World Chess Championship 2013
First used 9th of November 2013

URL day 1: http://direkte.vg.no/studio/sjakkvm2013-1
URL last day: http://direkte.vg.no/studio/sjakkvm2013-10

In April of 2013 Magnus Carlsen won the Candidates Tournament in chess in London, and thereby earned the right to challenge Anand for the World Champion title against reigning champion for the past six years Viswanathan Anand.
VG has covered Magnus Carlsen for several years with traditional journalism, but having a Norwegian in the most prestigious competition in a large world sport, lasting for several weeks, demanded new solutions.

VG acknowledged that this could be one of our most important editorial commitments of 2013, and wanted to make a significant contribution of transforming high level chess analysis into a national event.

Chess is traditionally not a big spectator sport, it’s complicated and a big challenge to follow move by move. Our challenge when planning the coverage of this event was mainly how to report the intricate games of chess in a correct way, and at the same time make it easily accessible for the masses. And also; how can we do this visually appealing, given that national broadcaster NRK bought the television rights for the event?

For this we developed our Chess Direct Studio

The event lasted over a total of 14 days, 10 games in total.

In the Chess Direct Studio we combined these different types of means of live reporting:
1) Hosted chat: One of our sports journalists with an interest and knowledge of chess was the online host throughout the championship. He reported the most interesting moves and comments from experts in the TV-studio. Being part of the crew in the red sofa he was the link between our readers and the studio; he answered questions from readers in text, and brought questions from our users to the experts in the studio.

2) “Chess Translator”. This unique widget used data from the world most recognized chess software “Houdini” and through our own algorithm converted technical chess values into more understandable win percentages. Thereby our readers instantly were able to see what effect each move had on computer generated estimated outcome of the game. This detail was instrumental for the majority of our readers given that predicting the outcome of a chess game in process is not as easy as when following a game of football where one team is ahead 3-0.

3) Live chess board, emulating the actual board in Chennai, based on a live feed. The yellow squares indicate the actual move, and using arrows one could back and forward in the game when needed.

4) Hans Arild Runde, a renowned man among chess players, was our expert in the studio. In text he explained each move in chess terms, especially valuable for people who know chess well. For the not so knowledgeable, he explained why each move was good or bad. He also participated in the chat around the table in the studio.

5) Questions and comments from twitter and Chess Direct users. A lot of tweets hashtagged #vgsjakk were shown here, during the championship #vgsjakk was used on 4 760 tweets, and the hashtag trended on Twitter in Norway.
6) Web TV player with live broadcast from VGTV. During the ten days of chess matches VGTV produced close to 50 hours of live coverage, and generated approximately seven million started streams. The broadcast started 45 minutes before each game, lasted throughout the actual game, and also included summary and reactions after the game.

The panel in the studio included a host (VG-journalist Mads A. Andersen), and several experts and guests. Most notably Hans Olav Lahlum, famous among Norwegians for participating in the world's longest intervju – 30 hours – together with the same Andersen. Amongst many other things he is a passionate chess player and judge, and became a very popular figure during the championship. Among other guests where Magnus Carlsens own sister and a very chess interested member of the parliament.

Often one or more of the panel moved over to the chess board on the floor in order to better explain a move or possible scenarios.

And when Lahlum one day had to attend an important meeting that collided with the game, a limousine was put to his disposable in order for him to quickly return to the studio (http://www.vgtv.no/#!/video/74485/vg-hentet-ekspert-hans-olav-lahlum-i-limousin)
He could comment the game live whilst in the car and the our users could take part :-) After each game there was a press conference with the players in Chennai that we covered, and we also had a team on location in Chennai that gave our coverage an extra presence.

In addition to the live stream from the studio and Chennai, the users could within our solution enjoy a lot of original content from VGTV. One journalist from VGTV was allowed to follow Magnus Carlsen for one year and he also did several in-depth interviews. This resulted in a half hour documentary (http://www.vgtv.no/#/video/73427/magnus-carlsen-39-s-last-big-title), and a lot of shorter clips that were made available in the chess direct studio and also used during our live broadcasts. The documentary alone reached more than 740 000 views.

7) Recommended move for player in action, based on the Houdini software. The chess simulator “Houdini” can process hundreds of previously played games and by using advanced algorithms present suggestions for the best possible next move.

We showed the result in graphics and text, along with the possible outcome the game would have given that player chose the same move.
In this way our users could actually see the mathematically (and strategically) the best possible next moves - regardless of their own level of expertise.

Most of the content from the desktop version was also presented on the mobile:

Our mobile users could follow the TV-stream, see the live board emulating the game and chat with our host.

The reactions to this service among both the general public and chess players were instant and overwhelming:
And our coverage turned out to be an addictive one, when people left home or the office, our Chess Direct Studio came along :-)
hjerpbakkk

Vi feirer Magnus! #vgsjakk

larseikbjorge

hjerpbakkk

nrksport, mortennessler, ilask, ronaldmavarez, morty123456, glovarm

henrikogaard Kan ikke gå glipp av størkampen selv om jeg sitter på ferja #sjakk #vgsjakk

lehland

Gustav Nore

Tidenes mest spennende forelesning i diskret matematikk! #vgsjakk #ntnu
pic.twitter.com/vTayLmhQDm

lehland Skriver Exphil eksamen... #vgsjakk
As the jury will know, Magnus Carlsen won the Championships :-) 
Here you can some of the best TV-moments from the two weeks: 
http://direkte.vg.no/studio/sjakkm2013-10/#!videoId=74919/ 

We had large traffic from day 1, but it kept increasing throughout the championship.

Over the ten games of chess the solution received over 6 million visits, on average from more than 300 000 unique visitors per day.

On the final day we reached more than half a million unique visitors on desktop, tablet and mobile combined. On the same day there was 650 000 started streams of our broadcast, average viewing time was 50 minutes – and the broadcast peaked at 92 000 simultaneous streams.

We gained a lot of traffic from social media, from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as documented above. 
And of course, we used our own front page extensively to lead our readers into the our live coverage:
Carlsens tidligere trener i Chennai:
- Jeg tror Magnus kan komme til å vinne nå

Følg VGs direktestudio NÅ

Fra partiet: Se brettet bli «støvsugd» på 20 sekunder | Carlsen bommet etter Anand-tabbe

Manager varsler Carlsen-prat etter omdiskutert valg

Avslører lillebrorens barnslige musikksmak

Les hele saken
Les også Klar for norsk superturnering
In addition, the use of VGs Chess Direct Studio reached beyond our own sites. Both Ekstrabladet.dk and Aftonbladet.se embedded streams from our coverage on their sites.
Also, the commuters in Oslo could take part in the suspense, as digital outdoor boards carried part of our solution live and continuously throughout the game – the first time ever this technology was used on outdoor boards in Norway.

These boards were part of a large campaign that started weeks before the event, a campaign telling people about the championship and that VG was the place to be when it started.

For even more about the campaign and VGs coverage of the chess world championship – enjoy this movie about VG and the World Chess Championships: http://goo.gl/OB0eVG