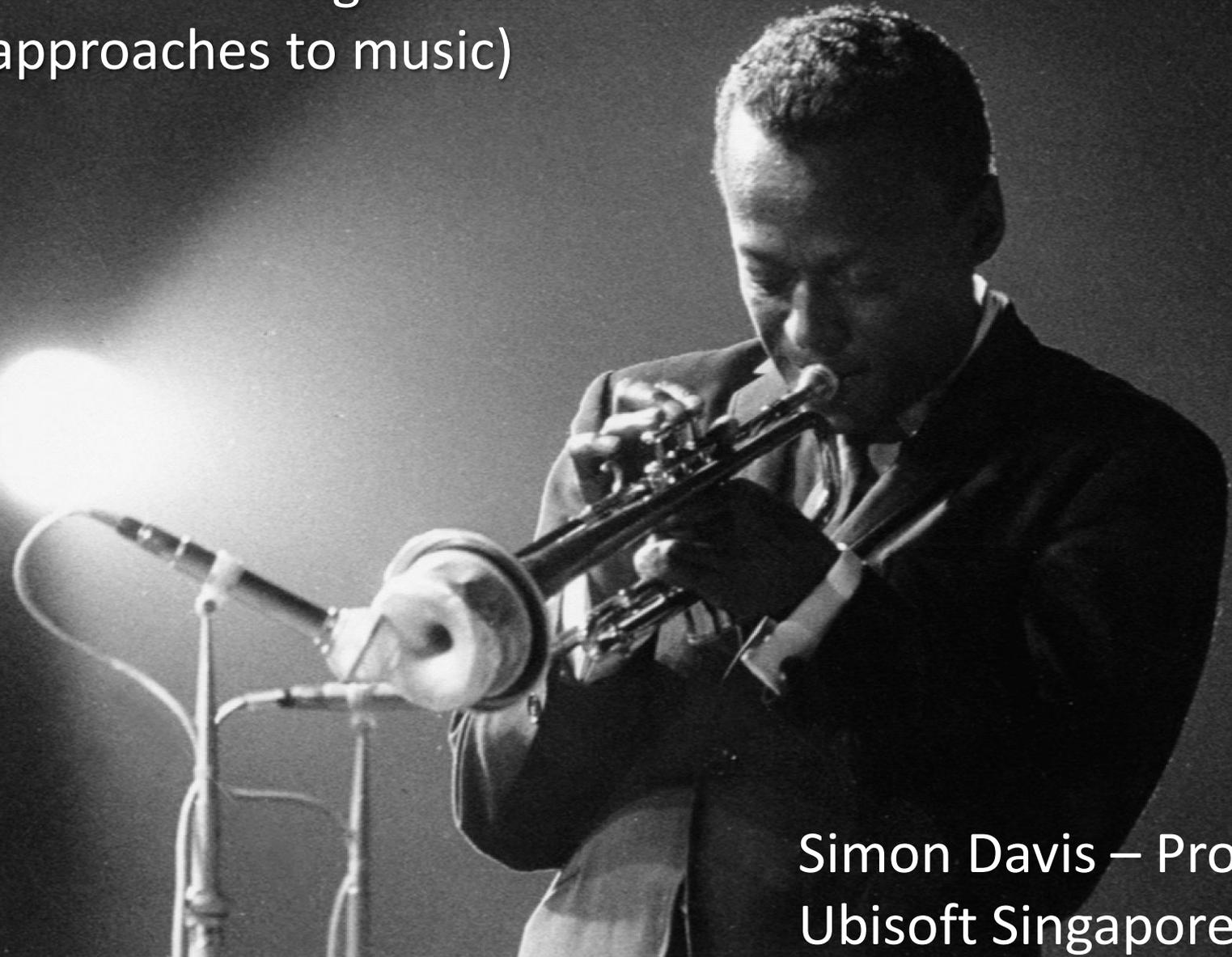


The Wonderful World of UX

(How we can make games which resonate better and learn from approaches to music)



Simon Davis – Producer
Ubisoft Singapore

What the hell is this all about?

UX: Taking games from “WTF?” to “Awesome!” since 1961.



What the hell is this all about?

- What is UX and how can we relate it to games?
- Why should you care?
- Different approaches to UX (Jazz vs. Blues)
- How can we create better experiences for our audience?

A little background



A little background



“What the hell is UX?”

UX ≠ New

UX ≠ Complex

*UX is how you make your game's
enjoyment easier to access.*

“What the hell is UX?”



Early games used story and “trial and error” to guide users.

“What the hell is UX?”

UX ≠ Usability

UX ≠ UI Design

UX is a collection of different practices.

“UX is a bit like a band...”



The Drummer

Information
Architecture

Billy Cobham: “Information Architecture Hero”

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Information Architecture asks:

- What are we trying to achieve?
- Who are our intended audience?
- Why will they play our game?

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Example Information Architecture
outputs:

- User stories
- Competitor analysis
- Content and functions

“UX is a bit like a band...”



Jaco Pastorius: “Information Design Legend”

The Bassist
Information
Design

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Information Design asks:

- What information will we show the user?
- Where will we present information?
- How will we present information?

