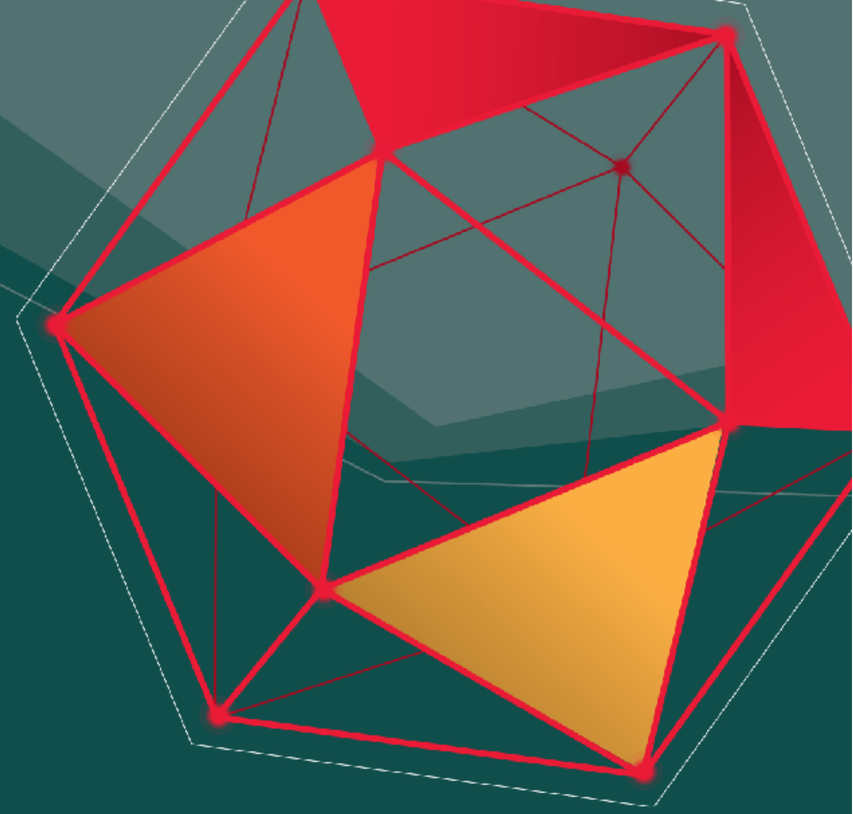
UX USER EXPERIENCE SUMMIT



Immersing a Creative World into a Usable UI

Steph Chow

UX/UI Consultant for Games . Steph Chow Design

GDC GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | MARCH 19–23, 2018 | EXPO: MARCH 21–23, 2018 #GDC18

UBM

BACKGROUND

STEPH CHOW (@STEPHCHOW)

Graphic Digital Design, Branding, Consumer Products Background
2012: Entered the game industry
Focus on Art Direction & UX/UI Design

MY GOAL:

Recognizing the importance of UI’s impact on your game’s overall branding.

How to produce UI elements that reflect your game’s world.

Understanding the balance act between usability
and narrative visuals.

WORLDS & IMMERSION

WORLDS

The fictitious universes created for film and games that have their own individual culture, visual rules and aesthetics.

コンタクト
uP!!!
先行販売チケットに結構、強い！
uP!!!
up-now.jp
Melumo
PROMISE
一番搾り
大盛堂書
First Love

THE JAZZ SINGER
WITH VITAPHONE
2.30 TWICE DAILY 8.45
Sunday Matinees 3.P.M.
Alan Crosland
Alfred A. Cohn
WARNERS' THEATRE
WARNERS'
AL JOLSON
"THE JAZZ SINGER"
WORLD SER
MATINEE
FLETCHER

ARO

Your game's creative world is also your game's brand.

GEAR
RISING BLOODLUST
AMMO ADVANTAGE
HEAD MASTER
OVERKILL
RISING BLOODLUST
After each successful kill (up to 5), weapon damage is increased.
Resets 10 seconds after last kill.
[Enter] EQUIP ITEM
[Q] / [E] CHANGE TAB
[Esc] BACK

