

Nike+

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ABSTRACT

The abstract should summarize the report's main objective, main findings, and their significance. Try to use no more than 150 words.

Keywords

Nike+, running, challenges, friends, goals

INTRODUCTION

An online community is a virtual community that exists online whose members enables its existence through taking part in membership rituals (Amy Jo Kim, 2000). Online communities have also become a supplemental form of communication between people who know each other primarily in real life.

Revealed in May 2006, Nike+ is a social networking site based around running. Covers every continent and in the end of January 2010 had reached a new record of 300.000.000 kilometers. To interact with Nike+ online community you have to buy the Nike+ kit, which is available in different options: Nike+ Sportsband (my selection), Nike+iPod kit or the Nike+ GPS App (for iPhone). One of the most interesting things about Nike+ is the way the brand works to build its user base. Most of their users are Nike fans for a long time (3 years or more) and use / buy frequently Nike products. Since the creation Nike+ community, Nike sales in the running shoe niche has increased astronomically and the consumer tie with the brand was also re-enforced.

What is proposed in this work is to study the profile of Nike+ users, including the motivation and objectives behind the use of Nike+ community. I performed a questionnaire focusing on user profile, motivations and how they use Nike+.

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

For this research about Nike+ I searched for publications (books, journals and conference papers) for Nike+, competition and motivation. Mostly of these publications are available at Google Scholar, which is a good source to find related academic work.

In this section I'm going to talk about the referred topics.

Nike+: Relation between users and Nike+ website

Available in ten different languages, Nike+ was created in 2006. In the first year it was measured a total of 134.979.939.800 steps from all Nike+ members, which is equivalent to 2.710 trips around the world or 5.610.069 pounds lost.

Nike+ is today the world's biggest running club and it was created by Nike as an initiative to establish a relationship with their clients on the internet.

Nike+ explores the interaction between consumers from the race issue. The technology present in the Nike+ shoes allows consumers to transmit to Nike, via internet, their running performance. In Nikeplus.com the consumers can see by the use of animated graphs the evolution of their runs, interact directly with Nike and other consumers, which are part of the community, plus other features as customized training or orientation. In other words Nike+ groups, involves, interacts and attracts consumers around itself, generating a relationship that goes beyond the simple relationship of buying and selling.

By the end 2008, Nike presented a new feature, to allow Nike+ users to publish their running activity on twitter and facebook.

In Nike+ relationship proposal is interesting to note that the offered resources and services are only available to members who own the Nike+ kit.[2]

Competition: the social structure of competition

Hannan and Freeman (1989) write: "The niche of population consists of combinations of resource abundances and constraints in which members can arise and persist." The competition between populations i and j is a function of extent to which they feed on the same resources.

Then, as the number of players approaches the limit that can be supported, competition eliminates the weaker ones.[3]

Preparing for Competition

The idea of competition is to compete. Competition is a special part of the sport of running. You should know exactly why you're running each race.

The goal of competition doesn't have to be to discover how fast you can race a particular distance, although that's often

the case. Your goal might be to try a new tactic in a competitive setting. [4]

Runner's World: Where's your mojo?

Running has more to offer than many things in life – health and happiness, for starters. So you'd think runners would never be tempted to hit the snooze bar instead of the road or a happy hour instead of a treadmill. Yet as much as we love our running, there are times, when, well, we're just not in the mood. Running is like any long-term relationship: Sometimes keeping the flame burning requires a little extra stoking. Maintaining your desire to run requires reinforcement and enjoyment, according to Michael Sachs, Ph.D., a Temple University sports-psychology professor. "Your enthusiasm for running can be reinforced by getting clear on your reasons for doing it, and then setting goals tailored to those reasons," he says. For example, setting specific objectives like losing five or 10 pounds; or incremental goals like running a 10-K, a half-marathon, and then a marathon. Sachs says. "So if your run isn't fun, make some changes. Run fewer days, try trail running, join a running club, or add new songs to your iPod." A runner's motivation can be tested at any point, but it can be particularly challenged when you're starting out, increasing your training, overcoming an injury, or descending the back slope of the performance curve.