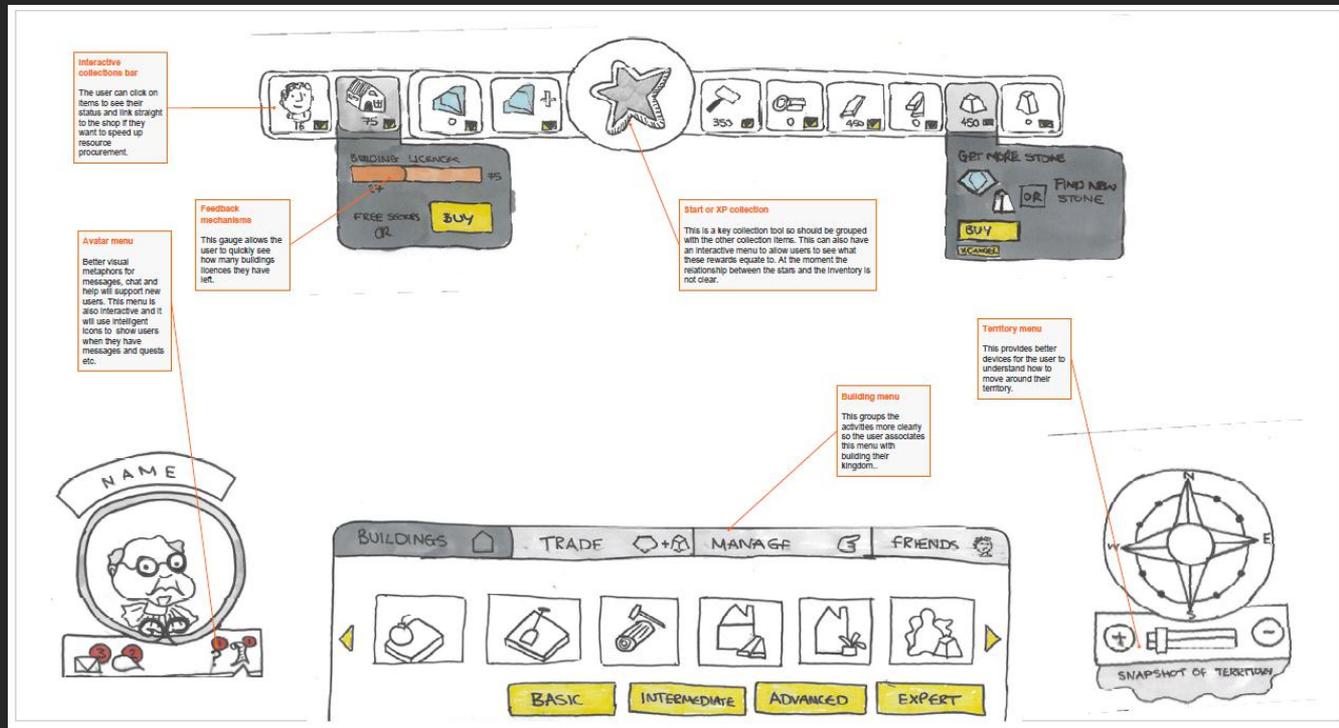
“UX is a bit like a band...”

Example Information Design outputs:

- Overview plans for game
- Layouts for main screens

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Information Design outputs:



Example scamp

“UX is a bit like a band...”



Bill Evans: “Interaction Design Idol”

The Pianist

Interaction

Design

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Interaction Design asks:

- **How** do you do?
- **How** do you feel?
- **How** do you know?

“UX is a bit like a band...”



Stanley Jordan: “Visual Design Colossus”

The Guitarist

Visual
Design

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Example Visual Design outputs

“Guide” which outlines:

- Stylistic conventions
- Visual communication (tied to Information Design)

“UX is a bit like a band...”



Eva Fitzgerald: “Usability Goddess”

The Singer

Usability

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Example Usability outputs:

- A/B Testing
- Usability guidelines
- Accessibility guidelines
- Observational Testing

“UX is a bit like a band...”



“UX is a bit like a band...”

Always remember these guys...



The Audience

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Information Architecture – User research, project goals, high-level design.

Information Design – Plans, “What goes where”?

Interaction Design – How do we communicate, how do we perform actions, where do we perform actions?

“UX is a bit like a band...”

Visual Design – Uniqueness, personality, communication.

Usability – How do people respond?
How intuitive is it to use?

You don't need a team of experts or formal processes to begin implementing these practices into your designs.

Jazz vs. Blues

“Make a jazz noise here...”



One thing I like about jazz, kid, is that I don't know what's going to happen next. Do you?"

