



LIQUID&GRIT

RPG REPORT

Competitive Research and Actionable Product Recommendations

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DECEMBER

2019

REVENUE DRIVERS



RPG > EVENTS > COLLECTIONS

COOKING MECHANICS

Thanksgiving Feast in *Rise of Kingdoms*

RPG > EVENTS > CHALLENGES

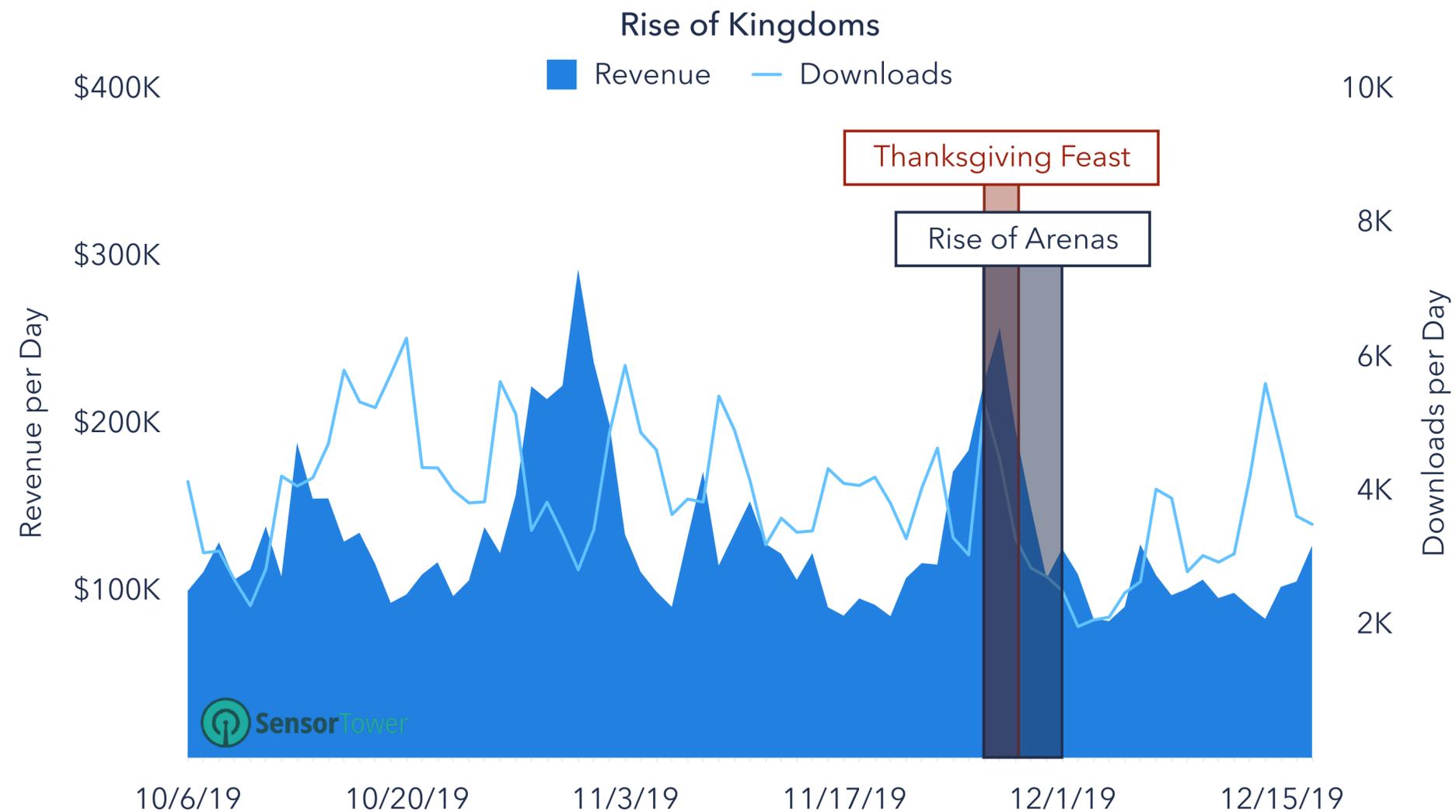
CROSS-PROMOTION EVENTS

Rise of Arenas in *Rise of Kingdoms* and *AFK Arena*

REVENUE ANALYSIS I

Rise of Kingdoms' revenue was +34% and downloads were -12% WoW after the cooking collection event Thanksgiving Feast. Cooking events are driving revenue in top-grossing apps across genres.

In the top-grossing casino app *Cash Frenzy*, revenue was +16% Wo2W after the release of the [Cooking Frenzy](#) event. Puzzle app *Matchington Mansion* saw an average revenue of +12% WoW across three releases of the [Brenden's Juice Bar](#) event.



Releases
11/16-11/24: Eve of the Crusade club event
11/22-11/24: Ark of Osiris club event
11/23-11/29: Thanksgiving Gathering challenge event
11/24-11/30: Recharge Rewards purchase event
11/25:
• \$4.99 Research Pack IAP moved +1 to #7
• \$4.99 Festival Special Offer IAP to #9 (NPL)
11/25-11/26: War and Peace accelerator event
11/25-11/30: The Mightiest Governor mission event
11/25-12/1: Black Friday Sale purchase event
11/25-1/14/20: The Lost Kingdom club event
11/26-11/28: Thanksgiving Feast collection event
11/26-11/28: Wheel of Fortune mini-game event
11/26-12/1: Rise of Arenas challenge event
11/28-11/29: Harvest Watcher challenge event
11/29:
• \$9.99 Gem Monthly Subscription IAP to #9 (NPL)
11/29-1/14/20: Lost Canyon competition event

* NPL = Not previously listed.

Graph data is iOS U.S. only.
WoW = This week over last week.

FEATURE TEARDOWN I

During the Thanksgiving Feast event in *Rise of Kingdoms*, players collect ingredients to complete dishes for individual and alliance rewards.

