10 Tips (And More!) To Make Your iPhone Game More Successful

Alan Martin
Producer
GDC Canada 2010

INTRODUCTION

The KEY:

Getting the most out of the tools that Apple provides.

What will be covered:
- Pre-Production Tips
- Pre-Release Tips
- Post-Release Tips

PRE-PRODUCTION TIPS

1) CONTENT UPDATES

Plan "Content" Updates Early!!!

Why To Update:

- Bug Fixes

- Provides Marketing Opportunities

- Keeps Existing Players Engaged

1) CONTENT UPDATES

What To Update:

- Bug Fixes / Customer Feedback

- In App Purchases

- Free DLC

- New / (Previously) Unfinished Features

1) CONTENT UPDATES

When Updating:

- Put Effort into the Update Description

- Tease the Update in your "community" – websites, Twitter, FB, etc.

- Plan approximate "schedules" for updates as early as possible

2) "LITE" VERSION

If possible, plan a "Lite" version of your game.

Tips:

- Include enough of your game to HOOK the audience – and quickly.

- DON'T give it ALL away - tease them!

- DON'T call it a "Demo."

- DON'T include references to other platforms.

2) "LITE" VERSION

Lite Version Timing - Suggestions:

- Save the "Lite" for a later marketing opportunity ("iShoot" example)... OR

- Release it simultaneously with full version... OR
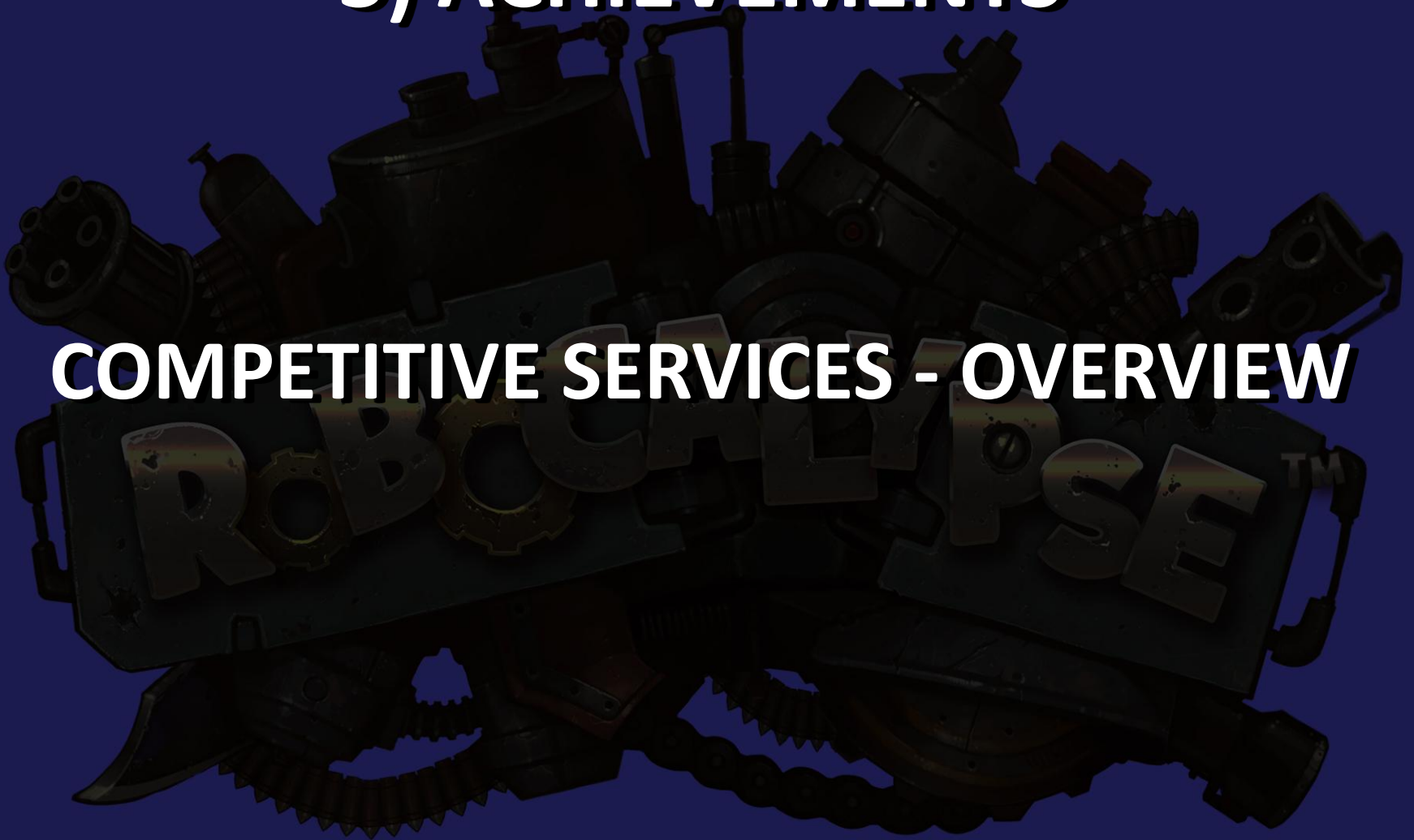
- Release it WHILE you're finishing the full version

3) ACHIEVEMENTS

- Plan Your Achievements / Stats Early!

