Feedback by the millions: What athletes really want

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Who exactly am I?

By Day:

• Principal Consultant designing enterprise network infrastructure for some of the world’s largest organizations based out of Washington DC – travel extensively

By Nights and Weekend:

• Competitive triathlete: Proficient runner, functional cyclist and flailing swimmer (I love all flotation devices)
• Completed a few Ironman’s, a few marathons, and a huge pile of far less painful races
• Love to travel and tinker with gadgets (though my wife would say I just like stockpiling them)
• Eat lots of cookie trimmings/pieces
DCRainmaker.com

- Started just over 4 years ago in September 2007
- Best known for ‘In Depth Reviews’ of Sports Technology products
- Reviews are the primary initial driver of traffic to site
- Over 500,000 page views/month, 250,000+ uniques/month
- Over 5,000+ daily RSS subscribers including editors for most major sport magazines and gadget sites
- ~4,500 Twitter followers
- Consistent 10-15% growth month over month
- Revenue based primarily on affiliate links
- No advertising from product segment I review
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Devices I use daily and why</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>If it’s out there, I probably have it...but there’s a difference between a product I ‘occasionally’ use’ and ones I use daily</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Swim</strong>: FINIS Swimsense, super simple – integrates with TrainingPeaks</td>
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<td><strong>Bike</strong>: Garmin Edge 800 (my wife stole my Edge 500)</td>
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<td><strong>Run</strong>: Garmin Forerunner 610, with foot pod indoors</td>
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<td><strong>Weight</strong>: Whatever scale is closest to me (large stack of them)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>iPhone with Wahoo ANT+ dongle or Garmin GTU10 used for live tracking purposes</strong></td>
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Feedback by the millions

- 2,881,016 product review page views in last 12 months
- Put together sports devices survey last winter – over 100 incredibly in depth and well written responses
  - Will do again this year in more standard format for you to consume
- Readers are across wide range of levels from Olympic Gold Medalists to those trying to lose 300+ pounds
- Only about half of readers are from US, rest mainly Europe/Australia
- Also write for:
  - Slowtwitch.com
  - Bicycling Magazine
  - Men’s Health Blog
Product Reviews

- I actually use the product
- Many consider my review their product manual
- I aim to tell the whole story of a product
- There’s always a reason something was done, I want to understand and communicate why
- I beat the crap out of the product
The big gaps last year, and how things have turned out:

- Data right-sizing and standardization:
  - Major improvements here – seeing 1-second recording across the board
  - You’re using exiting formats, not inventing new ones – this is great!

- Swimming:
  - Tons of new devices this past year...though still not a cohesive picture

- Live data tracking
  - Some improvements here via cell market, initial dedicated devices as well

- Ability to wirelessly sync watches via the phone or Internet
  - Improvements here, 100% due to Wahoo Fitness and cell phone apps

- New Data Streams/Sources:
  - ANT+ has released 7 new device profiles...but adoption has been slow in sports
Live Tracking

- Immense demand for real-time data, races don’t do a good job
- Solutions are so close...
  - Garmin GTU10 does GPS but not ANT+
  - HMM via GSM does ANT+ but not GPS
- Cell solutions
  - Some do instant, but no historical reference
  - Cell-alone has battery implications due to GPS
- Look at device integration to solve this short term
- Ancillary communications possible:
  - Intra-team
  - Coaches to athletes
  - Automated emergency support
New data streams

- A need for new and innovative sensor types to be incorporated into devices
  - **Aerodynamics** – What Alphamantis is doing is groundbreaking.
  - **Fall detection** – Imagine Spantec fall detection tied to cycling? And then linked to real-time communications.
  - **Equipment tracking** – Ability for head unit to know bike frame, adjust accordingly.
  - **Hydration/Nutrition Monitoring**
  - **Bike shifting via Di2**
- Not necessarily new ANT+ device profiles
  - Kayak paddle using existing power meter profile
  - Lapview for swimming uses cadence & distance
  - Using geocaching profile for race related tagging
Runners

- Want a device that looks like a normal watch. Period.
- Want consistent pacing information
  - Can look at data smoothing (user configurable)
  - Speed control solutions like that from Simon Fraser University
- Accurate altitude – it’s not just for cyclists
- Want a track mode – ability to record data accurately while on track (i.e. 400m)
- Want multiple user profiles (i.e. husband/wife)
Cyclists

- Weight and look is incredibly important
- Data consistency and accuracy – very low tolerance for lost or incorrect data on rides
  - Data must be the same across head units – too many differences (i.e. how zeros are handled)
  - High data rates – don’t truncate data
- Want better low-end data transmitting trainers
  - $1,500 for full resistance automated unit is just too much
  - Some great work though in mid-range (i.e. LeMond)
- Excitement around Fox mountain bike integration
- It must be ANT+ compatible for sensor data
- Love the new PowerCal HR strap from CycleOps
Swimmers generally avoid devices...unless they’re tricked into liking it.

An incredible array of new swimming devices over past year:
- One’s that track/download workouts (Swimsense, Poolmate Pro)
- One’s that are for entertainment (SwiMP3, WaterFi, many others)
- Ones that help with pacing (AquaPulse, Tempo Trainer, and similar)

Yet there still is unnecessary separation in the marketplace.
- Why can’t the same unit that beeps in my head also play music?
- Why can’t any of these devices talk together?
Multisport

- One device to rule them all
  - Clearest message across every single product review
  - It *must* swim (pool and openwater), bike, run
  - It must transition from swim to bike to run easily
- They don’t want compromises on features
- Size and shape while important, isn’t considered more important than single-device
- Good battery life is critical – minimum 17 hours (real world usage)
- It must be waterproof, real waterproofing (IPX7 doesn’t count)
- They are looking for more diversity in the marketplace, only 3 major triathlon-specific watches today out there
The Phone

Phones vs Dedicated Devices

- This shouldn’t be an either/or conversation
- Apps are replacing dedicated devices in areas that innovation isn’t occurring fast enough
- Athletes concerned about phone breakage
- Concepts like Metawatch should be leveraged to provide a watch + services platform (p.s., they are open to ANT+ chips in their watches)
  - Timex demo yesterday showing off really innovate integration
Devices as platforms

Building interesting in being able to build apps

- You’re creating incredible physical devices
  - But you can’t be expected to build the right software for everyone
- Look to allow others to build on your hardware
- Cerevellum is working on this for their ANT+ bike head unit
- Think of all the new ANT+ software apps since license model changes last year – these are GOOD for device manufacturers
- Remember: We’ve seen this movie before…it’s called The Phone
Software

Creative solutions stemming from community

- **iDevice:**
  - Over 100+ apps for iPad and iPhone with Wahoo ANT+ dongle.

- **Desktop Platform**
  - Golden Cheetah
  - TrainerRoad
  - ctANT+

- These depend on API’s - both ANT+ and device specific, don’t artificially restrict
Integration across devices and platforms has to occur

- Leverage other devices and capabilities
  - Amazing ideas heard this week – consumers want those ideas...today

- A device can’t merely be another watch with speed/distance/pace – it must go beyond that
  - Especially true of smaller companies – features must notably exceed bigger companies in display market

- Open-API’s are important, even if they aren’t listed on the box
  - Consumers want portability in data, it’s their data after all
Ways you can engage with me

**Method 1:** NDA discussions/product access, far in advance of product release, private beta feedback.

**Method 2:** Product launch timed review. Pre-availability product usually under NDA until public announcement.

**Method 3:** Post-release review (already in market product). Usually less time sensitive.
Q&A
(I’m around until 11:59PM tonight)

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