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[Appropriate salutations...]

The digital revolution has changed mankind more profoundly and more rapidly than any other.

It has changed the way we work....the way we play....the way we relate to one another.

It has changed our expectations and the way we think.

Just consider this.

There are well over 4 billion cell phones in use in the world today. That's one 'phone over 60 per cent of the world's total population.

In China, there are 679 million cellphones in use in a country with a population 1.3 billion....and the number is rising fast.

In Russia, Germany, Ukraine and the UK, there are significantly more cellphones in use than there are people!

These hugely sophisticated devices are the ultimate manifestation of the digital revolution. They put the world in our pocket, giving us access to almost unlimited sources of information, entertainment and communication.

The digital world is a world without limits and presents both a challenge and a massive opportunity for the world of sports and, in particular, National Olympic Committees.

For NOCs, the key to the future is understanding the relationship between digital technology and their many different stakeholders. It is about harnessing digital power to communicate, educate, facilitate and officiate more swiftly and effectively than ever before.

Let us look at some of the ways this will happen.

One of the key roles of an NOC and its member federations is to encourage participation in sport among young people and it is here that the effective use of digital technology can be particularly effective.

Some of you will be familiar with the term ' Digital Native.'

It refers to the generation of youngsters who have grown up in the digital era and have a natural affinity with the technology. They are the Face Book, You Tube and Twitter generation; a generation which is unused to waiting.....for anything.

They demand instant communication, instant answers and instant entertainment....and technology delivers.

They want to shape their own digital universe and set their own agenda.

Digital natives are linked by ideas and shared passions. They are not constricted by physical boundaries and constantly seek new challenges and experiences.

If sport is to be part of the lives of young people we have to be part of this world....their world.

That means reaching out through the media they use and understanding and living in their digital space.

It means finding a voice which resonates with young people and which will be heard amid all the clutter of their busy digital lives.

And I suggest that voice has to come from young people themselves..... From those already successfully engaged in sport and who are able to talk to their peers through digital channels. To tell them what sport means to them, of the pride, the passion, the hard-work and the satisfaction which sport uniquely delivers.

As NOCs we need to identify and work with our own Digital Natives. They are the most effective and credible ambassadors we can have in our programmes to make sport a central part of the lives of young people.

Of course, the digital revolution reaches into many other areas of an NOC's operations.

After all, so much of our work centres around effective communication. Whether organising and administering events, communicating with the media or allowing coaches to deliver detailed training programmes and dietary plans, digital technology takes personalised communication to new levels.

Training and education – of coaches and administrators - are key functions of NOCs and each can be enhanced by the appropriate and creative use of digital technology. A 3G cellphone is an infinite classroom for knowledge sharing and interaction.

And there is another dimension. Almost all NOCs work with sponsors whose contribution of funding, equipment or expertise is vital and acknowledged in many different ways.

Digital technology enables us to build closer and more valuable relationships with our sponsors by bringing into the centre of our presence in the digital environment and making them true and instantly recognisable partners.

This adds value for all parties and, in the process, raises the benchmark value of our sponsorship portfolios.

The future of sport, like much else in life, is inextricably linked to our ability to harness digital power to make us more effective and to achieve our goals.

I believe that it is role of NOCs to take the lead by setting the digital standards and creating a framework which links and benefits their member federations, schools, athletes, coaches, governments and sponsors in new and more effective ways.

It is not as though we have an option.

The digital revolution has created opportunities and raised expectations of the quality of service delivery and we must match and exceed those expectations or be left behind.

Thank you.