

# Reaching Color Zen

From Prototype to Chart Topper in Three Weeks

**Robert Meyer**

Game Designer

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SMARTPHONE & TABLET GAMES  
SUMMIT

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
MARCH 17-21, 2014  
EXPO DATES: MARCH 19-21

**2014**

# Who am I?

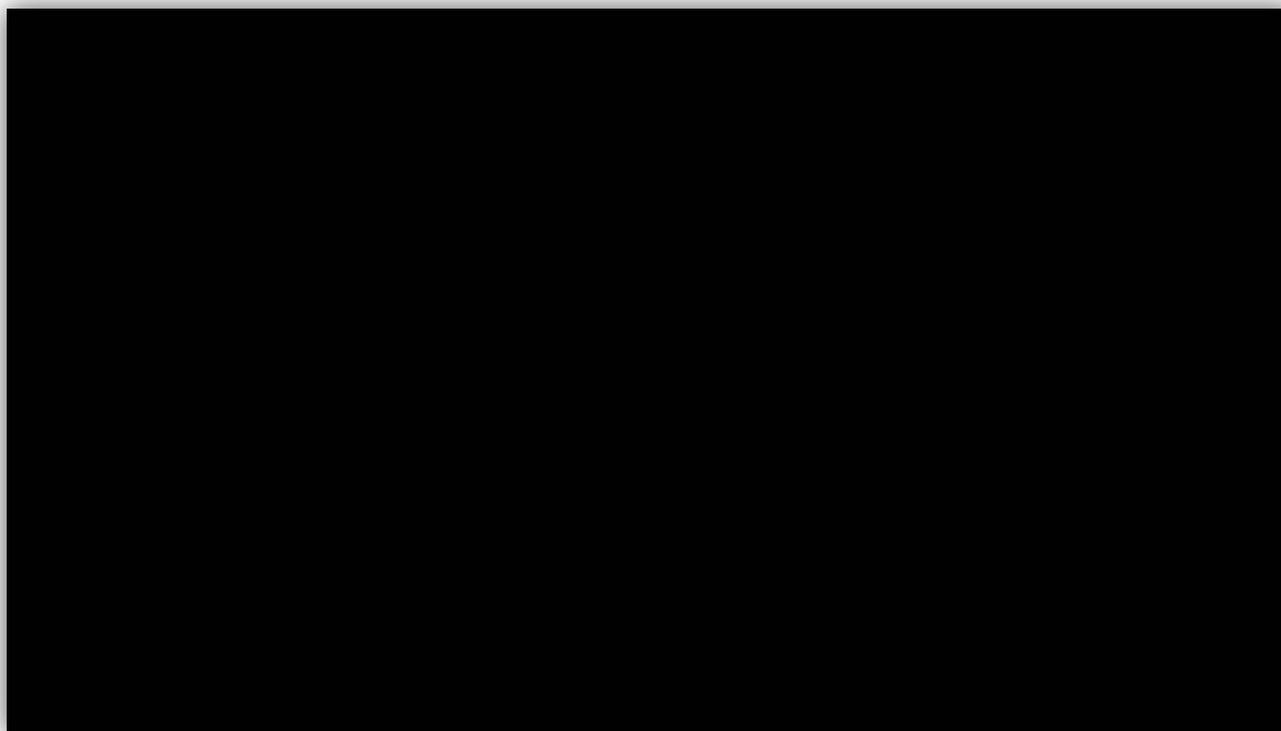


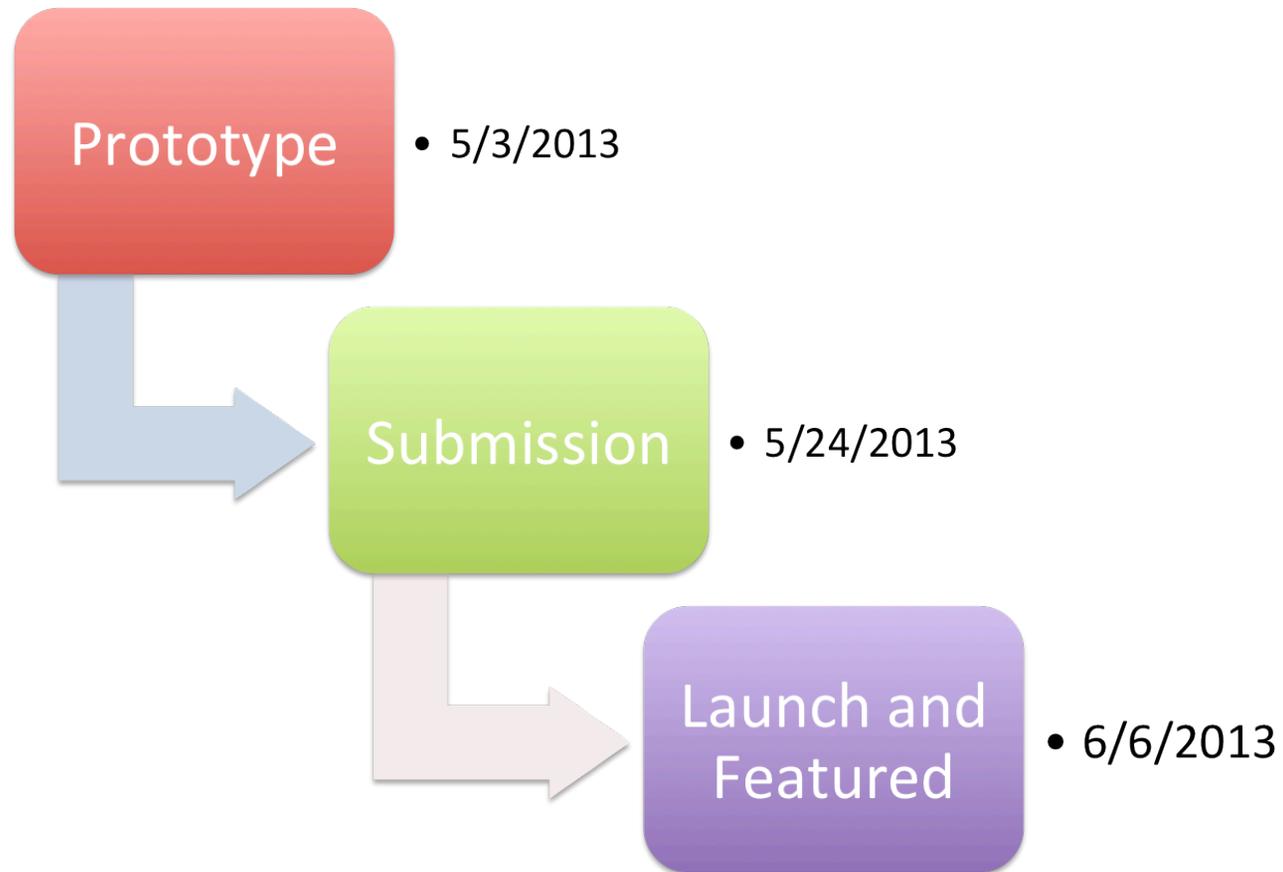
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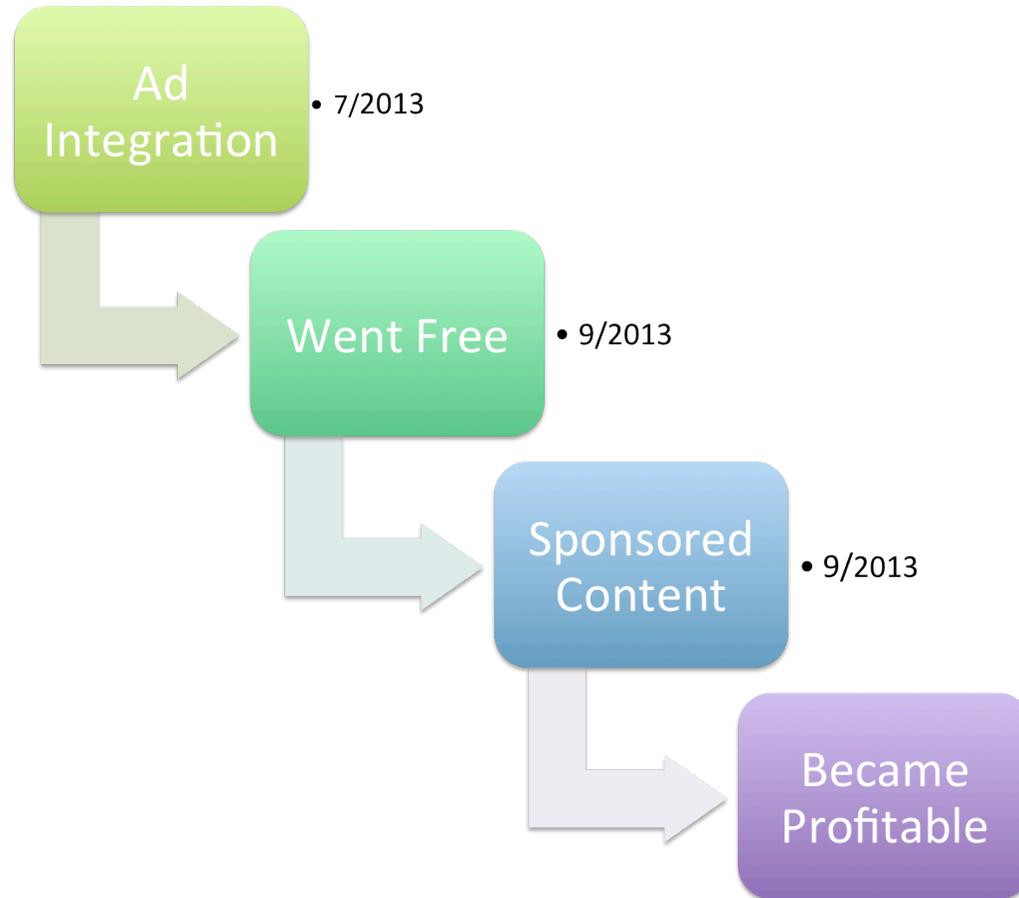
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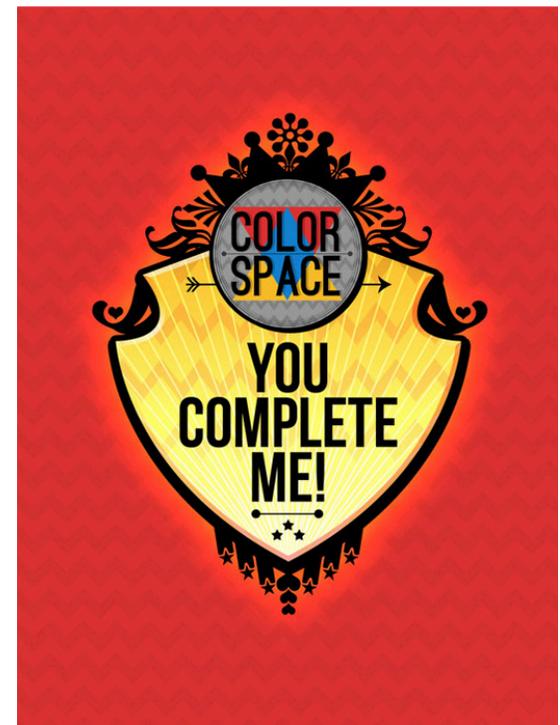
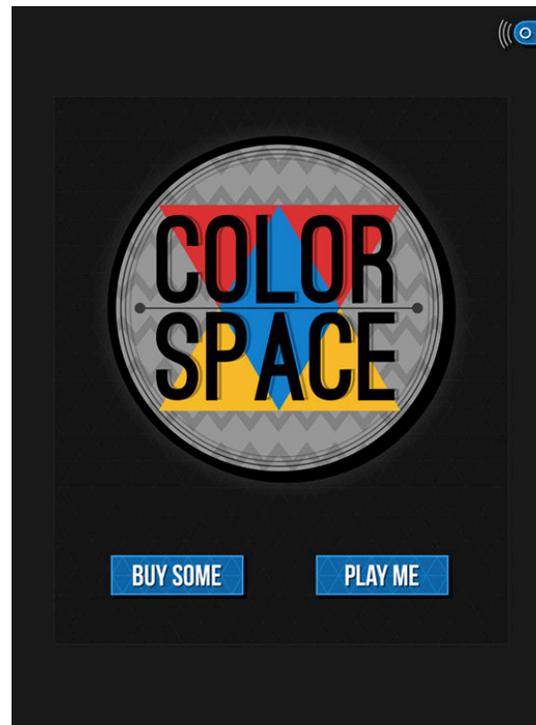
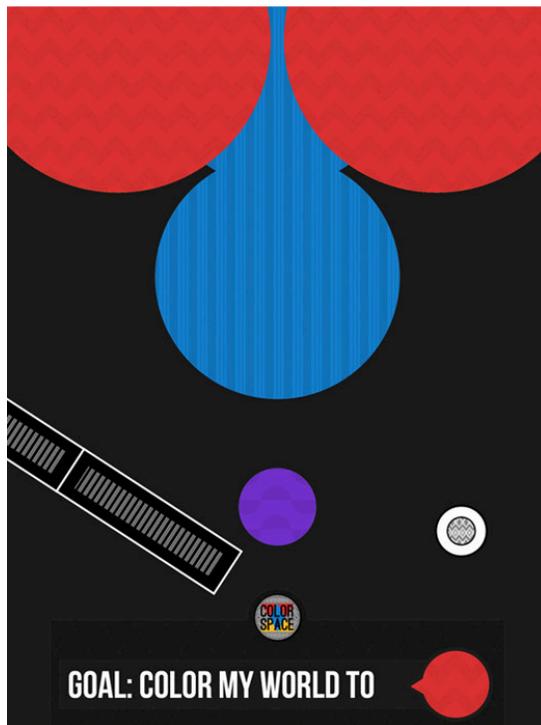






**12.5** Takeaways marked by a blue font that Doctors don't want you to see.

# The Prototype



# Takeaway 1

Tight, unmovable deadlines can help small teams create cool things at a low cost.