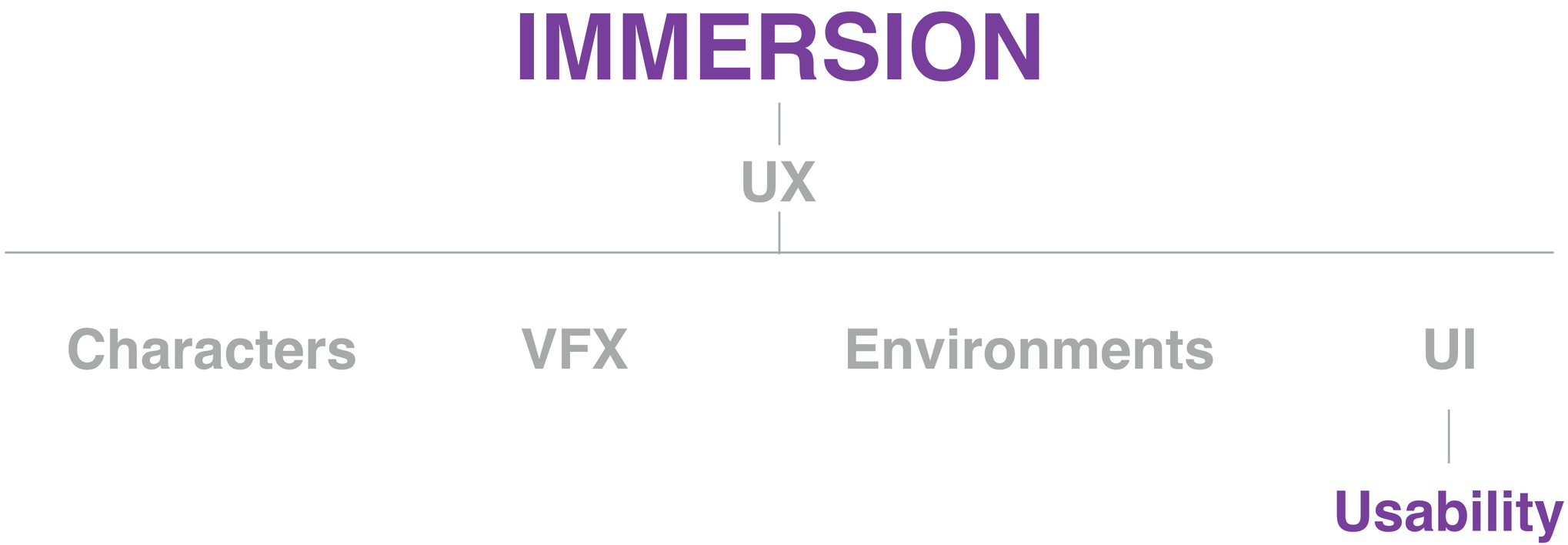
A game’s brand experience is **immersive and usable.**

< INVENTORY >
WEAPONS
2
25
25
100
87
SUIT
Engineering
AIR 120sec
ARMOR 5%
NODES
0
CREDITS
15,400
PULSE ROUNDS
Magazine of Ammunition for the Pulse Rifle.
- Inventory Slot Stack Size: 100
Navigate [E]Select [tab]Exit

IMMERSION

UX

Characters VFX Environments UI


IMMERSION
UX
Characters
VFX
Environments
UI
Usability

IMMERSIVE UI

Research

Exploration

Iteration

Research

WHAT IS THE VISUAL CULTURE BEHIND YOUR WORLD?

RESEARCH

WESTGATE
Plaza

The Capri
MOTEL

Caps 87
Hunting Rifle
Assault Rifle
Sawed-Off Shotgun
Combat Shotgun
Load Pipo
Raider Painspike
Armor
Raider Badlands
Armor
BB Gun
Missile Launcher
Motorcycle Helmet
10mm Pistol
Raider Blastmaster
Helmet
.32 Pistol
Armored Vault 101
Jumpsuit
Cost: 80 caps
CND
DAM 40
+20%
+3
CND
DAM 43
Repair All (1371) A)
Done E)

BUILD
WATER TREATMENT
POWER GENERATOR
DINER
BUILD
CANCEL
AGILITY
HELPFUL HINT
Dwellers require WATER to keep their RADIATION level low. Tap again to CONFIRM.

QUESTS
COMPLETED
GAME SHOW GAUNTLET
Play to win!
ACTIVE!
PROGRESS
ARRIVED!
TEAM
PROGRESS
14h 7m
TEAM

RESEARCH

dreamstime

70
8,020/15,000
6.34 M
282
1,163

Trade Offer
Time Left: 2h 29m
I've got a lovely bunch of coconuts...but they're not for sale.
0/5
176
55
1
Trade

Howdy, neighbor! What brings you to my little pile of dirt?
10
93
1,014
Gold
55% bonus!
Sell
6/6
36
x9
Fish
55% off!
Buy
32
61
x2
Sun Fish
Only available here!
Buy
552

RESEARCH

Ochosuelas
Calzado
0000000
Paticio
¡Te doy la bienvenida a mi humilde comercio, «Ochosuelas»!
1000
500
500
500
900
700

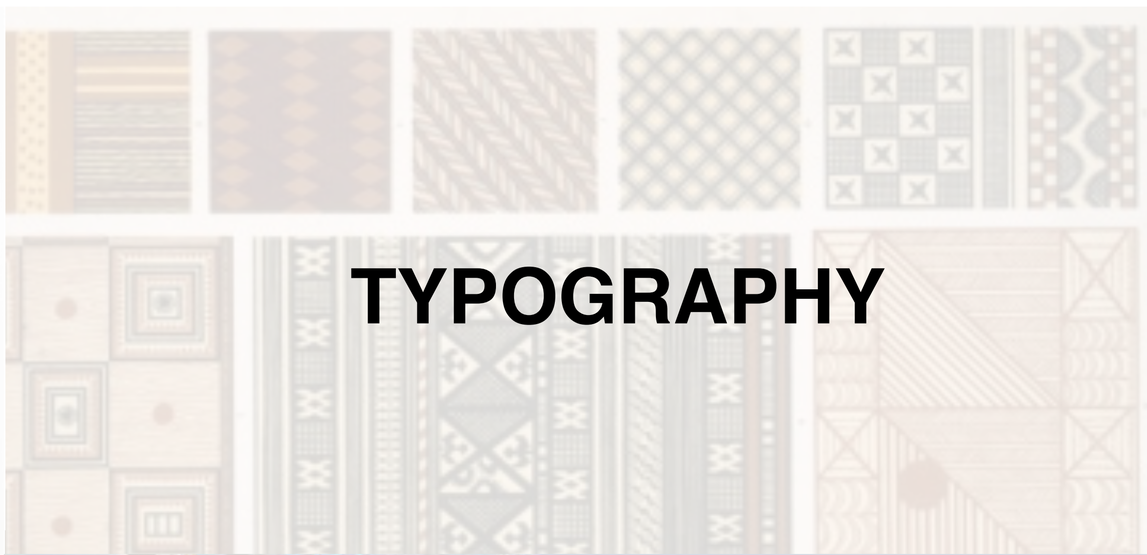
Choose a weapon!
Splattershot
Splat Roller
Splat Charger
Splat Dualies
Options