Motivation is more than a feeling. Put into action, it's a powerful force that can help you go longer, get faster, and enjoy your running more.[5]

Galloway's Book on Running: Motivation

Everyone has days of low motivation, and periods when there's no progress. One cause for low level of motivation can be low blood sugar. Forward motion exercise is motivating in itself.

Get a mission and write it on the calendar. When you do this, you're more likely to be motivated on those hot, muggy days or when snowflakes fall.

A mid-run motivation crisis is almost always the result of going too fast, on that day, as the more stress you put on yourself, the more negative messages you'll receive from the brain, which will lead to a desire to quit.

One good way to motivate is to bring an energy snack with you, as preferred blood sugar foods can pull you out of motivational lulls. Energy bars can boost motivation and running enjoyment in a matter of minutes. Always drink water with any of these products.

Almost every runner has at least one tough run, every month. Where it occurs during a tour challenge around the block, or during a speed session, here are some tricks to motivate:

1. Slow down, and allow the body and mind to get a break;

2. Break up the remaining distance into segments that you know you can do;
3. Use distractions;
4. In a challenge, focus on the person that is two people in front of you;
5. Use a mantra.
6. Don't give up.

[6]

RESEARCH METHODS DESCRIPTION

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this study was to know more about Nike+ users (how they use Nike+, motivation, challenges, etc). I've studied Nike+ by performing a quantitative study based on participant observation, reading documents and through an online questionnaire. For participation observation and interaction I registered myself on the website using truthful information, started running with Nike+ Sportband and uploaded my running activity to my account profile, to be able to participate actively in the community. As Nike+ hit mainstream a long time ago, finding users to participate in my questionnaire was easy. After realizing some concepts I created an online questionnaire and convinced some Nike+ users through twitter (only users who used the Nike+ Application), to participate in the questionnaire, to better understand them. The above figure shows how I motivated twitter users that published their running feed via twitter.



Fig. 1 – Method used to motivate users to answer my online questionnaire

The online questionnaire was easy to answer and had a participation of 70 users in total, from around the World. The questions included in the questionnaire were:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Country
4. How do you use Nike+?
5. Number of Kilometers run with Nike+?
6. What motivates you to use Nike+?

7. What's your running frequency (per week)?
8. Since you have started using Nike+, in how many challenges did you entered?
9. Number of Friends that you have on your Nike+ account

To have success in this task I created a webpage with the online questionnaire which was available at <http://www.herois.net/nikeplus/> (in English and Portuguese) with a small description about my goal and course information.

RESULTS

Results for my online questionnaire were the following:

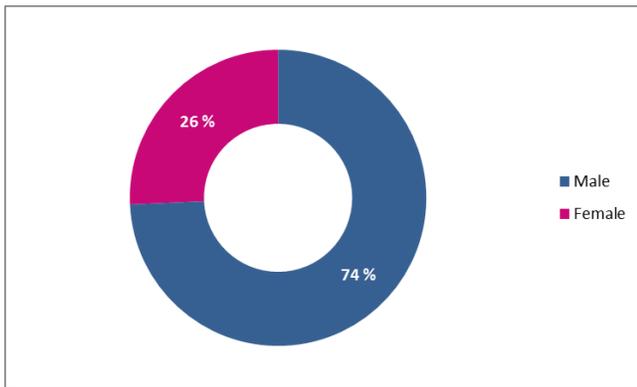


Fig. 2 – Gender of the participants

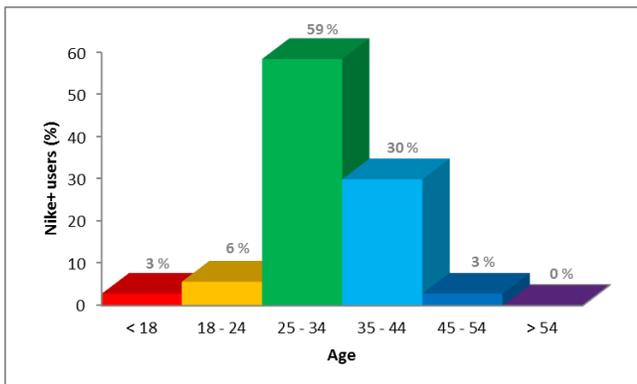


Fig.3 – Age of the participants

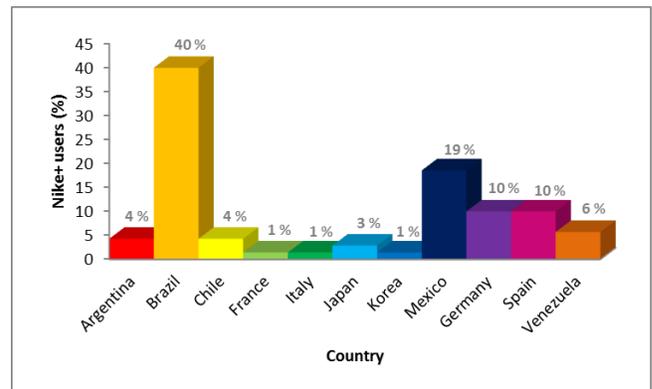


Fig. 4 – Country of origin

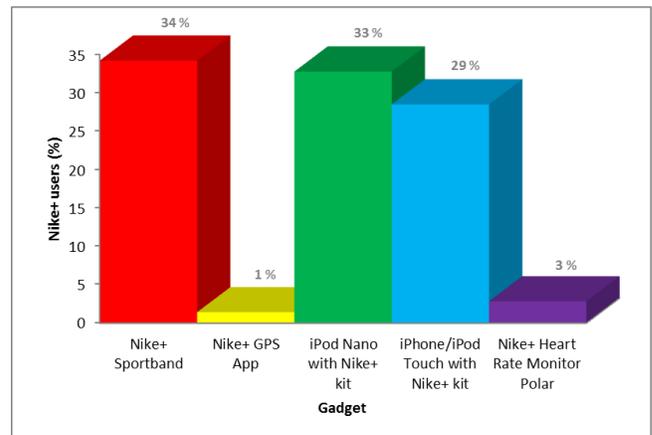


Fig. 5 – How do you use Nike+?

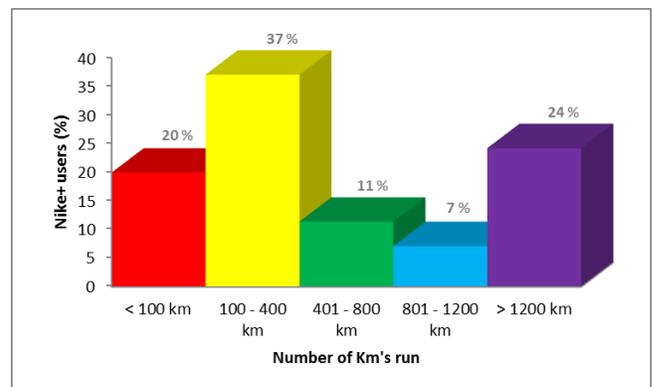


Fig. 6 – Number of Km's run with Nike+?

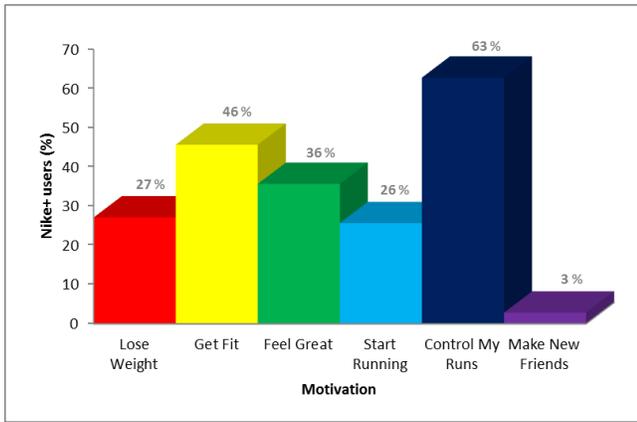


Fig. 7 – What motivates you to use Nike+?