# Aesthetics and Title







Jun 26, 2013 by Sylvester Stallione

Version 1.0.0

**cool game** - this is a perfect meditative game- beautiful graphics, challenging at times-add more levels!

*"There are no timers in Color Zen. You aren't being scored. It's a game where you're meant to take your time. Slip on some headphones and just lose yourself in the color and shapes"*

- Kotaku

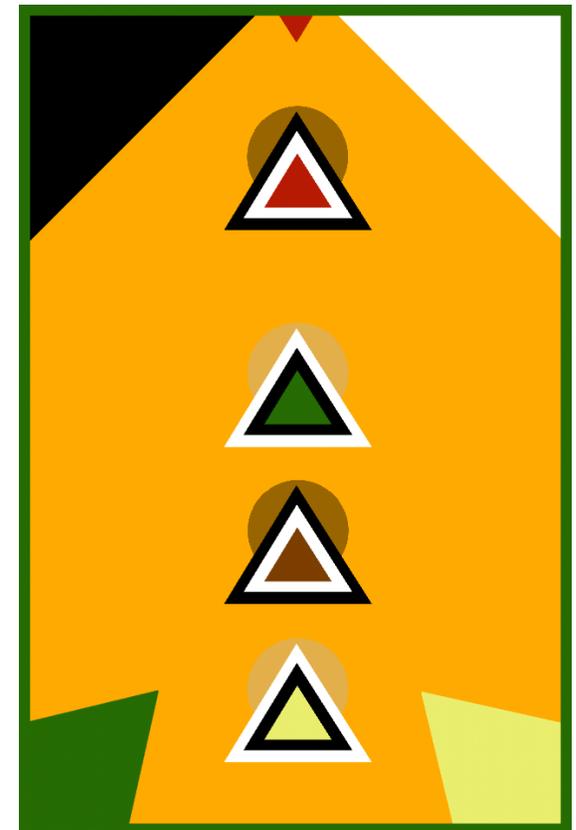


## Takeaway 2

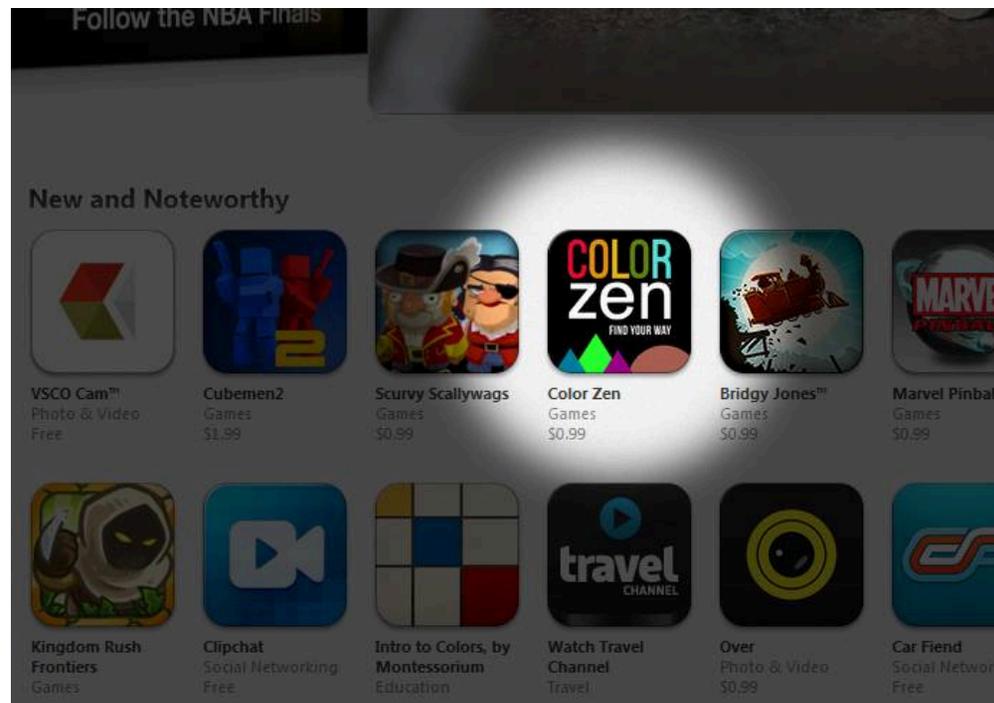
Settle on a unique design aesthetic for your game and stay true to it for every feature.

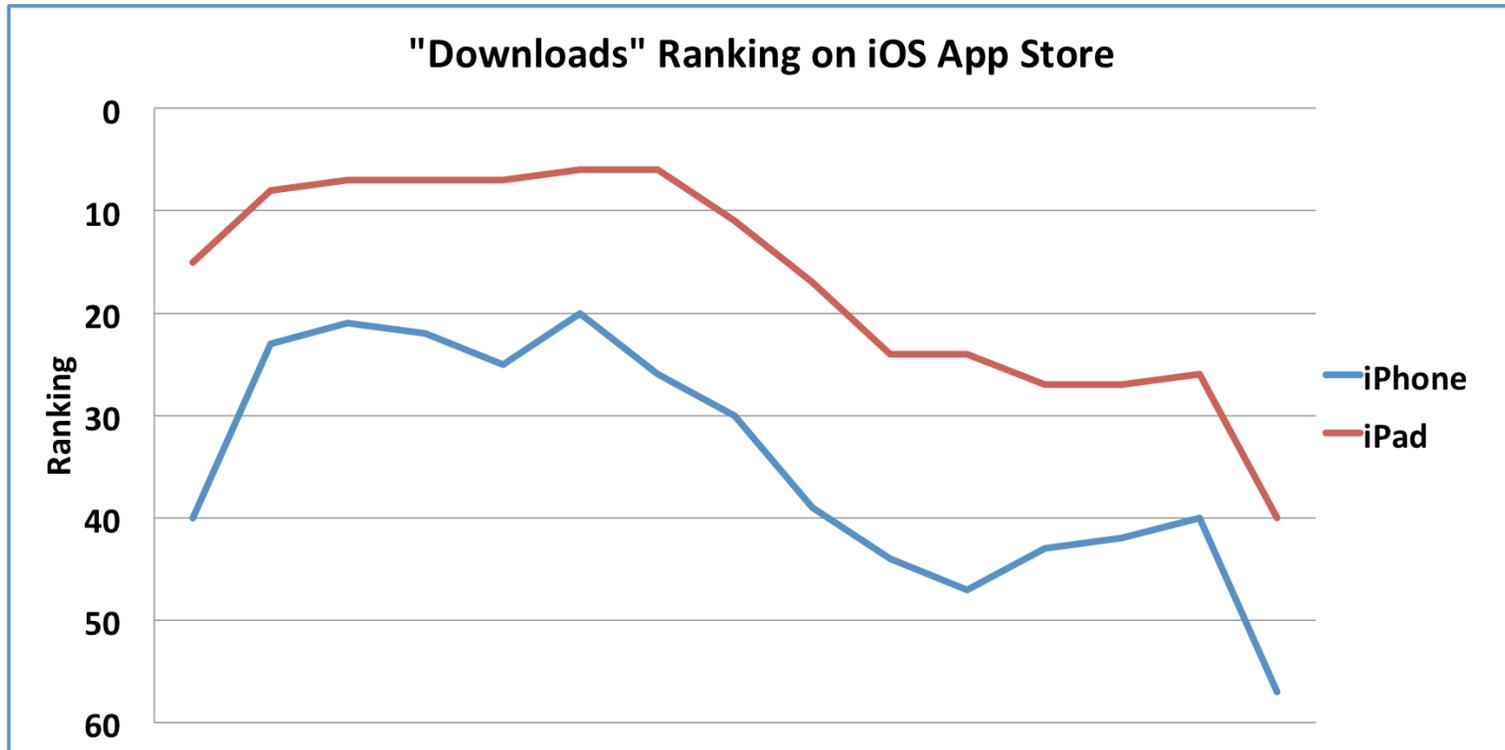
# Initial Launch Lessons

- Focusing on 2 week release means unrefined monetization
- Paid to free is hard. **3**
- Lack of stat tracking early hurts forever. **4**

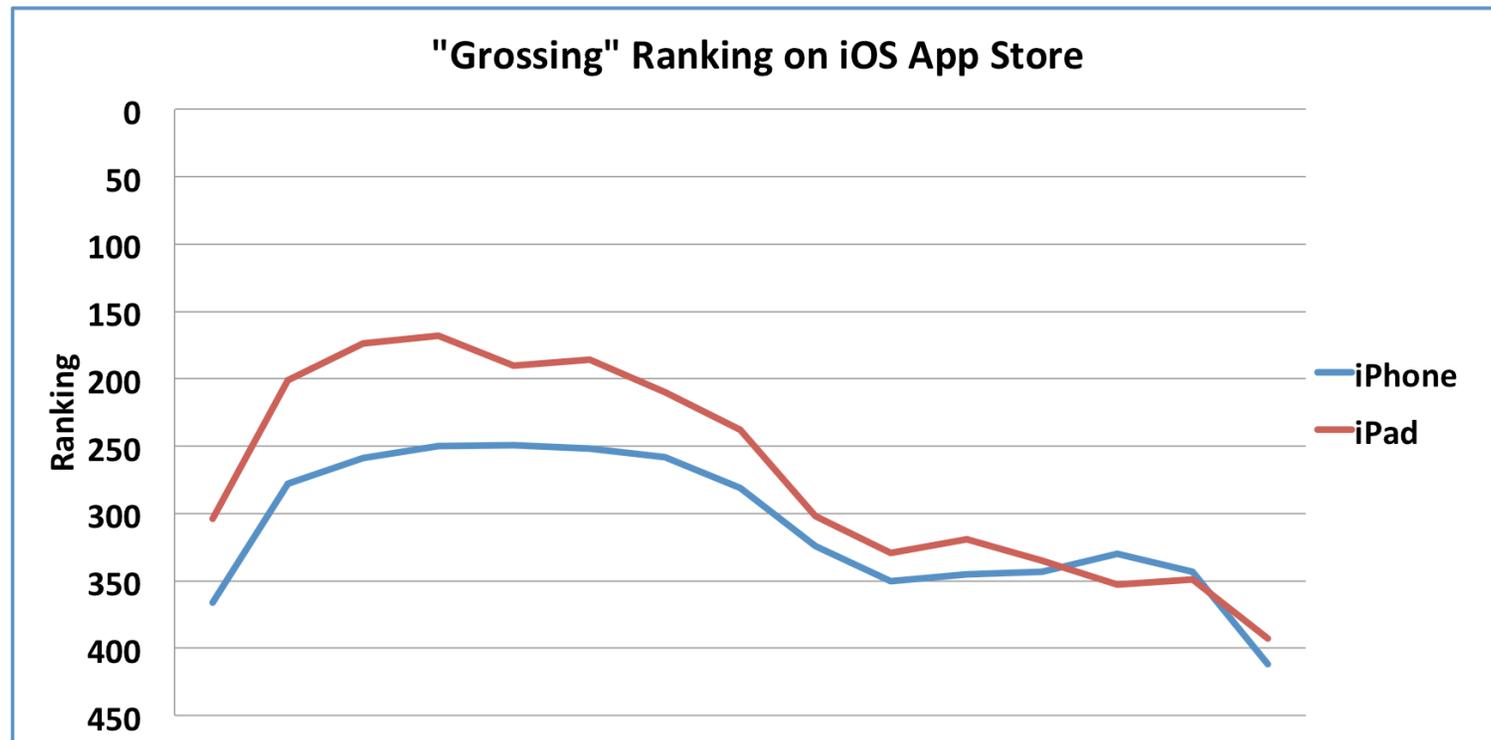


What does being “featured” on the App Store as a \$0.99 game really mean?