UI doesn’t have to be just a
bright “juicy” green button

RESEARCH

NATURAL . RHYTHMIC . PLAYFUL

POP UP SILHOUETTES



TYPOGRAPHY

ICONOGRAPHY

COLOR PALETTE

NATURAL . RHYTHMIC . PLAYFUL

TYPOGRAPHY

1 TRADING TASKS

2 Trading Tasks

3 Trading Tasks

4 Trading Tasks

5 Trading Tasks

6 TRADING TASKS

7 TRADING TASKS

8 TRADING TASKS

NATURAL . RHYTHMIC . PLAYFUL

COLORS & TEXTURE

1

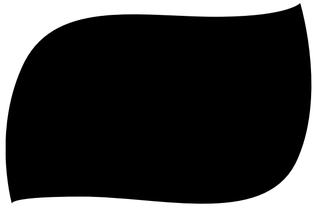
2

3

NATURAL . RHYTHMIC . PLAYFUL

SHAPES

1



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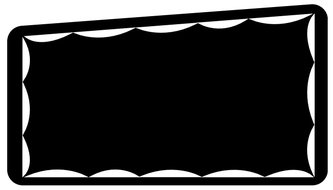
3



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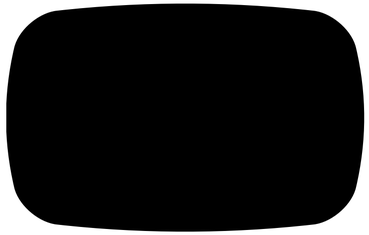
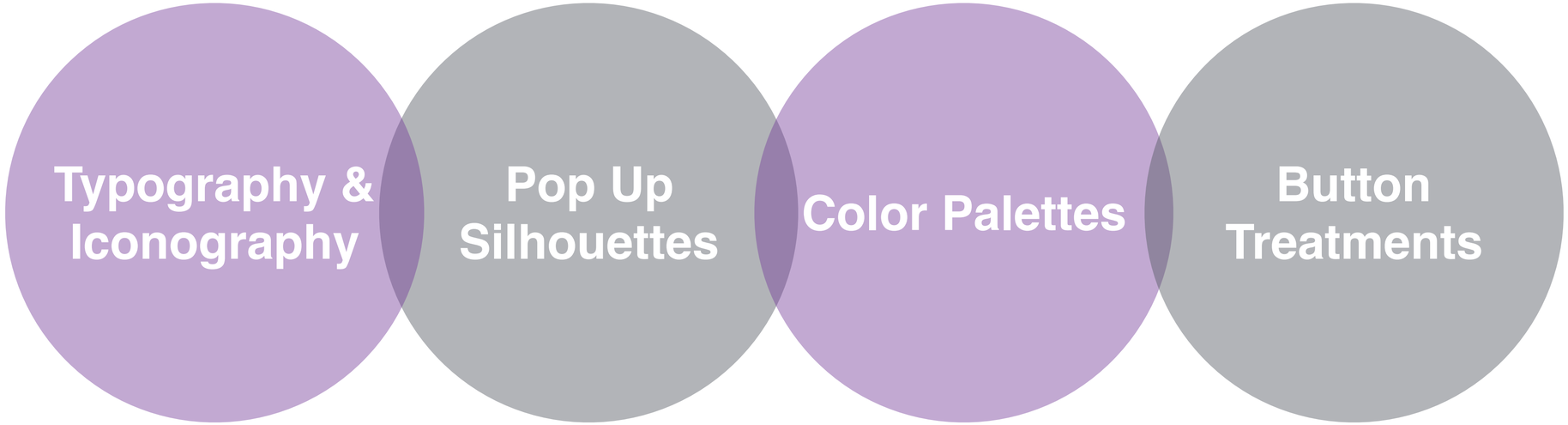


5

MAKE SAMPLE SCREENS



Research

WHAT IS THE VISUAL CULTURE BEHIND YOUR WORLD?

Research the visual details of the movement, culture, or era that inspires your game's world to find familiar but branded elements to design with.

Move beyond Google if possible. Go to museums, watch movies that relate to your game's world.

Start testing your visually inspired assets on a few key screens,

to get a sense of what is going to work…and not work.

Exploration

HOW DO YOU IMMERSE THE WORLD INTO YOUR UI?

EXPLORE!

Produce options that help the player play the game,
but still keep the player immersed.

IMMERSIVE UI INGREDIENTS

Diegetic
vs.
Non-Diegetic

Skeuomorphic
vs.
Flat

Layout

Animation

EXPLORATION

DIEGETIC

Interface that is included in the game world -- i.e., it can be seen and heard by the game characters.