— **Bix Beiderbecke**

“The blues is a mighty bad feelin’ ”



“Simple music is the hardest music to play and blues is simple music.”
— **Albert Collins**

... and now for some examples

Jazz: Grand Turismo



Blues: Outrun 2



Jazz: ARMA II



Blues: Far Cry 2



Jazz hands

GAME CONTROLS, DEFAULT



Film Controls

LT Left Trigger Thrust (Flying Cam)	Y Y Button Flying Cam/Player Cam	
RT Right Trigger Slow Motion/Fast Forward	X X Button Hide/Show Control Pad	
LB Left Bumper Move Down (Flying Cam)	B B Button Hide/Show HUD	
RB Right Bumper Move Up (Flying Cam)	A A Button Play/Pause	
Left Stick Move Camera/ Press to Pan (Flying Cam)	Right Stick Look/Rotate Camera (Flying Cam)	D-Pad Switch Players (Player Cam)

Forge Controls, Edit Mode

LT Left Trigger Thrust	Y Y Button Delete Item	
RT Right Trigger Hold to Rotate Selected Item	X X Button Inventory/Item Options	
LB Left Bumper Move Down	B B Button Hold to Drop Selected Item	
RB Right Bumper Move Up	A A Button Pick Up/Drop Item	
Left Stick Move/Rotate Selected Item	Right Stick Look/Rotate Selected Item	D-Pad Play/Edit Mode

Blues simplicity



Jazz Visual Design

Current location: **BJD4-E**

Nearest: **Red Alliance**

Sovereignty: **Province (3)**

Sovereignty Level: **Province (3)**

Constellation: **F-300K**

Region: **Pythabolis**

Security Level: **SVF System** (Panel changed to BJD4-E Local Channel)

Akoana > What are you doing?

Akoana > guy, we don't interfere when you are here firt

Akoana > y aun chrubim

Akoana > pres de kla gate de sortie

Akoana > je sens que c lui qui a la clé

Akoana > les fnoirés serieux

Akoana > tu peux screenshot stp?

Akoana > je suis dans un cyber, je pourrais pas recup si je le fais

Kaap > oué

Your Devastator Cruise Missile hits Gist Seraphim, doing 380.7 damage.

SELECTED ITEM

GIST NEPHILIM WRECK
DISTANCE: 30 KM
SEC.: 4.6

OVERVIEW (NOT SAVED)

IC	DISTANCE	NAME	TYPE
+	15 km	Arch Gistii Impaler	Arch Gistii Impa
-	15 km	Gistum Centurion Wreck	Angel Medium
-	15 km	Gistum Centurion Wreck	Angel Medium
-	19 km	Gistum Phalanx Wreck	Angel Medium
-	21 km	Gistatis Legatus Wreck	Angel Medium
-	23 km	Gistii Impaler Wreck	Angel Small Wr
+	31 km	Gist Seraphim	Gist Seraphim
+	31 km	Gist Nephilim Wreck	Angel Large Wr
+	31 km	Gist Seraphim	Gist Seraphim
-	33 km	Gistatis Tribunus Wreck	Angel Medium
-	33 km	Gist Nephilim Wreck	Angel Large Wr
-	33 km	Gistatis Tribunus Wreck	Angel Medium
-	34 km	Gist Cherubim Wreck	Angel Large Wr

DRONES: (5 OF) | **FLEET (3) / 1** | **BROAD**

- Drones in bay (5)
- Drones in local space (5)
- Large (5)
- Berserker II (Fighting)

