



Reading list usage

Survey results

Rita Ho

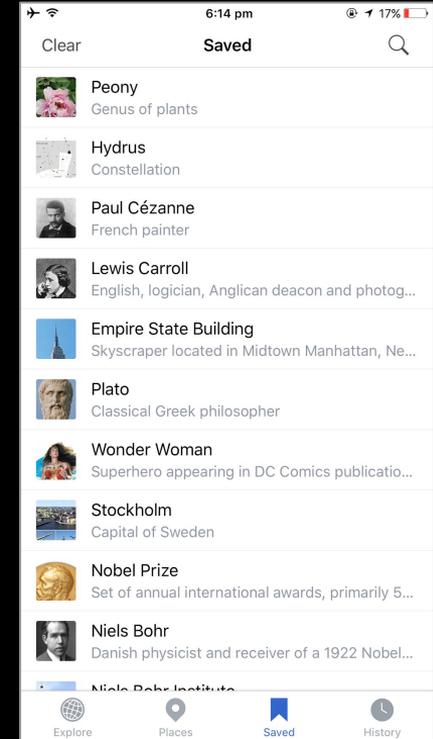
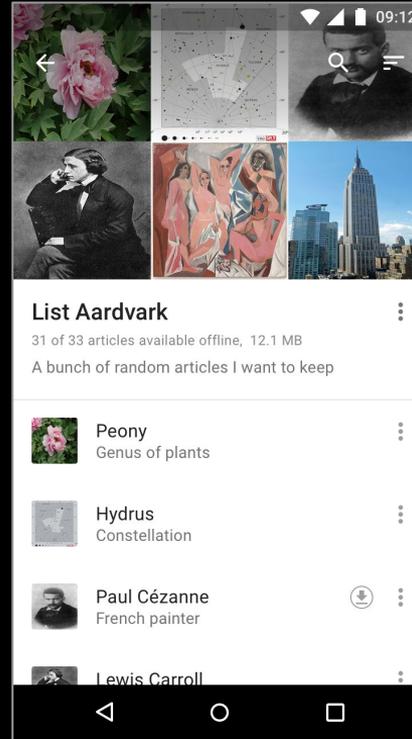
Background

Reading lists have been in place in Wikipedia Android for almost a year, and the corresponding *Save for later* on iOS for over a year.

Whilst there are some usage metrics available [1], we did not have direct feedback from users.

A survey was conducted on both iOS and Android to understand how and why reading lists are being used. This information will help inform the ongoing development of this feature as we develop sync capabilities, and explore its potential as a cross-platform feature for all readers.

[1] See the Appendix for [Android usage metrics](#)



Goal

Understand what motivates users of reading lists.

A secondary goal was to see if there were any differences in responses from iOS users who may save to a single list, versus Android users may create multiple reading lists.

Research questions

- What are the main reasons people use reading lists/save for later?
- How important are different features in affecting their usage of reading lists?
- Are 'power users' more likely to use reading lists for certain purposes?

Participants

Wikipedia Android users of *Reading lists* &
Wikipedia iOS users of *Save for later*.

Some caveats:

- In-app cards can't currently be tailored to appear exclusively for reading list users, so a screener question was added to the survey as a means to identify non-users from users
- The survey was available in app versions located in English-speaking countries only
- It was possible for a person to submit more than one time if they had the survey URL (though app users were only shown the in-app card once)

ANDROID

Have you ever used reading lists in the app? *

- Yes
 No

How many lists do you use? *

	More than 10 lists	6-10 lists	2-5 lists	1 list	None
Number of lists	<input type="radio"/>				

iOS

Have you ever used 'Save for later' in the app? *

- Yes
 No

Around how many articles do you have saved? *

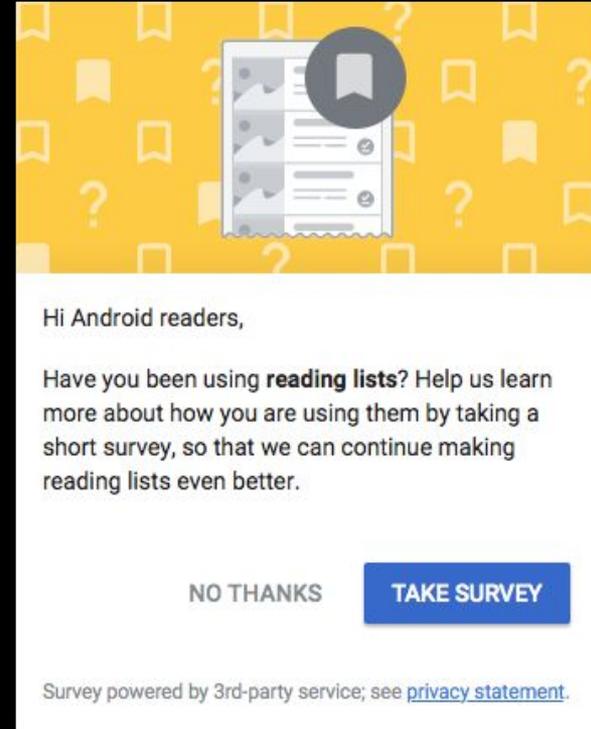
	More than 100 articles	50-100 articles	11-50 articles	1-10 articles	None
Number of articles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Survey method

