LIQUID&GRIT

Puzzle Report

Competitive Research and Actionable Product Recommendations

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JUNE

2019

NEW INNOVATIONS

QUEST EVENTS: MASTERY

Daily Quests & Treasure Hunts in Two Dots

REVENUE ANALYSIS

The release of a new feature, *Daily Quests,* appears to have increased the revenue impact of an existing, recurring event, *Treasure Hunts.* After *Daily Quests* went live, revenue was +11% 4Wo4W (two holiday sales in May also boosted revenue).

Releases

4/29 – 5/27 Gold Mine
5/2 – 5/24 Gold Sale
5/3 Daily Quests (new)
5/11 – 5/12 Mother's Day Sale
5/23 – 5/26 Treasure Hunts
5/27 Memorial Day Sale

Two Dots

■ Revenue —— Downloads

Daily Quests
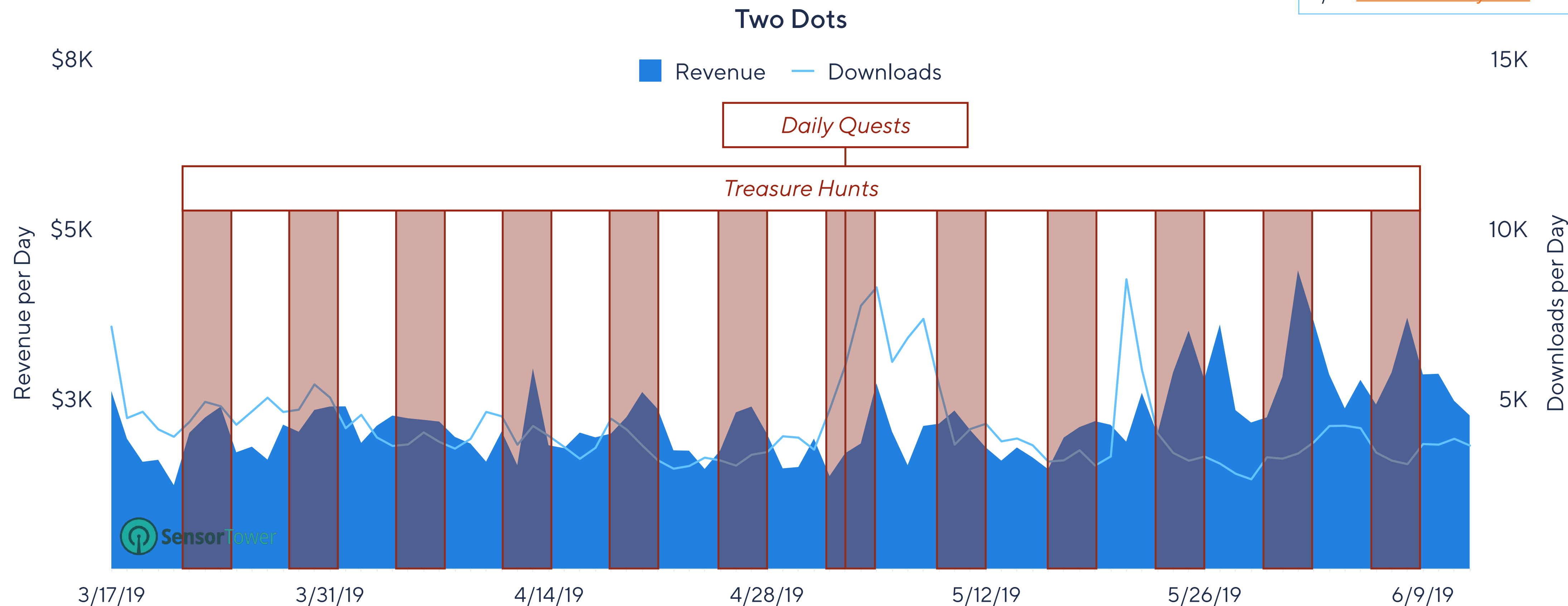
Treasure Hunts

Graph data is iOS U.S. only
4Wo4W = Four weeks over four weeks

FEATURE TEARDOWN

In the new *Daily Quests* feature, players complete daily challenges to earn points and fill a *Stamp Card.* In the existing event, *Treasure Hunts,* players either finish current maps ... or, *Rewind* to either complete or re-complete old maps.

Daily Quests Details
- Players can complete challenges every 24 hours to earn *Stamps* (1).
- Filling a *Stamp Card* awards a collectable, chests, and hearts.
- Players are ranked against their Facebook friends on a leaderboard (2).
- Additional screenshots and videos are in the Daily Quests Library.

Treasure Hunts Details
- Each week, players have 4 days to complete event-specific levels on a map (3).
- Completing a map awards a *Medallion,* prizes, and collectibles (4).
- Additional screenshots and videos are in the Treasure Hunts Library.

Rewinds Details
- Players can access previously released *Treasure Hunt* maps by *Rewinding* (5).
- Players use event-specific *Rewind Lives* (separate from core-game lives).
- Completing an *unfinished map* awards prizes and collectibles.
- Finishing a *previously finished map* ranks up the *Medallion,* increasing the prize rewards (6).
- Additional screenshots and videos are in the Rewinds Library.

IMPLEMENTATION INSIGHTS

Use elements of Mastery to keep high value players engaged while they wait for new levels. To impact more players and test a proven mechanic from another genre, implement elements of Prestiging to help make replaying old content more enjoyable.

