

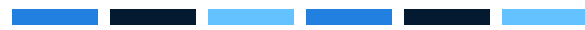


LIQUID&GRIT

Puzzle Report

Competitive research and actionable product recommendations

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MAY



2018

INTRODUCTION



Dear Product Owner,

Regulation risk is increasing. Loot boxes are now reviewed by Apple ... GDPR was released in the EU ... Washington State has outlawed social casino games ... and now, the Belgian Gaming Commission recommended prosecution for illegal loot boxes.¹ Remember to think long-term, and act with accountability and responsibility.

A strong IP does not *automatically* yield a sure-win title. Capcom is already retiring *Puzzle Fighter*, which was released in November of 2017.² Capcom never invested in paid user acquisition, and downloads dropped to 1K by January 2018, shortly after the launch surge. IP-driven games must still iterate post-launch to produce top-grossing titles.

Apple's recent *Developer Insight* highlights the importance of player reviews.³ Make sure your customer service team can handle the additional work; and increase your number of positive reviews by implementing Frictionless Ratings properly (p. 14).

For potential platform growth and relationship building, reach out to Facebook about *Facebook Instant Games*. Rovio is currently testing this with Angry Birds.⁴ King does a great job of implementing platform technology to bolster relationships and help generate featuring.

"You can design and create, and build the most wonderful place in the world. But it takes people to make the dream a reality." - Walt Disney

Brett Nowak
Editor-in-Chief

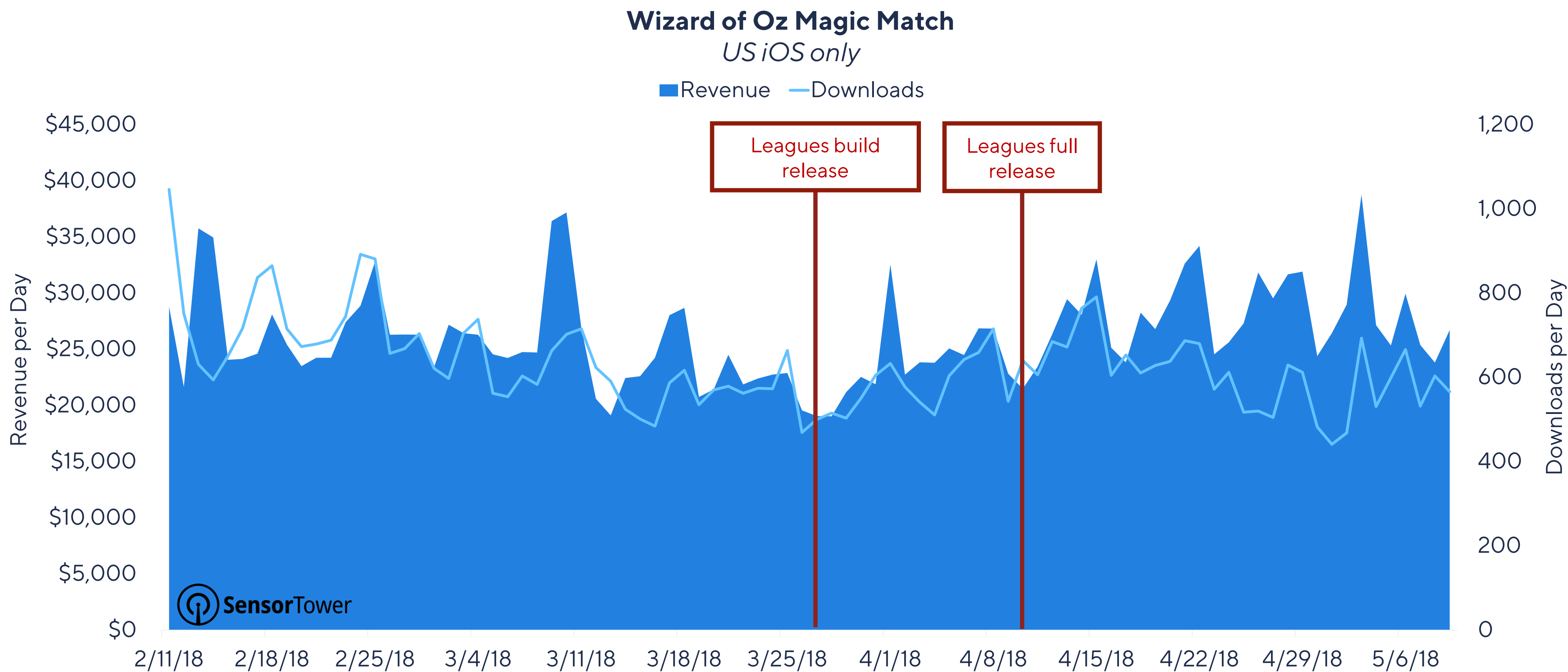
1. [Loot Boxes Warrant Criminal Prosecution Says The Belgian Gaming Commission](#), TouchArcade
2. [Puzzle Fighter Sunset Announcement](#), Capcom
3. [Responding to Reviews](#), Apple
4. [Angry Birds the Latest Big IP to Flock to Facebook Instant Games](#), PocketGamer

REVENUE PRODUCERS

LEAGUES

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Wizard of Oz Magic Match revenue increased after both the *Leagues* build release and the full feature release



Revenue and download data comes from Sensor Tower

FEATURE SNAPSHOT

Leagues are complicated to build. Revenue impact is driven by more competitive players. Events released on top of *Leagues* can increase the longevity of revenue impact

Additional Information

- [Leagues](#) - Wizard of Oz Magic Match
- Release: 4/10/18 (build release on 3/26/18)
- [Target Players](#): Mercenary, Daredevil

Related Features

- [Arena League](#) - Angry Birds 2
- [Leagues](#) - Solitaire TriPeaks
- [Leagues](#) - Zynga Poker HD

