

Facebook: Is the Cake a Lie?



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The questions I intend to answer.

- Should I develop solely on Facebook?
- Should I completely ignore Facebook?
- Should I mostly ignore Facebook?



Developing solely on Facebook

- The platform functionality is still rapidly evolving
- The platforms TOS is evolving as well
- There are several large companies in the space that have no qualms about cloning your game



Evolution of the platform

- 1) What did it look like at launch?
- 2) What did it look like a year ago?
- 3) Today?
- 4) A year from now?
- 5) When my game launches?



Launch of the platform



Awwwwww! It's a cute wittle platform. It's gonna grow up to be a...

The Platform a year ago



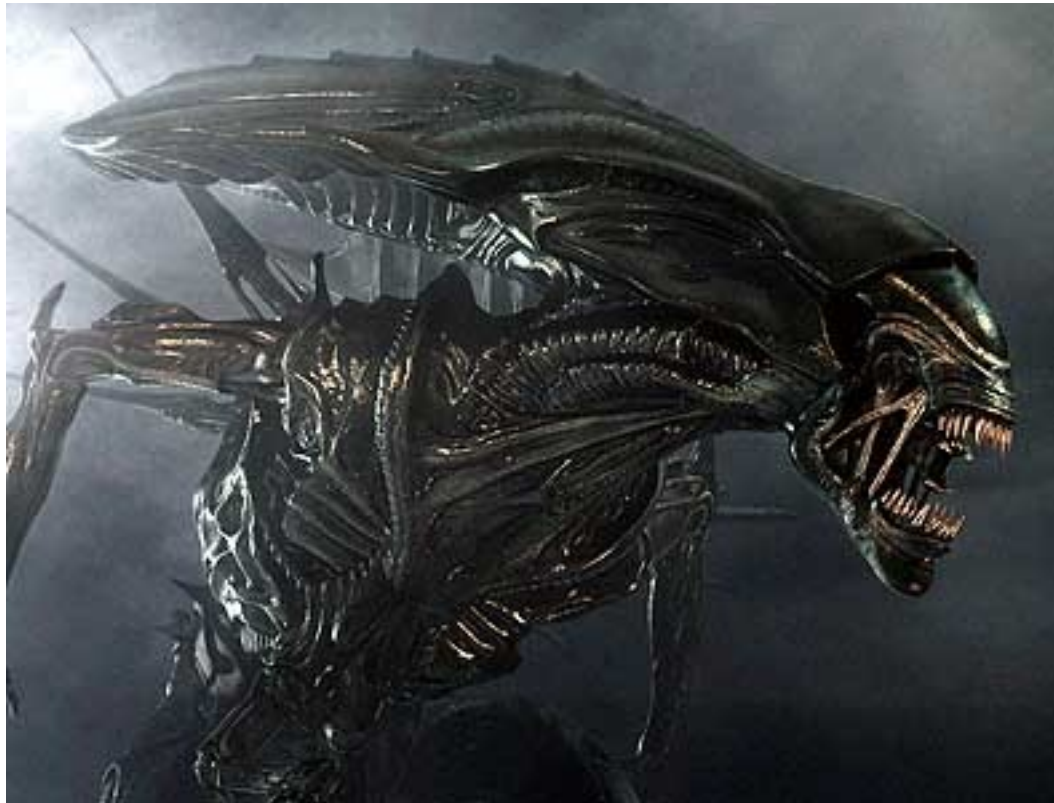
Wait.. how the hell did it become this...