Product Recommendations

- Decrease high-value player churn with Mastery. When high-value players complete all the core progression levels, Mastery can keep them occupied until new levels are released.
- For a potentially larger impact, test variations on Prestiging. In many Idle Games, players can start the entire game over but with a faster progression (see this Kongregate article and Reddit video).
  - When implementing a Prestiging option, add *some* new elements to the game during the *Prestiging Loops* … to make the game feel relatively new (1).
  - Review Gummy Drop's core leveling, which is a Prestiging-like mechanic (Level Tiers).
- Minimize risk by releasing Mastery-specific currency. In Two Dots' *Rewinds*, players use event-specific *Rewind Lives* to complete old maps (2).

Player Insights

- Gamer Gary and Trainer Tracy personas will gravitate towards Mastery mechanics. Gamer Gary continuously needs content to stay immersed in the game world. Trainer Tracy will use Mastery to improve her abilities (and presumably brain strength).
  - Gamer Gary has the highest monetization potential and Trainer Tracy is largest group (but lower monetization potential).

Additional References

- Consider combining previously released events. In Slotomania's *Hot Shot* event, players complete 4 previously-released events (see the Casino Report analysis Repurposed Challenge Events in the *new* Wiki Tool).

BREAKOUT APPS

PASSION PUZZLE (AD MARKET)

APP TEARDOWN

The app's gameplay is match–link, and the progression is a choice–based storyline that is quite provocative. Players take women on *Dates* and eventually receive *Photos* of them. Revenue peaked in May at $18.8K per day in the U.S. on iOS … but dropped considerably in June.

Revenue Information
- The app was launched in the U.S. in August of 2018.
- Peak revenue was $18.8K per day in the U.S. on iOS (week of 5/18/19).
- Revenue and installs have dropped, and continue to slide, beginning 6/8/19.

Feature Details
- Players have conversations and *Dates* with women to progress (New User Flow).
- In the conversations, players select 1 of 3 responses (1).
- When a woman is ready, players can take her on Dates, which are match–link levels (2).
- During level play, points are earned based on a woman's *Personality* (3).
- Players increase their Skills and the woman's *Personality* to improve a player's in–level boosts.
- After completing a level, players receive coins, items, and *Photos* (4).
- Players hold their *Photos* and *Messages* in the Phone tab (5).
- Completing Quests can award racy *Photos* (6).
- Go to the Gallery Tool for more images and videos of Passion Puzzle.

Notable Mechanics
- **Set the new buyer bundle to a sizable price.** The first transaction sets the default transaction amount for payers … so avoid under–selling established payers. In Passion Puzzle, the new buyer bundle costs $16.99 (New Buyer Bundles).
- **Add a Crop Mechanic to time–based retention systems.** In Passion Puzzle, each *Location* has a different countdown timer that awards coins when completed (e.g. the *Airport* gives 5 coins every 5 minutes & the *Square* gives 15 coins every hour). For more impact, make the value collected diminish if players do not collect within a certain amount of time (Misc. Features).
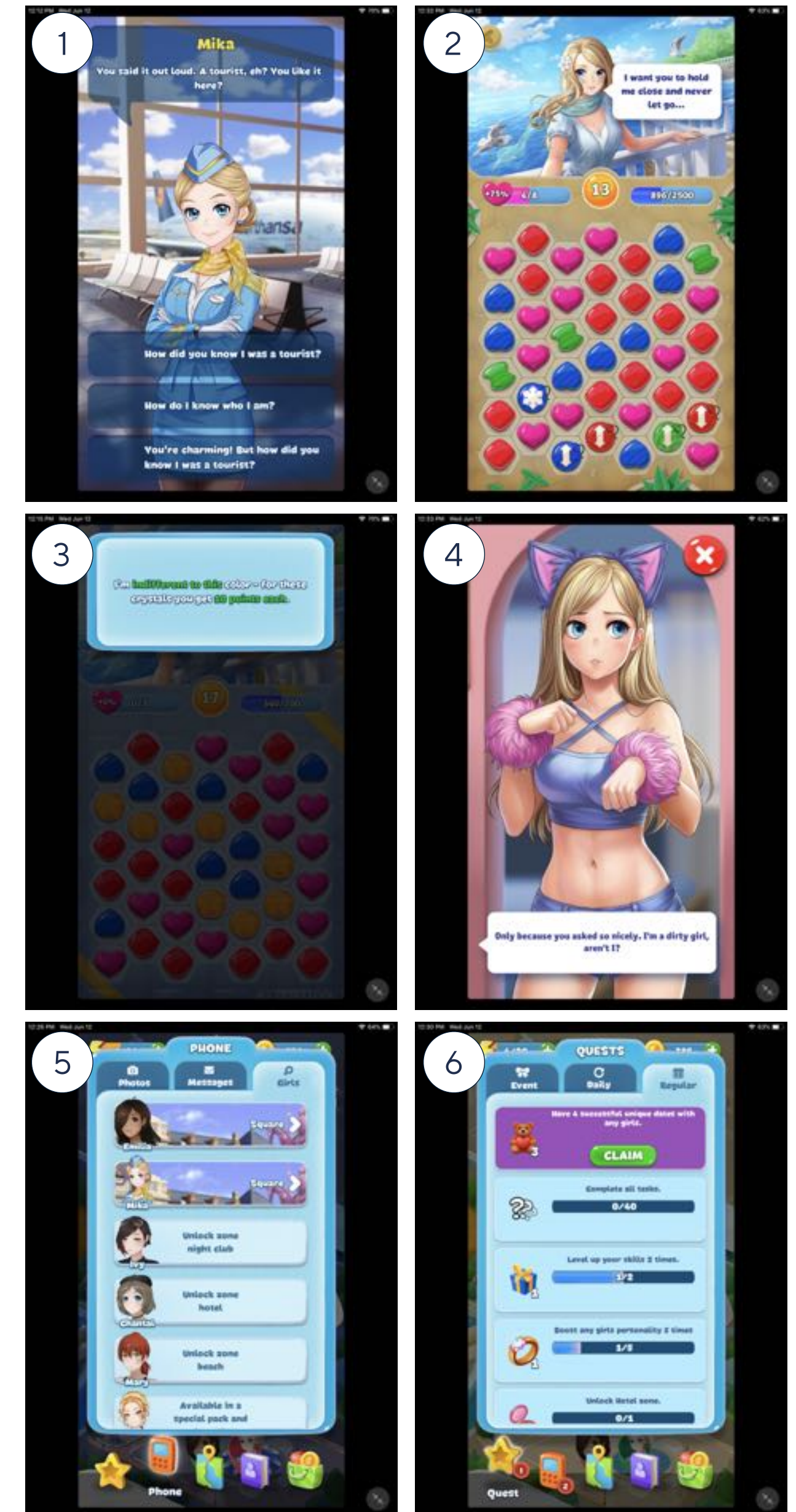
WORD STACKS (PEOPLE FUN)

