

Joining the InCrowd

Building a Mobile Social Game in Four Weeks

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GDC Online 2010 – iPhone Games Summit

About Booyah

“dedicated to creating new forms of entertainment ... by bringing together elements of the real world and the digital world”



Booyah's InCrowd

- Location-based social discovery game
- Personalized avatars
- Facebook integration
 - Facebook Places
 - Facebook Social Graph
- iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch









Genesis

- Motivated by new Facebook Places feature
- Lots of broad ideas (multiple genres, etc.)
- Studio leadership picked the final concept
- Good fit with overall company focus

How Long Is 4 Weeks?

- Facebook Places launch deadline
- One polished iteration
- Core mechanics
- Establish a product
- Less than Photoshop's trial period

What It's Not

- Not a prototype
- Not a hackathon
- Not four weeks of crunch

These products live on as live services.

Minimum Viable Product

- Iterative process of idea generation, prototyping, analysis, and learning
- Fast iterations until a market fit is attained or the product is deemed non-viable
- Product vision remains constant
- Not “release early, release often”
- Focus on early adopters

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimum_viable_product

Scoping

- No animations
- Generic venue backdrops
- Leverage embedded web views

Starter Kit

- Producer (1)
- Designers (2)
- Engineers (5)
- Artists (2)
- QA Team (2)

Starter Kit

- Issue tracker (Redmine)
- Source control (Bazaar)
- Build system (Hudson)
- Development tools (Xcode, etc.)
- Apple Developer Account

Day One

- Basic project setup
 - Source code
 - Provisioning profile
- Build system support
- Distributed build to team by end of day



Meetings

- Meetings called on demand
- Start small and pull people in as needed
- Notes distributed via email and on wiki

Make meetings as optional as possible.

Art

- Adopted Nightclub City art style
- Reused Nightclub City avatars
- Designed unique venue backdrops
- Designed unique user interface



1 Install
Nightclub City



Permissions



3 Add Bookmark



Like



Subscribe



0

Add

33

582

POPULARITY

38029

LUXURY

Keith's Club



Output
SR



Art Style Reuse

- Leverage existing style guide
- Conserves asset creation time
- Existing assets are already reviewed
- Builds visual brand



Game Server

- Existing server platform
 - Application support
 - Shared database layer
 - Messaging system
- Extensible client-server API
- Experienced operations team

Game Server

- Character and avatar persistence
- Place details and visitor tracking
- Social action messaging
- Facebook interactions
- Tunable game constants

Facebook Integration

- Used on both client and server
- Exclusive use of the Graph API
- Early access to the Places API
- Rich stream posts
- User and friend platform for free!

Facebook Places

- Only Place Search partner
- Full integration except ...
 - Friend tagging
 - Adding new places





Jon Parise was at City Beer Store.



City Beer Store on InCrowd

See what Jon is doing at City Beer Store right now.
Want to become a local legend? Join the InCrowd.



September 11 at 9:20pm via InCrowd · [Comment](#) · [Like](#)



Robert Zubek likes this.



Jon Parise just picked today's look!

[Remove](#)



Make me so, so fancy!

You could look this great, too, if only you played InCrowd.



39 minutes ago via InCrowd · [Comment](#) · [Like](#)



Tracy Espeleta lookin fly!

2 minutes ago · [Like](#) · [Delete](#)

BooYAH!

[Home](#) [Blog](#) [News](#) [About](#) [Advertise](#) [Contact](#) [Jobs](#)



Hi Jon



What's Hot Here

Everyone

Friends

Nearby

Booyah HQ

0.213

CHECKINS

0.059

VISITORS

0.024

POSTS



Available on the iPhone

App Store

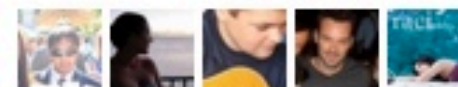
Get InCrowd ▶



Like



Rahul Gupta, Meghan Crosno and 10 others like this. · [Admin Page](#)



Embedded Web Views

- Spreads out UI implementation
- Breaks the App Store submission cycle
- Personalized content
- Advertising content (timed campaigns)
- Supports social widgets

