PlayStation

User testing social & casual games

PlayStation

User testing social & casual games

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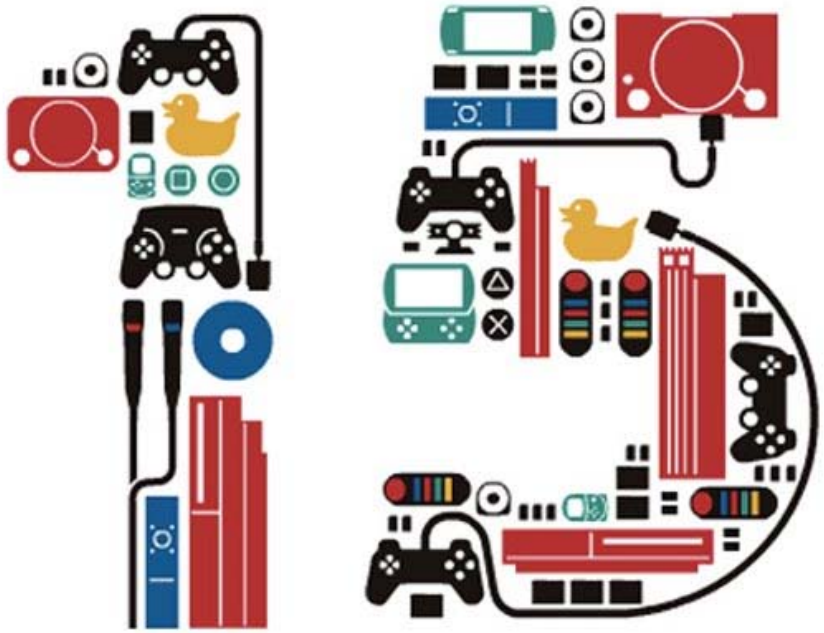
Sony Computer Entertainment Worldwide Studios Europe

16.11.2004

Today's Talk

15 Years PlayStation user testing



Today's Talk

15 Years PlayStation user testing

6 lessons for testing social games

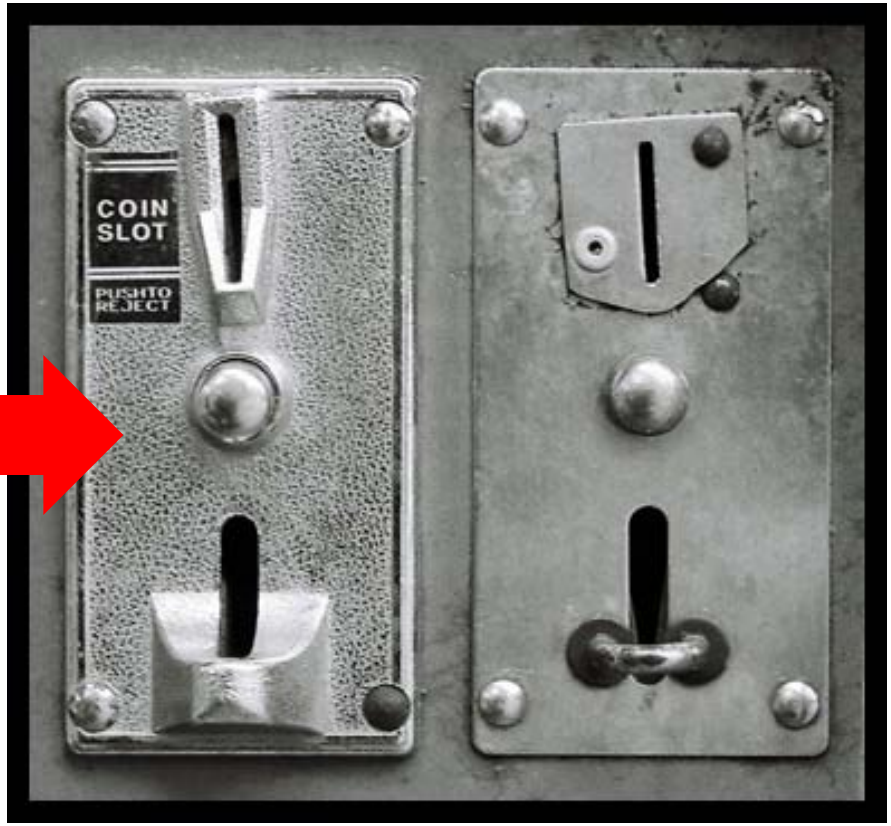
SPORT

1943

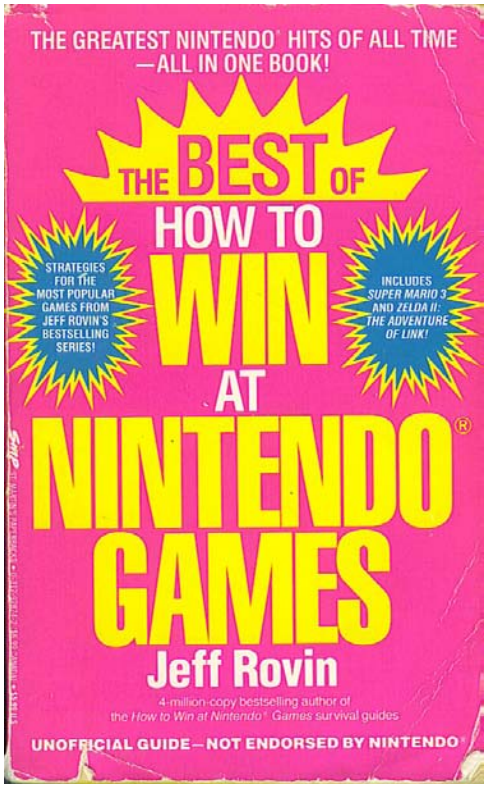
A Brief History of User Testing in WWS

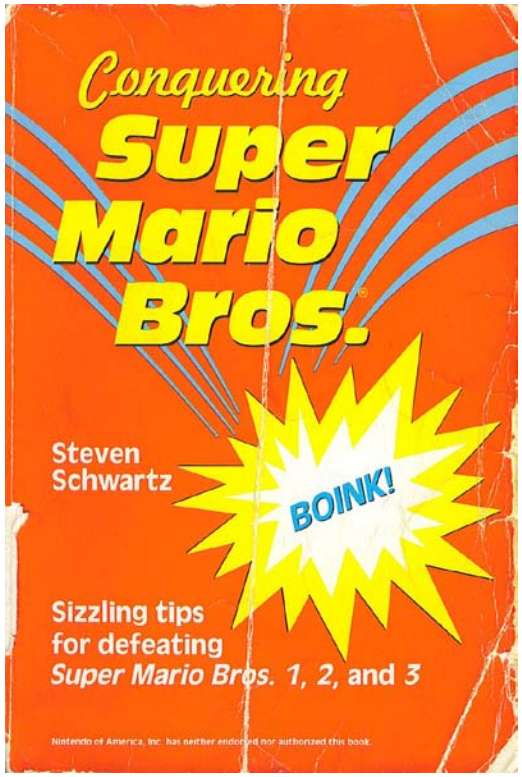
0134921 LV 07
×02
Games Design in Early 90’s

Arcade mindset



Home console games often tough





PSOne attracted less hardcore gamers

Games needed to be more accessible

PlayStation's User Testing Pioneers

1996

Tokyo 1996

The Pioneers

CRASH
BANDICOOT

“I die... I die... I die... I quit!”