APP TEARDOWN

In this word puzzle app, words found in the puzzle are removed and the resting pieces collapse, forming a new layout. In every level, there are hint phrases and a progression feature based on finding non-listed words in the puzzle.


Revenue Information
- Launched in the U.S. in October of 2018.
- Revenue is $21.1K per day, and downloads are 13.2K in the U.S. on iOS.
- Revenue and downloads continue to be strong.

Feature Details
- There are 3 in-level boosts available to players (1 and New User Flow).
- Swiping a correct word causes the remaining tiles to collapse (2 and Misc. Features).
- Players unlock new Themes and can customize their lobby and level background (3).
- Finding non-listed words awards 1 point, filling the Bonus Words meter (4).
- After players complete Chapter 500 (at level 5,000), there are Master Levels (5).
- Go to the Gallery Tool for more images and videos of Word Stacks.

Notable Mechanics
- Stress-test the game's progression for heavily-engaged players. In Word Stacks, heavily-engaged players have *Master Levels,* which start at level 5,000 (5). In Solitaire Grand Harvest, VIP players have separate levels based on their VIP Status (VIP Program & Levels).
- Consider a non-level progress mechanic as an inexpensive alternative to a Mastery system. In Word Stacks, players fill a Bonus Words meter when finding words not assigned to the puzzle (4).
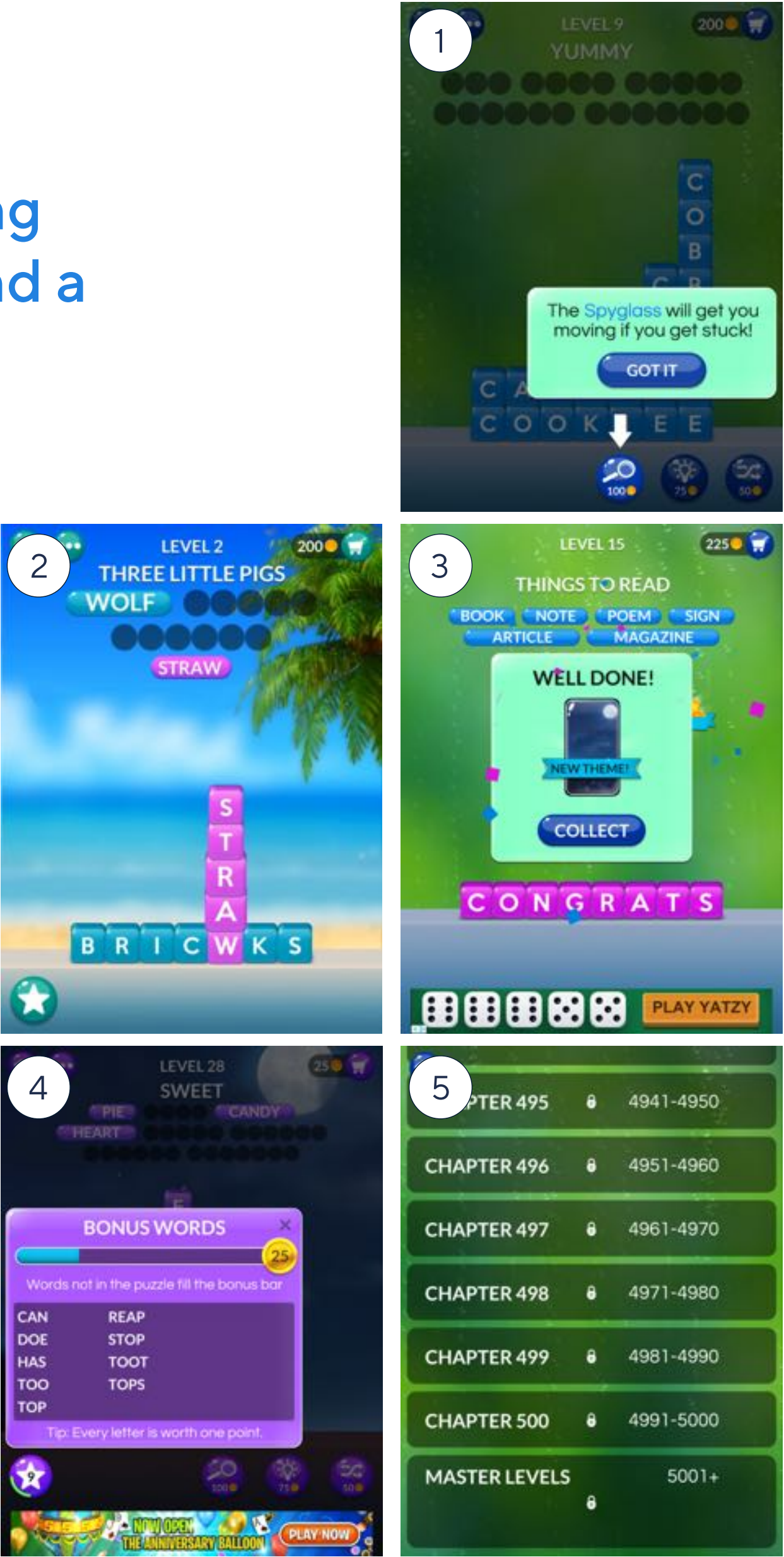
5 DIFFERENCES ONLINE (SMART PROJECT)

