Game Developers Conference® | March 9-13, 2010 | Moscone Center | San Francisco, CA

iPhone Games SUMMIT

How to Keep Your Game on Top of The Charts

The story (mostly) of Doodle Jump

Igor Pušenjak
Lima Sky

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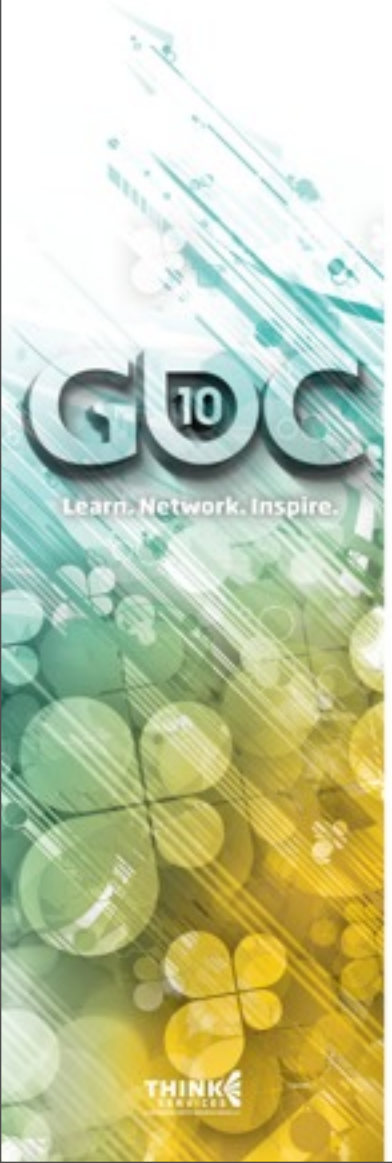
www.GDConf.com



Overview

Keeping a **great game** alive, interesting and on top of the charts takes:

- frequent updates
- communication with players
- social networking
- promotion

Intro

Doodle Jump had:

- 21 downloads on day one
- Almost 80,000 on Christmas day
- Over 3 million today

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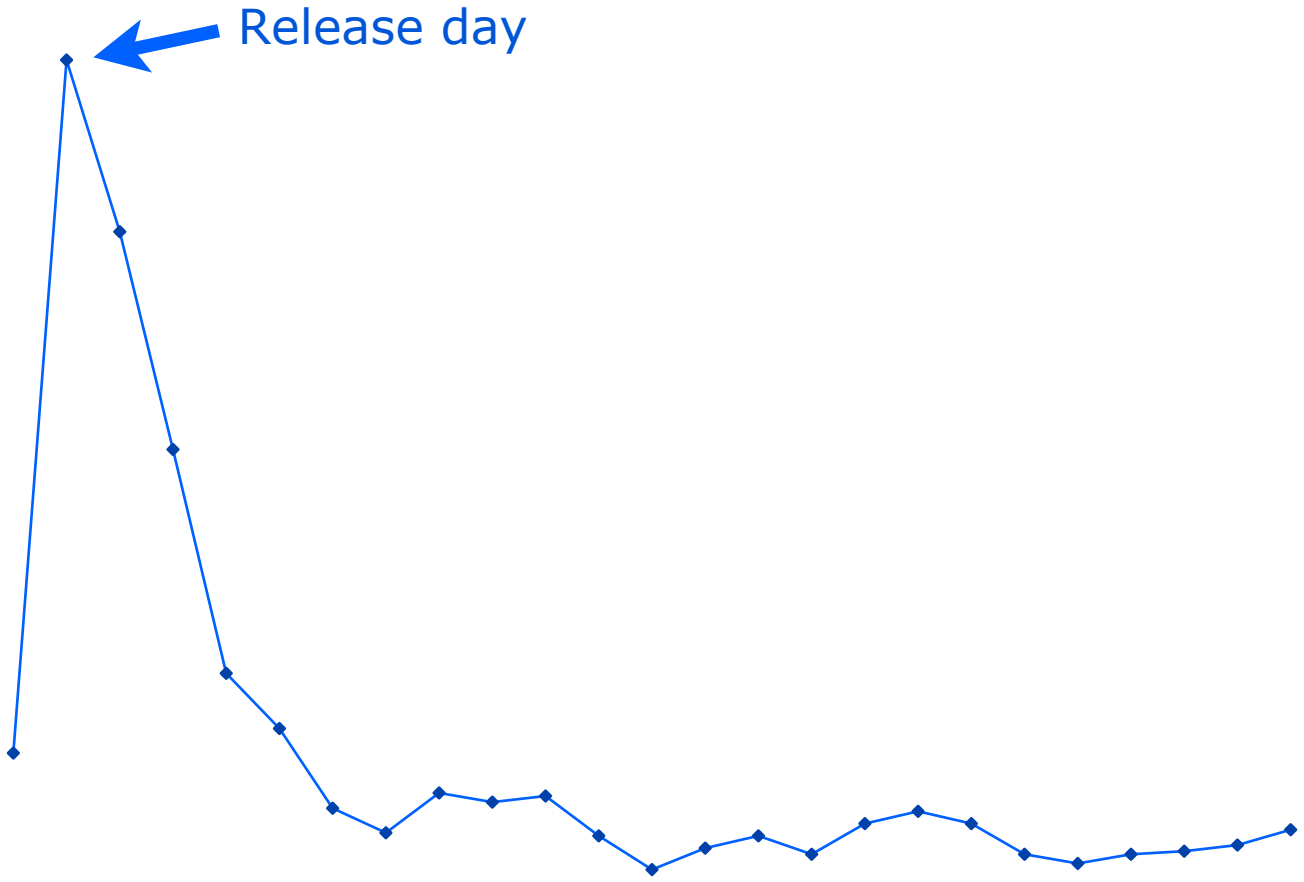
New Game sales curve



Eat, Bunny, Eat! sales data: Launch - 1st update. August/September 2008

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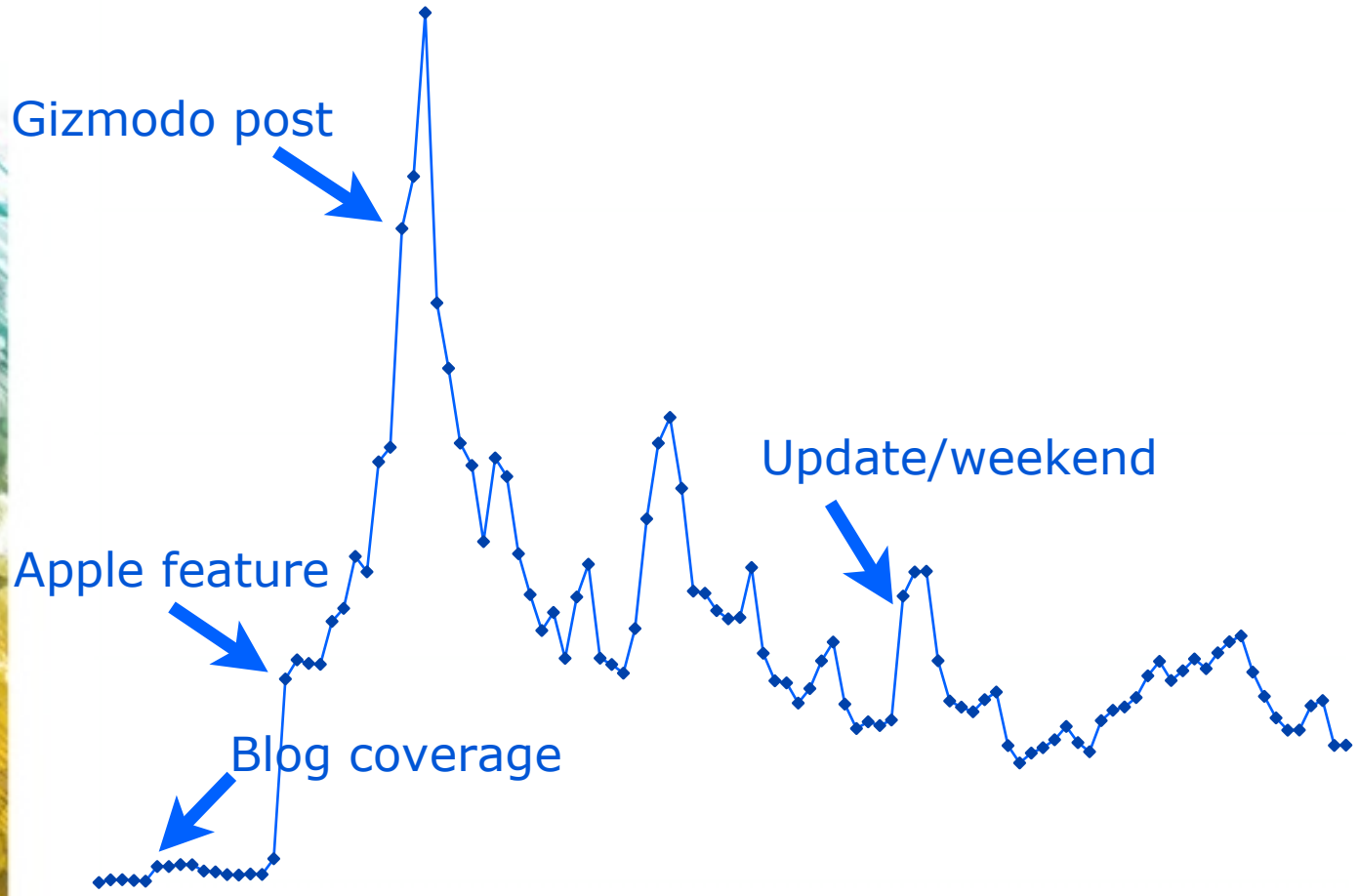
Doodle Jump sales curve



