

Secret Sauce of the AppStores

Japheth Dillman



Who is Japheth Dillman?

Began Programming and making games at the tender age of 10
Reached over 300 million users with my games
Created games for nearly every online and mobile platform
Multiple titles on iOS with 5-10 million users each

Most notorious for:
CoFounder of YetiZen



- World's first and only game industry accelerator
- World's largest community of game developers

A Few brands I have touched in a Gamey way



What is the Ultimate recipe for success? What Secret Sauces do you use?

Three Sauces for the ultimate recipe:

1. How to game the system for better rankings
 - *Ranking Secret Sauce*
2. How to get more bang for less buck
 - *Campaign Secret Sauce*
3. Tricks of the trade & Toolbag
 - *AppStore Optimization Secret Sauce*

Sound delicious? Let's get cooking....



RANKING SECRET SAUCE

Power of the AppStore!

- Discoverability! This is new.



OBSESSION

You could have invested in therapy instead,
but then what would you do on Friday night?



Organic is best...

**Organic != Virality
Virality != Organic**

Why is Organic “Better”?

How to get Organic?
-Know the Formulas



History Lesson

Understand Apple's thinking process....

Oldest Formula:

(# of Installs over last 7 days)



Evolved Formula (still old...)

(# of Installs over last 24 hours + Stars (rating)
+ Engagement + \$\$\$)

iOS Revealed!

TOP SECRET

(# of installs over the past 4 days [weighted])
+ (# of installs in the past 4 hours [weighted])

80%

**Weight:* 8 times the sales of the current day + 5 times the sales on the 2 proceeding days + 2 times the sales on initial date

R =  **TODAY'S RANKING** +  **TODAY'S Installs** +  **YESTERDAY'S Installs** +  **Installs FROM 2 DAYS AGO** +  **Installs FROM 3 DAYS AGO**

Note 1: weighting system is the SAME (x8, x5, x5, x2) for last 4 hours

Note 2: Past 4 days have more weight than past 4 hours (about 50% more)

**TOP
SECRET**

iOS Revealed! continued

- + Stars (rating [*heavier*] AND the number of reviews)
- + Engagement (# of times app opened, etc)
- + \$\$SALES\$\$



Note: Only 20% of the formula are “performance” metrics. The main bulk of the formula is related to downloads & velocity of downloads.

Great Power = Great Responsibility!

(Sample insight)

Secret insight on taking advantage of the iOS ranking formula:

Weekend installs
compared to weekdays



20%

HOWEVER... Weekends **cost 50% more** on average

Thus, if you can capitalize on the preceding days leading up to the weekend (with the ***weighted system***) you can then take advantage of organic visibility during higher traffic download times!

That ain't nuthin...

You thought that the iOS formula was complex?
Android's Google Play ranking formula has... wait for it...
OVER 200 components in the algorithm.



ANDROID

So I'm going to only focus on those elements which
a developer can control, or actually impact in the ranking.



The Power of

Android (Google Play): --- ***TOP SECRET*** ---

[*Install Rate - Uninstall Rate*] + Install Velocity - Long Installs + Web Click-Throughs to Google Play store
+ User Reviews + SEO, Google Search + \$\$\$SALES\$\$\$
+ GeoSignal Location + Location of Servers
+ Freshness + Social Media Reputation
+ Speed/Usability Performance + Engagement
+ Funnel Analysis + Google Play Services

Things NOT taken into account:

- Other AppStores (even on Android)
- Sales figures do NOT take into account
Ads, only in-app purchases!

Breaking Down Individual Components

- **[Install Rate - Uninstall Rate]** – Early days, there was a lot of garbage on Gplay. Ensures quality Apps.
- **SEO, Google Search** – Why does Google care about your SEO on search engines? Because that's where THEY MAKE MONEY.
- **Web Click-Throughs to Google Play store** – See above (money for Google) and placing importance on driving web traffic to Google Play.
- **\$\$\$SALES\$\$\$** - Sad face, no Ad revenue here ☹️
- **GeoSignal Location** – Tweets and other geo-tagging. This means you can focus on regional success.
- **GooglePlay Services** – Multiplayer, Quests, Save Games, Achievements, Snapshots, etc.