APP TEARDOWN

Every level, players compete in *Spot It* gameplay. Winners of the level advance, and losers have the option to *wait* or *pay-to-play again.* If the *Daily Tasks* from the prior day were not completed, players must either *pay-to-continue* or *reset* the task list.

Revenue Information
- Launched in the U.S. in February of 2019.
- The app is averaging $6.6K per day in iOS U.S. revenue.
- Revenue continues to maintain.

Feature Details
- Each level has 2 images with 5 differences (New User Flow).
- Players compete against others to find the differences the fastest (1).
- Finding all the differences first awards *Stars,* filling the *Star Meter* (2 & 3).
- Winning a level progresses players to the next level (4).
- Players that lose a level have the option to *wait* or *pay-to-play again* (5).
- A *Weekly Tournament* is based off points earned in level play (6 and Weekly Tournament).
- Daily Tasks are challenges completed during level play.
- If players do not complete a *Daily Task*, they may either *pay-to-continue* or *reset* (7).
- Collection items are found during play (8).
- Go to the Gallery Tool for more images and videos of 5 Differences Online.

Notable Mechanics
- Position new apps *clearly* to a particular player motivation. 5 Differences Online is for competitive players ... given the competitiveness of level progression and the *Weekly Tournaments* (4 & 6).

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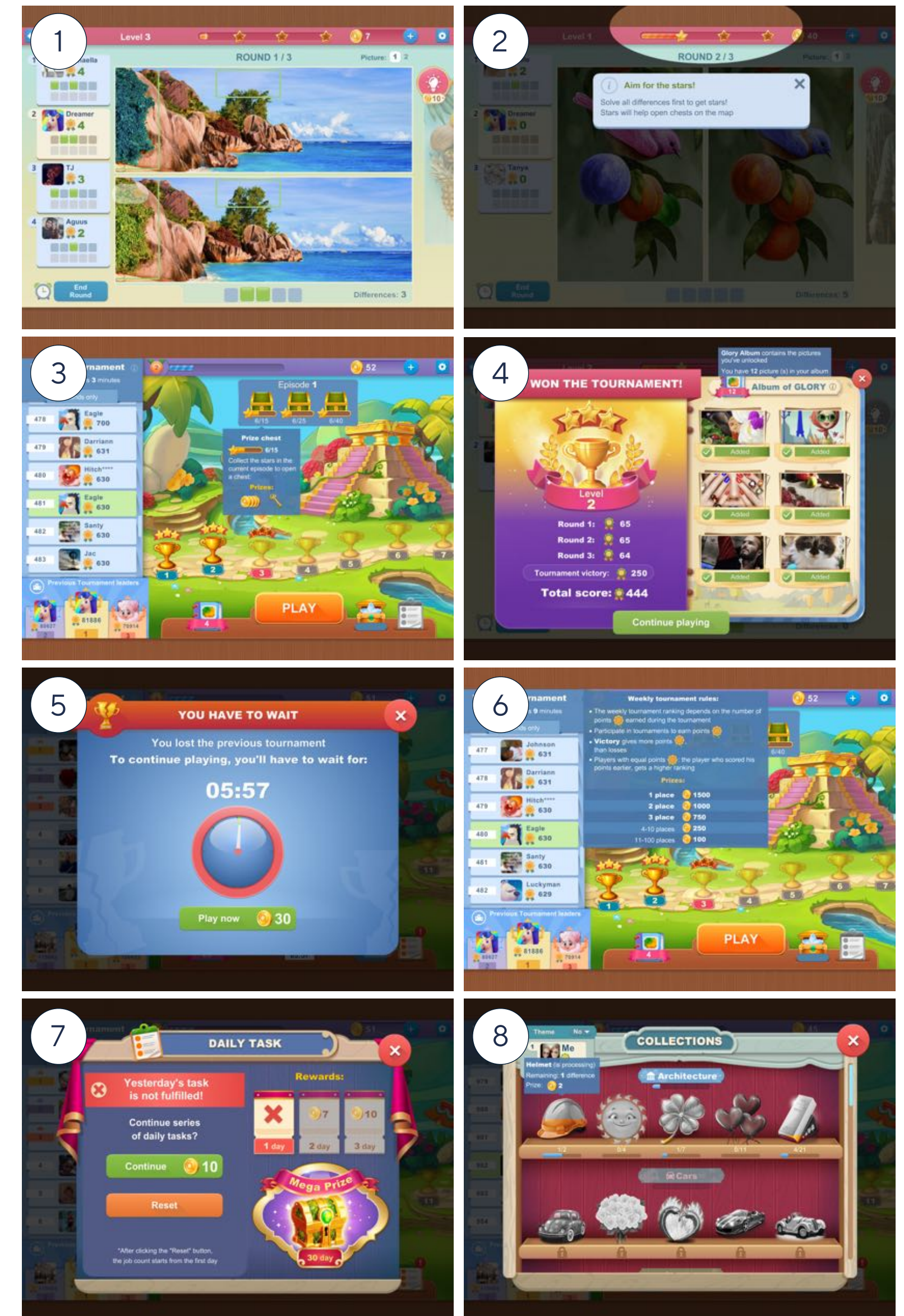
IN SOFT LAUNCH

