SMARTPHONE & TABLET GAMES SUMMIT

HOW I SHIPPED FIVE GAMES IN TEN MONTHS

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Game Designer, GRL Games

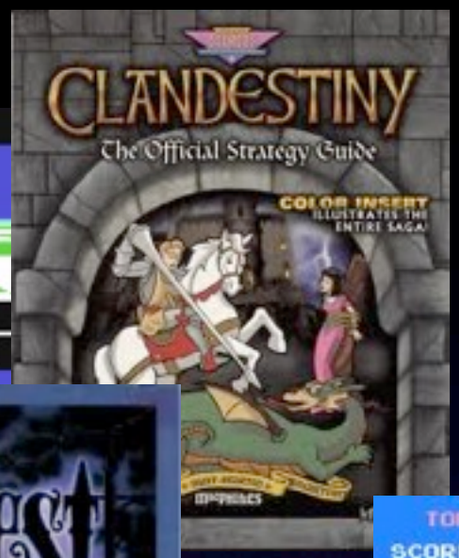
Game Developers Conference® Online 2011

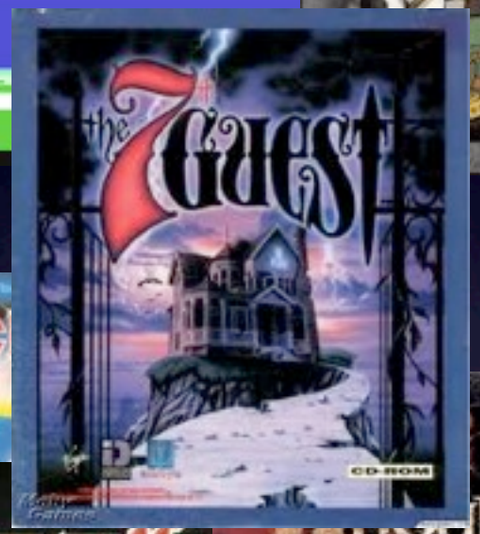
October 10-13, 2011 | Austin, TX

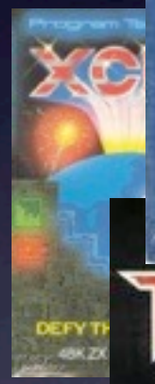
www.GDCOnline.com

GDC 11 Online

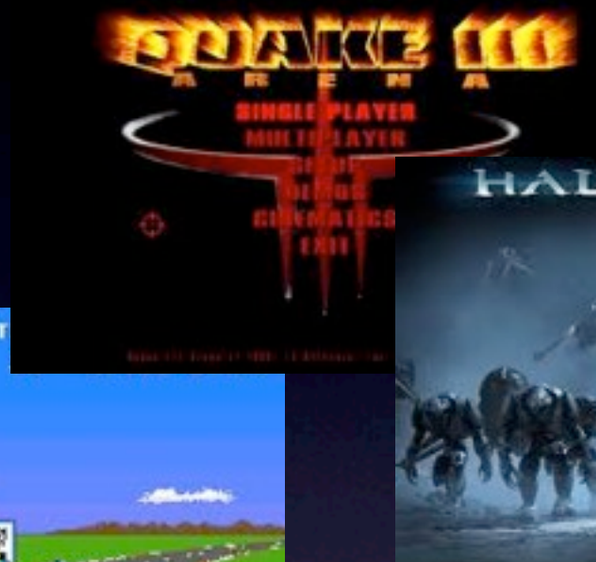
ballblazer


CLANDESTINY
The Official Strategy Guide
COLOR INSERT
ILLUSTRATES THE
ENTIRE SAGA!


