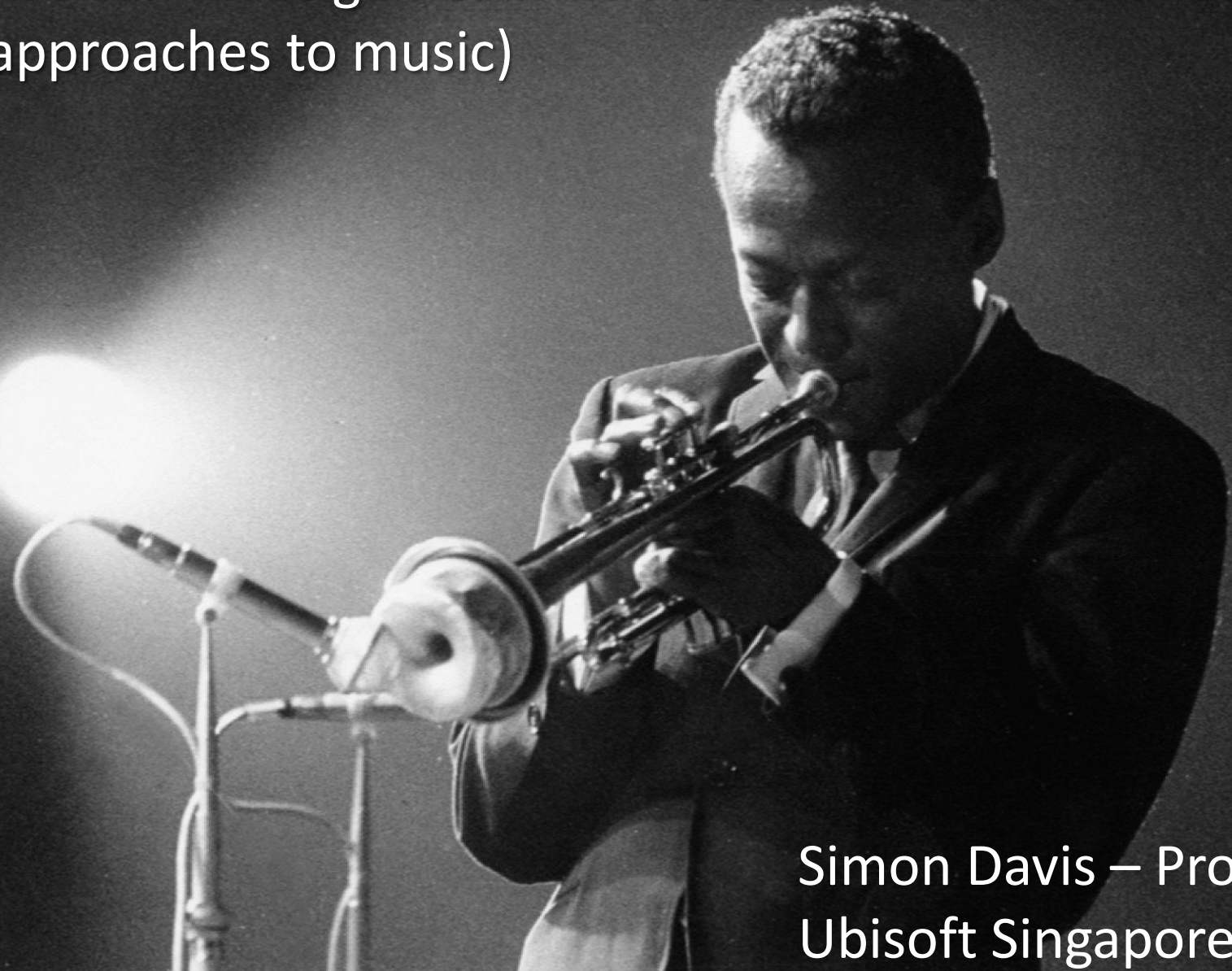


The Wonderful World of UX

(How we can make games which resonate better and learn from approaches to music)



Simon Davis – Producer
Ubisoft Singapore

What the hell is this all about?

UX: Taking games from “WTF?” to “Awesome!” since 1961.



What the hell is this all about?

- What is UX and how can we relate it to games?
- Why should you care?
- Different approaches to UX (Jazz vs. Blues)
- How can we create better experiences for our audience?

A little background



A little background



“What the hell is UX?”

UX ≠ New

UX ≠ Complex

*UX is how you make your game's
enjoyment easier to access.*

“What the hell is UX?”



Early games used story and “trial and error” to guide users.

“What the hell is UX?”

UX \neq Usability

UX \neq UI Design

UX is a collection of different practices.

“UX is a bit like a band...”



The Drummer

Information
Architecture

Billy Cobham: “Information Architecture Hero”

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Information Architecture asks:

- What are we trying to achieve?
- Who are our intended audience?
- Why will they play our game?