The Platform Today



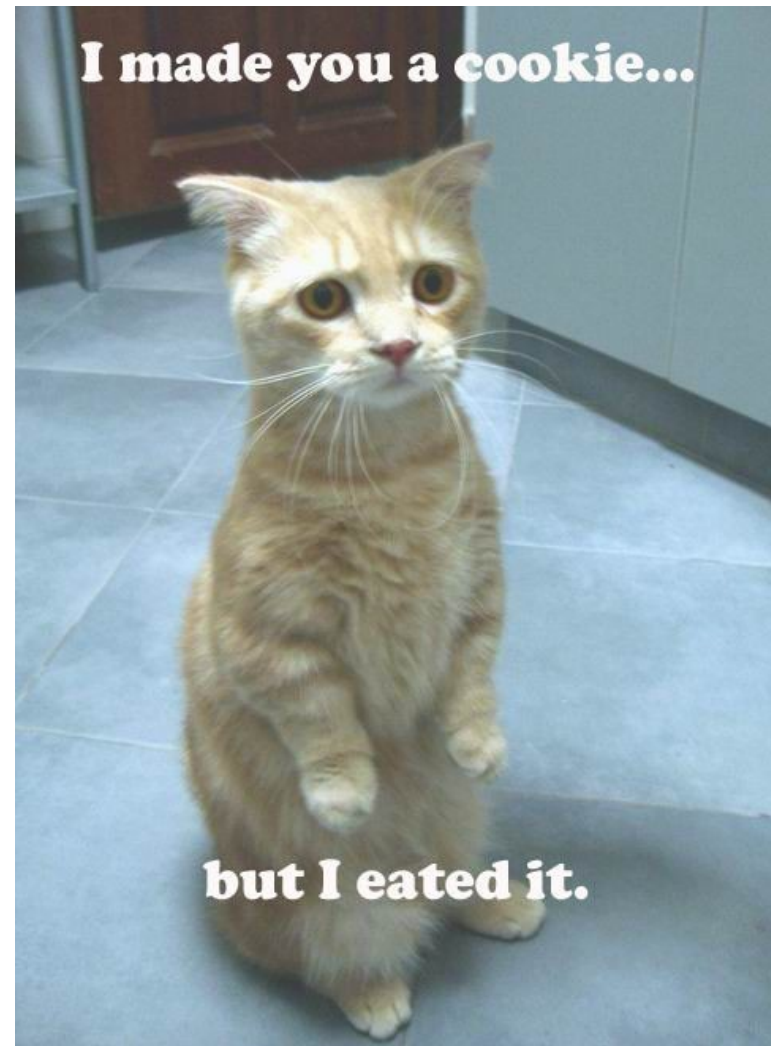
Seriously, WTF? There is no logical progression from fetus to floating tree to dinosaurs with lasers.

The platform in a year*...



*possibly

Or maybe...



When your game launches*?

*I didn't forget a picture, I'm making a dramatic statement.

The truth:

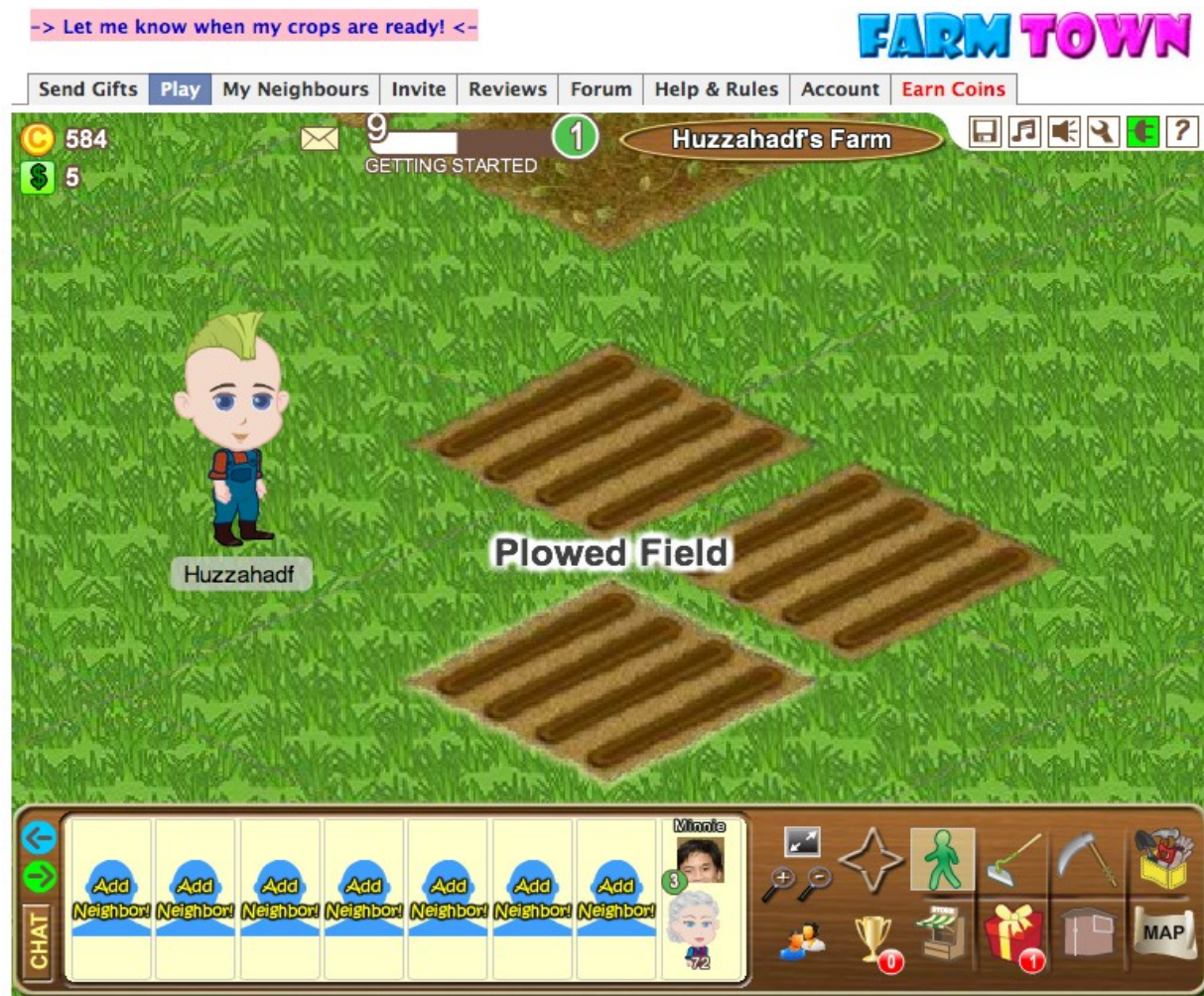
- Nobody knows.
- If someone claims to know, they are lying.
- Even if they are “experts” in this industry.
- Even if they work at Facebook.
- Even if they work on the platform
- Even me.
- Especially me.



In more concrete terms:

- Facebook pushes every Tuesday night.
- Major API changes in 2 year period that required a patch/release for me: over 30
- TOS policy changes that required a patch/release from me: 9
- Newsfeed integration has had 5 major rearchitecturings.

