

New space service to revolutionise photography at sporting events

A £900,000 investment from the UK Space Agency in partnership with the European Space Agency will support developers at AWOL, based in the North West, to roll out their space-enabled photography service that is able to upload images in real-time.

The service, which can be used at mass sporting events of all kinds including running, cycling and triathlons, means when a person passes a specific milestone on the course or crosses the finish line, their photos will be delivered instantaneously via smartphone to family and friends.

The investment comes as the UK marks UN-backed World Space Week 2020 (4th to 10th October) which celebrates the contribution made by satellites to everyday lives.

The new project will see a number of rollouts at real events in early 2021 – including the Cancer Research UK London Winter Run, Manchester Marathon, Tour de Yorkshire Ride, Royal Windsor Triathlon (organised by Human Race) and the Children with Cancer Swim Serpentine and Standard Chartered Great City Race (organised by the London Marathon Events Company) among others later in the year.

Space is a key contributor to the UK economy, employing around 42,000 people, and it is also fundamental to many sports activities that rely on satellites for time and location services, provided by GPS, and access to the internet, provided by satellite communications.

The project is being led by developers and photographers from AWOL, and supported by some of the UK's major tech brands including SCAN Computing, BigBlu and Wex Photographic, bringing in cutting edge tech from the likes of Microsoft, HP, Canon, Fuji, Nikon, Sony, Cobham and Europasat.

Rich Burnett, Co Founder and Operations Director, said:

Image quality is everything: not only will photos be delivered much faster than is currently possible, but it also unlocks huge potential for Quality Control.

Production Managers will be able monitor the actual pictures being taken, and make a range of both physical and technical adjustments to continue pushing the boundaries of event photography.

Graham Turnock, CEO of the UK Space Agency, said:

Space is a glue that joins together many of the practical parts of

our everyday lives, from how we bank to our food delivery. But it also supports technologies like sports photography that make life more fun.

AWOL's concept will help revolutionise the quality and the speed of sports photography and I am certain anyone who has taken part in these kinds of events will look forward to using this service.

Nick Rusling, CEO of Human Race Events, said:

AWOL is a company we've been pleased to work with for the last three years across our event portfolio which includes the award-winning Manchester Marathon, Manchester Half Marathon, Dragon Ride, Windsor Triathlon and others.

It's great to see innovation happening in the area of Photography and Athlete Experience, especially in such a challenging time for our industry and we look forward to reaping the benefits of this new technology as part of our ongoing and profitable partnership with AWOL

[Human Race Ltd](#), under parent ownership of Tour de France owners, Amaury Sport Organisation (A.S.O) is the UK's premier Mass Participation Sporting Events organiser, with a diverse portfolio of running, cycling and triathlon events year-round including the Manchester Marathon, Tommy's Manchester Half, Cancer Research UK London Winter Run, Tour de Yorkshire Ride, Dragon Ride and Royal Windsor Triathlon.

The UK space sector is an economic success story, growing by over 60% since 2010. The sector already supports £300 billion of UK economic activity through the use of satellite services, and the government has established a new National Space Council to consider how space policy can enhance the country's prosperity and place in the world, as well as our security interests.

The UK continues to be a leading member of the European Space Agency, which is independent of the EU, having committed a record investment of £374 million per year in November 2019. Satellites support the economy and everyday life and this is one of the UK's fastest growing industries.