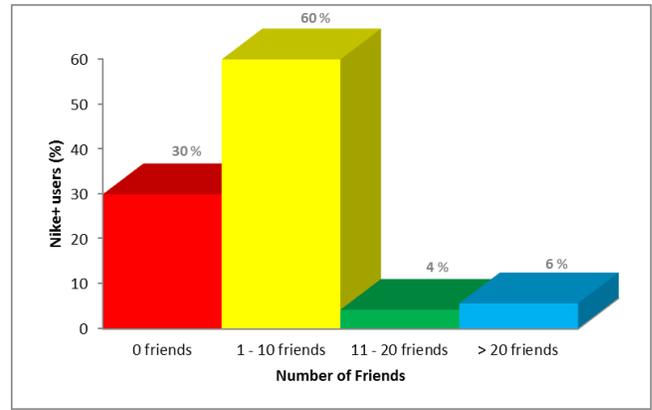


Fig. 10 – Number of Friends that you have on your Nike+ account

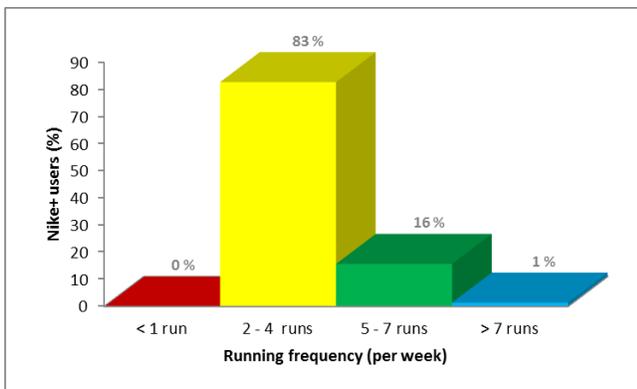


Fig. 8 – What's your running frequency (per week)?

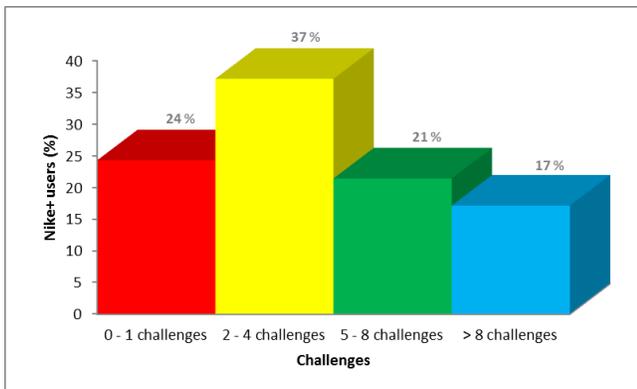


Fig. 9 – Since you started using Nike+, in how many challenges did you entered?

DISCUSSION

I'm going to start this part of the paper by discussing some of the results that I've gathered with my online questionnaire. Starting by the gender of the Nike+ participants, men dominate the website, as men run more and often.

Now the age of the most Nike+ users are between 25 to 44 years. This may be due to the time, occupation, financial capacity or geographic location.

In the results for the question "How do you use Nike+?" we have that most users use Nike+ Sportband, iPod Nano with Nike+ or iPhone/iPod Touch with Nike+ kit. This is due to their price, simplicity of use, features or the user just wanted to stick with the product that owned in the past, instead of buying a new one. Ex. If I had an iPod Nano I wouldn't need to buy the Nike+ Sportband, just the Nike+ chip.

For the number of Km run with Nike+, most of the users answered between 0 and 400 km. We can see that they're new Nike+ users, with less than 1 year.

Now, in the most important question we have that only 3% of the users that participated in the online questionnaire use it to make new friends. This can be due to a number of reasons: lack of social features (PM), Nike+ isn't considered a social network for the users or they're motivation while using Nike+ is different from while they're using Facebook. Other idea we can take from this results is that Nike+ is considered for most of Nike+ users a great tool to control the runs and motivate them in other aspects (lose weight, get fit, look great and start running).

The results for the question "What's your running frequency (per week)?" indicates us that the users are very active runners.

In the results for the question "Since you started using Nike+, in how many challenges did you entered?", we have that the number of Km run is proportional with the number

of challenges, in which the user participated. More Km run is equal to more challenges.

Last but not least in the results for the question “Number of friends that you have on your Nike+ account”, we have that 30% of the Nike+ users that participated in this questionnaire have no friends and 60% have only between 1 to 10 friends, which reveals that Nike+ lacks in some social aspects and the website needs an improvement in this area.

To conclude I can claim that Nike+ is a better tool for runners than is a social network, because as I said before they lack in some social aspects. Besides that fact, Nikeplus.com and the available products attends the needs and helps motivate the Nike+ users to run more / frequently.

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