

Project: Nike Run Club Mobile App

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1 INTRODUCTION

My chosen interface to redesign is the Nike Run Club (NRC) app. The Nike Run Club app is a full-featured fitness and health app geared towards active runners that want to be a part of a global running community and log their running activities. The features listed in Figure 1 makes the NRC app one of the most popular apps among runners.

Figure 1 – Nike Run Club App Features from App Store

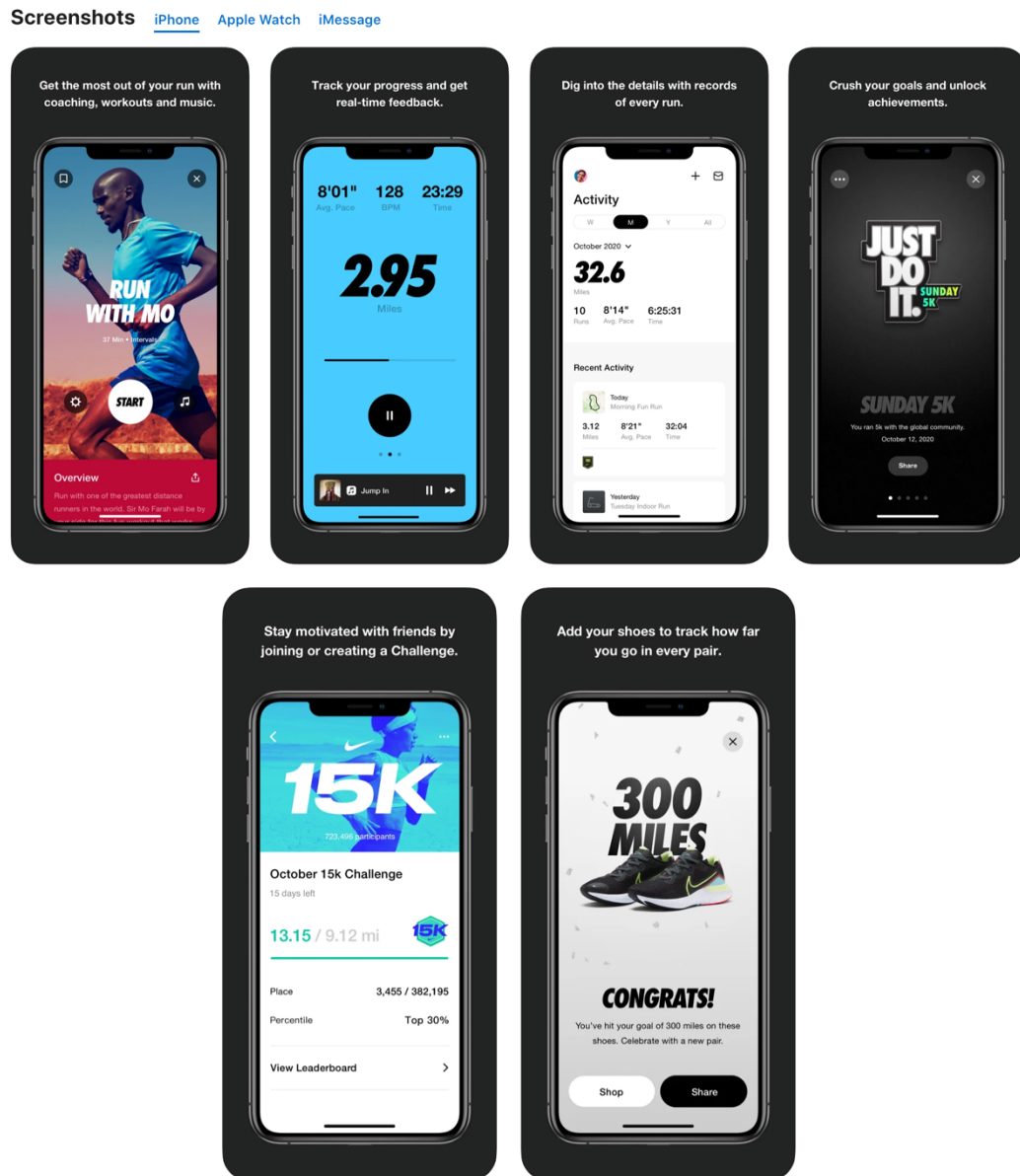
FEATURE LIST

1. Support for Apple Watch and Nike co-branded Apple Watch
2. Track and store running activity (GPS-enabled)
3. Audio guided runs with Nike coaches and athletes
4. Motivate yourself with distance-based challenges with other app users
5. Distance-based challenges with other NRC app users
6. Personalized training plans
7. Celebrate your achievements with trophies and badges
8. Compare and compete with leaderboards
9. Get in-run cheers from friends
10. Customizable post-run sharing
11. Integration with Apple Music and Spotify as a music source

The NRC app is free and available to download from Apple's App Store and the Google Play Store.