NON-DIEGETIC

Interface that is rendered outside the game world, only visible and audible to the players in the real world.

https://www.gamasutra.com/view/feature/132674/game_ui_discoveries_what_players_.php

DIEGETIC

FULLY
IMMERSIVE

EASY TO GRASP
NARRATIVELY

PRESERVES
THE 4TH WALL

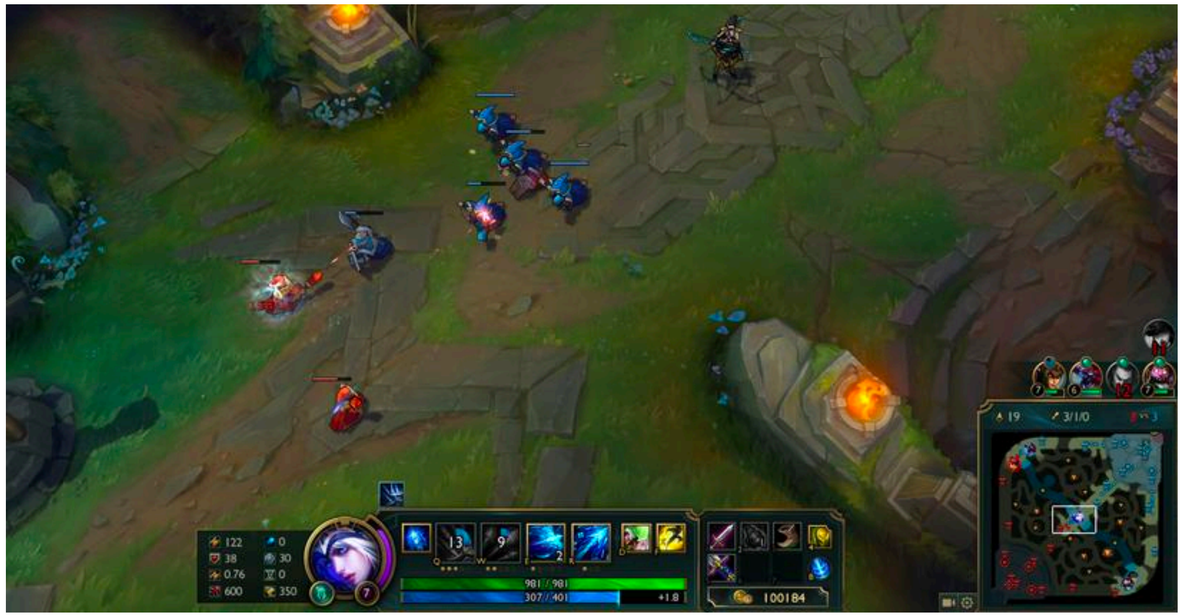
DIEGETIC

BURIED
INFORMATION

COMPLEX TASKS
COGNITIVE LOAD

COMMITMENT TO
THE 4TH WALL

NON-DIEGETIC

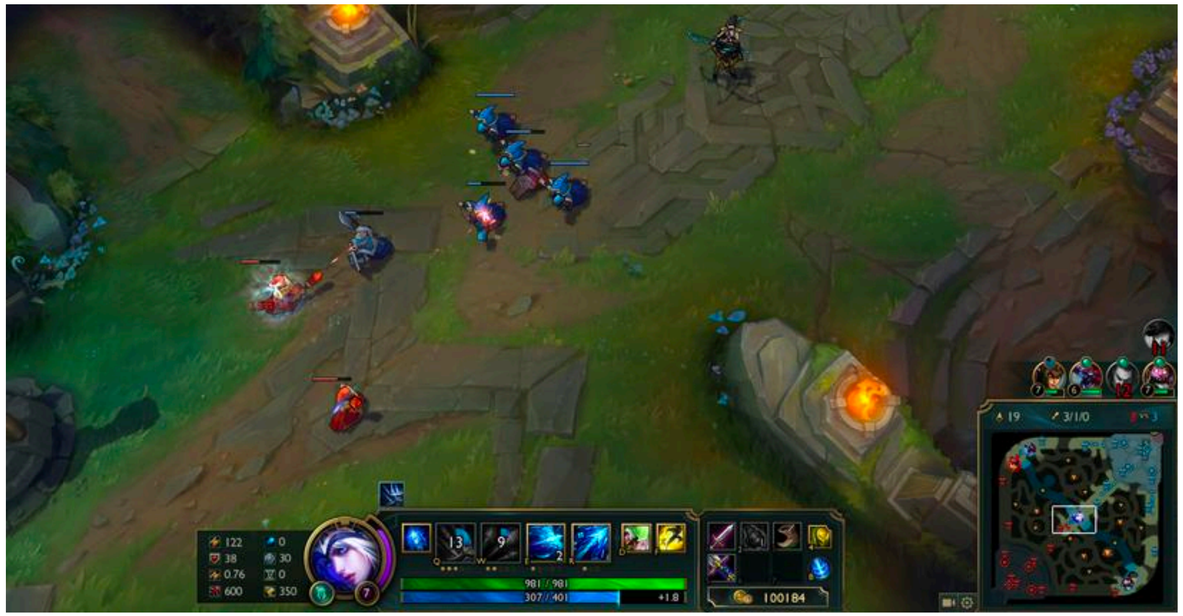


DETAILED
CONTENT

EASIER TO GRASP
COMPLEX TASKS

CLEAR
SEPARATION

NON-DIEGETIC



DISTRACTING
TO CONTENT

COMPLICATES
COMPLEX TASKS

BREAKS
4TH WALL

IT DEPENDS…

How much space do you have?
(mobile, tablet, TV, VR)