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Example Information Architecture
outputs:

- User stories
- Competitor analysis
- Content and functions

“UX is a bit like a band...”



Jaco Pastorius: “Information Design Legend”

The Bassist

Information
Design

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Information Design asks:

- What information will we show the user?
- Where will we present information?
- How will we present information?

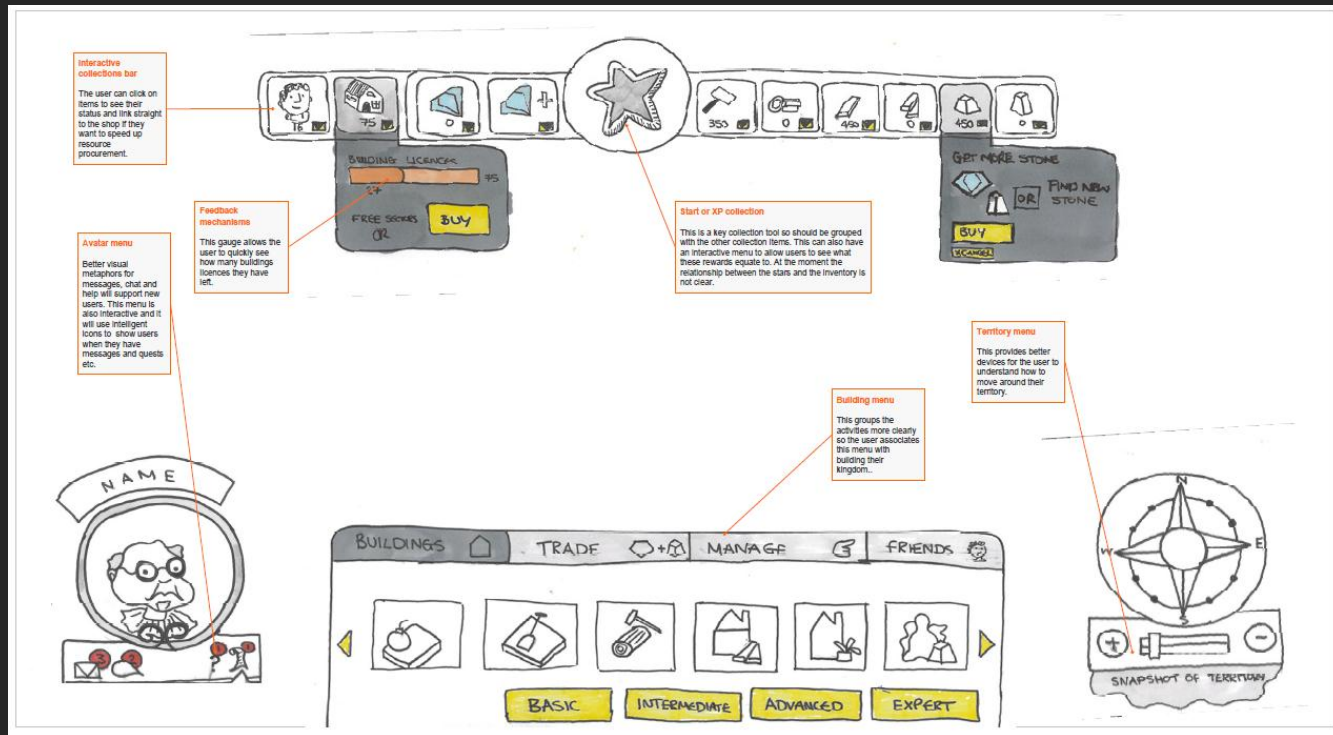
“UX is a bit like a band...”

Example Information Design outputs:

- Overview plans for game
- Layouts for main screens

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Information Design outputs:



Example scamp

“UX is a bit like a band...”



Bill Evans: “Interaction Design Idol”

The Pianist

Interaction
Design

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Interaction Design asks:

- **How** do you do?
- **How** do you feel?
- **How** do you know?

“UX is a bit like a band...”



Stanley Jordan: “Visual Design Colossus”

The Guitarist

Visual
Design

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Example Visual Design outputs

“Guide” which outlines:

- Stylistic conventions
- Visual communication (tied to Information Design)

“UX is a bit like a band...”



The Singer

Usability

Eva Fitzgerald: “Usability Goddess”

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Example Usability outputs:

- A/B Testing
- Usability guidelines
- Accessibility guidelines
- Observational Testing

“UX is a bit like a band...”



“UX is a bit like a band...”

Always remember these guys...



The Audience

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Information Architecture – User research, project goals, high-level design.

Information Design – Plans, “What goes where”?

Interaction Design – How do we communicate, how do we perform actions, where do we perform actions?

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Visual Design – Uniqueness, personality, communication.

Usability – How do people respond?
How intuitive is it to use?

You don't need a team of experts or formal processes to begin implementing these practices into your designs.

Jazz vs. Blues

“Make a jazz noise here...”