BEST FIENDS STARS (SERIOUSLY)

Soft launched in April of 2019, Best Fiends Stars gameplay is match–link puzzle with a level progression system. The features and events are influenced by Best Fiends and Toon Blast … with Clubs as a core initial feature. Artistically, the app utilizes the Best Fiends characters.

Category	Details
Sub-Genre	Match–Link
Mechanics	Collection, Social, Leaderboards, Team Events
Soft Launch	4/11/19
Countries	Brazil, Poland, Finland
Summary	• Players may join Teams and complete Team Chest events (1). • Similar to Toon Blast's Teams • Players may unlock Star Chests by collecting *Stars* during level play. • Similar to Toon Blast's Star Chests • For certain levels, players complete Chest Levels (2). • Similar to Toon Blast's Toon Chests
Features	• New User Flow • Boosts • Misc. Currencies • Gene's Star Chase (event) • Misc. Features • Howie's Magic Dash (event) • Fiends Collection

VINEYARD VALLEY (JAM CITY)

Vineyard Valley gameplay is collapse puzzle with a custom design progression system. The features and events have similarities to Toon Blast and Homescapes. The app was soft launched in February of 2019.

Category	Details
Sub-Genre	Collapse-Builder
Mechanics	Custom Design, Leaderboard/Competition, Storyline/Characters
Soft Launch	2/21/19
Countries	Canada, Netherlands, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Israel, Sweden, Singapore, Argentina
Summary	• Players experience an in-depth storyline and characters during the New User Flow (1). • As players progress, they customize a wine vineyard (2 and Custom Designs).
Features	• Misc. Features • Misc. Currencies • Boosts

LEVEL MECHANICS

NEW LEVEL DESIGN I

Phone in Homescapes
- Only removable when *Ringing*, which lasts 2 turns.
- Adjacent matches or boosts remove a *Ringing Phone*.
- If not removed, *Ringing* transfers to a different *Phone* on the board (1).

Cocktail Glass in Toy Blast
- Grouped together in blocks.
- Removed by making an adjacent match or using a boost (2 & 3).