Doodle Jump sales data: First 3 months. March - June 2009

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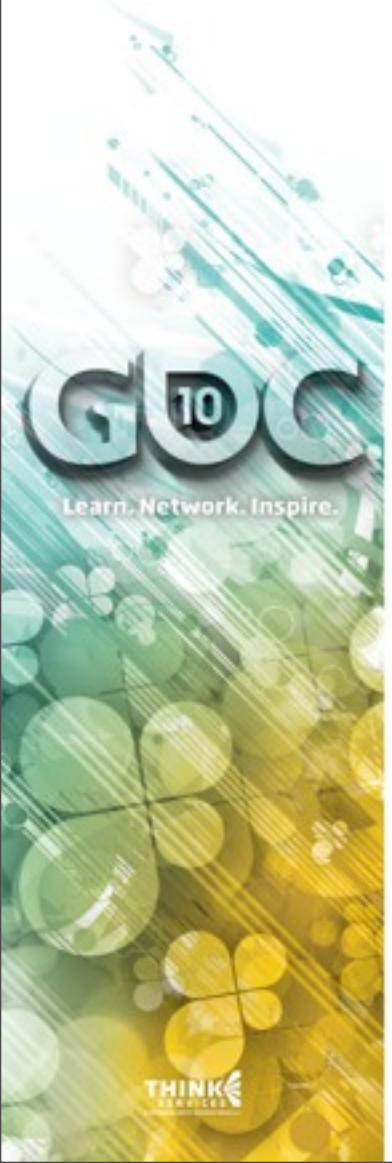
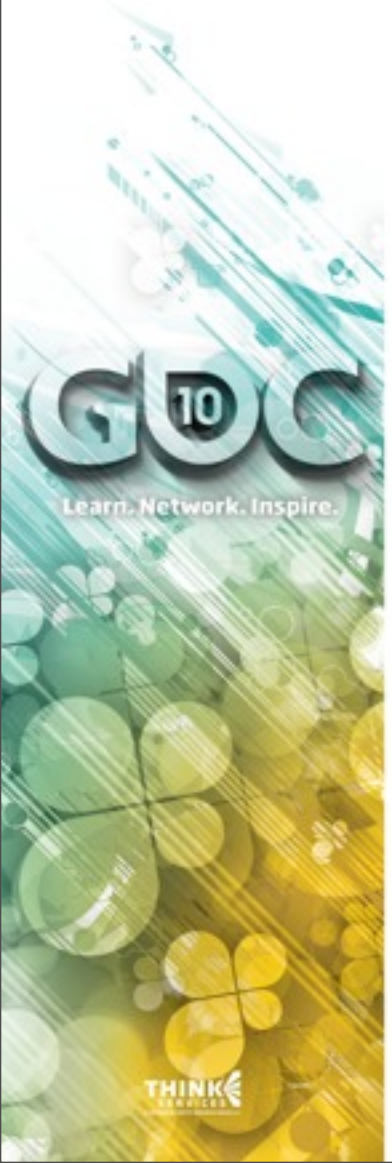
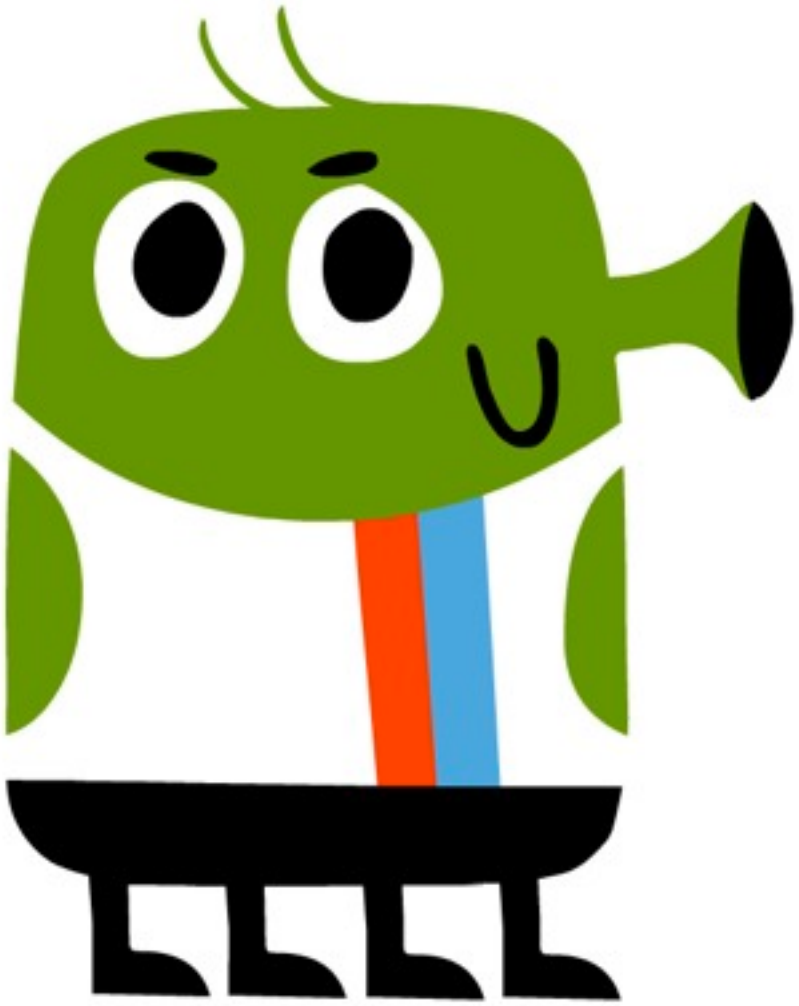
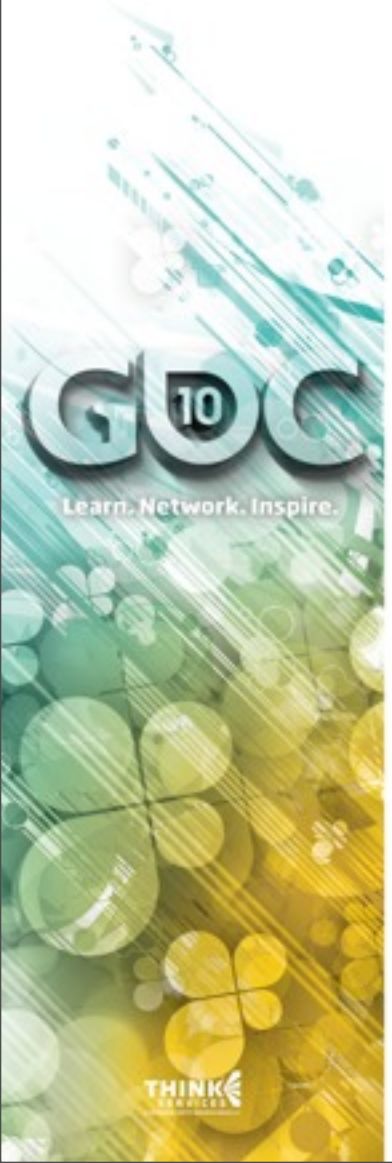


What did we do?



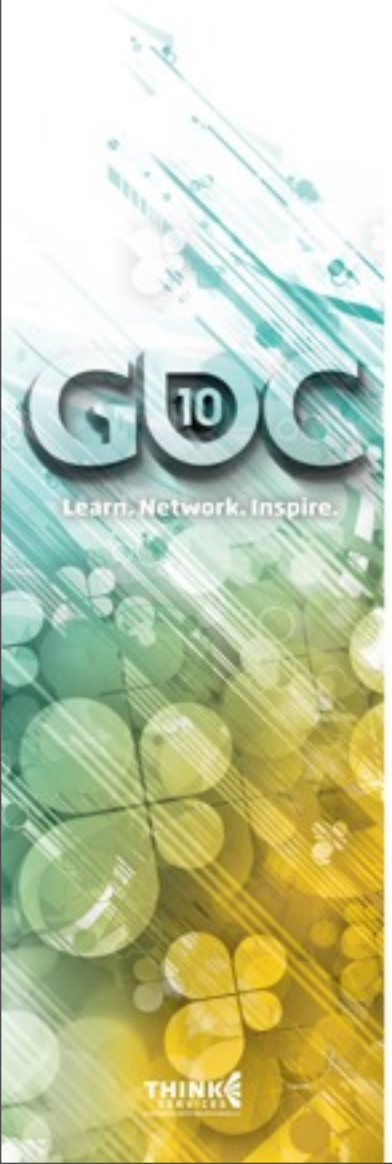


Doodle Jump 2



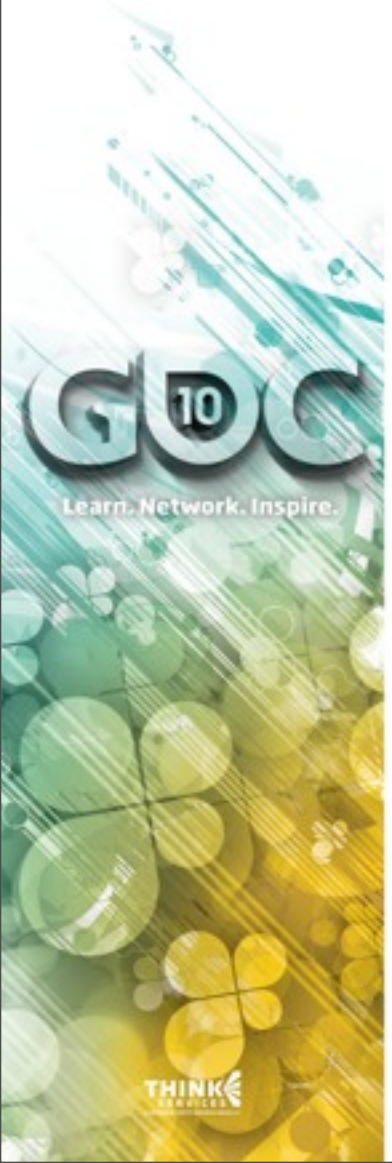
We were not ready to give up on Doodle Jump just yet

so we:



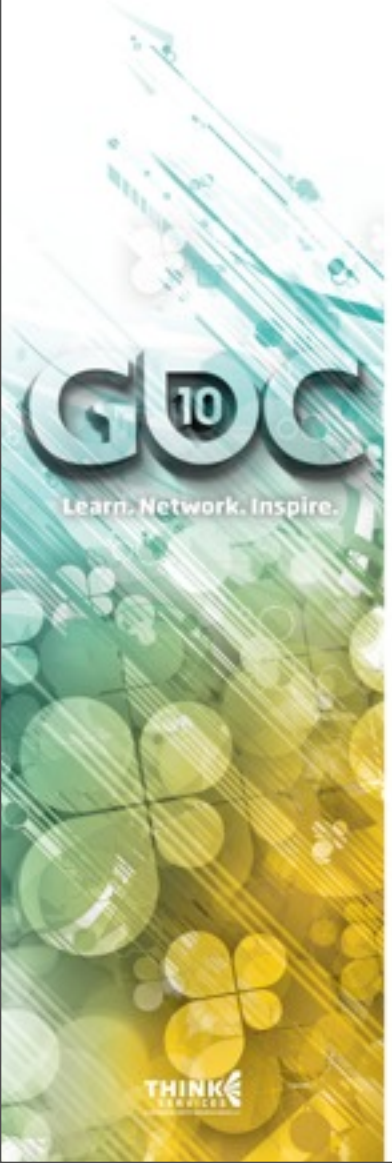
- Updated
- Communicated with players
- Integrated social networking
- Reached out to media
- Cross-promoted
- Tried advertising

new section



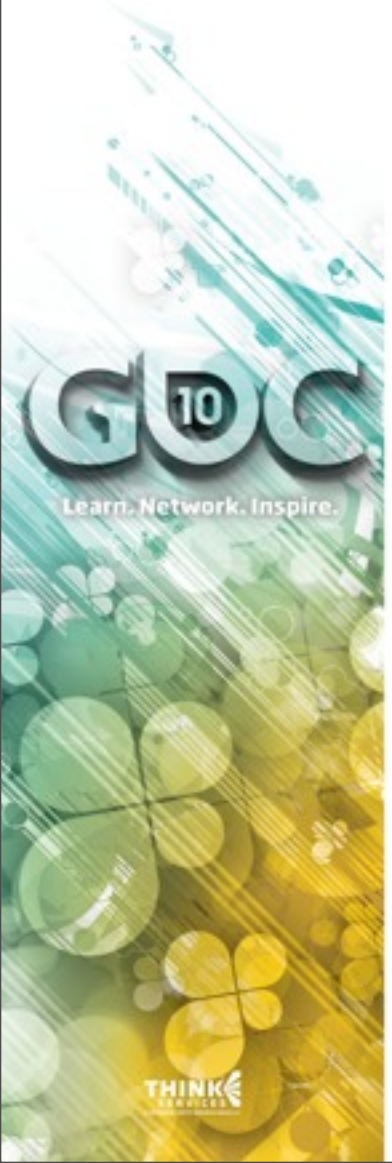
Updates

- Why update your game?
- What to release in an update?
- When and how often to release updates?



Why update your game?

- People LOVE updates
- Updates increase sales
- Updates allow you to minimize risks
- Updates keep the game alive
- Updates give you flexibility
- Updates give you promo codes
- Updates let you communicate with players



Why People LOVE updates?

