

gdc next | nov 13

ethan levy | monetization design consultant | @FamousAspect

# Designing in-game purchases

---

[FamousAspect.com](http://FamousAspect.com)

gdc next | nov 13

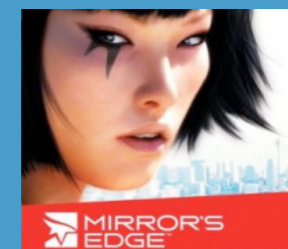
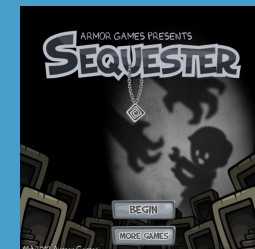
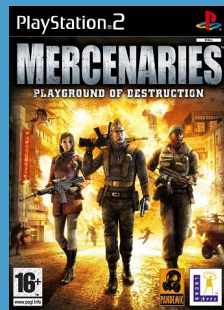
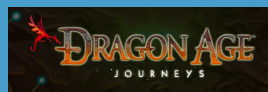
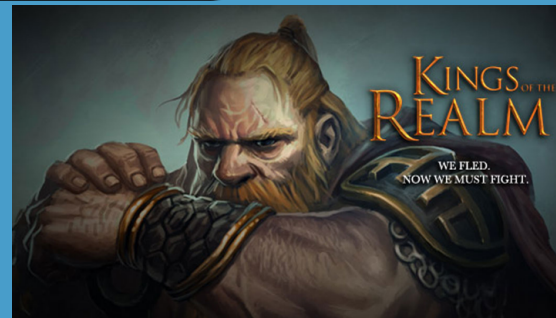
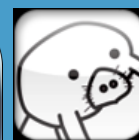
ethan levy | monetization design consultant | @FamousAspect

# Designing in-game purchases

---

[FamousAspect.com](http://FamousAspect.com)





↑ [-] [\[score hidden\]](#) 39 minutes ago

↓ Get it through your thick skull that CONSUMERS HATE F2P PAY GATES, which seem to be an idea you spurt off about nonstop since developers and the marketing [people](#) like them. **You are damaging this industry. Please stop it.**

[permalink](#) [save](#) [parent](#) [report](#) [give gold](#) [reply](#)

↑ [-] [\[score hidden\]](#) 26 minutes ago

↓ Let's talk about Dragon Age Legends. I cannot believe ANYONE would hire you as a consultant after that [fucking](#) abomination of the ideas you seem to love so much for some reason. Great job "producing" it into the dumpster. **You're such a failure and cancer to this industry.** Just leave and go grub for money elsewhere, [jackass](#).



[Migaru90](#) ▶ [Stephen Totilo](#)

3 ★ [comment](#) ▶

If any major publisher ever hires this man for "blockbuster" titles, I will quit gaming forever, or at least modern gaming.

Today 10:08am



[klnetlcdamage](#) ▶ [Migaru90](#)

★ [comment](#) ▶

Yeah, he's like ... the forbidden gamedesigner

! 21 minutes ago



[jaypaulbarnes1414](#) ▶ [Stephen T...](#)

1 ★ [comment](#)

Ethan Levy - you are a *horrible* person.  
YOU are what's wrong with video games.

Today 10:32am



[Eight-Bit Generation](#) ▶ [Etha...](#)

1 ★ [comment](#)



What annoys me about this article is that I agree with the general premise (that free-to-play videogames are not inherently bad and are a response to market pressure) but I really hate the condescending, offensive, effete, stereotypical San Francisco attitude

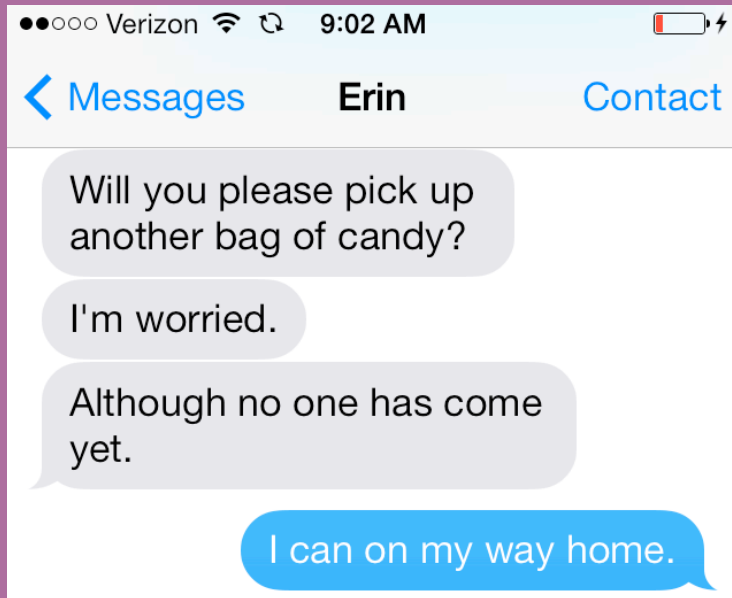
↑ [-] [Yashakiden](#) 1 point 2 hours ago