Broom in Matchington Mansion
- Clears all pieces in a horizontal and vertical line from the selected position (4).
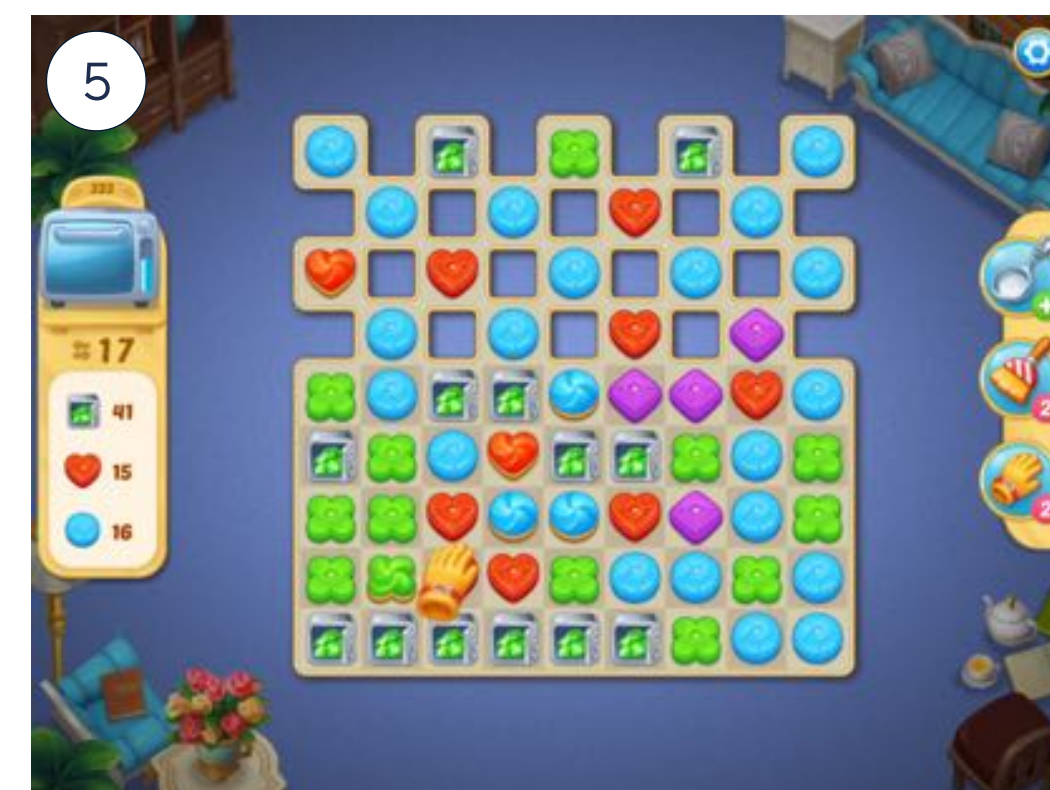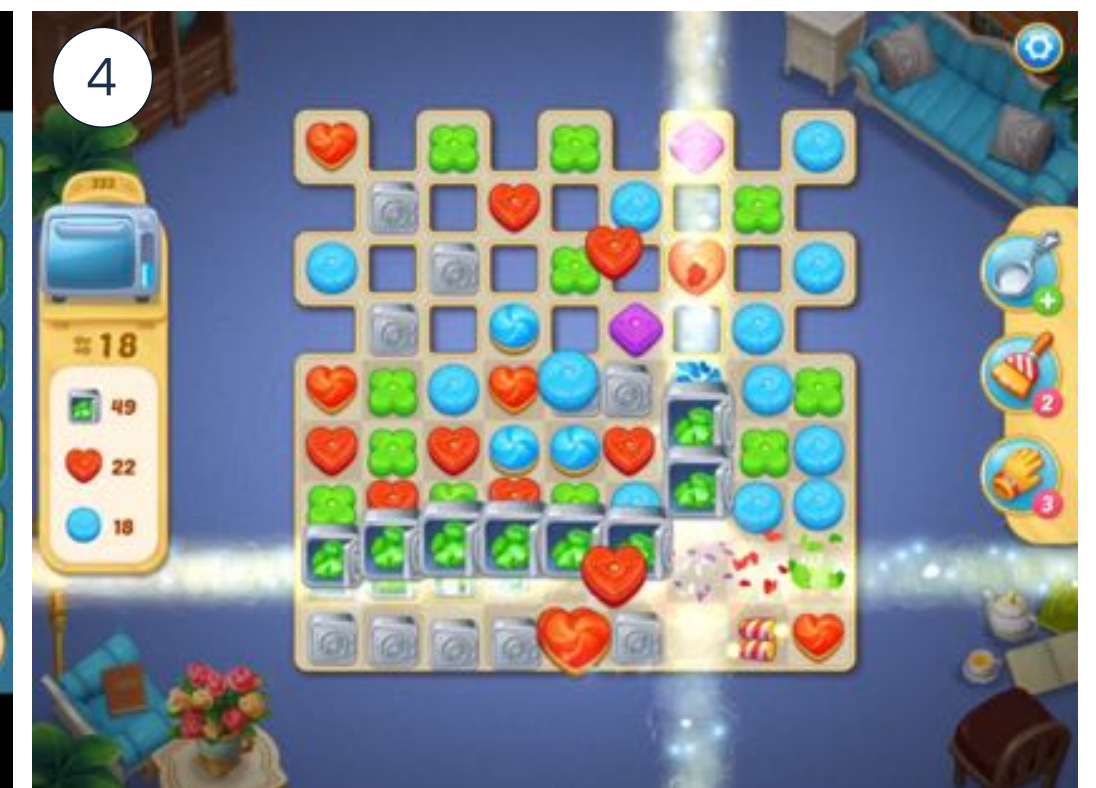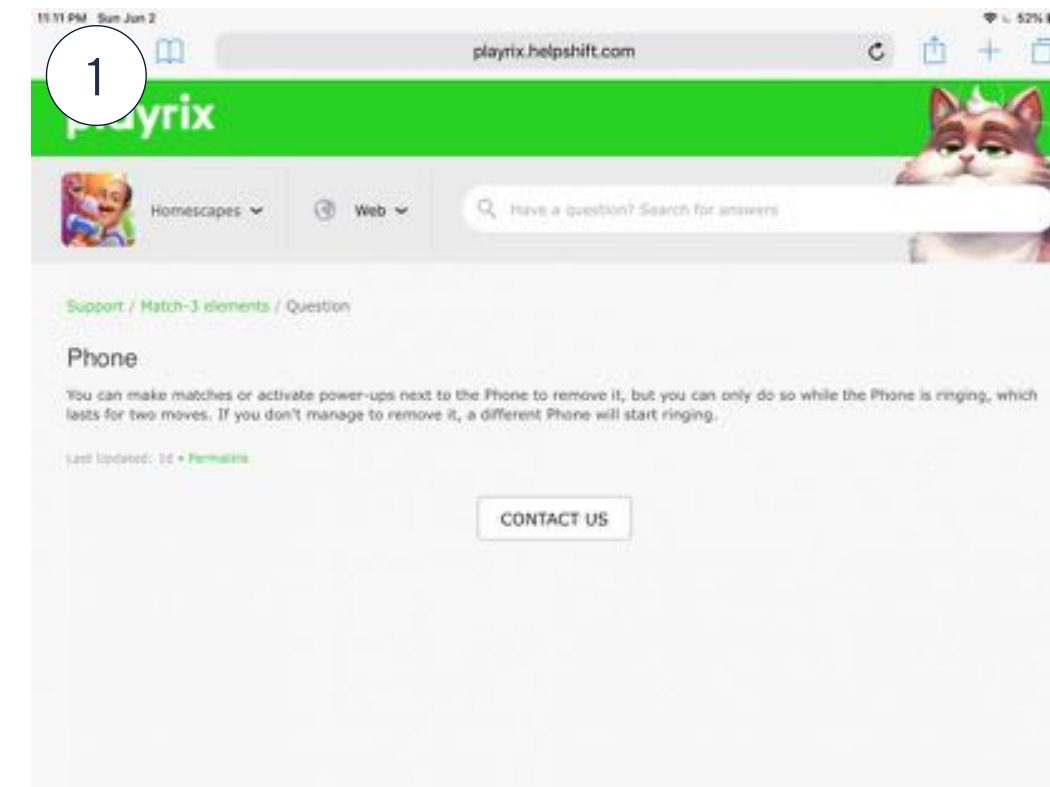
Glove in Matchington Mansion
- A boost that swaps 2 adjacent pieces (5).