- People play games to achieve goals!

- Do this, even if they're implemented after Launch.

- Partner with one of the free services, to maximize exposure in their community.

3) ACHIEVEMENTS

COMPETITIVE SERVICES - OVERVIEW

3) ACHIEVEMENTS

OpenFeint:

- +: Free for developers to integrate

- +: Lots of games already supported

- +: Friends / Xbox Live-style presence

- +: Geolocation Leaderboards

- +: Tools for your Game's Community

- - : Adds a lot to your App size

3) ACHIEVEMENTS

Plus+:

- +: ngmoco's achievement engine

- -: Many similar features to OpenFeint (but slightly behind)

AGON:

- -: Many similar features to OpenFeint (but slightly behind)

- - : Not well known / not many games

3) ACHIEVEMENTS

iAchievements:

- +: Many similar features to OpenFeint (but behind)
- +: Free for developers to integrate
- +: Includes "Smart Ads" with Achievements
- -: Duplicates what Apple's iAds promises (without Achievements)

PRE-RELEASE TIPS

4) TITLE & KEYWORDS

"Strategy" for Titles:

- Look at similar games / genres
- Look for similar titles
- Does your title convey the game? Fun?!
- Remember the limited title (display) space!

4) TITLE & KEYWORDS

"Strategy" for Keywords:

- Look at similar games' keywords
- Be smart with character limitations (100 chars. max for all keywords and commas – don't use spaces!!)

Robocalypse's Canadian English Keywords:
strategy,action,robot,comic,humour,real-time,war,military,combat,funny,defence,mobile,multiplayer

- Don't use others' TMs in your keywords!

5) LOCALIZATION

Even if you can't localize your game's content, localize the App Store elements!

- You won't make any sales in countries where people can't read what your game is about!

- Call around, get bids from translators.

- Maximize the common languages.

5) LOCALIZATION

What to Localize:

- App Description
- Application Name
- Keywords
- "Sale" Words / Phrases
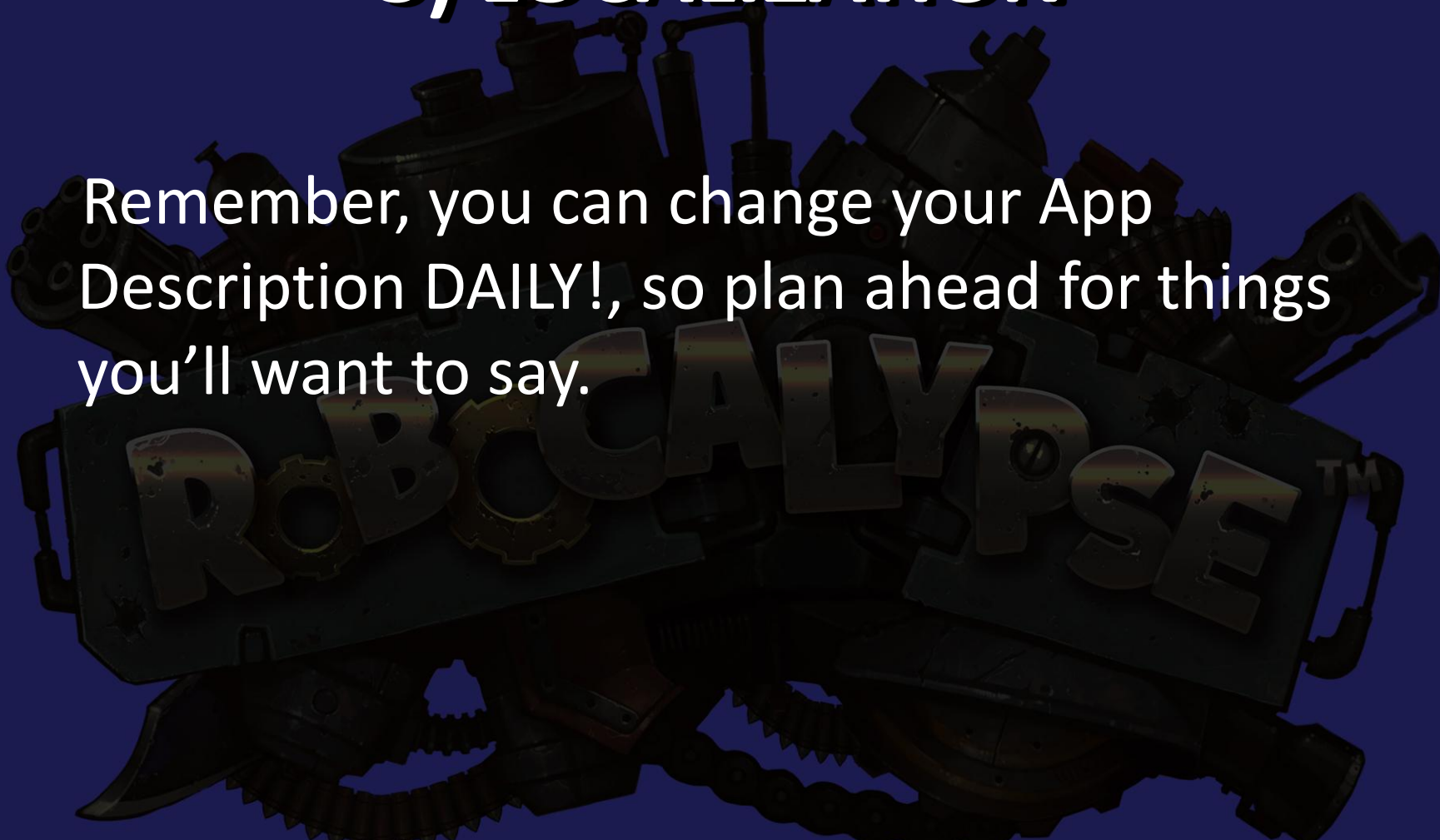- Website Names / For Reviews