Peaked at #6 Paid Downloads on iPad, #20 on iPhone



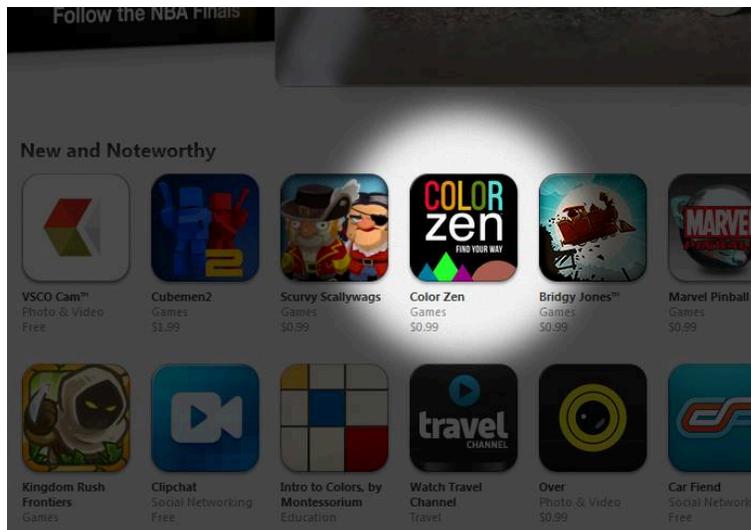
Peaked at #168 on iPad, #249 on iPhone

**For our \$0.99 game:**

#6 on the Download charts =  
#168 on Grossing charts

**For our \$0.99 game:**

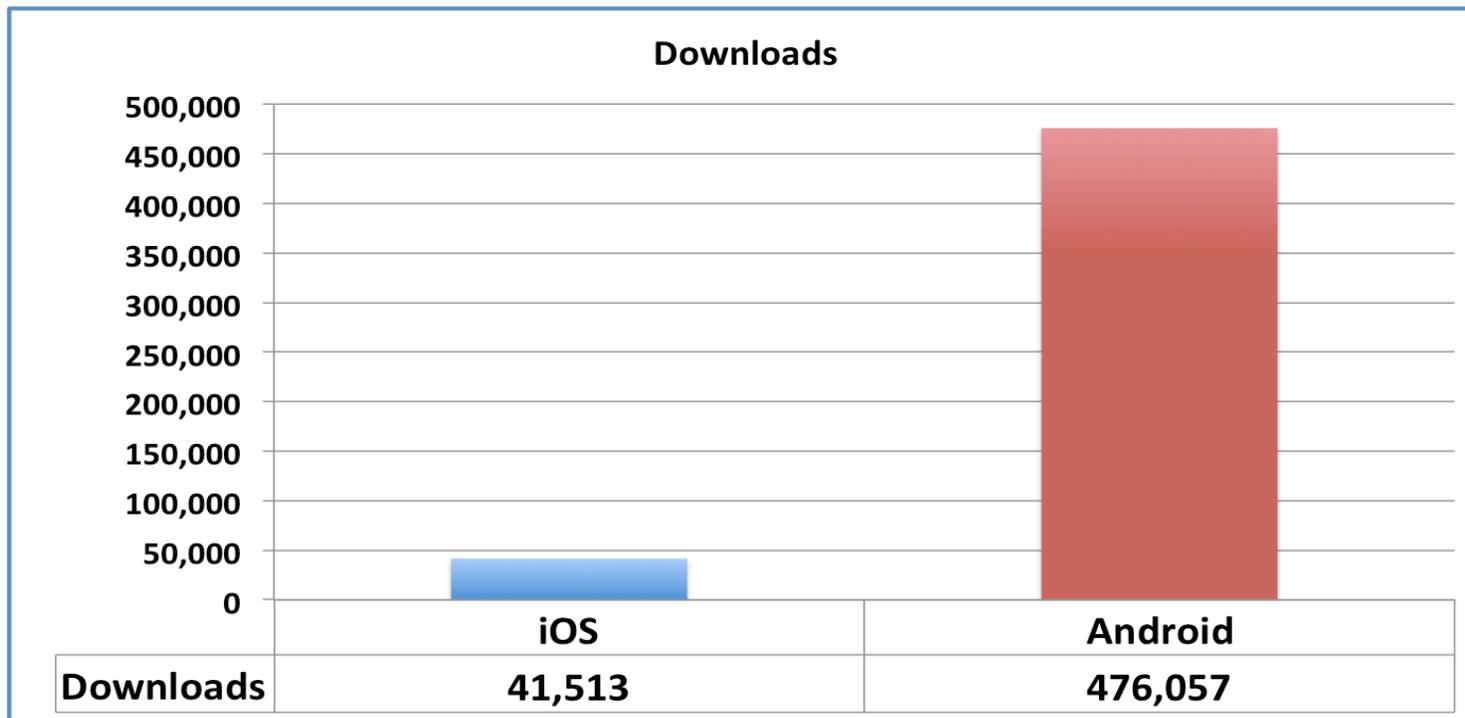
41,500 Downloads =  
\$30,500.00



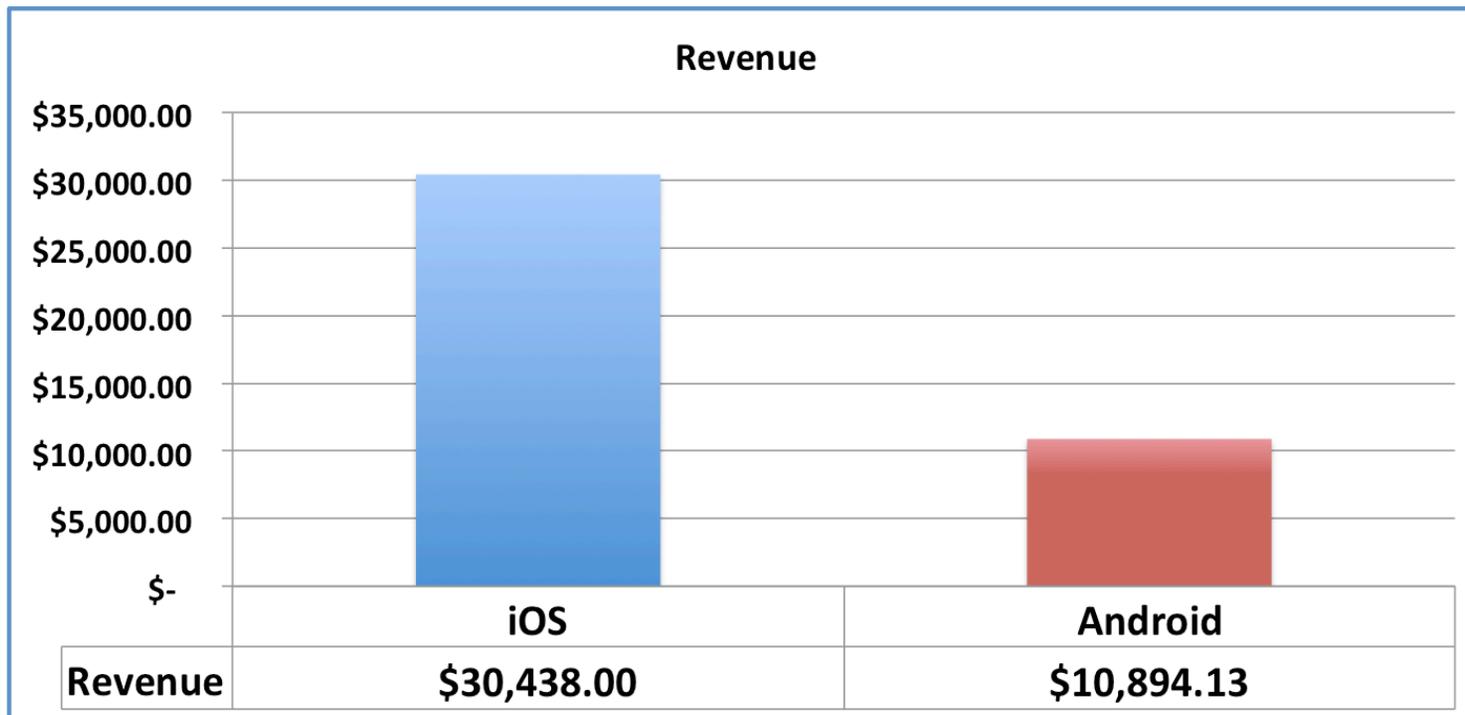
vs.