the 7th Guest
CD-ROM

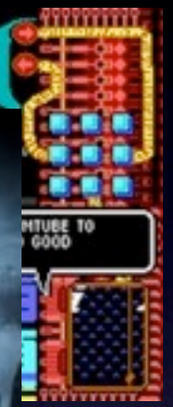

XC

TOP 12000
SCORE 7300

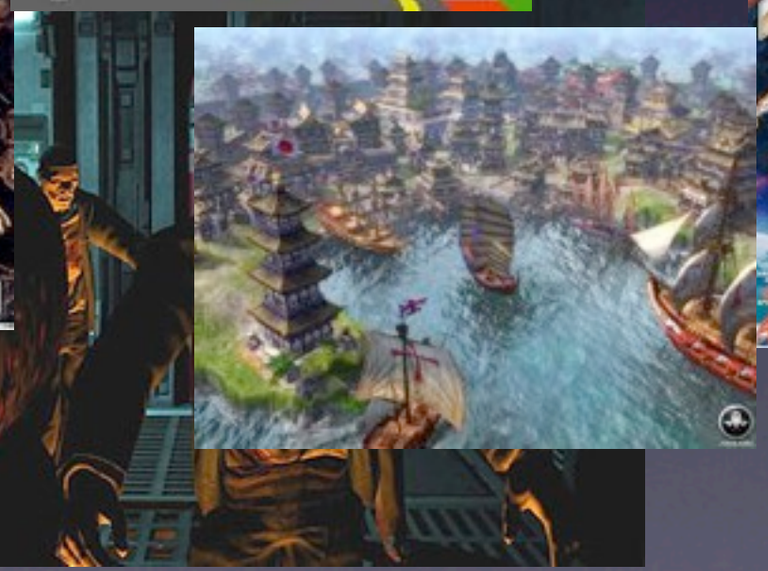

QUAKE III
ARENA
SINGLE PLAYER
MULTIPLAYER

Please leave the tape running.
SOFTEK
FIREBIRDS
G.Devine

HALO WARS
ENSEMBLE



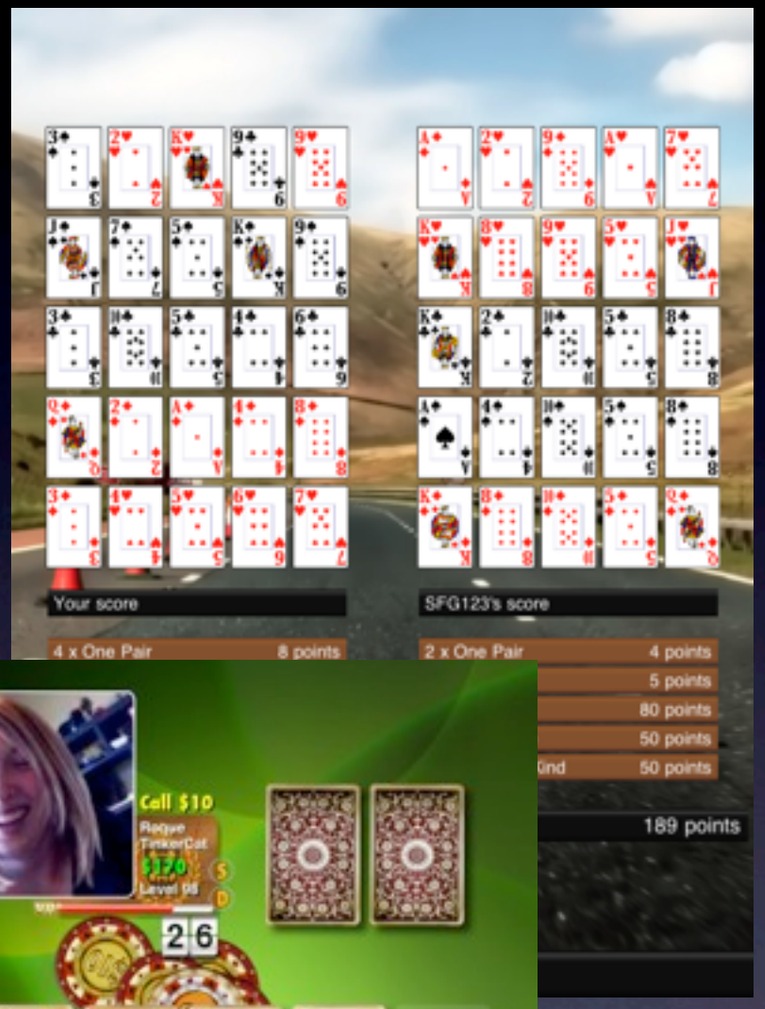
Wolfe



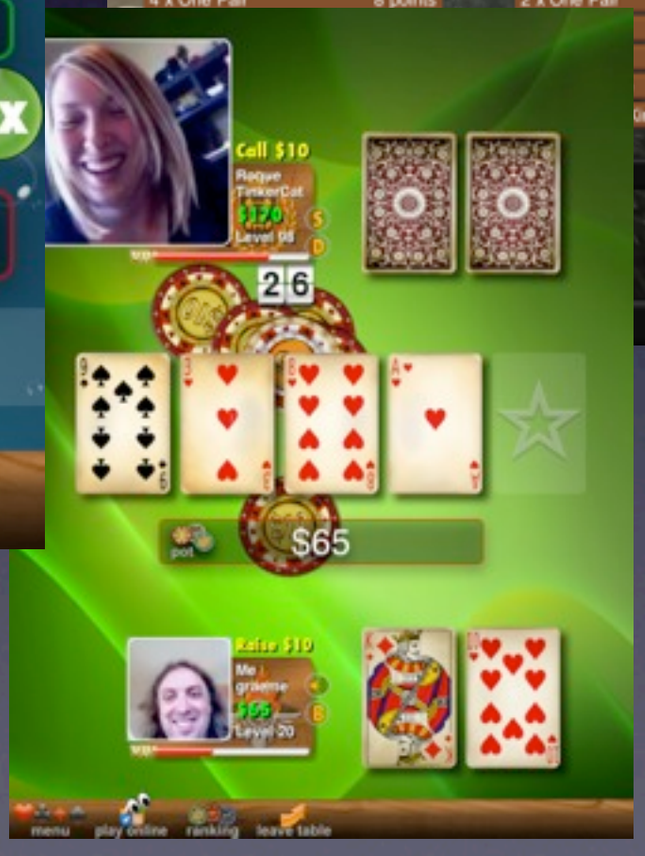
SILVER SURFER

7UP
PROUDLY PRESENTS
SPOT

menu
25
camera
SCORE
16
sir +3
jo +9
soy +6
11 words
F4 U2 N2
2x 3x 4x
SCORE
88
E1 J8 S1 B3


Your score
SFG123's score
4 x One Pair 8 points
2 x One Pair 4 points
5 points
80 points
50 points
50 points
189 points

menu
redeal
restart
3,820 score
automove
undo
hint


Call $10
26
$65
pot
Raise $19
menu
play online
ranking
leave table

Today

- A brief history of GRL Games.
- If you're a small dev studio this is a blueprint that works.
- If you're a big dev studio this is a reason to fear me.

Caveat

- The may seem like a talk about making a bunch of card games.
- But it really isn't.
- That's the cover story.

December 6th 2010

grl
games

I planned on making two games

I have yet to make either.

But I had a plan.