Breaking Down Individual Components

.... continued

- **Location of Servers** – Preference given regionally to ensure quality for users.
- **Freshness** – Very hard to keep ranking after 1 month on the store. This means UPDATE!
- **Social Media Reputation** – Mostly mentions. *Weight on Google+*
- **Speed/Usability Performance** – Machine learning algorithms
- **Engagement** – # of Opens > Session Length. Also, # of repeat days app is opened.
- **Long Install** – Definition: An Install played through once then deleted.
- **Funnel Analysis** – Search -> Listing -> Download -> Click on Icon

Great Power = Great Responsibility!

Insights into GooglePlay:

- SEO! Free store ranking... whaa???? There are ways to rank your SEO on search for free (tags in html code, cross links, etc)
- Only utilize other AppStores if you have strategic purpose/value – GooglePlay does NOT algorithmically account for your ranking elsewhere.
- Where's a big chunk of the revenue on Android? ADS. Notice what's missing from the formula. ☹
- When releasing a regionally targeted game, focus your social media contacts in that region.
- Update regularly to avoid the Long Install.



CAMPAIGN SECRET SAUCE

The Organic Power of the AppStore

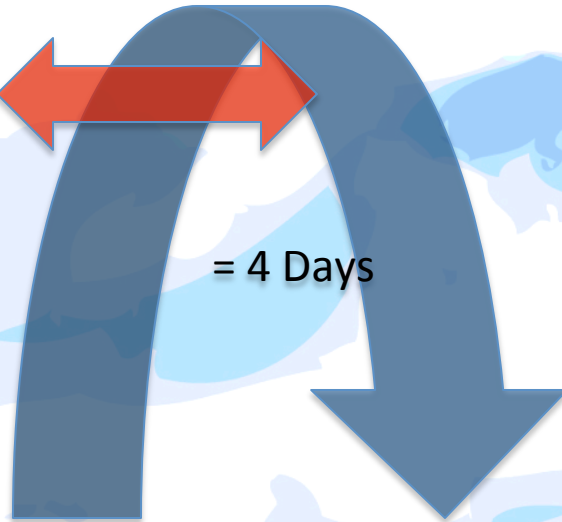
AdMob

Tapjoy

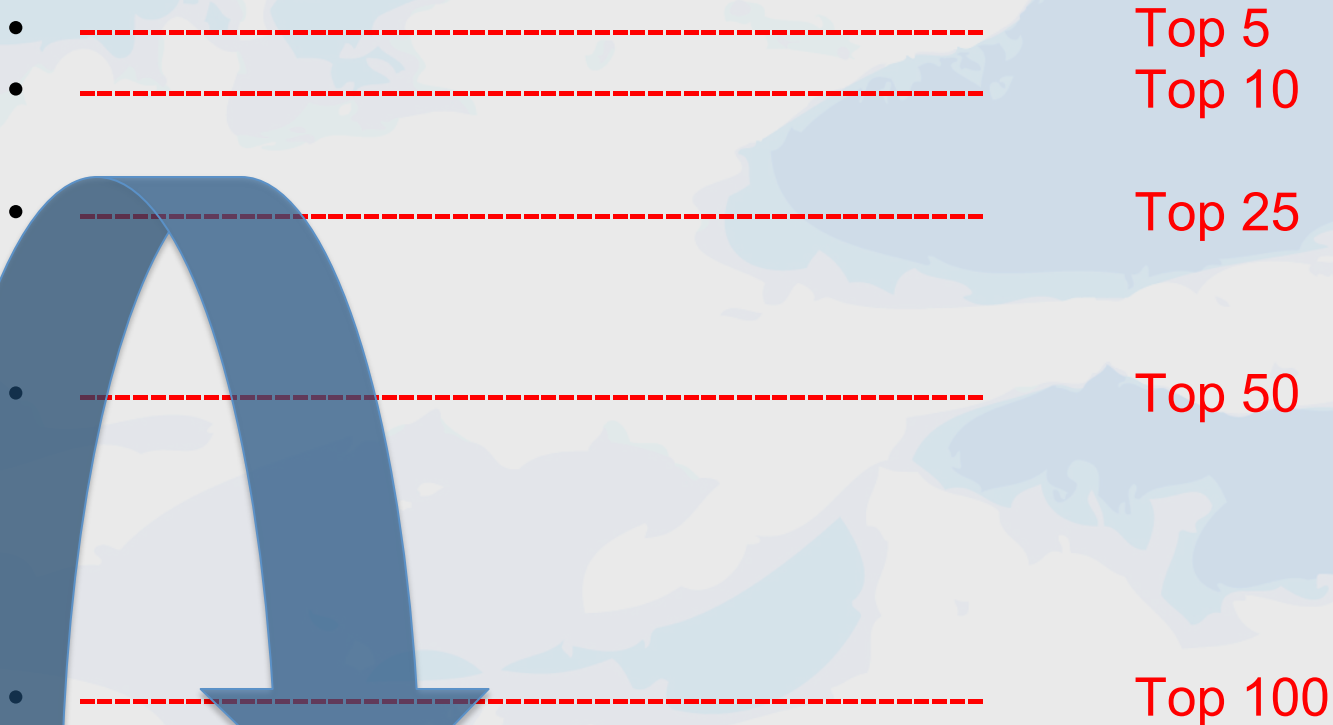
NativeX



= 4 Days



A single Channel – Can get you to top 25 (average, depending on channel)



1 Distribution Channel? Diminishing Returns



The background of the slide is a photograph of a vast, snow-covered mountain range. The peaks are jagged and covered in thick white snow, with some rocky outcrops visible. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is bright and serene, suggesting a high-altitude environment.

Why does it diminish?

**Audience is exhausted,
Limited fresh eyeballs.**