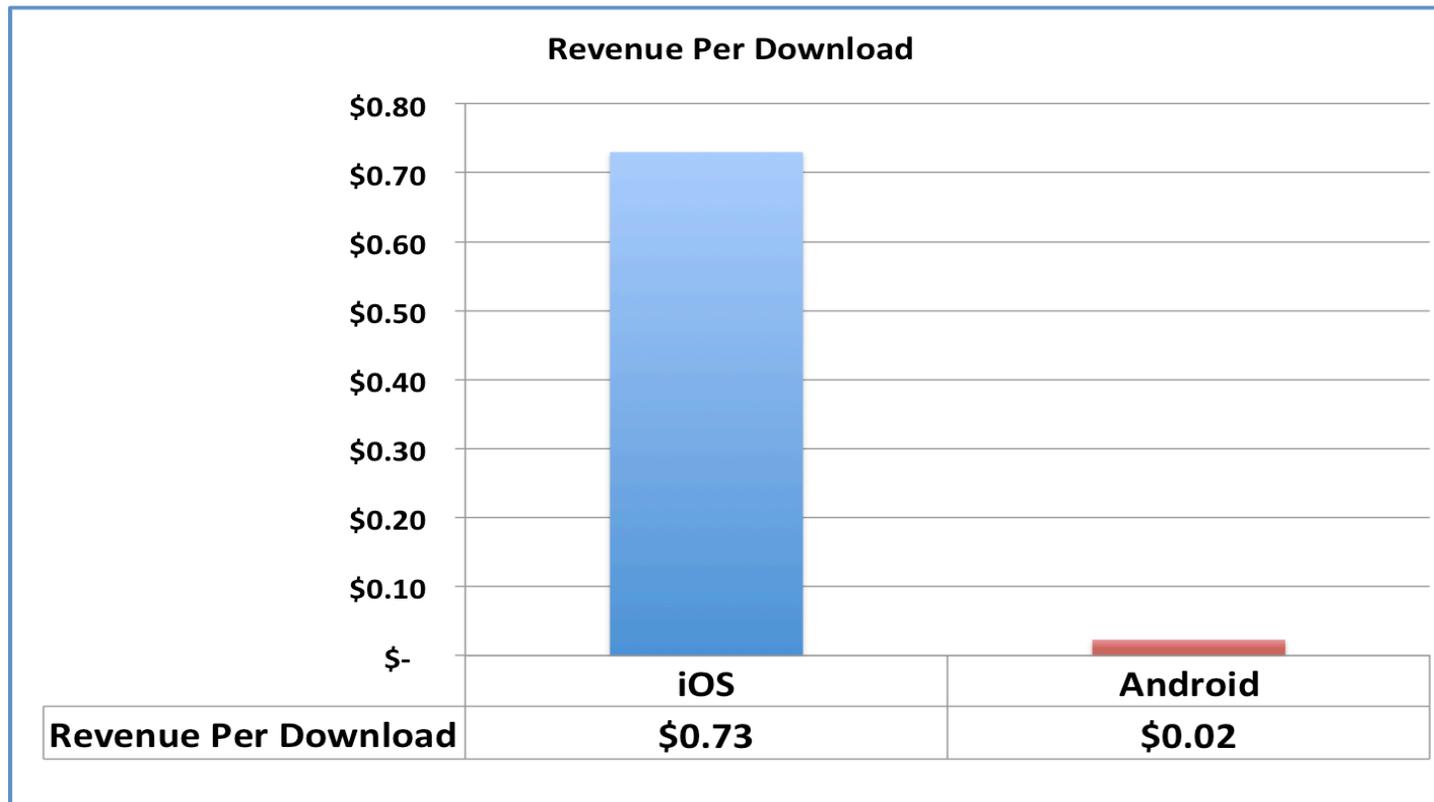
## After 2 Weeks of Being Featured

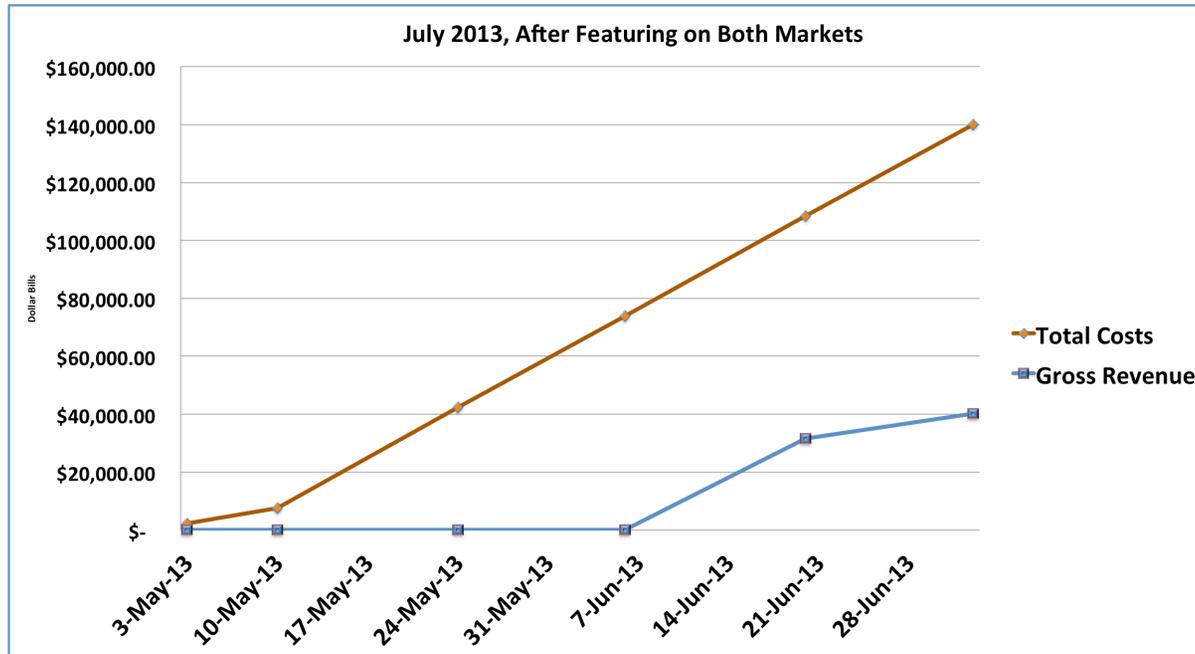


## After 2 Weeks of Being Featured



## After 2 Weeks of Being Featured

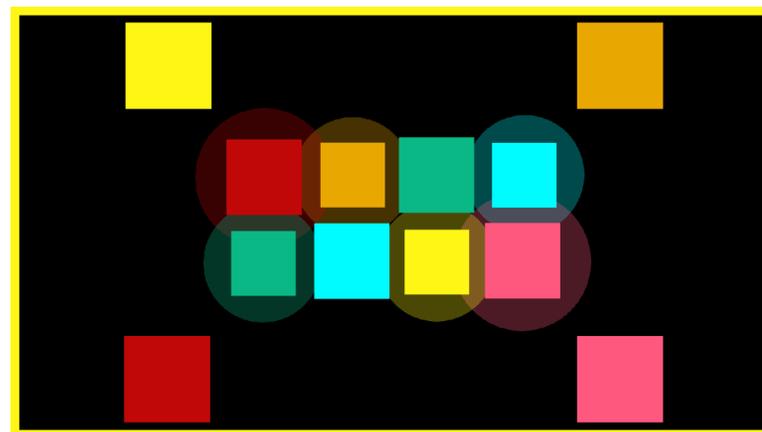
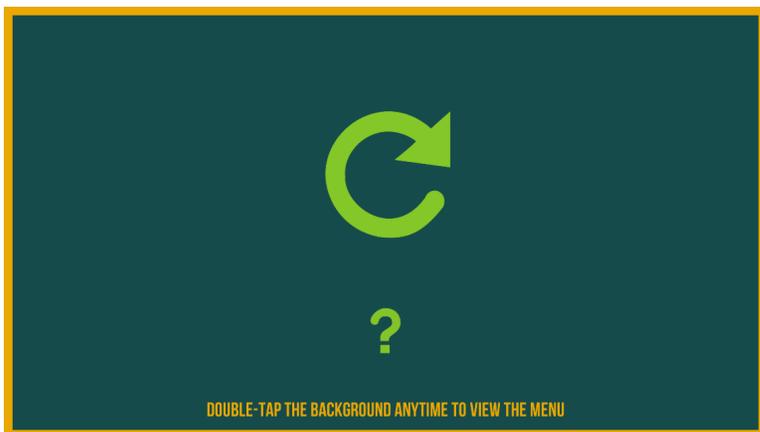
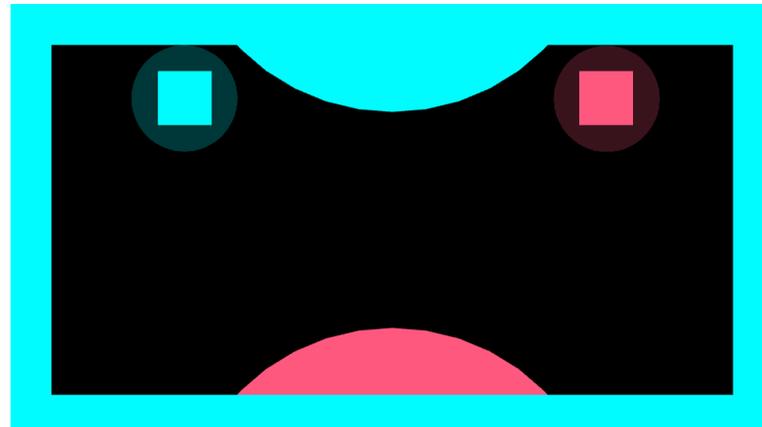
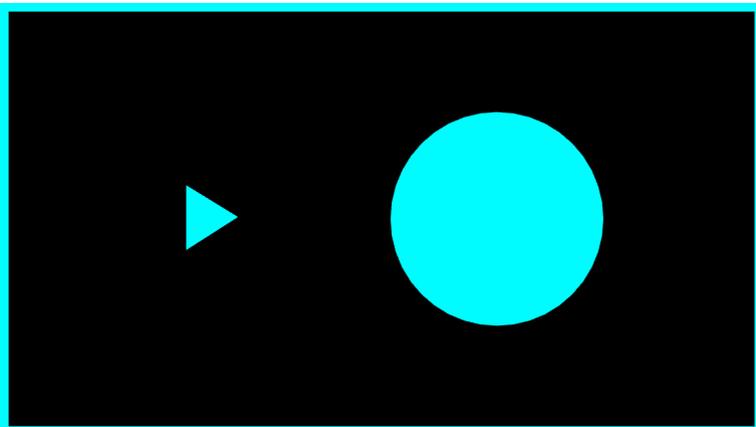


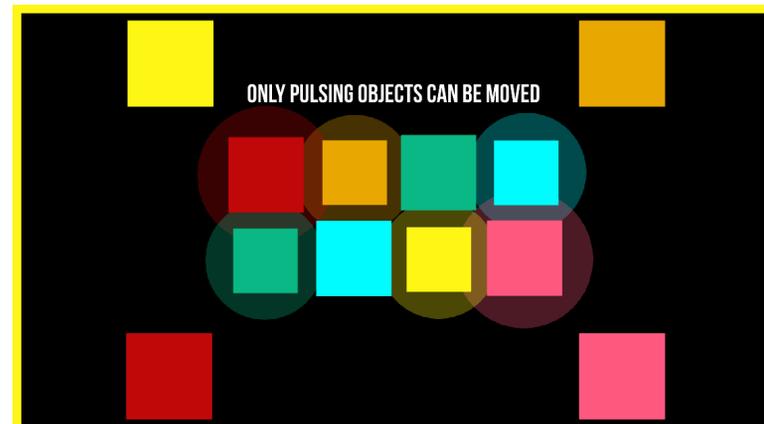
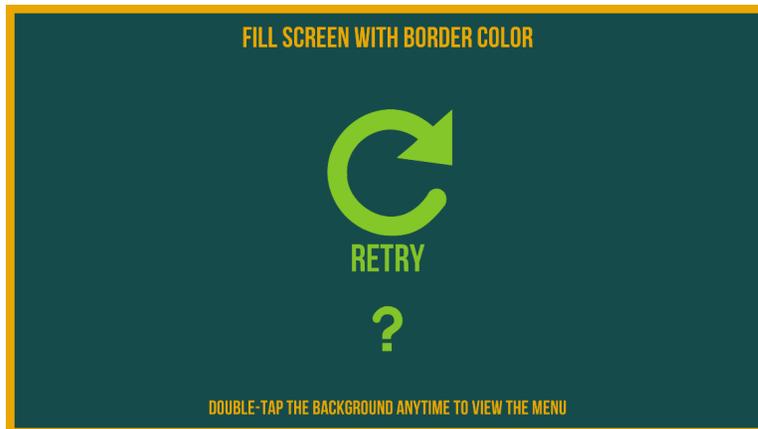
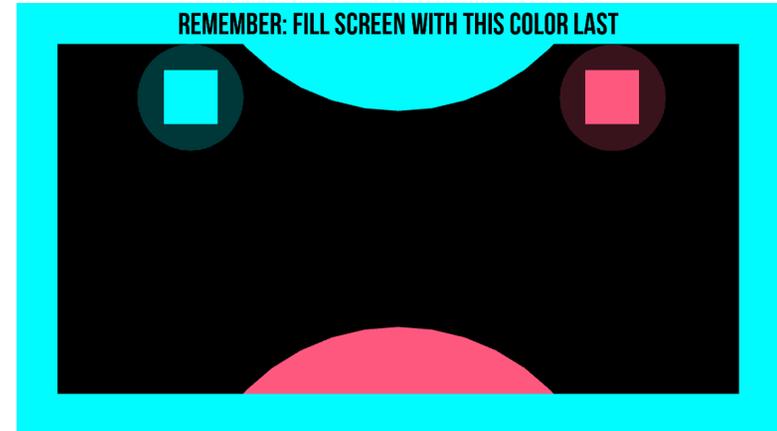
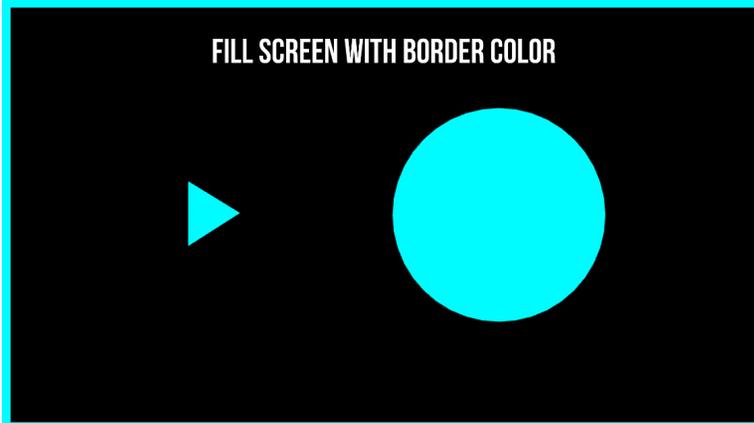


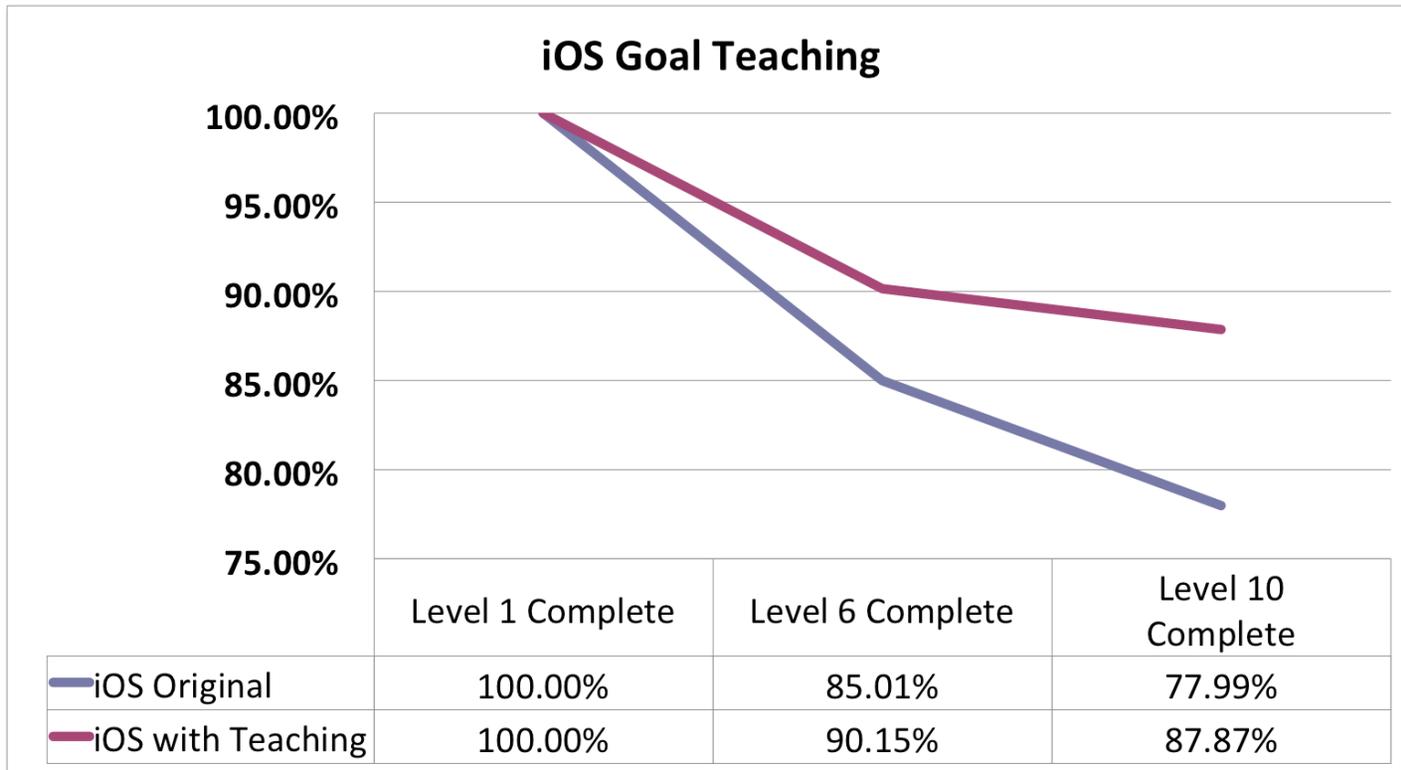
7 people working on it for about 9 weeks at this point