Mac App Store

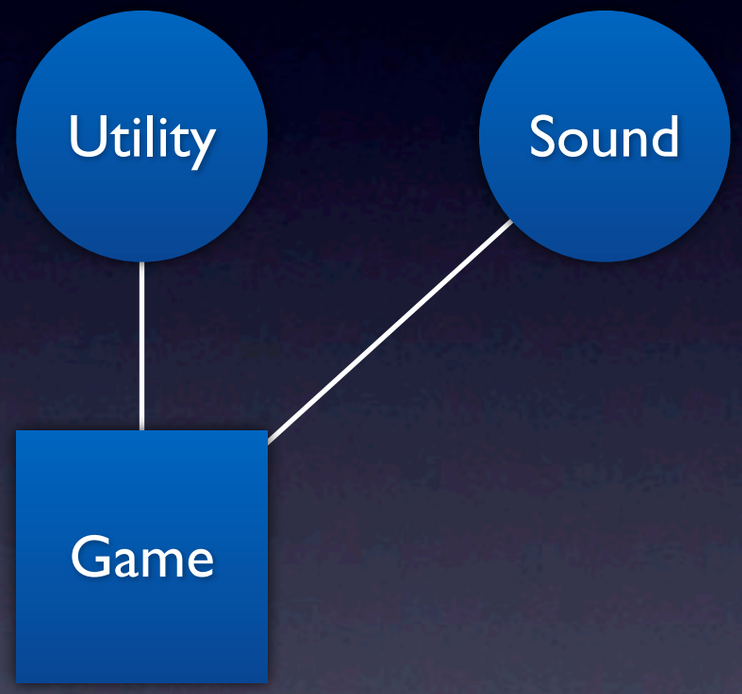
Clandestiny

1/6/11

Mac App Store

- First game was always going to be Clandestiny - but for the iPad.
- When Apple announced the Mac App Store I decided I could be there day one.

Game Engine v. 0.1



1. Client

Meanwhile..

- At the same time my wife and daughter wanted me to make a solitaire game.
- They were playing a lot of solitaire on their iPads and thought they could design one that was better.

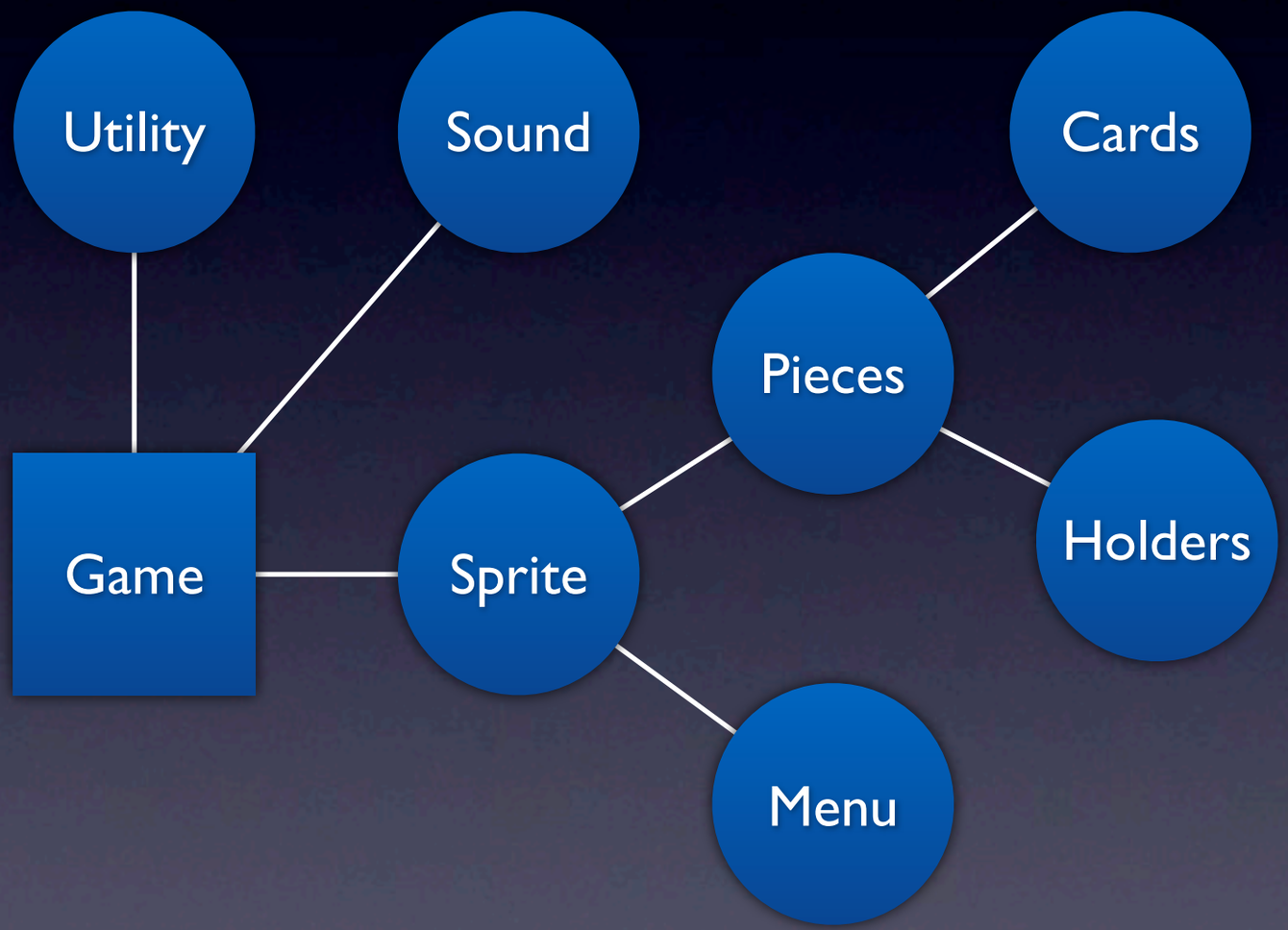
Full Deck Solitaire

1/29/11

Full Deck Solitaire

- 22 Solitaire Variations!
- Been number one card game for Mac OS X since it came out.
- Over one million downloads now.
- Concept of “game engine”.

Game Engine v. 2



But what about iOS?

- Bringing Game Engine to iOS took a week
- Could now run same source on two platforms.