The interface of the NRC app is multi-layered, see figure 2. In the upper left-hand corner of the app, is your profile picture, which will take you to your user profile. The user profile is where you can set your name, configure the app settings, add shoes to track mileage, and view your friend list. Located at the bottom of the screen, you can access the 5-tab app menu where you can navigate to the following tabs: Feed, Activity, Run, Club, and Inbox.

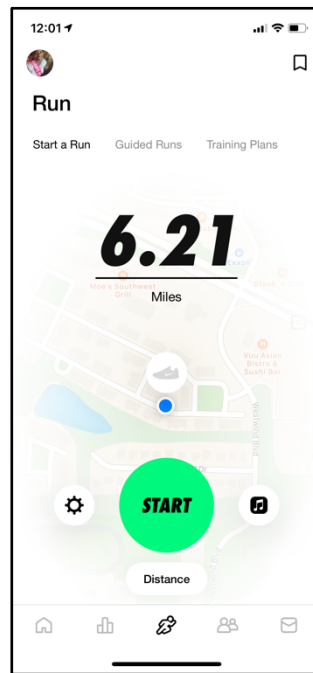
Figure 2— NRC app screenshots from the App Store



Source: [App Store](#)

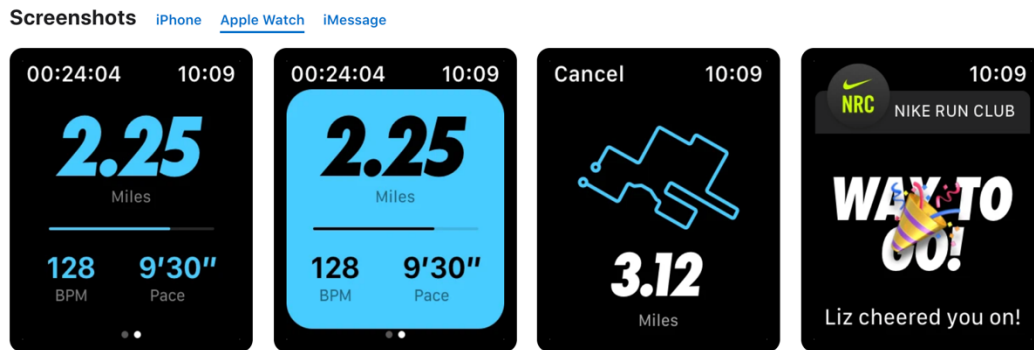
As shown in figure 3, the tab that you will interact with the most is the Run tab. On the Run tab, are sub-tabs for Start a Run, Guided Runs and Training Plans.

Figure 3—Run tab in the NRC App



The NRC app can be accessed from your iPhone and Apple Watch, see figure 4.

Figure 4—Apple Watch screenshots



Source: [App Store](#)

Essentially, when a person is ready to start their run using the NRC app they will first decide if they are going to track the run using the watch only or smartphone only. This is important because the watch is an independent app and upon completion of your run, it will sync your run data to the NRC app on your smartphone.