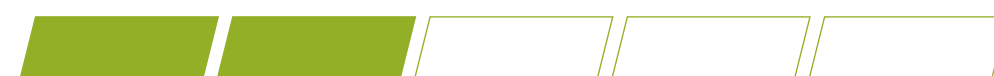
Impact



Longevity



Repeatability



Skinnability



Cost



PRODUCT INSIGHTS

Players earn and purchase *League* points to level up *League* tiers and win additional benefits

Feature Explanation

- Completing levels award *Emerald Points*. The number of points awarded is based on *Stars* earned (1)
- Additional points can be earned through W2E ads (2)
- Players can purchase point boosts with tickets or coins (3)
- The top 10 players are promoted and the bottom 10 players are demoted at the end of a week-long competition (4)
- *Leagues* are groups of 30 players (5)
- There are 9 *League* tiers. Higher tiers give faster life regeneration and special boosts (6)

Key Takeaways

- *Leagues* are geared towards *Mercenary* and *Daredevil* player types ... be careful to avoid overly-competitive mechanics that would turn off *Companion* and *Explorer* player types (see [Player Personas](#) in the Appendix for details)
- In competitive games, integrate *Leagues* deeply into the reward system. Poker Heat is a solid example of a reward system built around *Leagues* and competitive play (see Poker Heat [Leagues](#))
- From the start, design the *League* with an event system to drive revenue (see *Collection Sets* released on top of *Arena Leagues* in the [March 2018 Puzzle Report](#))

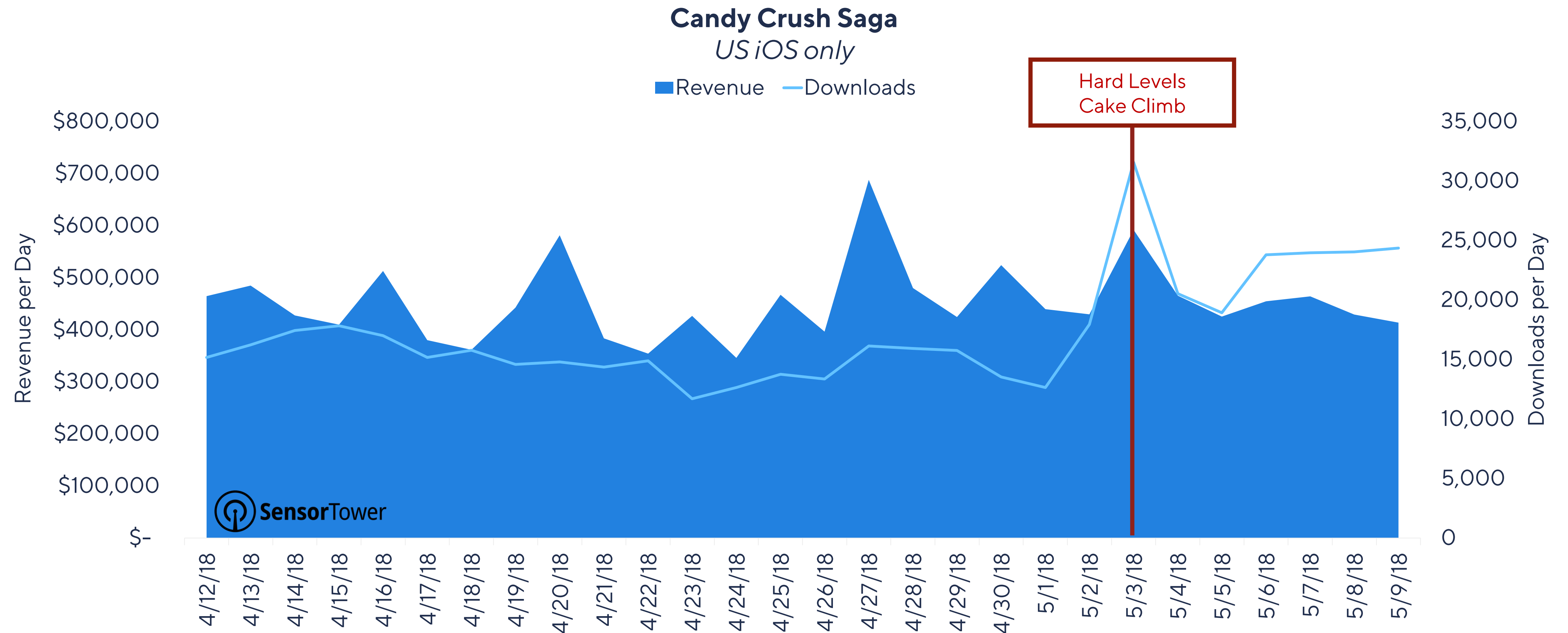
[Click for more images of Leagues](#)



HARD LEVEL EVENTS

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Revenue spiked 49% WoW in Candy Crush Saga on 5/3/18, right after the release of the *Hard Levels Cake Climb* event. The coinciding spike in downloads is unlikely to have caused such an immediate revenue impact



FEATURE SNAPSHOT

Hard Levels Cake Climb is a small variation on an already proven *Win Streak* mechanic that drives revenue with minimal development cost

Additional Information

- [Hard Levels Cake Climb](#) - Candy Crush Saga
- Release: 5/1/18 - 5/4/18
- [Target Players](#): Patternner, Commander

Related Features

- [Hard Challenge](#) - Genies & Gems
- [Magic Beam Gathering](#) - Wizard of Oz Magic Match
- [Hard Level Prize Wheel](#) - Family Guy AFMG



PRODUCT INSIGHTS

This streak event variation entices players with challenging levels *and* large rewards