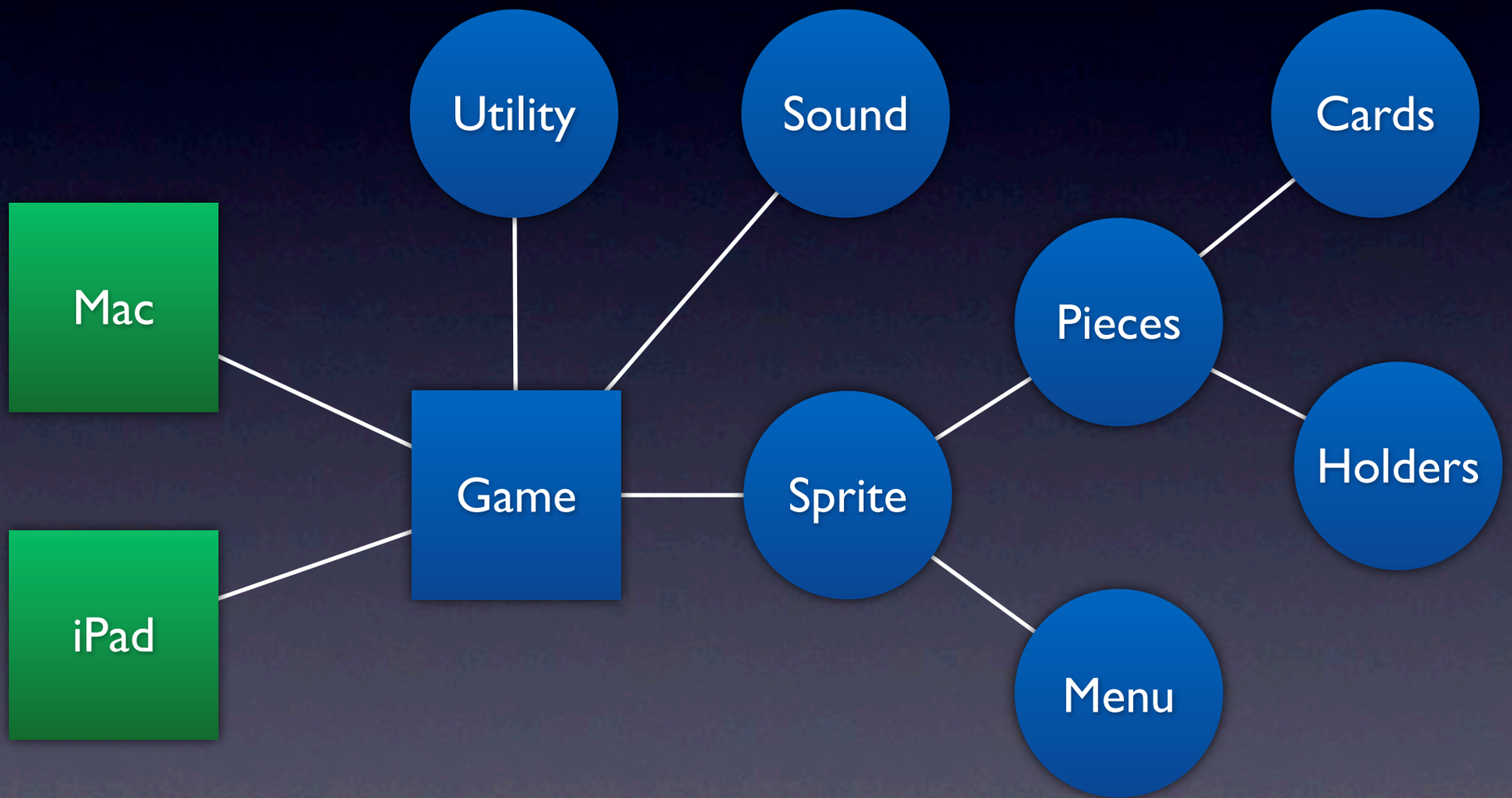
Full Deck Solitaire

2/15/11

iPad

- Back ported improvements to Mac OS X
- Support, support, support
- Revisions

Game Engine v. 1.1



2. Better Client

Adding to the picture

- Wanted to extend experience to friends
- Hide the work so the friend connection was natural and easy
- Build a system that would scale