How complicated are your game’s tasks?
(simple game mechanic, twitch mechanic, heavy-strategy)

How is your player interacting with the game?
(touch, controller, camera)

IMMERSIVE UI INGREDIENTS

Diegetic
vs.
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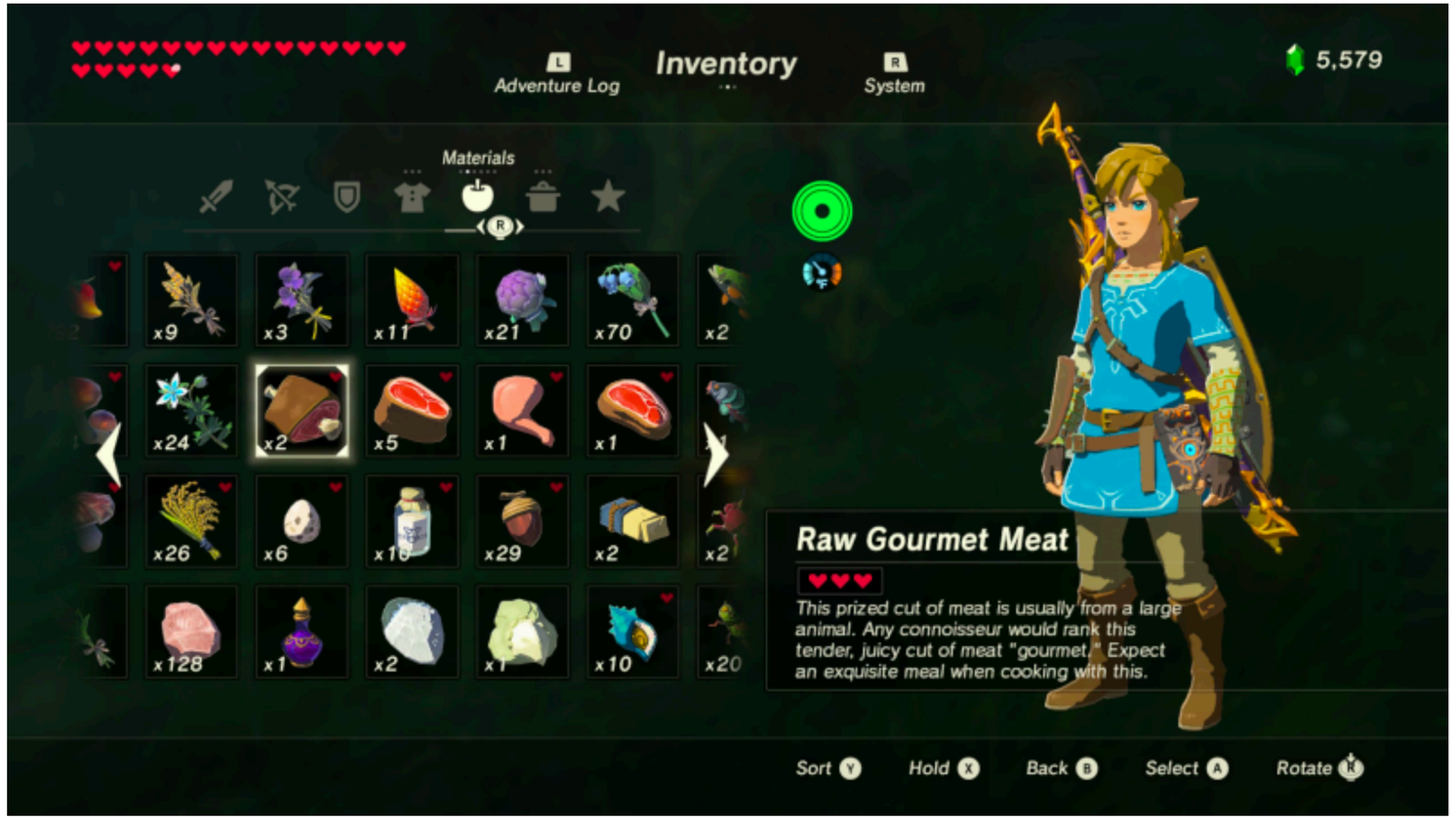
vs.
Flat