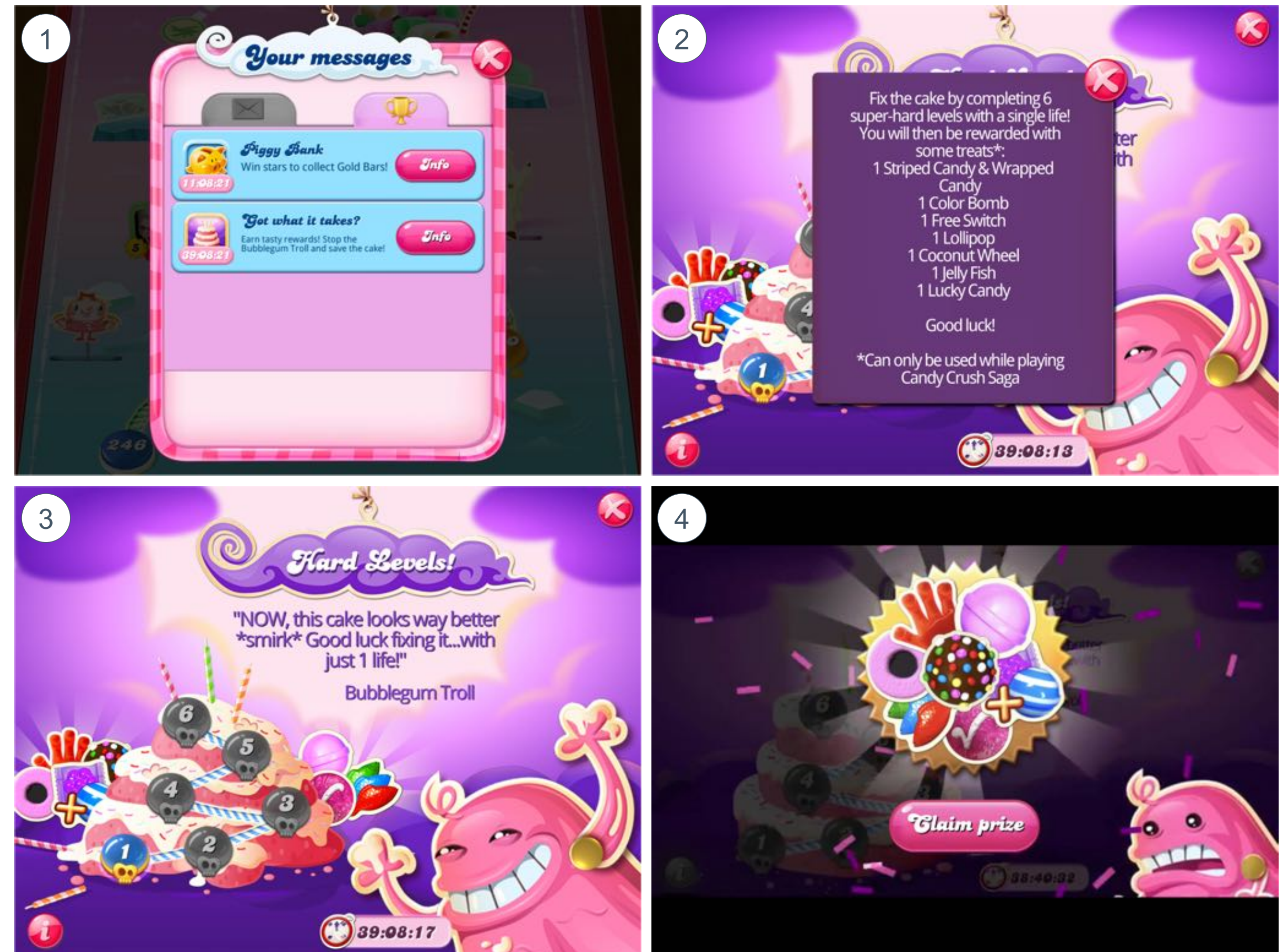
Feature Explanation

- Players receive streak event details in their inbox (1)
- Players have 1 life to beat 6 hard levels for boost rewards (2)
- Completing event levels fill a meter along the map (3)
- Completing all 6 levels awards \$6.40 worth of boosts (4)

Key Takeaways

- Take level difficulty to an extreme ... and then showcase the few players who complete all the levels (use first name, last initial to give players anonymity). This will drive player engagement from your most involved players, while providing identity protection
- To increase player adoption, add in 3 tiers of difficulty. Refer to Slotomania [Slotoquest](#) as a sound implementation of a levels-based quest system

Click for more on [Hard Levels Cake Climb](#)



RETENTION & INSTALL DRIVERS

GAME SYNCs & FRICTIONLESS RATINGS

PRODUCT INSIGHTS

Gardenscapes teaches players how to sync progress across devices. Angry Birds Match provides frictionless App Store ratings

Feature Explanation

- Gardenscapes markets to players to connect games across devices (1 & 2)
- An instructional video is posted on the community page
- Tutorial screens guide players through each step (3 & 4)
- Angry Birds Match lets players rate and review without leaving the app using [SKSReviewController API](#) (5)
- The rate prompt dialogue appears after players complete levels. According to Apple's rules, you can prompt players 3x in one year (6)