If a person only wants to track their run using their smartphone, then they will do the following steps:

1. Open the NRC app
2. Navigate to the Run tab
3. Select run type (indoor or outdoor)
4. Set music source
5. Touch the 'green' Start button

2 INITIAL NEEDFINDING

2.1 Needfinding Selection – Product Review Method

The chosen needfinding approach is the product review method.

2.2 Needfinding Approach and Description

In this needfinding exercise, I will visit to the NRC app page on the Apple App Store website and the Google Play Store website from my laptop and smartphone. I will navigate to the review section of the app page on the respective app stores and read at least 50 of the most recent negative reviews. I intend to filter by recent reviews because the older reviews may no longer be relevant since the app is frequently updated with new enhancements.

From there, I will summarize the reviews by frequent themes and list the tangible enhancement opportunities/feature requests.

2.3 Needfinding Execution and Conclusions

I performed the needfinding exercise by first navigating to the Apple App Store and navigating to the Nike Run Club app page, see figure 5. There was a total of 376,381 ratings. I filtered the list on “most recent” and started reading the comments. Most reviews were negative comments with the same feedback about the app glitching/crashing on the Watch and the watch run sync feature is not working properly. Out of the 36 comments from the App Store, I record 24 were related to the app malfunctioning due to the recent software update.

Next, I navigated to the Google Play Store from my laptop and then, navigated to the Nike Run Club app page, see figure 6. There was a total of 1.01 million ratings. I did the same thing as I did in the Apple App Store; I filtered the

comments on most recent. I read 14 reviews. 9 of the 14 reviews were related to the app malfunctioning too.

Figure 5— Apple App Store Nike Run Club page

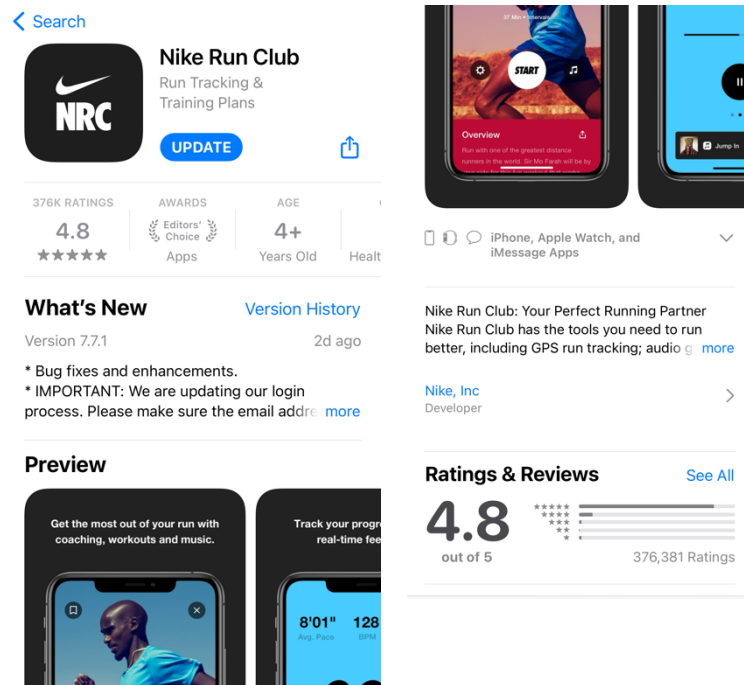
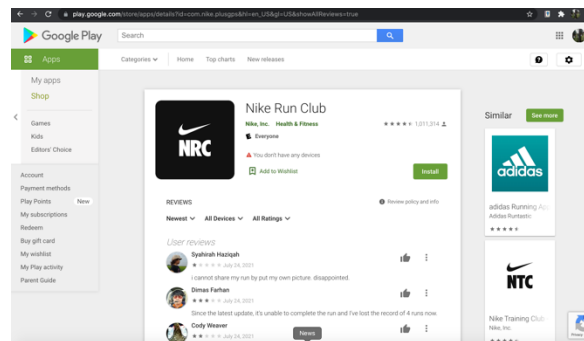


Figure 6— Google Play Store Nike Run Club page in Google Play Store



After reading 50 reviews, I was able to derive and document 9 new feature requests. I reviewed each and validated them in Table 1.