Movie

California 1996

User Testing Crash 2

How to make it less difficult?

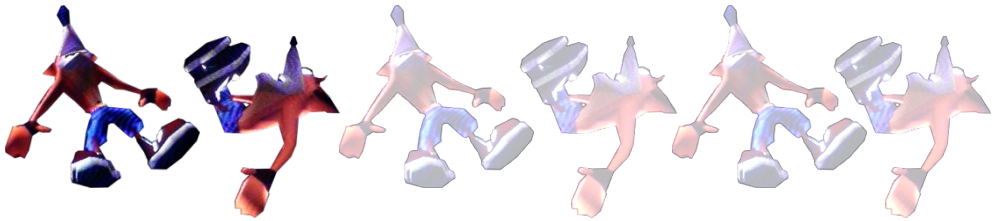
Checkpoint-to-Checkpoint classic structure

≈ 160 Challenges

between checkpoints

only 10 Challenges

between checkpoints

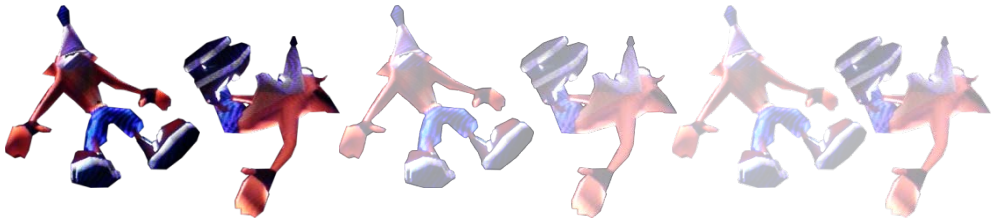


only 10 Challenges

between checkpoints

TOO HARD

+ more Checkpoints



Players should get through a stage in 20 minutes

User Testing Spreads

User Testing Spreads

10 seats facility

Downside 1: Players Cheat

(simple) solution: put up barriers

Downside 2: Observation is difficult

1. Record to VCR

2. Watch on fast forward

3. Write down each death

Let’s give it a try…

MOVIE

So, how many deaths?

and repeat!

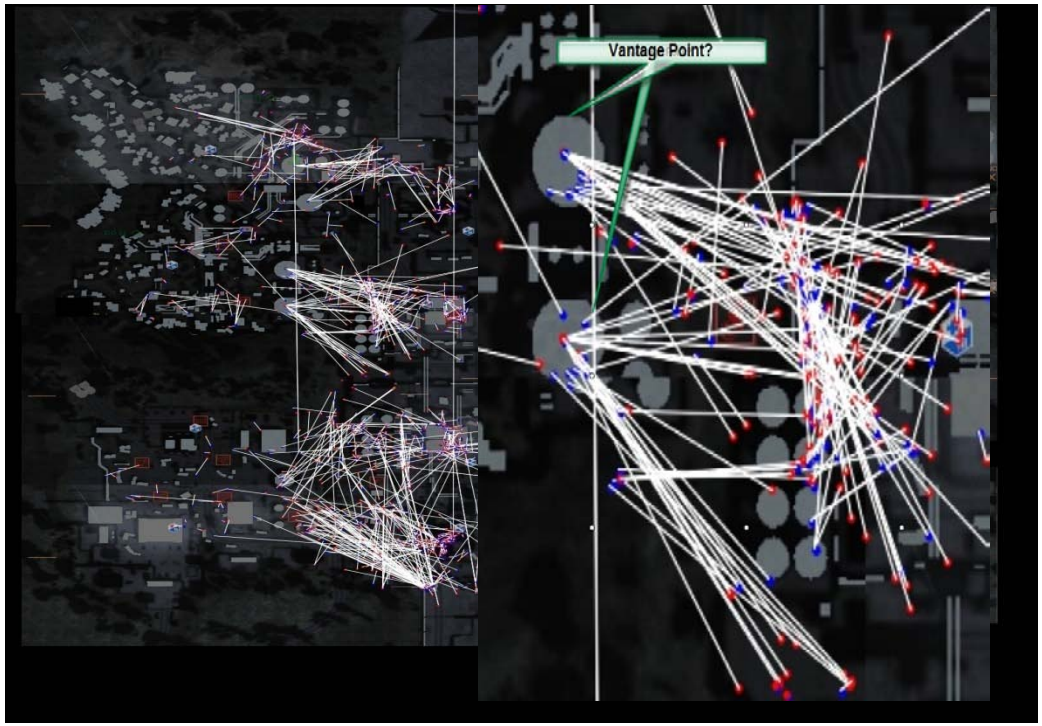
X 8hrs of gameplay

X 10 users

Solution: Record Automatically

Solution: Record Automatically

PLAYSTATION®Network



Established testing process

1. Playthrough

2. Questionnaire

3. Roundtable

What it achieves ?