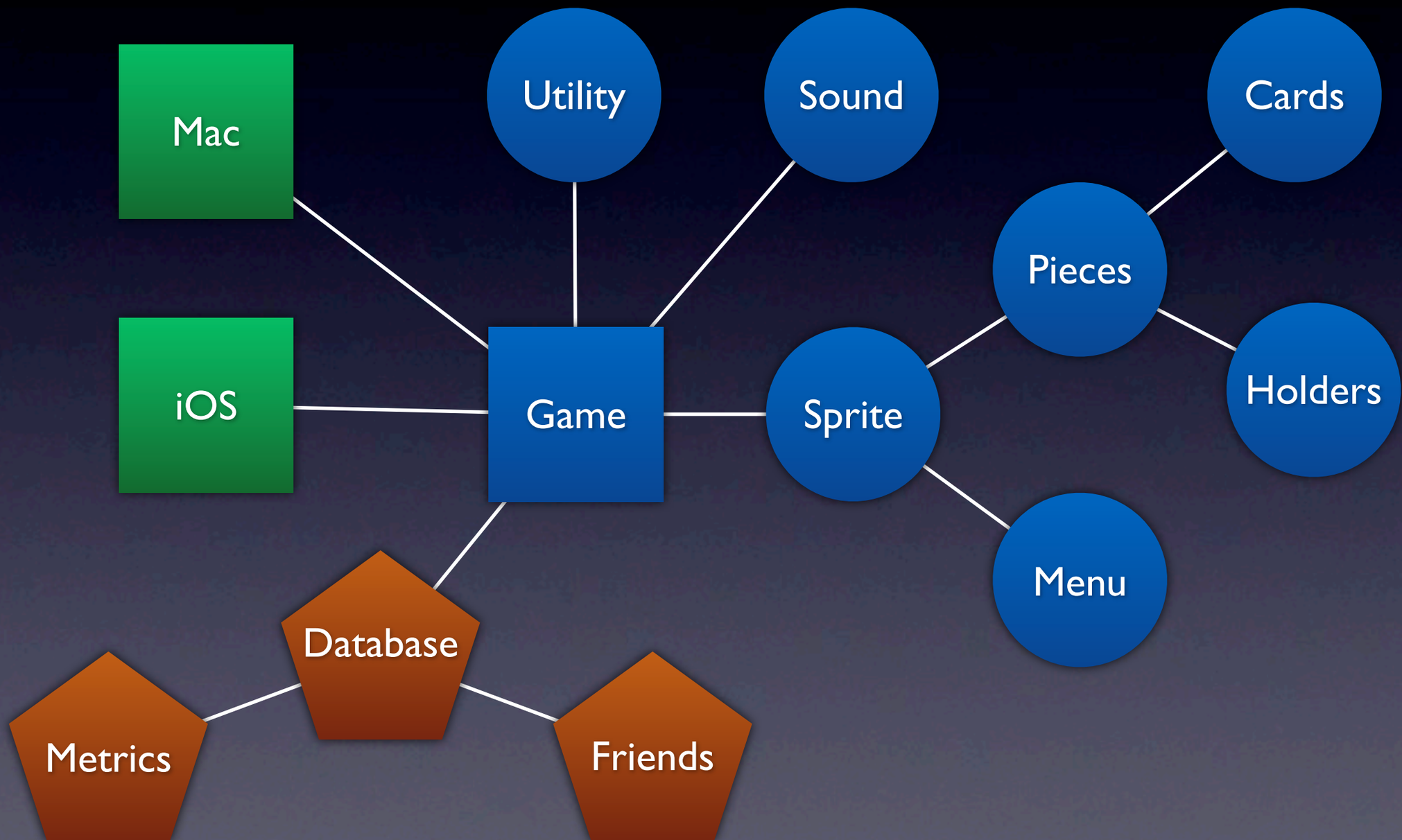
Full Deck Poker Solitaire

3/31/11

Full Deck Poker Solitaire

- SQL server for users
- connect friends with a challenge
- lots of learning

Game Engine v. 1.2



3. Connections

Summer Break

How Hard Can Poker Be?

- I made several wrong assumptions here.
- Poker would be easy.
- The AI would be simple.
- People wanted to play with friends.

How Hard Can Poker Be?

- I was completely wrong.
- Poker is really hard.
- The AI is incredibly difficult.
- People want to play with poker players.

