

Intuitive vs. Data Driven Design and Conquering the App Stores of Tomorrow



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GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE™ CHINA
SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER
SHANGHAI, CHINA · OCTOBER 19-21, 2014

Intuitive vs. Iterative Data-Driven
Design & Conquering the Discovery
Mechanics of the Global App Stores
of the “Internet of Things” Era



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Alexander Rivan Ronalds

- A decade of experience building games.
- Shooters, MMOs, Strategy Games, Adventure Games, Social Games, Mobile Games, etc.
- Balanced Worlds was wholly acquired by Kabam in 2012.
- CEO @ Argine Consulting

ARGINE Consulting

Game development consulting company that creates end-to-end solutions for developers.





- Broadest database of individual game events in the world.
- Detailed metrics about monetization sorted by OS, genre, feature, and rankings.
- An information bank for game development teams to optimize their games.

**“A good game designer is
never wrong.”**

Why do we believe this?

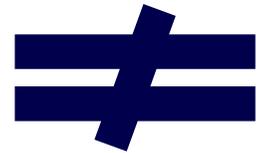
- Rise of social games & data-driven design
- Changing business models required changing development practices.
- MVPs, more games, shrinking dev costs to launch!
- Fundamental shift in the roll of game designers.
- And it's awesome!





But beware of the dark side.
For once you start down the
dark path, forever will it
dominate your destiny!

Data Driven Design



Risk-Mitigation



Case Study

- RPG Title for Facebook
- New generation Social Gaming Company

Problem:

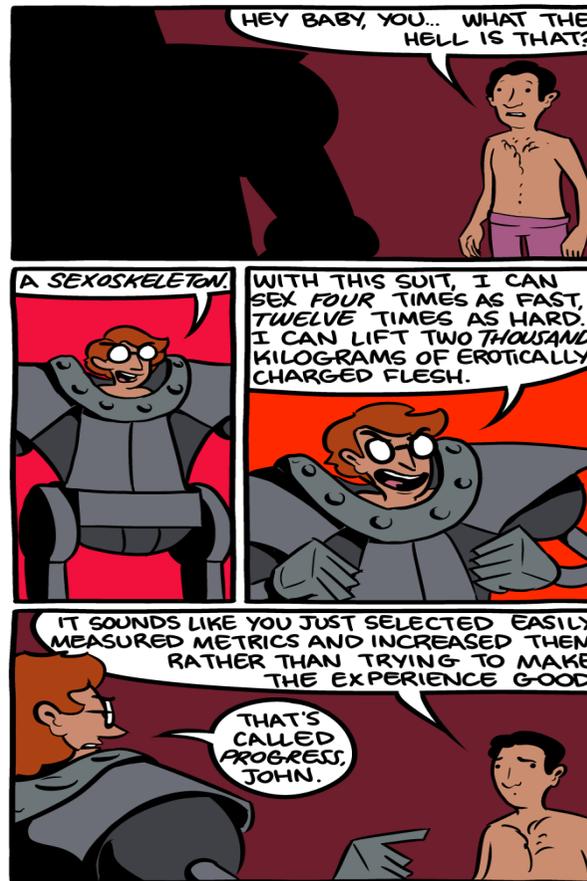
- 40% Acquisition Rate
- 20% D1 Retention Rate

Workflow:

- Funnel Analysis on Acquisition Rate
- Feature implementation to improve D1



**It Wasn't
Fun!**



smbc-comics.com

Source:
Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal
www.smbc-comics.com



**“A good game designer is
never wrong.”**

**“A good game designer is
SOMETIMES allowed to be wrong.”**

....And a review of Intuitive Design....



"Luke, you switched off your targeting computer — what's wrong?"

"...Nothing! I'm all right."

Playtesting



Intuitive Design Data Sources



Pitfalls of Intuitive Design

- Intuition comes from instinct.
- Data sources are “softer” and more subject to interpretation.
- Emotional connection to the ideas.





Source: Dilbert Comics

Case Study

MMORPG for PC, First title for studio

Problem

Schedule overrun by 150%

Why?

Intuitively
Driven Design



Emotional
Attachment



Confirmation
Bias

So what have we learned?

- Data driven designers rely on large data sets to make more accurate guesses.
- Intuitive driven designers rely on their vast experience of trial and error to make more accurate guesses.



Game designers rely on the information available to them to create more accurate guesses.

**“A good game designer
is **SOMETIMES**
allowed to be wrong.”**

**“A good game designer
is ALWAYS
going to be wrong.”**

“Experimentation and failure is part of the game design process that creates great games.”

How can we help our designers create experiments that identify failures as quickly as possible?

Game design is a creative process that needs to be kept in check with metrics and analytics.