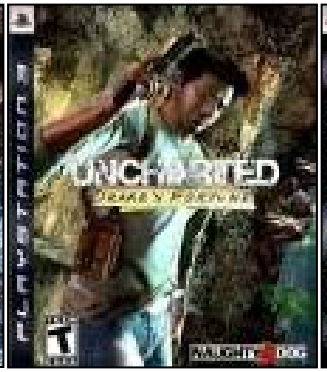
Quality

Consumer relevance

Innovation

Evidence

UNCHARTED 2
AMONG THIEVES
NAUGHTY DOG

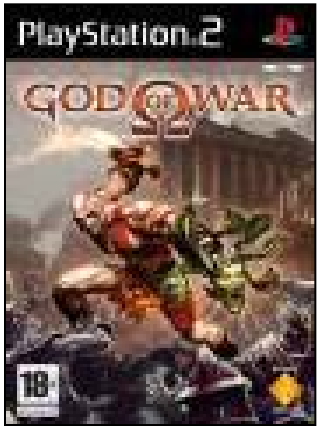

UNCHARTED
NAUGHTY DOG

RATCHET & CLANK

RESISTANCE 2

RESISTANCE
FALL OF MAN

inFAMOUS

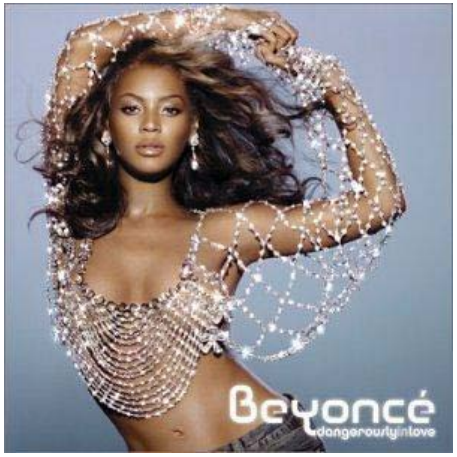

PlayStation.2
GOD OF WAR

PlayStation.2

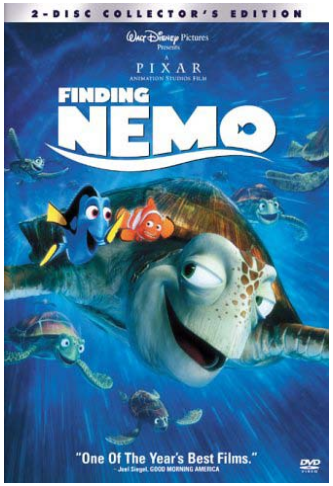
Europe 2003

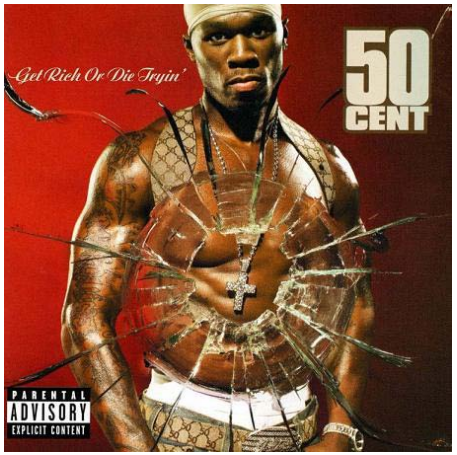
Traditional games testing

Dedicated facility

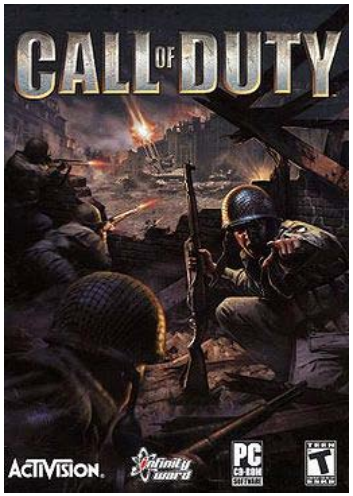

Beyoncé
dangerously in love

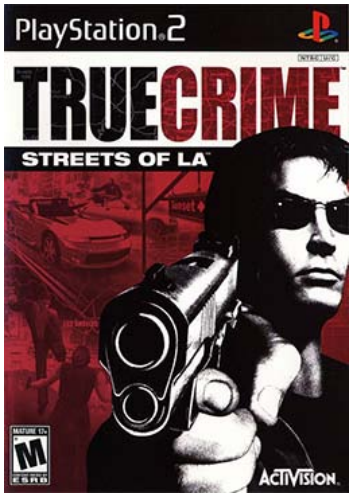
The Lord of the Rings
The Return of the King
The Journey Ends


2-DISC COLLECTOR'S EDITION
Walt Disney Pictures
PIXAR
FINDING NEMO
"One Of The Year's Best Films."


Get Rich Or Die Tryin'
50 CENT
PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