5 & 6

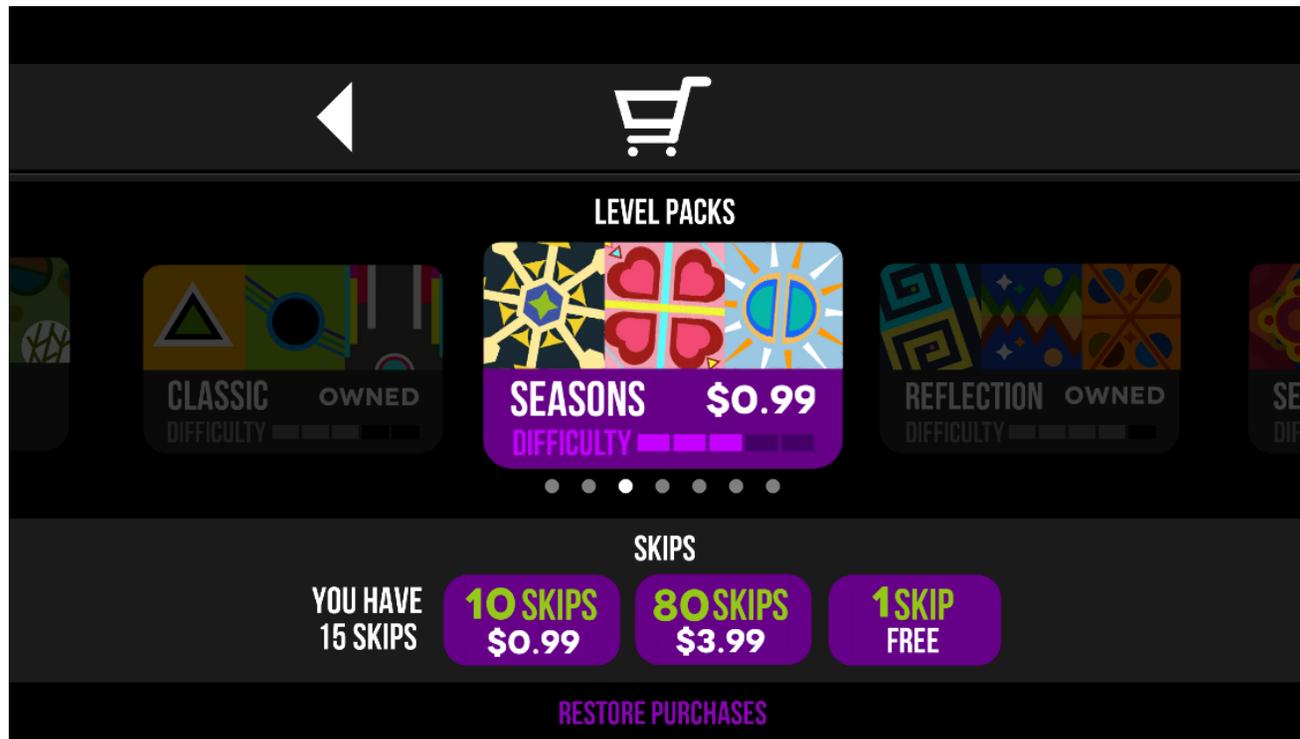
# The Self-Teaching Game vs. The Crutch of Text



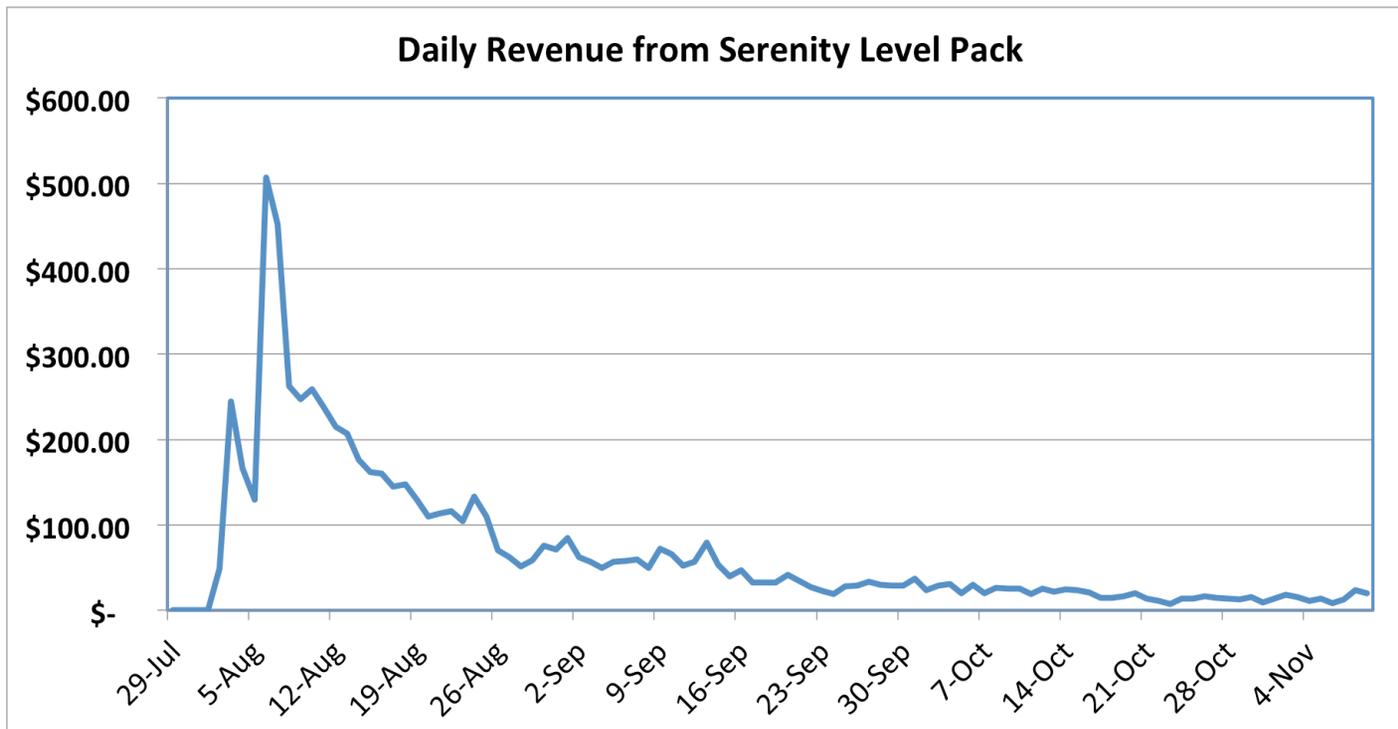




# Level Packs



# Level Packs



## Level Packs

Total Gross Revenue From Serenity Pack as  
of 3+ months after release:

**\$7,085.69**

Total cost estimate: **~\$10,000**

# Bundling Packs

**ONE TIME OFFER**

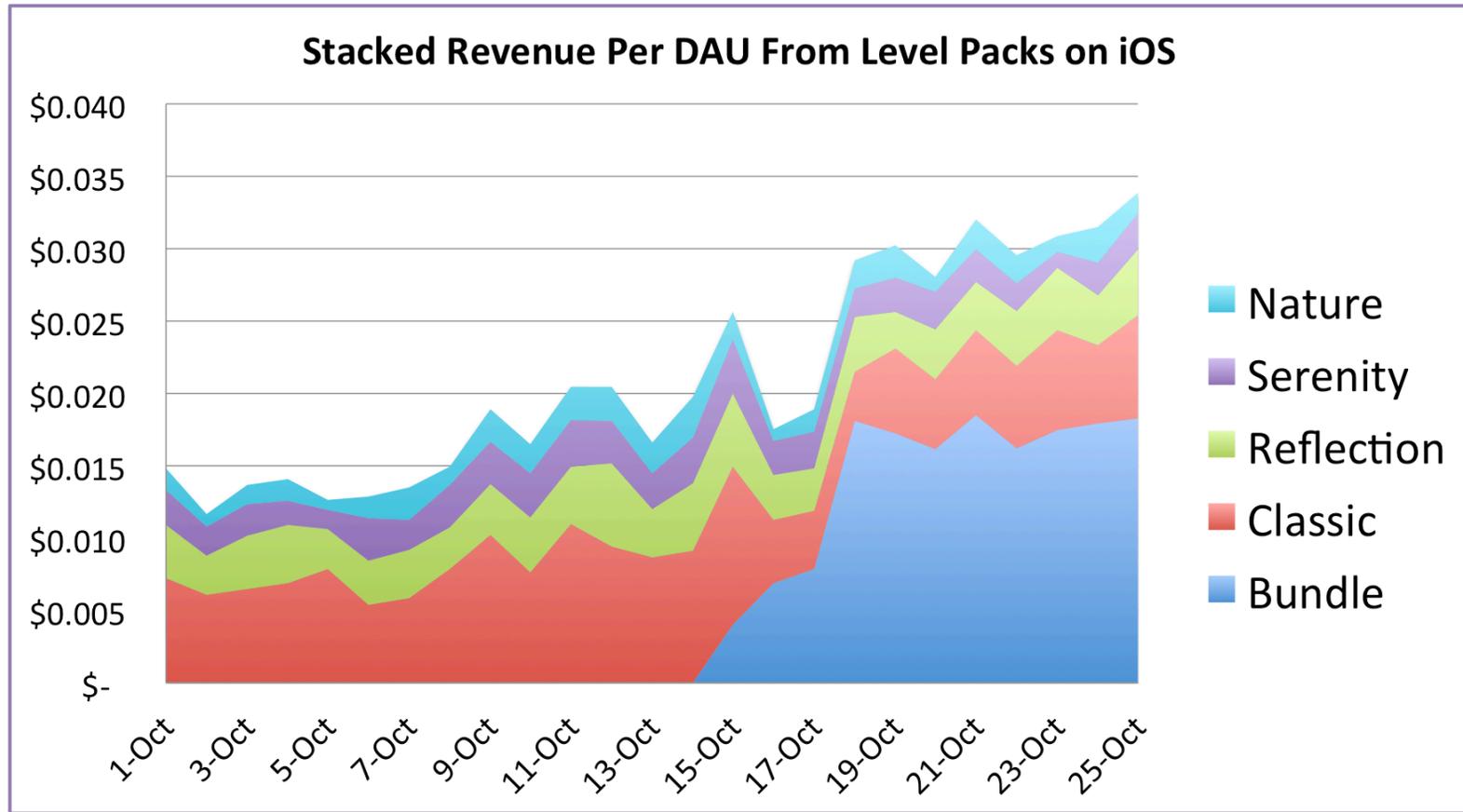
GET ALL 4 PACKS, 460 LEVELS!

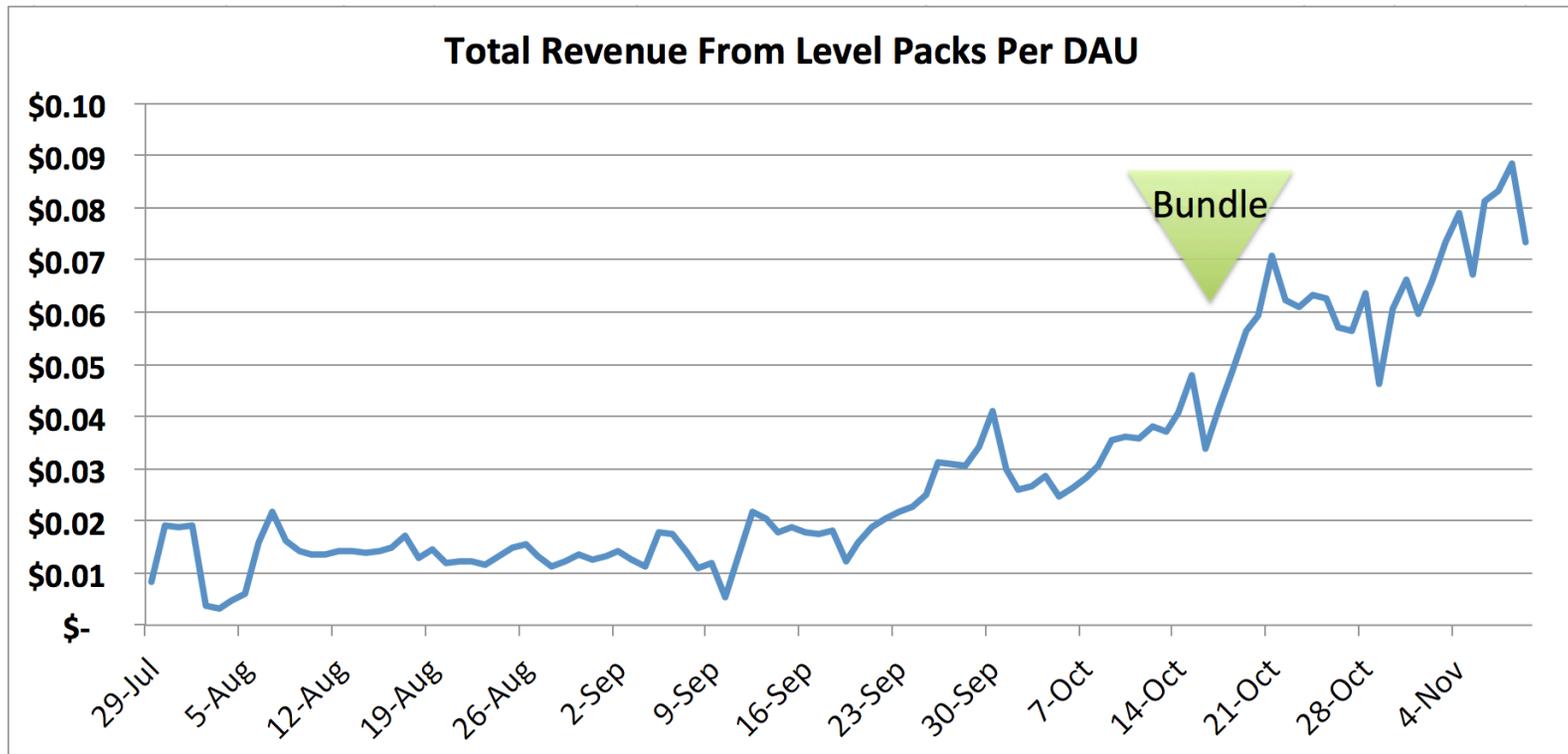


**\$3.99 VALUE!**  
**BUY ALL PACKS \$2.99**

**BUY CLASSIC \$0.99**

• • • • •





# Micro-talk time

# Reaching Ad Zen (or "RAZ")

How we put Ads in our game without hating ourselves or disrespecting our players and still made some money.