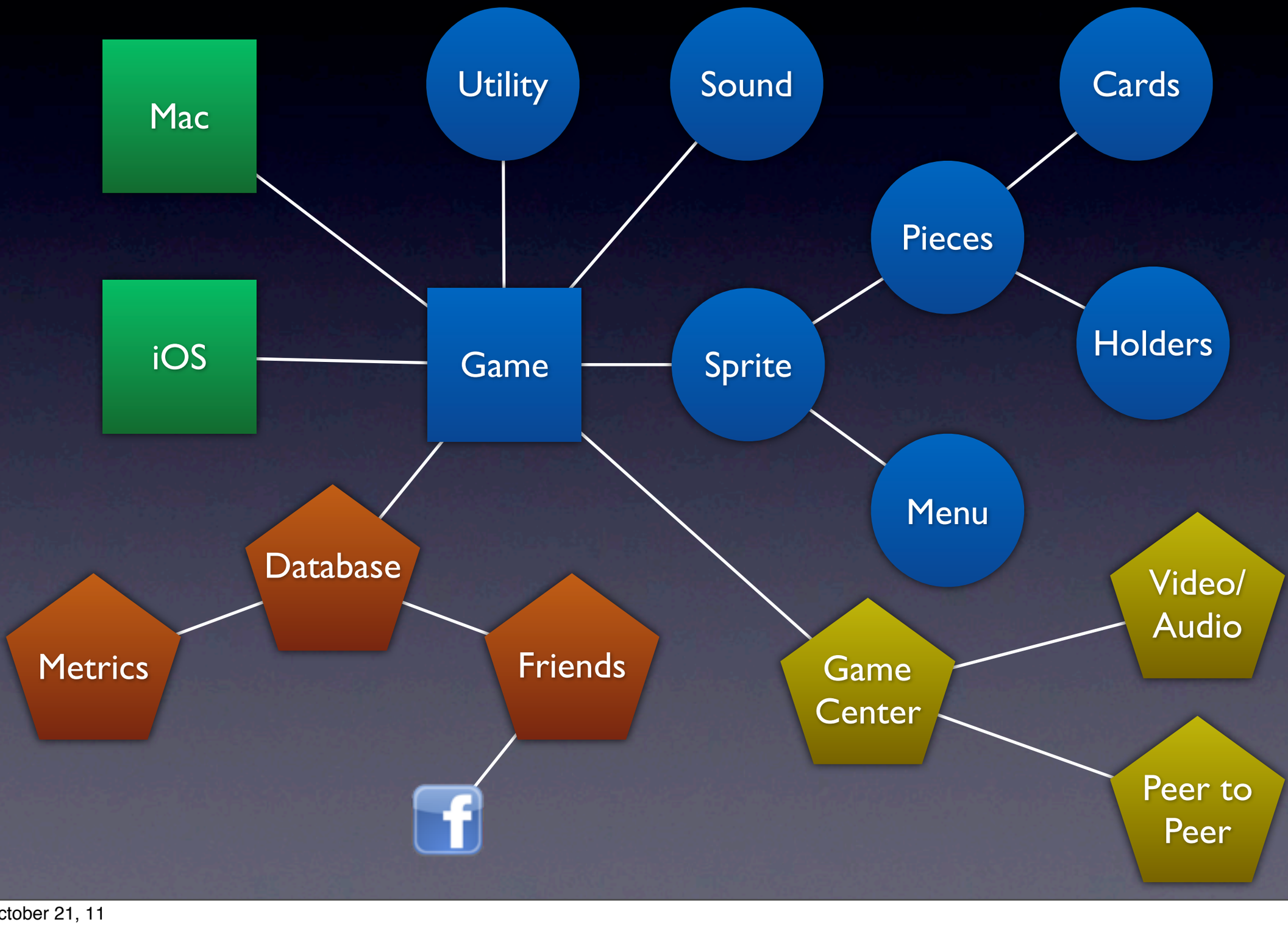
Full Deck Hold'Em v 1.0

8/22/11

Video

- The “hook”

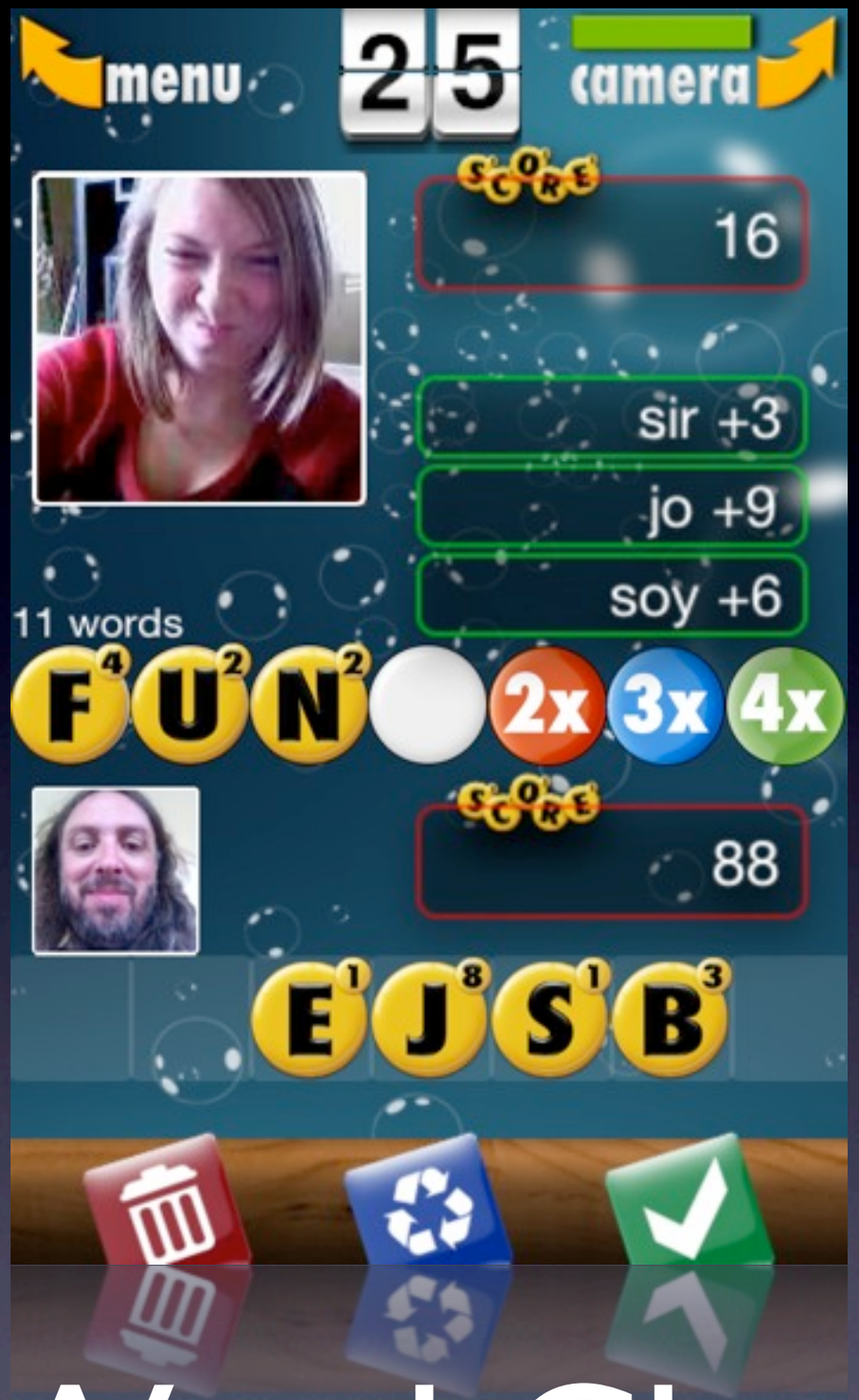
Game Engine v. 1.3



4. Better Connections

Adding More

- Decided to see if I was on right track.
- Also, wife and daughter wanted me to make a word game.



Word Chat

9/12/11

Word Chat

- 7 days from starting to App Store submission.
- Updated once with whole new game mode.
- Second update coming with iOS 5 turn based game.