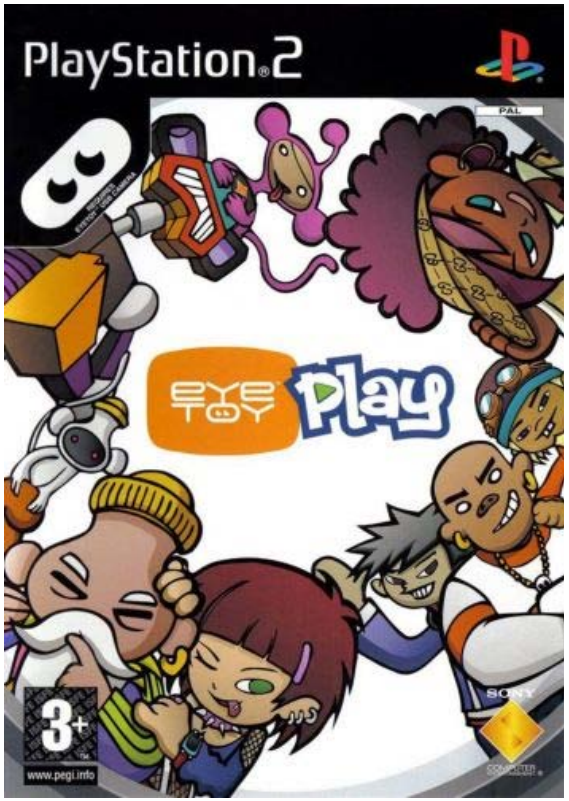
2003


CALL OF DUTY
ACTIVISION
PC
CD-ROM
T


PlayStation 2
TRUE CRIME
STREETS OF LA
M
ACTIVISION

PC CD-ROM
NEED FOR SPEED
UNDERGROUND
EA GAMES

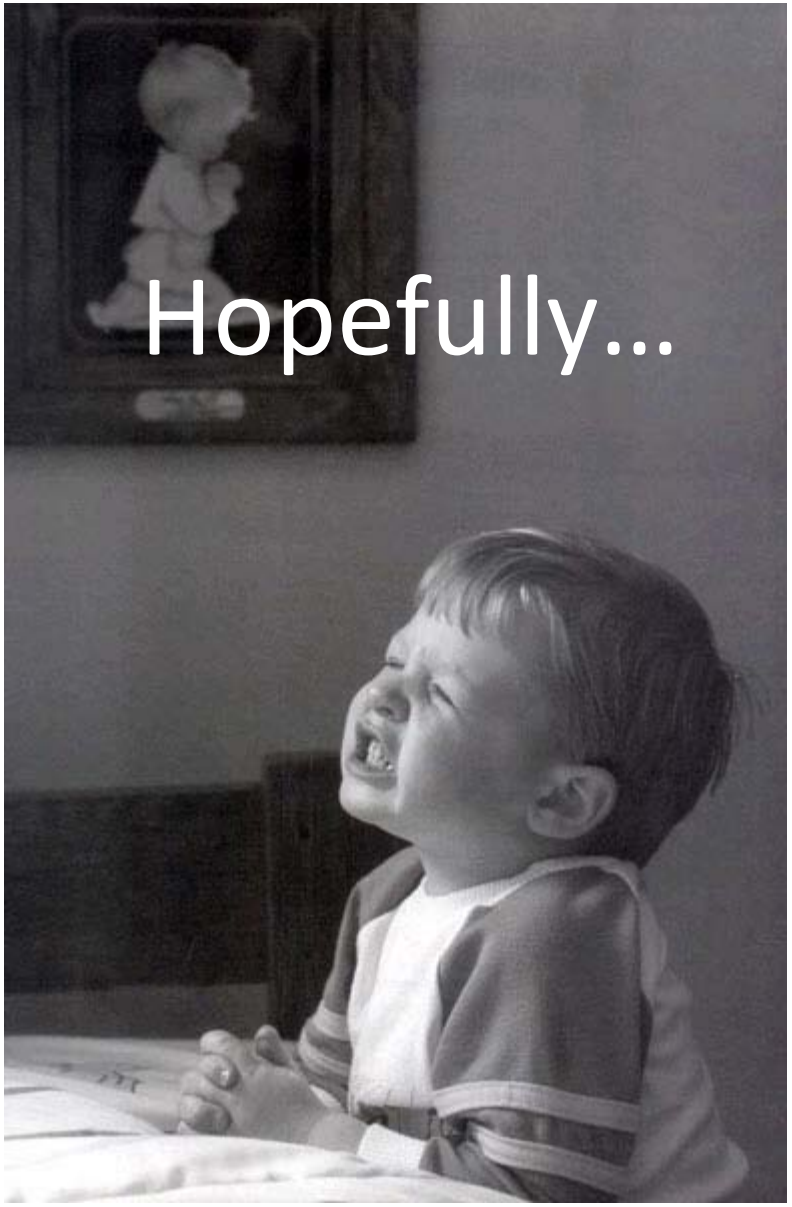
2003 as well



Your body is the controller

So you didn’t need to learn this…

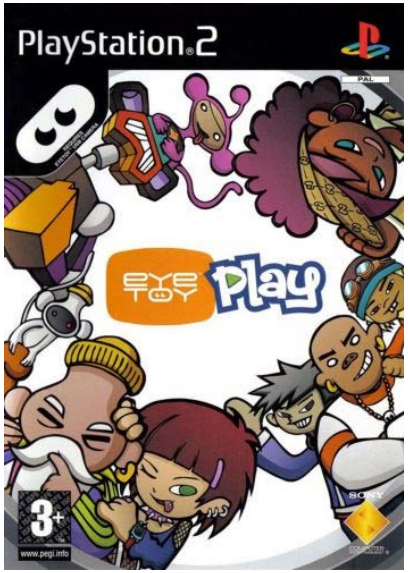
Accessible to new players

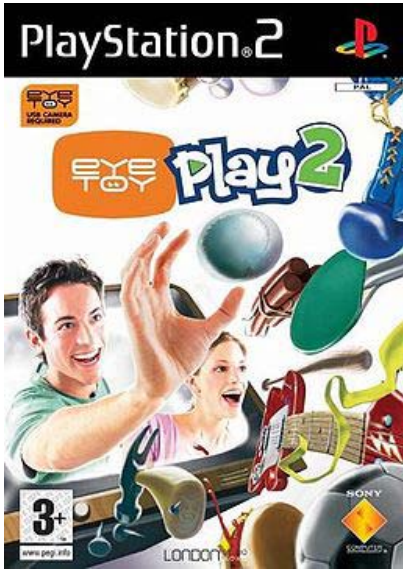

Hopefully…

Let’s test !

Maybe we need to adapt our methods ???

And EyeToy:Play was just the beginning





New interfaces, new audiences

2003

2004

2005

PlayStation 2
PAL
EYE TOY
Kinetic
In association with
NIKE MOTIONWORKS
3+
www.pegi.info
INCLUDES
EYE TOY
SONY