Layout

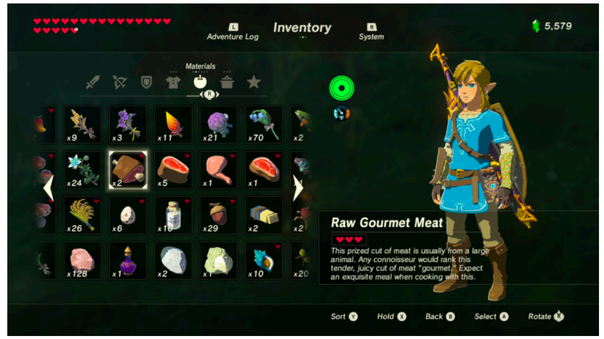
Animation

SKEUOMORPHIC VS. FLAT

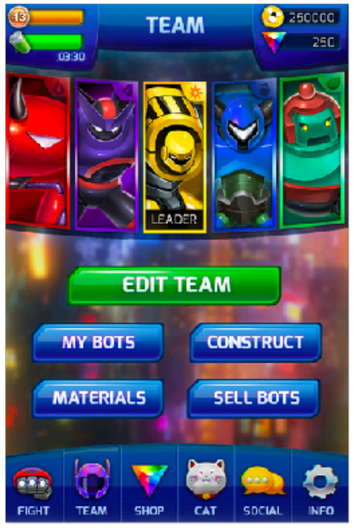
SKEUOMORPHIC VS. FLAT



SKEUOMORPHIC VS. FLAT



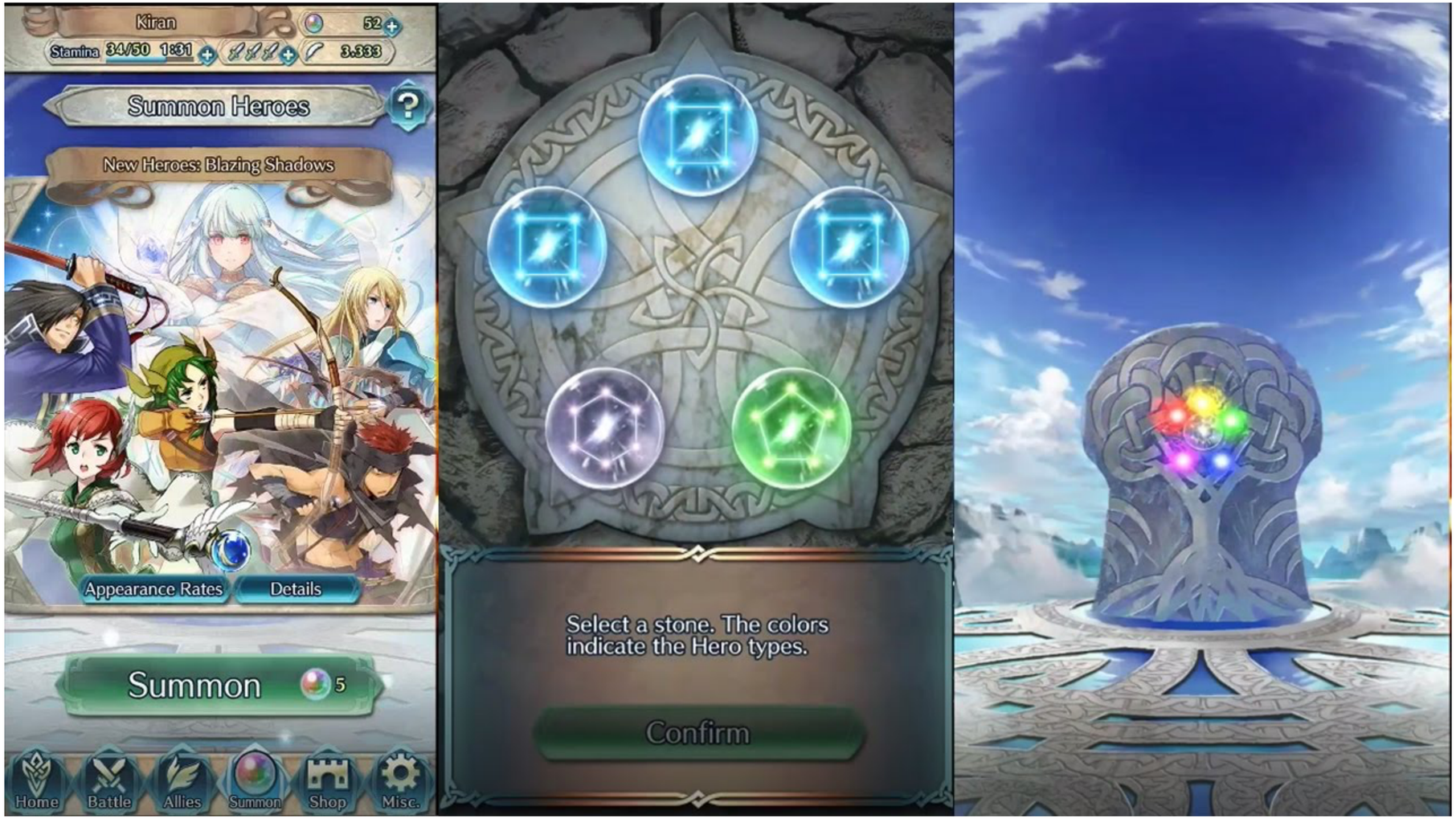
Skeuomorphic ←→ Flat



EXPLORATION

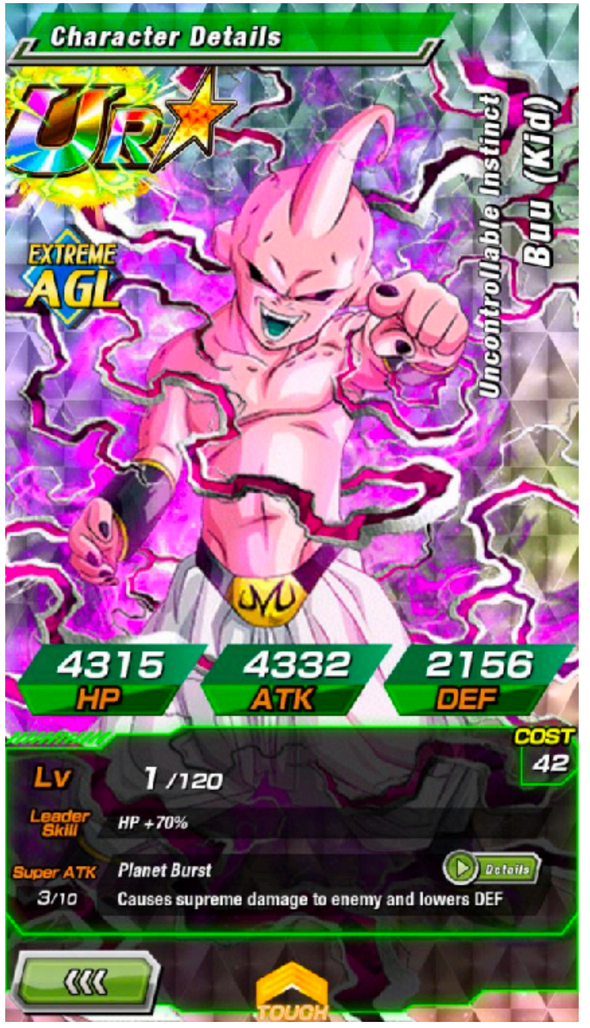
Skeuomorphic ← → Flat

LAYOUT


Kiran
52
Stamina 34/50 1:31
3.333
Summon Heroes
New Heroes: Blazing Shadows
Appearance Rates
Details
Summon
5
Home
Battle
Allies
Summon
Shop
Misc.
Select a stone. The colors indicate the Hero types.
Confirm

LAYOUT

VS
LEADER
7926
8010
11745
8000
FRIEND
9960
10986
9293


Character Details
UR
EXTREME
AGL
Uncontrollable Instinct
Buu (Kid)
4315
HP
4332
ATK
2156
DEF
COST
42
Lv
1 /120
Leader Skill
HP +70%
Super ATK
3/10
Planet Burst
Details
Causes supreme damage to enemy and lowers DEF
TOUCH

ANIMATION

ANIMATION

Exploration

HOW DO YOU IMMERSE THE WORLD INTO YOUR UI?

Apply your world’s research through different design elements: layout, animation, diegetic, non-diegetic, skeuomorphism, flat design.

Variety is king: What does your design look like when you focus on a skeuomorphic approach vs. a flat approach?

Think about how elements like animation not only project a player’s goal, but also complements the world.

Iteration

HOW DO I BALANCE
BETWEEN NARRATIVE UI AND UX

ITERATION

Skeuomorphic ← → Flat

ITERATION

Readability

Personality

Implication

Scale

ITERATION

Readability

Personality

Implication

Scale

ITERATION

Skeuomorphic ← → Flat

ITERATION

Readability

Personality

Implication

Scale

ITERATION

Skeuomorphic

ITERATION

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Personality

Implication

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ITERATION

Skeuomorphic ← → Flat

ITERATION

Readability

Personality

Implication

Scale

ITERATION

Skeuomorphic ← → Flat

ITERATION

Skeuomorphic ← → Flat

Good UI should enhance
the game's brand experience.

UI can reflect a game's world
but should not compete with it.

10 USABILITY HEURISTICS

Visibility of system status
The system should always keep users informed about what is going on, through appropriate feedback within reasonable time.

