



Surviving the Apocalypse

Finding New Life after Deleting Everyone's Data

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GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

MARCH 18-22, 2019 | #GDC19

Introduction



HIDDEN VARIABLE





Autumn
G A M E S™



lab zero™
G A M E S

GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE
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A Brief History of Skullgirls Mobile

GDC¹⁴

2014

2015

Spring
2017

Halloween
2017

Autumn
G A M E S.



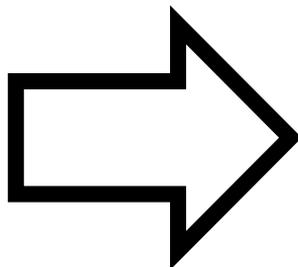
...Slight Change of Plans

- Corporate drama at launch
- Didn't get marketing support
- Decided to part ways



**GOODBYE
FOREVER**

Server Migration



Server Migration

CREATE SKULLGIRLS LOGIN

In January 2018, LINE Corporation will terminate its distribution of "LINE Skullgirls". Autumn Games will release a new "Skullgirls" app soon afterwards. If you wish to transfer your existing data (excluding LINE log-in related data) to the new Skullgirls app, you must create a Skullgirls Login below.

As a bonus, you will also immediately get a **FREE SILVER LINING RELIC!**

Email Address

Password

Verify Password

A confirmation email will be sent to this email address.

SKIP **CREATE**

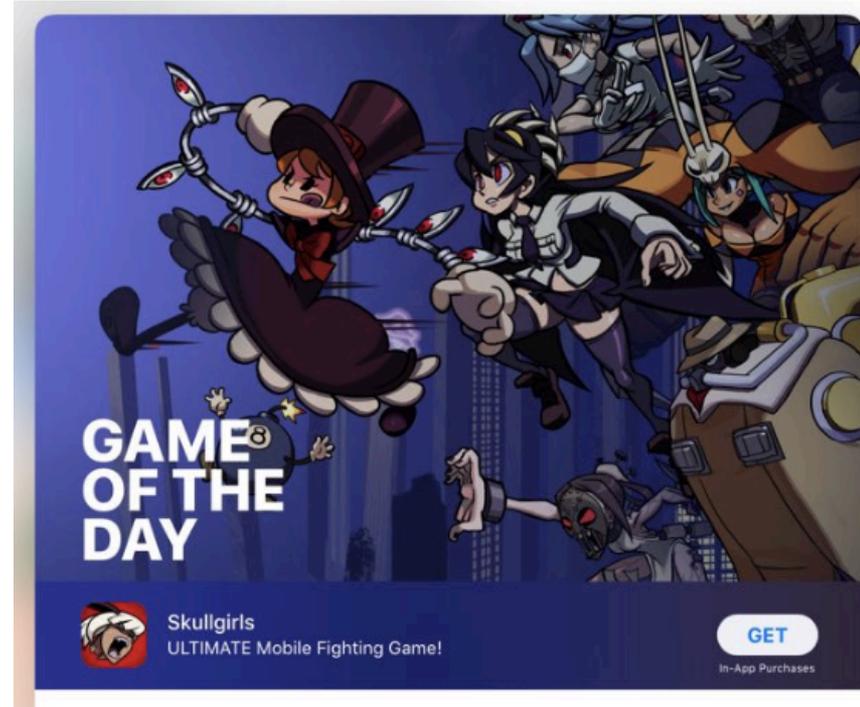


**500,000
TOTAL USERS**

**50,000
ACCOUNTS
MIGRATED**

January 2018: A New Hope

- Relaunch is going well!
- Proper UA → **200k new users**
- New expert backend partner
- Upcoming App Store Feature
- **Need more server bandwidth!**



0800 Friday, February 2nd, 2018

- The Call
- Accidentally Reprovisioned Live Shard
- All User Data Fully Wiped
- No Backups