**Robert Meyer**  
Game Designer

@RobMeyer7



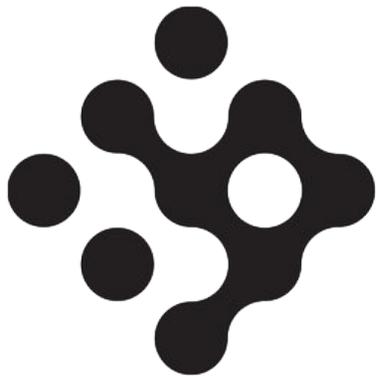
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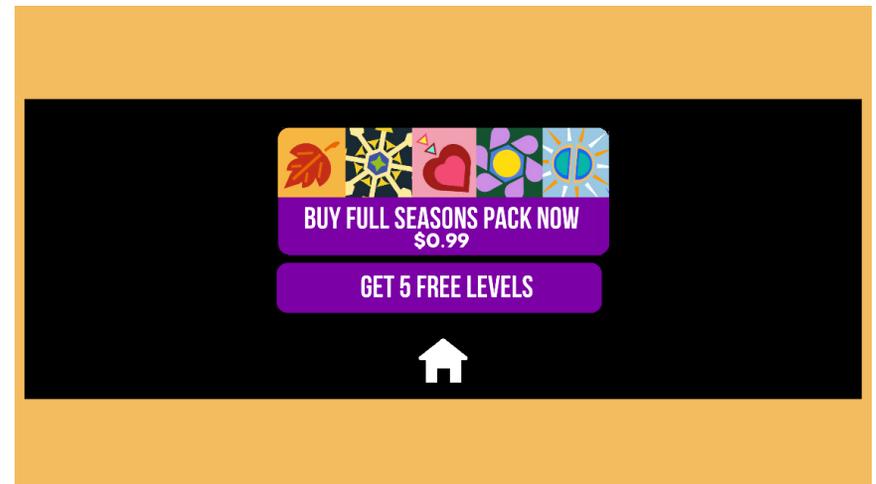
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# Who am I?



# Ads



 WIN \$1,000,000 OR MORE  
PLAY THE NEW YORK LOTTERY'S  
SECOND CHANCE SWEEPSTAKES

[LEARN MORE](#)



MONOPOLY © 2014 Hasbro. All rights reserved.



skip booster >>

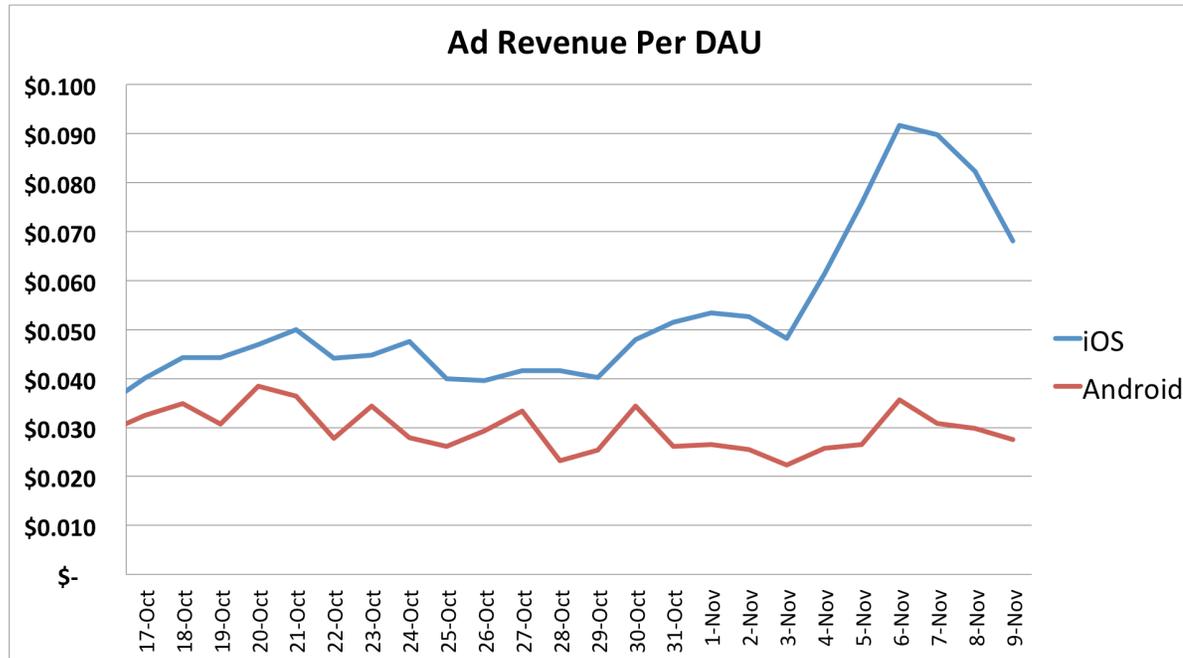
YOU GOT 5 LEVELS IN

 SEASONS  
CHAPTER 1

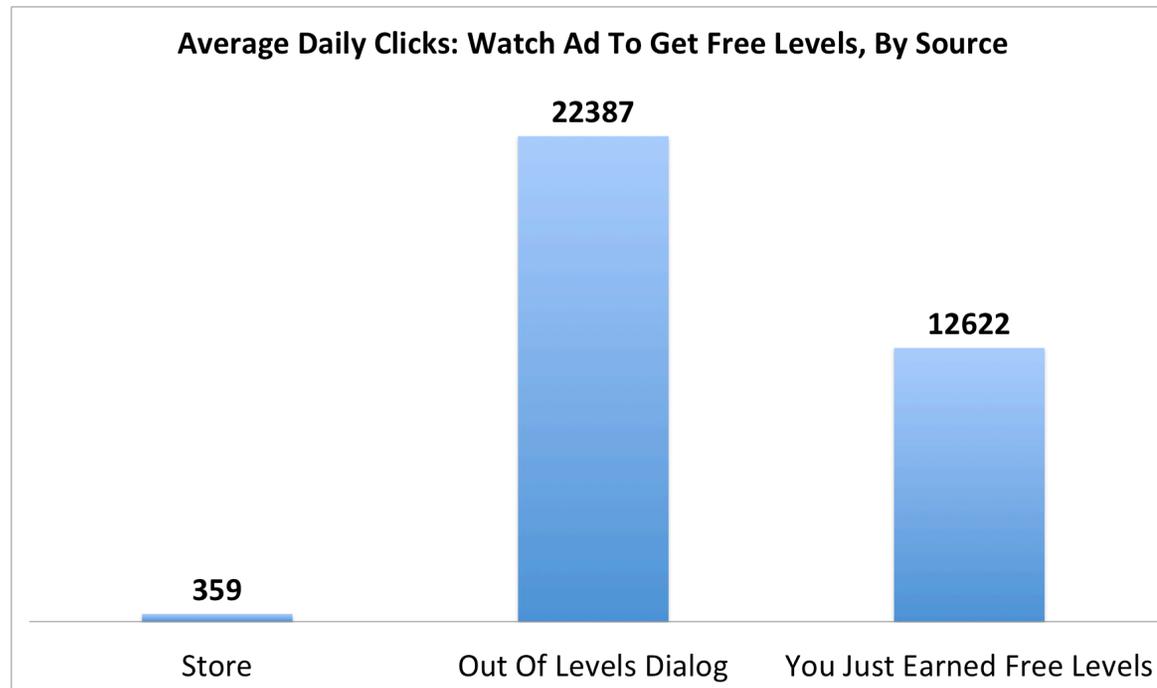
CONTINUE

GET 5 MORE

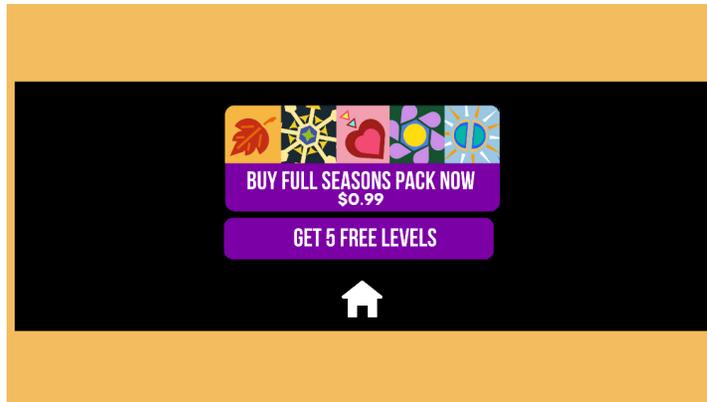
The screenshot shows a dark-themed interface for purchasing in-game items. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a white left-pointing arrow and a white shopping cart icon. Below this, the section is titled "LEVEL PACKS" in white text. Three level pack cards are displayed horizontally. The first card is partially visible on the left, showing a brown and blue geometric pattern and the word "OWNED". The second card, titled "SERENITY", features a colorful geometric pattern and is labeled "OWNED" with a difficulty progress bar below it. The third card, titled "NATURE", features a yellow, blue, and green geometric pattern and is also labeled "OWNED" with a difficulty progress bar. To the right of these cards is a large, semi-transparent grey button with the text "GET 5 FREE LEVELS". Below the level packs, there is a horizontal row of seven small white dots, with the fifth dot from the left being larger and white, indicating the current selection. The next section is titled "SKIPS" in white text. It displays "YOU HAVE 15 SKIPS" in white. To the right are three purple buttons: the first says "10 SKIPS \$0.99", the second says "80 SKIPS \$3.99", and the third says "1 SKIP FREE". At the bottom of the screen is a purple button with the text "RESTORE PURCHASES" in white.



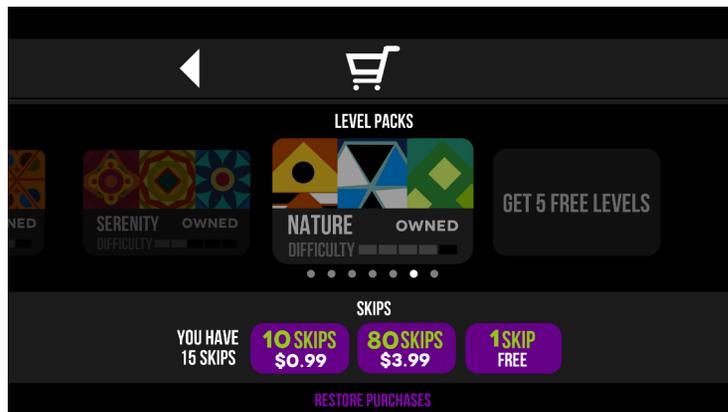
Ad Revenue Averaged **4.4¢** per DAU  
Our limit was ad inventory, not user interest



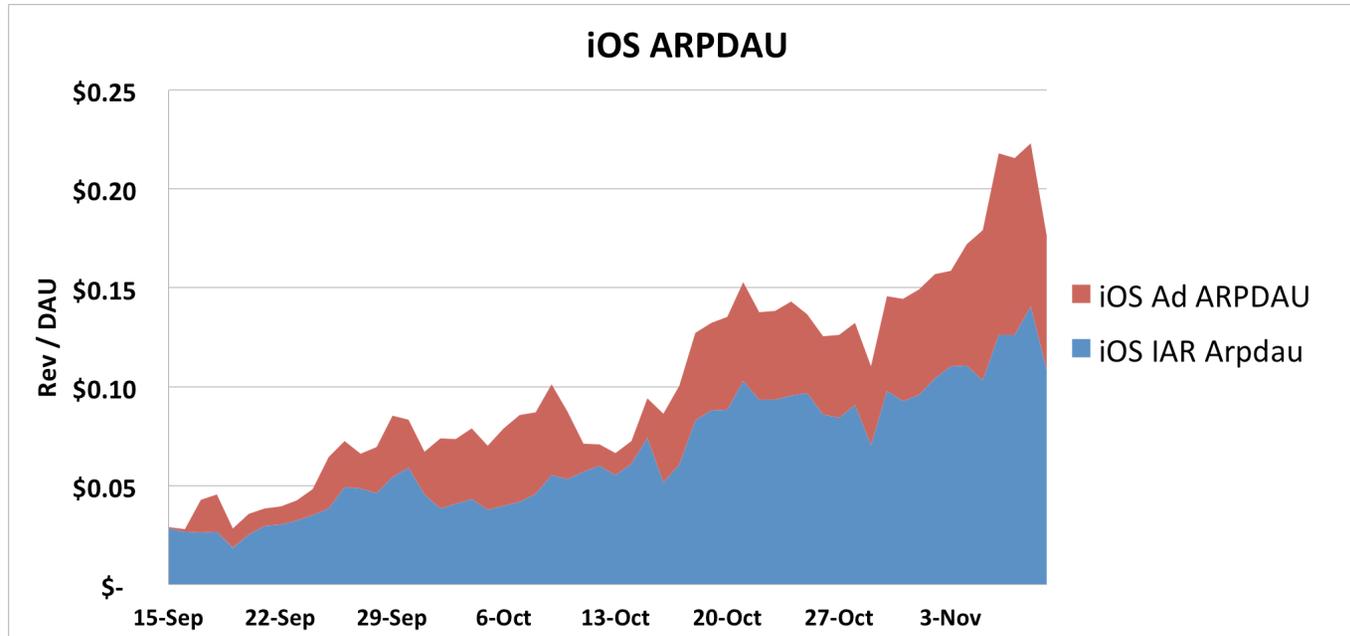
**98.4%** of Opt-ins came when player was presented with "Out Of Levels" dialog.