Table 1 — Feature Requests and Needs

Valid	Feature Request	User Needs
True	Access to watch app to Training Plan feature offered on mobile app version	User would like to start runs using the training plan feature
True	In-app chat function.	User would like to engage with their friends by commenting on their feed or posts or within the custom challenges
True	Notification and alerts	User would like notifications when their friend has started a run or completed
True	Share run through Messages app (Text messages)	User would like to share completed run through Messages app on iPhone
True	Adjust volume of voice-over only on guided run. Music is playing.	User would like the ability to increase the volume of the voice-over so they can better hear the coach with the music in the background.
True	Monitor running pace and set alert when run drops below the target pace	User would like the ability to set a target pace and receive alerts when run paces above/below target
True	Sync runs from watch to a Training Plan	User would like the ability to access the Training Plan program from watch
False	Post pics with runs	Feature currently exists
True	Run viewer interface resign. Interface is too busy.	User would like a simple layout with 1 or 2 buttons

Most of these features are improvements to the existing system.

3 HEURISTIC EVALUATION

When evaluating the NRC app, I conducted a task analysis using a GOMS model on the primary use features as the “goal”. Each feature was mentioned in the app reviews. This model will allow me to assess the app from the processor user

view. The goal is “to track running activity”. The available methods are the smartwatch or smartphone. The selection criteria is based on if the user wants to run with the phone in hand or stored on his or her person version just run with the watch. Running with the watch will lead to reduced cognitive overload. When you run with a phone and you want to look at your stats, you will have to grab your phone from your pocket or arm band, unlock the phone with your face or code just to see the run screen and all while you are still actively running. Your hands will be sweaty, and you will battle between looking forward in your race route and your phone else risk tripping over something or getting hit by a moving object. Your haptic and visual perceptions will be a bit overwhelmed.

The operators used in the GOMS model are similar across both methods.

1. Open NRC app
2. Update Settings
3. Touch ‘Start’ Button

Upon completing your run, the goal is achieved, and the user receives feedback of the final race stats, which include average heart rate, average pace, distance, route, and duration.

Some other goals to create a GOMS model for are 1) track my running activity in a Nike curated guided run and 2) track my running activity in my Nike curated training plan. Each of these goals have a different set of operators compared to the just run goal previously mentioned. Also, the training plan feature is not available on the watch method.

3.1 What works well

In the NRC app, the core functionality of tracking running activity works well. A user can easily navigate to the app on their watch or phone and start a run. The run view interface is simple displaying the current distance in big print while the other real-time metrics (pace, heart rate and duration) are of smaller fonts.

A user can also customize their run experience with the app by adding music from Apple Music or Spotify with voice overs when you have hit run route milestones like mile or kilometer complete. Another function that works well is the

ability to create distance-based challenges with your friends at ease due to its straightforward interface with help text.

The NRC in many ways have the characteristics of an invisible interface, especially on the watch where you can schedule a run. When the scheduled time arrive, the user device will prompt him or her to press one button to start the run.

3.2 What makes it work well

The app interface works well because of the following design principles of discoverability and flexibility.

In terms of discoverability, the app functions are visible on the interface making everything easy to discover. In figure 3, the icons at the bottom are familiar symbols. The house symbol takes you to the home tab that is labeled Feed at the top. The chart symbol takes you the activity tab that is labeled Activity at the top. The running man symbol takes you to the run tab that is labeled Run at the top. The 2 people symbol takes you to the club tab and the envelope takes you to the Inbox tab. Again, all are appropriately labeled making everything easily discoverable.

When it comes to the run tab, it's obvious how to start your run as the button is green and labeled Start in bold.