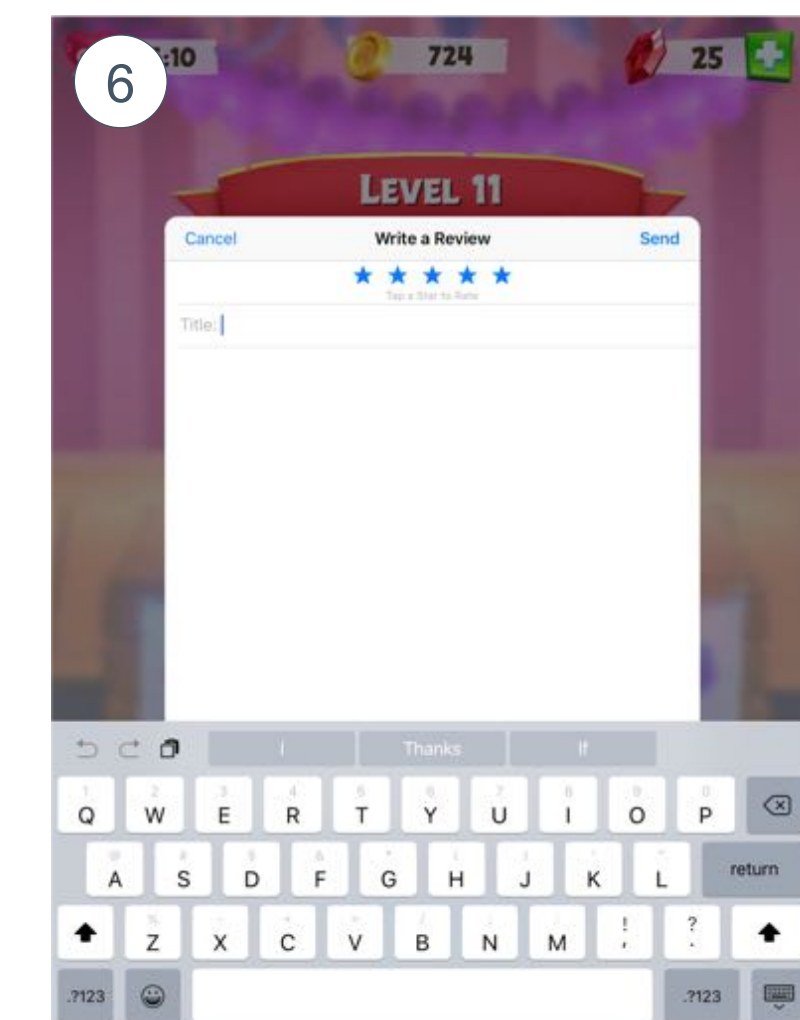
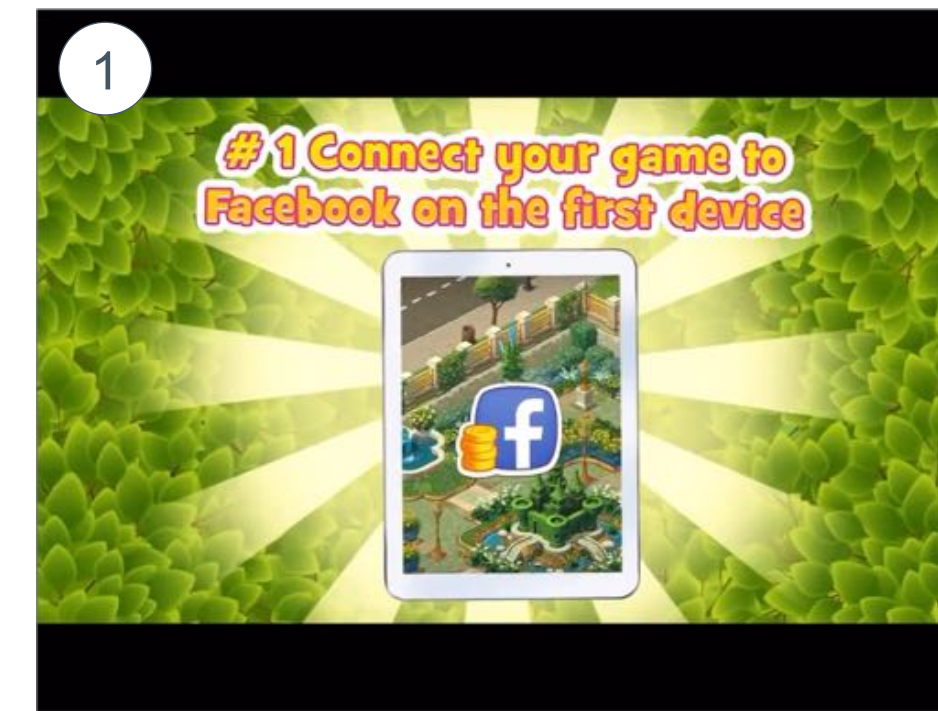
Additional Information

- [Transfer Progress](#) – Gardenscapes (4/5/18)
- [Rate Flow](#) – Angry Birds Match (4/30/18)
- [Target Player](#): All Player Types

Key Takeaways

- New devices are a potential drop-off point for heavy payers. These valuable players are likely to play your app for years, so device changes *will* happen. To decrease device-related churn, consider clear tutorial videos
- For very high value players on old devices, consider sending them upgraded devices with app information *already installed*
- Frictionless in-app reviews will increase the number of ratings, but make sure they are positive. Add a survey prior to the rating dialogue to ensure a positive review (see [February 2018 Social Casino Product Report](#) for more information)

Click for more on [Transfer Progress](#) or [Rate Flow](#)



LEVEL DESIGNS

NEW LEVEL DESIGNS

[Sealed Fireworks](#) in Gardenscapes:

- Sealed *Fireworks* are hidden under 2 to 18 positions. Activating boosts and matches uncover them (1)
- Uncovered *Fireworks* destroy random items needed to clear the level (2)

[Safes](#) in Toon Blast:

- *Safes* alternate every move between open and closed (3)
- Collapse cubes next to open *Safes* to collect diamonds (4)

[Snow Globes](#) in Toon Blast:

- Multiple matches remove the *Snow Globe*: the first match pops a crate to reveal a *Snow Globe*, and the second match removes it (5 & 6)



NEW LEVEL DESIGNS

Ceramic Tiles in Homescapes:

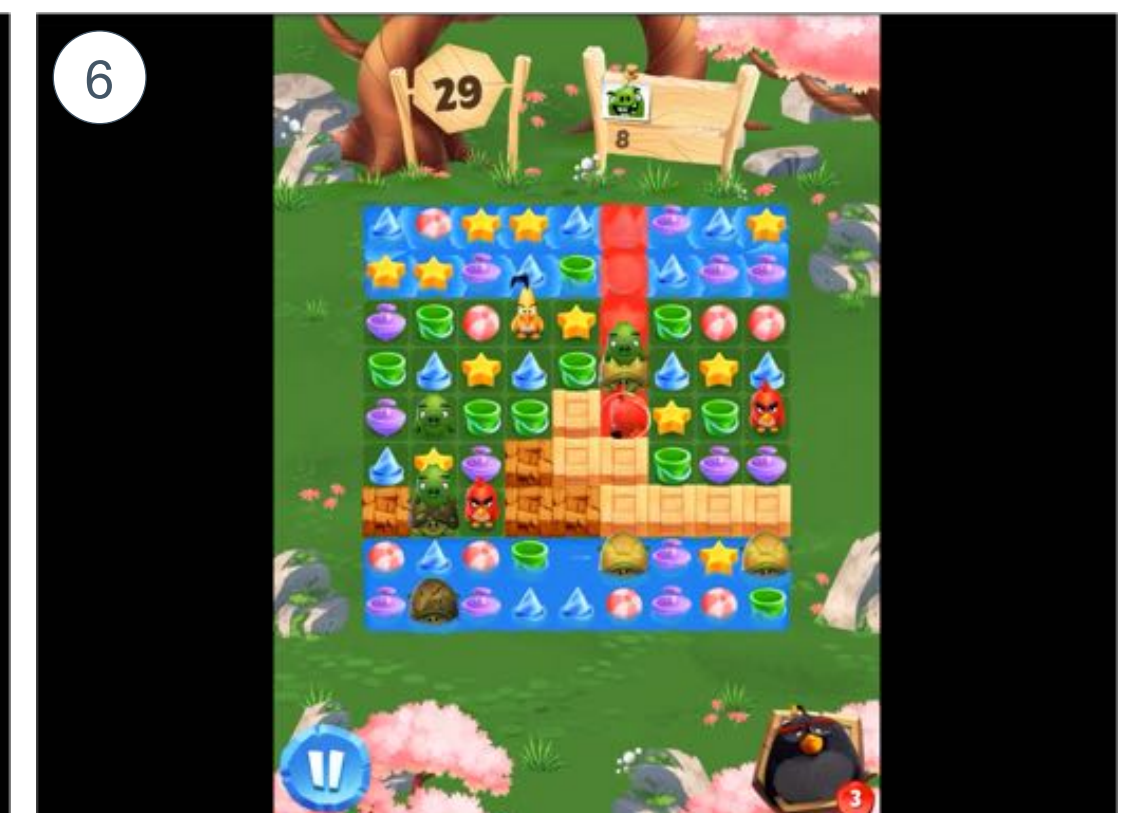
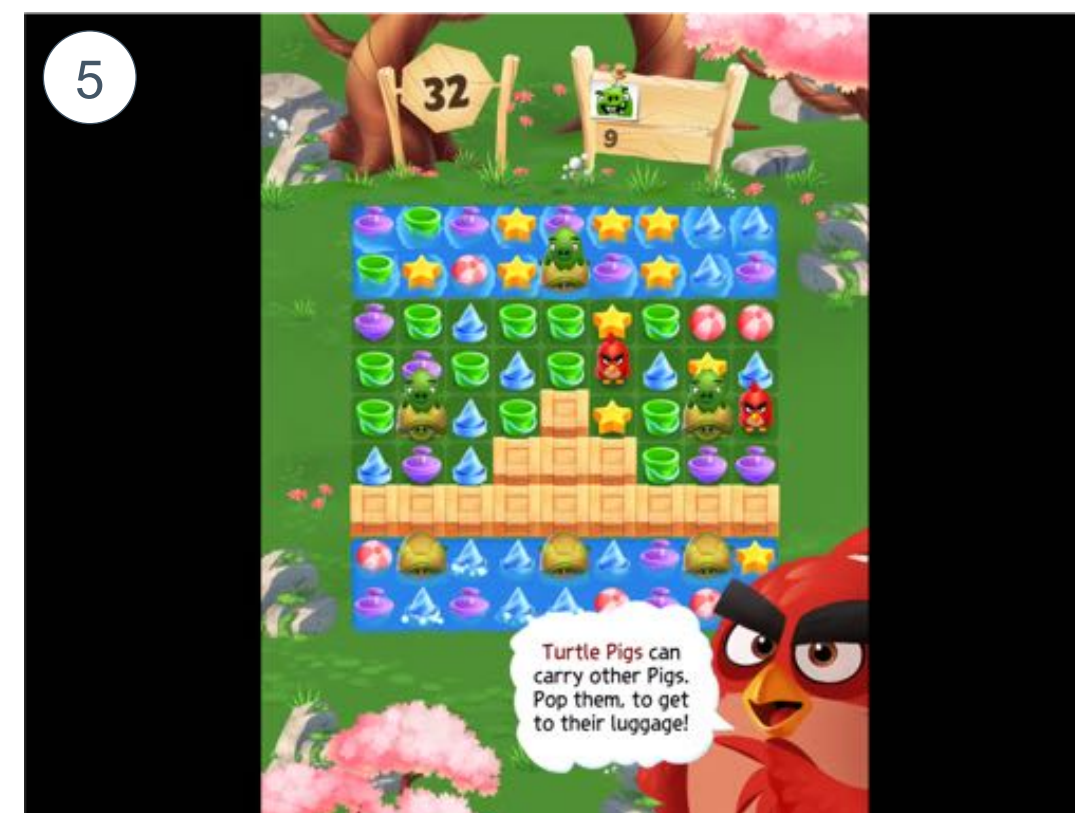
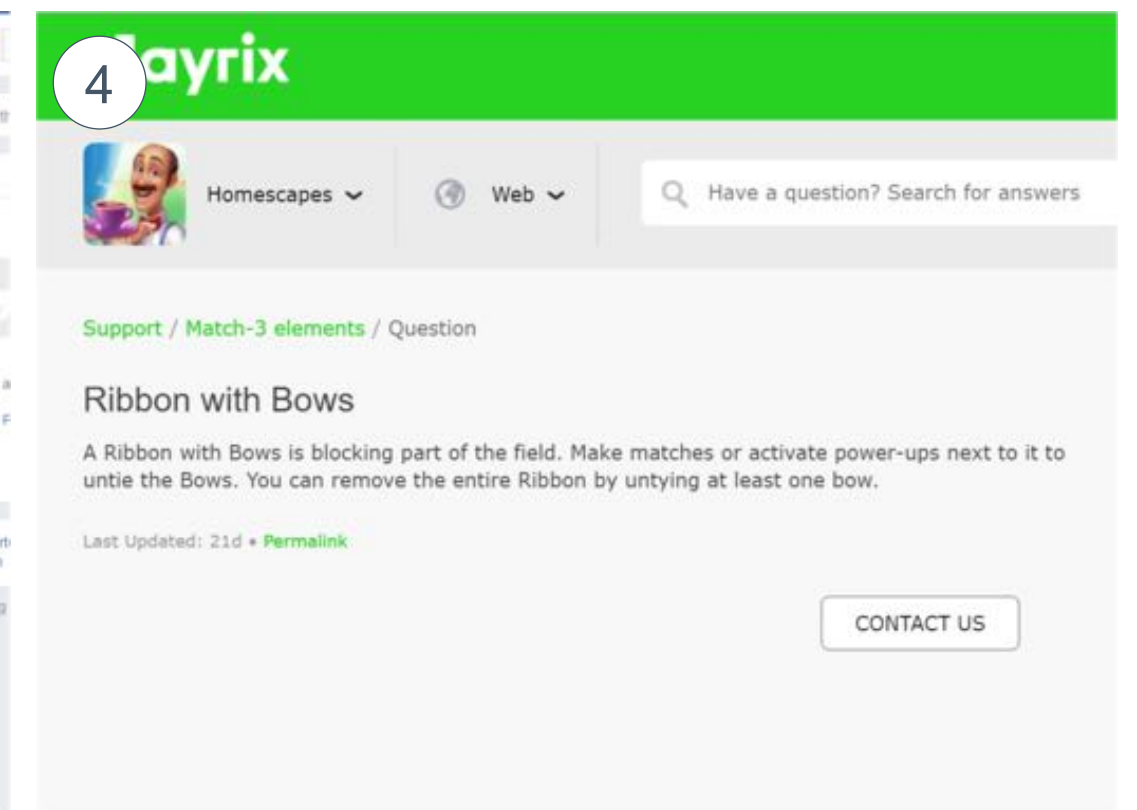