1. An in-app card was shown on the Explore feed linking to a Google form from the weekend period of May 26-28, 2017.
2. Participants answered a 3-part survey:
 - A. An initial screener question (“have you ever used reading lists/save for later?”)
 - B. Usage questions (skipped for those responding “no” in part A)
 - C. Optional free-text feedback

Android Survey: <https://goo.gl/DIKuLW>

iOS Survey: <https://goo.gl/nHLYdb>



Summary of responses

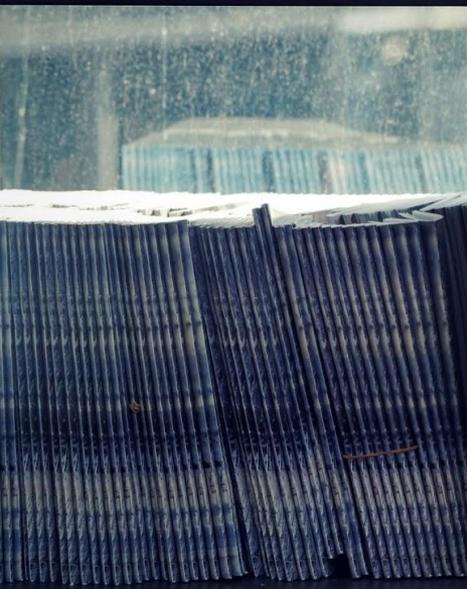
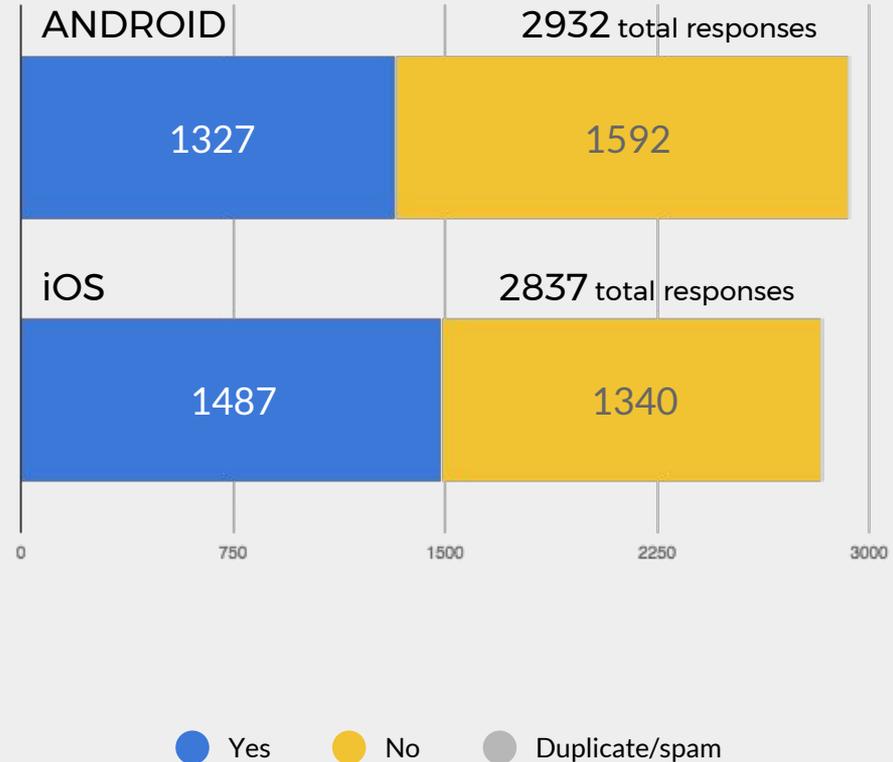


Photo by Maarten van den Heuvel via Unsplash (CCO)

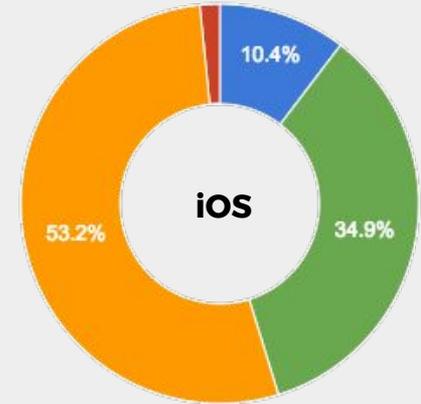
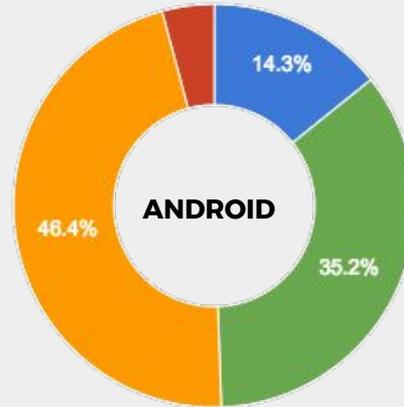
Have you ever used reading lists/save for later in the app?

About half the responses were from those that were unaware of the reading list/save for later feature on the respective platforms.



How often do you use reading lists/save for later?

Android users self-reported slightly higher usage of reading lists than iOS users, but also more who abandoned usage.

