Introduction

In keeping with the Special Topic of this issue, Endurance Training, we have looked at the website of one the oldest and perhaps the most successful publications dedicated to distance running, the American Runner’s World (www.runners-world.com/), which is part of the magazine’s stable of English language sites, including ones from the UK and Australia.

Owned by the American company, Rodale Inc., Runner’s World started in 1966 as Distance Running News with the name change coming in 1969. Publication has since expanded to 18 countries. Appearing monthly, the USA edition targets all age groups including high school, university, post-university, and Masters. In early 2016 the publication Running Times, also owned by Rodale, was incorporated into Runner’s World.

The writers for Runner’s World include the magazine’s own staff and editors, elite athletes, journalists, sports scientists, and other “experts” on the fitness industry. As the name implies, the focus is on running, especially marathons, and extensive coverage is given to heathand a healthy lifestyle. Elite International athletes are usually highlighted in monthly articles.

Figure 1: Typical article from the Runner’s World USA website
The *Runners World* website was originally created in 1996. According to Alexa, a company that provides commercial web traffic data and analytics, the site is ranked about 8,000 in the world, and 2,800 in the USA (as of December, 2016). Of the visitors to the site, 55% are from the USA.

The primary sources of media used on the website are written articles, videos and podcasts. There is also a means for reader engagement and interaction using the comment section through Facebook Comments.

As it is mobile responsive, the site can be viewed on a computer or laptop, a tablet or a mobile phone and I found it is best view on a tablet or phone. It makes use of the “hamburger menu” (i.e. 3 short solid lines resembling a burger). When you slide out the menu, it will display a full listing of topics or categories. The site also uses the traditional horizontal menu bar. Social media sharing buttons are available throughout every article for maximum coverage, and therefore more web traffic.

*Runner's World* also offers a free newsletter delivered by email. These emails will be links redirecting you back to full-page articles on the website. The magazine version of *Runner's World* is also available digitally through Google Play (Android devices) and iTunes (Apple devices). In defence of tradition, I will say that while digital media is mainstream and widely available, I sometimes feel that a printed version is useful in certain situations where you don’t have access to your phone or tablet.

Like most websites, there are banner adverts throughout each page, with some linking back to the products advertised. A number of the ads are third party, subject to retargeting (An example of a retargeting experience is when you visit another retail site, then you visit Run-
Overall, the Runner’s World website is a great source for “generalist” articles, news and information. There is enough free content to help any runner with tips and motivation and beginner and intermediate runners can benefit by browsing the articles on a regular basis. But by no means can this website replace a real coach if you wish to run a competitive time.

If there is one gripe I have about this site it is that I wish there was an easier way to find your favourite writer or journalist. Only when you read an article, do you see that the author’s name is hyperlinked to a short bio, followed by their latest articles. A more complete search function would be a welcome improvement.

Reviewed by Jimson Lee

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