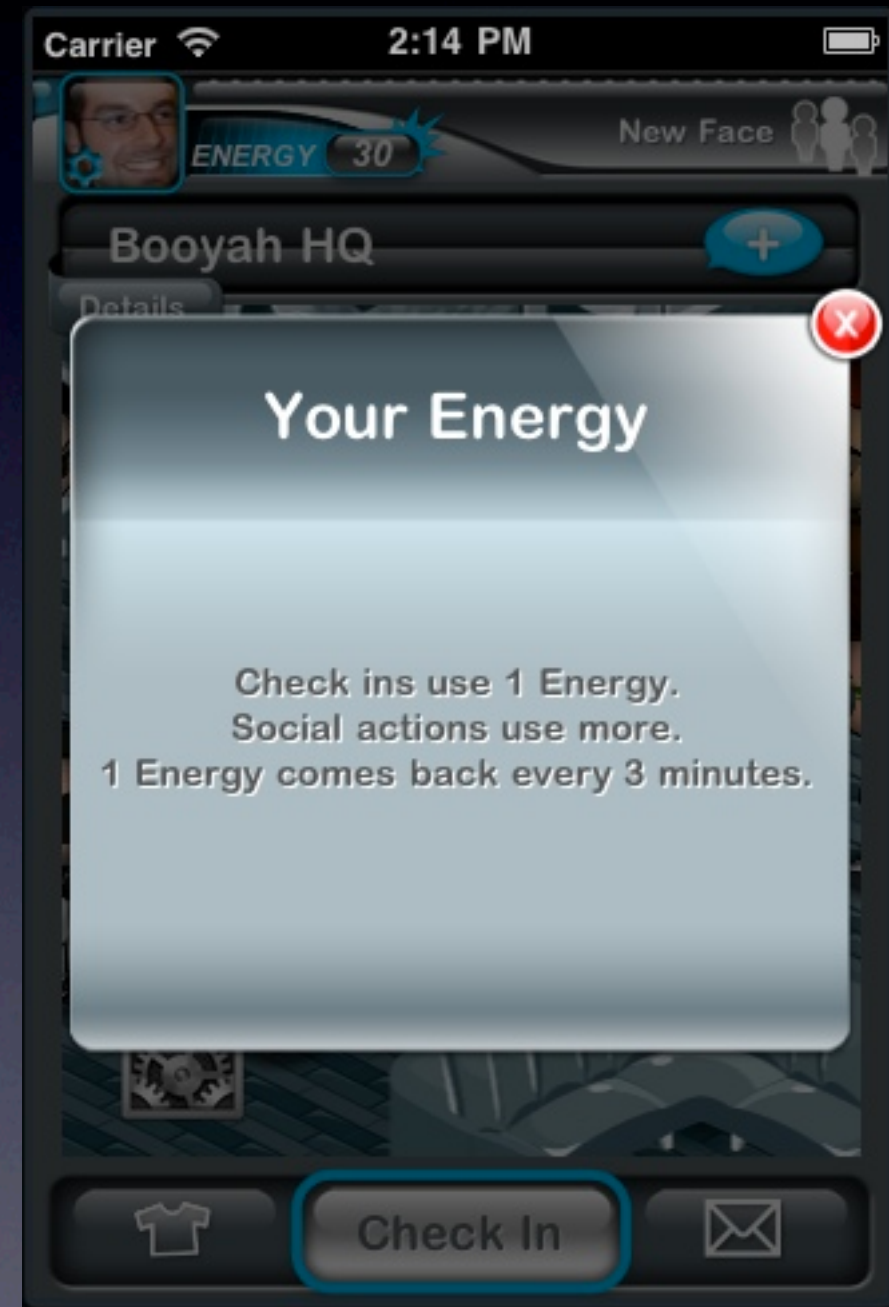