Welcome to Facebook, Farmtown!*

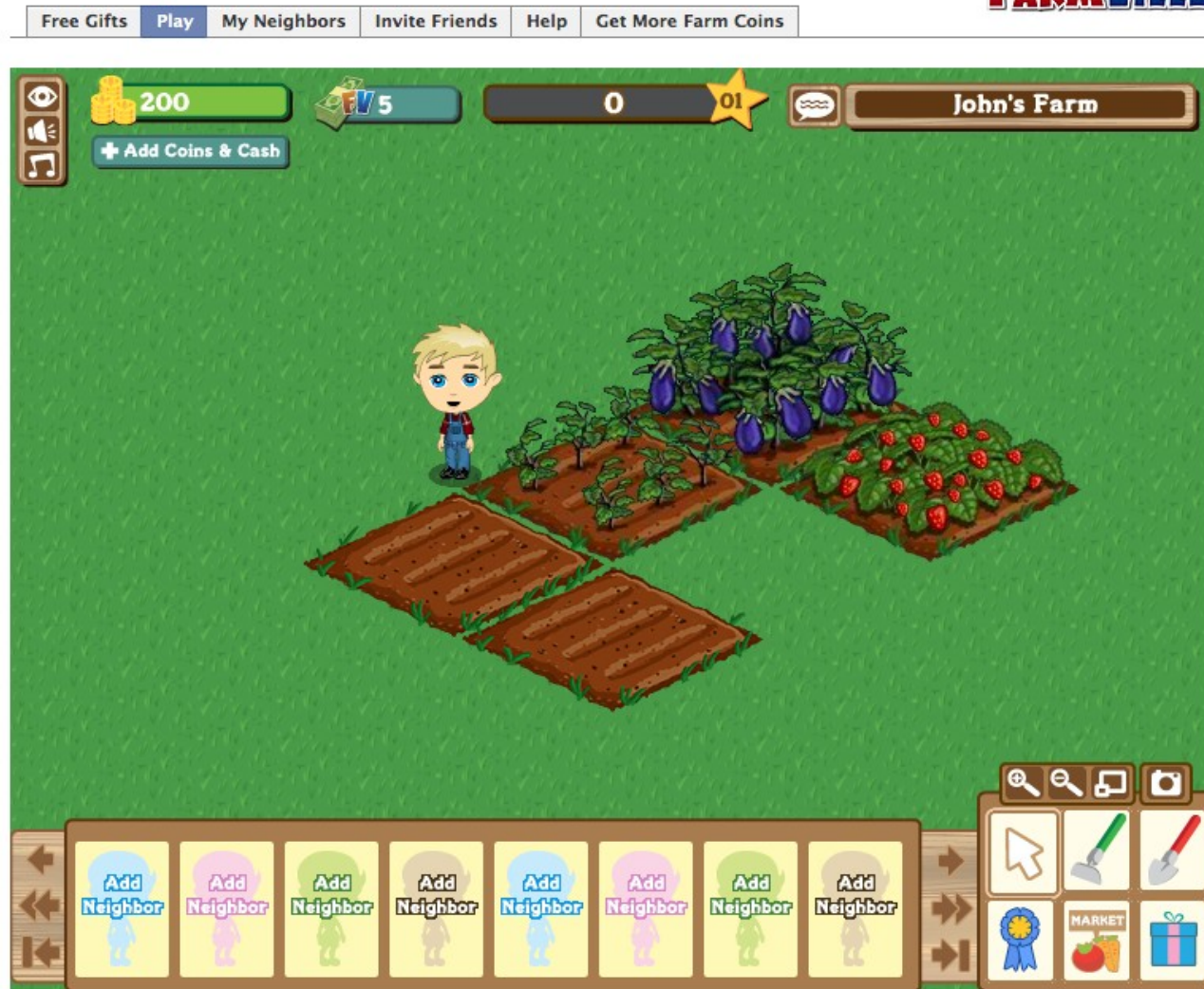


*Special thanks to Scott Hartsman for allowing me to use his idea

Meet Farmville!