- Updates are FREE
- Updates add new content
- Updates create excitement around what will be added next
- Updates get people to suggest what should be added next

AniMatch

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AniMatch updates

Kids were excited to see what animal will be added next

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Updates increase sales

Eat, Bunny, Eat! sales data: Launch - 3rd update. August/October 2008

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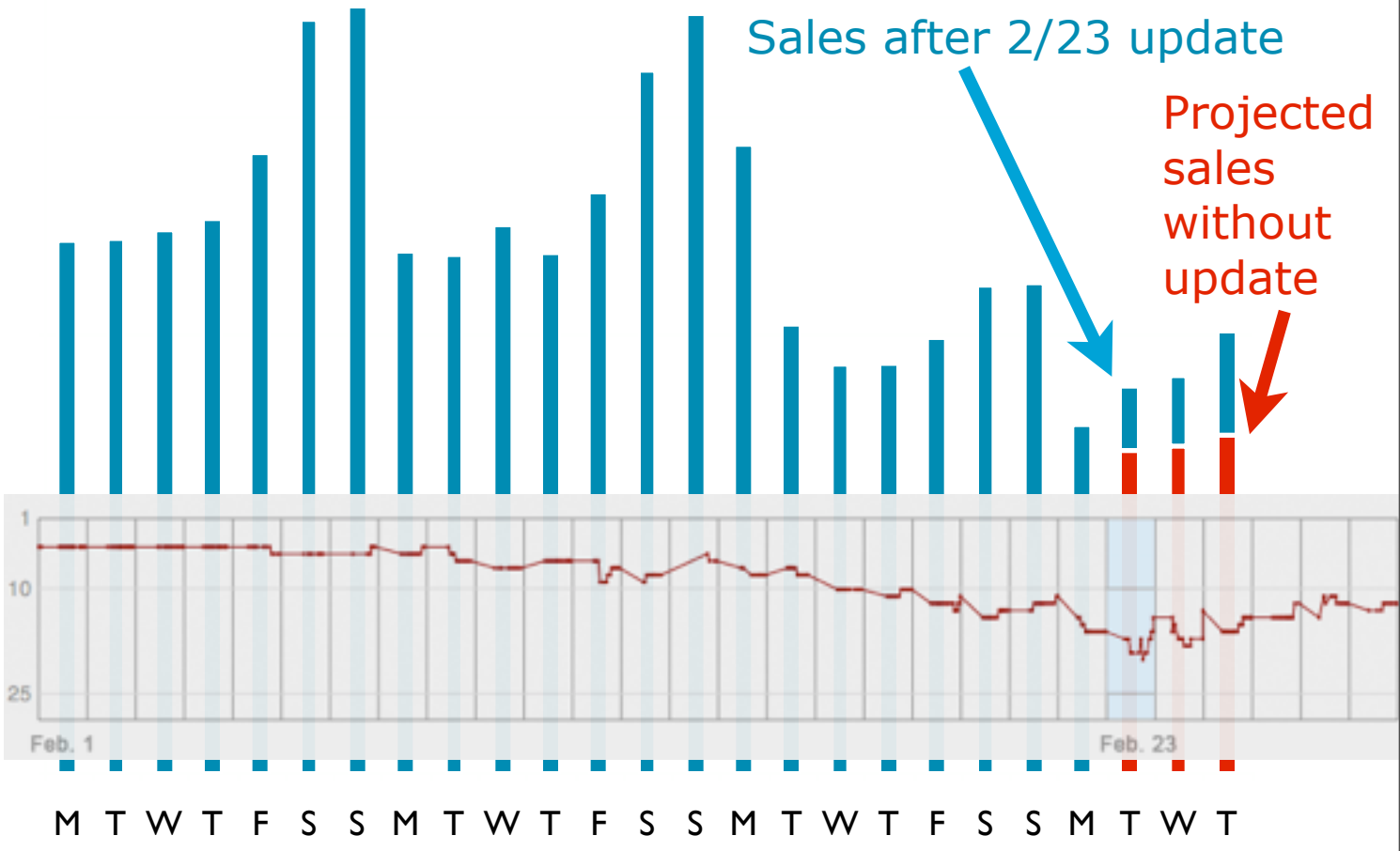
Updates increase sales



Doodle Jump sales data & top grossing position: February 2010

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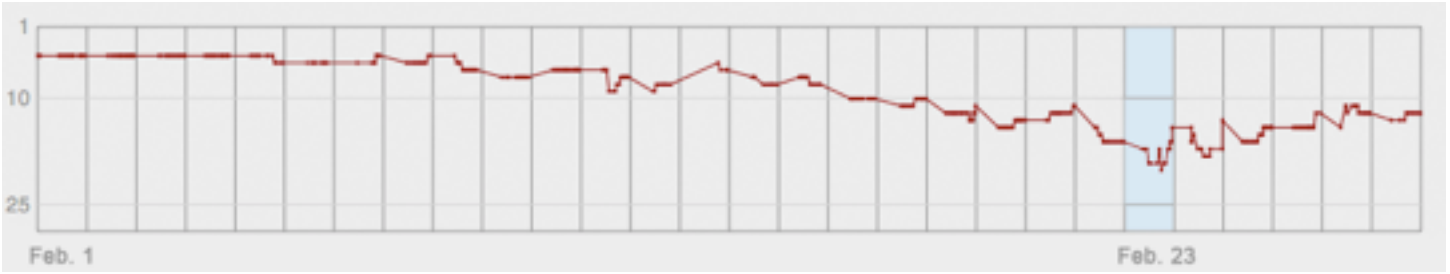
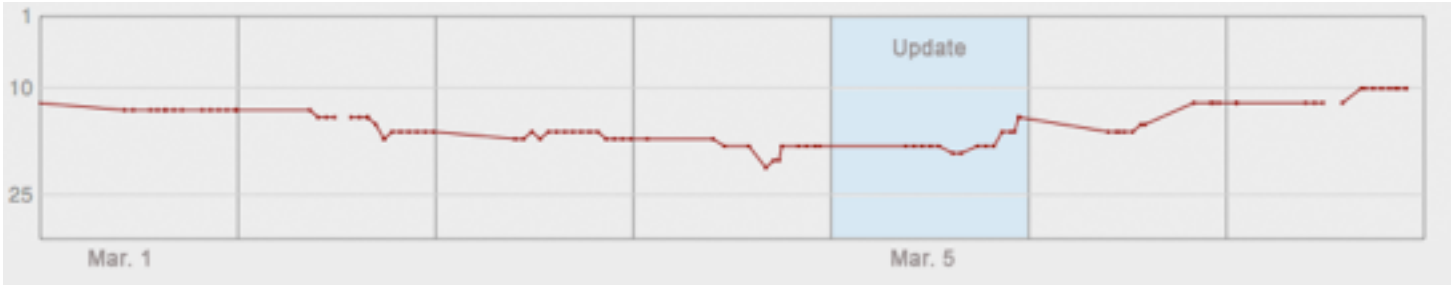
Updates increase sales



Doodle Jump top grossing chary position: February 2010



Doodle Jump top grossing chart position: March 2010

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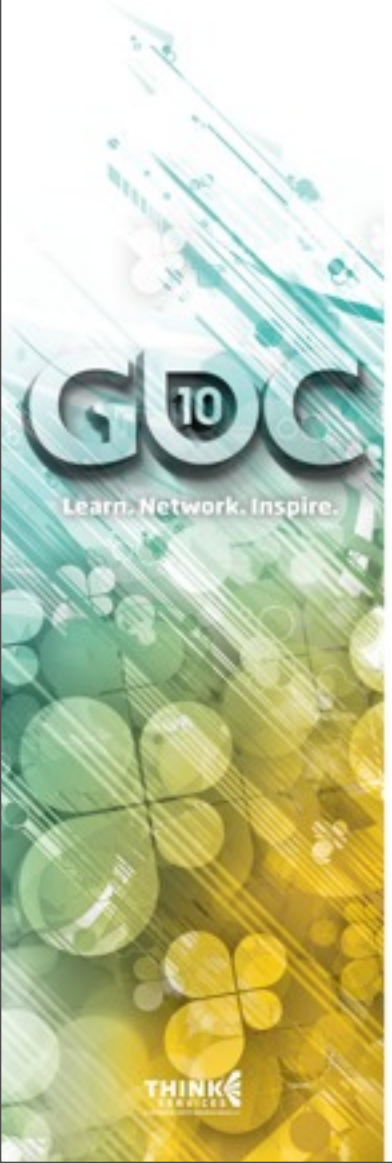
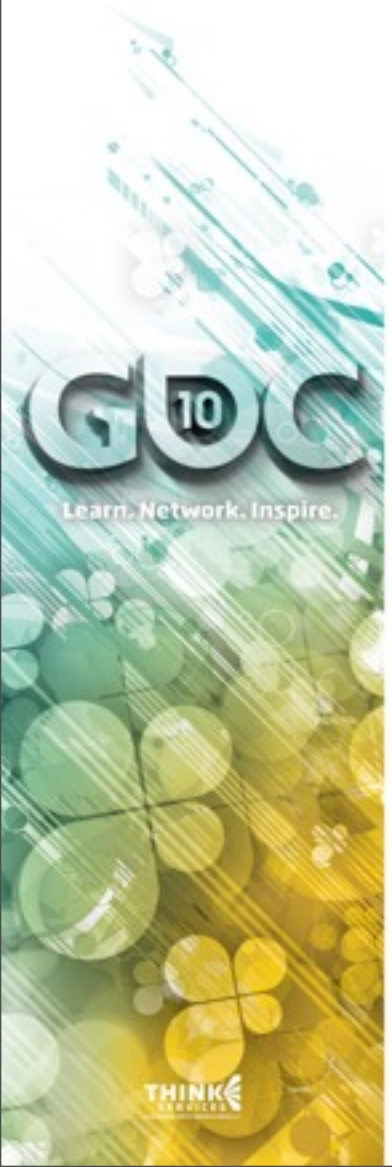


Updates minimize risk

- The game can be released faster
- Interest for the game can be gauged with minimal time investment
- Content can be added gradually



Updates keep the game alive and fresh

- New content creates new interest
- People are likely to play the game again when they see there is a new update available
- Media write about updates

Promo codes & flexibility

- You get 50 new promo codes with each update
- Game content can be adjusted based on player feedback

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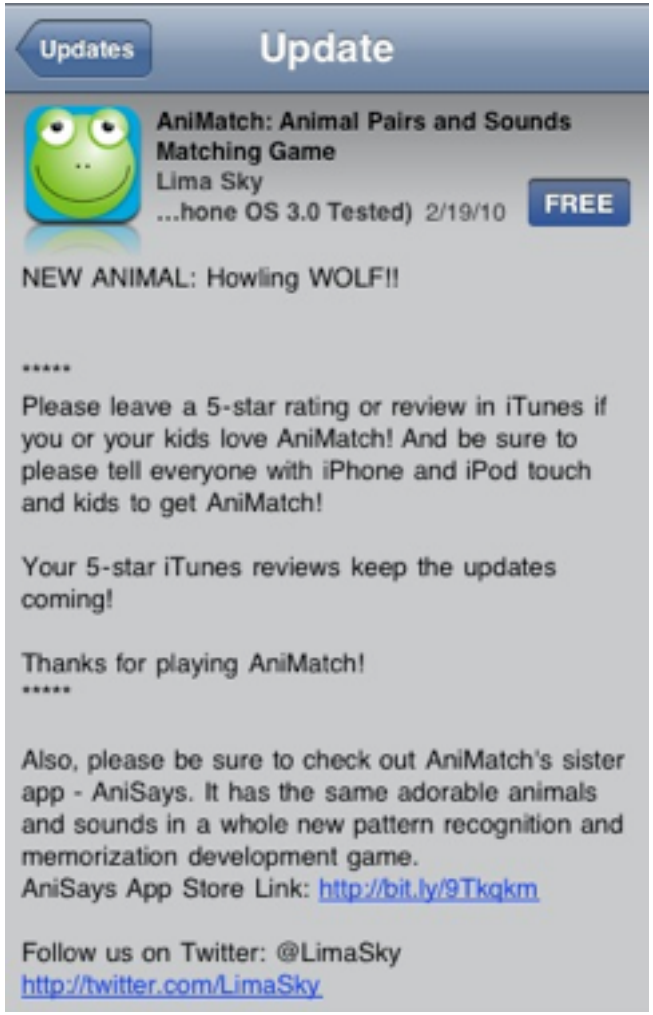
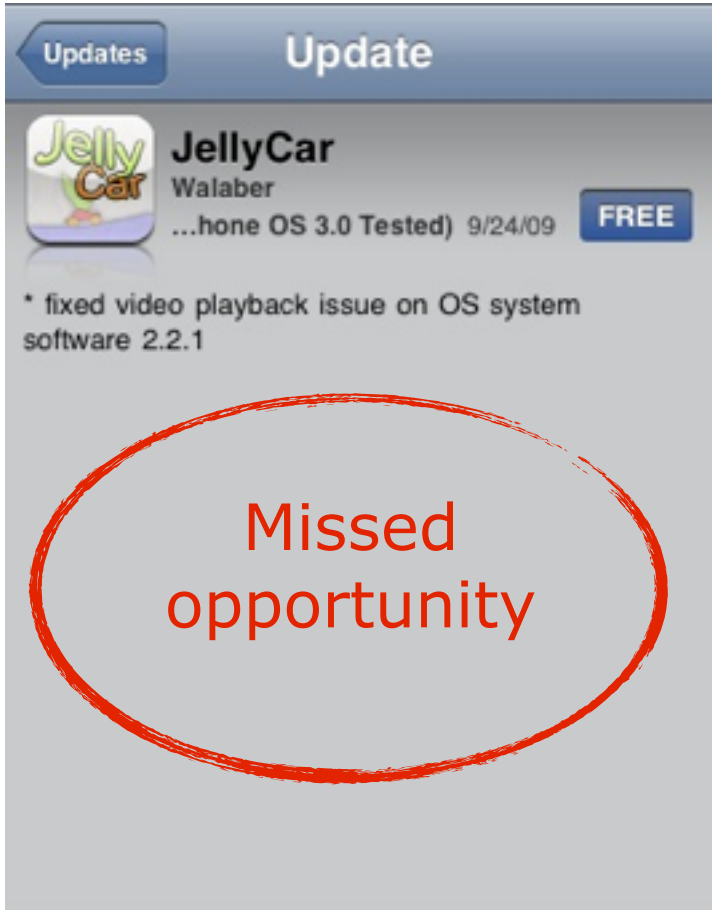
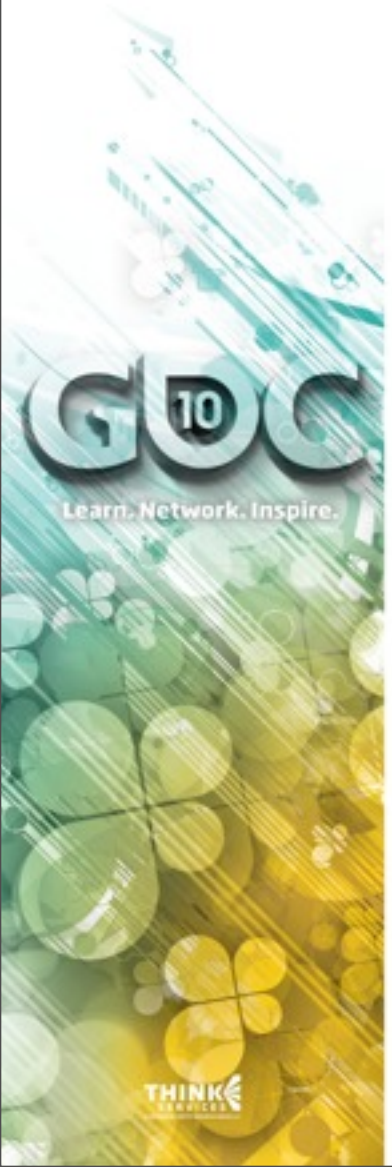
Updates let you communicate with players