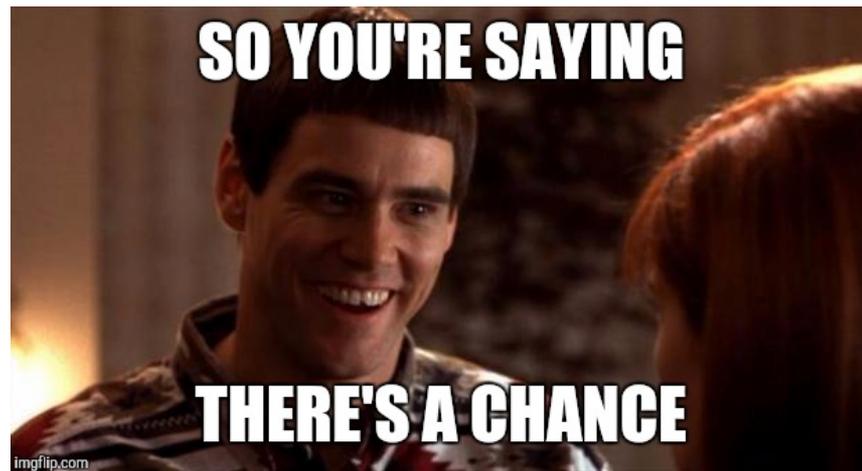


0800 Friday, February 2nd, 2018

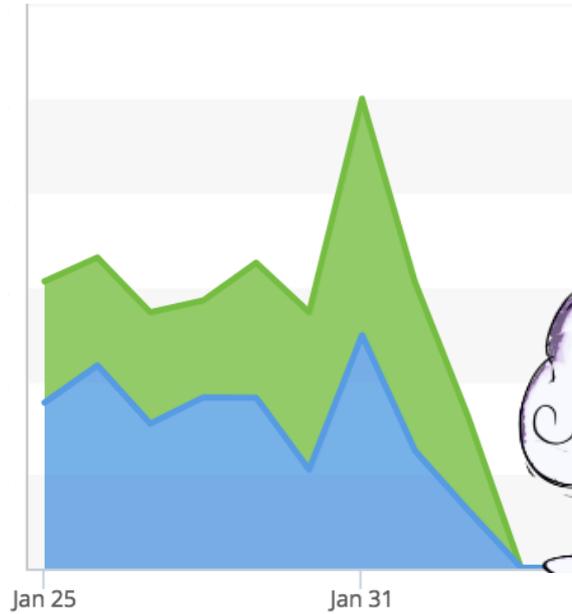


Assessing the Damage

- **The Good News**
 - Still have LINE Data Export
 - Activity Log
- **The Bad News**
 - No Authentication Data
 - Manual Rebinding Needed



Meanwhile...



Revenue



Delivering the News

- Take responsibility
- Be open and honest
- Regain our players' trust



OFFICIAL: 2.0.4 Maintenance Complete + User Data Details
Discussion in 'Official News & Announcements' started by MightyZug, Feb 5, 2018.

Tags: Add Tags

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Thread Tools Unwatch Thread Selected Posts: 0

 Alright everyone, in light of the imminent re-launching of the servers, I've made a fresh, new post just to summarize everything all in one place.

MightyZug
Game Director
Hidden Variable Dev

Joined: May 5, 2017
Messages: 96
Likes Received: 529

HOW WE GOT HERE

As part of our preparations for our transition from LINE, one of the biggest challenges was migrating our backend infrastructure over from LINE servers to Amazon Web Servers that were under our control. Given that we are a small dev team with grand aspirations, we made sure to enlist the aid of a dedicated, experienced, highly-regarded backend partner to help build, manage, and maintain our servers.

Unfortunately, on Friday morning at around 7:30 AM PST, one of their employees made a mistake and wiped the User Database. Furthermore, due to a separate set of internal complications, their regular backups were also not available.

I know - that confluence of events still doesn't seem possible to us either - but here we are.



WE WILL REBUILD

As a result, we had to use our last snapshot of the game (from the LINE Migration on January 15th) and our Activity Database (basically a record of EVERY account action every player has taken since the relaunch of the game in early January) and reconstruct every user's player data since then.

I HATE TO ASK... WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY DATA?

The good news is we have successfully reconstructed everyone's data.

The bad news is that we are unable re-create the authentication data needed to auto-login users to their Google or Facebook accounts.

As such, the only users that will be able to immediately access their data are:

Option 1: Manually Recover User Data



Option 2: Free “Starting Over” Gift

NEW / DELETED USER COMPENSATION

For any players who lost their data, when you login you will be treated as a brand new player. As such, for the next 3 days, we will be granting ALL new players the following compensation package in the mail to help get you back into the game as quickly as possible. Yes, feel free to tell your friends!

- **2x Gold Fighter Relics**
- 5x Silver Lining Relics
- 10x Bronze Move Relics
- 10x Silver Move Relics
- 10x Gold Move Relics
- 3x Bronze Keys
- 3x Silver Keys
- 3x Gold Keys
- 1000 Theonite
- 250,000 Canopy Coins

**\$400
VALUE!**



Sacrifice revenue for retention

All Hands on Deck

- **2000+ tickets** in the next 48 hours
- Everyone became Customer Service
- One-by-one resolved **over 3500 requests**
- Took us **months** to fully work through the list



Thank
you.