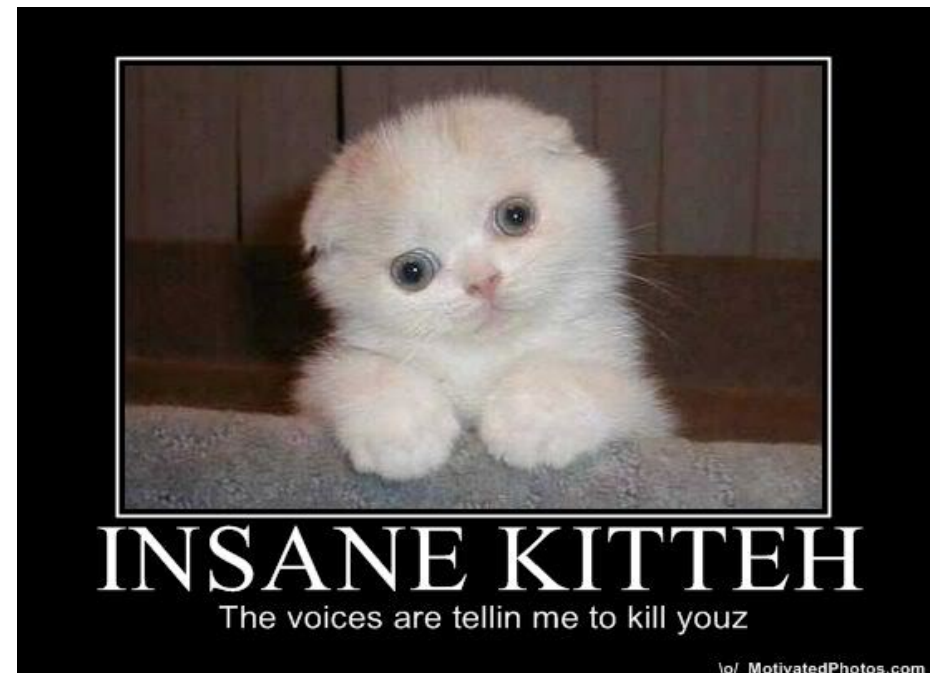
The Don needs you in Mafia Wars.

FARMVILLE



Developing solely on Facebook is right if:

- Your game will require no more than 3 months to develop.
- You are willing to maintain short dev cycles to keep the game running.
- You enjoy filing and fighting copyright lawsuits.
- You are bat-shit insane.
- Like me.