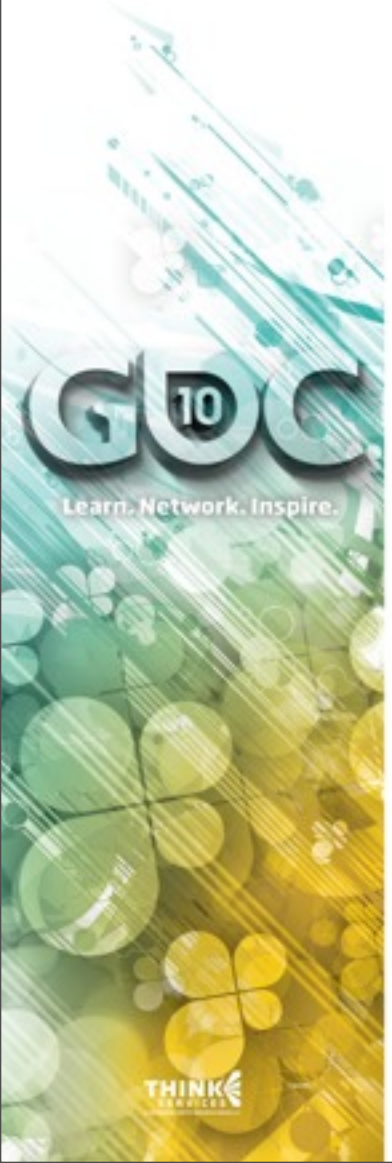






What should be in an update?

- New level(s), new enemies, new world(s), new power-ups...
- Not too little, not too much
- Players start expecting the same amount of new content in each update



When to update

- As often as you can
  - weekly, bi-weekly, monthly
- Players will expect you to keep up with your update frequency
- Around big holidays
  - Christmas, Halloween, Valentines...

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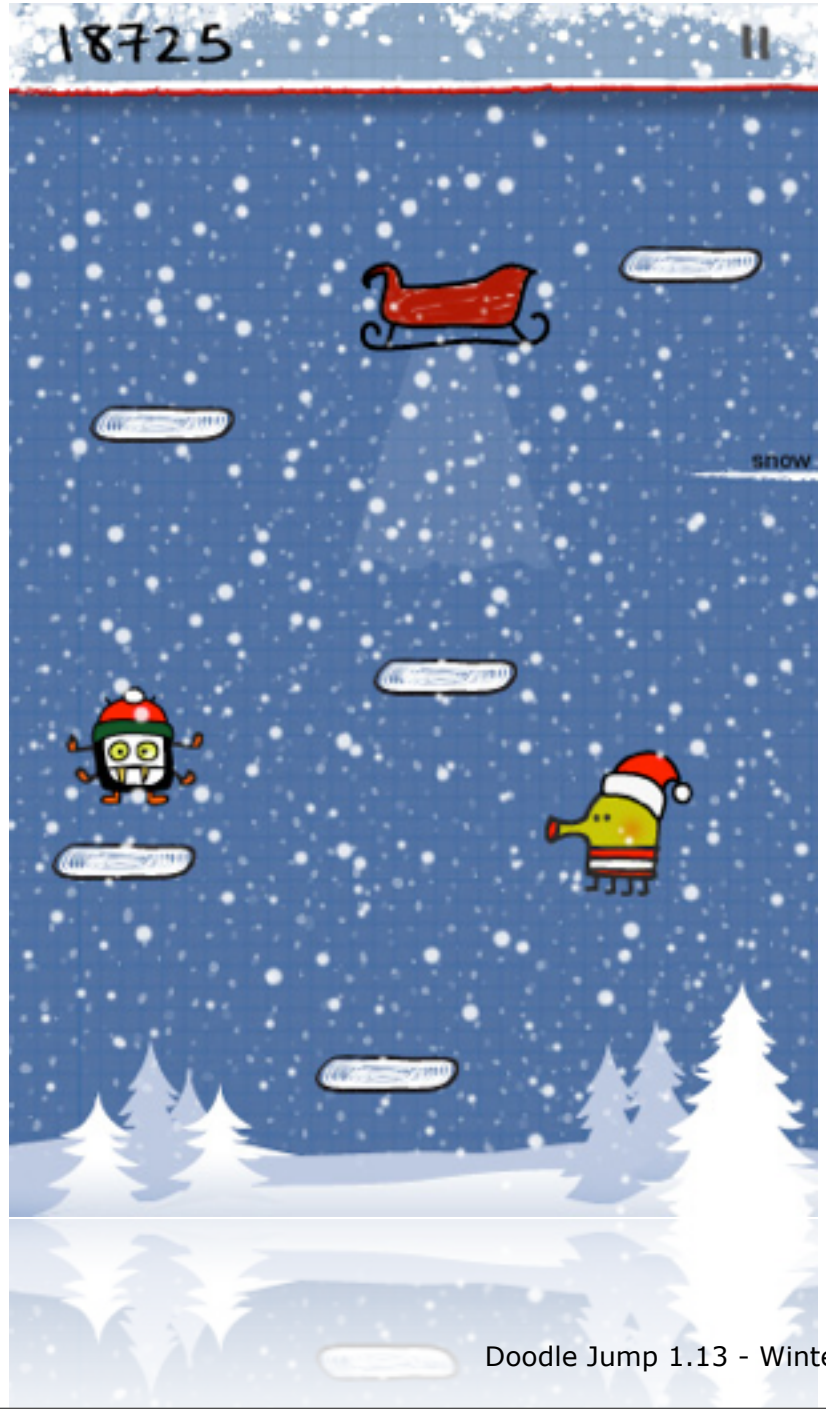

Doodle Jump 1.13 - Winter Christmas Snow update

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Doodle Jump winter Christmas snow update

new se

Doodle Jump sales data: Nov. 23 - Dec. 13 2009

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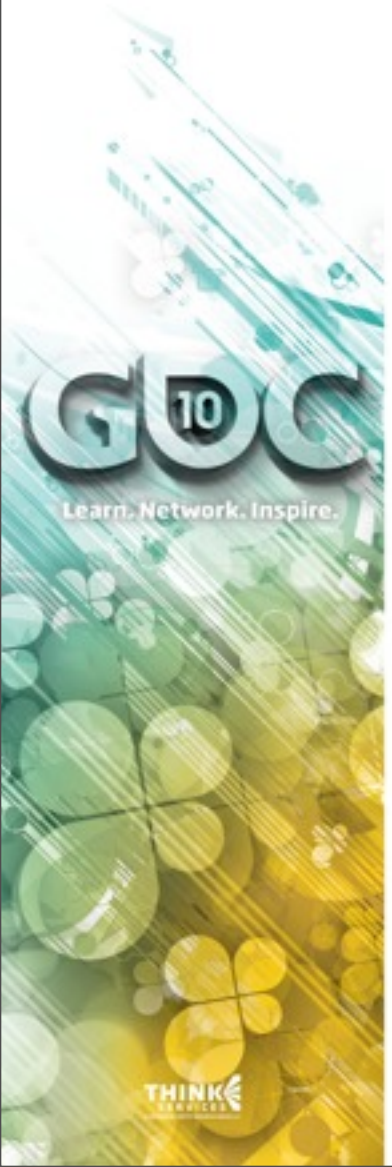
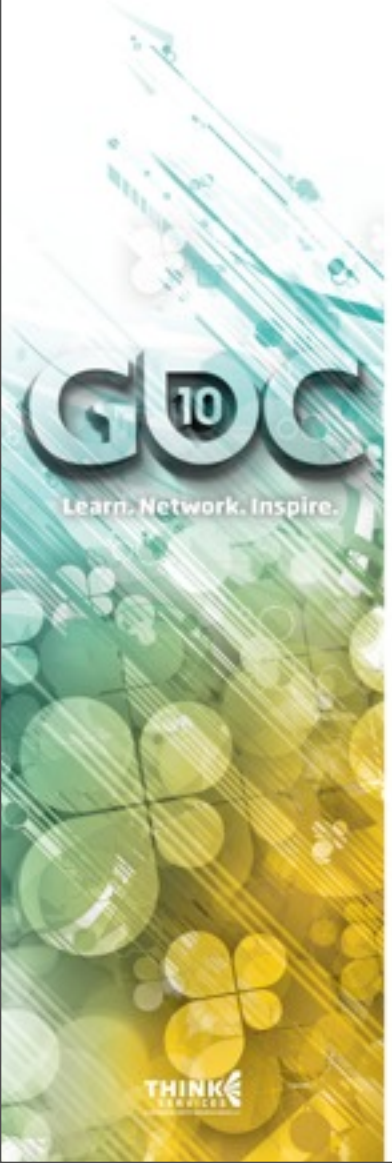


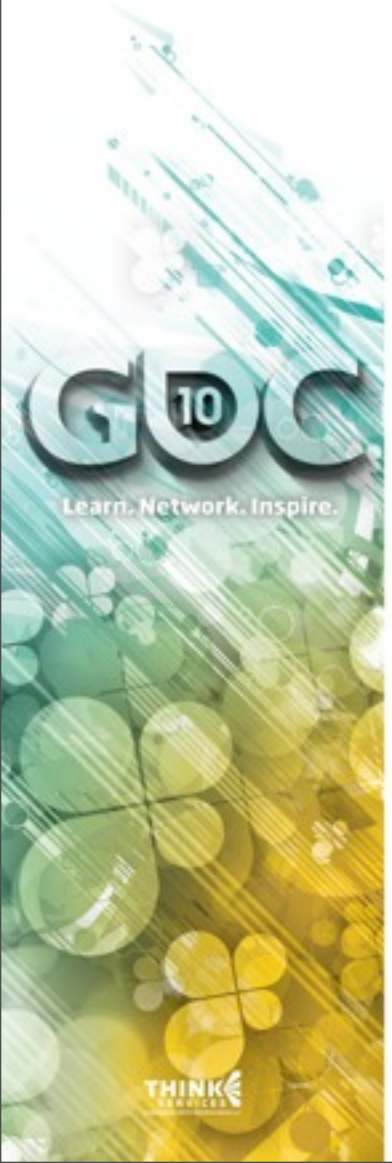
Communication with players

- Use all the available channels
- Listen to suggestions
- Communicate directly
- Monitor and react