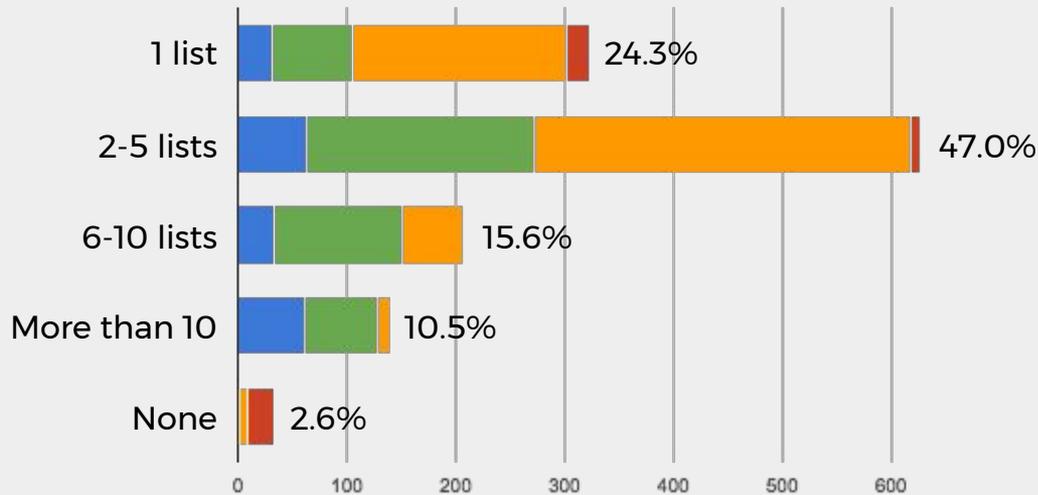


● Every time I open the app ● Often ● Occasionally ● I no longer use it

Android: How many lists do you use? (vs usage frequency)

Unsurprisingly, more frequent users of reading lists tended to have multiple lists.

Multiple list usage in this survey was also somewhat higher than has been reported in event logging metrics[1] which shows ~77% of users have only 1 list, indicating a higher response-rate from power-users

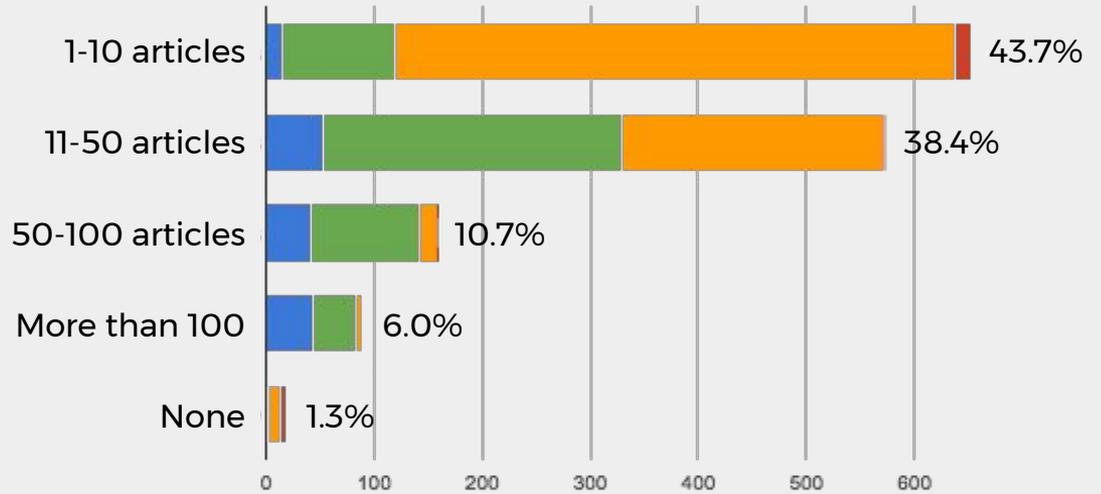


[1] See the Appendix for [Android usage metrics](#)

iOS: How many articles do you have saved? (vs usage frequency)

Similar to Android, frequent users of Saved articles tended to have more articles saved.

The large portion of iOS respondents with only 1-10 articles saved is also in line with actual Android usage metrics[1] indicating most users have less than 10 articles per list.