Pies in Gardenscapes
- Made up of different colored *Slices*.
- *Slices* are removed by making an adjacent match of the same color or using boosts (6).

Chests in Fishdom
- Unlocked by matching *Keys* with pieces of the same color.
- Marked with the number of *Keys* required to open it.

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NEW LEVEL DESIGN II

Emeralds in Fishdom

- Collected by activating 3 adjacent power-ups (1).

Seals in Fishdom

- Move *Seals* along a track and into an *Ice Hole* by matching *Fish* with pieces of the same color or exploding adjacent power-ups.

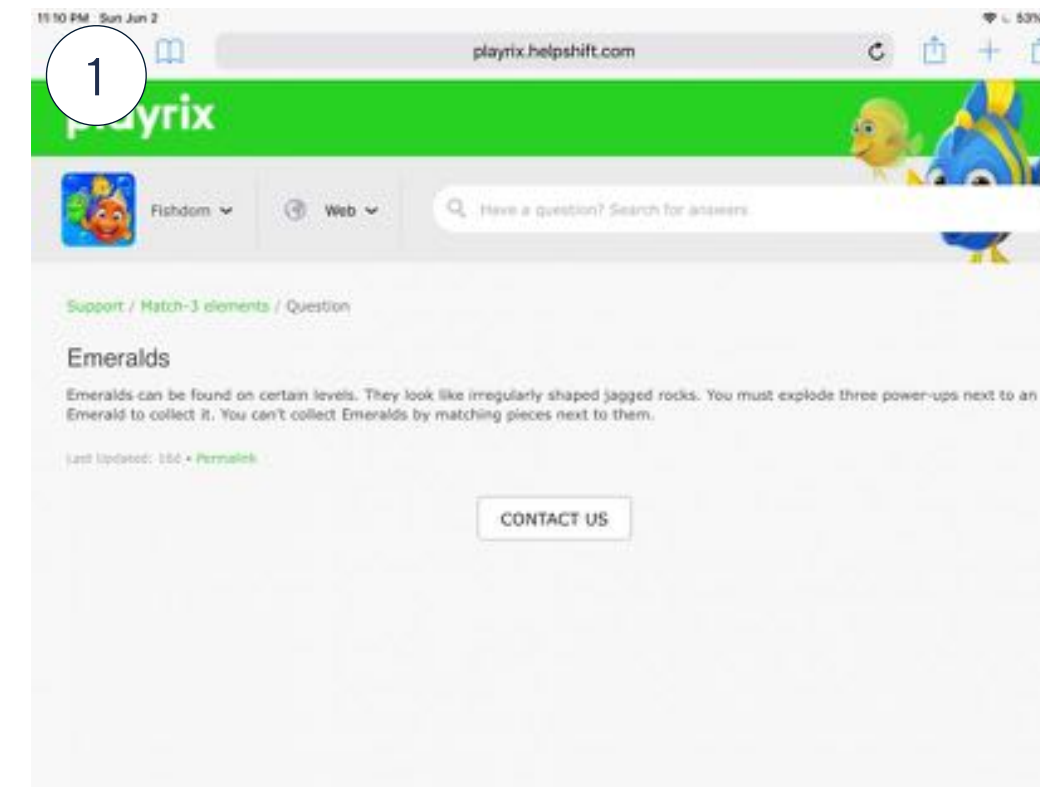**Green Double Converter in Best Fiends**

- *Dougie,* a recently introduced *Fiend,* has a boost called *Double Converter* that converts 4 adjacent pieces to *Double Green Blocks* (2).

Beach Balls in Best Fiends

- An adjacent link-match causes the *Beach Ball* to inflate and hop to a nearby tile, destroying the piece it lands on.
- Removed after 3 adjacent link-matches (3 & 4).