Details

- Players complete daily challenges to collect ingredients ([1](#) and [video](#)).
- Ingredients are used to cook dishes and fill a prize meter.
 - Chests are awarded at meter milestones ([2](#)).
 - Players can request dishes from alliance members ([3](#)).
- Players deliver dishes to their alliance for alliance points ([4](#) and [video](#)).
- Alliances that accumulate 100 points or more in a single day can host a 12-hour feast.
 - Alliance members who attend the feast for at least 20 minutes receive rewards.
 - Rewards are based on the number of points used to trigger the feast.
- Dishes and ingredients expire at the end of each day, resetting individual and alliance prize meters.

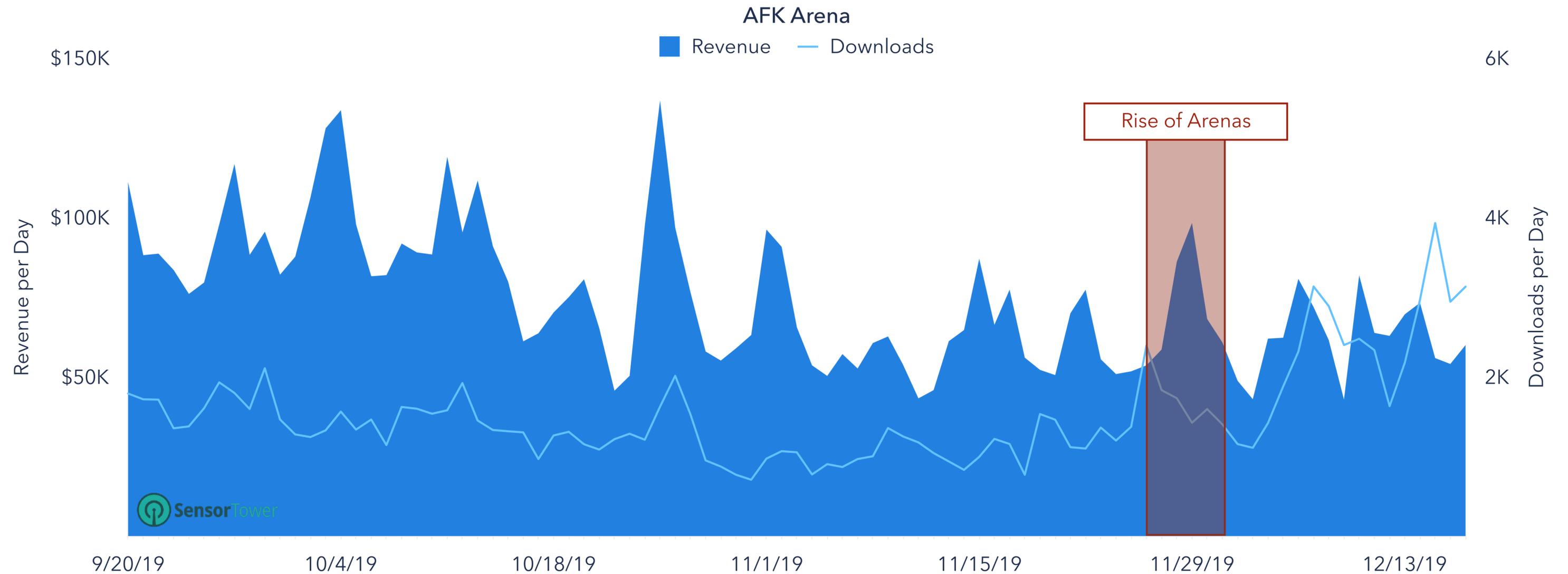
Additional Information

- See the [Thanksgiving Feast](#) Library for more images and videos.



REVENUE ANALYSIS II

AFK Arena's downloads were +26% WoW and +65% 2Wo2W due to the Rise of Arenas cross-promotion event with Rise of Kingdoms—an app with nearly three times as many downloads as AFK Arena.



Graph data is iOS U.S. only.

FEATURE TEARDOWN II

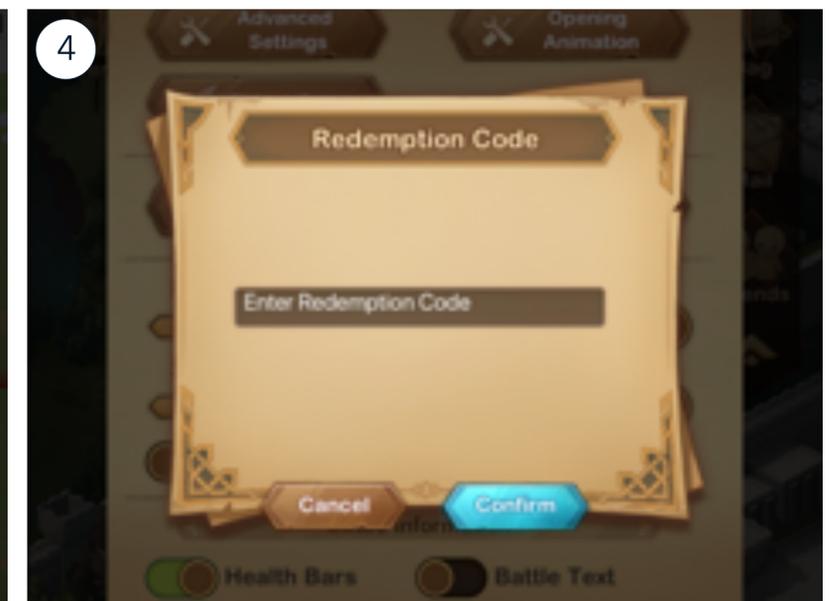
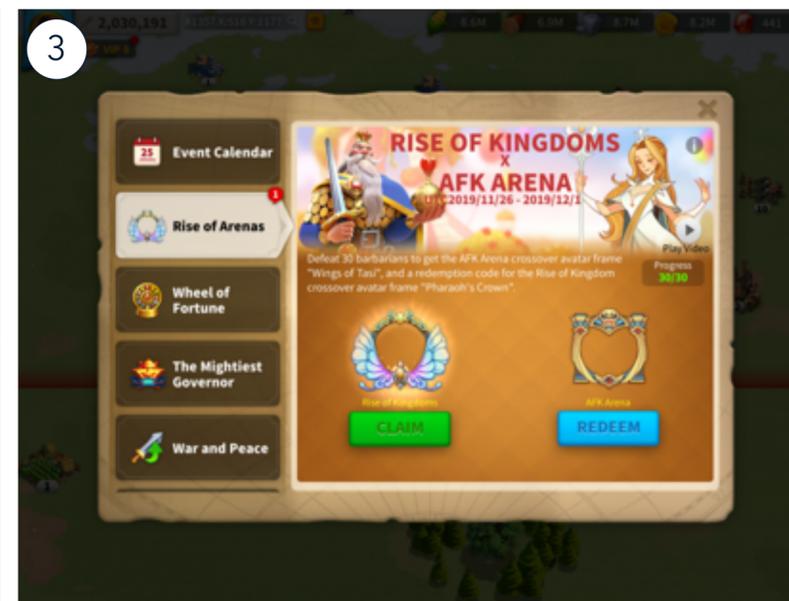
In the Rise of Arenas cross-promotion event, challenges in *Rise of Kingdoms* and *AFK Arena* award event-exclusive avatar frames for both games.

