



BTN2Go Launches on Apple Mobile Devices

Sports Video Group
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In a coffee shop in Madison, WI, a bookstore in Southern California, or an airplane 30,000 ft. above it all: fans of Big Ten sports can get their fix anywhere.

Earlier this month, Big Ten Network launched a free application for the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch called BTN2Go, a live 24/7 multiplatform extension of the television network.

Centerpiece of the app is the ability for users to stream a live simulcast of BTN's main linear network, which, in turn, gives mobile access to all live games aired on the network.

In the case of multiple games' airing simultaneously — for example, three regionalized football games airing at noon or the first game of a basketball doubleheader going into overtime — the network will be able to direct fans to BTN2Go for uninterrupted coverage of a particular game. This was a key feature for much of the staff at BTN.

“We're really pleased,” says Michael Calderon, VP, digital and interactive media, at Big Ten Network. “We've gotten, for the most part, very positive reviews in the App Store; it's been really well received amongst the Big Ten fan base as we monitor message boards and social media; and we hear it directly through our customer-service inbox as well.”

BTN2Go, which was created through a partnership with IPTV provider NeuLion, will feature more than 100 men's basketball games in addition to hundreds of other live events, on-demand programming, and archived content, including current-season games from the Big Ten Conference's television partners. Also Available are original series — *The Journey*, *Big Ten Icons*, *Big Ten's Best*, and *The Big Ten's Greatest Games* — game highlights, and coaches' shows.

The app keeps the Big Ten at the forefront of the monetization of video rights and makes the network one of the first in the college space to fully embrace over-the-top content for even its marquee sports (football, men's basketball).

“I think the hesitation [for other networks to stream live games] is less about people not wanting to do it but is more about people figuring out those complicated rights issues and who has those rights and who is going to be able to monetize them,” says Calderon. “We're fortunate to be in a pretty clear situation that our rights fees, which we pay the conference for, are all-inclusive for all platforms.”

He also believes that the app boosts the network's exposure and will prove to be a strong addition for its partners.

“For us, it’s really about supporting the value proposition to our affiliates,” he says. “Our affiliates are obviously key to our business model and to be able to bundle BTN2Go with the Big Ten Network high-definition linear channel, the standard-def channel, the VOD channel. To be able to add this to the portfolio of Big Ten Network content that we offer to our affiliates, it’s a great added value that legitimizes our subscription fees.”

Calderon also says the network is working on a Android-phone version of the app, with a target launch date of “early 2012.” BTN is exploring expansion to other platforms as well but likely won’t launch any additional apps beyond Apple and Android products in this academic year.

The online service has been available since Sept. 1 to subscribers of participating cable, satellite, and telco providers — Bright House Networks, Charter, Cox, DIRECTV, Dish Network, and Time Warner Cable — who receive BTN as part of their TV-channel lineup.