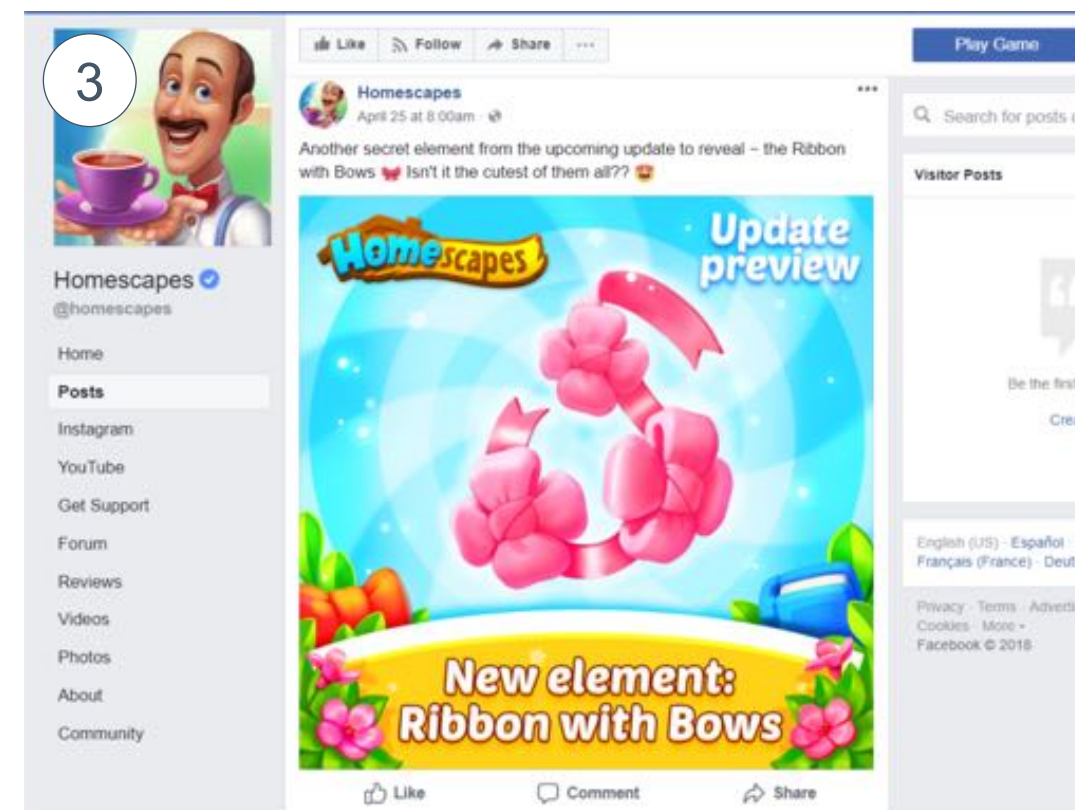
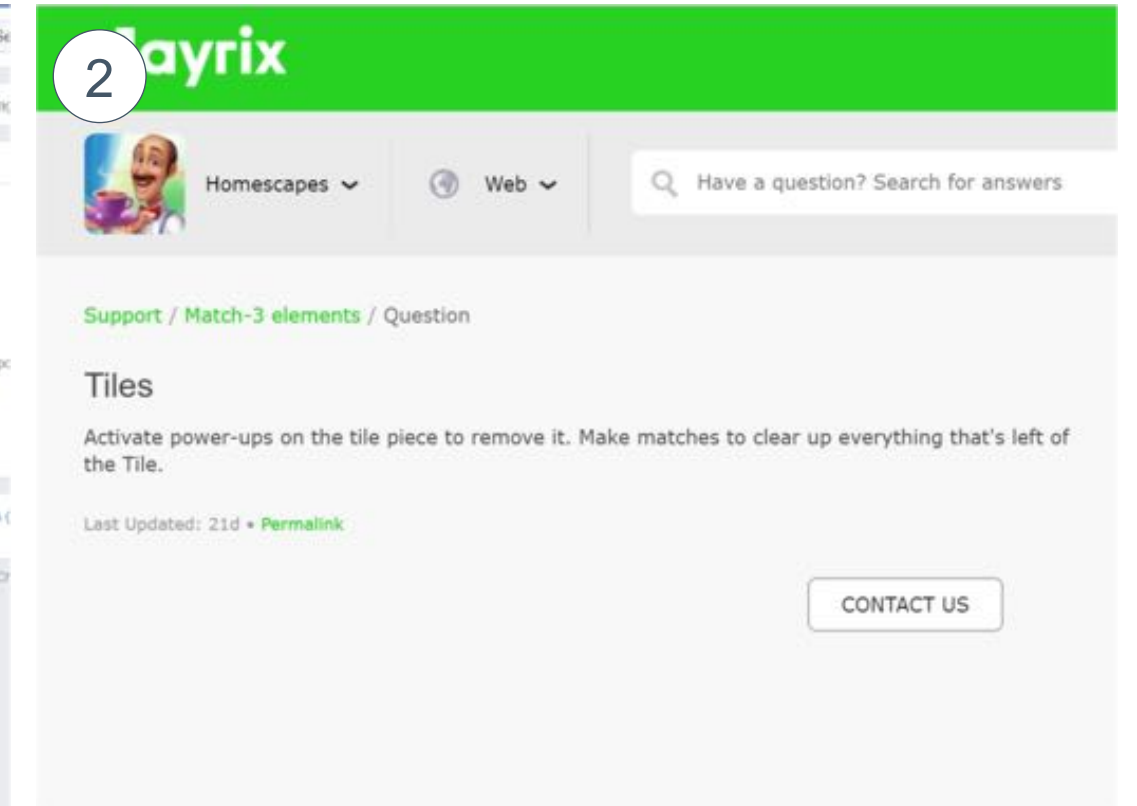
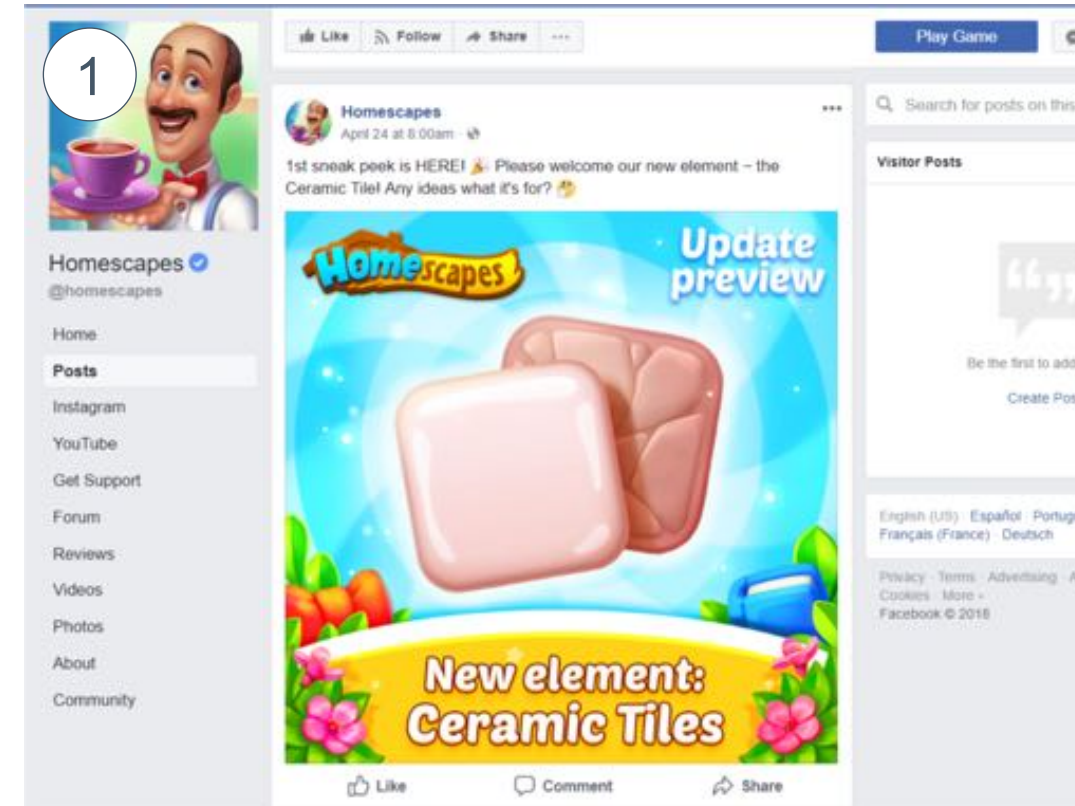
- *Ceramic Tiles* covering positions on the board are broken by activating boosts
- Making matches and additional boosts remove them (1 & 2)

