

INTERNET

## Lexus online US Open campaign to see 100M impressions

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By RACHEL LAMB

Lexus' online campaign for the U.S. Open tournament that includes digital advertisements and a virtual golf game is expected to see more than 100 million impressions and 100 million social media ad impressions, according to the game organizers.

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The U.S. Open's Web site features interactive ads from the brand and a free golf game called Virtual U.S. Open that looks like the course where the tournament takes place. Lexus is taking this opportunity to push the RX F Sport via these efforts.

"The video game is a fun way for Lexus to message to potential car buyers as the people who have an interest in the U.S. Open are affluent golfers who own luxury automobiles," said James Dean, senior vice president and head of luxury and financial practice at [WealthEngine](#), Bethesda, MD.

"The U.S. Open, in part, will be attended by thousands of affluent golfers which is a key demographic for Lexus," he said. "Lexus is being smart and creative in reaching out to this audience during the event."

Mr. Dean is not affiliated with Lexus, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Lexus](#) could not comment before press deadline.

The United States Golf Association's **U.S. Open** will be played June 14-17 at The Olympic Club's Lake Course in San Francisco.

Par for the course

The Virtual U.S. Open game can be found on the right-hand side of the U.S. Open site.

Consumers must first sign up for the game on the site.

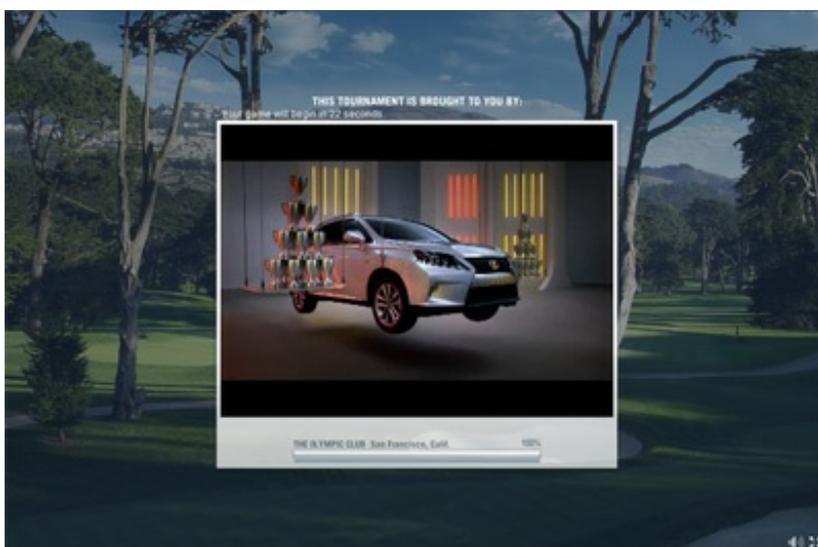


### *Virtual U.S. Open game*

The makers of the game, WGT, recreated the Lake Course using HD photography and virtual reality technology. Users can play the entire course of just one of the holes.

Throughout the game, players will see branded in-game tee marketers, flagsticks and wind indicators. In addition, every avatar is wearing a golf shirt and hat with the Lexus logo.

In addition, commercials for the Lexus RX F SUV will play to demonstrate Lexus' "pursuit of perfection," per the brand.



### *Lexus ad before the game starts*

The campaign is expected to generate more than 100 million impressions for Lexus in

three months, plus another 100 million social ad impressions, according to WGT. This is because the Lexus avatars are viewed by the more than 5 million registered players on World Golf Tour.

The WGT game is designed to allow brands such as Lexus to reach their audiences in an engaging and memorable way, according to WGT.

In addition, both of the best online score and a random entry will win trips to the U.S. Open as guests of the USGA.

Embedded Video: <http://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/Ds0uQv2CH-0>

*Lexus RFX Sport commercial*

Back to reality

Lexus extended its ongoing partnership with the USGA in 2011 to remain its exclusive automotive partner and the official car of the U.S. Open, U.S. Women's Open, U.S. Senior Open and U.S. amateur golf tournaments ([see story](#)).

The partnership has been around since 2006. As part of its renewal, Lexus continued to provide attendees access to activities such as autograph signings, visits with golf legends and photo opportunities.

Other efforts this year include hosting a Twitter chat with professional golfer Peter Jacobsen while he is on-scene at the Open ([see story](#)).

Also, as the official sponsor of the USGA, Lexus has provided onsite activities for attendees such as a golf swing simulator, photo opportunities and golfer autograph stations and at the Performance Drive Pavilion.

Attendees can obtain a Lexus Game Card activated with a Radio Frequency Identification Device and earn points by swiping their game cards at checkpoints throughout the course. The player with the most points will win a trip for two to the 2013 U.S. Open.

Consumers can also compete on the golf swing simulator for the chance to win a 2013 Lexus ES.

"Clearly, Lexus is trying to target a younger, predominantly male demographic," said John Casey, founder of [Freshfluff](#), New York. "Luxury and other brands are splashed all over pro golf tournaments, via branded tee-shirts, caps and bags.

"Thus, if you're going to provide a virtual version of the U.S. Open, you might as well make it look like the real thing, including realistic golfers, greens, fairways and of course strategic placements of prominent brands in and along the course," he said. "As a luxury brand trying to reach younger males, it seems like a no-brainer to brand the virtual game.

"Younger male golf fans are so used to seeing brands at pro golf tournaments, so having a brand pop-up throughout a virtual game probably makes it seem more realistic versus intrusive."

## Final Take

*Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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