↓ You are exactly the sort of people who are ruining gaming.  
Pure, unadulterated evil.



what do you want to get out of this session?

# Desired takeaways



When will you be home?

No one has come yet.

Leaving in 10, so prob  
6:30. May need to stop at  
whole foods on the way  
home to pick up  
something for dinner







# a practical guide to in-game purchases

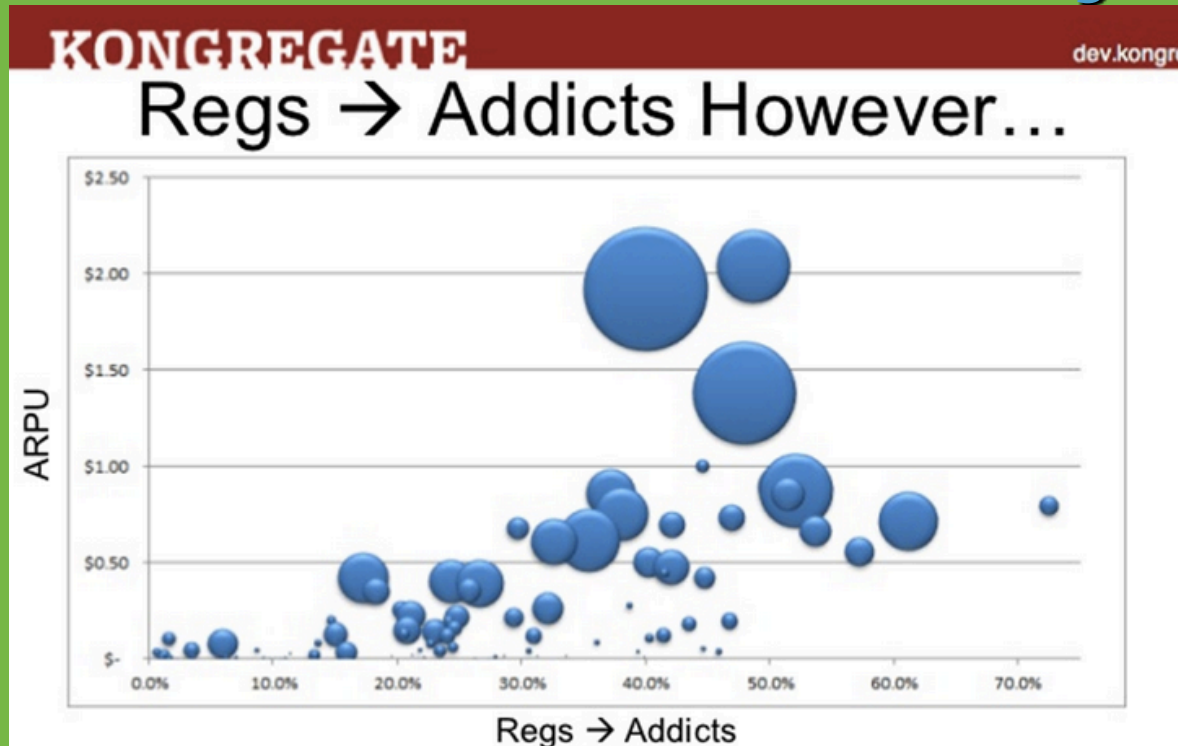
- Is my game a good fit for freemium?
- Is my design built for freemium?
- Am I selling the right things?
- What examples should I follow?



is my game a good fit for the freemium model?