Turtles in Best Fiends

- On each turn, *Turtles* convert the pieces they walk across to the color marked on their back.
- An adjacent match causes *Turtles* to retract into their *Shell* and remain stationary for 2 turns (5 & 6).
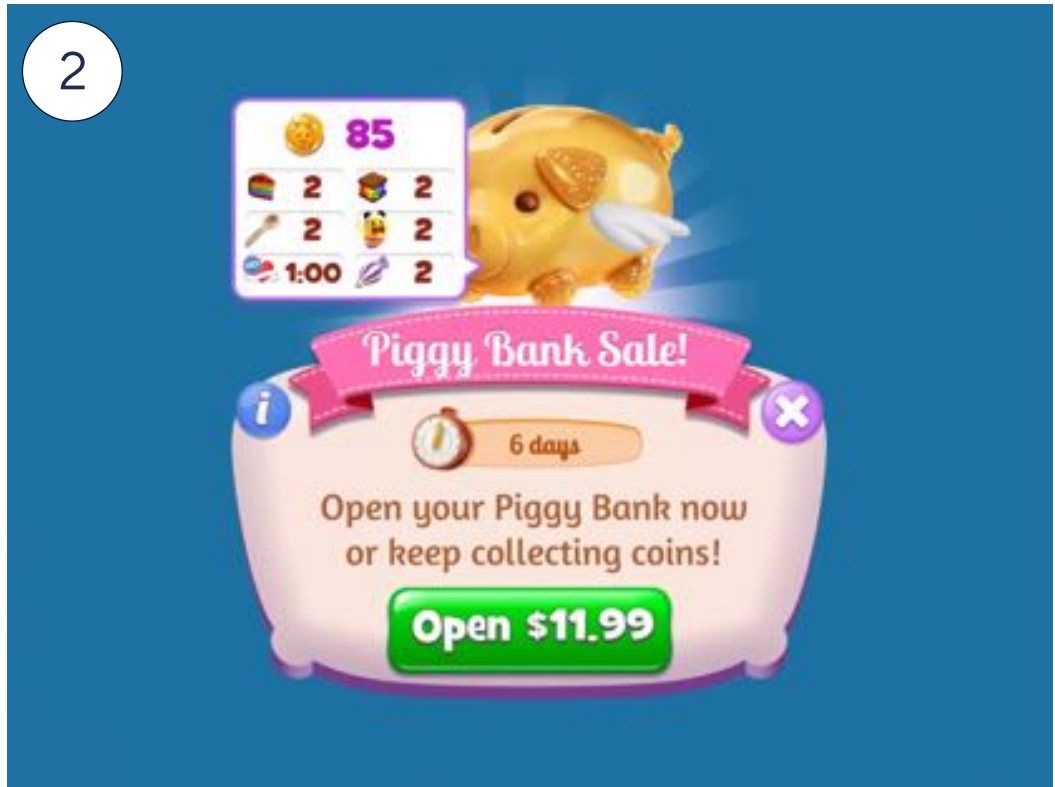
MARKET WATCH

5/1/19 – 5/31/19

NOTABLE RELEASES I

App	Library	Description
Candy Crush Saga	Episode Race	• 5 players compete to finish all the *Episode* levels in the fastest time. • The top 3 players are awarded *Gold Bar* prizes (1).
	Special Tricks	• Limited-time boosts were released that grant players unique abilities, such as moving pieces diagonal.
Matchington Mansion	Pet Competition	• Players compete on a leaderboard based on points earned by completing levels. • During streaks, players are awarded additional points on each level completion. • This is a reskin of Snowball Fight (2).
Gardenscapes	Teams	• A Club Feature *Teams* was released that lets players chat, exchange lives, and earn rewards through events.
Pet Rescue Saga	Versus Mode	• 2 players compete on the same board by making matches to expand their area of control. • Players win by either controlling 50 spaces or having the most spaces after 2 minutes (3).
Bricks n Balls	Road to Victory	• Players spend energy (unique to the event) to play event levels that award *Stars*. • Completing all the event levels earns players chest rewards.

NOTABLE RELEASES II

App	Library	Description
Angry Birds Dream Blast	Stella's Store	• *Cherry* pieces that appear during gameplay can be collected and spent on special items at *Stella's Store*.
Lost Island Blast Adventure	Relic Rush	• Players complete levels to earn points, which are determined by level attempts (1).
	Bank Update & Daily Gift	• In this new store, every 24 hours players can collect a free booster pack and purchase 2 additional packs using soft currency.
Cookie Jam Blast	Piggy Bank Sale Update	• Players can purchase *Piggy Banks* that award boosts, an hour of unlimited lives, and any collected coins (2).
	Quick Travel	• A UX feature that lets players quickly access key parts of the app (3).
All Releases		
Review all Puzzle features and events released in the Data Tool		

APPENDIX

PREMIUM PARTNERSHIPS

Liquid and Grit partners with these premier market research and analytics companies to infuse our reports with the most relevant and detailed gaming user personas, data, and statistics available.

Quadrant Strategies	Kinrate Analytics	Sensor Tower
Market Research	**Player Personas**	**Mobile App Store Intelligence**

Market Research

Quadrant Strategies website

Quadrant Strategies is a market research consultancy that uses research to help the world's most prominent technology, gaming, and entertainment companies develop strategies for building their user base, increasing user engagement and spend, and strengthening their marketing and brand plans.

We do that using a range of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, including gamer segmentation and persona development, feature testing, message creation, and loyalty and engagement modeling. The work of our senior leadership goes back many years, and includes long-term engagements for console and gaming-PC hardware-makers, individual games in a range of genres, and across consoles, PCs, and mobile, and for some of the top game franchises.

Player Personas

Kinrate Analytics website

Kinrate Analytics offers game developers, consultants, publishers, and cloud gaming operators the best cross-platform game recommendation engine for targeted marketing, as well as a novel profiling-as-a-service solution for intelligent market segmentation and social networking.

Other services include advanced market prediction analyses for identifying emergent gaming trends, and access to unique AI-enhanced data of 140 thousand game titles and 48 million game players.

The products of Kinrate Analytics have been developed in university-led research projects in collaboration of economists, psychologists, game scholars, and data scientists.

Mobile App Store Intelligence

Sensor Tower website

Sensor Tower is relied upon by financial analysts, VCs, and publishers who need to leverage data to identify the fastest growing apps, emerging markets, and more.

Clients harness Sensor Tower's suite of app intelligence tools to...

- Evaluate app economies and app vitality
- Drive organic growth with the leading App Store Optimization platform
- Get the best global download and revenue estimates for the App Store and Google Play
- Discover top creatives and better shape user acquisition strategy

"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

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