One thing I like about jazz, kid, is that I don't know what's going to happen next. Do you?”

— **Bix Beiderbecke**

“The blues is a mighty bad feelin’ ”



“Simple music is the hardest music to play and blues is simple music.”
— **Albert Collins**

The Jazz/Blues Spectrum

Jazz

Blues

"Closed" Communication

"Open" Communication

- Complex
- Appreciated by specialist audience
- May require “expert” knowledge
- *Requires active listening to enjoy*

- Simple
- Easily appreciated
- Requires no specialist knowledge
- *Requires less immersion*

Typically, the more complex it is to understand or interact with something, the more challenging it becomes to convey emotion.

... and now for some examples

Jazz: Grand Turismo



Blues: Outrun 2



Jazz: ARMA II



Blues: Far Cry 2



Jazz hands

GAME CONTROLS, DEFAULT



Film Controls

LT Left Trigger Thrust (Flying Cam)	Y Y Button Flying Cam/Player Cam
RT Right Trigger Slow Motion/Fast Forward	X X Button Hide/Show Control Pad
LB Left Bumper Move Down (Flying Cam)	B B Button Hide/Show HUD
RB Right Bumper Move Up (Flying Cam)	A A Button Play/Pause
Left Stick Move Camera/ Press to Pan (Flying Cam)	Right Stick Look/Rotate Camera (Flying Cam)
	D-Pad Switch Players (Player Cam)

Forge Controls, Edit Mode

LT Left Trigger Thrust	Y Y Button Delete Item
RT Right Trigger Hold to Rotate Selected Item	X X Button Inventory/Item Options
LB Left Bumper Move Down	B B Button Hold to Drop Selected Item
RB Right Bumper Move Up	A A Button Pick Up/Drop Item
Left Stick Move/Rotate Selected Item	Right Stick Look/Rotate Selected Item
	D-Pad Play/Edit Mode

Blues simplicity



Jazz Visual Design

Current location:
► BJD 4 - E

Nearest
Sovereignty > Red Alliance
Sovereignty Level > Province (3)
Constellation > I-300K
Region > Faythabolis
Security Level > I-300K
System > BJD 4-E Local Channel

Akoana > What are you doing?
Akoana > guy, we don't interfere when you are here firt

Akoana
Car Saladi
Frackus Division
Kaap
Kamashutra
Mr4ex
Tom Hansen
Varshyll

ALLIA CORP ICE-CAF ICEB ELEGGIC RG 1 PMV DIABETE EXPLI FLEET

Akoana > y aun chrubim
Akoana > pres de kla gate de sortie
Akoana > je sens que c lui qui a la clé
Akoana > les fnoirs serieux
Akoana > tu peux scrennshot stp?
Akoana > je suis dans un cyber, je pourrais pas recup si je le fais
Kaap > oué

Selected Item
GIST NEPHILIM WRECK
DISTANCE: 30 KM
SEC: 4.6

Overview (NOT SAVED)

IC	DISTANCE	NAME	TYPE
15 km	Arch Gistii Impaler	Arch Gistii Impa	
15 km	Gistum Centurion Wreck	Angel Medium	
15 km	Gistum Centurion Wreck	Angel Medium	
19 km	Gistum Phalanx Wreck	Angel Medium	
21 km	Gistatis Legatus Wreck	Angel Medium	
23 km	Gistii Impaler Wreck	Angel Small Wr	
31 km	Gist Seraphim	Gist Seraphim	
31 km	Gist Nephilim Wreck	Angel Large Wr	
31 km	Gist Seraphim	Gist Seraphim	
33 km	Gistatis Tribunus Wreck	Angel Medium	
33 km	Gist Nephilim Wreck	Angel Large Wr	
33 km	Gistatis Tribunus Wreck	Angel Medium	
34 km	Gist Cherubim Wreck	Angel Large Wr	

Drones: (5 OF) FLEET (3) / 1 BROAI

Drones in bay (5)
Drones in local space (5)
Large (5)
Berserker II (Fighting)
Berserker II (Fighting)
Berserker II (Fighting)
Berserker II (Fighting)
Berserker II (Fighting)