Match between system and the real world
The system should speak the users' language, with words, phrases and concepts familiar to the user, rather than system-oriented terms.

User control and freedom
Users often choose system functions by mistake and will need a clearly marked "emergency exit." Make sure it is clear to not cause user pain.

Consistency and standards
Users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing.

Error prevention
Even better than good error messages is a careful design which prevents a problem from occurring in the first place.

Recognition rather than recall
Minimize the user's memory load by making objects, actions, and options visible. The user should not have to remember information from one part of the dialogue to another.

Flexibility and efficiency of use
Accelerators -- unseen by the novice user -- may often speed up the interaction for the expert user such that the system can cater to both inexperienced and experienced

Aesthetic and minimalist design
Every extra unit of information in a dialogue competes with the relevant units of information and diminishes their relative visibility.

Help users recognize, diagnose, and recover
Error messages should be expressed in plain language (no codes), precisely indicate the problem, and constructively suggest a solution.

Help and documentation
May be necessary in the end. Make sure it’s discoverable.

https://www.nngroup.com/articles/ten-usability-heuristics/

Some Thoughts

AR & UI IMMERSION?

Due to AR’s focus on camera interaction, user interface could be kept very minimal to allow player to focus on mix reality experience.

Will still need a way to imply the world when the camera is off.

Becomes even more important for the UI to be believable if it is mix reality of a player’s familiar environment with unbelievable elements

Some Thoughts

VR & UI IMMERSION?

Huge opportunity for diegetic world immersion through more physical interactions

More incorporation of animation, audio, and haptic effects to enhance world immersion and crucial player feedback.

Complicated tasks will still require visual interface like type and buttons for accessibility purpose.

But Why!

