

.RETAIL

Running with Spikes



Consumers design their own Nike shoes at NIKEiD.com.

Nike handles spikes with **immediately scalable digital technologies**

NIKE.COM HAS OVER twenty Nike brand sites; brand marketing sites that are heavily experiential. Nike's director of consumer direct IT Tony Bacos cites ATG (Art Technology Group), EDS and Akamai as the "big three" technologies behind Nike's online operational success. Nike uses ATG as its application server and for commerce activities. EDS is the hosting provider and Akamai is the key partner for content distribution. (See sidebar: Nike on the Edge.)

Bacos explains that Nike looks at online technologies in two areas: gaming, which must always push the envelope to new levels of customer experience, and the more traditional side of running the online business. For the latter, Nike evaluates new technologies for scalability, reliability, security, the tech company's position in the marketplace and whether

or not Nike is going to be entering a long-term or one-off relationship.

In all cases however, scalability is really the most critical factor. "Nike's online business has incredible spikes, often driven by off-line activities, such as TV campaigns, and of ten coming without any advance warning," says Bacos. Therefore, Nike needs "immediate scalability" in the capabilities of the digital technologies it uses.

Nike's Online Presence

Nike's presence on the Web is

unique compared to competitors because it is a blend of so many targeted brand sites. "If you look at the traffic

metrics, Nike is pretty far above what would be considered its 'traditional' sporting goods competitors," says Bacos.

Traditionally, the Nike branded sites have not been the "selling" sites for the company, but instead have fed consumers to Nike's main site niketown.com. The challenge for Nike, according to Bacos, was taking all

those sites, which have generally been run by different brand groups with different third-party creative developers, and integrating them into Nike.com. At about 20 people strong, Bacos' digi-

Nike on the Edge

Nike uses the Akamai EdgeSuite as its content delivery system. Akamai's technology delivers all types of content including HTML, graphics, streaming audio and video. The strengths of the technology for Nike.com is its ability to deliver these types of content to global constituencies quickly, in a manner that scales cost effectively — a key measurement for Nike — without increasing the internal IT infrastructure. The Akamai suite is built on the globally distributed Akamai Platform.

tal team, the Consumer Direct IT Group (CDIT), handles the integration work that brings all the branded sites together as a whole.

"We do a little of everything," says Bacos about the direct-to-consumer technologies the company deploys. "Some of the more innovative technologies we use are the gaming technologies on some of the brand sites like nikefootball.com. The CDIT group does the hosting and support of the online gaming technologies, which can be pretty bleeding edge."

Going forward in the next 12 to 18 months, Nike will be extending the commerce capabilities of the main niketown.com site to some of its branded sites. Its core business, however, will continue to be providing service, educating consumers, informing them of product innovations, and providing interactive experiences and the opportunity to purchase favorite Nike products — with or without spikes. **RIS**

By John Hall, Managing Editor