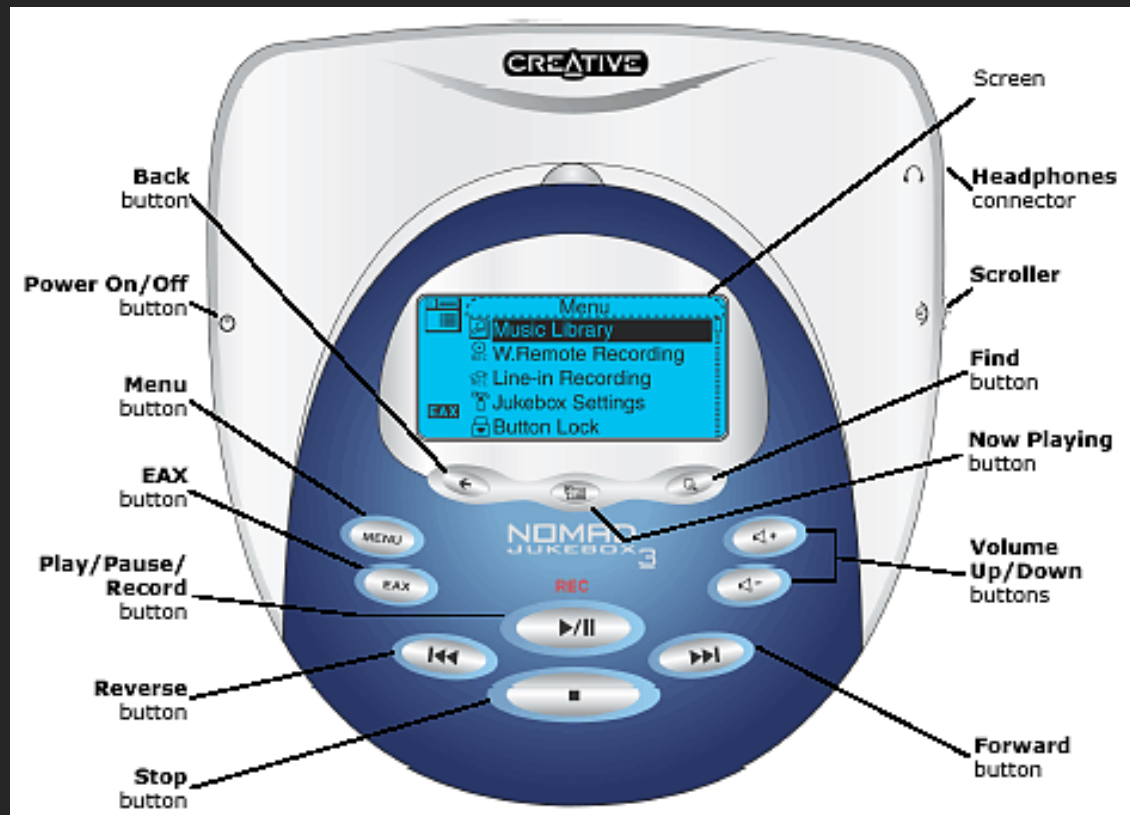
144 M/S

Blues Visual Design



Beyond games...

“Non-audience driven” product design?




“Audience driven” product design?



The Iterations of GRO

The Iterations of GRO

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ENGINEER: LVL 2

SGT MAJOR HERO.WARJUNKIE




IGC: #5,182
GR\$: \$4,501

UPCOMING ACHIEVEMENT

UPCOMING PROGRESSION

LOADOUT: STANDARD EQUIPMENT ▼

SAVE | EDIT | DELETE

PRIMARY WEAPON	M16A4 ASSAULT RIFLE LEVEL 6 REQUIRED + CLASS RESTRICTED	HELMET
AMMO: PRIMARY		FACE
SIDEARM		BODY ARMOR
AMMO: SECONDARY		OTHER (COSMETIC)
GRENADE		
<p>DMG 10.2 AMMO TYPE 5.56MM ACC 91.7 RECOIL 15.3 MOBILITY -5.5 DURABILITY 120/120</p> <p>CONSUMABLES</p> <div> SELF  TEAM SPECIAL</div>		

[Global](#) | [Trade](#) | [Friends](#)

Hero.Myre: so I put it on my head and it worked. who knew?

Hero.Tombstone: just bought the [Finely Crafted Titanium Barrel] real cheap. you should all buy one.

SittingDuck: That's how it goes some-times.

Match starting soon! Who's in?