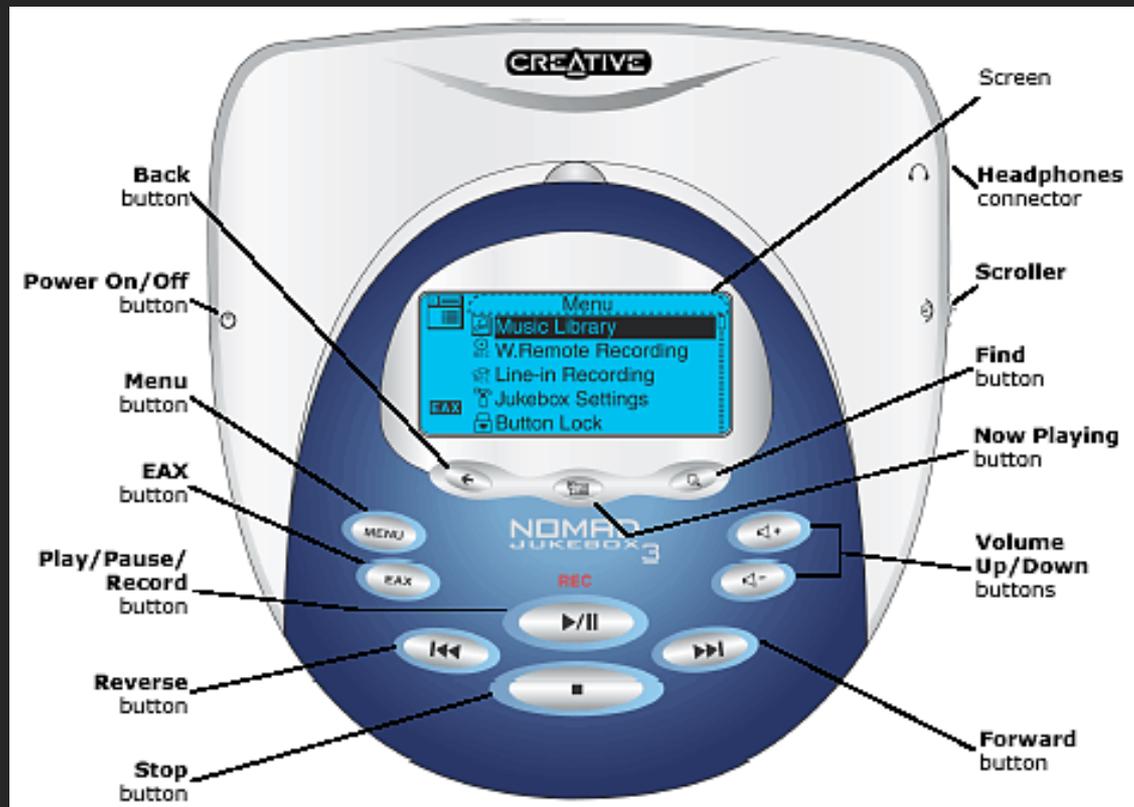
12:27

Blues Visual Design



Beyond games...

“Non-audience driven” product design?



“Audience driven” product design?



The Iterations of GRO

The Iterations of GRO

PLAY NOW | SOLO | MULTIPLAYER PROFILE | INVENTORY | STORE MAIL FRIENDS | CLAN | L'BOARDS OPTIONS | HELP/BUGS | QUIT



ENGINEER: LVL 2


SGT MAJOR HERO.WARJUNKIE

IGC: #5,182
 GR\$: \$4,501

UPCOMING ACHIEVEMENT

UPCOMING PROGRESSION

LOADOUT: STANDARD EQUIPMENT ▼

SAVE | EDIT | DELETE

PRIMARY WEAPON	M16A4 ASSAULT RIFLE LEVEL 6 REQUIRED + CLASS RESTRICTED	HELMET
AMMO: PRIMARY		FACE
SIDEARM	DMG 10.2 AMMO TYPE 5.56MM ACC 91.7	BODY ARMOR
AMMO: SECONDARY	RECOIL 15.3 MOBILITY -5.5 DURABILITY 120/120	OTHER (COSMETIC)
GRENADE	CONSUMABLES  SELF  TEAM SPECIAL	

Global Trade Friends

Hero.Myre: so I put it on my head and it worked. who knew?

Hero.Tombstone: just bought the [Finely Crafted Titanium Barrel] real cheap. you should all buy one.

SittingDuck: That's how it goes some-times.

Match starting soon! Who's in?

INVENTORY | CARDS SELL | DELETE PAGE 1/3

The Iterations of GRO

The screenshot displays the Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon scoreboard interface. At the top left, the game title "TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON" is visible. The player's name "SittingDuck" and rank "1. Recruit" are shown, along with a score of 0 and a level indicator of 11058. The main scoreboard area is titled "SCOREBOARD: VICTORY!" and features a "COMMANDO LEVEL 5" progress bar. A notification box states "YOU WON A BRONZE CARD!" with a "CLICK TO OPEN" button. The interface also includes a list of achievements, a chat window, and a bottom status bar with "Public Chat", "Party //", "Friendlist", and "20" players.

SCOREBOARD: VICTORY!

Results | Scoreboard

COMMANDO LEVEL 5

XP: +250 TOTAL: 2222/2700
IGC: +1.000 TOTAL: 11,058

YOU WON A BRONZE CARD!
CLICK TO OPEN

Channels / 1 Public Channel

Public Chat | Party // | Friendlist | 20 | 12:21 PM

The Iterations of GRO

Profile 1000
01 Rank 1000 \$
COMMANDO

QUICKPLAY : DOM **START GAME**

// STORE

Smoke Grenades - Blue x 5 @20 IGC 100
Hi-Density Ceramic Armor Inserts x 2 @175 IGC 350
AS-50, [Super Magazine](#) x 1 @200 GRS 200

SR-16 2-HOUR SALE
40 GAMES | 100 IGC
TRY IT NOW

UPGRADES
SALE ITEMS
BEST-SELLERS
MY FRIENDS
CLAN

WEAPONS
ASSAULT RIFLES
SMG'S
LMG'S
SNIPER RIFLES
SHOTGUNS
PISTOLS

SPECIALTY AMMUNITION
GRENADES & EXPLOSIVES
ARMOR
ARMOR INSERTS
CONSUMABLES
UTILITY TOOLS
COSMETIC ITEMS

DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT
BUY MORE GR\$
USE A PRE-PAID CARD

CURRENT WEAPON
RPK 74
CLASS: CMD
30/30 DURABILITY

DMG 29 ROF 600
RND 30 MOB -5
ACC MED REC MED

FIRE MODES:
FULL-AUTO, SEMI-AUTO.

