NTT and Zwift link up to deliver innovative fan experience for the first ever UCI Cycling Esports World Championships

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LONDON, UK, 8th December 2020 – NTT Ltd., the global technology services company, is partnering with Zwift, the global online training and racing platform for athletes, to deliver data analytics to enhance the fan experience at the first ever UCI Cycling Esports World Championships today.

NTT will draw upon experience collaborating with the Amaury Sport Organisation (A.S.O.) to bring data analytics to the Tour de France, as well as a previous partnership with Zwift to host the first Virtual Tour de France in July 2020. A staggering 40 million fans watched the event.

Now, NTT will bring its expertise in data-led storytelling to esports at the first Cycling Esports event sanctioned by a sports governing body. With Zwift, racers physically cycle but the game takes place in a virtual world.

Eric Min, CEO and co-founder, Zwift comments, “This is a significant moment for cycling that will pave the way for this new discipline of cycling esports to be recognised more widely. Combining physical activity with a virtual race environment has many benefits. Not only does it appeal to future generations, and the way they now consume fitness and entertainment, but it also opens up opportunities to make the sport accessible to more racers around the world – both male and female – as well as to teams based in countries where it’s not usually possible to compete.”

NTT connects to the Zwift platform, retrieving the real-time data from all the riders taking part, and then aggregates and analyses these to provide new insights for viewers. NTT will use algorithms originally developed for the Tour de France to identify and track the groups of riders taking part in the race so that viewers will have a better understanding of the race as it evolves. All this data processing is done in near real-time, with the broadcast graphics able to show events within 500 milliseconds of them happening.

For the first time, NTT will share analytics on which riders are best at playing the game and able to get the highest speed for their power – a new Zwift Efficiency rating. All this means that, in addition to seeing competitors’ speed, power and heart rate in a particular instant – which fans have been able to do for all Zwift events up till now – fans can now see the competitors’ average power, speed, watts per kg and efficiency over the last few minutes and since the start of the race.

Rob Webster, Vice President Advanced Technology Group: Sport, NTT Ltd. explains, “Analytics shows us which rider approaches the race in the best way. Without data analytics, what’s happening in the race isn’t always clear and the viewing experience could be overwhelming. By taking the data the platform generates and analysing the performance of the 80 riders taking part, we translate the insights into stories so fans can better understand and enjoy the race.”

The delivery of the race is supported by NTT’s suite of managed services, developed with its secure by design approach. NTT has used its Intelligent Workplace solutions, with the technical delivery team spread across three continents and able to work remotely thanks to powerful collaboration technology.

NTT’s partnership with Zwift will extend to the Premier Division of the Zwift Racing League, the platform’s grassroots league which runs until 30th April 2021. This community-based racing league is open to riders of all abilities. 9,400 unique racers took part across 232 events in season one, riding 1.02 million miles and climbing 12.9 million meters. There is complete gender parity when it comes to race distances, and exposure. Now specialist racers in eRacing are emerging from the 1,000 teams, based in 125 countries, that registered for the first season.

Ruth Rowan, CMO, NTT Ltd, concludes, “Zwift’s purpose of getting more people more active more often is aligned with NTT’s ethos to use technology for good. Esports presents an exciting part of sport's future and we’re delighted to put data-led storytelling at the heart of it for fans. We have been able to take our expertise from the Tour de France to innovate for eSports. It's fantastic to enable more people around the world to get involved in cycling through using technology.”

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About Zwift

Zwift is the fitness company born from gaming. We're dedicated fitness enthusiasts that also happen to be experienced software and video game developers. Combining that passion and deep understanding of the fitness world, Zwift is the first company to use massive multiplayer gaming technology to bring the outdoor experience indoors. Athletes from around the globe can train and compete with each other in rich, 3D-generated worlds simply by connecting their existing devices & hardware (e.g. cycle trainers, power meters, treadmills heart rate monitors, etc) wirelessly via open industry standard ANT+ and BLE. From friendly competition, to racing & structured training programs, Zwift is building a community of like-minded athletes united in the pursuit of a better social fitness experience.

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