**Let's see a successful BURST
campaign...**

Burst Campaigns done right: Stacking the Channels!

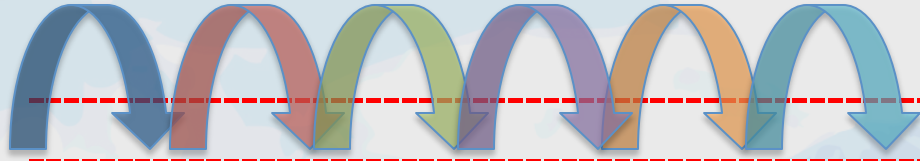




We've bursted. Now I'm ready for the long haul. How do I keep it up (sustained campaigns)?

How do I stay at the top without spending like I'm bursting each week?

The Organic Power of the AppStore: Flipping the Channels!



-
-

Top 5
Top 10

-

Top 25

-

Top 50

-

Top 100



This gives us fresh eyeballs each week that hasn't been exhausted by our creatives (ads).

So to combine our methods into success...

Burst Campaign leading to Sustained Campaigns = Maximized Success!

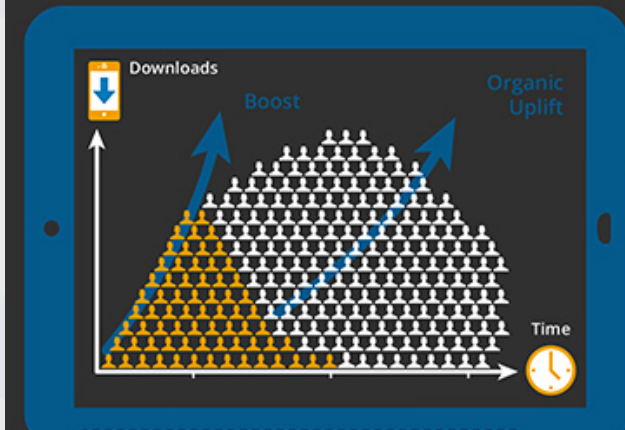


Getting to the top Distribution Channels... a history lesson

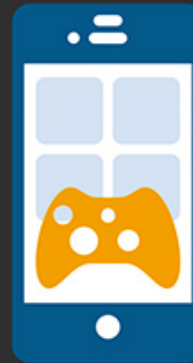
- **Early AppStore Distribution:**
 - 1 channel
- **Mid-History of AppStore:**
 - 3 channels
- **Now?**
 - 30+ channels (38 if you're good)

Case in Point - TradeMob

THE BOOST EFFECT: The Result Of Purchasing Installs



ORGANIC UPLIFT: Gaming App vs. Non-Gaming App



100%

For game apps, each purchased install generates on average 1 additional organic (free) install during the first three days of the boost.



65%

Non-game apps see an average of 0.65 additional organic (free) installs for each purchased install during the first three days of the boost

Currently Calculated: 80k installs to get to top 10

<http://www.trademob.com/infographic-calculating-the-cost-of-a-top-10-rank-in-the-app-store/>

Thresholds

- Cracking into top 4, 8, 12, etc. (iOS)
(Used to be 5, 25, 50, 100...)
- higher thresholds = exponentially higher Organic install rates
- Depending on number of apps competing at each threshold:
Organic rate is between 3x – 10x

Diminishing Organic on each channel over time



Diminishing Organic – How to Solve?