ATTACHMENT POINTS:
SCOPE, BARREL

H&K 416
CLASS: CMD, ENG
90/90 DURABILITY

DMG 30 () ROF 700 (100)
RND 20 (10) MOB -1 ()
ACC MED (0) REC LOW ()

FIRE MODES:
FULL-AUTO, SEMI-AUTO

ATTACHMENT POINTS:
UNDER-BARREL, STOCK

H&K MP5 400 GR\$

VSS VINTOREZ 250 IGC
425 IGC
225 GR\$

RECON STARTER KIT 50 GR\$

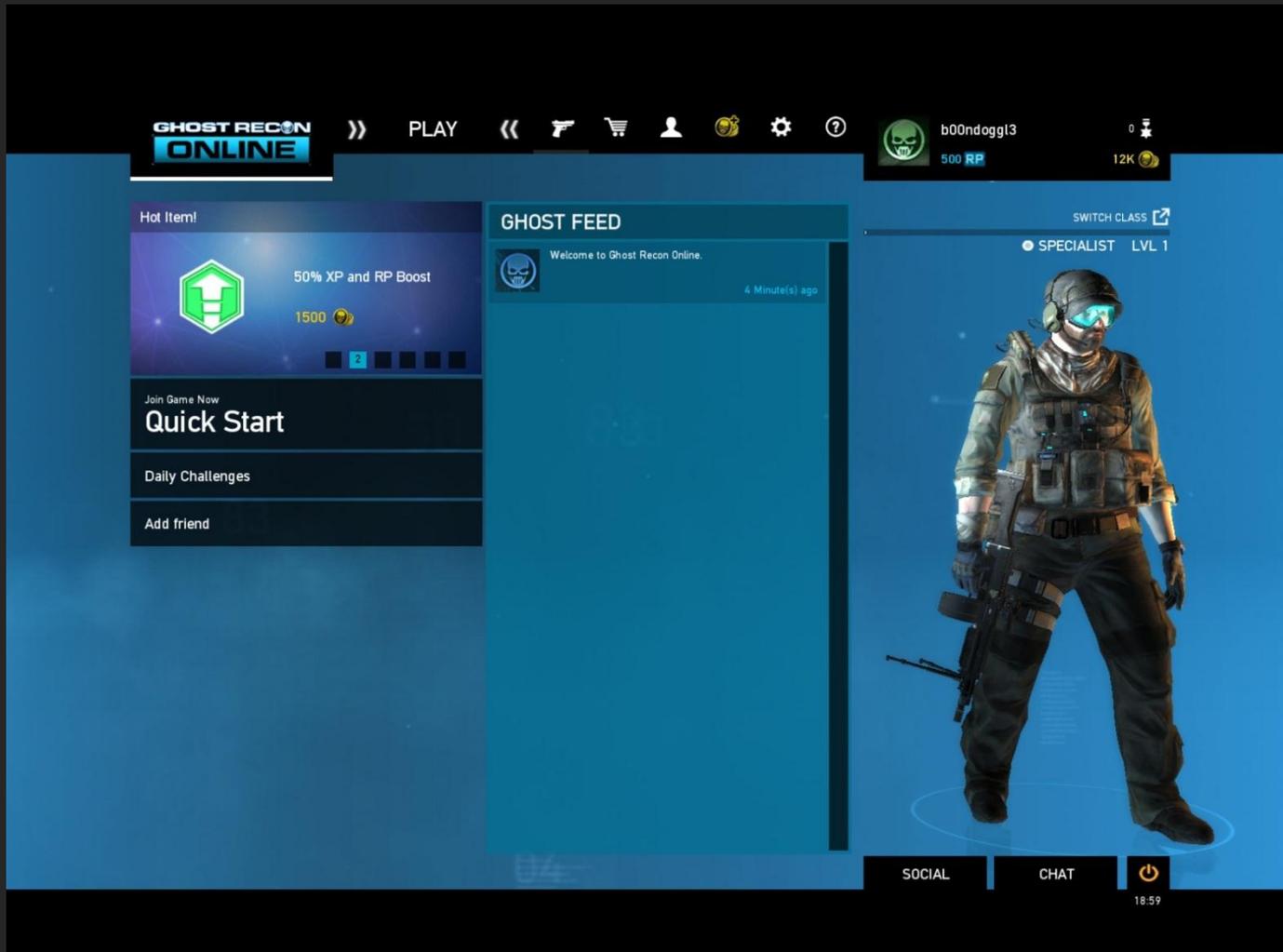
EXTRA FACTION MISSION
DAILY DOUBLE 250 GR\$

Channels ROOM::PUBLIC

Type Here|

Public Chat Chat PARTY 0 11:00 PM

The Iterations of GRO



Finding your sound

- Be honest about who it is you're making games for.
- There is no right or wrong approach, only the right and wrong approaches for your game.

Jazz Power

Ideally suited to games which focus on the following:

- Strategic thinking (RTS, TBS)
- Tactical play (FPS, RPGs)
- MMORPGS
- Games with an engaged audience who are willing to take the time to learn (Sports and Vehicle sims)

Blues Feeling

Ideally suited to games which focus on the following:

- Emotional content (fear, tension, empathy with NPCs, etc.)
- Simple gameplay mechanics (casual, family, party, social, etc.)
- Games which have to engage users early on (F2P, iOS, online demos)

Now that you've found your sound

- “Play the hits!”: Know what your audience want and give it to them.
- “Sneak in some new songs”: A/B, iterative testing.
- “Hand out some backstage passes”: Get to know your audience.

Additional Benefits

- Reduced support costs: Your game is easier to use and understand.
- Faster development cycle and improved prioritisation: Know what your audience like/dislike.
- Freedom: “The band” can riff and try new things.