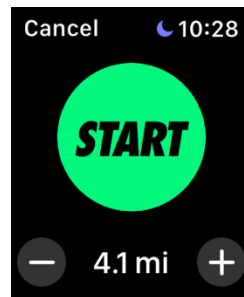
In terms of flexibility, the app is available on other modalities—select smartwatch devices. Both devices behave independently. Meaning you can start your run on your watch without having your phone nearby for anything. The watch has GPS capabilities to record your run route and all run activity information recorded on your watch syncs to your smartphone when it is within a certain range to your phone. In terms of gulf of evaluation, you know the run activity synced because the watch interface displays the sync status, you interpret that activity is synced to your NRC mobile app, and then you can evaluate by accessing the app from your phone and navigating to the Activity tab to confirm if your recent activity is displayed. Thus, a large gulf of evaluation is not present.

3.3 What doesn't work well

NRC surely has its areas of improvement with its existing features. The Feed tab is easily discoverable, but I am not clear on the intent of the Feed tab. It appears to be a marketing feed, where Nike promotes apparel to app users. App notifications and alerts are not in the Inbox tab, instead there are friend request

accepted notification and Nike Run Club Global Community content. Invitations to join challenges do not appear in your Inbox tab or Feed tab. Inability to set distance runs on the watch app at custom increments as opposed to preset. For example, if I wanted to run a 4-mile distance run, when I press the plus sign on the watch app it goes from 0.1, 0.6, 1.1, 1.6, 2.1, 2.6, 3.1, 3.6, to 4.1, see figure 7.

Figure 7— Screenshot of Setting Distance on Apple Watch



3.4 Why doesn't it work well

It is not clear on the system intent of the Feed tab. When I go to the Feed tab, it is my intention to see a newsfeed containing my friend's run activity posts so I can comment or like the post. However, based on the interface design it is hard to find friend's post. This is a large gulf of execution. I know my intentions, but it was complex to discover the steps of execution. After I scrolled down, I found a section called Community Activity. I only saw my recent posts and none of my friends. I later realized I didn't see any of my friends post because they didn't make any posts. An indicator stating no update in Community Activity would reduce the gulf of evaluation for checking community activity.

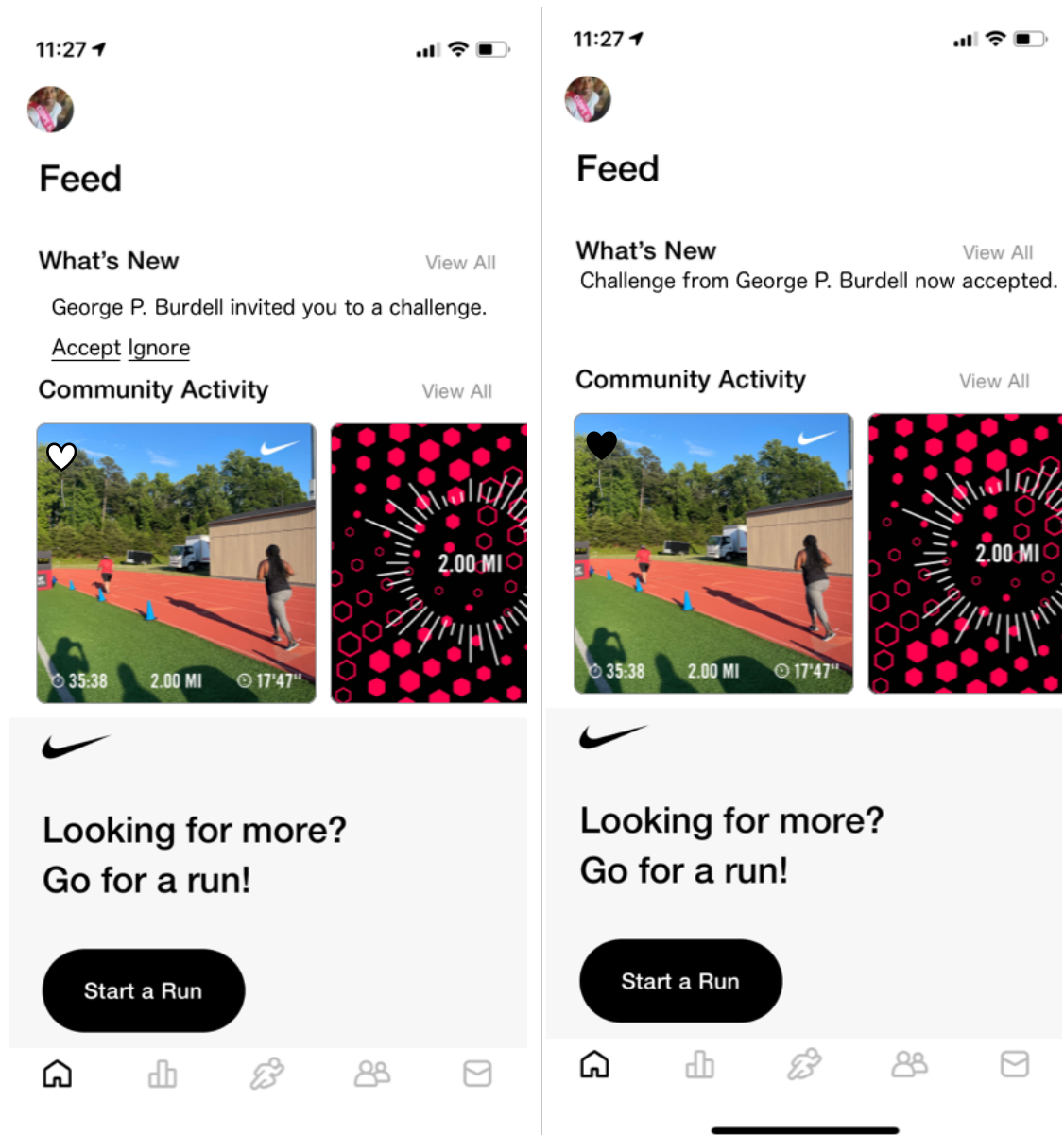
App notifications, alerts and invitation violate the design principle of consistency. There are other comparable apps like Strava and Fitbit. All Strava notifications and club invitations appear in the notification tab. NRC app should be like similar apps like Strava in the market.