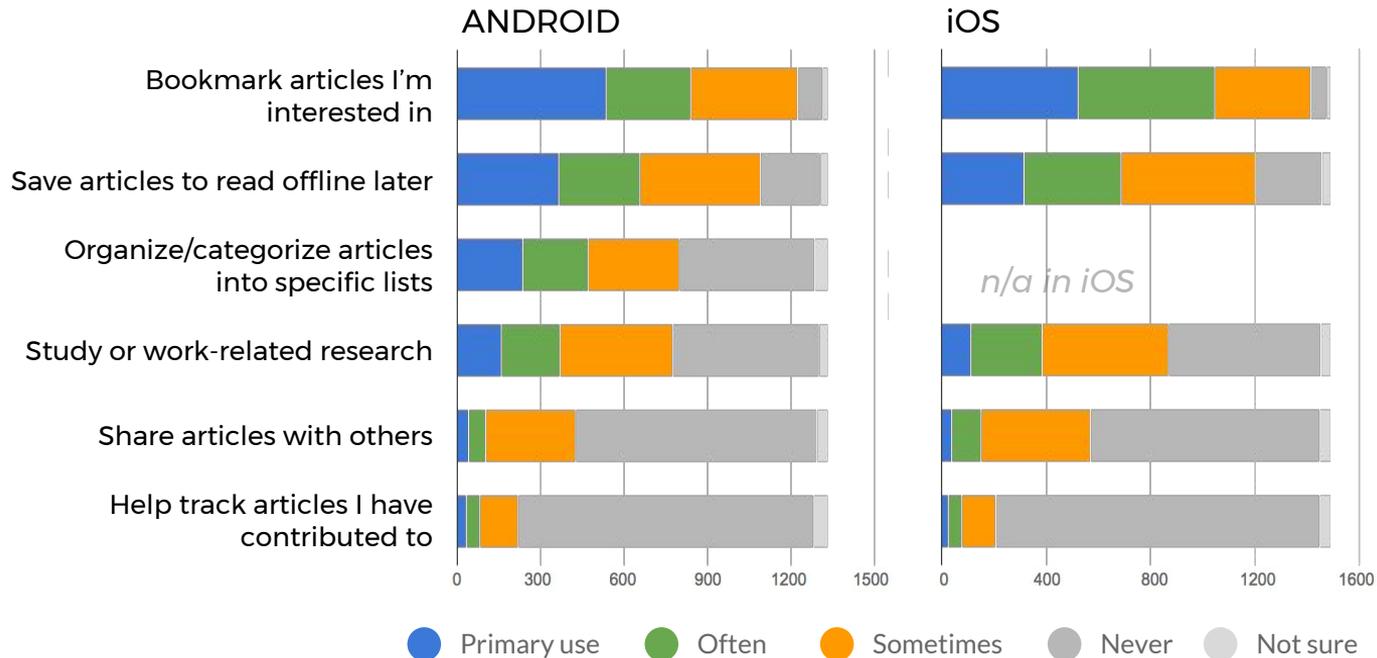


[1] See the Appendix for [Android usage metrics](#)

What are your reasons for saving articles to lists/read later?

Survey results were similar across apps, where **bookmarking** and **saving for offline** were the two most popular user motivations.

A higher proportion of iOS respondents used saving for later as a way to share and read offline.

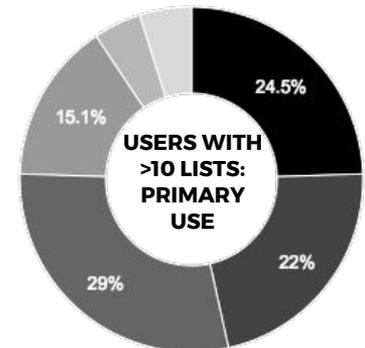
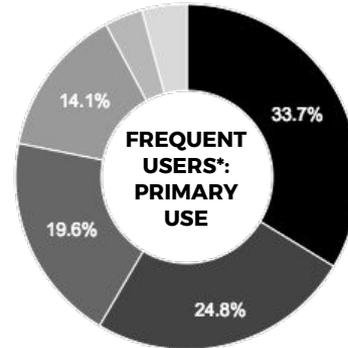
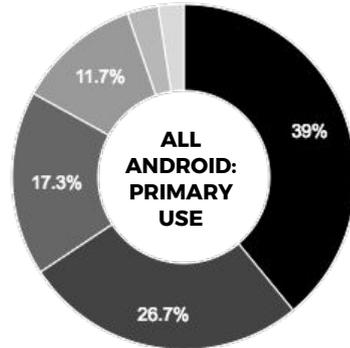


Android 'Power user' primary use motivation comparison

There was no major difference when comparing the *primary use* of power users (Frequent users* and users with >10 lists) versus the entire survey population.

Unsurprisingly, more users with >10 lists cited 'organizing articles into specific lists' as their primary use for reading lists than other users.

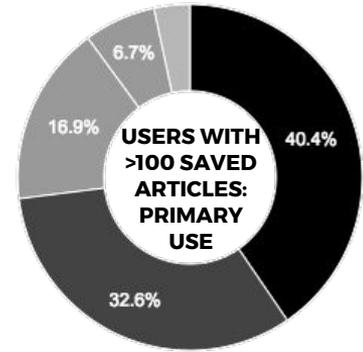
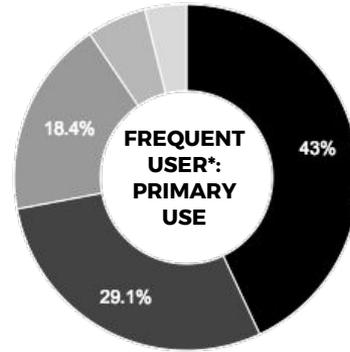
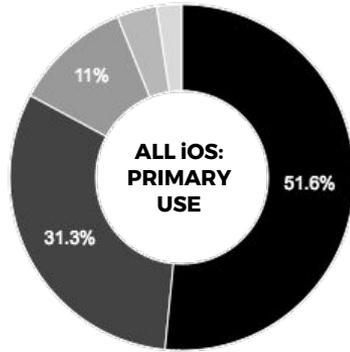
*A 'Frequent user' was a respondent who claimed to use reading lists every time they opened the app



- Bookmark articles I'm interested in
- Save articles to read offline later
- Organize/categorize articles into specific lists
- Study or work-related research
- Share articles with others
- Help track articles I have contributed to

iOS 'Power user' primary use motivation comparison

On iOS, power users were slightly more likely to *specify* that they were primarily saving articles for “Study or work-related research”, which accounts for the slightly lower figures for the more general “Bookmark articles I’m interested in”



- Bookmark articles I'm interested in
- Save articles to read offline later
- Study or work-related research
- Share articles with others
- Help track articles I have contributed to

*A 'Frequent user' was a respondent who claimed to use reading lists every time they opened the app

Other uses for reading lists/ save for later

Respondents mentioned using lists for more subcategories of those stated: Bookmarking to maintain an archive of interesting reading history, to keep articles on-hand as reference, and when traveling (in terms of bookmarking related content as well as offline reading when in transit).

