

# Rhetorical analysisi of a technology

Technology



The internet has become the new recreational area of the present and upcoming generations. Discourse communities have evolved greatly over time allowing users to redesign computer mediatedcommunication. Eachdiscourse communityis made possible by the use of unique commonplaces where shared values andgoalsare identified. Active. com facilitates communication among athletes in our nation. Their community emphasizes competition, healthy nutrition and training. Through the use of this discourse community, athletes can take part of a team outside the localenvironment.

In 1998, the Active Network began as an online registration site for tournaments. The company mission is “ to enhance the life of individuals worldwide throughtechnologyand marketing solutions that enable and encourage participation” (Dave Alberga). The network now process more than one million transactions of events each year (“ Hystory”). Registration, sales, and donations are processed online which allows for paperless transactions, making for a more cost effective and environmentally friendly option.

According to journalist S. Marks comment on this discourse community, “ It's among the Web's best tickets to sports and fitness event registration, fitness advice, and more”. In the case of a charity event and fundraisers, members habitually make a decision to participate for the sole cause of serving. This allows members to support a certain event of interest in which they might not be physically participating in, but might offer their support through donations and promotional support through online networking. Members of Active. om may take advantage of numerous tools offered to assist in

enhancing athletic performance and improving overall health and fitness. Diet plans are customized for specific fitness and performance goals. There are also various fitness calculators included, ranging from those that calculate Body Mass Index (BMI) to pace rate and maximum heart rate. More in depth nutritional and training support is available through customized programs tailored to an individual's current status and goals. However, these supplemental services are not free of charge.

Training advice, tips and moral support is provided without a fee among the discourse community. The operators of the website provide members with daily advice which may be linked on other discourse community feeds such as Facebook or Twitter. Newsletters are also available via e-mail providing updated information on training trends, athletic event, nutritional and injury prevention tips. There is also advice for other outdoor activities such as camping and fishing which further encourages physical activity and well being.

The shared goals of the discourse community: competition, healthy nutrition, and training ultimately form the foundation for overall wellness achieved through physical activity. Online training logs are ideal for logging and tracking fitness and athletic performance when working towards a goal or seeking overall improvement. The website is fashioned in such manner as to persuade the community to take part in sports and to seek further resources available through subscriptions for sale which are upgraded versions of the free tools offered.

Provided that a member desires to have unlimited access to the vast benefits offered by Active. com, it can be acquired at the monthly rate of \$9.

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99/plus tax. The site is a strong athletic community which uses related advertising as a means to promote the discourse community shared goals and values. The services for sale may be of benefit to novices or athletes who have hit plateau and are seeking expert guidance for reaching their goals, otherwise the free services should suffice member's needs. The online community unitesprofessional athletes, beginners and fans from different parts of the nation.

Users can create their own blogs which provides fans with the ability to keep track of professionals' athletes within the community. Others that aspire to become professionals can be discovered by trainers in the same manner. The discourse community endows its members with valuable insight, including updated information, tips, and testimonials by expert coaches, trainers and professional athletes within a specific sport of interest. Members of the community value physical fitness, many of them inspiring to reach and maintain a certain level wellness.

Therefore, advice from experienced athletes within the same field of interest is particularly valued within the community. Information shared among members is comprised of tournament instructions, fundraisers and charity events. When users begin a blog page, they often describe and elaborate on their personal experiences, achievements and obstacles encountered during their passionate involvement in a particular sport or activity. Language plays a crucial role in communicating among members when considering the diversity in sports lingo and terminology. The lingo used by the members of the discourse community might encourage individuals hat are familiar with the terminology to join and interact with other likeminded individuals. On the

other hand, those who are unfamiliar with the sports lingo may be a bit hesitant in joining the discourse community. BMI, fartlek and ratio numeration used to denote training intervals are examples of sports lingo found in this discourse community. However, Active. com does offer various glossaries, articles and newsletters which allow for familiarization of specified terminology. Beginner and “newbie” selections are available for those just getting started within a particular sport.