Details

- Players complete one of two challenges in *Rise of Kingdoms* or *AFK Arena*:
 - In *Rise of Kingdoms*, players must defeat 30 barbarians (1 and video).
 - In *AFK Arena*, players must complete daily quests to collect 100 activity points (2).
- Completing either challenge unlocks two event-exclusive avatar frames—one for each game (3).
- Each frame must be claimed within its respective game (4).
- Both games award the same two frames.

Additional Information

- See the [Rise of Arenas](#) Library for more images and videos.



PRODUCT INSIGHTS

Increase engagement in cooperative events by identifying individual contributions and rewarding top performers.

Revenue – Group Mechanics

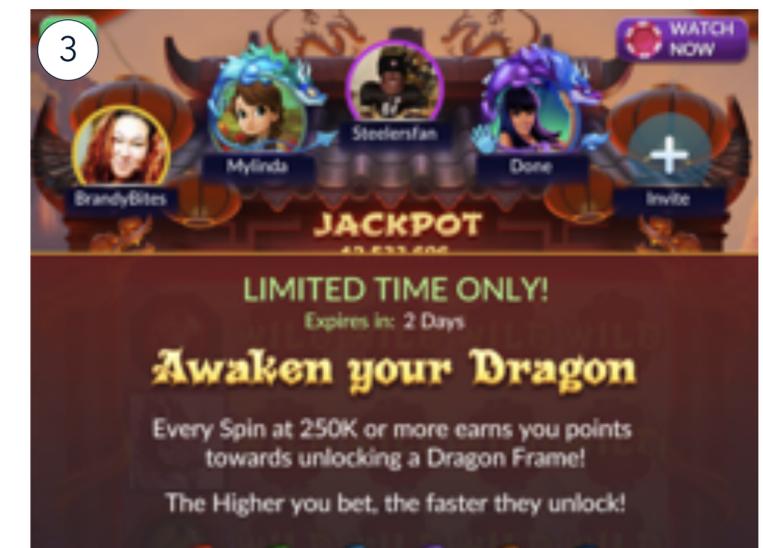
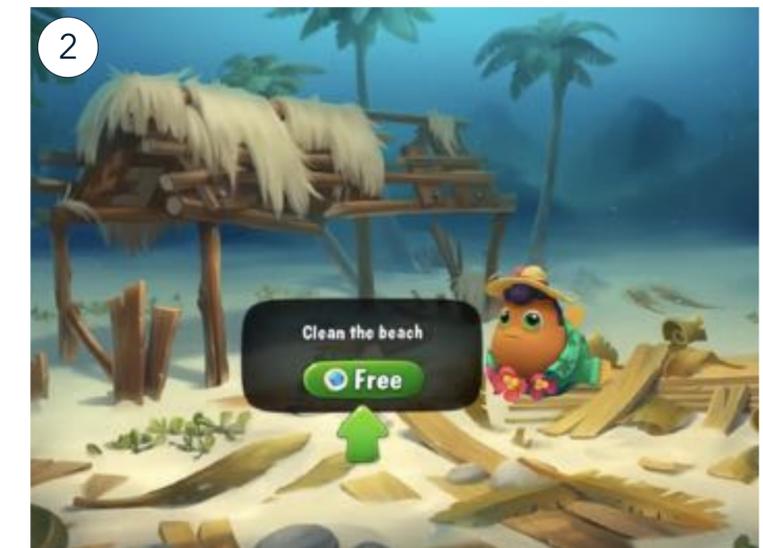
- **Identify individual contributions during cooperative events.** “Social loafing” describes the tendency of individuals to decrease cooperative efforts as group size increases. One study found that identifying individual contributions in six-person groups increased output by 46% compared to groups with anonymous contributions ([Identifiability as a Deterrent to Social Loafing](#), p. 306).
- **Release mini-competitions or additional rewards for top players within cooperative events.** Competitions create unlimited engagement opportunities for high-performing players. A survey of 270,000 video game players found a significant correlation ($r = .45$) between players who like competitions and players who like community ([Competition Is Not The Opposite of Community](#)). *Slotomania's SlotoClans*—a cooperative feature that increased revenue 32% WoW—encouraged further engagement by allowing players to upgrade their individual winnings once the group award was unlocked (1).

DAU – Cross-Promotion

- **Let players “earn” their way to another app.** The relative ease of the challenges in the Rise of Arenas cross-promotion creates a wide funnel of players who “earn” the frame reward. This system triggers the [Zeigarnik Effect](#), a psychological phenomenon in which unfinished tasks create mental tension that is relieved when the tasks are complete. *Fishdom's Trouble in Paradise* event (+33% revenue WoW) applied this mechanic by having players clean up an area of the game (2).
- **Use redemption codes or custom URLs to promote events and new apps.** The free-standing nature of codes and URLs allows for creative promotions. *Halo 2's* famous viral marketing campaign [I Love Bees](#) used hidden URLs to generate 2-3 million unique visits over the course of three months. *Rise of Arenas* used redemption codes to award avatar frames and *Slotomania's* successful [SlotoClans](#) used custom URLs to help players find clans.