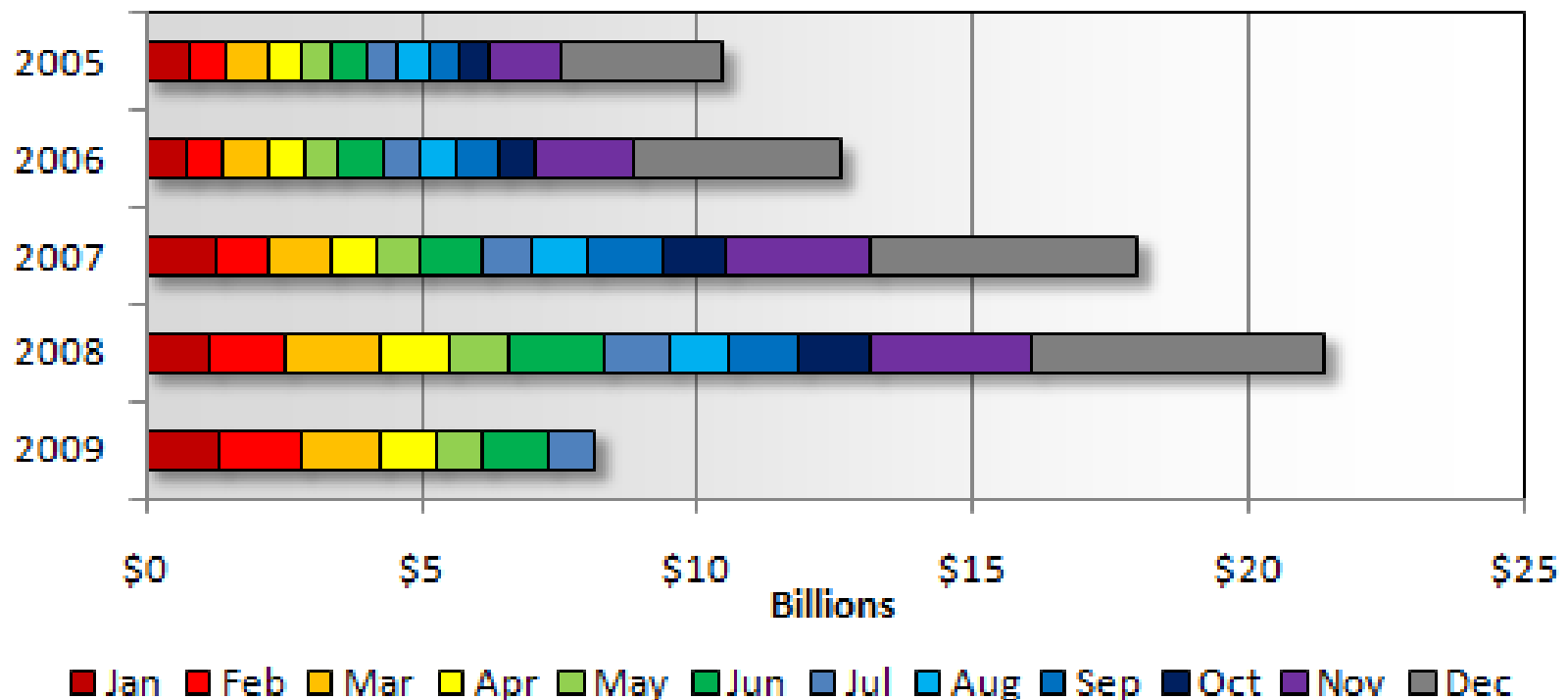
Ignoring Facebook



- The impact Facebook has had on gaming hardware/software sales
- Users that no longer game on PC/Consoles now that they can game on Facebook
- Being your own platform

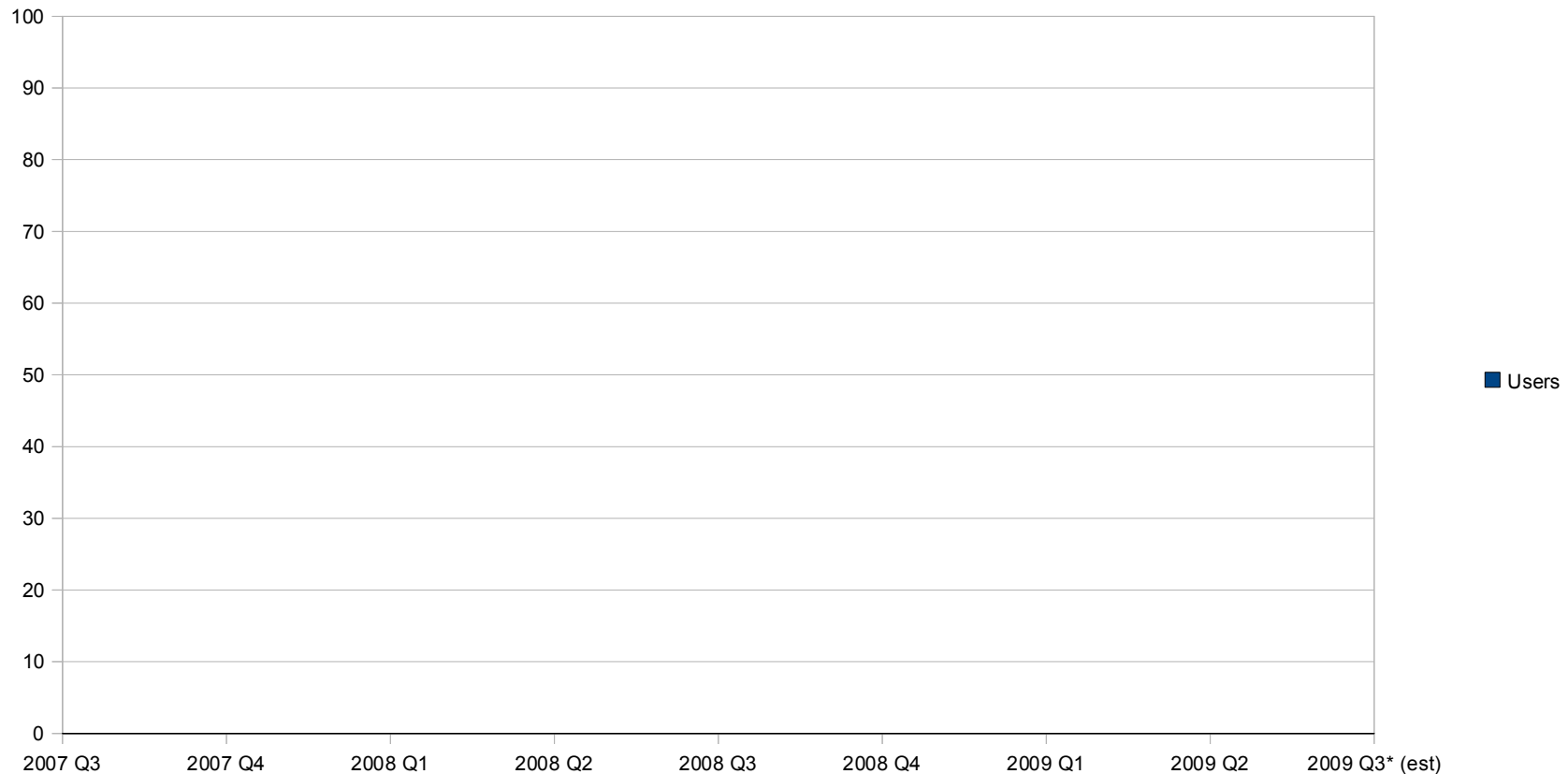
Facebook's impact on hardware/software sales