In setting a distance run using the Apple Watch, the design principle of constraints was incorrectly used and is inconsistent with the mobile version of the NRC app. There is an unexplained constraint where the user can only select a pre-set distance on the watch, but in the mobile app, the user can use the keyboard to manually enter in the intended race distance.

4 INTERFACE REDESIGN

The interface redesign as depicted in figure 8 has 2 key changes on the Feed tab. The first change is displaying your challenge invitations in the What's New section, where you can accept the challenge. Next change is adding friends' posts and enabling a like feature on each post by clicking on the heart.

Figure 8—NRC App Feed tab Redesign



5 INTERFACE JUSTIFICATION

5.1 Justification

In figure 8, I decided to redesign the Feed tab of the NRC App because the Feed tab in its current state didn't have a clear explanation for the end user. The typical person would perceive a Feed tab to have contents including posts, updates, highlights and alerts. The current page had more of a marketing appeal that looked like Nike's intention was to upsell app users to buy more Nike branded apparel and shoes and clickbait to look at fitness related articles from Nike Coaching and Wellness Staff.

I redesigned the Feed tab to be like that of Strava and Fitbit apps. As previously mentioned, your friends' posts will appear, and you have the option to like their posts by clicking the heart in the upper left corner. Information on challenges will be in the What's New section. The section can be expanded but in effort to create an interface with the design principles of simplicity and ease, I limited the user experience as one-click to triggered events as opposed to layered event with multiple interfaces asking subsequent questions.

5.2 Description

The redesigned interface still preserves the positive elements of existing interface design. I maintained the discoverability aspect of the interface. A user can still access the Feed tab as they do today by clicking on the home icon. Also, I made all the core page components on one page to avoid the need to scroll vertically. However, to see all your friend posts you need to scroll horizontally in the community activity section.

I reduced the gulf of execution on both enhancements in the interface. With challenges, a user intends to accept a challenge by clicking on the button. The user knows to click on a button because it consistent and perceived that when you see the word "accept" underline that that work is clickable. When you click on it, it is expected that the challenge is accepted. The interface provides feedback per design by displaying a message that you accepted the challenge.