INVENTORY | CARDS

SELL | DELETE

PAGE 1/3

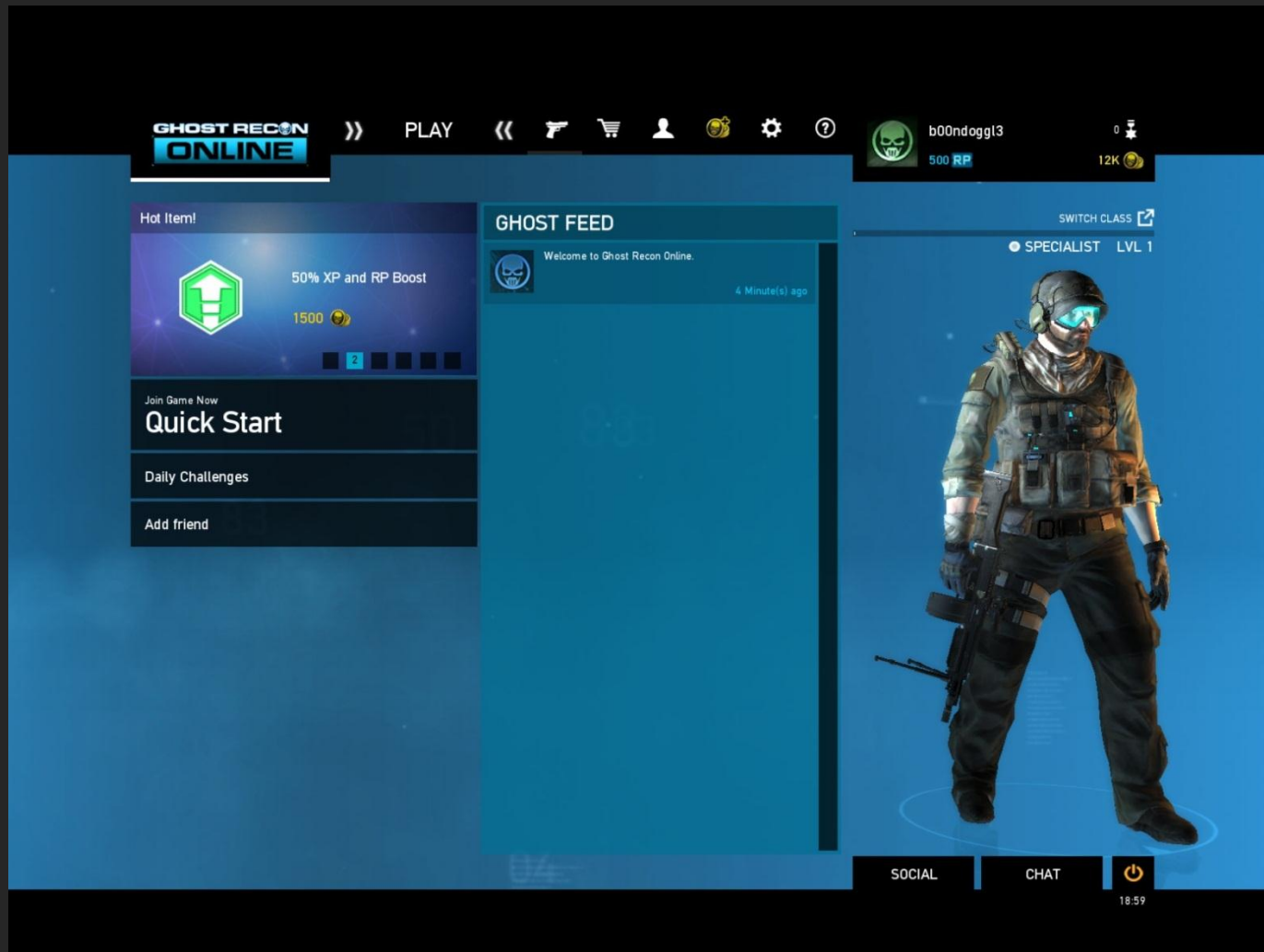
The Iterations of GRO



The Iterations of GRO



The Iterations of GRO



Finding your sound

- Be honest about who it is you're making games for.
- There is no right or wrong approach, only the right and wrong approaches for your game.

Jazz Power

Ideally suited to games which focus on the following:

- Strategic thinking (RTS, TBS)
- Tactical play (FPS, RPGs)
- MMORPGS
- Games with an engaged audience who are willing to take the time to learn (Sports and Vehicle sims)

Blues Feeling

Ideally suited to games which focus on the following:

- Emotional content (fear, tension, empathy with NPCs, etc.)
- Simple gameplay mechanics (casual, family, party, social, etc.)
- Games which have to engage users early on (F2P, iOS, online demos)

Now that you've found your sound

- “Play the hits!”: Know what your audience want and give it to them.
- “Sneak in some new songs”: A/B, iterative testing.
- “Hand out some backstage passes”: Get to know your audience.

Additional Benefits

- Reduced support costs: Your game is easier to use and understand.
- Faster development cycle and improved prioritisation: Know what your audience like/dislike.
- Freedom: “The band” can riff and try new things.

The Secret Sauces:

The Secret Sauces: Love the “Metagame”