# Am I ready for MTX?

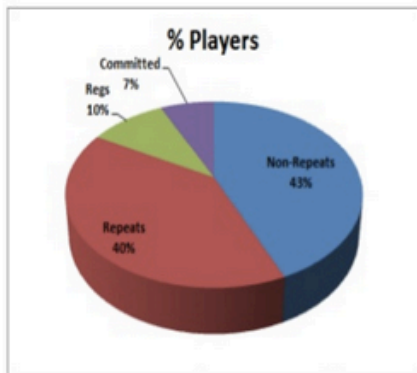
# mo' fun == mo' money



Turning players into veterans is key to making money

# value lies in vets

## Commitment REALLY matters



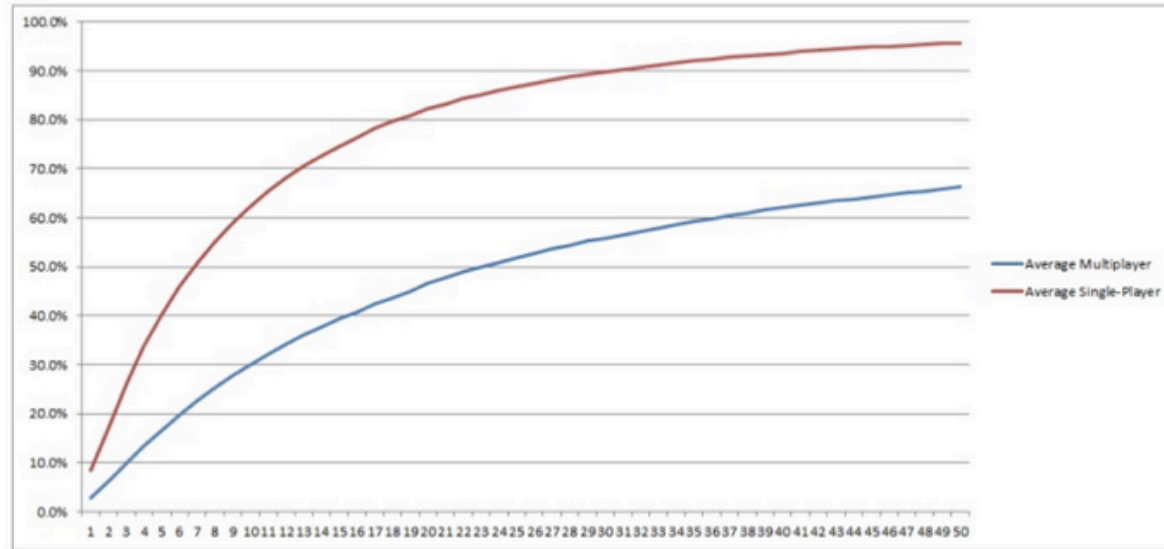
Type of Player	% Buyers	Avg Trx	ARPPU	ARPU	% Players	% of Rev
Non-Repeats	0.03%	2.10	\$ 24.69	\$ 0.01	43%	0%
Repeats (2-9 plays)	0.40%	1.85	\$ 19.61	\$ 0.08	40%	3%
Regs (10-49 plays)	4.68%	2.61	\$ 21.35	\$ 1.00	10%	12%
Committed (50+ plays)	16.53%	7.03	\$ 96.92	\$ 16.02	7%	84%



86% of revenue comes from Vets

# conversion takes time

## Gameplays before 1<sup>st</sup> Purchase



23 sessions before spend in multiplayer

# ideal player progression

Newb



Player



Vet



Early Game



Mid Game



Elder Game

# great elder games are

- social
- competitive
- infinitely replayable
- involve social organization

is my design built for freemium?

# My core loop

# what is a core loop?

- Key set of activities a player takes each session
- Path of least resistance
- Actions - main interactive elements
- Gates - elements that block progression
- Sinks - where player spends currency
- Taps - where player gains currency



# purchasing not present



Major Mayhem

# purchasing not present



Major Mayhem

# purchasing not present



Major Mayhem

# purchasing not present



Major Mayhem

# purchasing not present



Major Mayhem

# purchasing not present



Major Mayhem

# purchasing made present



Despicable Me: Minion Rush

# purchasing made present



Despicable Me: Minion Rush



# purchasing made present



Despicable Me: Minion Rush

# purchasing made present



Despicable Me: Minion Rush

# purchasing made present



Despicable Me: Minion Rush

am I selling the right things?