Ribbon with Bows in Homescapes:

- *Ribbons with Bows* block the field
- Adjacent matches and boosts untie *Bows* and remove the *Ribbons* (3 & 4)

Turtle Pigs in Angry Birds Match:

- A *Turtle Pig* can carry stacked items, requiring 4 matches to remove from the field (5)
- *Birds* and boosts remove them instantly (6)



MARKET WATCH

4/1/18 - 4/30/18

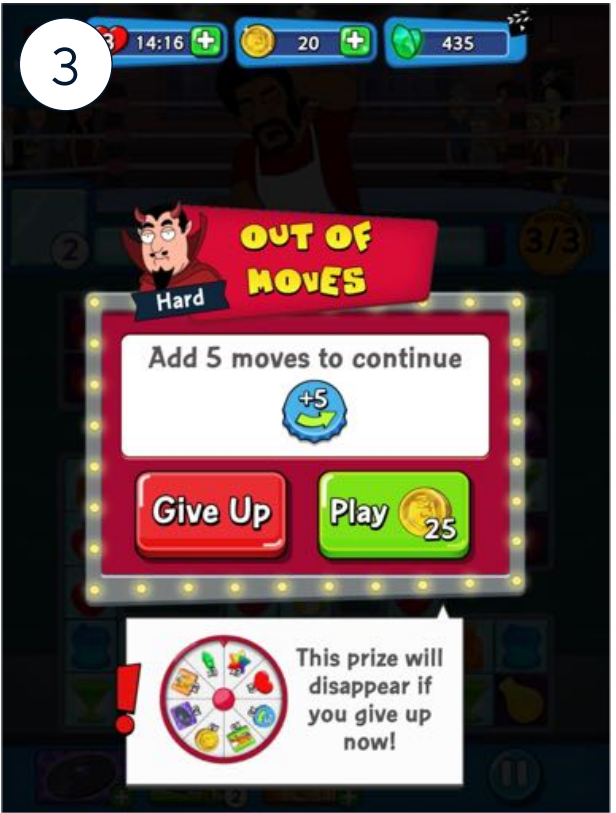
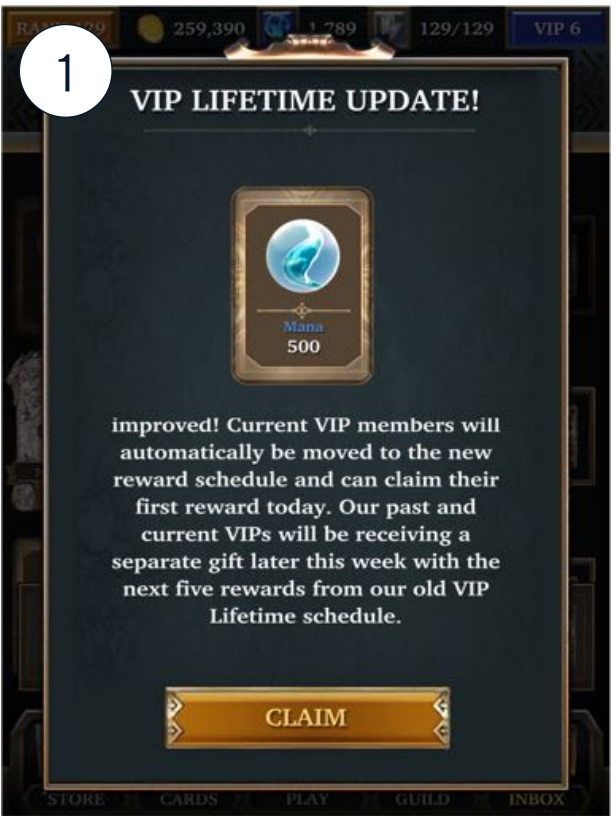
NOTABLE RELEASES I

App	Notable Release	More Information
Candy Crush Saga	Dexter's Delight League Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Notice of <i>League</i> hiatus for re-design, resulting in a reset of all progression
Gardenscapes	Anime Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none">April Fool's joke about redesigning art style posted as in-app news and on the community page
	Treasure Chest Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Streak event coming soon to award boosts and a treasure hunting event (1)
Fishdom	Lifeguard Dolphins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Failed level additional purchase option of +5 moves and 'Lifeguard Dolphins' boost (2)
Candy Crush Jelly Saga	Mastery Rank	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Player XP leveling and frame feature added with second-screen points notification update (3)



NOTABLE RELEASES II

App	Notable Release	More Information
Legendary Game of Heroes	Guild Leagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Update to <i>Guild League</i> system to include 8 new <i>Guild Leagues</i> to the <i>Guild</i> leaderboards
	VIP Subscription Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Announcement and outline of the new <i>upgraded</i> benefits added to the VIP subscription system (1)
Bubble Witch 3 Saga	Magic Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Special event giving players level 22 and higher a chance to play level 1,000 (2)
Family Guy AFMG	Hard Level Prize Wheel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Complete a hard level on first attempt for a wheel spin (3)
Hidden City Mystery of Shadows	Magical Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bonus match-3 mini game awarding collection items that are only available during event



[Click here](#) for the full list of content released with links to more images in the [Feature Database](#)

APPENDIX

PLAYER PERSONAS

	Mercenary	Companion	Commander	Adventurer	Explorer	Daredevil	Patterner
Gender	76% male	72% female	73% male	45% female	78% female	69% male	71% female
Mean age	31.6	40.8	37.8	31.5	42.3	39.6	45.3
Highest preference(s)	Assault	Care	Manage	Journey & Assault	Journey	Assault	Coordinate
Lowest preference(s)	Care	Assault	Care	Manage & Care	Assault	Journey & Care	All except Coordinate
Gameplay mechanic LIKES	Stealth, strategy, being the protagonist, skill progression, and exploration	Befriending non-playable characters (NPCs), creating an avatar, skill progression, and city or village handling	Strategy, city or base construction, and large-scale handling of NPCs	Creating an avatar, skill progression, being the protagonist, exploration and secrets, and befriending NPCs	Collecting rare items and treasures, exploration, skill progression, and tile matching	Racing, explosions, and stealth	Tile matching, platforming, and collecting rare items
Gameplay mechanic DISLIKES	Rhythm mechanics, pet training	Killing, war, weaponry, explosions	Theft, illegal activities, stealth, retreating, rhythm mechanics	Racing, sports, tile matching, instruments, dancing, and pet training	Theft, explosions, retreating	No strong dislike for any particular mechanic	Killing, theft, destruction, and war

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS



Recommendations, information, and data come from market research, app intelligence tools, and deep analysis of the apps

Market Research

- Each app is reviewed daily for updates, regardless of whether the app has been updated through the App Store
- Transaction information comes from the iOS App Store's In-App Purchases tab. These transactions are ranked based on the number of transactions
- Trending revenue, downloads, and package-rank data come from Sensor Tower Store Intelligence

Game Information

- App information comes from a deep-dive analysis of each app
- In the Economy Analysis and economy-related slides, the currency value is determined by converting currencies into money using \$5 worth of non-sale purchasable currencies in each app
- For example, if an item costs 1,000 of the primary currency and players can purchase 500 for \$5, the value of the item is \$10. For apps without a \$5 package, the next closest package is used

*“You can design and create, and build the most wonderful place in the world.
But it takes people to make the dream a reality.” – Walt Disney*

– Walt Disney

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