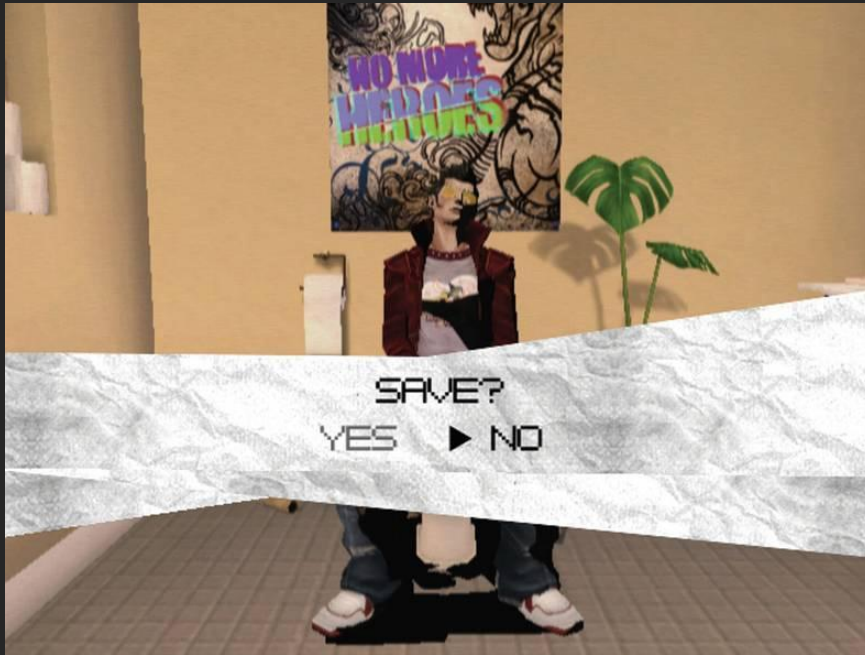
The Secret Sauces: Love the “Metagame”



The Secret Sauces: Love the “Metagame”



The Secret Sauces: Love the “Metagame”