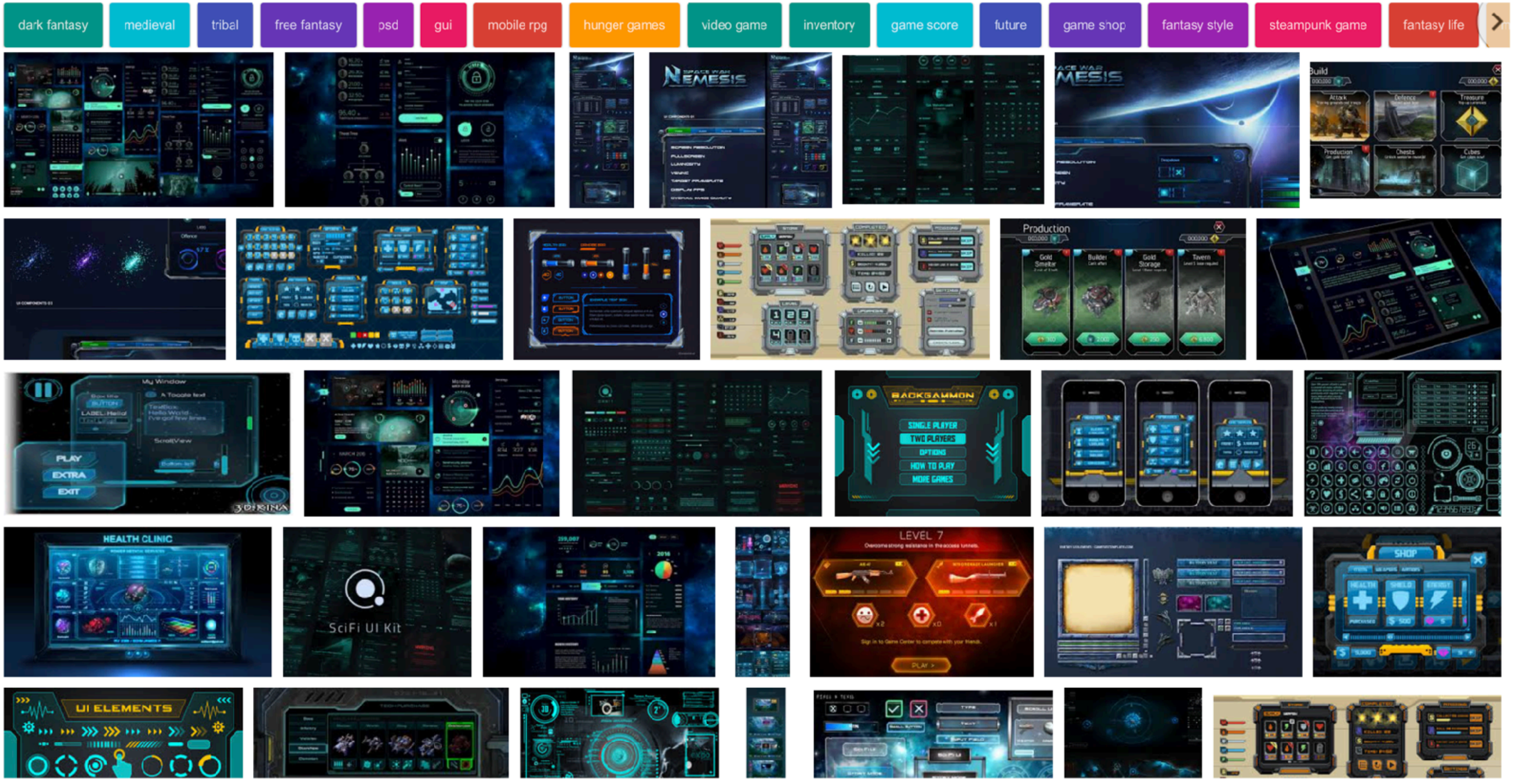
ENGAGEMENT IN UI IMMERSION

Diegetic or Non-Diegetic, you can inject story into you UI!

Narrative UI can immerse a player into a story, a world, and a brand.

Know when to pull back to maintain player game flow and avoid player frustration by testing and weighing against user heuristics.

CONCLUSION


dark fantasy
medieval
tribal
free fantasy
psd
gui
mobile rpg
hunger games
video game
inventory
game score
future
game shop
fantasy style
steampunk game
fantasy life
NEMESIS
Production
BACKGAMMON
SINGLE PLAYER
TWO PLAYERS
OPTIONS
HOW TO PLAY
MORE GAMES
HEALTH CLINIC
SciFi UI Kit
LEVEL 7
SHOP
UI ELEMENTS

CONCLUSION

farm field
game store
mobile game
casual game
social game
simulation game
rpg
android game
farm frenzy
farm heroes saga
match 3
farming game
battle game
gaming
puzzle
MARKET
Buy Gold Bars
BUY COINS
Larder Storage 300/500
New Sale
COMPETITIONS
NEWSPAPER
YOU CAUGHT
GAME EXIT
LEVEL COMPLETE
Restart
Next
Back
BUY GEMS
COMPLETE!
Casual Game
UI Kit
DELIVERIES
MESSAGES
VALUE PACK
Limited Time!
COLLECTIONS
Farm

IMMERSIVE UI

Research

Exploration

Iteration

IMMERSIVE UI INGREDIENTS

Diegetic
vs.
Non-Diegetic

Skeuomorphic
vs.
Flat

Layout

Animation

ITERATION ELEMENTS

Readability

Personality

Implication

Scale

THANKS! 🙋🏻‍♀️

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