# My offer catalog

# purchase makes a promise



Kingdom Rush


# crossing the penny gap

## Basic Edition Special!

Get everything you need to fully enjoy the Card Hunter campaign in the Basic Edition Special!

- All 11 Treasure Hunt Adventures
- 1 month Club Membership
- 9 extra figures (shown below)
- 100 Pizza slices





All for the special discounted price of \$25.00




Cancel


## PAPA MANCHU PIZZA MENU

*Authentic Pizza and Szechuan Cuisine delivered to you any time day or night!*

	Basic Edition	\$25.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
	330 Pizza Slices	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
	690 Pizza Slices	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1800 Pizza Slices	\$50.00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	3800 Pizza Slices	\$99.00	<input type="checkbox"/>

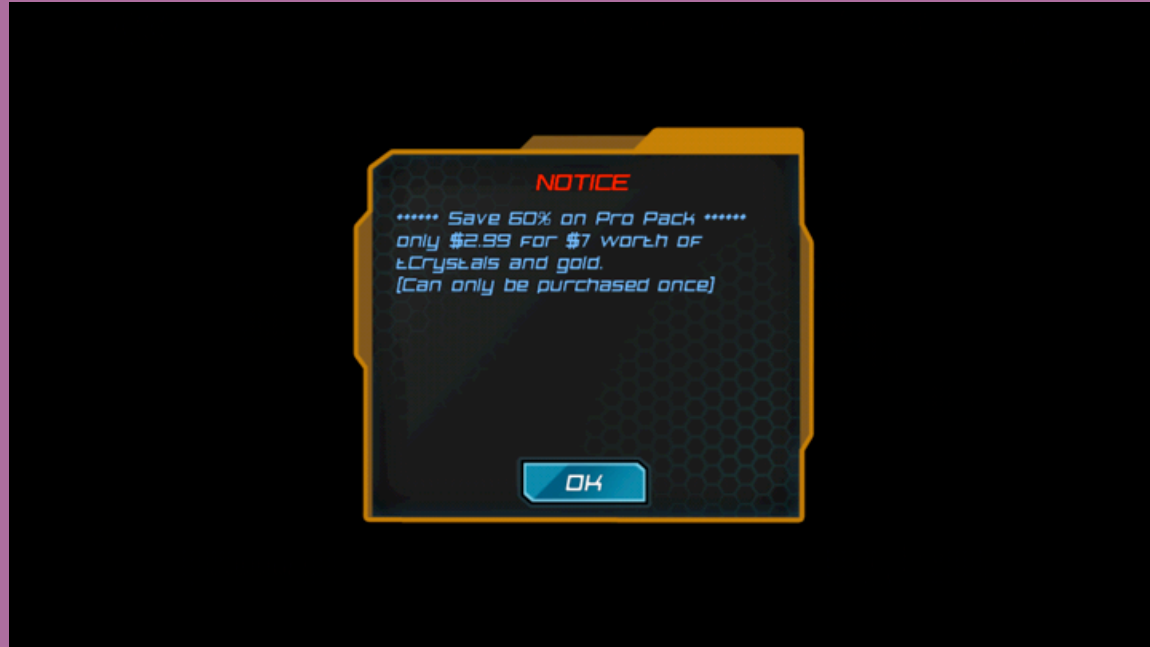
**BEST VALUE!**

Buy with 

Check out with  **PayPal**  