Industry Revenue, 2005 — 2009



Source: NPD Group

Users that no longer game on PC/Consoles now that they can game on Facebook



Being your own platform

- You own the user experience
- 3rd party developers do your work for you
- You are the king



TWEETCRAFT

Ignoring Facebook is right if:

- You have already created a platform
- You have millions of users
- You have an active dev community that will create plugins (addons) for your games that integrate with Facebook, Twitter and anything else that comes up.
- Basically, if you're Blizzard.



It's good to be the king.

Should I mostly ignore Facebook?

- What is mostly ignoring?
- Scheduling and how you should architect your solution given the nature of Facebook.
- Mostly ignoring Facebook for almost the same amount of work as ignoring Facebook. Almost.

What is mostly ignoring?

- Architecting your game such that the design and balance have no reliance on Facebook.
- Assume your marketing budget will not change since you will not get free infinite users.
- Use integration points (e.g. newsfeed) as marketing channels.



Scheduling and how you should architect your solution given the nature of Facebook.

- If your launch date is more than 9 months away, do nothing.
- If your code complete date is more than 6 months away, do nothing.
- Avoid client->Facebook solutions. If Facebook changes their entire API, you should not have to do client patches.
- Proxy the integration through your own servers.
- Be prepared to patch the server portion of your solution on a weekly basis.



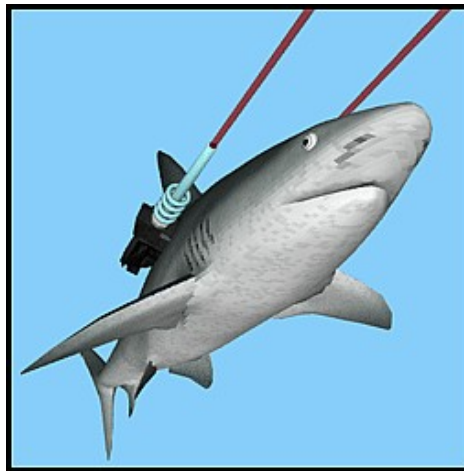
Mostly ignoring Facebook for almost the same amount of work as ignoring Facebook. Almost.

- Relying on 3rd Party integration solutions.
- Enjoy a consistent api and let them deal with the weekly server patches
- Cryptic using Raptr (www.raptr.com) for Champions Online.
- Rumors that Steam will be doing the same?



Thanks for your time

Sharks with laser beams are awesome also.



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