Backlash

It is either you guys recover my account back of **give my fkg money back!**

This is super irritating, I wait 4 days & can't even play , on top of the fact I spend \$ on my account & now it's gone , I'm about ready to leave a review on the app & just never play it again this is such bullshit , **i don't understand how a person on your end messes things up & we have to suffer? Not impressed**

are you fucking kidding me rn? it took 37 hours to send an automated copy paste message? idc if you're busy that is absolutely pathetic, it's bad enough that maintenance lasted for 3 days, which i've played a lot of games and none have had maintenance for that goddamn long. whoever reads this (assuming it's not a bot which might be too much to ask tbh) **please tell your company to get their heads out of their asses and get their act together.**



The Silver Lining

The support you guys gave me in regards to my account is amazing. **I have never seen this much support in games ever!**

You guys are the best. **It seems like you're the only team who cares about their customers.** THANKS AGAIN! :D

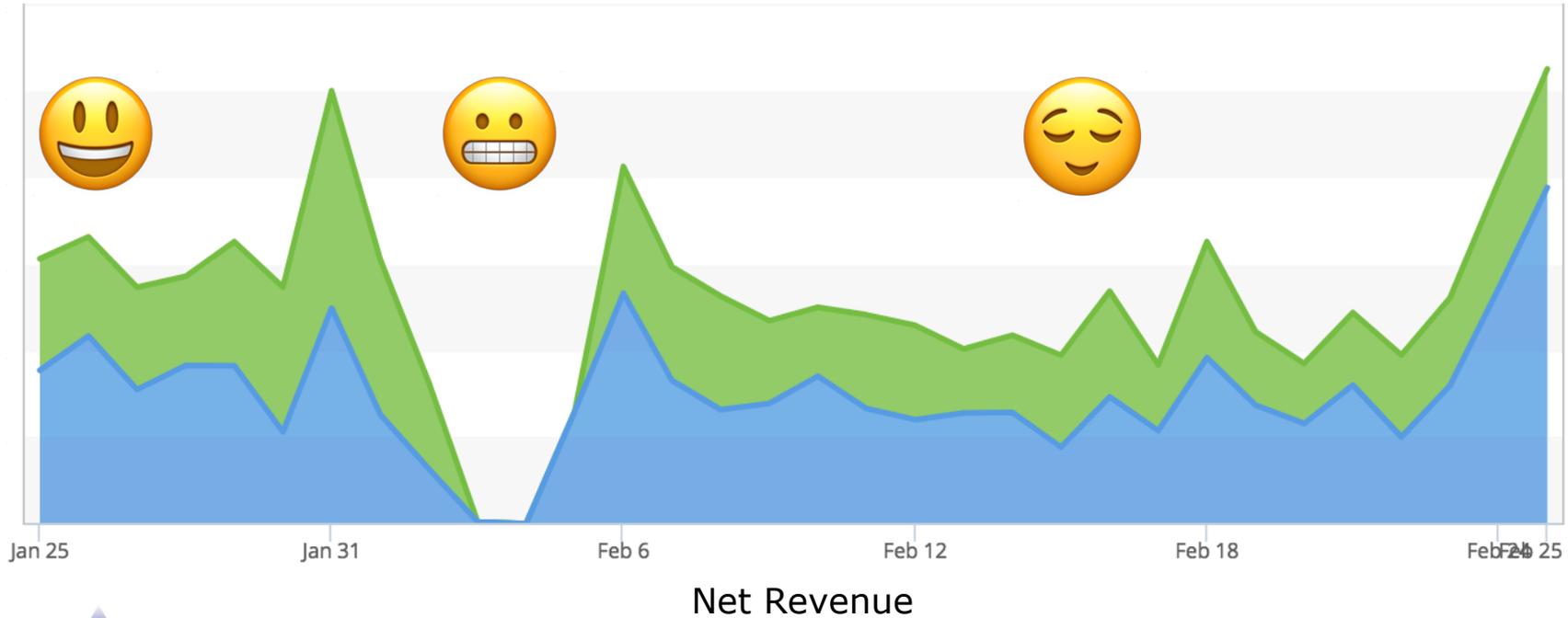
I'm speechless... thanks for all your attention. **I know you will help other players with more problems than me** you are the best of the best.

I'm glad for your generous rewards for new and people who lost their data. **It feels like you are welcomed with a pleasant gift.**

Thanks devs for working so hard on this. I know it must be a nightmare, but I am sure that **many of us appreciate the massive effort** to hunt down all of these accounts.



Recovery...?



TAKEAWAYS



Art by emlan
<https://www.deviantart.com/emlan>

Take Responsibility

- You are responsible for your partner's mistakes
- Avoid the temptation to pass the buck
- Keep your chin up



Allow Selective Exploitation

- Lots of... questionable requests
- When in doubt, give it to them
 - Fastest option
 - We trust you
 - We owe you



Players are
Lying and
Exploiting us!



Low Cost
Retention of
High Value
Users

Strong Community Relationship

- Forum / Discord / Chat AMAs
- Team actively plays w/o cheats
- Devs are accessible & relatable
- Transparent about gameplay and business decisions
- Respond to every user review



Be Open, Honest, and Empathetic

- Regular updates
- Empathy begets empathy
 - “We understand why you’re upset. We would be too.”
 - “We’re so sorry for the delay.”
 - “We’re a small team and are doing our best to make sure everyone’s issues are resolved.”
 - “Thanks for your patience.”
- Build faction in advance



In Conclusion

If you ever want to bring your team together and galvanize the support of your playerbase, simply delete everyone's data. Works every time.*

*Repro steps (1/1)





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