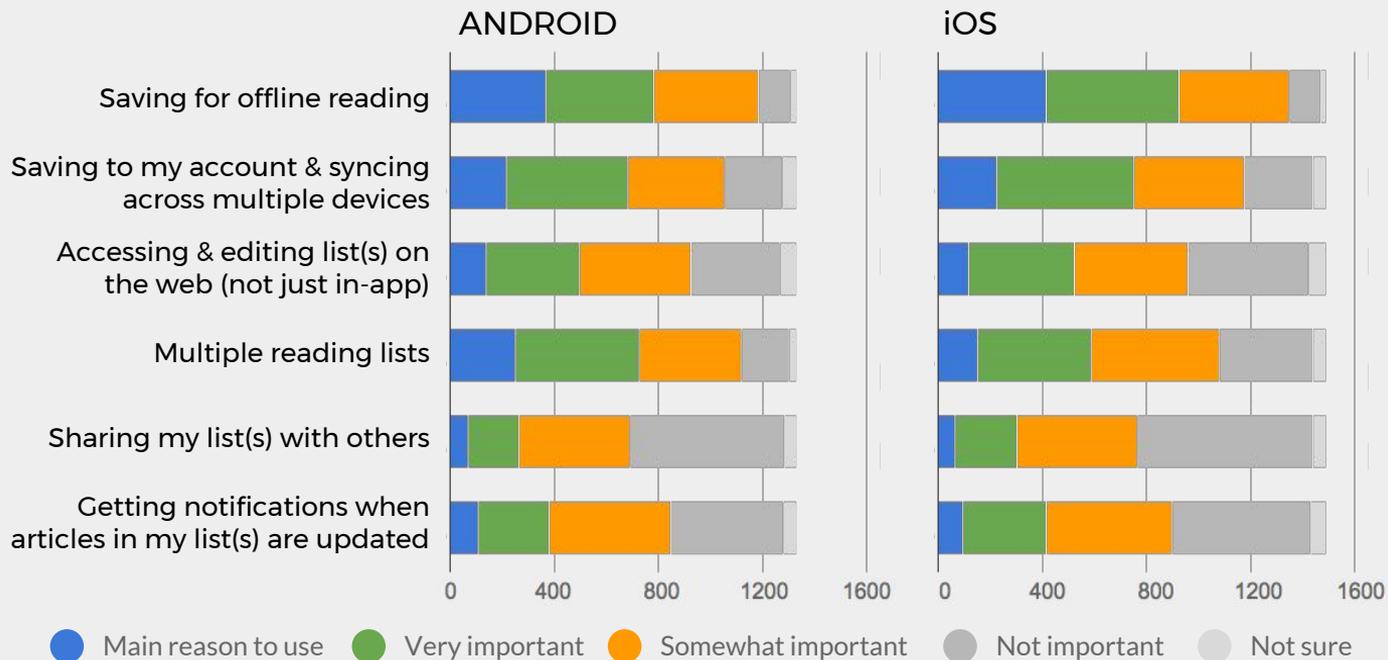
It was also sometimes used as proxy/shortcut functionality – particularly in iOS a few mentioned saving it as a shortcut to portal pages, and as a proxy for tabbed browsing.

'Other uses'	Android	iOS	Total
Access portal page shortcut	1	4	5
Bookmark - Continue reading	1	4	5
Bookmark - Interests	12	3	15
Bookmark - Re-reading	2	5	7
Bookmark - Reference	7	12	19
Bookmark - Save for later	4	11	15
Bookmark - Travel	2	3	5
Edit - Tracking for later	3	0	3
Find related articles	1	2	3
Monitor - Article updates	0	2	2
Monitor - Current events	3	3	6
Multilingual	2	0	2
Offline (general)	2	1	3
Offline - Data-saving	0	1	1
Offline - Poor connectivity	0	1	1
Offline - transit	5	3	8
Organize into groups	3	1	4
Proxy for tabbed-reading	0	3	3
Research - Medical	1	1	2
Speed (faster loading)	0	1	1
Study/research	11	4	15
Record/track reading history	2	6	8

How important is _____ for you to continue/resume using reading lists?

Users on both platforms felt **Offline** and **Syncing** were highly important features to have for reading lists.

More Android users cited the importance of **Multiple lists**, but it was also the 3rd most important feature desired iOS users.