OR

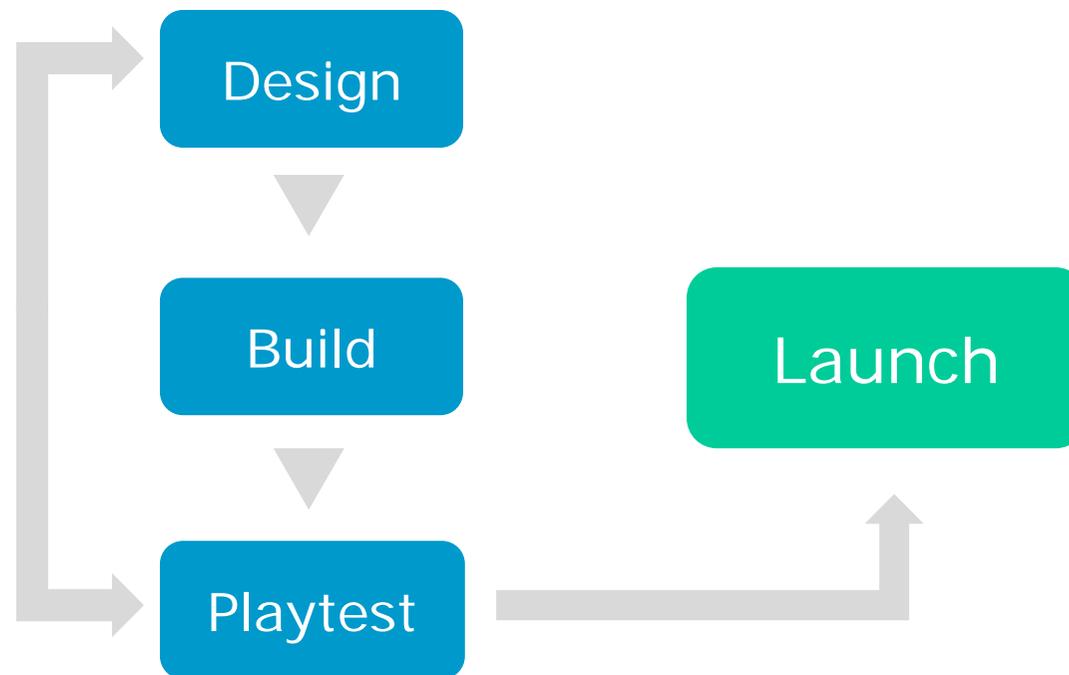
Intuitive design validated by metrics and analytics.

Blending Intuitive & Data-Driven Design Practices

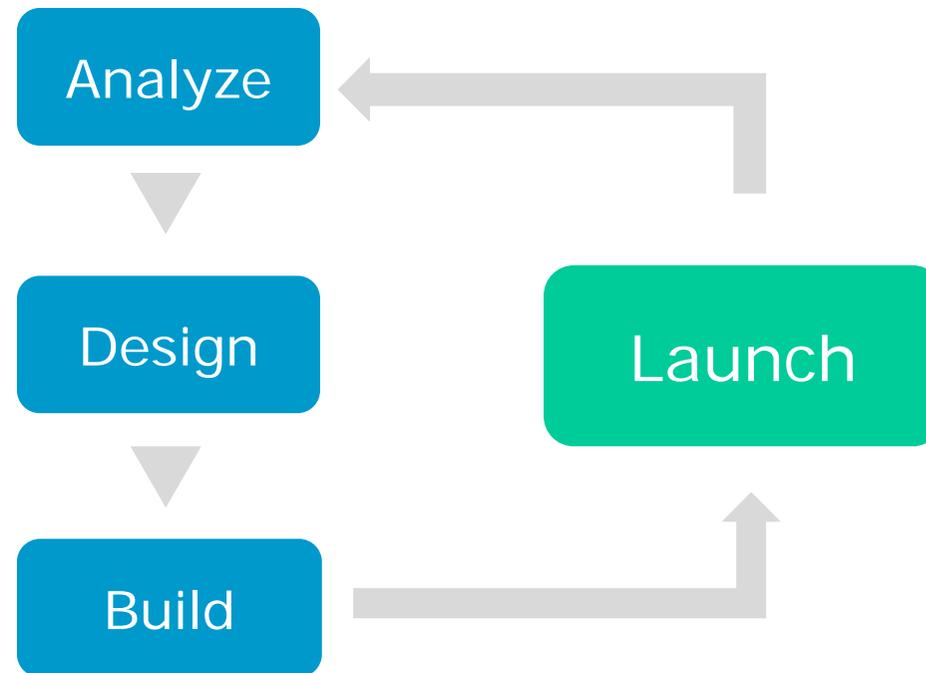


Now, witness the power of this fully operational battle station!