The safer, easier way to pay

Card Hunter

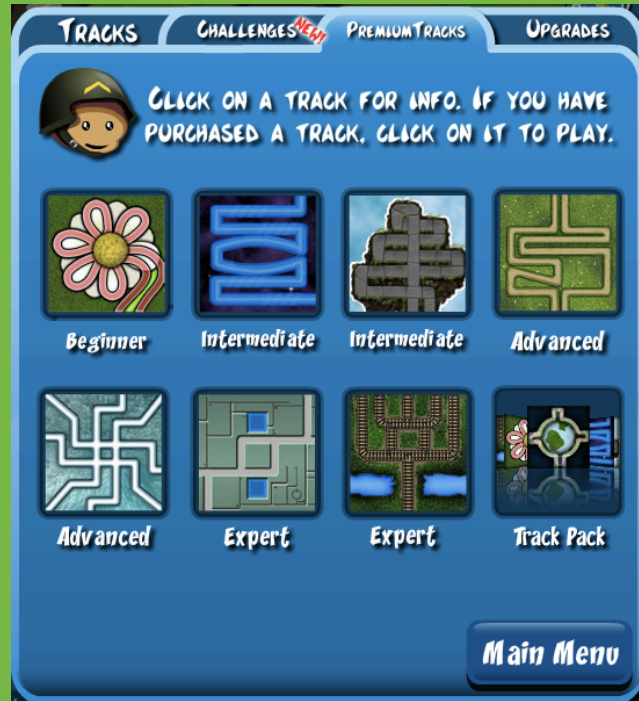
# out of context upsell



Call of Mini: Infinity



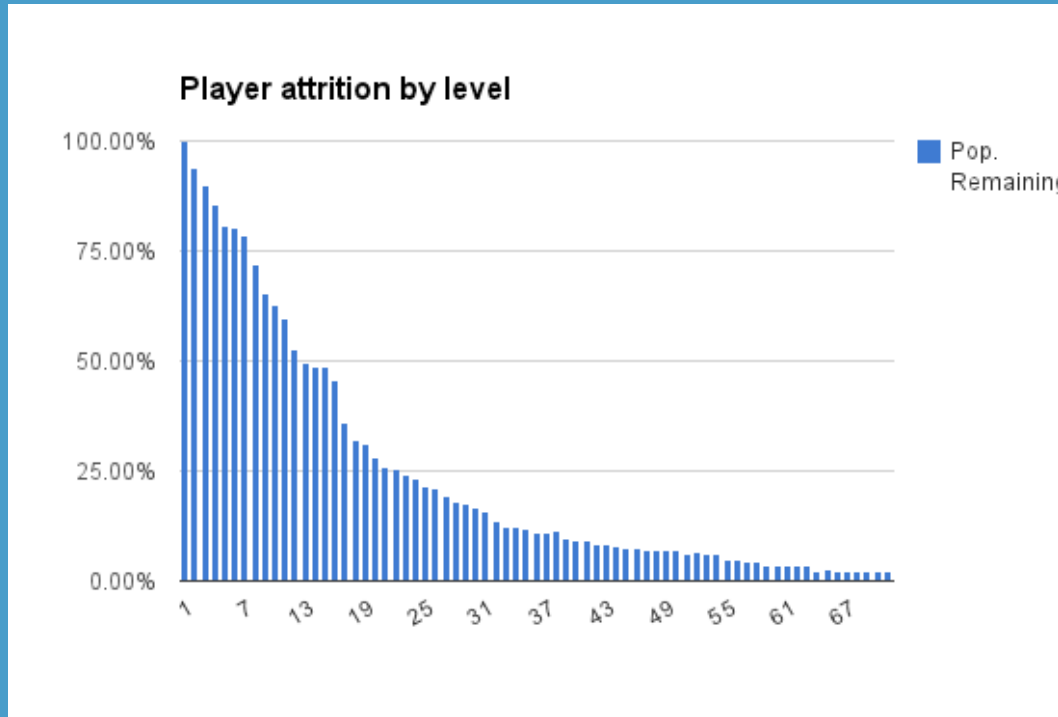
# danger of linear content



Bloons Tower Defense 4

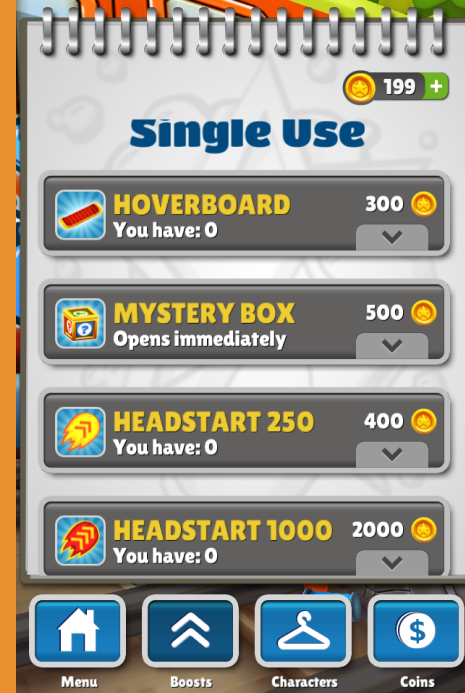


# danger of linear content



Example data from level based game

# permanent vs consumable goods



Consumables create a path to infinite monetization

# ask for dollars



Kingdom Rush: Frontiers

# ask for dollars



Kingdom Rush: Frontiers

# luxury items

## A \$500 in-app purchase? 'The Kraken' in Glu's Gun Bros. is almost worth it

September 27, 2011 | By [Mike Dano](#)

SHARE

Editor's Corner:



2



2



0

Like

1

I have the Coronal Ejector. It should make me happy. It shoots an enormous fireball that vaporizes all but the strongest nearby T.O.O.L. enemies. Indeed, in [Glu Mobile's Gun Bros. game](#), the Coronal Ejector "was developed to jumpstart dying solar systems."