The Secret Sauces:

The Secret Sauces:
Love the “Metagame”

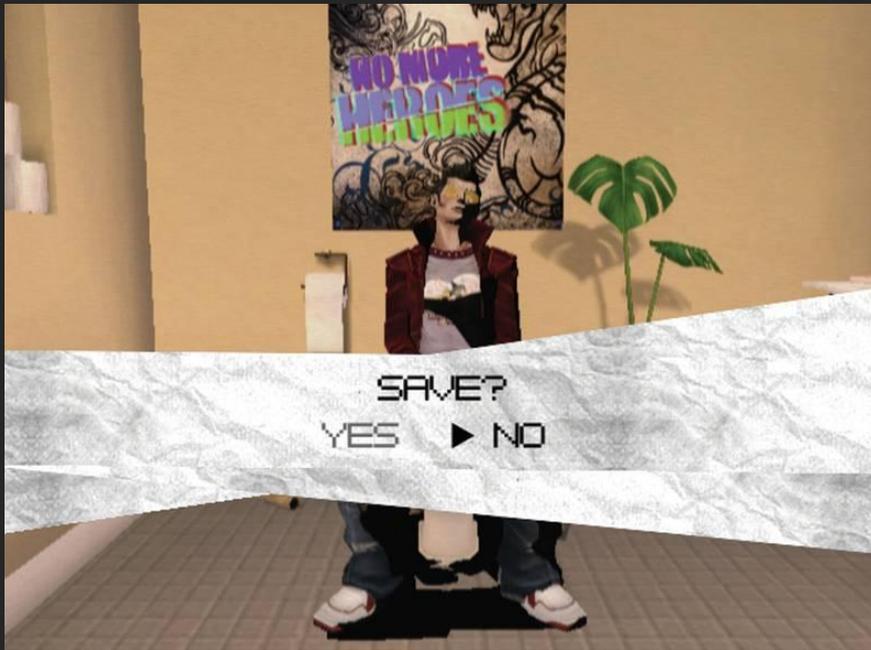
The Secret Sauces: Love the “Metagame”



The Secret Sauces: Love the “Metagame”



The Secret Sauces: Love the “Metagame”