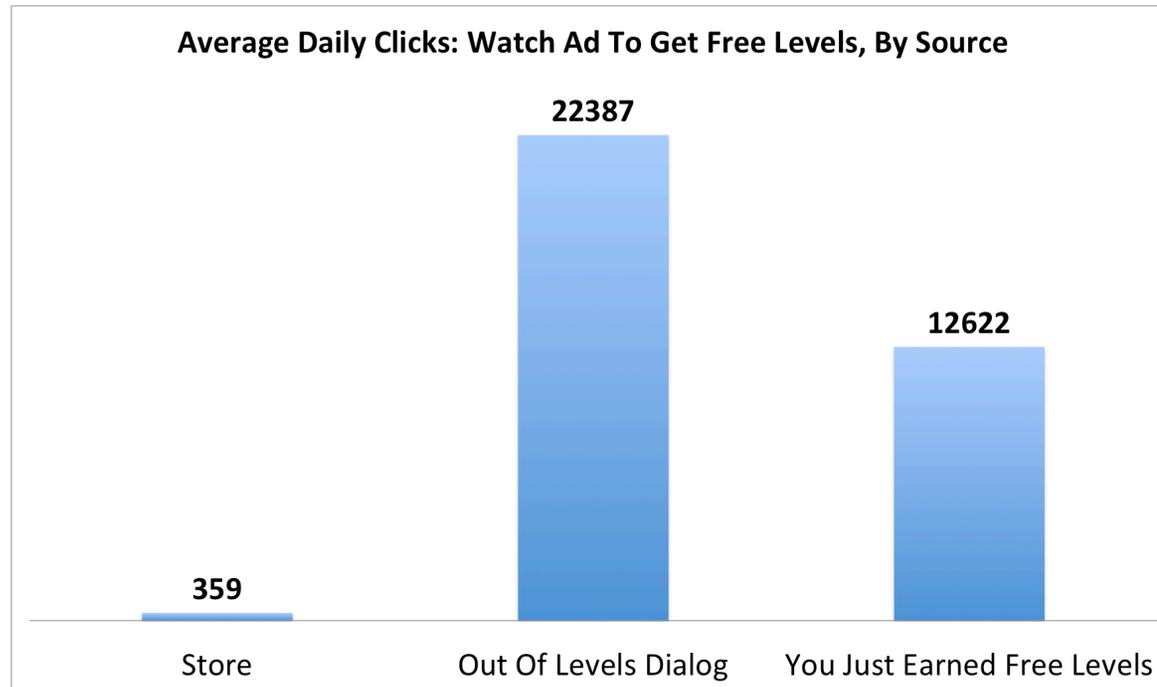
98.4% of Ads



~1% of Ads

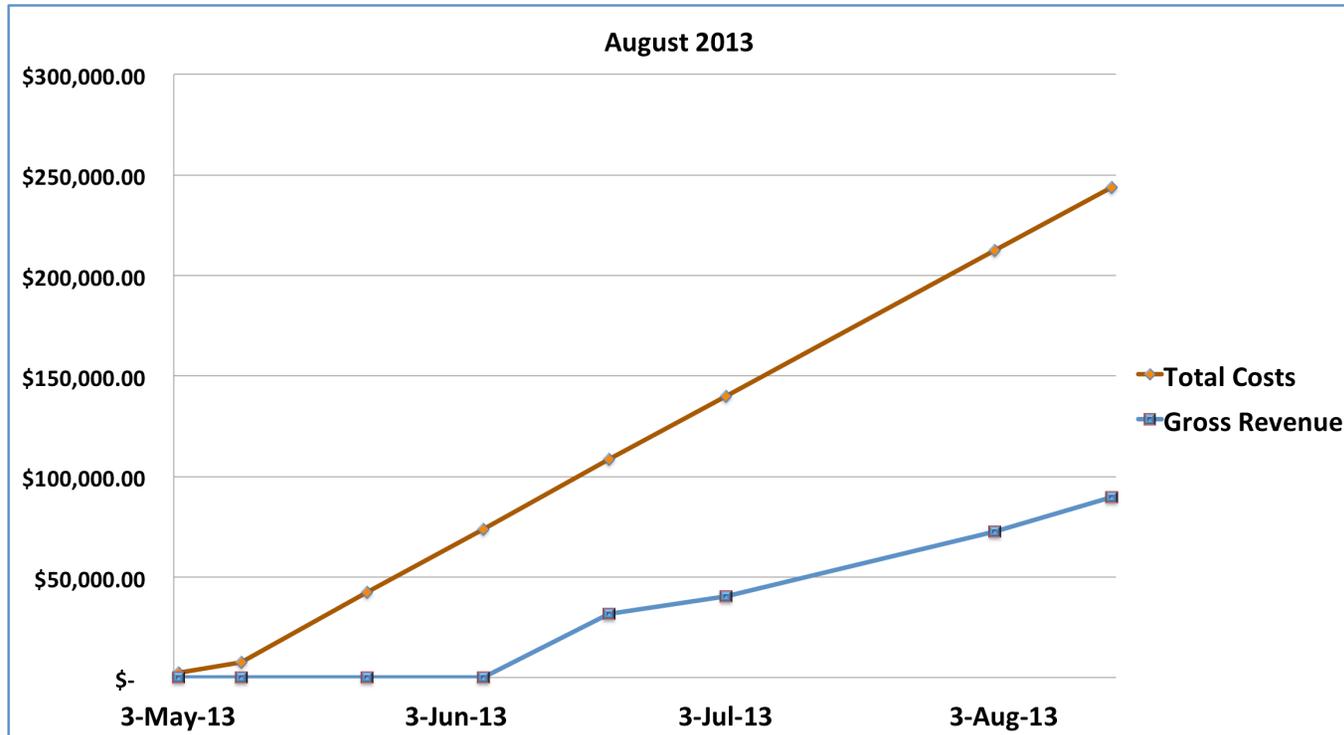


Ad Revenue Averaged **35.4%** of Total Revenue

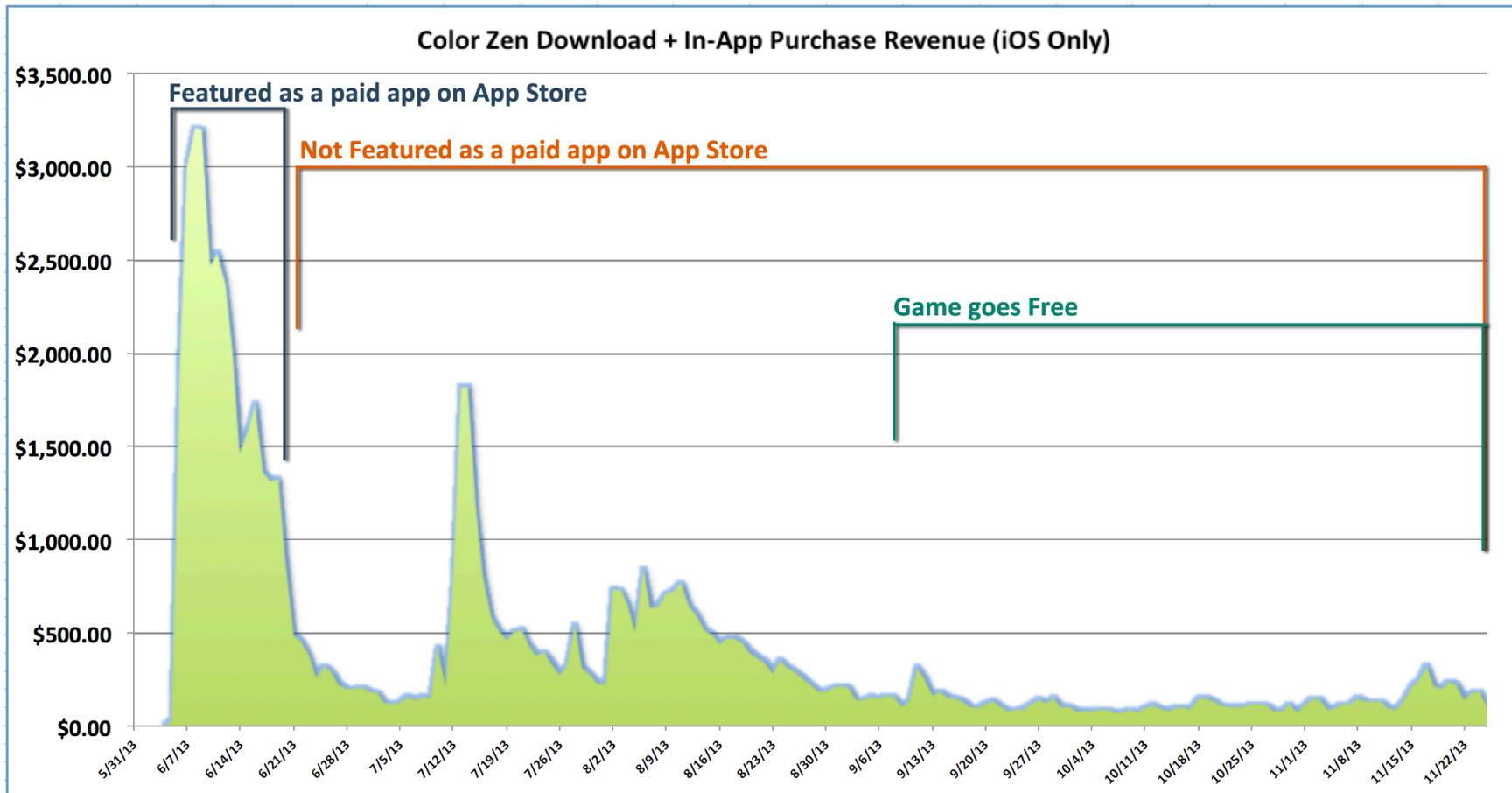


**35.7%** of the time players opted to watch another ad right after finishing their previous one.

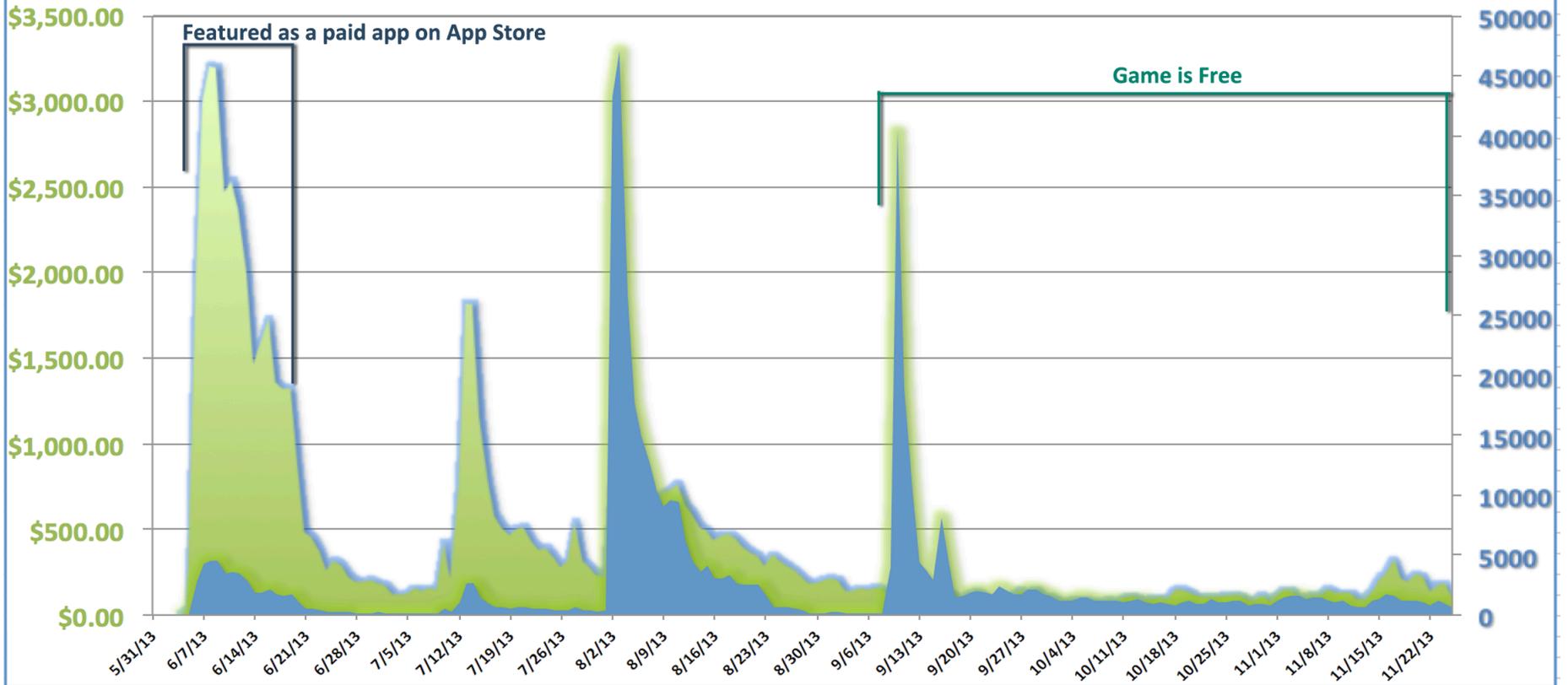
Micro-talk concluded.