Revenue – Avatars

- **Make avatar frames publicly visible and socially powerful.** During the [Awaken Your Dragon](#) event in *Big Fish Casino* (+66% revenue WoW), players earned frames that distinguished their profiles and awarded perks to all players in the room (3). Research found that adding profile badges to a commerce site increased the number of transactions, comments, and page views ([Do badges increase user activity?](#), p. 476).



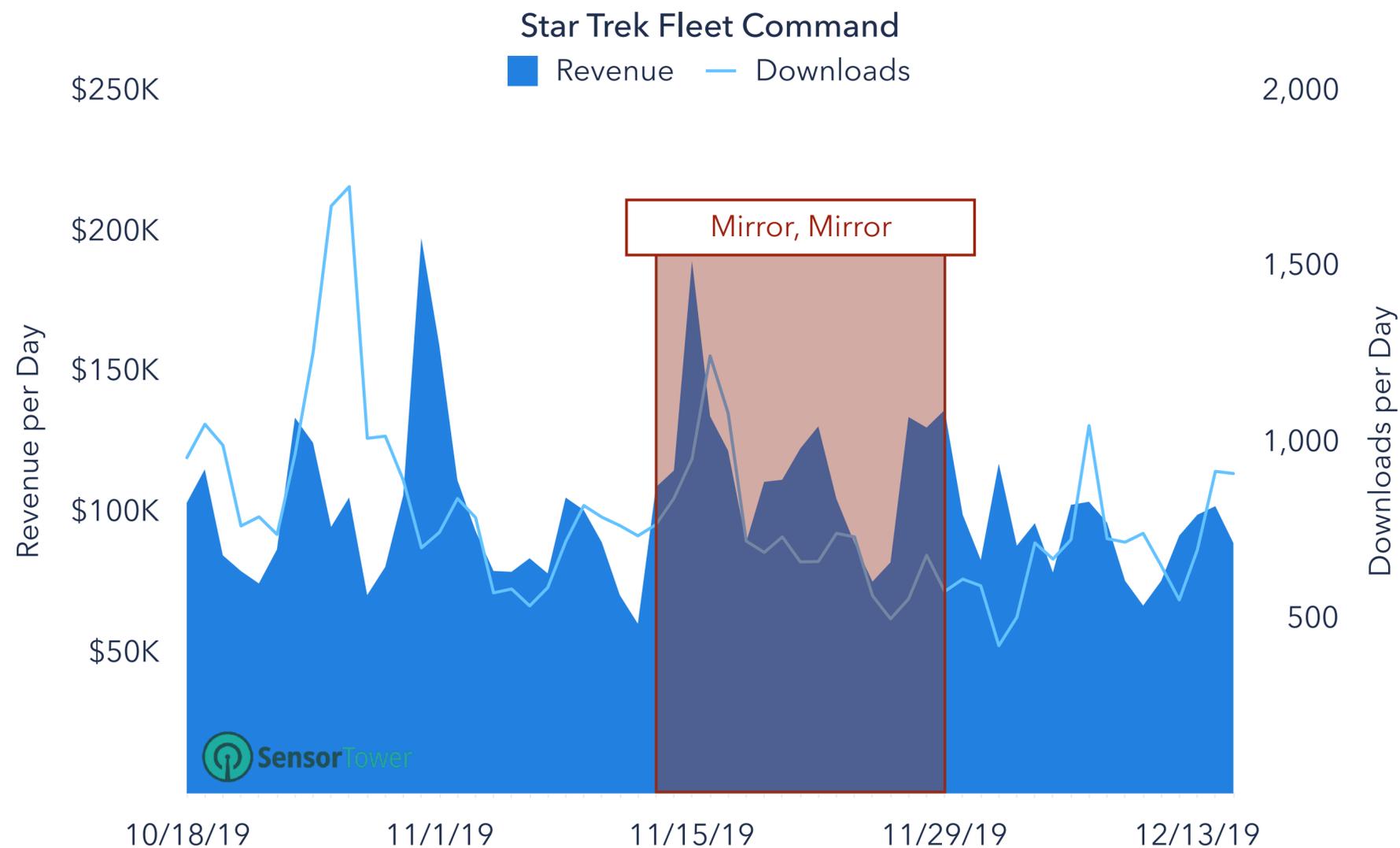
RPG > EVENTS > CHALLENGES

EVENT ENGAGEMENT TOKENS

Mirror, Mirror in *Star Trek Fleet Command*

REVENUE ANALYSIS

Star Trek Fleet Command's revenue was +11% and downloads were -17% for the 17-day Mirror, Mirror event compared to the previous 17-day period (starting on the same day of the week). iOS featured listings in AR and RPG categories accounted for 50% of total downloads from 11/12 to 11/30.



Releases
11/1-11/15: November Reward Packs purchase event
11/12-11/25: \$19.98 Mining Officer Special purchase event
11/13: Version update
11/13: Combat Update conflict feature
11/13: ISS Jellyfish hero content
11/13:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$19.99 Special Offer IAP moved +1 to #4 • \$49.99 Master Ship Power Pack IAP moved +2 to #5 • \$19.99 Special Offer IAP moved +1 to #7 • \$19.99 Special Offer IAP moved +1 to #8 • \$19.99 Special Offer IAP moved +1 to #9 • \$19.99 Special Offer IAP to #10 (NPL)
11/13-11/24: \$19.99 Mirror, Mirror Mission Pack purchase event
11/13-11/24: \$49.99 Mirror Universe Special purchase event
11/13-11/24: \$99.99 Mirror Universe Special purchase event
11/13-11/29: Mirror, Mirror challenge event
11/14: \$49.99 Master Ship Power Pack IAP moved +1 to #4
11/15: \$19.99 Boru Super Booster Pack IAP moved to #3 (NPL)

* NPL = Not previously listed.

Graph data is iOS U.S. only.