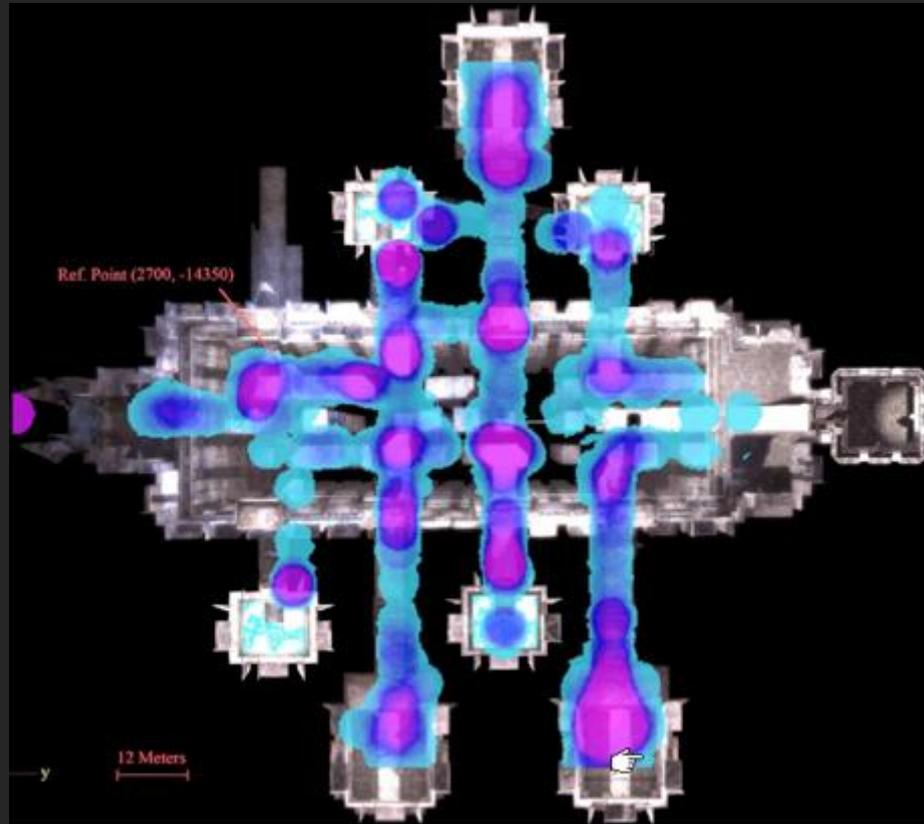


The Secret Sauces: Data is your friend

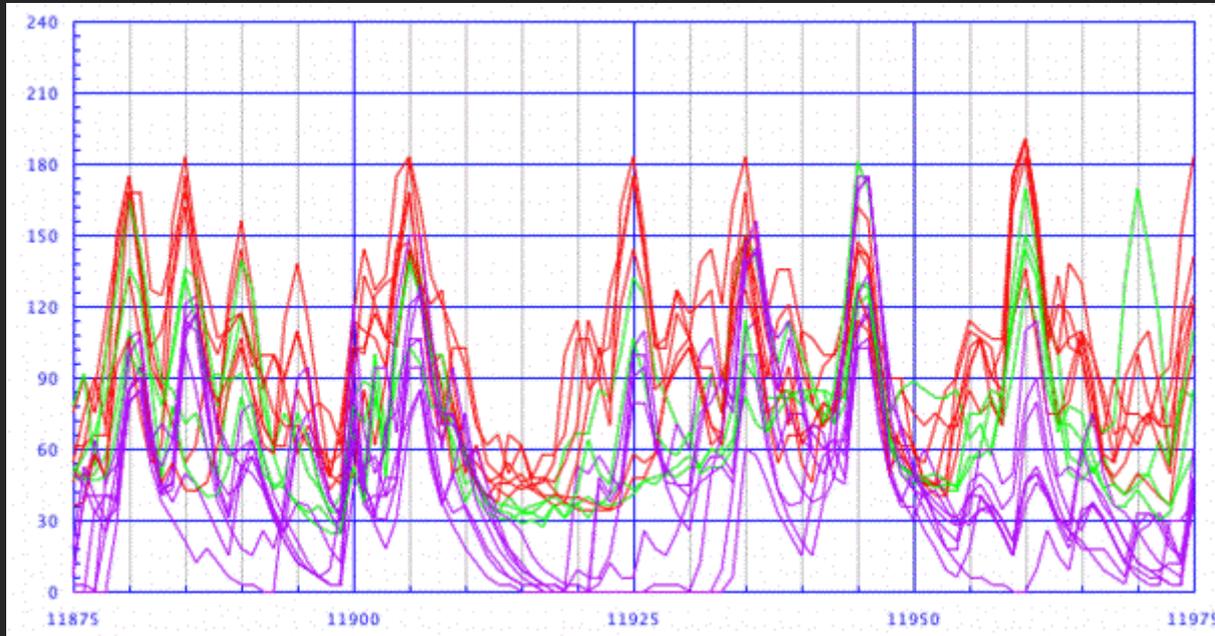
“Data is what distinguishes the dilettante from the artist.”