5. Execution

Issues

- Game Center as a transport
- Finding friends and opponents isn't the same
- Anything that is not making is easier had to go

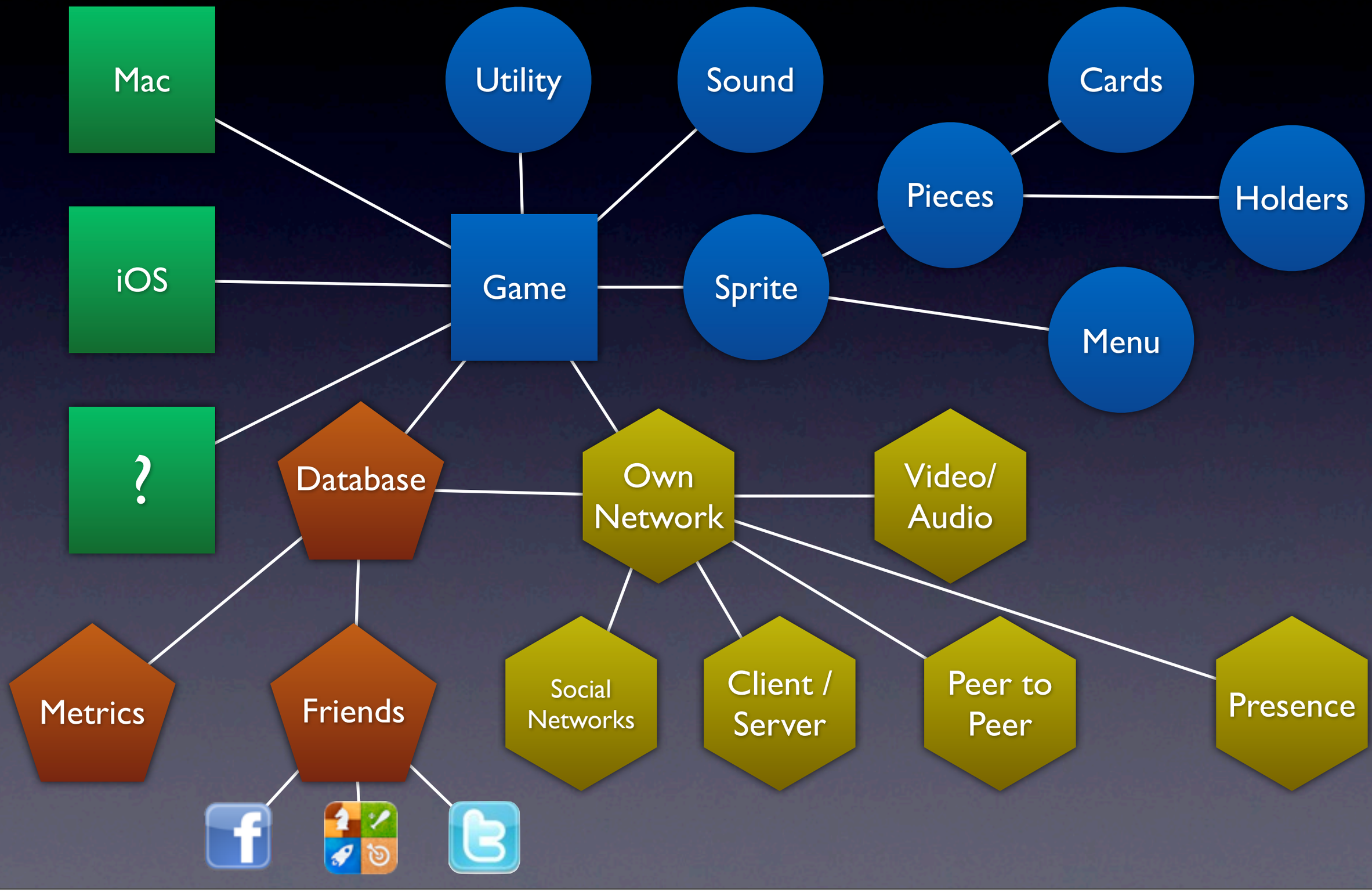
Solutions

- Implement my own matchmaking / network code.
- Keep friends seamless.