Members of the discourse community are encouraged to use sports lingo while active members of the site, this facilitates transition from novice to intermediate and so forth. People of the discourse community may browse for a team to join, a sports camp or retreat to register for or simply network with people nationwide with similar athletic interests. Millions of members visit Active. com each year to learn improvement techniques of the sport practiced and explore the website as this offers infinite number of activities available for members (“Our Communities Connect People with Things they Love to Do”).

The benefits of the discourse community includes a facilitated activity calendar for athletic events where athletes are able to record times of previous competitions making their performance trends available for viewing by other community members. Members involved in this discourse community have the ability to create an online identity by creating a profile. Users are allowed to describe their interest on their profiles and write their plans which are referred to as their “status”. Blogs created by each member have the potential to inspire and motivate the rest of the community to reach and achieve their fitness/athletic goals.

The discourse community shapes the identity of users by allowing them to identify with the context of the web page at the same time the users fit into place in blogs and tournaments of their level of training. By uploading video format and pictures, members may generate a dynamic space allowing communication through a more visual means. Members of the community typically upload pictures of themselves, as well as, pictures of previous competitions in which they participated in. Occasionally, some people will upload pictures of their children participating in sports.

The site is welcoming to people of all body types, genders and racial/ethnic groups. Profile pictures of members as posted vary from the very athletic physique to the not so athletic. Fans are capable of following blogs by bookmarking members or creating online friends. The friendship created among users often resembles that of a coworker which post and answer each other's blogs. If a member is interested on having a closer friendship, private messages can be sent to arrange for chatting or other activities.

The users are allowed a display name or real name along with a picture or an avatar character representation. A URL web address is provided which can be accessed by members and nonmembers of the community. The language of the discourse community is to be understood among its like minded members of the community. Common places regarding to the role of each member in the community plays are described on the website. Each member is assigned a level according to points accumulated, mimicking recognition given to professional athletes by assigned nicknames coined by fans and coaches.

The lowest level is called “rookie” with zero starts, and the highest level is called “we’re not worthy” which has five starts. The starts and points are awarded by initiating posting and by replying helpful answers. The points can be interchanged by prizes to include free training subscription from the site. The website operates under appropriate vocabulary etiquette. Comments, posts, and blogs that do not attach to the agreed etiquette behaviors are erased by the operators of the website. The primary commonplace of the discourse community is the logo of the website followed by the common place of each particular group.

Due to the wide variety of sports that the website offers, the names of the sports are displayed as a list to avoid confusion among disciplines. The main page of the website displays several pictures and related links to associated articles while the member’s and groups profiles have a plain white background with one or two pictures. People’s reasons for participating in an online community may vary from person to person. Some reasons may include convenience, a broader community network which includes participants of all levels and practicality of services and tools offered online.

People functioning under unusual agendas might benefit from the online space as they have the conveniences of simply logging in from any available computer with internet connectivity. This kind of convenience allows for staying current with blog friends, as well as keeping up to par with current community news and online feeds (Uwe Matzat). Members who belong to an athletic team may communicate, plan and schedule an event through this network of communication. This kind of discourse community may also be the perfect motivational tool for a novice of prospective athlete.

People of all walks of life may find inspiration and support from this community since it is comprised of a diverse target population. The social status of the target audience is primarily middle class to upper class and the age targeted might vary according to articles, blogs, and groups that member belong to. For example, a mother of a family might find joy reading articles related to getting her children more involved in outdoor activities that involve the whole family, such as camping. In the same manner a teenage boy may find it more appealing to participate in group events such as marathon running.

Residential and non-residential training camps are available for children and adult alike. A residential training camp consists of lodging for training session lasting more than one day, whereas non-residential involves a one day session. This unique social form of networking allows for athletes of all levels to come together in sharing advice, anecdotes and experiences related to a common athletic interest. The website ideology shapes people to be better athletes and eat healthy as the affinity group ideology is based on competition, healthy nutrition and training. Enthusiastic and inspirational individuals are found within the numerous communities which promote and support physical activity and wellness through participation in the various existent sports.

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