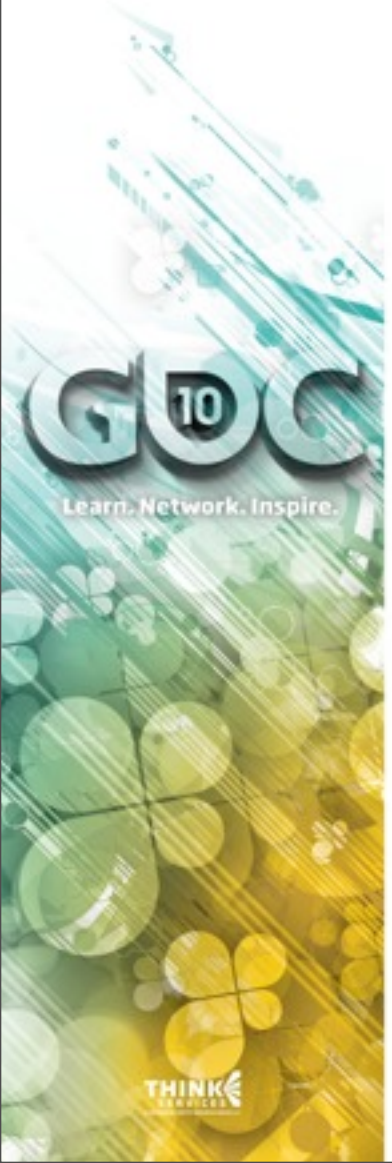
Communication channels

- App Store description page
- Message boards / Forums
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Blog/web site



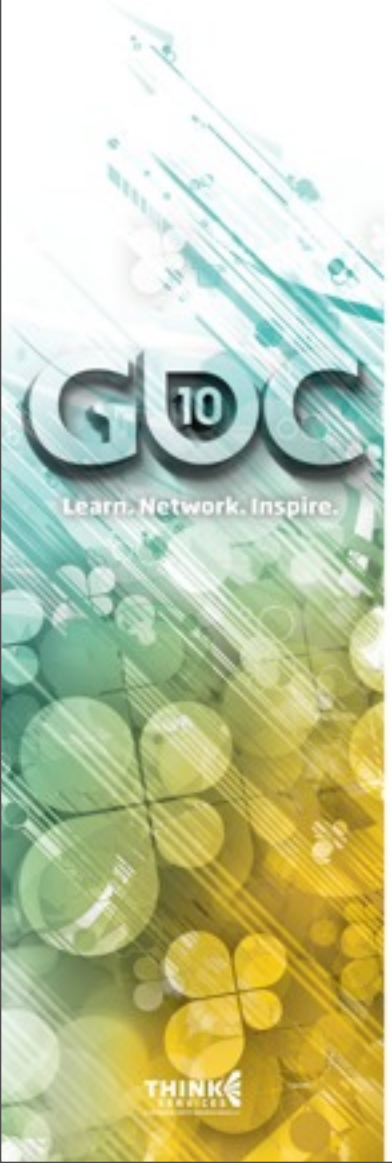
Description page

- Get your icon to stand out
- Have a catchy game name
- Choose appealing screenshots
- Write a fun description
- List player reviews
- Have media quotes
- Keep updating the info!



Gaming forums

- Participate
- Post information about your game
- Seek opinions and reply to comments

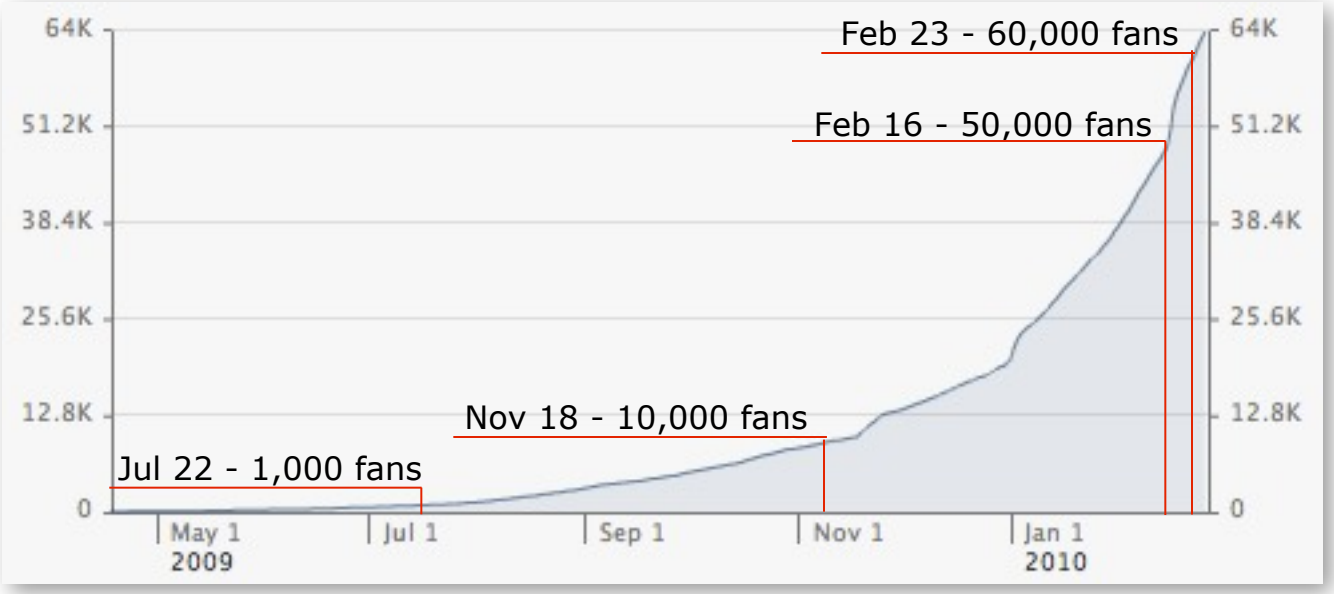


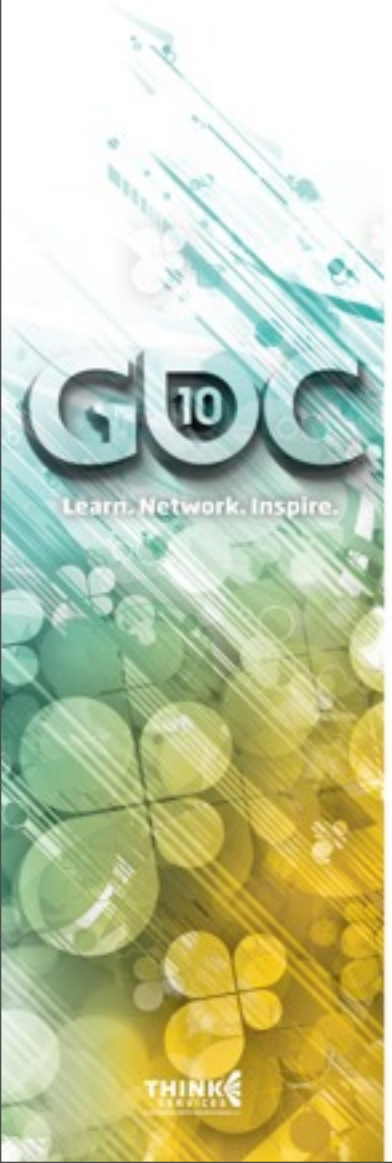
Facebook

- Create a facebook fan page
- Tell people to become fans
- Give them a reason to become fans

Doodle Jump facebook page

Doodle Jump facebook page fans





Twitter

- Have a Twitter account
- Get followers
- Follow others

The most AMAZING Doodle Jump update yet has just been approved and should start showing up on your devices very soon!!!!!

3:45 PM Feb 23rd via Tweetie

#DoodleJump update is out! Boing, boing, boing- TRAMPOLINE! Jump on it and watch the Doodler bounce and flip! http://yfrog.com/76jbrj

11:35 AM Nov 7th, 2009 via Tweetie

HAPPY HALLOWEEN from Lima Sky! Anyone dressing up as The Doodler tonight?

10:55 AM Oct 31st, 2009 via Tweetie

Vote for Doodle Jump as the BEST iPhone game of 2009! http://bit.ly/8oX01j Please RT!

1:00 PM Jan 12th via Tweetie

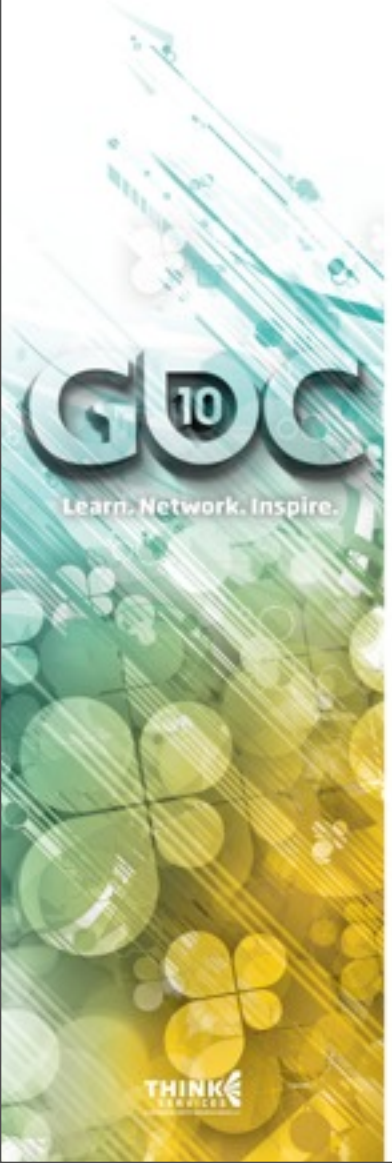
Our most popular and bestselling kids' game, AniMatch, is mentioned in this Sunday's New York Times / Travel Section http://bit.ly/4oA9n2

5:41 PM Nov 27th, 2009 via Tweetie

WOW! Thank you UK! Our "Flags Fun - World" just made it to TOP 10 on the UK App Store! Check it out! Fun & Educational! http://bit.ly/4p1Tw0

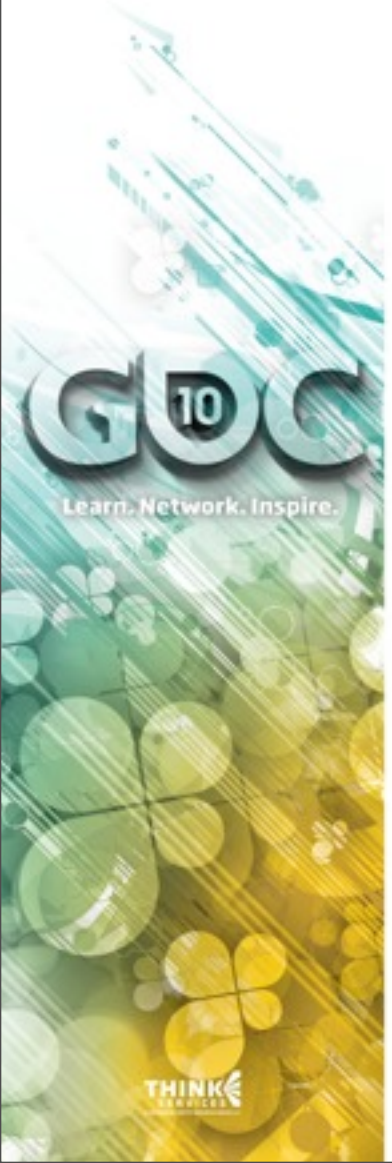
10:45 AM Oct 4th, 2009 via Tweetie

Example @LimaSky tweets



Blog / web site

- Create a blog or web site
- Maintain and update
- Build in social elements



Listen to suggestions

- iTunes reviews
- forums
- Twitter
- facebook
- email

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Doodle jump ★★★★★
by The bomdigidy/awesome - Version 1.14 - Feb 23, 2010

the best game ever!!!!¡ one more thing is to now make a baseball stage!!!!¡

The Tech Fan

TheTechFan @LimaSky There should be a parachute pack you can pick up that would save you from falling.
10:38 AM Mar 1st via Twitterrific