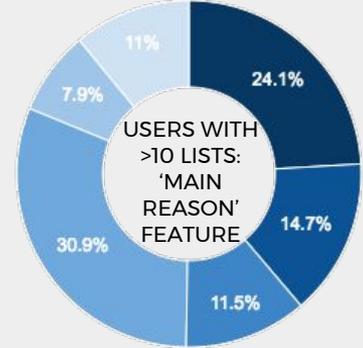
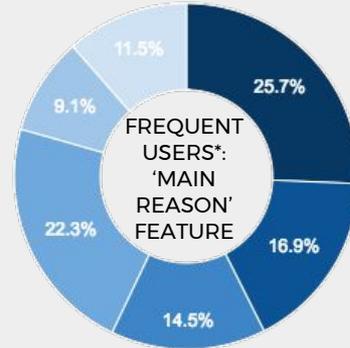
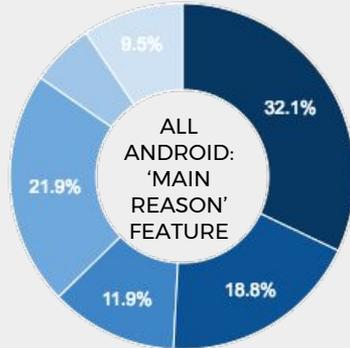


Android 'Power user' main reason to use feature comparison

In comparing the *main reason to use* reading lists feature cited by power users versus the entire survey group, frequent users* valued access to editing on the web and update notifications more highly.

Unsurprisingly, users with >10 lists cited multiple lists feature the most as the main reason to use reading lists.

*A 'Frequent user' was a respondent who claimed to use reading lists every time they opened the app

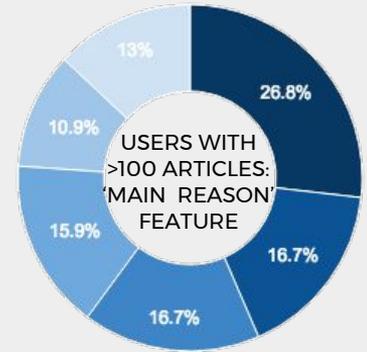
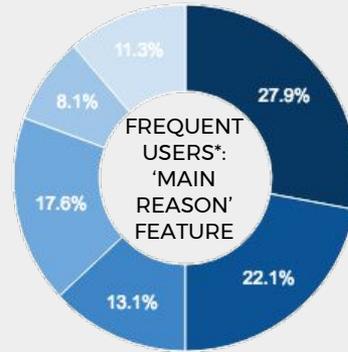
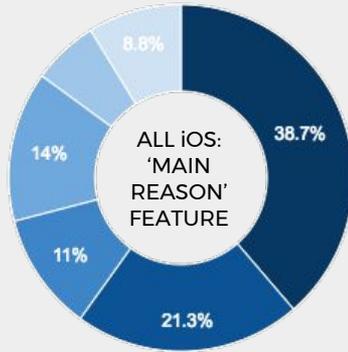


- Saving for offline reading
- Saving to my account & syncing across multiple devices
- Accessing & editing list(s) on the web (not just in-app)
- Multiple reading lists
- Sharing my list(s) with others
- Getting notifications when articles in my list(s) are updated

iOS 'Power user' main reason to use feature comparison

iOS frequent users* and >100 article users valued sync and web access higher than the iOS survey group as a whole.

Getting notifications about article updates was also cited as a desired feature somewhat more by the >100 articles user cohort.



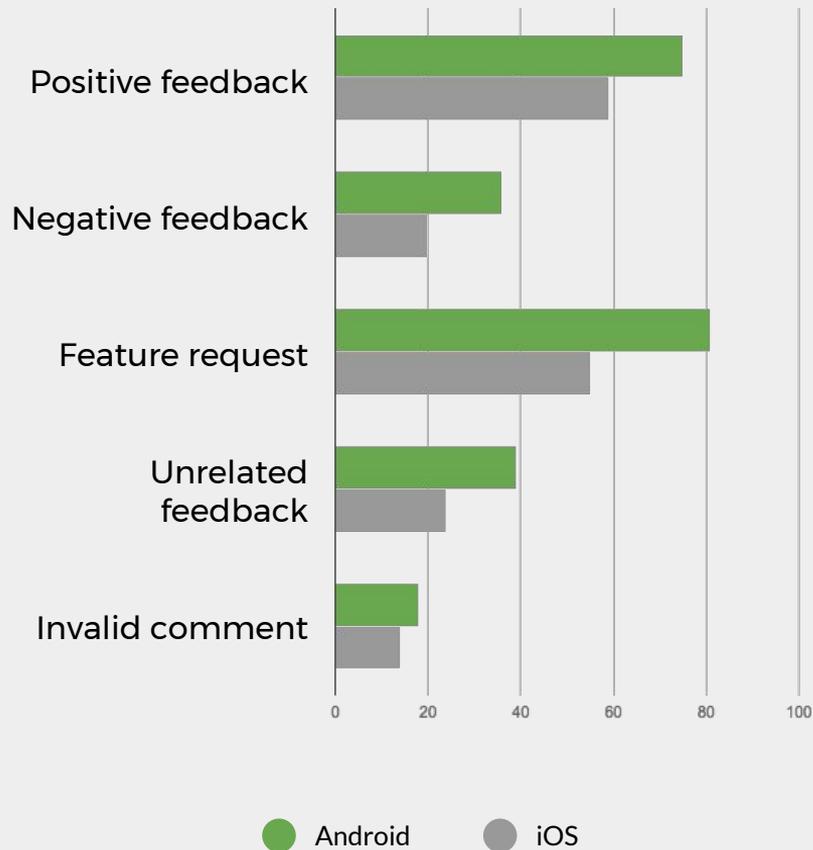
- Saving for offline reading
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- Accessing & editing list(s) on the web (not just in-app)
- Multiple reading lists
- Sharing my list(s) with others
- Getting notifications when articles in my list(s) are updated

*A 'Frequent user' was a respondent who claimed to use reading lists every time they opened the app

Comments from users by type

Most negative feedback about the feature from users were related to performance – crashing or lags when using the feature, or articles not being properly saved offline.