FEATURE TEARDOWN

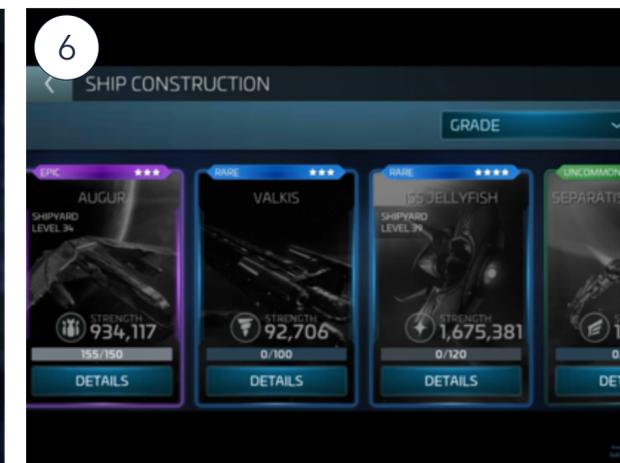
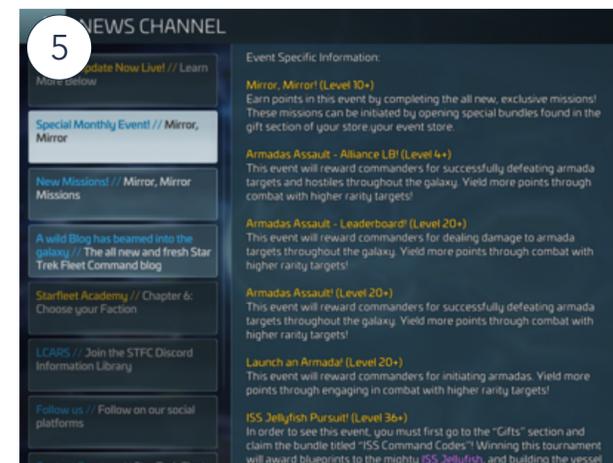
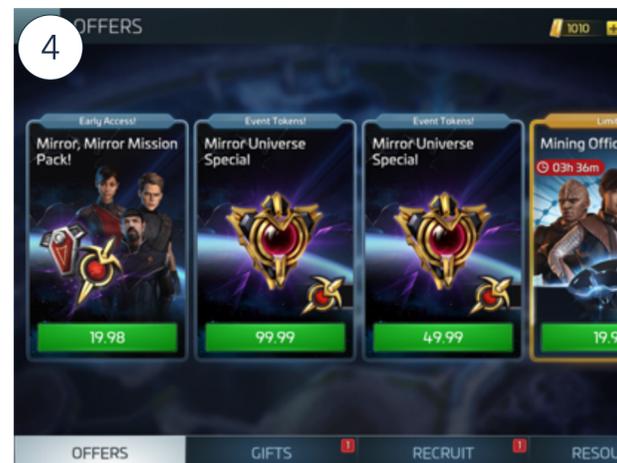
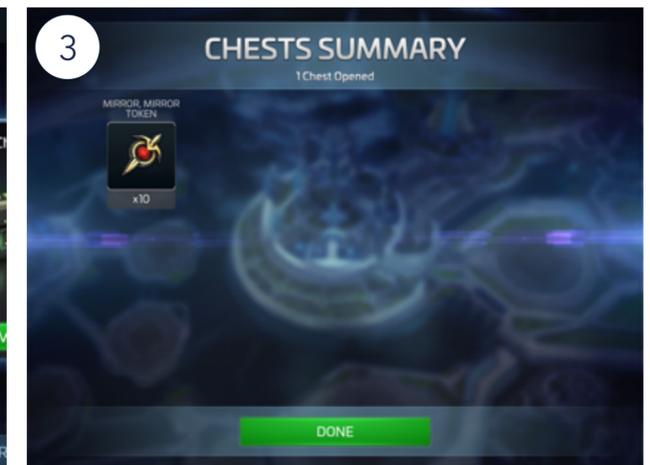
During this multi-event, players spend two types of event tokens to unlock missions. High-level players construct a new ship to gain access to event-exclusive competitions.

Details

- Players can purchase early access to certain mission mini-events (1).
- All missions require either Mirror, Mirror event tokens or Broken Mirror event tokens (2).
- Players are gifted 10 Mirror, Mirror tokens at the start of the event (3).
- An event-specific IAP bundle offers both types of event tokens (4).
- Mini-events have escalating minimum level requirements, from level 4 to level 39 (5).
- Level 36 players can collect blueprints for the ISS Jellyfish (6 and 7).
- Level 39 players can build the ISS Jellyfish to unlock event-exclusive competitions.

Additional Information

- See the [Mirror, Mirror](#) Library for more images and videos.



EXPERT INSIGHTS

Increase revenue from highly engaged players by adding exclusive competitions to challenge events. Price event currency IAP bundles strategically to maximize conversions.

Revenue – Event Currencies

- **Event currencies are trending as a revenue-driving mechanic across genres.** [Custom design events with event currency](#) in top-grossing puzzle apps *Homescapes* and *Fishdom* yielded an average revenue increase of 22% WoW. The two most recent releases of *Bingo Blitz*'s [Pick-A-Diamond](#) mini-game event increased revenue by an average of 25.6% WoW and 14.1% 2Wo2W (1).

Revenue – Whales

- **Unlock exclusive competitions with high-level PvE challenges.** In *Mirror, Mirror*, players must be level 39 or higher to build the ISS Jellyfish and unlock event-exclusive competitions. A survey of 3,200 MMORPG players found that players who prioritize leveling up, obtaining rare items, and optimizing game mechanics also have a strong preference for competition mechanics ([Motivations of Play in MMORPGs](#), p. 4-5).

Event Engagement – Freemium

- **Make initial event engagement free.** Players receive 10 free tokens at the start of *Star Trek Fleet Command*'s *Mirror, Mirror* event. Afterwards, players *must* buy more tokens to continue. *Caesars Slots*' [Thirst for Riches](#) mini-game event (+13% revenue WoW) awarded all players a free dice roll to start the game (2). A study on in-store sampling found that sampling increased sales by an average of 70% and as much as 600% in some cases ([The Effect of In-store Sampling on the Sale of Food Products](#)).