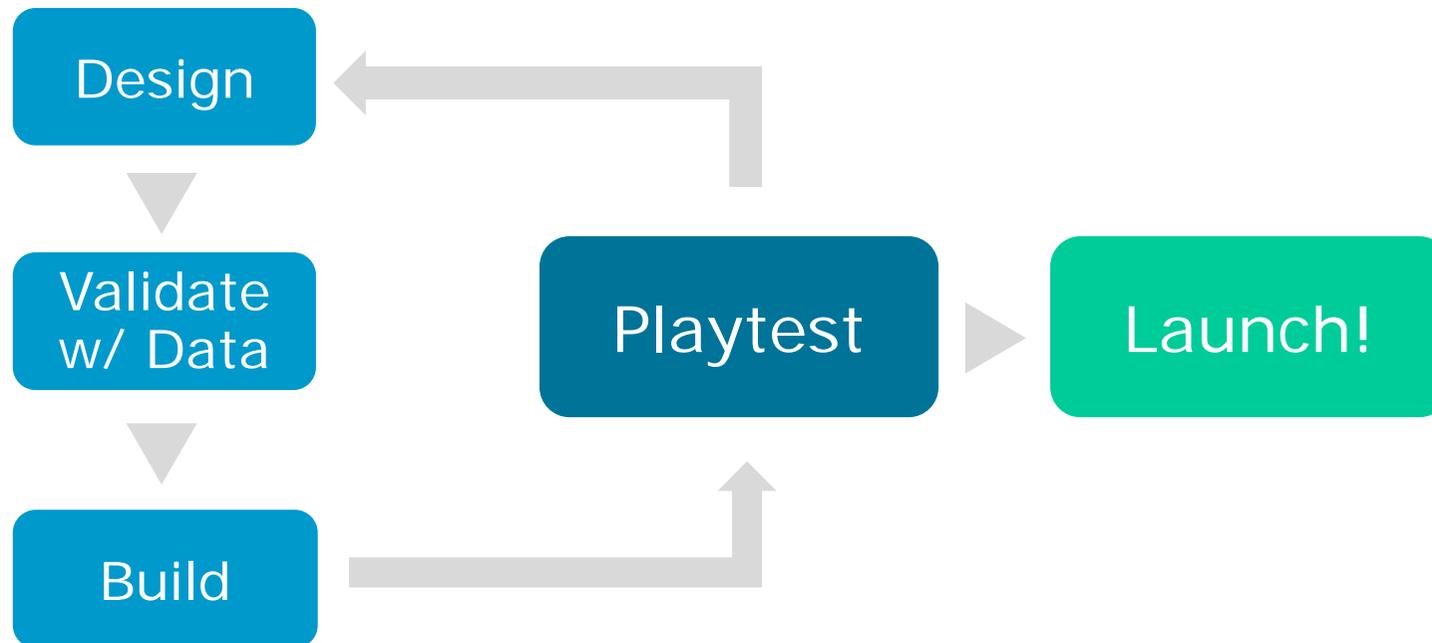
Intuitive Design Process



Data-Driven Design Process



Intuitive meets Data-Driven Design Process



Culture

- Everyone should be creating hypotheses.
- It's okay to be creative.
- Wrong is not bad.

Team Structure

- Creative Director - Jack of all trades
- Designers - Experts in their fields
- QA - Right arm of Design, Culture of Design Team