1:20
2

EYE TOY
PlayStation 2

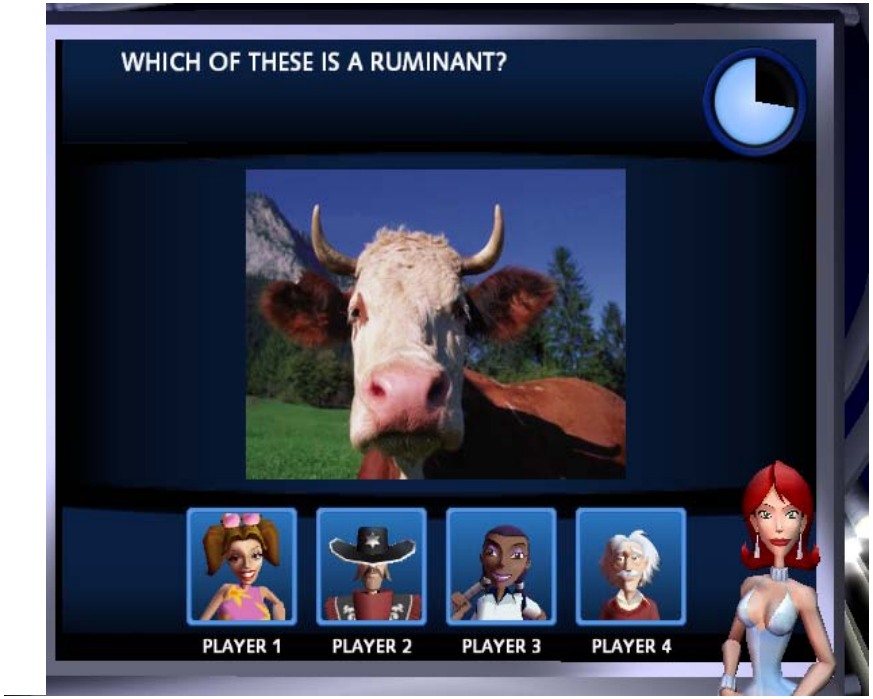
Fitness

PlayStation 2
singstar
3+

TIME 00:23
P1 00340
P1
Had a heart of glass
Seemed like the real thing

Singing

PlayStation 2
BUZZ!
3+


WHICH OF THESE IS A RUMINANT?
PLAYER 1
PLAYER 2
PLAYER 3
PLAYER 4

Quiz

6 Lessons for Testing Social Games

Traditional vs. Social

Audience

Environment

Play patterns

Audience

Lesson 1

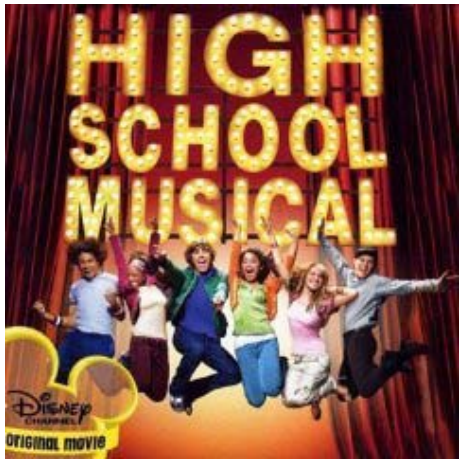
Test with the target audience

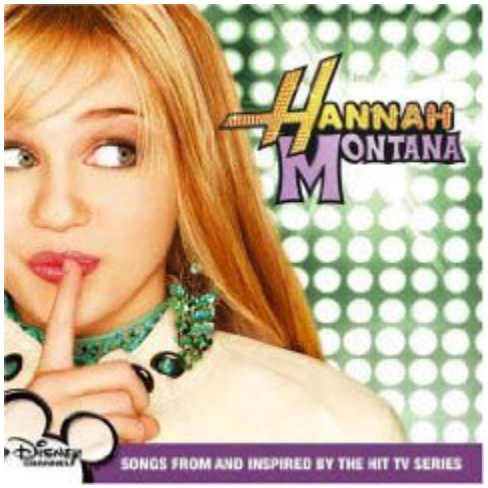
(they aren’t like you)

Hardcore
Gamer

Social were titles intended for “non gamers”

Think you know what 8 year old girls like?

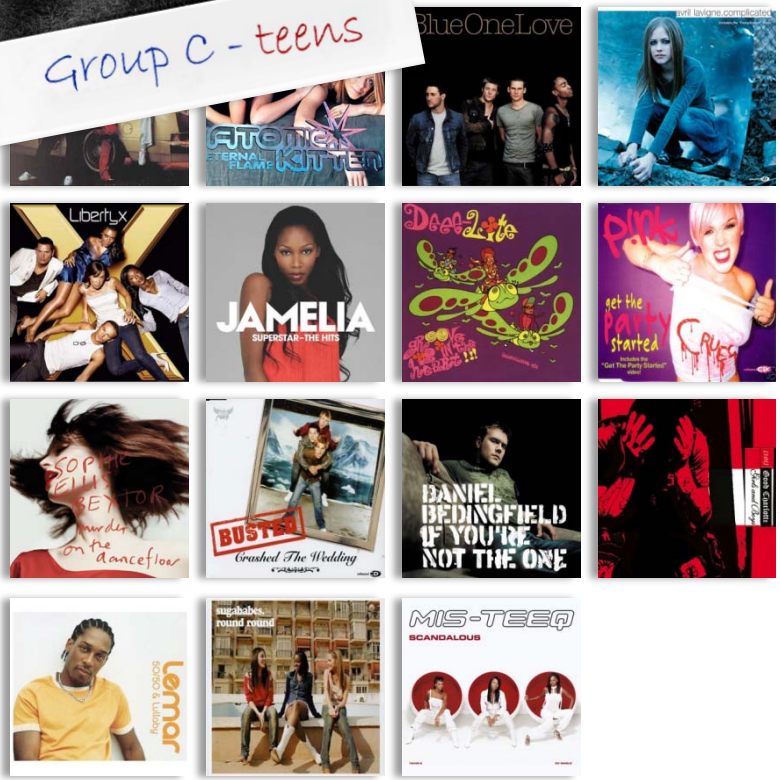




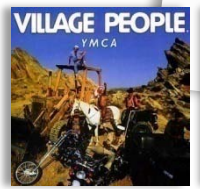
First SingStar User Test

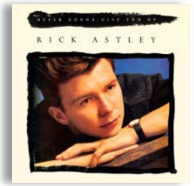
Songs for teens

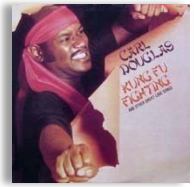
Songs for parents



Songs for parents?







Your audience will surprise you!

"Competitive couples"

- Young professionals, affluent, urban
- Likely to live with partner
- 25 – 45, even M/F split
- Casual/lapsed gamers
- Likely to have HDTV
- Social gaming practice
- Play to entertain/impress friends
- Competitive but inclusive
- Often see friends at home for dinners

Lesson 2

Test Kids with Friends

Kids are intimidated by adults

Kids playing together talk freely

Siblings???

MOVIE

Never again !