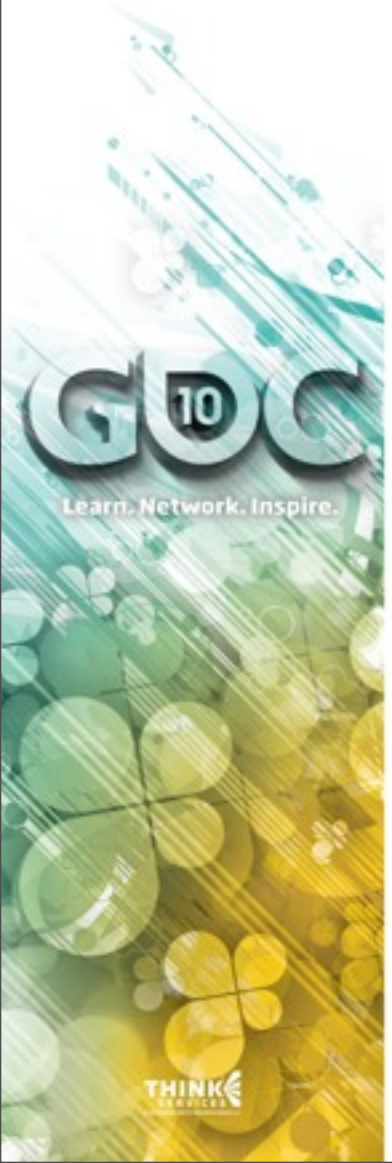
Nate Webster there should be an area in the options where you can turn certan items off like types of monsters, special objects, and platforms.
Mon at 6:45pm · Comment · Like · Report

Shervin Forootan then it wouldnt be fair...
Mon at 6:57pm · Delete · Report

to "info@limasky.com" <info@limasky.com>
date Tue, Mar 2, 2010 at 1:10 AM
subject Lima Sky Contact

For doodle jump, you should make an outer space theme! I will look for this in future updates!

--Jack:-)



Direct communication

- Kids love hearing from YOU, the developer
- Try to answer every email
- Be yourself

Monitor and...

- Monitor what people are saying
  - Twitter, iTunes reviews, forums, blogs, media...

… react

- Reply, retweet, post…

justsamtastic the other day a passing plane sounded like one of the aliens in doodle jump. scary. good thing i had that shield thing on.
7:36 PM Feb 17th via web
Retweeted by you and 3 others Reply Retweeted

christt That Doodle Jump iPhone game is the bestest allegory for human life I've seen for ages.
8:01 PM Feb 17th via Twitterrific
Retweeted by you Reply Retweeted

igor
Senior Member

Quote:

Originally Posted by
OMG OMG OMG OMG

So, I still prefer getting the main stage updated, with new power-ups, enemies, platforms and so on.

There will be some of that in the upcoming updates as well! Thanks!

Igor : Lima Sky
LimaSky.com
Twitter - @LimaSky
facebook - tinyurl.com/doodle-jump-facebook

Tennis star Andy Murray played Doodle Jump for several hours before defeating Isner at the Australian Open http://bit.ly/8sRXm5 Go Andy!
8:42 PM Jan 25th via Tweetie

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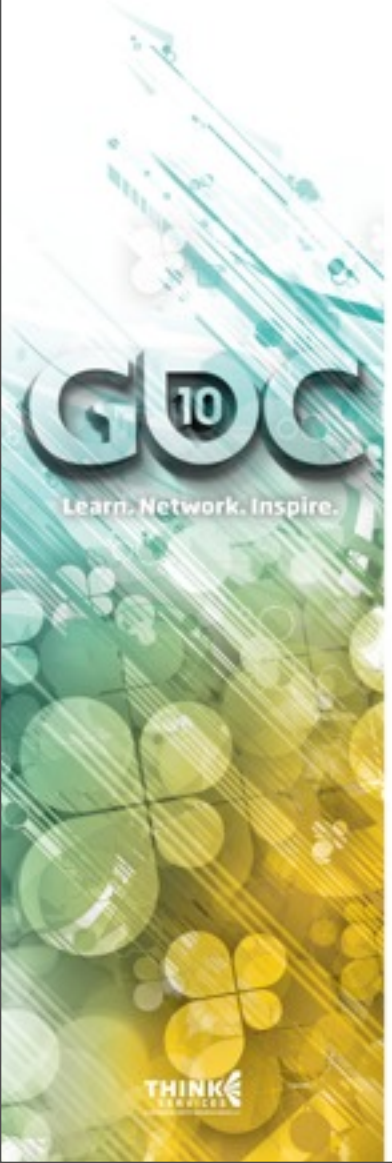
Monitor and react

new section

An article in the Summer issue of Popstar! mentioning that Jonas brothers play Doodle Jump

Doodle Jump ad in the Fall issue of Popstar!



Social networking
in-game integration

- Twitter
- facebook
- Leaderboards
- iPhone social networks

plus+

OpenFeint

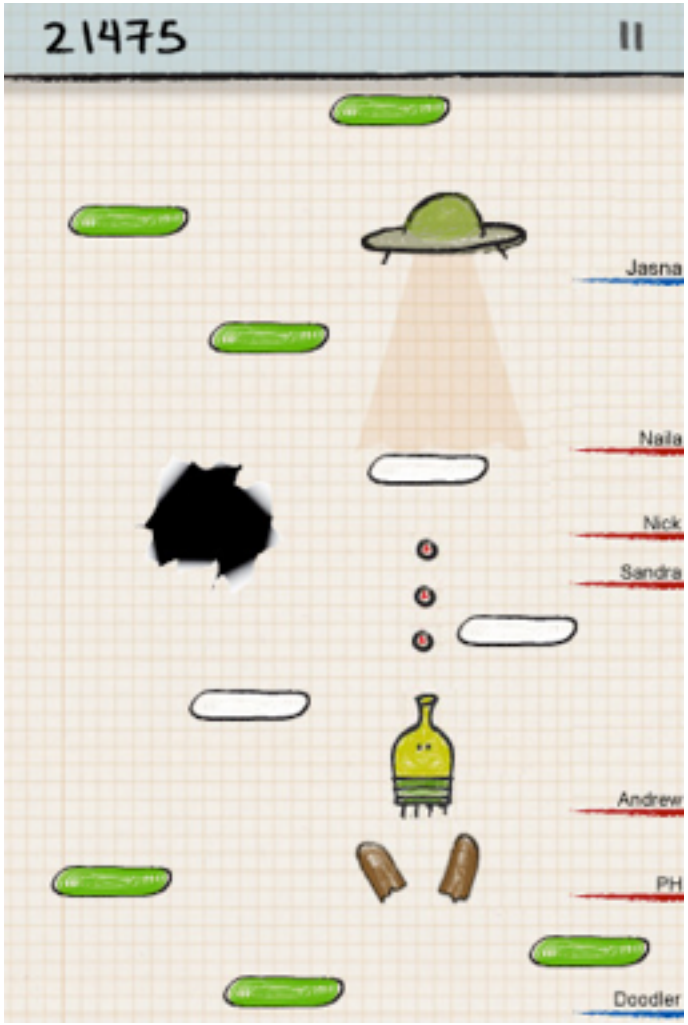
Crystal SDK

Scoreloop

agon

Doodle Jump social networking integration

Submit score to Twitter or facebook



In-game score markers

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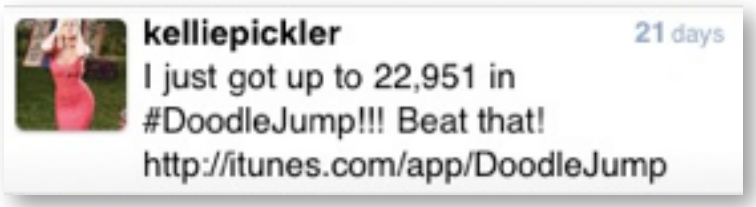
Twitter

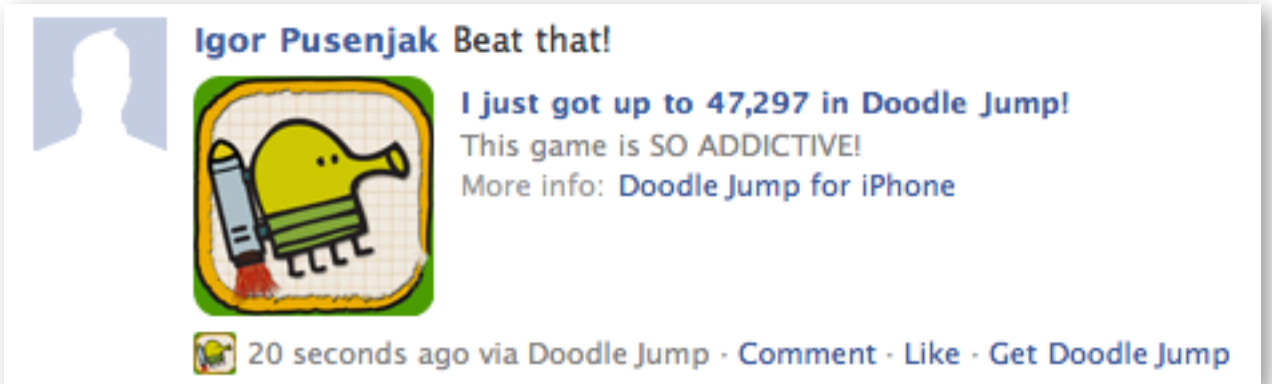
- Score tweets
- Achievements tweets

Doodle Jump Twitter score submission



facebook connect

- Let players post their score on facebook for their friends to see



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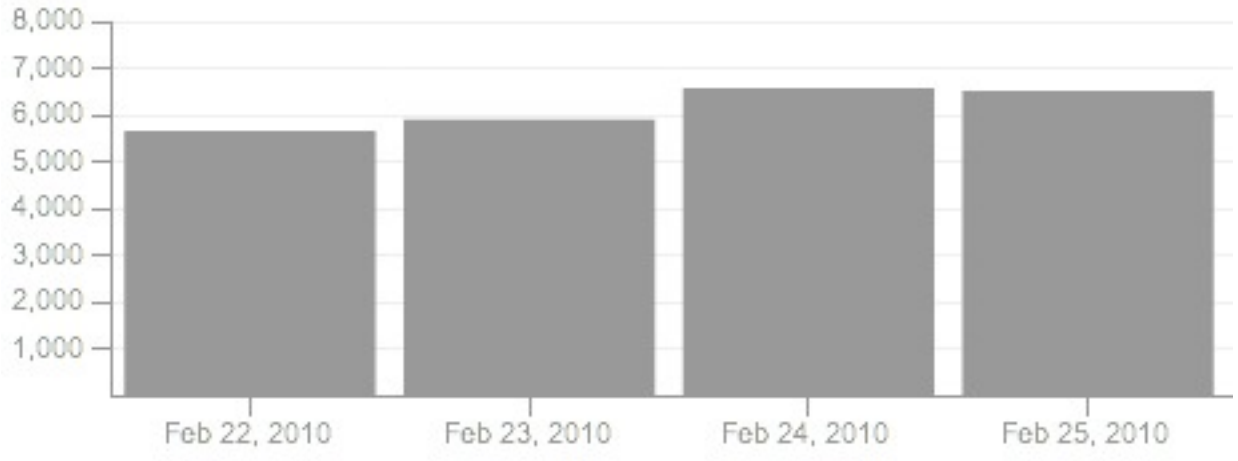
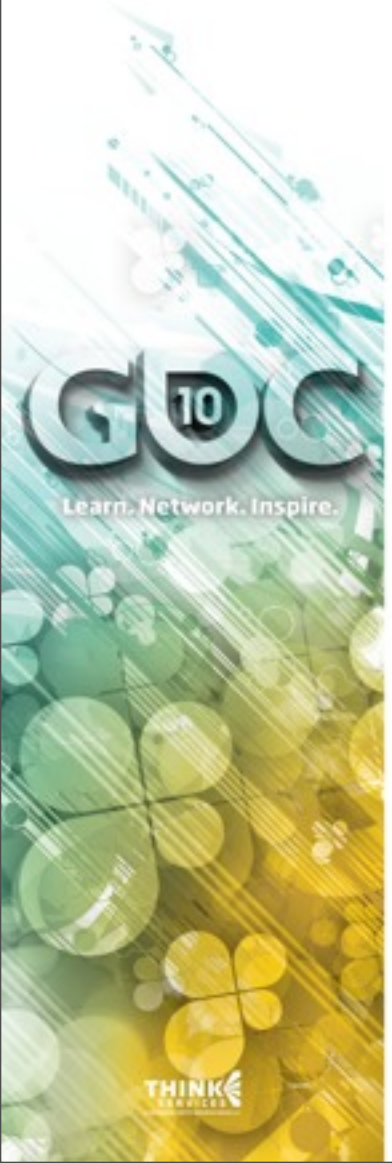
facebook connect