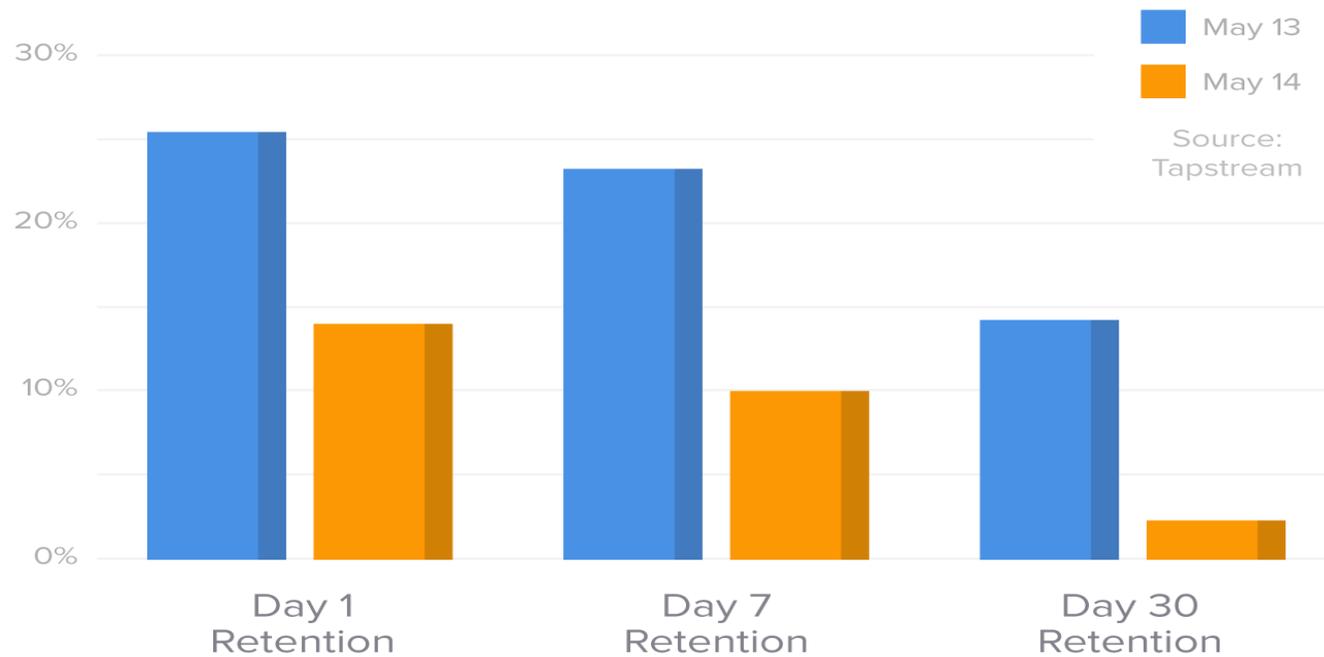
Playtesting, Playtesting, Playtesting

- Crucial source of data.
- Crucial to the culture of the dev team.
- Crucial to the creative process.

CRUCIAL!

Conquering The App Store of Tomorrow

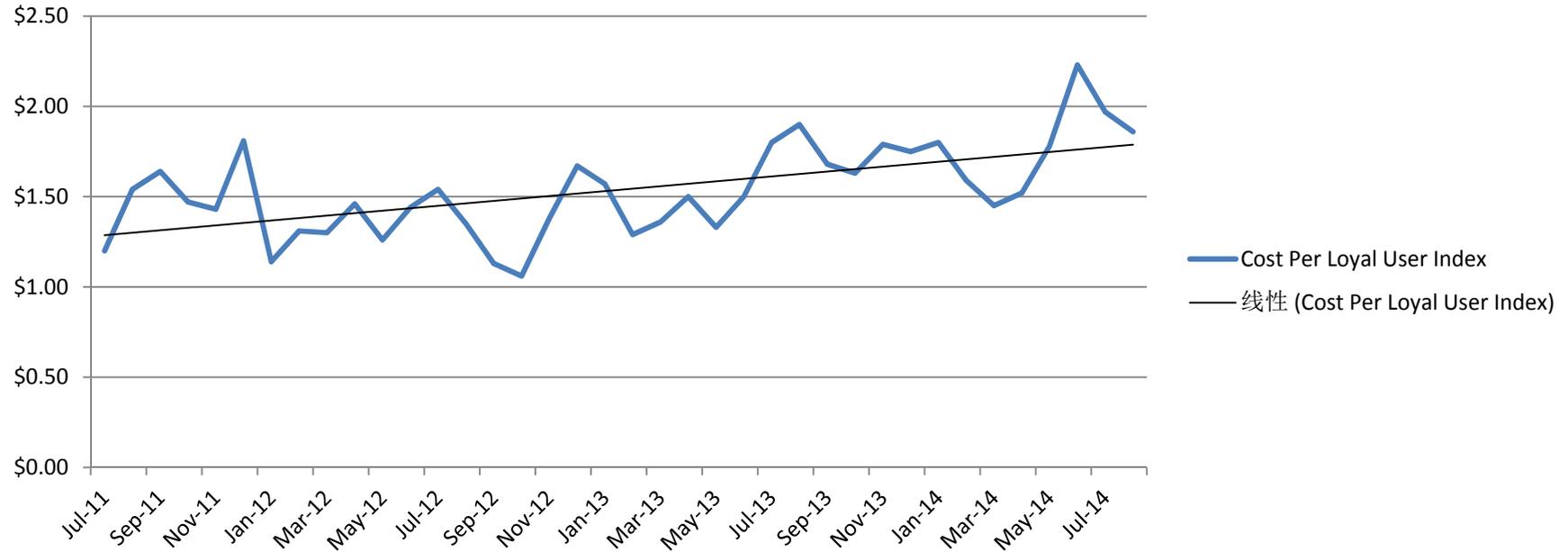
50% drop in D1 Retention in 1 Year



Source: TapStream

Rising Acquisition Costs

Cost Per Loyal User Index



Source: Fiksu Indexes

Development Budgets on the Rise

- More competition -> Fidelity goes up
- Fidelity goes up -> Higher production budgets

Innovate or Die



If they follow standard Imperial procedure, they'll dump their garbage before they go to light-speed. Then we just... float away.

...With the rest of the garbage.

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