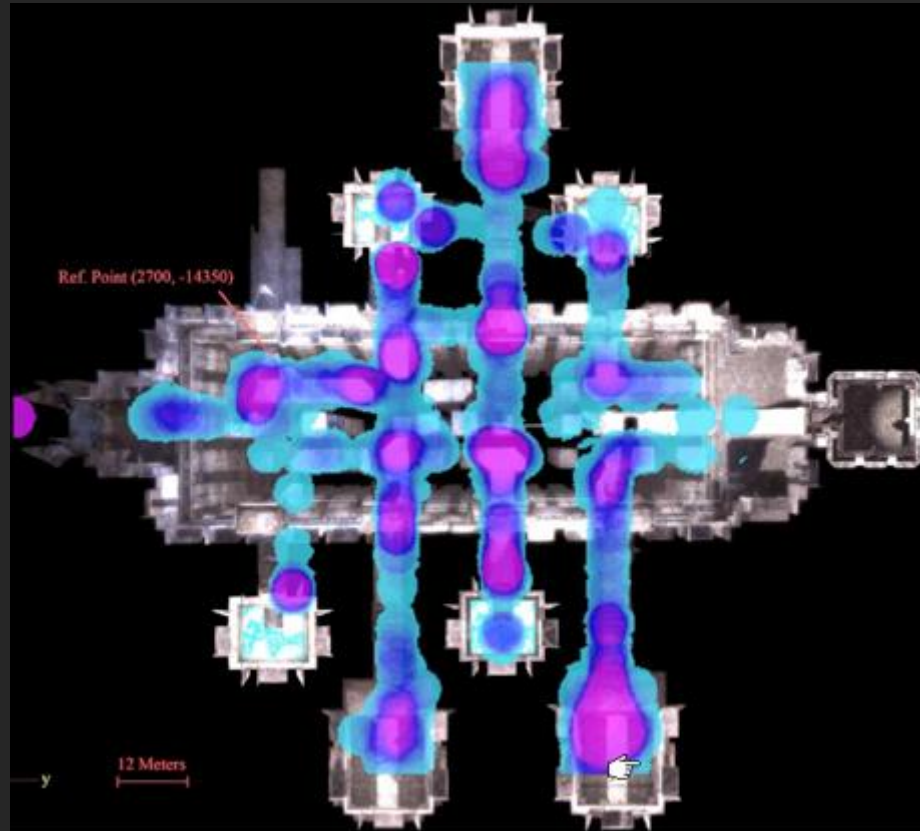


The Secret Sauces: Data is your friend

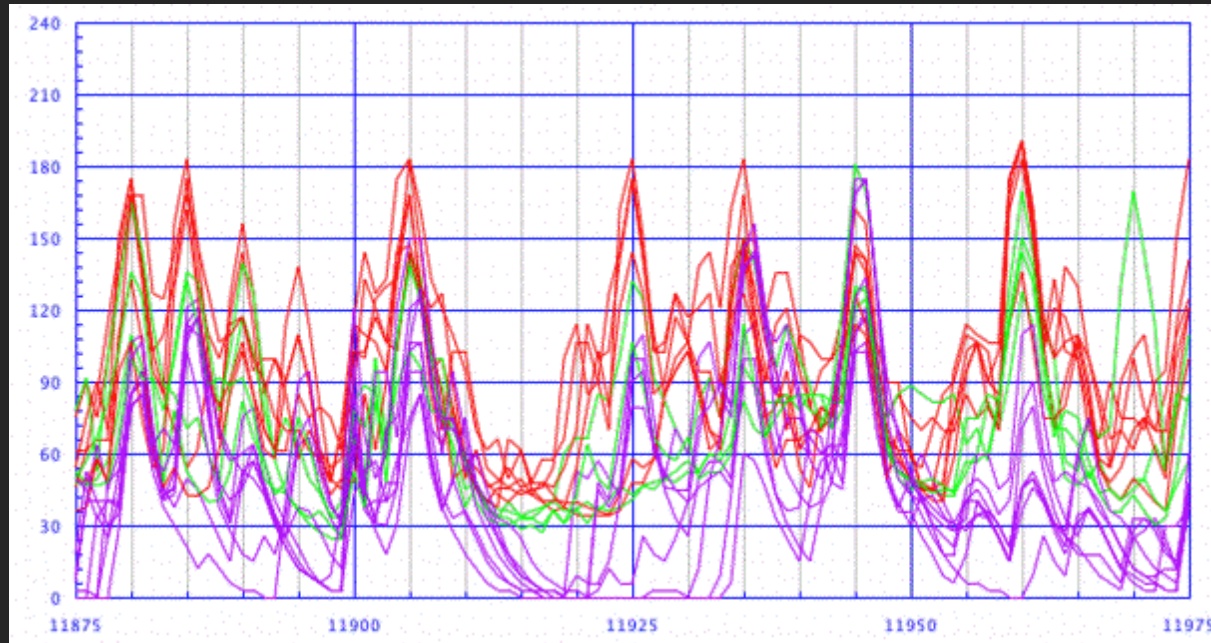
“Data is what distinguishes the dilettante from the artist.”

- George V. Higgins

The Secret Sauces: Data is your friend



The Secret Sauces: Data is your friend



The Secret Sauces: Data is your friend

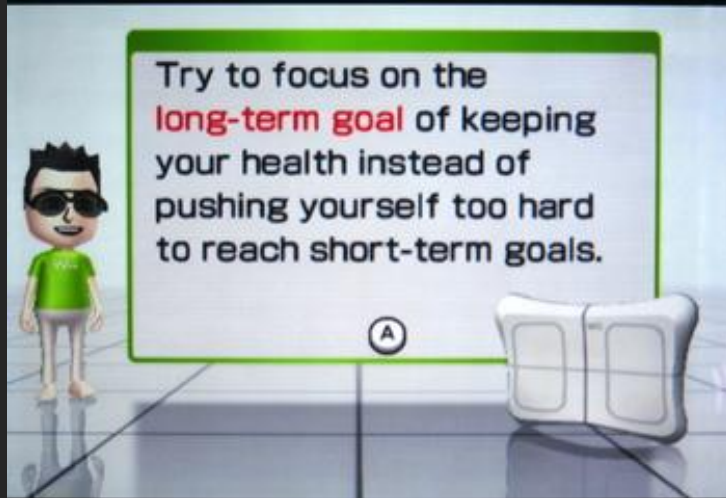


The Secret Sauces: Emotional Intelligence

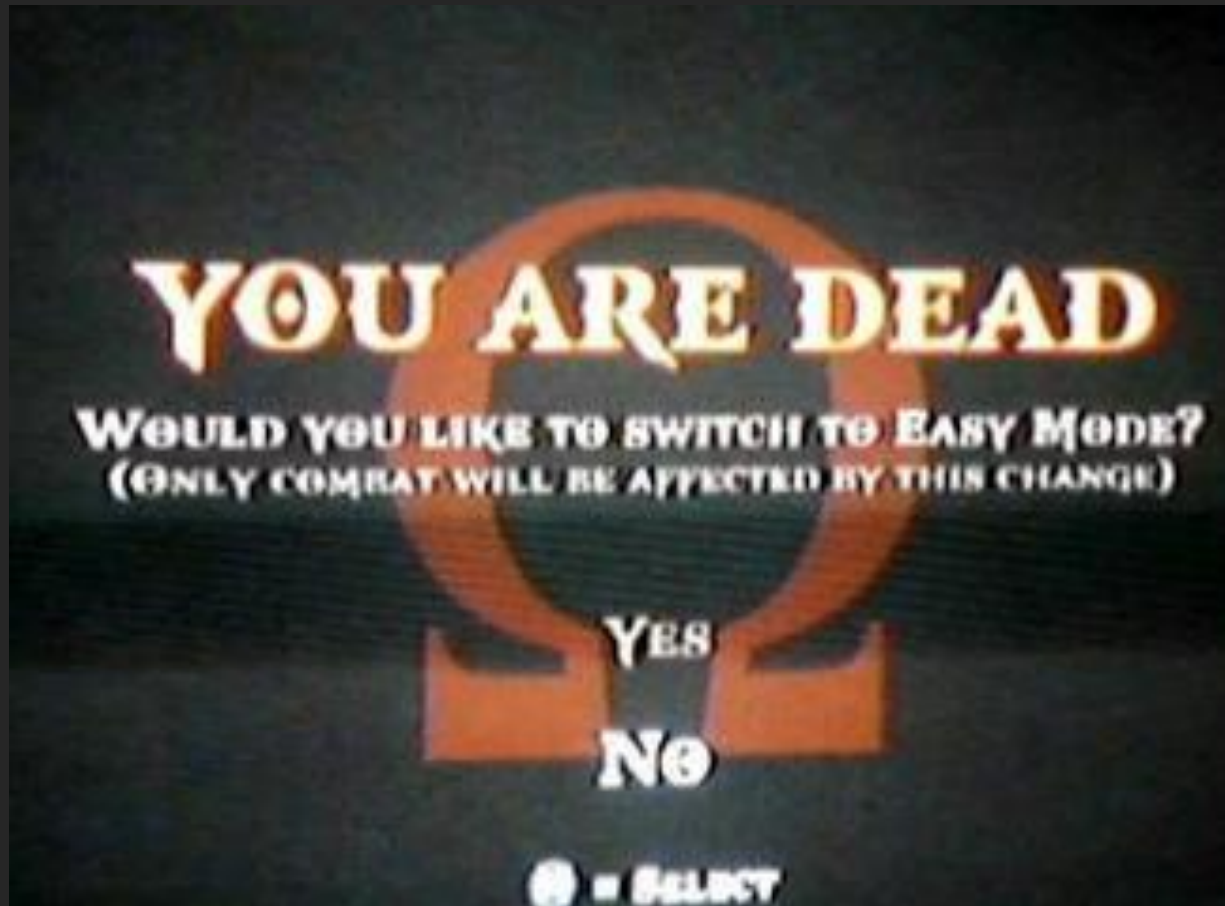
“Go ahead and play the blues if it'll make you happy.”