Before users would miss the challenge invitations, now that won't happen by creating the notification and posting it at the top of the Feed tab.

The same is true for liking a friend's post. A person knows that the heart symbol means like and when you touch it, the system will change the heart to a solid color indicating that you liked those posts. This can be compared to liking posts on Instagram.

Throughout the interface, the user does not have to think about the Feed tab or any of the contents. You see a challenge; you accept or ignore. You see a post, you like it or not. It may not be completely invisible but after a person commits the action in their short-term memory enough times it moves to your long-term memory; eventually, making it an invisible interface.

There is no cognitive overload. The posts are displayed uniformly as a tile with your miles ran, duration and other metrics of choice. This aligns to the design principle of structured.

6 EVALUATION PLAN

6.1 Selected Method for Qualitative Evaluation

I will take an asynchronous approach and qualitatively evaluate using a survey. The survey could be delivered on such platforms like Georgia Tech's peer survey platform.

6.2 Participants/Evaluations

The survey participants (evaluators) will be recruited from my friends and my fitness-themed member group on Facebook, i.e., Peloton Atlanta Member Group. Since NRC app is targeted towards runners of all skillsets, I can cast a wide net and include runner from all spectrums of career runners to casual runners/walkers. Below is a detailed criteria for participants:

1. Smartphone users
2. At least 21 years old
3. Active fitness app user, including the NRC app, Strava, or Fitbit
4. All skillsets
5. Last running physical activity occurred in the last 6 months or currently training a race, like Couch to 5k.

I will post the survey link(s) via my social media pages and direct messaging some friends directly.

6.3 The Survey

Below is a list of the survey questions:

1. What is your age? (Age range)
2. Do you consider yourself a runner? (Yes/No)
3. How often do you run? (Never to Frequently range)
4. Please specify the fitness mobile apps that you have used to track your run activity. (Response Options: Apple Fitness, Strava, Fitbit, Peloton, Nike Run Club, and Other)
5. If you selected "Other", please specify the app(s) that you use? (Open ended)
6. Click the link below to access and view the wireframe prototype. (Single select checkbox to confirm)
7. Describe the function of the Feed tab/page? (Open ended)
8. What do you not like about the Feed tab/page? (Open ended)
9. What do you like about the Feed tab/page? (Open ended)
10. What is the likelihood that you will respond to a run activity challenge invitation from the Feed tab/page? (Scale 1 to 10)
11. What is the likelihood that you will view your friends' posts and like them on the Feed tab/page? (Scale 1 to 10)
12. What changes would you like to see in this prototype? (Open ended)

6.4 Requirements in Data Inventory

The interface requirements are defined in table 2.

Table 2 — Interface Requirements

Area	Description
Usability	User must be able to use the smartphone or smartwatch interchangeably to respond to running community and challenge invitations using the watch touch screen functionality and native smart app, like Siri to facilitate acceptance of app-based activity invitations.
Functionality	User must be able to view notifications and community activity from the Feed tab in the NRC app.

Area	Description
Compatibility	User must be able to use this functionality on their smartphone device and other connected devices.
Learnability	User must be able to respond to challenge invitations and respond to friends' run activity posts with 1-click.

This survey will help me gauge if the interface meets all the areas listed in table 2 except useability. This prototype is focused on the mobile application. I would need to create an iterative prototype focused on the smart watch interface. As far as the remaining areas, the feature works with 1-click which will make it easy for the user to learn. The core app is inherently useable on all smartphone devices—compatibility. The challenge invitations and community posts functionality on the Feed tab allows a user to better interact with their running community in the NRC app—functionality.

6.5 Preventing Biases

To prevent my own biases like confirmation bias, I worded the survey questions objectively by asking open-ended questions (i.e., what the participant liked, didn't like, and what is the likelihood of using the new functionality) instead of asking a subjective question that may unintentionally sway the participant to narrowly answer the question agreeing with my passion to add this new function. Just because I think this new function/enhanced interface would be needed, others may not.