- George V. Higgins

The Secret Sauces: Data is your friend



The Secret Sauces: Data is your friend



The Secret Sauces: Data is your friend

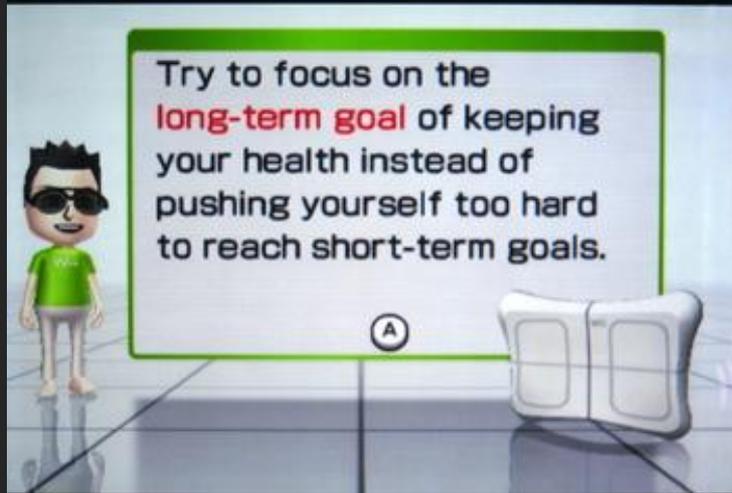


The Secret Sauces: Emotional Intelligence

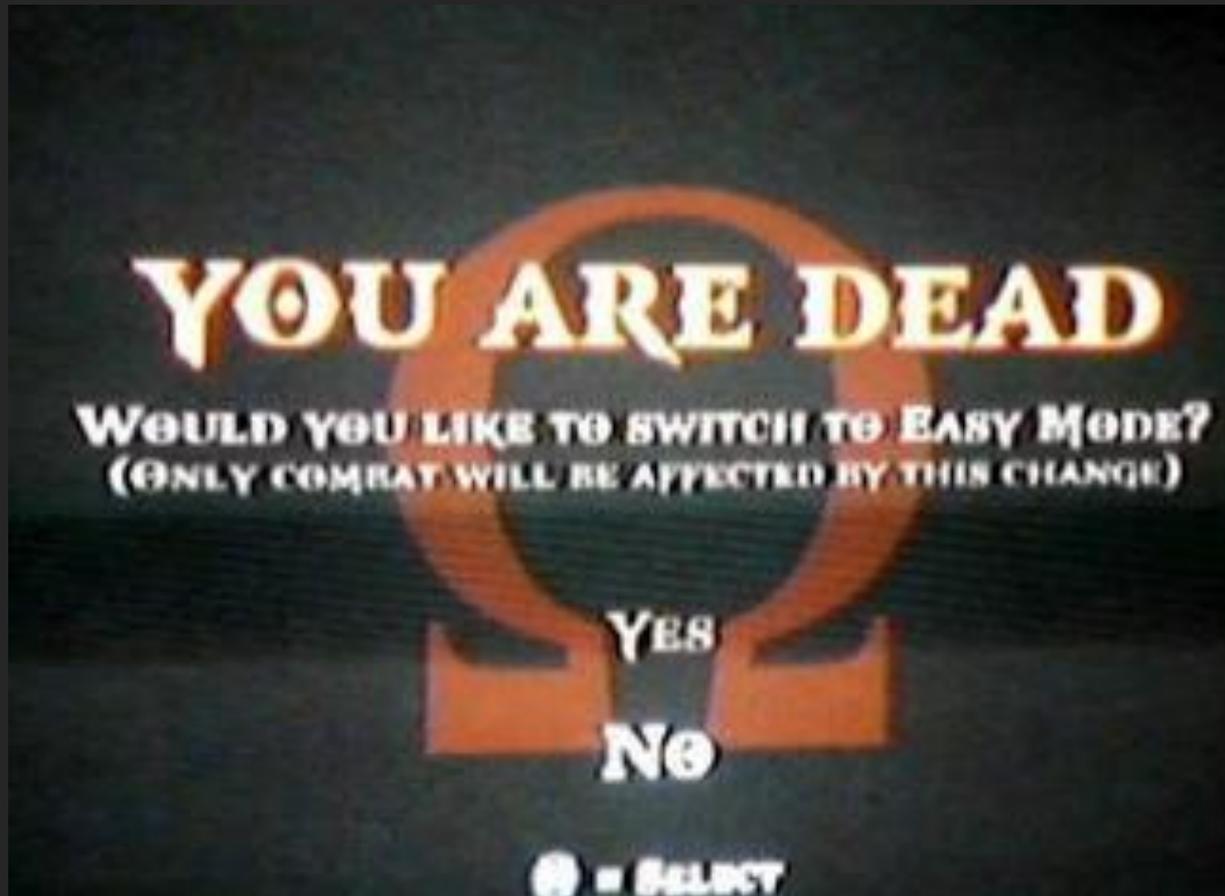
“Go ahead and play the blues if it'll make you happy.”

— Dan Castellaneta

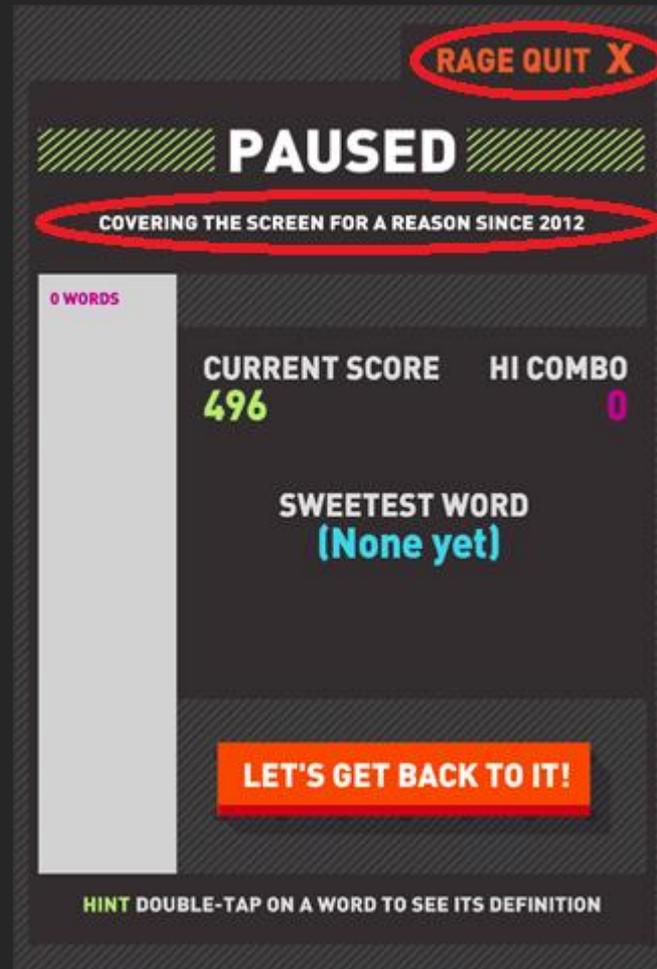
The Secret Sauces: Emotional Intelligence



The Secret Sauces: Emotional Intelligence



The Secret Sauces: Emotional Intelligence



Takeaways

Takeaways

- *UX has been a key part of game design since day 1.*
- *Any team has the resources and skill to consider UX within their game design. It need not be expensive or complex.*
- *Regardless of who your audience are: Make it as simple as possible. Then simplify it some more.*
- *“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”*

Takeaways

- *Never forget the audience and take the effort to know them. Don't guess.*
- *Adopting a UX-centric approach will allow you to prioritise the areas which matter the most.*
- *Iterative testing will allow you to quickly and cheaply validate new ideas, allowing greater creative freedom.*

Takeaways

- *Data: Love the data and it will love you back.*
- *Metagame: The game is the whole package, not just the core experience.*
- *Emotional Intelligence: Consider how users will feel, and how you want to make them feel.*

Takeaways

The most important thing to remember in music or UX:

OK ≠ OK

It's been emotional...

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