— **Dan Castellaneta**

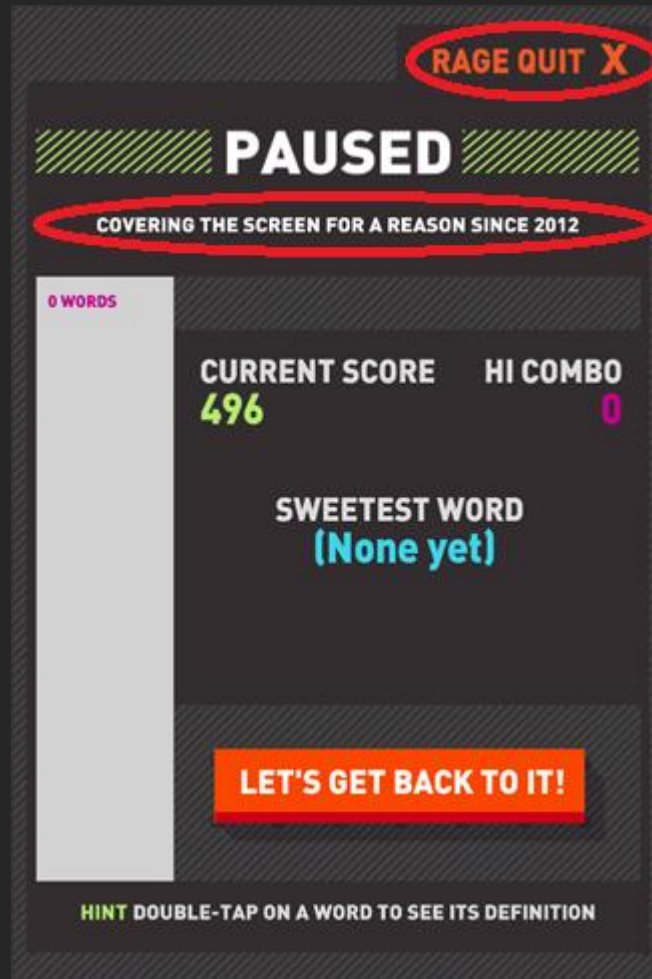
The Secret Sauces: Emotional Intelligence



The Secret Sauces: Emotional Intelligence



The Secret Sauces: Emotional Intelligence



Takeaways

Takeaways

- *UX has been a key part of game design since day 1.*
- *Any team has the resources and skill to consider UX within their game design. It need not be expensive or complex.*
- *Regardless of who your audience are: Make it as simple as possible. Then simplify it some more.*
- *“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”*

Takeaways

- *Never forget the audience and take the effort to know them. Don't guess.*
- *Adopting a UX-centric approach will allow you to prioritise the areas which matter the most.*
- *Iterative testing will allow you to quickly and cheaply validate new ideas, allowing greater creative freedom.*

Takeaways

- *Data: Love the data and it will love you back.*
- *Metagame: The game is the whole package, not just the core experience.*
- *Emotional Intelligence: Consider how users will feel, and how you want to make them feel.*

Takeaways

The most important thing to remember in music or UX:

OK \neq OK

It's been emotional...

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