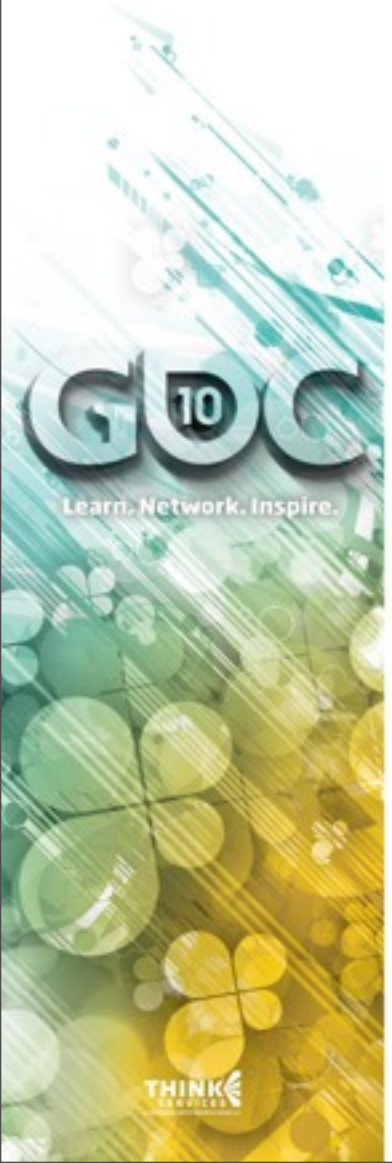
Clicks on links in Doodle Jump facebook connect post

new section



Promotion

- Media outreach
- Cross-promotion
- Advertising

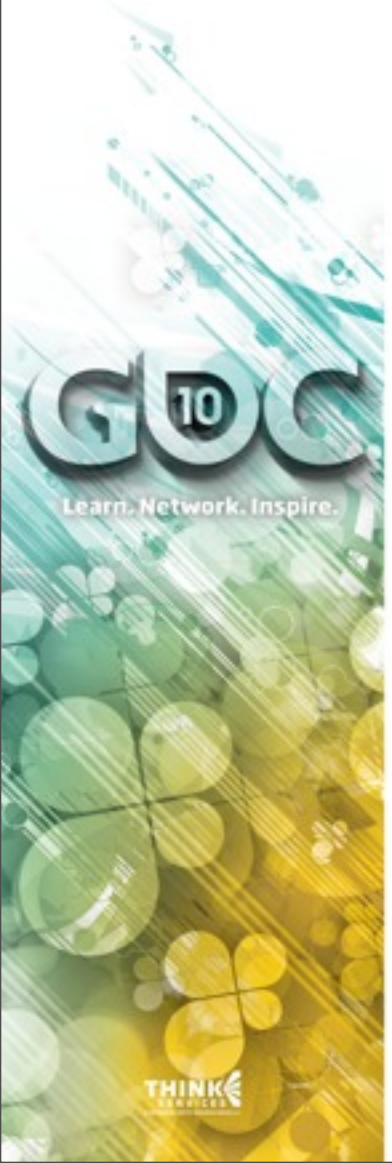


Media outreach

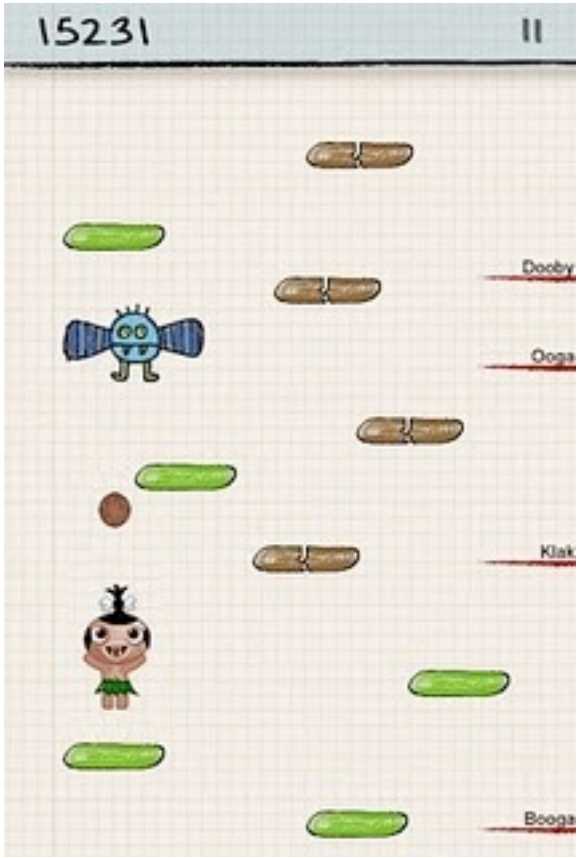
- Tell EVERYONE about your game
  - Media, personal blogs, game forums, YouTube reviewers, friends...
- Be excited about your game
- Send promo code, screenshots, and gameplay video
- Be persistent, but not annoying

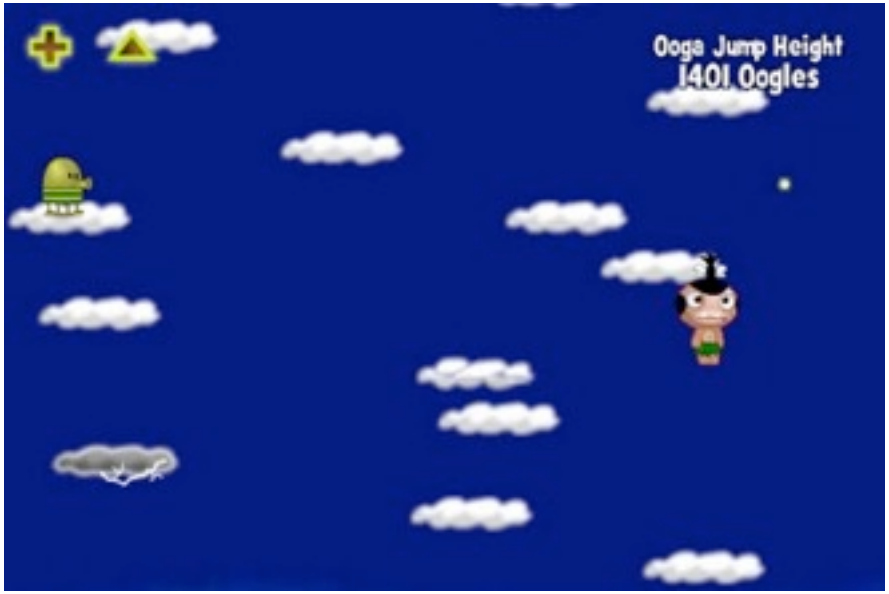
Cross-promotion

- Consider a lite version
- Have a “more games” section
- Promote in other apps
- Consider crossovers