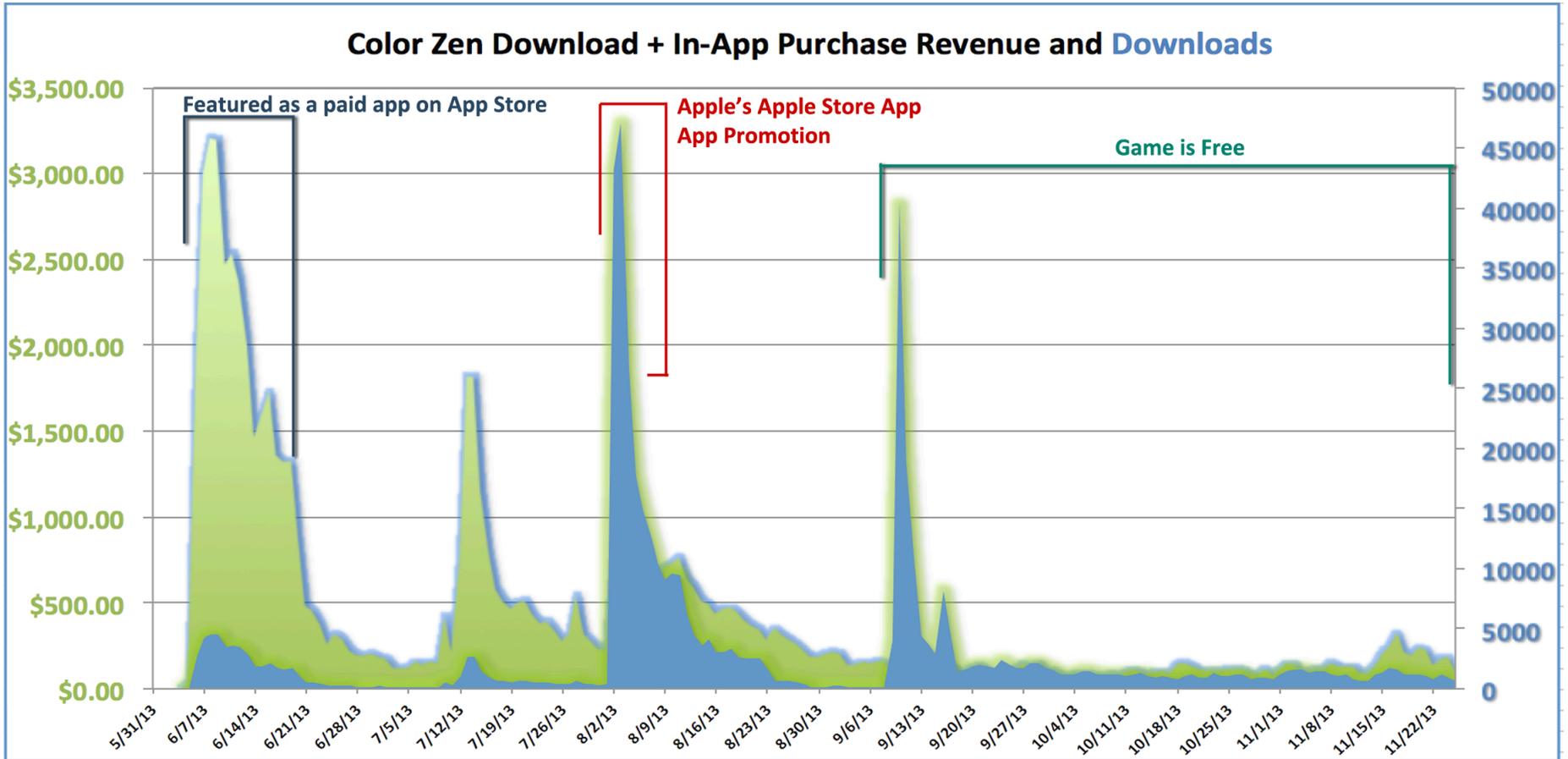


Well, we might as well go free on iOS.



### Color Zen Download + In-App Purchase Revenue and Downloads





# A Quick Note on Paid User Acquisition (AQN on PUA)



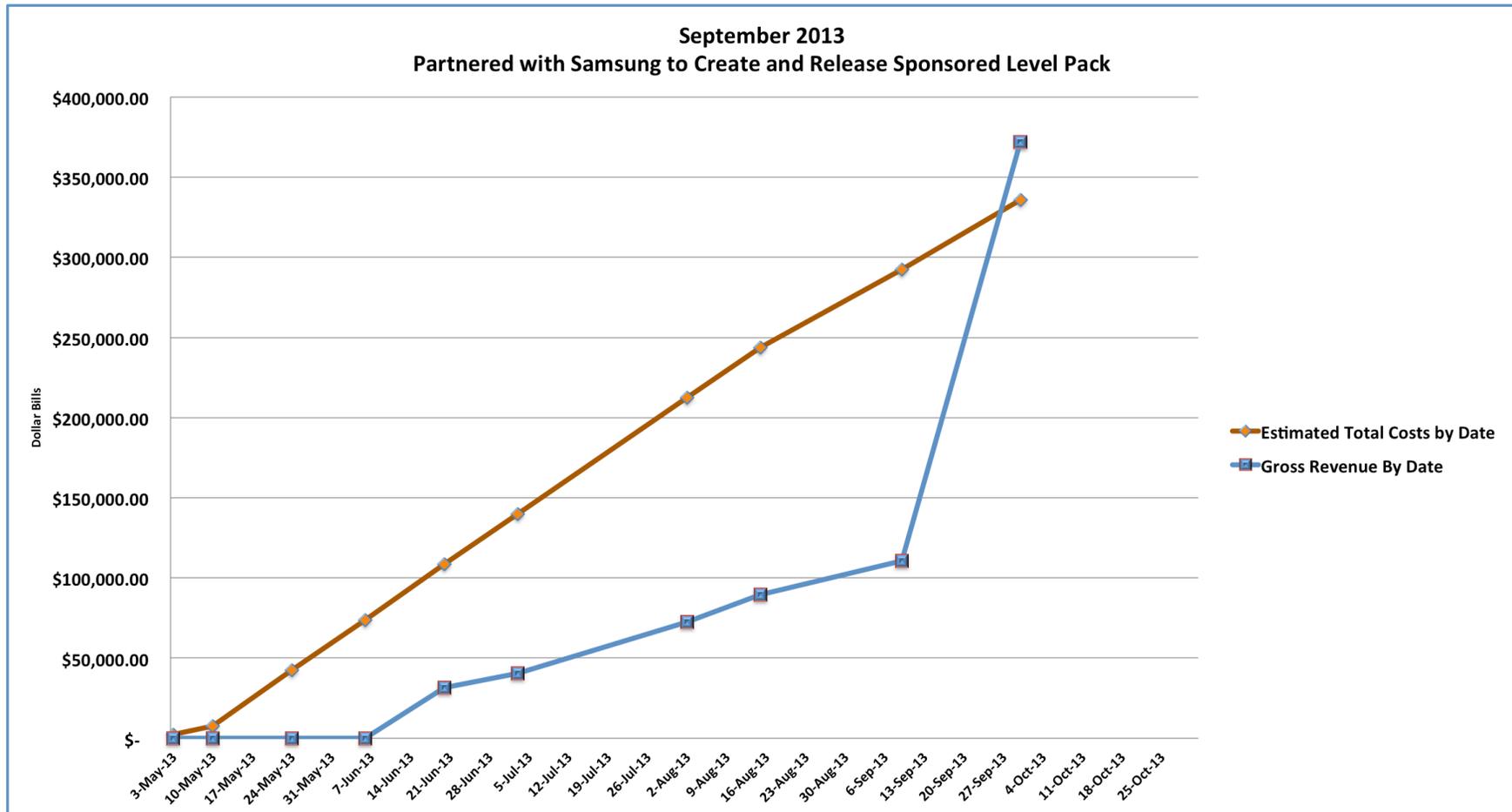
Free Best CPI: \$0.48

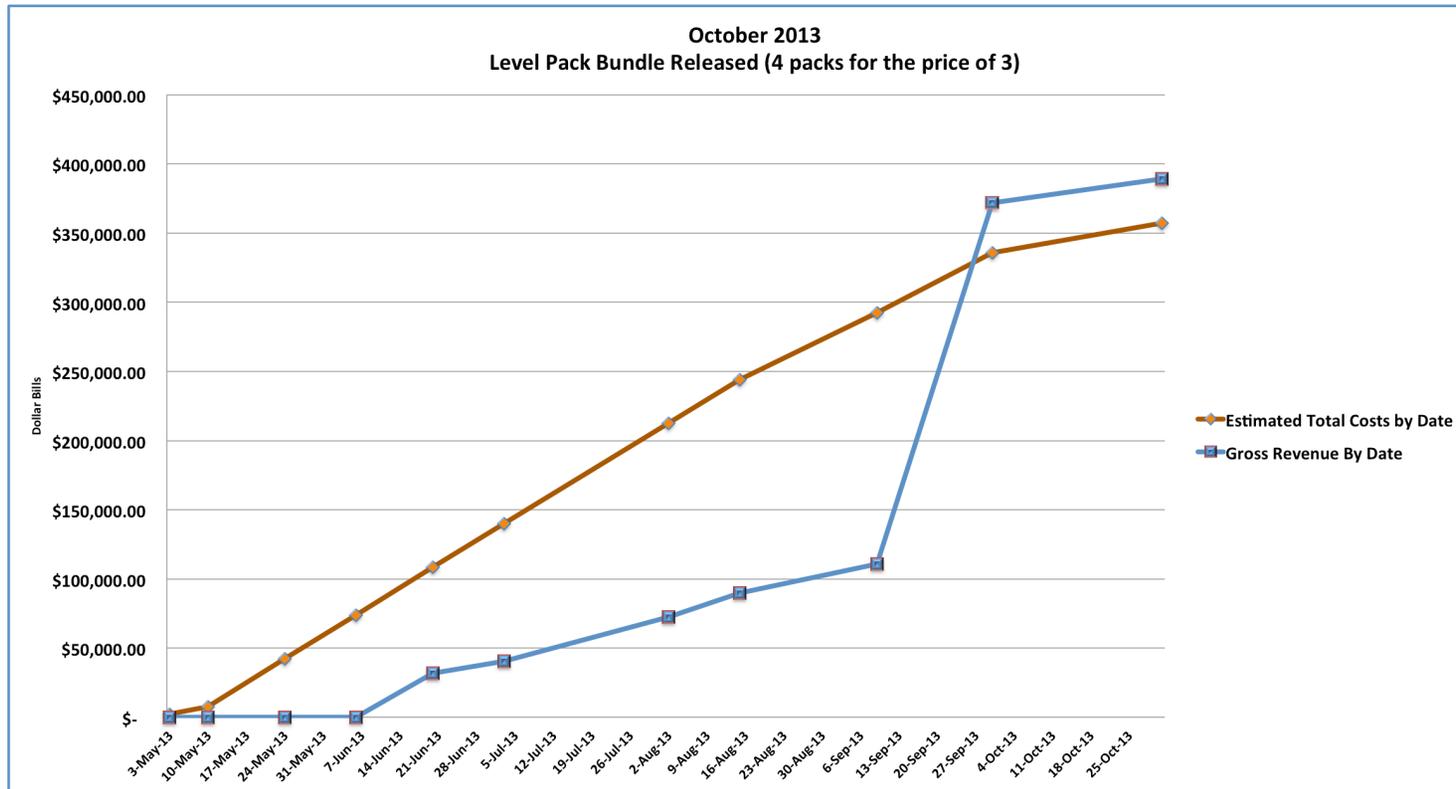
Paid Best CPI: \$2.70

THE REFLECTION LEVEL PACK AVAILABLE **FREE** FOR LIMITED TIME

PRESENTED BY Samsung GALAXY Tab3







11 & 12

# In Conclusion

Lastly, let's not forget about the most important takeaway of all:



**12.5:** Just try making players smile.  
Thanks

# Reaching Rob Zen

How to reach the creator of the acclaimed GDC talk "Reaching Color Zen: From Prototype to Chart Topper in 3 Weeks"

**E-mail:** [RobMeyerGames@gmail.com](mailto:RobMeyerGames@gmail.com)

**Twitter:** [@robmeyer7](https://twitter.com/robmeyer7)

**Tumblr:** [robmeyer.tumblr.com](http://robmeyer.tumblr.com)



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