Abstract

**THESIS:** Competition and Athlete Engagement to Improve Nutrition: A Usability Study of the Mobile Application BSUathlEATS

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Athletic programs are big businesses for universities. With revenue more than $100 million at the top universities, programs are driven to seek any competitive advantage possible for enhancing their ability to recruit, train, and produce elite athletes. Since a landmark ruling by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in 2014, nutrition has become another key component of many universities’ athlete recruiting and training strategies. With the ubiquity of mobile devices and ease of access to developers, athletic programs have also incorporated custom mobile apps into their offerings. Facilities and personnel require significant capital investments, whereas mobile apps offer a financially viable opportunity to provide athletes the information and support they require to better understand how nutrition and diet affects their performance. Developed at Ball State University, BSUathlEATS represents a low-cost disruptive innovation for college athletic programs and their athletes. This thesis aims to understand and evaluate the extent to which the functionality and user interface design, social aspects and community engagement opportunities, and competitive game-based structure all affect the users’ perceptions of enjoyment, engagement, and usability related to BSUathlEATS.