New Feature!



Diminishing Organic – How to Solve?

New Feature!



How many installs to top 10?

Hold on. No “easy” answer.

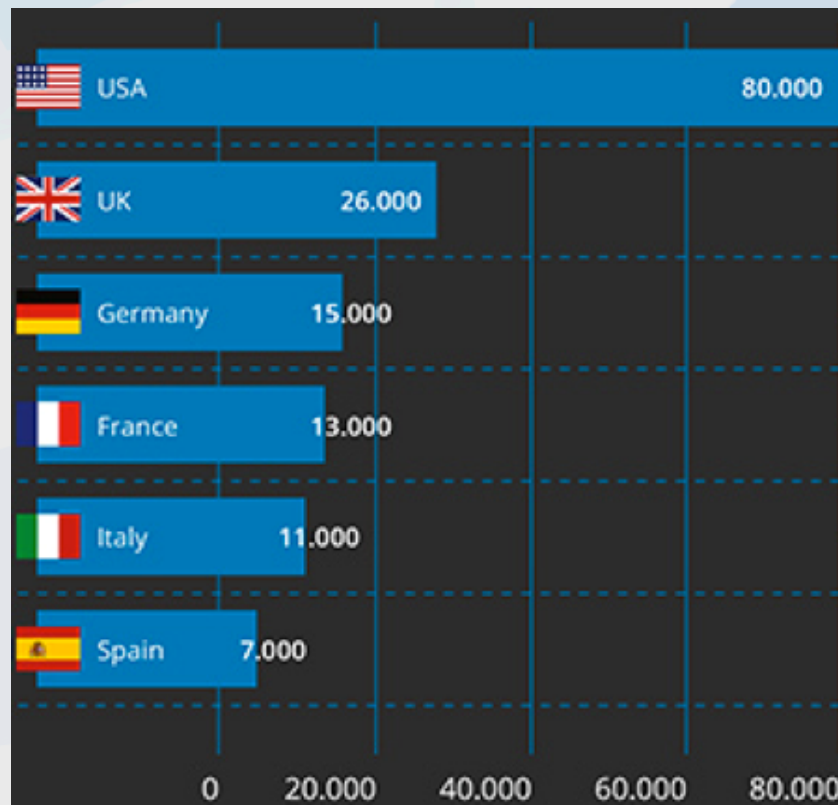
Factors:

- Time of Year
- Competing Apps
- Apple vs. Google
- Number of other factors

Ok, but reallllly... tell me, how many?

How many installs to top 10? Fo reals...

Double these numbers for GooglePlay....



How many installs to top 10?

Continued...

Top 10 on Apple: 80,000 in 1 day

Free charts on Apple: 25,000 in a day

Paid charts on Apple: 4,000 in a day

DOUBLE all those numbers for GooglePlay.

What Distro *ACTUALLY* channels work?

- Web banners, reviews, online marketing, etc.
- Short Answer? No.

What Distro channels work?

- Long Answer?
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO.
- Off-Device marketing = virtually zero effect
(aside from GooglePlay's ranking algorithm)
- Channels that work:
 - In-App Advertising
 - Offer Walls
 - Cross-Promotion between Apps
 - ANYTHING on-Device