Mike Dano

I should be happy with it. But then there's "The Kraken."

"If annihilation had a portrait, it would be of you, holding this gun, screaming, as every living enemy within a mile was vaporized in an instant, leaving behind only smoldering boots, a T.O.O.L. helmet, and regret," the *Gun Bros.* armory advises of The Kraken.

It's a tempting gun. Whereas the Coronal Ejector's "power" is rated at 420, The Kraken is rated at a whopping 1,500. Imagine how many T.O.O.L. (Tyrannical Oppressors of Life) had you could vaporize with that gun!

## Cater to high value players

# currency package pricing

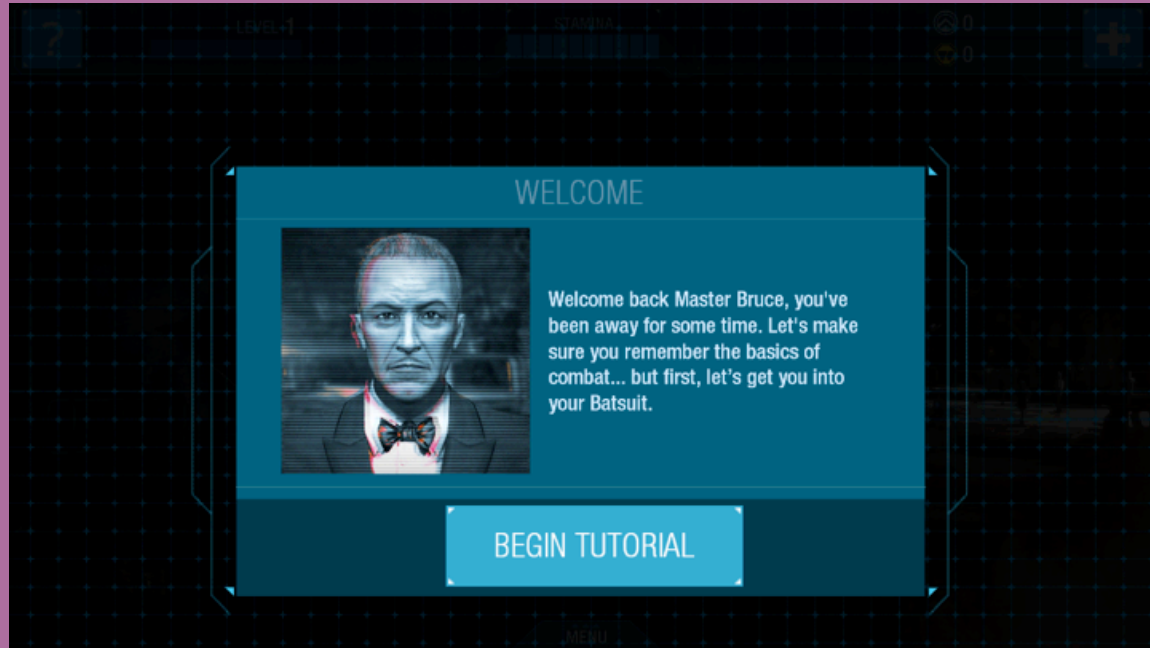


The Last Stand: Dead Zone

what examples should I follow?