Users were unsurprisingly also displeased with lack of sync capabilities in the current reading list feature, and many feature requests were also related to adding sync capabilities.



Feature requests sorted by type

Feature requests were mainly sync-related but notably it was not only requests for sync across devices or syncing to account, but also to 3rd party services (iCloud, Instapaper, Pocket).

iOS users also asked for multiple lists; whilst on Android there were requests both for an even greater level of categorization into “lists of lists”, as well as pleas to simplify to one list only.

Feature request	Android	iOS	Total
Automatically add categories	1	0	1
Add comment/note on saved articles	1	0	1
Easier access to list(s) from article view	6	3	9
Export lists	2	3	5
Recommend lists: auto-generated lists	0	1	1
Recommend lists: via related articles	1	1	2
Recommend articles: via social sharing	0	1	1
Improve organizational capabilities (delete/sort/move lists/etc)	14	9	23
Lists of lists	7	3	10
Multiple lists	0	13	13
Simplify to one main list	3	0	3
Notifications for editing	0	1	1
Offline storage - save to other locations	2	0	2
PDF view: PDF creator / Save to PDF	1	1	2
Share lists	1	0	1
Settings to turn on/off saving offline	4	2	6
Sync across devices	10	3	13
Sync to 3P service (eg., Pocket, iCloud)	2	6	8
Sync to account	17	5	22
Tabbed browsing for reading list articles	0	1	1
(Auto) update articles in lists	5	1	6
Widget for reading lists	1	0	1

Some user comments

Great feature. Main reason for using wiki app

I dont know why you're asking about this but PLEASE do not take this important feature away.

I would not use wikipedia half as much if I were unable to save and read later

I would like to be able to reorganize articles into new groups after they are saved.

Please make them organizable and searchable

I love the reading lists! Performance is the main thing that needs work. Large lists lag heavily.

Saved articles makes the app crash much more often. More saves, more instability, forcing reinstall.

I think it would be beneficial to be able to access reading lists directly from an article

I would like to access my saved articles anytime I am using the app and not just on the explore page

Having reading lists sync with my account across devices is #1 on my wish list!

I would love to use reading lists on the desktop version of Wikipedia.

The sync feature with online wikipedia website and across the devices is extremely critical.

iCloud syncing rather than forcing a Wikipedia account would be great.

I wish that I could choose where to store the offline articles.

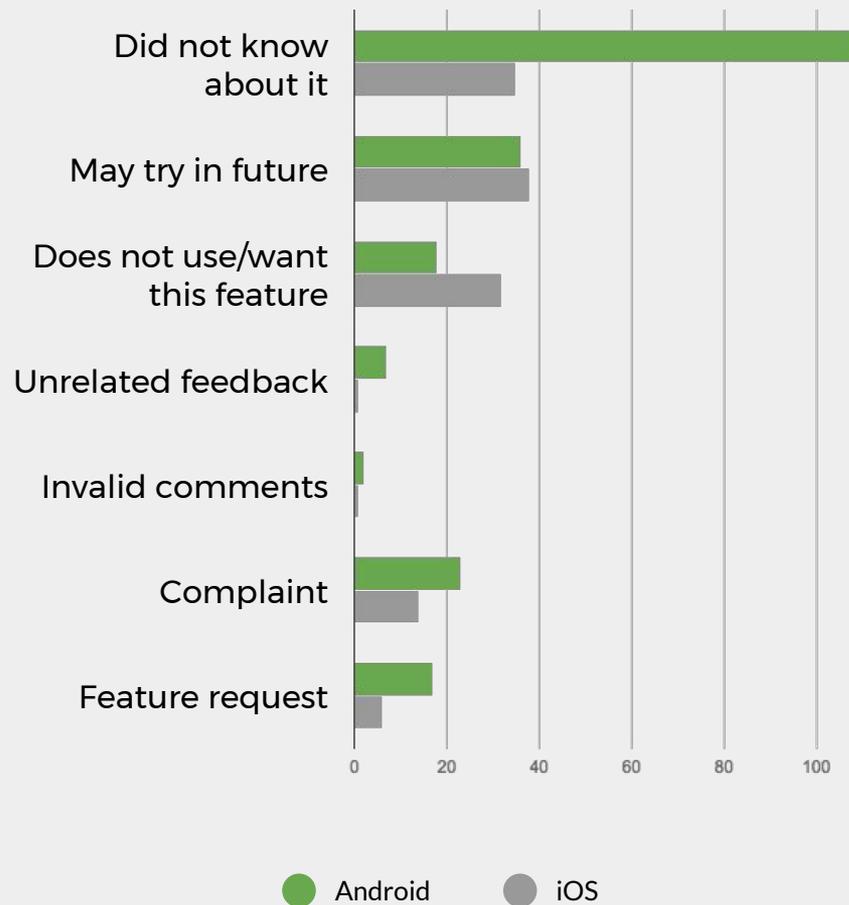
I would love to have a multiple list feature in order to save articles grouped by subject.

Types of comments from non-users

Comments from those who said they had never used reading lists/save for later were sorted into comment types.

For Android respondents, it was mainly because they did not know about the feature.

For iOS, there were more comments about explicitly not using *Save for later* because they had alternative methods to saving articles.