Let’s try with friends…

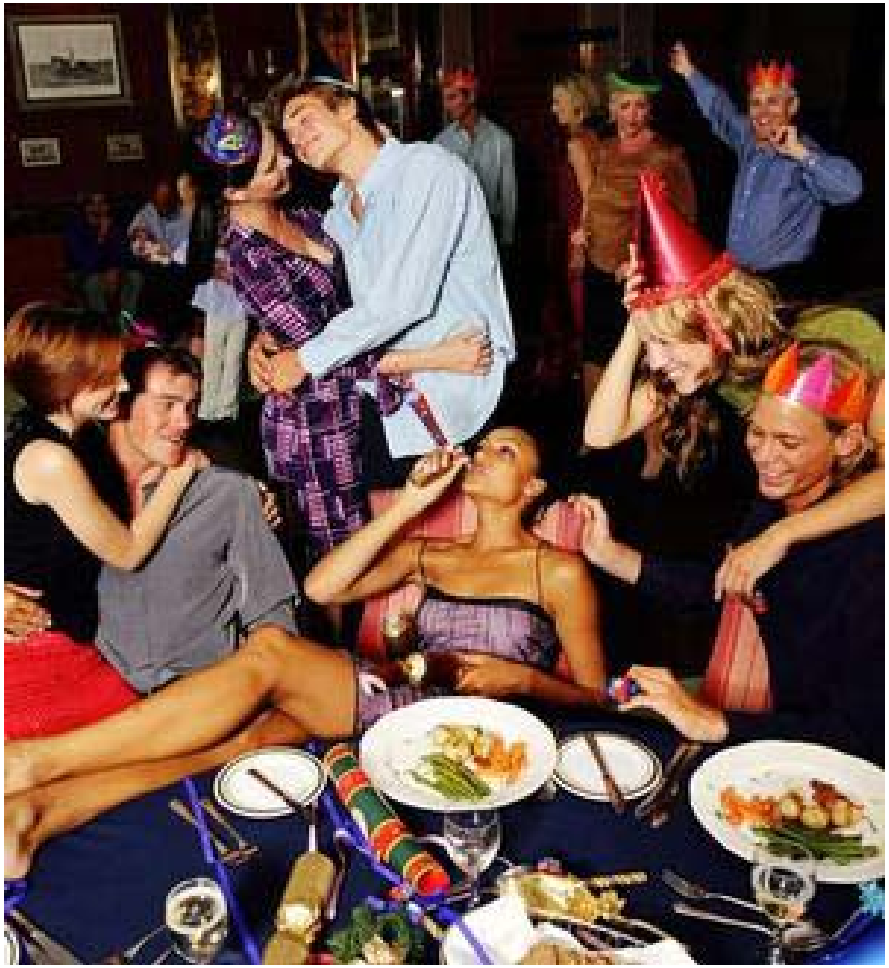
MOVIE

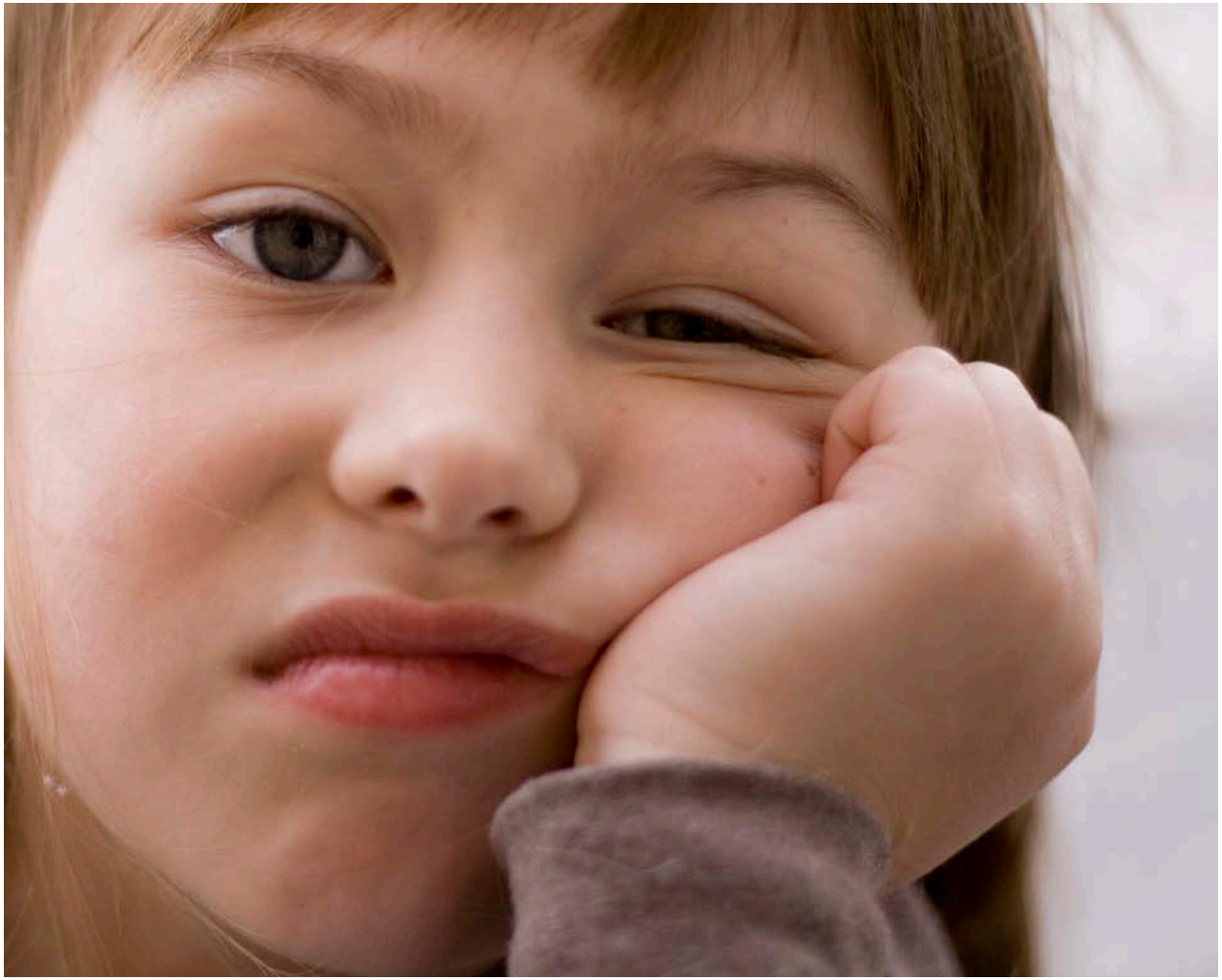
Perfect !

Lesson 3

Test Social Games with Friends or Family Groups

Let the party begin!





Boring !!!

Recruit 1 person + friends

MOVIE

People in the group need to know each other

Environment

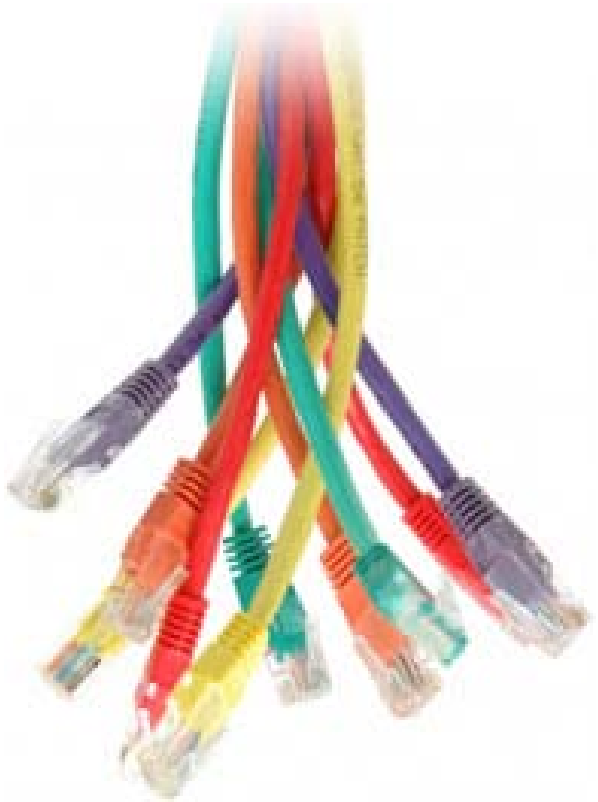
Lesson 4

Build your own Living Room

(No-one parties in a lab)

Home visits

Moving kit, IT…



6 Lessons for Testing Social Games

1. Recruit the target audience
2. Test kids with friends
3. Test social games with families and friends
4. Build your own living room

Lesson 5

Test in the Real World

(It’s a jungle out there!)

But what about here?