# UI/UX best practices

# teach players to spend



Batman: Arkham Origins



# teach players to spend



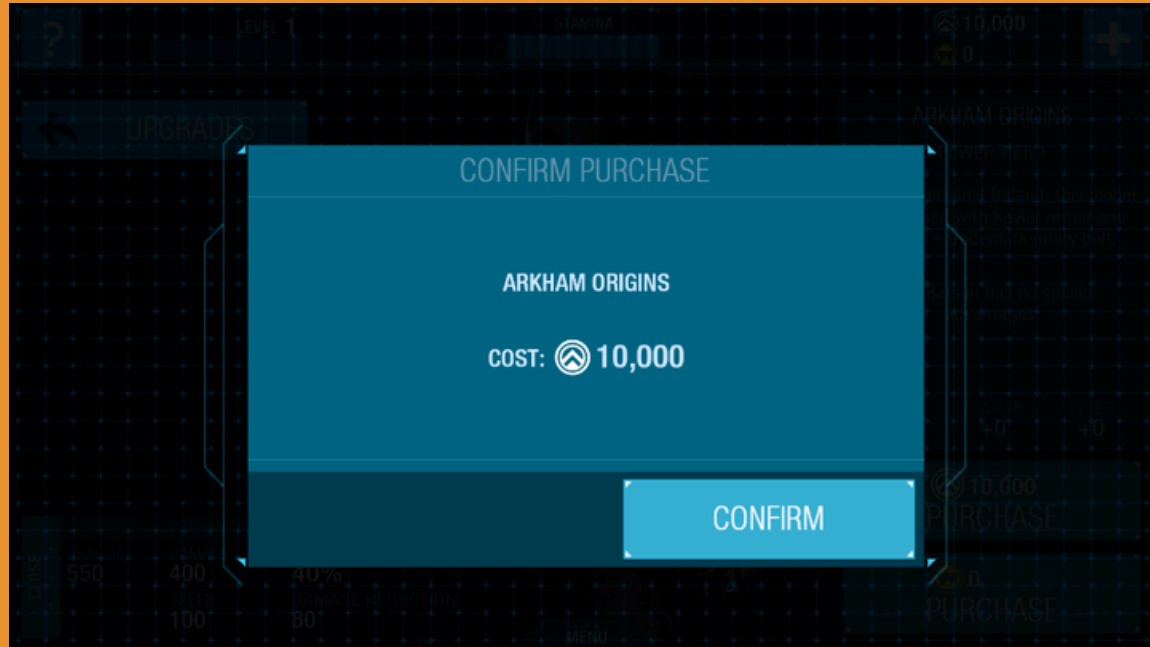
Batman: Arkham Origins

# teach players to spend



Batman: Arkham Origins

# teach players to spend



Batman: Arkham Origins

# teach players to spend



## Batman: Arkham Origins

# teach players to spend



Batman: Arkham Origins

# the first taste is always free



CSR Classics



# the first taste is always free



# the first taste is always free



## CSR Classics

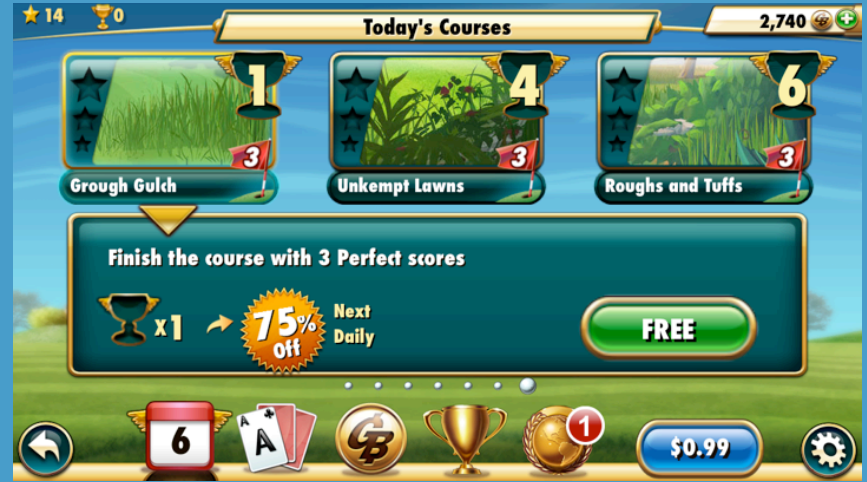


# level the playing field



Clash of Clans

# advertise your goods



Fairway Solitaire

# more fun with friends

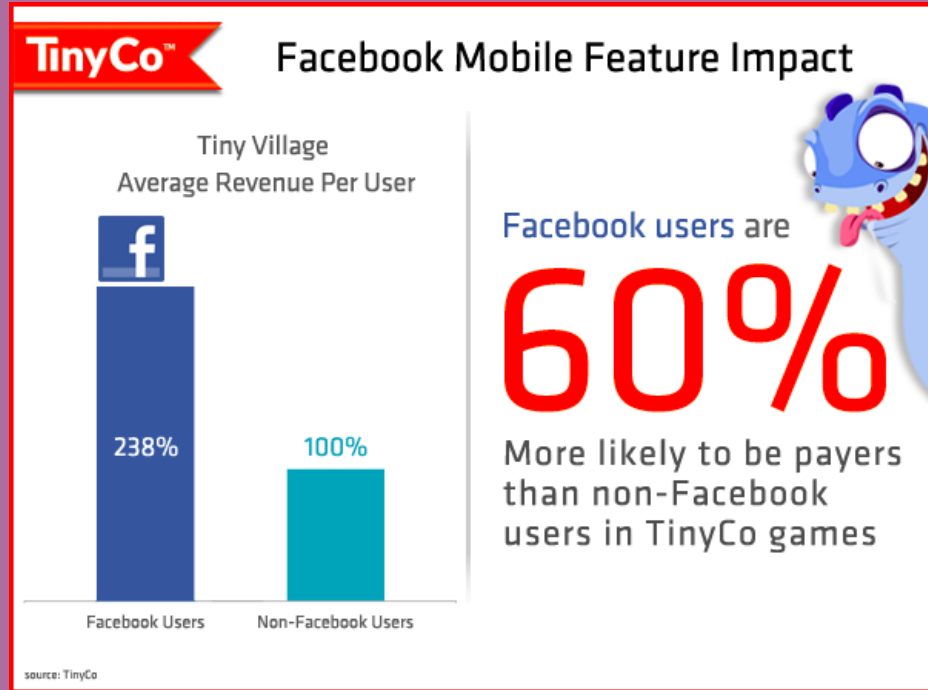
The screenshot displays the Bejeweled Blitz game interface. At the top, it shows a 'NEW HIGH SCORE' of 190,550, earned 700 coins, and a total of 178,500 coins. There are buttons for 'ADD COINS' and 'SHARE'. Below this is a leaderboard with four entries:

Rank	Player	Score	Stats
1	Greg Bliss	320,050	STATS
2	David Silverman	255,950	STATS
3	Ethan Levy	190,550	STATS