APPSTORE OPTIMIZATION SECRET SAUCE

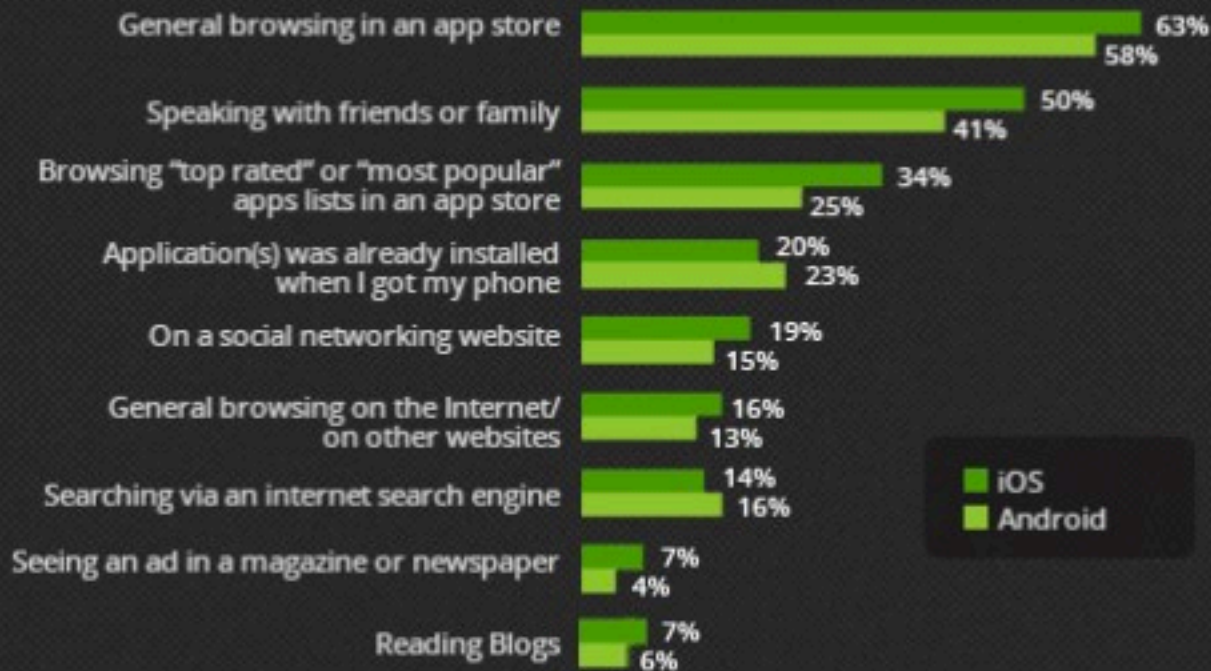
WHY AppStore Search Optimization is so damn important???????

MOST Installs are initiated by...

SEARCH!!!!


63%

NEW APP DISCOVERY METHODS



In the
App
Stores!

Source: European Technographics Consumer
Technology Online Survey, Q4 2012

 Apptentive

AppStore Optimization Secrets....

- 75% Search by Function, NOT Brand
 - i.e. “Card Battle Game” not “SuperCell”
 - i.e. “Car Racing Game” not “CSR”
- 50% of Users Search store 1x Week, 12% DAILY
- Longer App Names = Better
 - BUT over 3 words hurt (muddled in search results)
- Long and Eloquent descriptions Hurt
 - Get your Keywords upfront fast!

AppStore Optimization Secrets....

Comparing Apple & Google

- Google uses synonyms; not Apple
- Google fixes/uses bad spellings; Apple in late 2013, but not as robust as Google
- Google uses PageRank; not Apple (see previous slide on algorithm)
- Google uses description, especially first 2 lines; Apple uses keywords & ignores description
 - Apple description still important for web search!

Ian McGee: “Think of Google Play search as Google circa 2004; Apple is Yahoo 1995. But expectation is both will improve”

AppStore Optimization Secrets.... What's Important?

- Factors:
 - Keywords
 - Description
 - Icon
 - Title

But what's the order of importance?

AppStore Optimization Secrets.... Importance Ranked!

- **ICON**
- **Title**
- **Keywords**
- **Description**
 - First two lines on iOS
 - All of Description on Android

AppStore Optimization Secrets.... OMG THE EYES!

Icon Notes: eyes, colors

Note on eyes: See Cornell University's Food and Brand Lab's paper on cereal box eyes, "*Eyes in the Isles.*"



This Speaker Does Not Recommend The Following Dirty Tricks...

- Early versions of Flappy Bird: there was a “rate” button at the end of each play session, placed in the same location that the player would tap to continue play. As a result, when the user wanted to continue playing, it was easy to hit the rate button instead. This is attributed to Flappy Bird’s early rise.
- Using competitor’s titles in your Keywords (dangerous) or in your description (unlikely to be dangerous).
- Game Google+... get your app “plus one-d” by people who have played similar apps. Then your app will appear in GooglePlay as a “Personalized Recommendation” for other users.

AppStore Optimization Secrets.... ToolBag

App Annie

- Trends, rankings,

Distimo

- App Annie on Crack

Searchman SEO

- Keywords

Appnique

- Analyze competitive Keywords, Alerts on Keywords, Keyword Rankings

Onavo (recently acquired by FB)

- Expensive, but can tell you EVERYTHING!
- Ads displayed, \$ on individual Ads, Traffic, Usage on Apps, Search on AppStore AND Mobile Web, etc etc etc

Questions



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