Conversion – Pricing

- **Avoid using the same price for multiple purchase options.** Listing multiple items at the same price increases the difficulty of purchase decisions and leads to more drop-offs. One study found that only 46% of customers completed a purchase when offered two types of gum at the same price—compared to 77% of customers when the prices differed by just two cents ([Adding Small Differences Can Increase Similarity and Choice](#), p. 227-228).



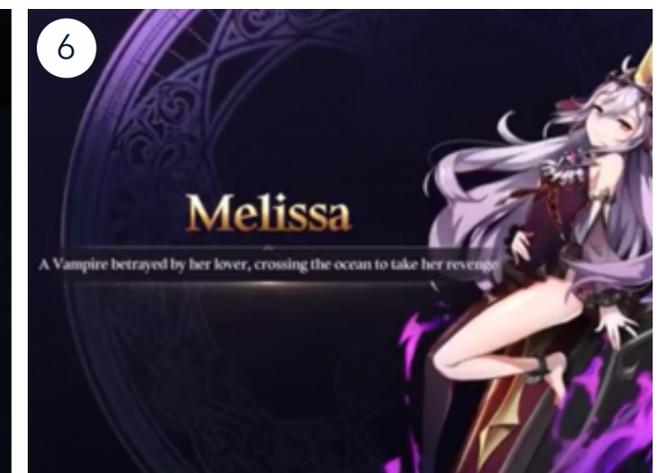
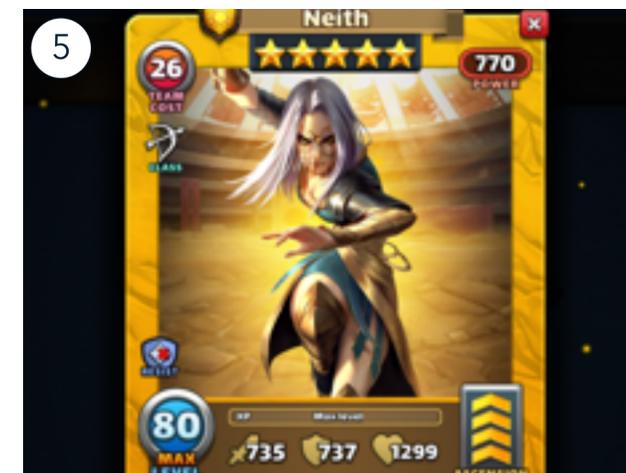
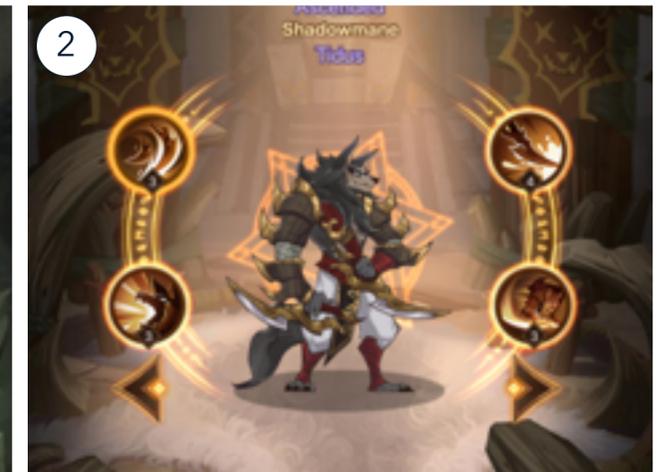
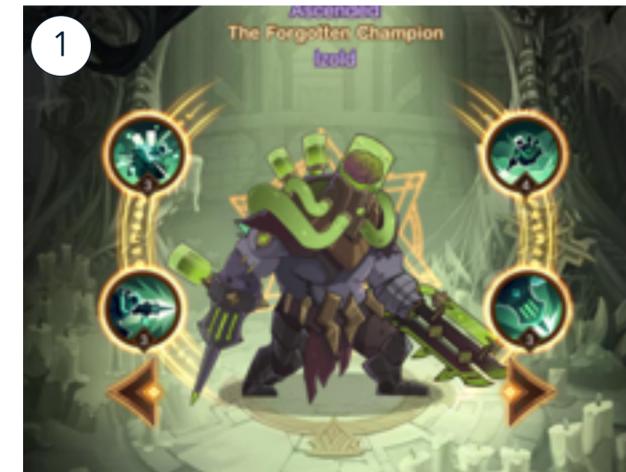
NEW CONTENT