PSP
INVIZIMALS
7
www.pegi.info
SONY

Augmented reality monster capture & combat

inviZimals are found by seeking out specific colours in the **real** world

That’s a cable !

That’s coloured papers !

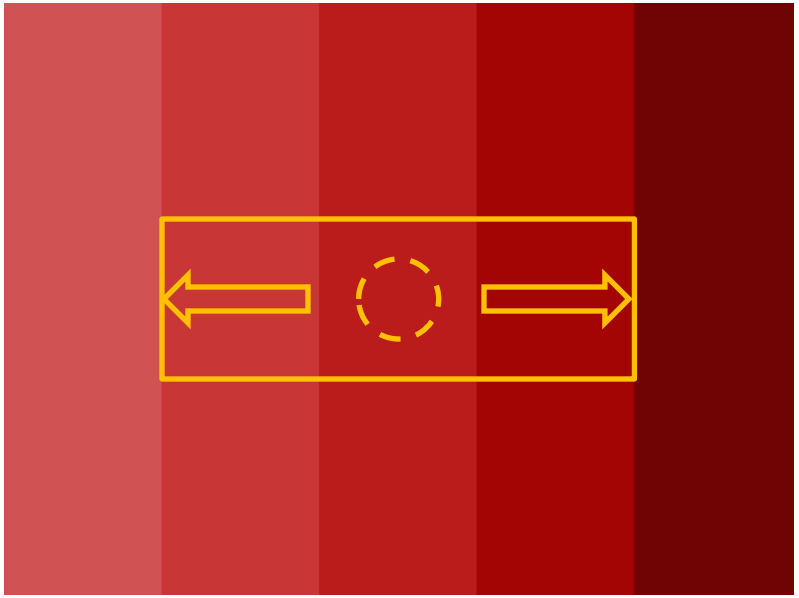
ROOTS

Red?

PRESS X WHEN SEALS ALIGN
PSP

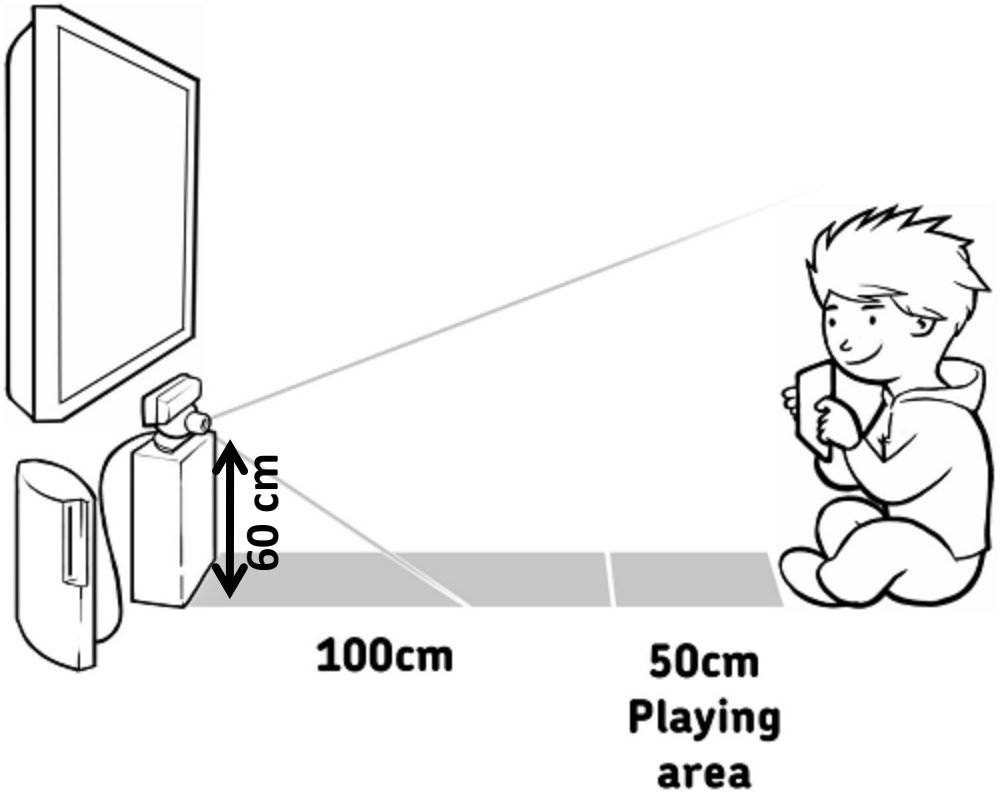
Improved Tutorials

Colour Recognition Sensitivity



PLAYSTATION 3
PlayStation Network
PlayStation Eye
REQUIRED
EyePet
Download new looks and toys from the Pet Centre
3
www.pegi.info
SONY

A virtual pet in your living room


60 cm
100cm
50cm
Playing
area

Play Patterns

Lesson 6

Let people play how they would at home

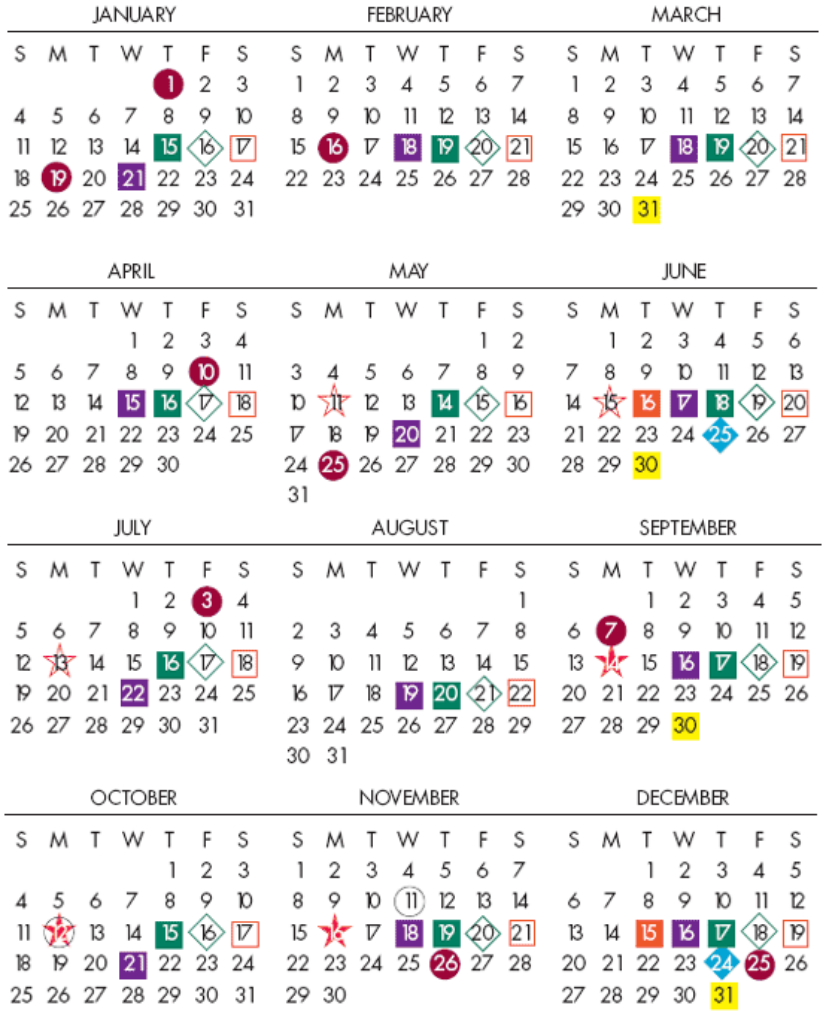
(they may not play at all)

