

How Sportsnet removed friction from the user experience and saw a **24% increase in time spent in comments**

THE CLIENT

Sportsnet is Canada's leading sports media brand, and its mission is to connect fans to their favourite teams and athletes.



THE CHALLENGE

As part of this mission, a major strategic initiative at Sportsnet is to reduce friction in the user journey across its digital properties. In order to encourage authenticated sign-in, Noah Love and his team identified various barriers to engagement, including one that had been there as long as anyone could remember: the “load comments” button at the bottom of each article.

If users wanted to read comments or join the conversation, they had to click a button to reveal the comments. The team suspected that this button was disrupting the experience and discouraging engagement.



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One of our goals at Sportsnet is to build an engaged fan community. Viafoura plays a pivotal part in helping us deliver an engagement experience that meets the expectations of our readers.

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— Noah Love

Product Manager, Sportsnet

THE SOLUTION

Noah's first step was to scope the impact of removing the "load comments" button. As Product Manager, he's responsible for delivering an exceptional user experience and ensuring optimal site performance, so any changes can't compromise these objectives.

He worked with longtime partner Viafoura — the engine powering Sportsnet's comments section — to remove the button and instead automatically display the top engaged comments.

Now, when users finish reading a Sportsnet article, they immediately see the comments that have gotten the most likes and replies. Additionally, there are calls to action to follow along to get alerts or join the conversation by writing a comment. Users can also see when someone is typing a comment, encouraging them to stick around and watch the conversation unfold in real time.

The team's hypothesis was correct: by removing the button and surfacing Viafoura's audience engagement solution on every article, Sportsnet has seen increased engagement across the board. Noah and his team are delivering a more seamless user experience that makes it easier for sports fans to connect with each other and engage with Sportsnet's content.

RESULTS



increase in registrations per million page views



262% increase in the number of comment readers



increase in time on page spent by comment readers