CONTENT RELEASES I

RPG > Content > Abilities, Equipment, and Heroes

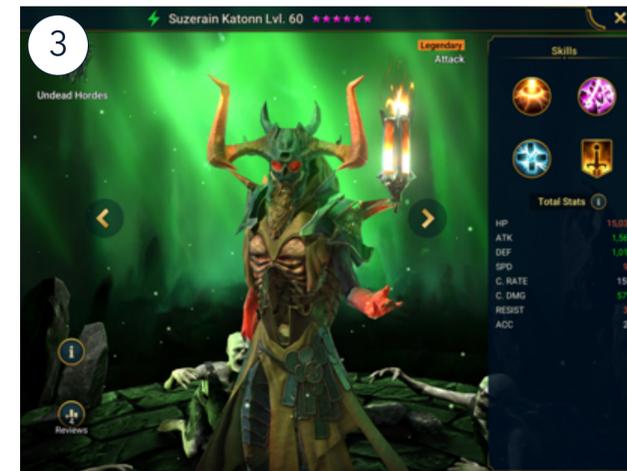
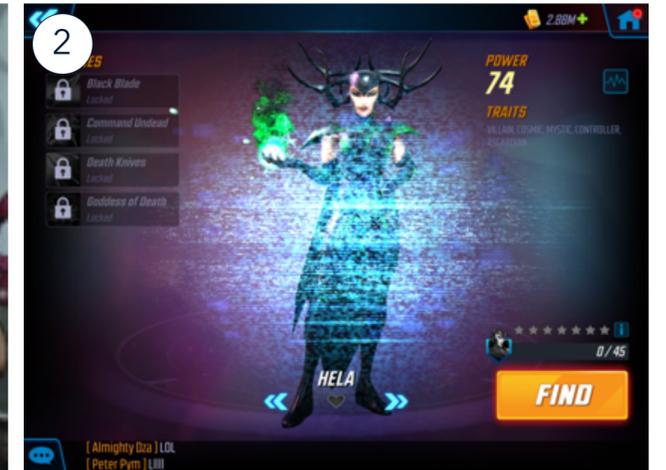
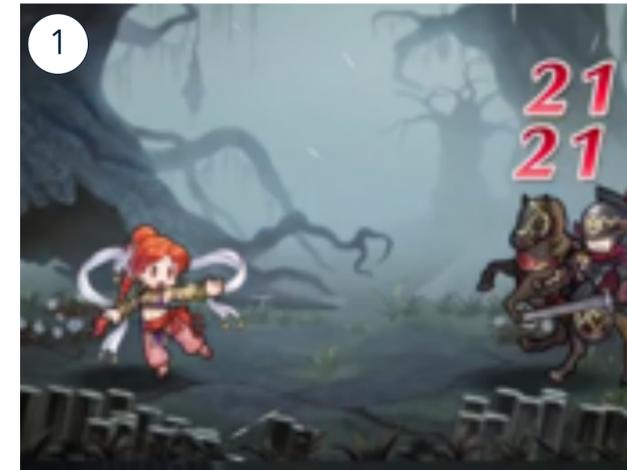
- 11/13: [Izold The Forgotten Champion](#) – AFK Arena hero (1)
- 11/13: [Tidus Shadowmane](#) – AFK Arena hero (2)
- 11/16: [13 Squads Summons](#) – BLEACH Brave Souls heroes
- 11/30: [CFYOW Summons The Alternate Rebirth: 4](#) – BLEACH Brave Souls heroes (3)
- 11/6: [Final Form Cooler](#) – Dragon Ball Legends equipment
- 11/6: [Ultra Space-Time Summon #17](#) – Dragon Ball Legends heroes
- 11/13: [I won't be as gentle as I was before...](#) – Dragon Ball Legends equipment
- 11/20: [Awakened Consider This an Honor! No. 1](#) – Dragon Ball Legends equipment
- 11/20: [Gohan Conquers](#) – Dragon Ball Legends equipment
- 11/20: [Super Gohan](#) – Dragon Ball Legends equipment
- 11/20: [Super Saiyan Gohan \(Teen\)](#) – Dragon Ball Legends hero
- 11/20: [This is the Kaioken](#) – Dragon Ball Legends equipment
- 11/27: [LEGENDS Hour of Darkness Characters](#) – Dragon Ball Legends heroes (4)
- 11/27: [A proud warrior!](#) – Dragon Ball Legends equipment
- 11/27: [Singular Compulsion Goku Black Equipment](#) – Dragon Ball Legends equipment
- 11/1: [Neith](#) – Empires & Puzzles: RPG Quest hero (5)
- 11/13: [Riddles of Wonderland Heroes](#) – Empires & Puzzles: RPG Quest heroes
- 11/7: [Bloody Rose](#) – Epic Seven equipment
- 11/14: [Khawana](#) – Epic Seven hero
- 11/7: [Melissa](#) – Epic Seven hero (6)
- 11/14: [Three New Exclusive Equipment](#) – Epic Seven equipment
- 11/28: [Faithless Lidica](#) – Epic Seven hero



CONTENT RELEASES II

RPG > Content > Abilities, Equipment, and Heroes

- 11/7: [Desert Mercenaries](#) – Fire Emblem Heroes heroes (1)
- 11/19: [Guardians of Peace](#) – Fire Emblem Heroes heroes
- 11/20: [Brunnya: Devoted General](#) – Fire Emblem Heroes hero
- 11/28: [Altina: Dawn's Trueblade](#) – Fire Emblem Heroes hero
- 11/11: [Musketeer Curiosities](#) – Guns of Glory equipment
- 11/20: [Wildfire](#) – King of Avalon: Dragon Warfare equipment
- 11/5: [Hela](#) – MARVEL Strike Force hero (2)
- 11/14: [Mister Sinister](#) – MARVEL Strike Force hero
- 11/20: [Stryfe](#) – MARVEL Strike Force hero
- 11/15: [14 New Champions](#) – Raid: Shadow Legends heroes (3)
- 11/25: [Champion Rebalances and Skill Fixes](#) – Raid: Shadow Legends abilities
- 11/1: [Attila](#) – Rise of Kingdoms hero (4)
- 11/1: [Takeda Shingen](#) – Rise of Kingdoms hero
- 11/13: [ISS Jellyfish](#) – Star Trek Fleet Command hero (5)
- 11/1: [Hyena Bomber](#) – Star Wars: Galaxy of Heroes hero
- 11/7: [BTL-B Y-Wing Starfighter](#) – Star Wars: Galaxy of Heroes hero
- 11/27: [ARC Trooper](#) – Star Wars: Galaxy of Heroes hero (6)
- 11/27: [Ki-Adi-Mundi](#) – Star Wars: Galaxy of Heroes hero
- 11/27: [Malevolence](#) – Star Wars: Galaxy of Heroes hero
- 11/9: [Homunculus Updates](#) – Summoners War abilities
- 11/27: [Ancient Runes of Dimension Lumel](#) – Summoners War equipment
- 11/27: [Werewolf and Martial Cat 2nd Awakening](#) – Summoners War abilities