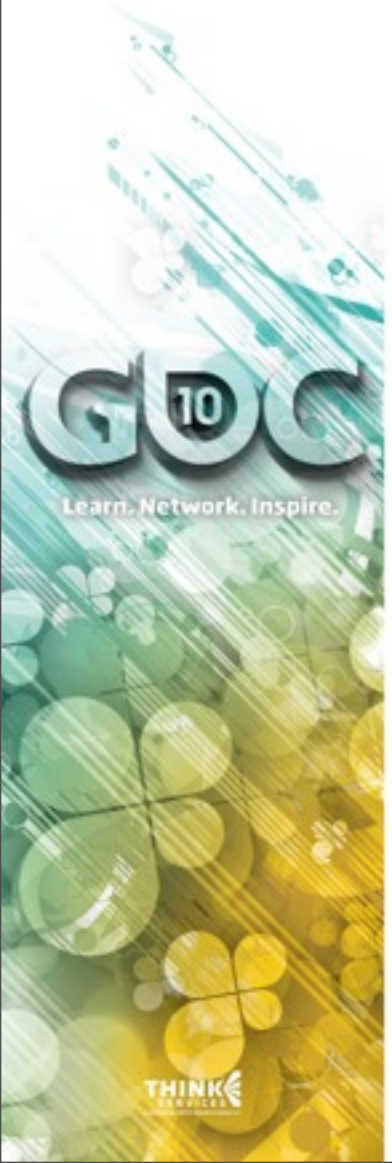


Doodle Jump/Pocket God crossover

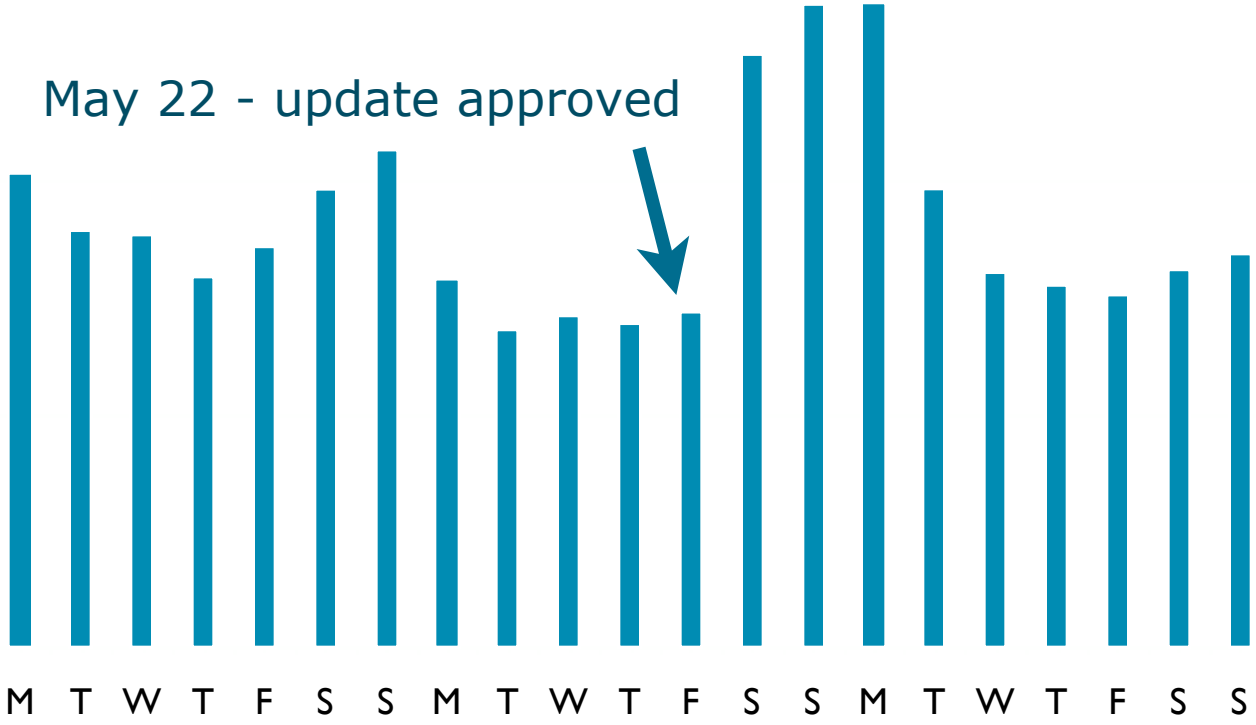




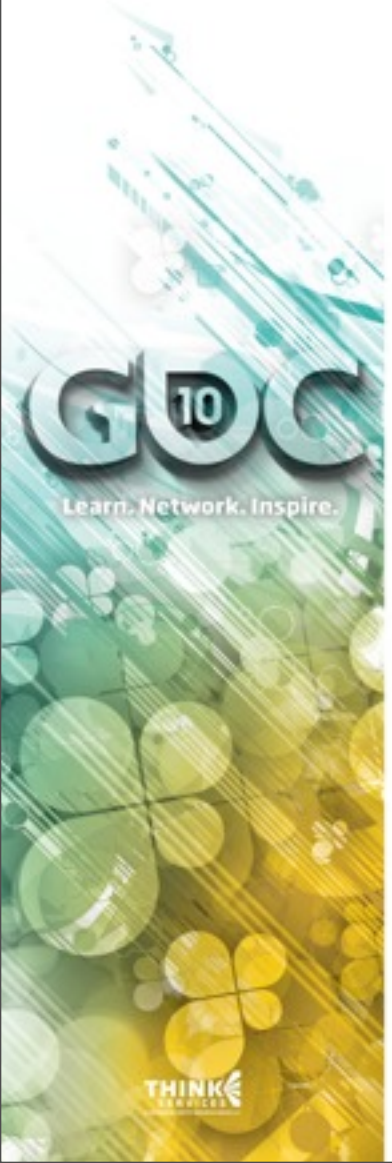
GDC 10
Learn. Network. Inspire.
THINK



Doodle Jump Pocket God easter egg update

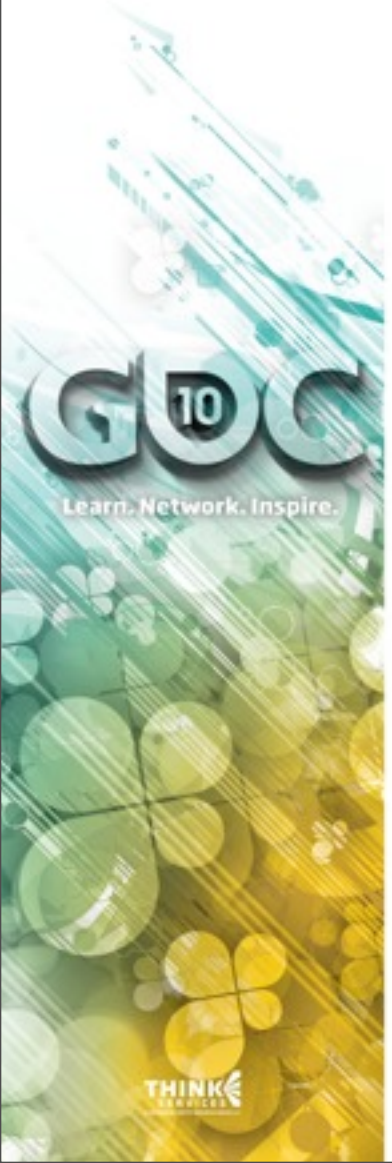


Doodle Jump sales data: May. 11 - Dec. 31 2009



Advertising

- Very difficult to measure effectiveness
- CPA is often 2-3 times the price of the game
- Can be effective depending on:
  - the price of your game
  - your goal
  - how you define success

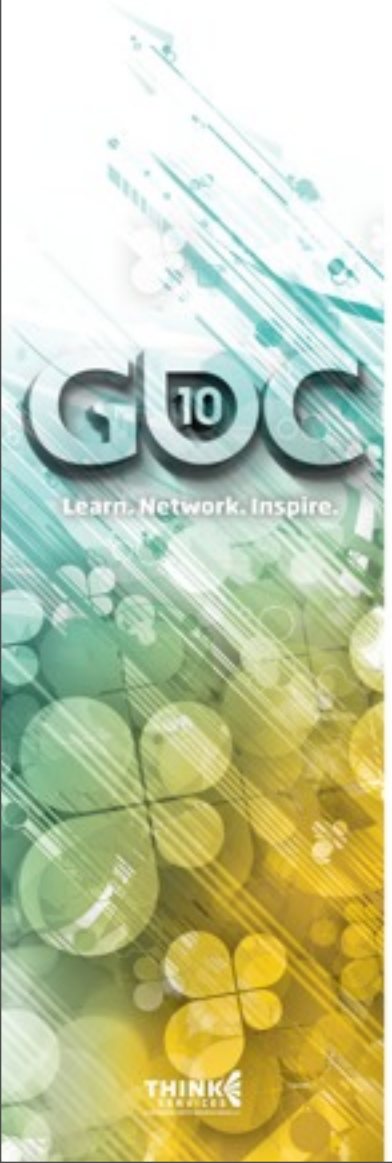


Conversions

\+ Word of mouth sales

\+ Rise on Top Paid chart sales

= (maybe) positive ROI

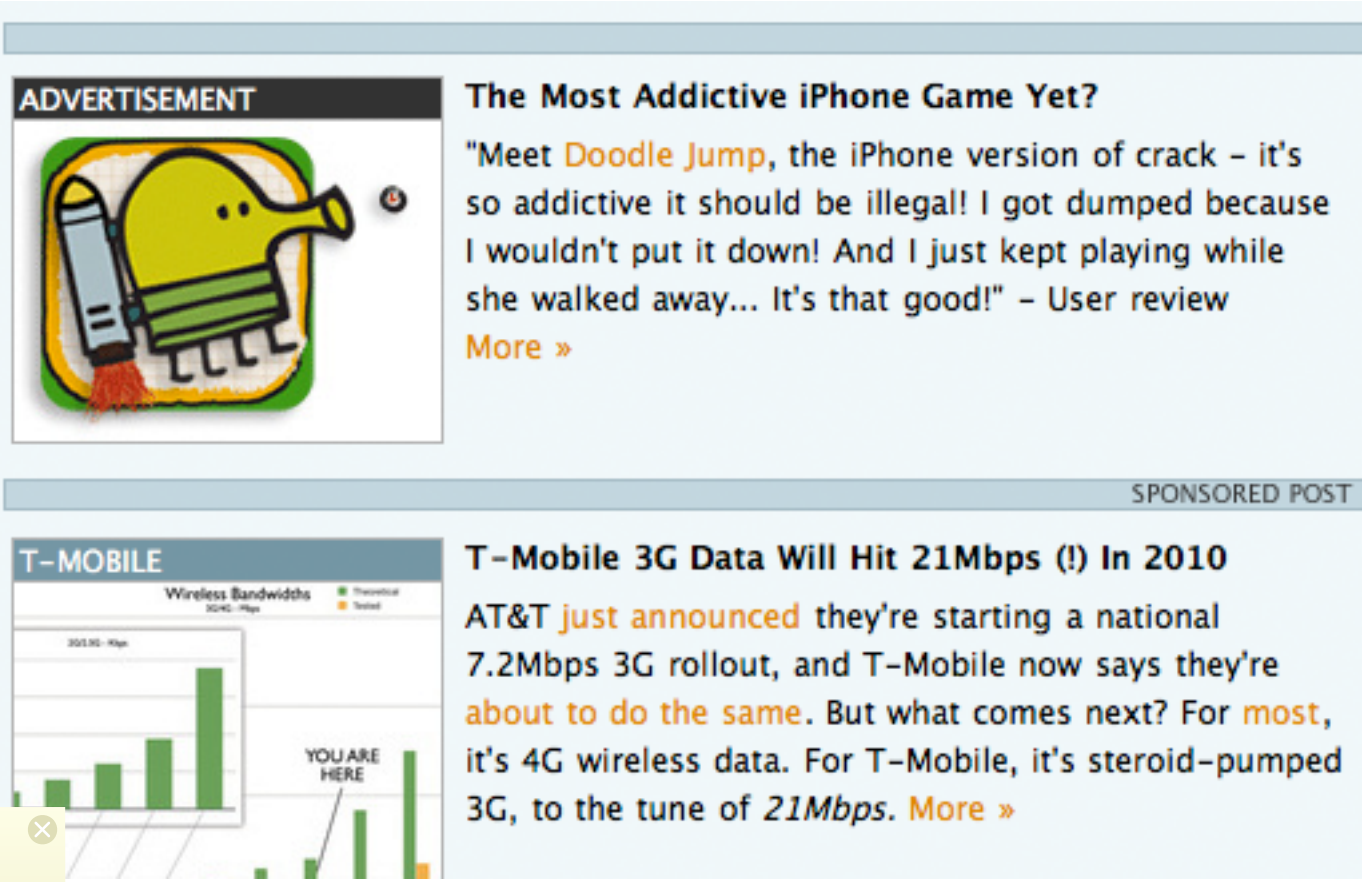


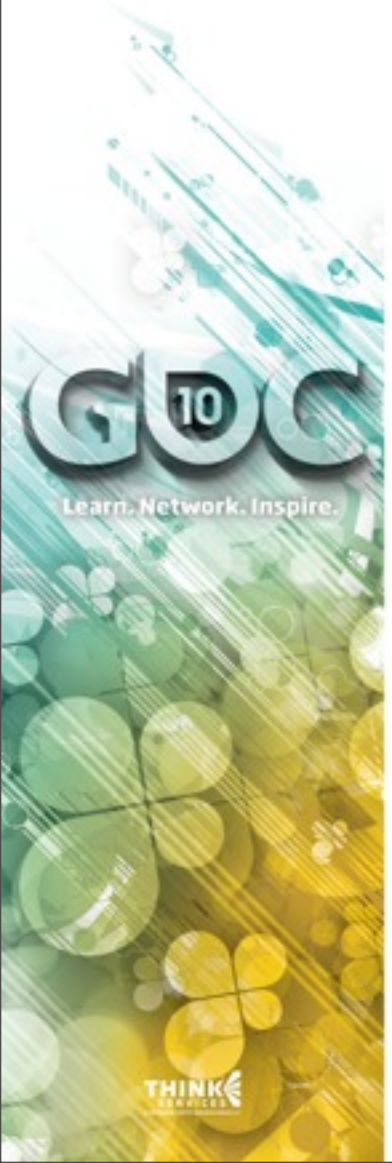
Advertising channels

- iPhone gaming blogs
- Ad networks
- Big blogs
- Print
- Facebook
- Twitter

What worked for us

- Gizmodo

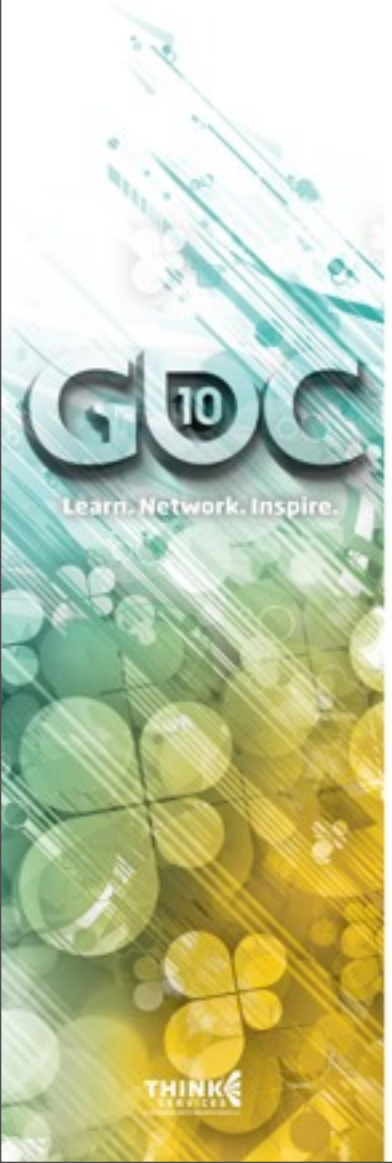




Recap

To keep your great game alive, interesting, and on top of the charts you will need to:

- frequently update
- communicate with players
- integrate social networking tools
- PROMOTE THE HELL OUT OF IT!



Thank you

Questions?