User Feedback in the AppStore: An Empirical Study

— Pagano & Maalej (RE 2013)

Summary

Exploratory empirical analysis of >1M Apple App Store reviews studying *when* users post feedback, what topics appear, and how feedback impacts downloads and ratings.

Key insights

- Feedback spikes shortly after new releases and decays quickly afterwards — so release-time feedback is especially informative.

- Reviews commonly contain multiple topics (UX, bug reports, feature requests); longer reviews are more likely to be judged helpful.

- Positive, constructive feedback correlates with better ratings and can influence download counts; negative feedback often lacks contextual detail and may be less actionable.

Practical implications

- Integrate app-store feedback into rapid release cycles: prioritize triage just after releases.

- Automated tools that classify reviews by topic and helpfulness (and link to releases) can materially aid requirements and bug triage.

Limitations / cautions

- Sampling limited to top-downloaded apps and App Store only — generalizability may be constrained. Authors recommend combining store feedback with usage/context data to increase actionable value.