4	Andrew Mayer	No score yet	STATS

At the bottom of the screenshot is a large 'PLAY' button and a decorative scroll with a blue arrow pointing up.

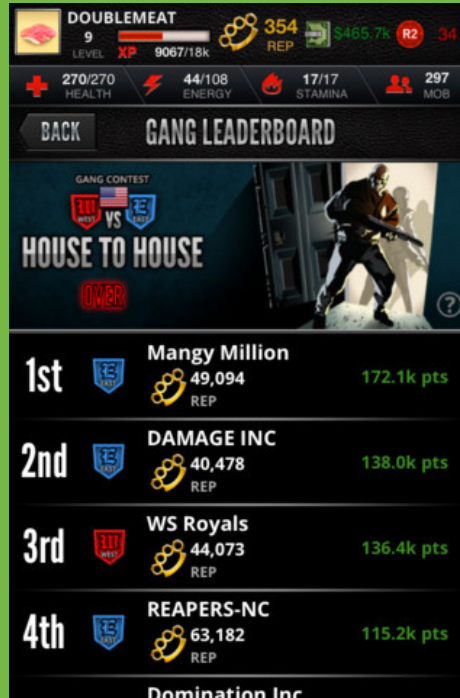
Bejeweled Blitz

# more fun with friends



TinyCo report jun '12

# community based elder game



Life is Crime

# optimize the path to purchase



Tiny Castle



# optimize the path to purchase



Tiny Castle

# optimize the path to purchase



Tiny Castle



# optimize the path to purchase



Tiny Castle

# optimize the path to purchase



Tiny Castle

# optimize the path to purchase



Backyard Monsters: Unleashed

# optimize the path to purchase



Backyard Monsters: Unleashed



mobile = short sessions, long treadmill



Defender II by Droidhen

# mobile = comfort gaming



# mobile = comfort gaming



# mobile = comfort gaming





# continue the conversation

- Email: [ethan@FamousAspect.com](mailto:ethan@FamousAspect.com)
- Twitter: [@FamousAspect](https://twitter.com/FamousAspect)
- Articles, tools and templates: [FamousAspect.com](https://FamousAspect.com)