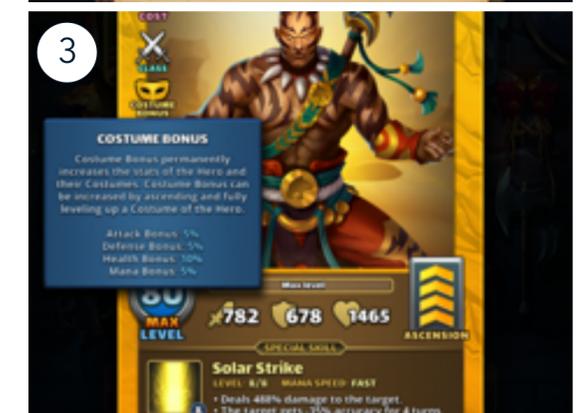
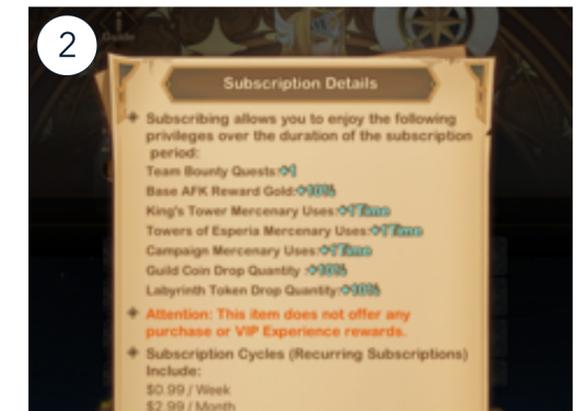
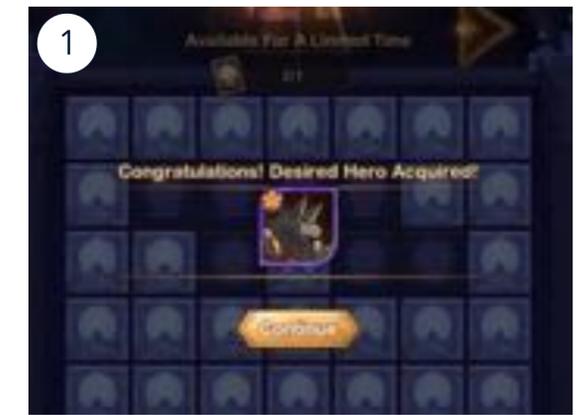


MARKET WATCH



NOTABLE RELEASES I

App	Library	Description
AFK Arena	Box of Fortunes mini-game event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players choose which hero page to play in a pick'em mini-game. • Each pick costs 1 stargazing card or 500 diamonds. • Picks award boosts, gems, or heroes. • Each hero page is guaranteed to contain that hero. • Once players win the hero, the page resets (1). • Players can switch between hero pages at any time. • Each hero can be won up to eight times.
	Noble Subscriptions rewards feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players can purchase recurring weekly or monthly subscriptions for \$0.99 or \$2.99. • Subscriptions increase gold rewards, quest attempts, mercenary uses, and drop amounts (2).
Empires & Puzzles: RPG Quest	Hero Costumes collection feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players earn keys by completing costume quests or buying IAP bundles. • Players spend keys or gems to randomly summon a hero costume—an alternate form of an existing hero (video). • Costumes can be leveled up like normal heroes and award unique stats and skills (3).
Epic Seven	World Boss club feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players battle a world boss for individual and guild rewards (4 and video). • Bosses are available twice a week for three days at a time. • Players can enter battles twice per day. • Battles cost 20 energy. • During battles, players can select a team of supporters from guild members or NPCs. • Battles reward players based on their scores. • Players' scores are added to their guild scores. • At the end of the event, guilds are rewarded based on their members' ranks.



NOTABLE RELEASES II

App	Library	Description
<i>King of Avalon: Dragon Warfare</i>	Netherfall club event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Player alliances compete in this 12-round tournament. • Only the top 10 alliances from each kingdom are eligible to participate each week. • Battles last one hour and occur in three stages. • Players earn individual and alliance rewards for each battle. • Rewards include event currency that can be exchanged in an event shop (1). • At the end of the tournament, all alliances are rewarded based on their ranks. • Members of the winning alliance are named Nether Kings.
<i>Last Shelter: Survival</i>	Base Decoration System custom design feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players complete daily tasks to collect blueprints. • Blueprints are used to unlock custom design buildings and landscape features (2). • Players spend coins or diamonds to build unlocked buildings (video).
<i>Rise of Kingdoms</i>	Ghost Parade challenge event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players defeat barbarians to collect bat emblems (video). • Bat emblems reset when player armies return to their cities. • Players compete to collect the largest number of bat emblems in a single expedition. • At the end of the event, the top 100 players are rewarded based on their ranks (3).
<i>Star Trek Fleet Command</i>	Combat Update conflict feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This major combat update aims to increase the number of viable playstyles. • Ships have improved stats and abilities. • Officers provide larger stat bonuses to ships. • Stations have improved defenses.

Quickly review all features and events

- Filter the [Library Tool](#) by month and year to see all the new releases.



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

Market Research

[Quadrant Strategies](#)

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.



Kinrate Analytics

Player Personas

[Kinrate Analytics](#)

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 with economists, psychologists, game scholars, and data scientists.



Sensor Tower

Mobile App Store Intelligence

[Sensor Tower](#)

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.



RPG MECHANICS TAXONOMY

Family	Definitions
Accelerators	Increases the power, impact, or efficiency of play
Banks	Saves a % of spend that can be unlocked later
Bonuses	Free bonuses given to players (e.g., retention or W2E)
Challenges	Goal-oriented tasks for players to complete
Clubs	A group accomplishing goals or competing with other groups
Collections	A set of items players collect (often for a completion prize)
Competitions	Players competing against other players
Conflict	Players engaging in battle with their characters
Cosmetics	Improvements or updates to the app or a feature
Currencies	Changes to currencies, economies, stores, and items
Custom Design	Options to customize aesthetics
Expansions	Additional rooms, worlds, play modes, VIP lounges, etc.
Flows	Specific flows, like the NUX, ratings, and surveys

Family	Definitions
Hazards	Level elements/blockers that make levels more difficult
Interactions	Any social feature with direct or indirect interaction
Leaderboards	Stand-alone leaderboards
Levels	Anything to do with leveling
Mini-Games	Smaller, shorter games within a game (e.g., scratcher cards)
Missions	A linear set of tasks that players must accomplish
Notices	Feature or product announcements
Other	Miscellaneous features and outliers
Profiles	Related to a player's setup, profile, settings, and controls
Purchases	Anything to do with purchases
Quests	Completing tasks to progress along a map or map-like feature
Rewards	Any reward players receive for engagement or spend (other than the bonuses family)

“The greatest power on Earth is the magnificent power we all of us possess... the power of the human brain!”

– Professor X (Uncanny X-Men #2)

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