Some non-user comments

Only use Wikipedia for specific searches so don't read reading lists or similar pages

I use Pocket mostly because I can save for later all the items from all reading sources, not just W

It would be nice if they could sync to Pocket, where I keep everything else.

Use instapaper instead

I use the list of past searches

I didn't know they existed, yet I've been using the app several times a week.

How was I to be aware of the save for later feature? I will look for it in the future...

Just discovered it! Will use from now on

I've been having several tabs with one page open at the same time, and plan to use reading lists.

I feel like it violates privacy because if I don't clear history each time I use the app, it shows

Historically, the app crashes when I try to use reading lists.

I've been bookmarking articles. Is it the same as save for later? It's been crashing...

Bring back solarized dark!

Could you put the random article button on the front page please? Easy access. That'd be great.

I really miss the random article feature at Wikipedia. I am sorry that you removed it.

Main observations



Photo by Jet Kaweenon via Unsplash (CC0)

Multiple lists are an important feature for using reading lists for a substantial minority of Android power users, and quite desired in general by iOS users.

It would be cool if we could save articles and make our own lists with said list: Favs, weird, etc.

Allow in iOS version to create folders, for specific subject.

It would nice to be able to set up folders for different categories that you could save into

Syncing across devices is desired, but even more important to users is being able to **access and edit lists on the web, not just in-app.**

I really want to sync across devices.

The most useful thing in the world would be syncing between devices! For PC would also be handy.

Accessing lists from Wikipedia.org would be HUGE. It would be a game changer.

Allow for seamless Pocket integration as a saving option.

Users asked for **more organizational controls** – from being able to sort (iOS) and search lists, to enabling owner annotations and more list (sub)folders

Please create a method to better sort and/or search saved offline articles within iOS app.

It would be great if items could be moved from one list to another.

Have a way to add a comment to articles in lists. I would use to note errors in article to fix later

Make sure that the date that the article is was saved is clear and is in chronological order.

Users also want **more information about their saved articles** (version dates, filesize, etc) to help with their bookmarking and offline use.

They should contain the date last synced so I know how up to date they are.

It would be nice to see how much storage saved articles are taking up on my device.

I wish that I could choose where to store the offline articles.

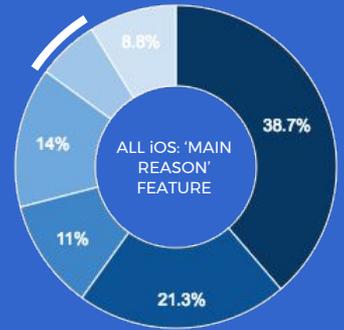
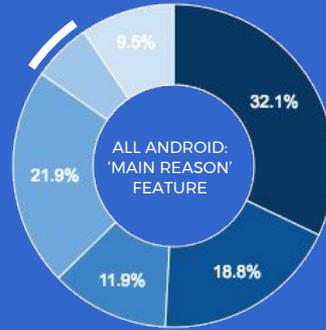
Notifications and being apprised of updates to saved articles for editing and general monitoring was also quite important (more so than sharing)

My only complaint is when I open an article in my list it's not current and I have to refresh it.

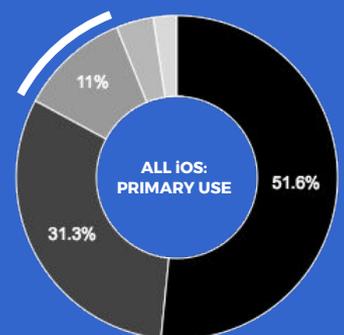
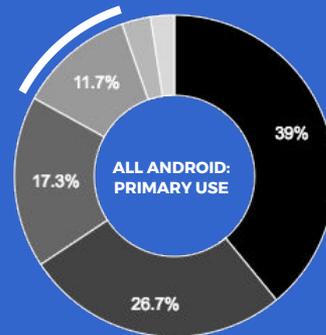
Notifications on updates is very important.

Make sure that the date that the article is was saved is clear and is in chronological order.

Sharing capabilities overall were not highly rated by either platform's users as a highly motivating factor



Sharing was the primary reason or main motivating factor for using reading lists by only about a tenth of respondents



Android could benefit from adding user education/onboarding to increase awareness of reading lists (many more Android non-users didn't know about *Reading lists* compared to iOS non-users of *Save for later*).

I'm not sure I've used them, but this is 1st time I've heard of them. I use Wikipedia a lot.

I don't know what they are, or what they're for, or how to use them. App feature info card, please?

Honestly had no idea the feature existed. LOVE the app though.

Just discovered it! Will use from now on

Appendix

Usage metrics for Reading lists on Android

Some relevant metrics for Android's Reading list feature as of May 2017, via event logging:

- ~10.5% of Android readers use reading lists
730K of 7M active users
- ~77% of users have only 1 list
Then 10% with 2 lists, 4% with 3 lists, and 9% with 4+ lists
- Most users have < 10 articles per list
The median number of articles per list is 3, whilst the average is 17 articles per list, indicating a relatively small set of users with extremely large lists.

References

- Android Survey: <https://goo.gl/DIKuLW>
- iOS Survey: <https://goo.gl/nHLYdb>
- [Raw survey results for Android](#)
- [Raw survey results for iOS](#)
- [Amalgamated survey results spreadsheet with data breakdowns](#)
- [Phabricator ticket](#)



Thanks



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