Traditional games tested one big play-through

Social/Casual gamers play in short sessions over long periods

We couldn’t force feed them the whole game

We couldn’t keep inviting them back



JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH

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29	30	31				

APRIL

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26	27	28	29	30		

MAY

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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

JUNE

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28	29	30				

JULY

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26	27	28	29	30	31	

AUGUST

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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER

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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

NOVEMBER

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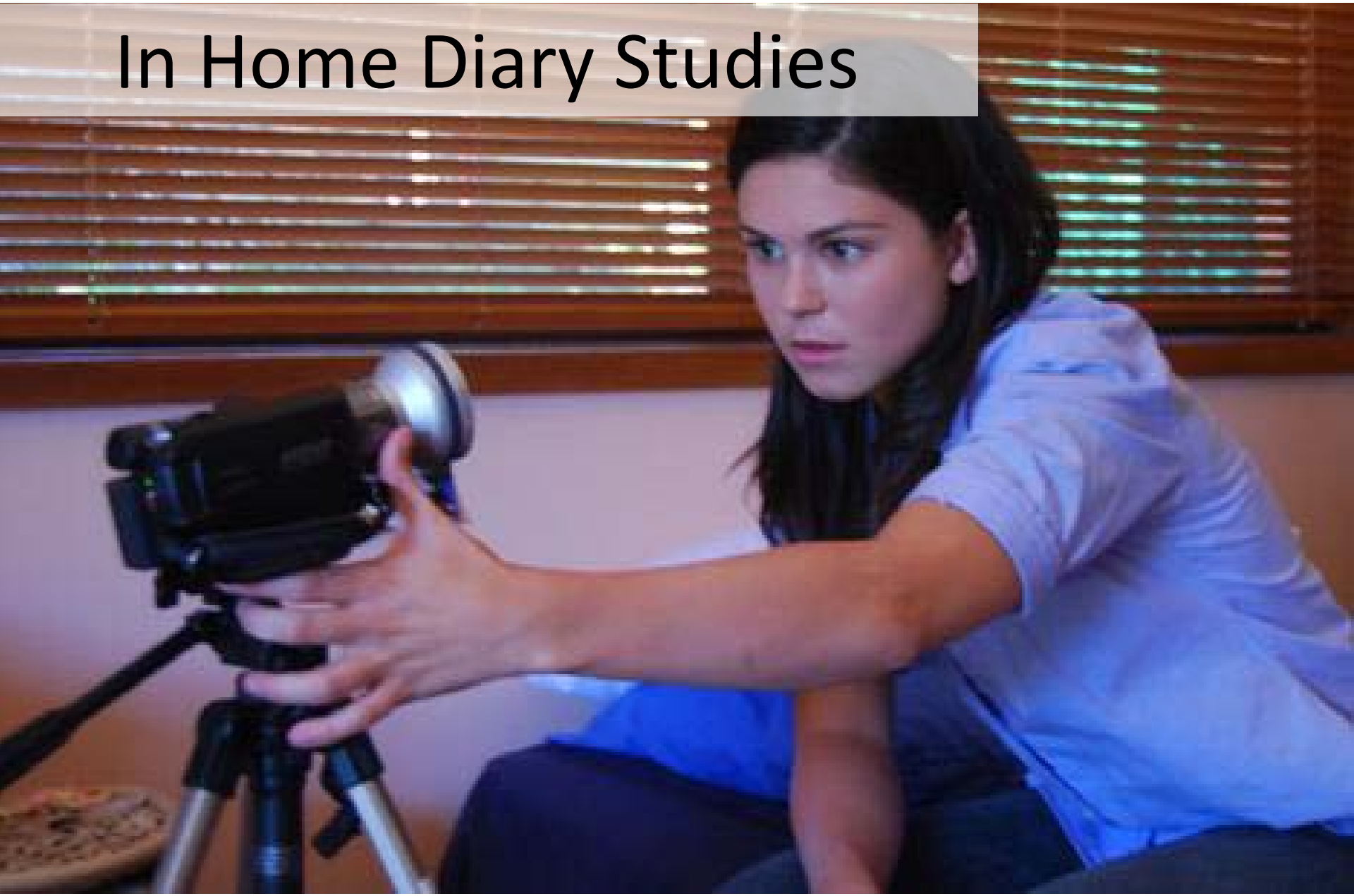
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

In Home Diary Studies



PlayStation 2
PAL
EYE TOY
Kinetic
In association with
NIKE MOTIONWORKS
3+
www.pegi.info
INCLUDES
EYE TOY
SONY

Fitness program is inherently long term…

Lend your game to trusted users

Provide users with a back up memory

So what happened?

In-game support

PlayStation Digital Comics

Metroline
98
WILLESDEN BUS GARAGE
THE N°1 SHOW
THE LION KING
LYCEUM THEATRE
JJD 561D

BRITISH AIRWAYS

I won't play
my music
out loud

Summary of Key Lessons

1. Recruit the target audience

2. Test kids with friends, not siblings

3. Test social games with families and friends

4. Build your own living room

5. Test in the real world

6. Let people play as they would at home

Something missing ?

Before

After

1943

Thanks to

WWSJ : Tuning & Monitoring team

WWSA: Foster city team**,** Naughty Dog, Insomniac, Sucker punch, God of War

WWSE: Creative Development Group, User Testing Team, Singstar, EyePet, Buzz! , InviZimals, Digital Comics, Eytoy Play, EyeToy Kinetic, Creative Services

All the anonymous users

Questions?

user_testing_team@scee.net

6 Lessons for Testing Social Games

1. Recruit the target audience
2. Test kids with friends, not siblings
3. Test social games with families and friends
4. Build your own living room
5. Test in the real world
6. Let people play as they would, at home