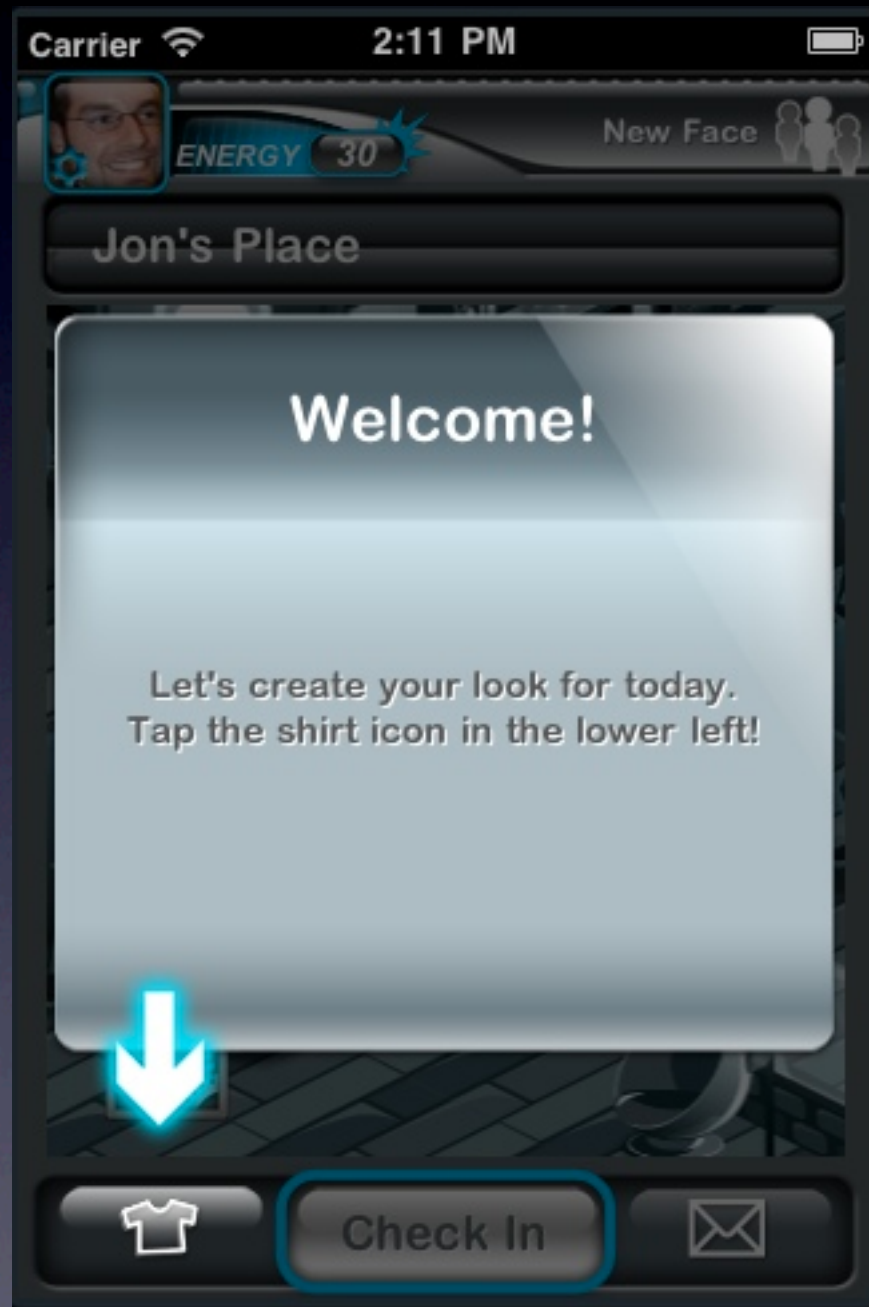