Full Deck Hold'Em v 2.0

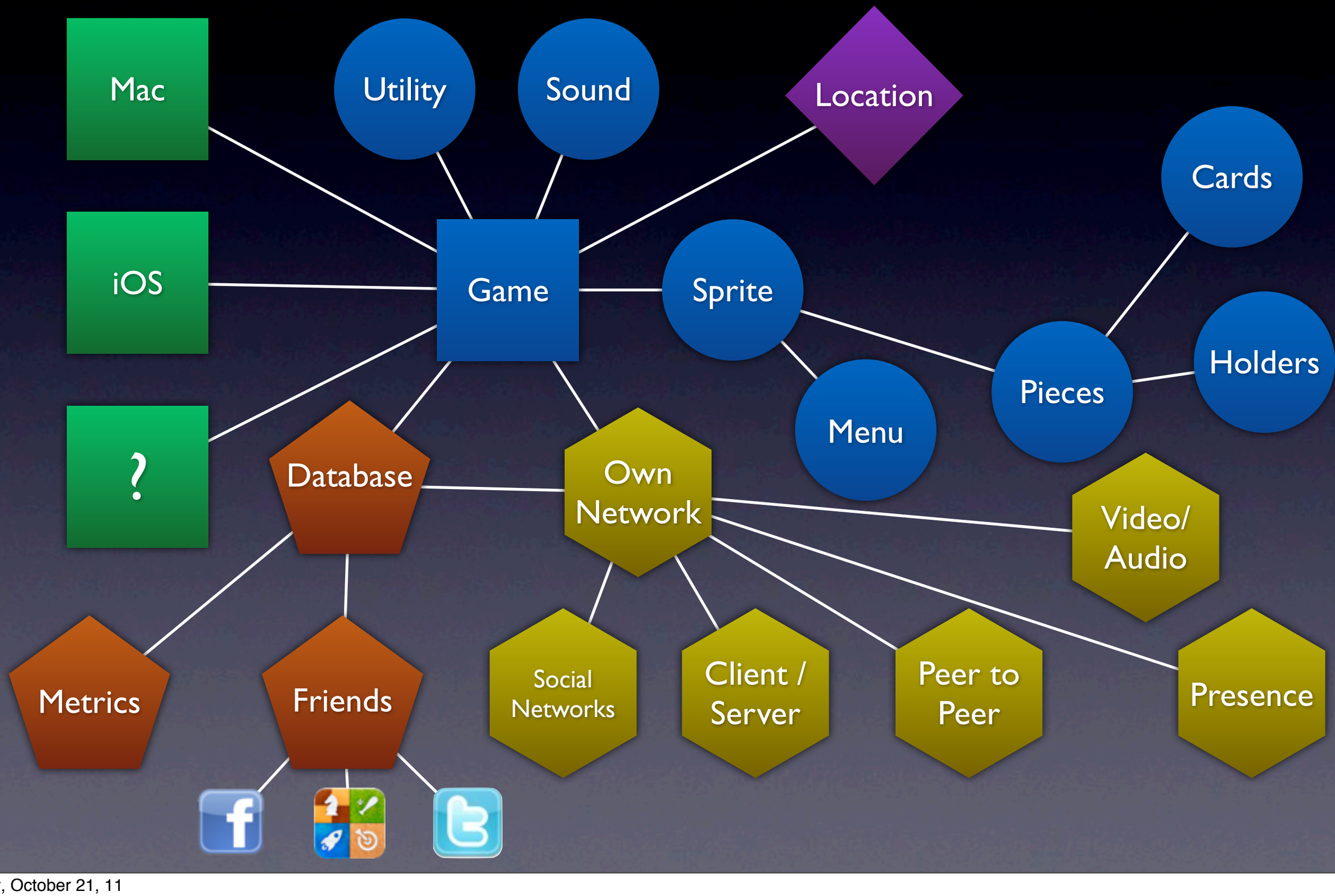
10/8/11

Game Engine v. 1.4



5. NOW

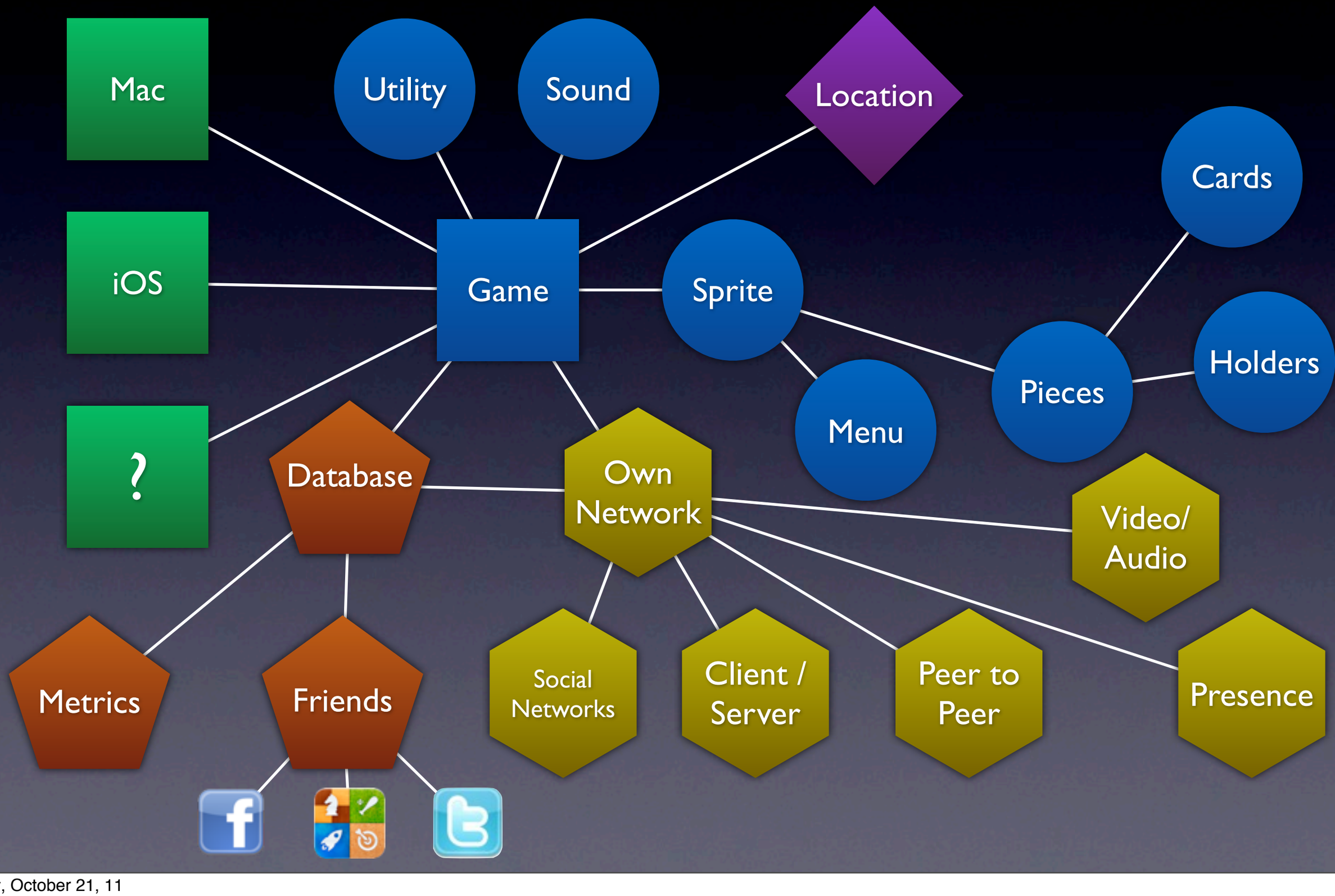
Game Engine v. 1.5



GRL Games

- Yes, I shipped five games and twenty eight updates.
- But this year has always been about building a platform.

Game Engine v. 1.5



Thank You

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- @zaphodgjd on twitter

grl
games