Web View Techniques

- Leverage HTML, CSS, and JavaScript
- Pass parameters from app to server
- NSHTTPCookieStorage manipulation
- Extend NSURLCache for local resources

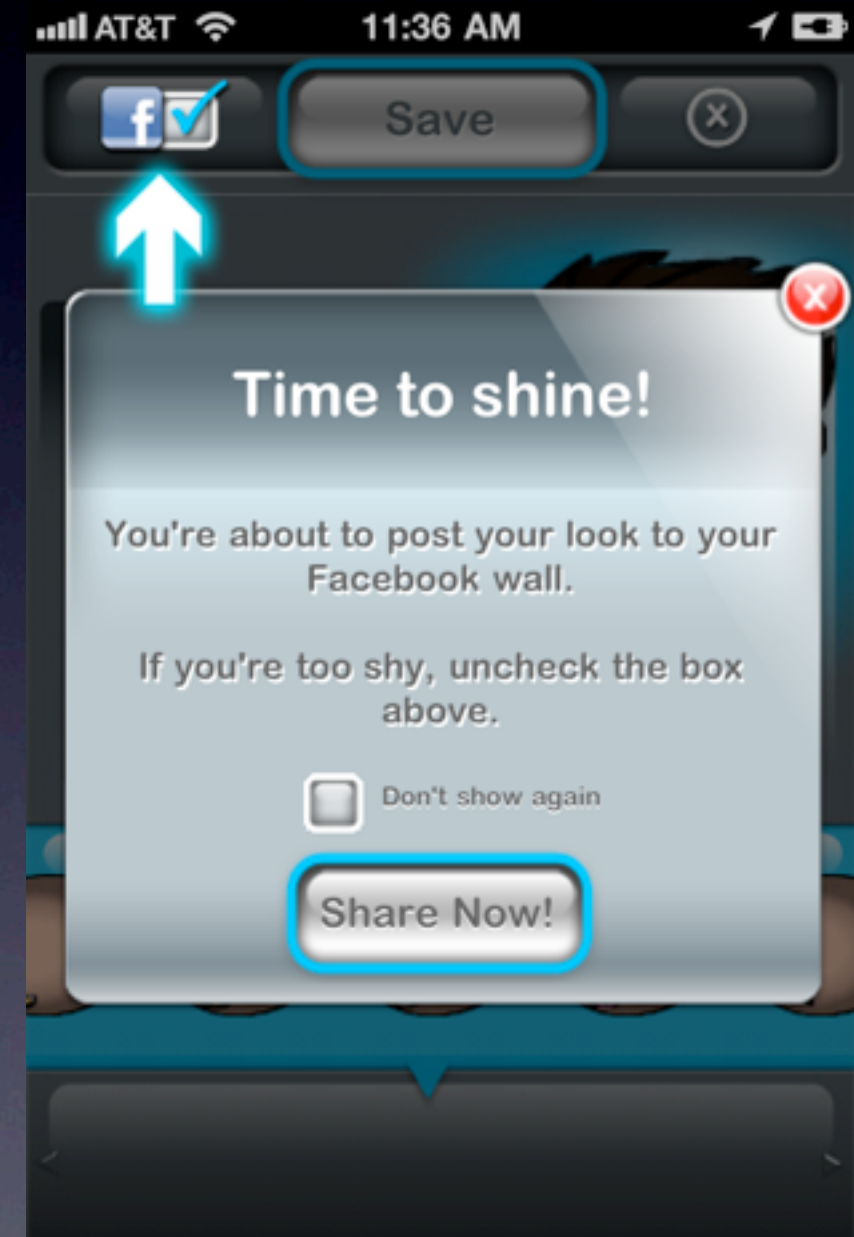
```
<meta name="viewport" content="width=320,  
    user-scalable=no" />
```

Tutorial



Tutorial

- Expanded tutorial based on player feedback
- Added “Don’t show again” dialog options



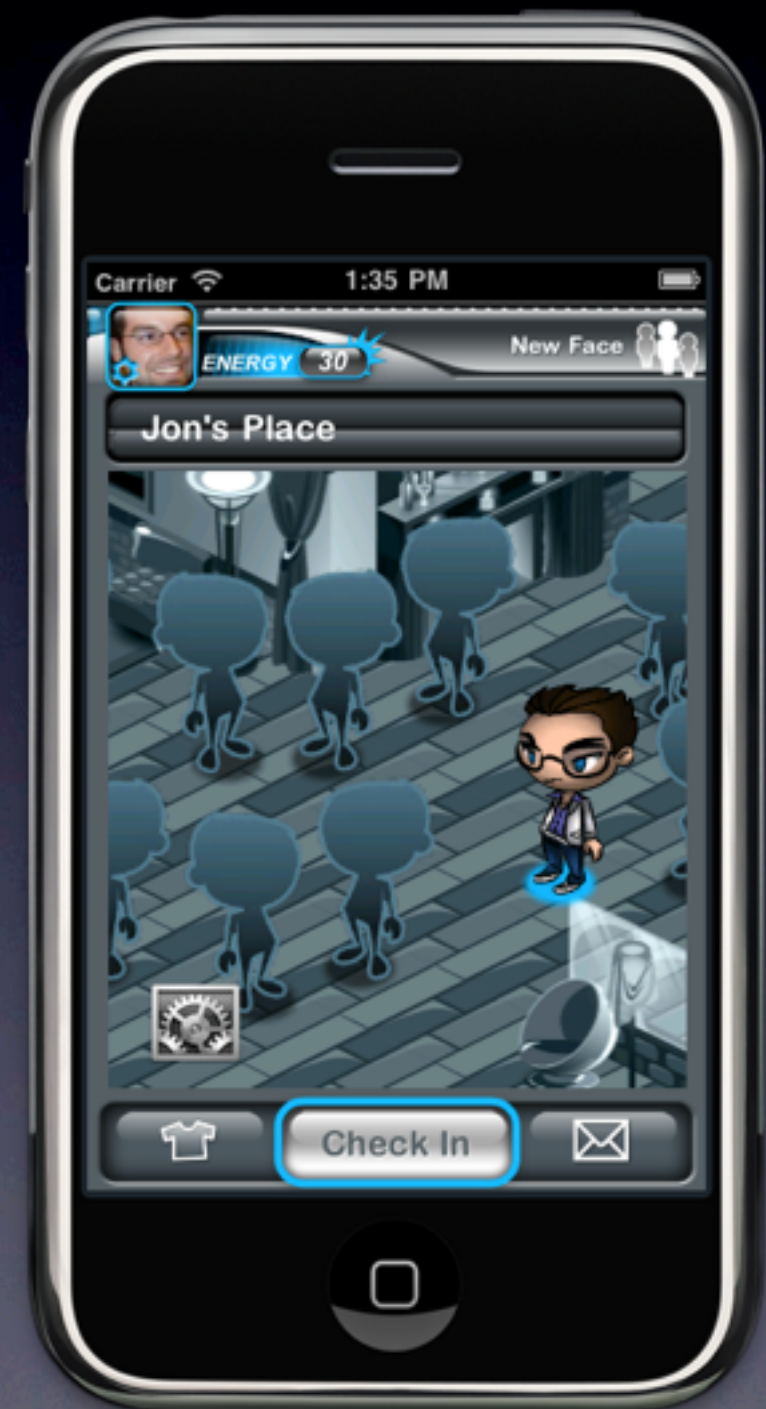
Accidental Features

Loading Screen



Home Base

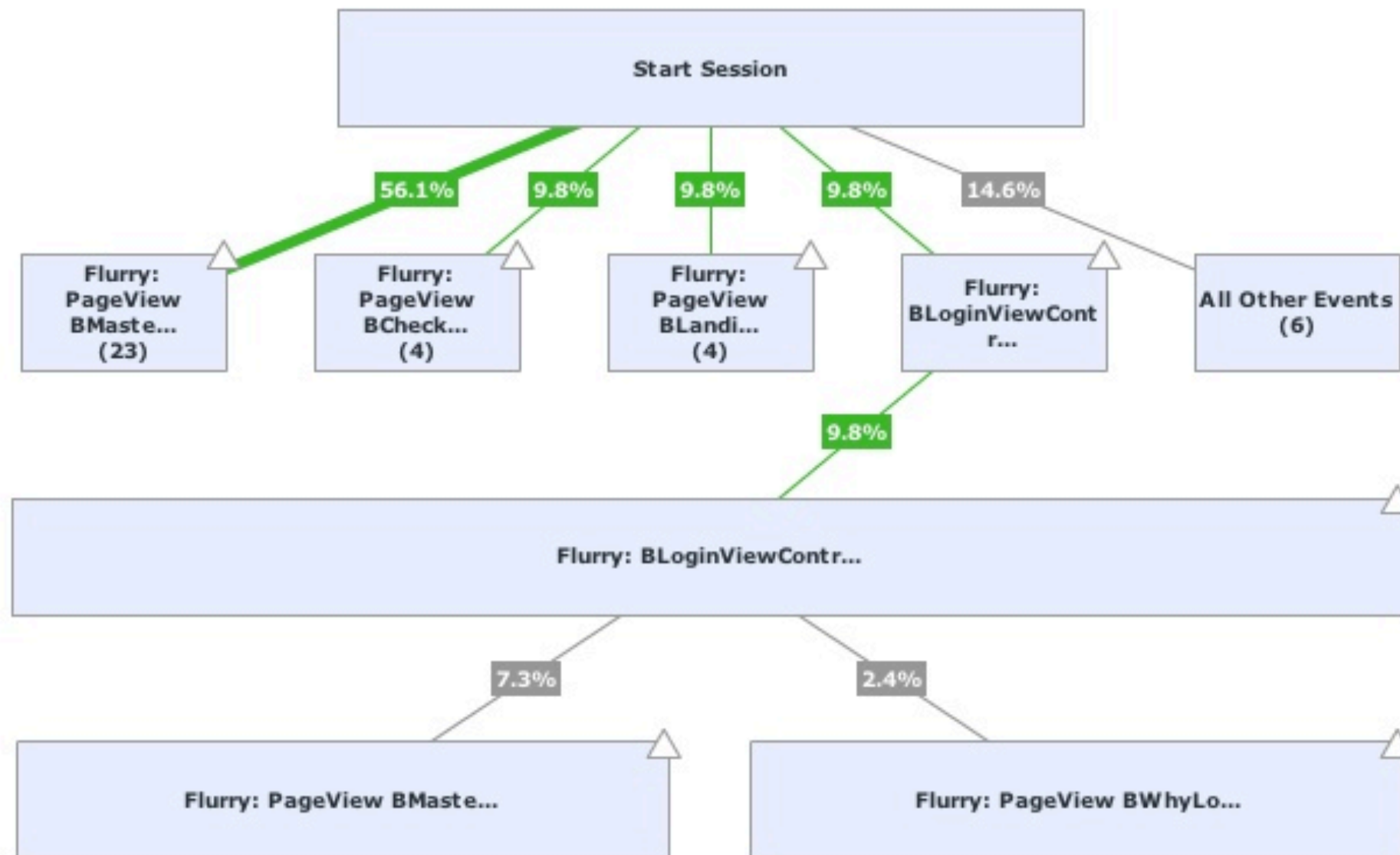
- A place-less way to connect with friends
- Was an accidental user experience opportunity



Metrics

- Flurry and Google Analytics
- Detailed login flow instrumentation
- Page View tracking (for user paths)
- Sampled and unsampled reporting
- Social actions, wardrobe choices, etc.

User Paths



Shipping

- You probably still have lots you want to do
- You still have lots of open design questions
- You may not yet have the answers

Positive Feedback

- Players enjoy the visuals
- Turns “checking in” into a game
- Friend discovery

Sweet concept ★★★★★

by pDXZ - Version 1.0 - Sep 3, 2010

[Report a Concern >](#)

Ha I just got my first wink today, someone down the street from my house!! :-)

Looking forward to more stuff to do and updates! Saw the video announcement from the facebook event... is it really true you guys made this in less than a month?? Crazy-nuts!

Negative Feedback

- Loneliness from empty places
- Sparse place data in many areas
- Facebook requirement
- Facebook wall posts

What's New In Version 1.0.1

- Publishing of Facebook Feed Stories now defaulted to "OFF".

Screenshot Retrospective

- Take a few screenshots a day
- Capture progress and UI revisions
- Automate as part of your build process

In Summary

- Build a flexible, multi-talented team
- Maintain a consistent product vision
- Reuse as much as possible
- Avoid rushing and cutting corners

Thanks!

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<http://incrowd.booyah.com/>