Double-Check Using Free Online Tools!

5) LOCALIZATION

Remember, you can change your App Description DAILY!, so plan ahead for things you'll want to say.

5) LOCALIZATION

Languages:

Apple currently allows 17 different languages (plus US English) for App Store elements:

- Australian English
- Canadian English
- Canadian French
- Dutch
- French
- German
- Italian
- Japanese

- Mexican Spanish
- Simplified Chinese
- Spanish
- UK English
- Brazilian Portuguese
- Korean
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Swedish

6) SCREENSHOTS

Screenshot Tips:

- Check the Competition

- Variety of Shots

- Make sure they are Representative of your Product

- No Horizontals on some devices

- You can now have separate iPad screenshots

- Localize!

7) THE ICONS!

Icon Tips:

- In addition to ones you need to Launch, plan ahead for ones you'll need later (for "Sales" and promotions).

- Some App icons can be changed quickly and easily, others cannot.

- If Apple contacts you about a featured spot, they will want your Icon empty of addition text (like "Sale", etc.)
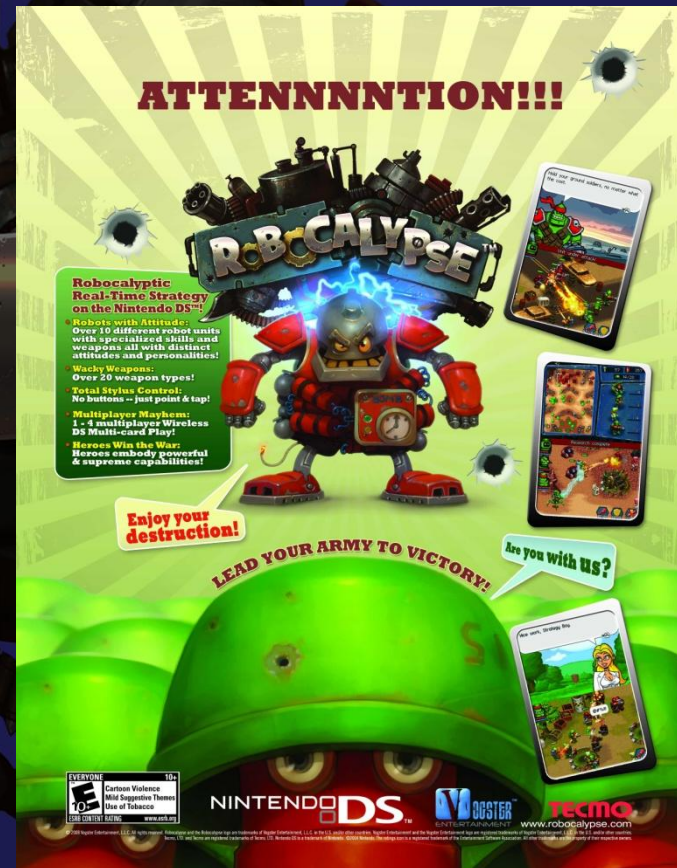
7) THE ICONS!

ROBOCALYPSE – MOBILE MAYHEM
ICON POST-MORTEM

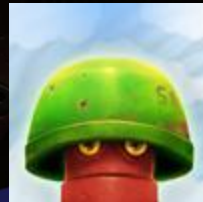# 7) THE ICONS!
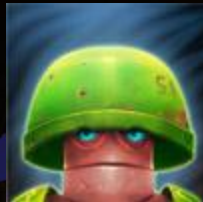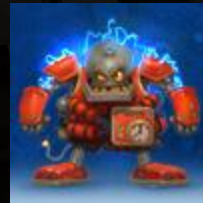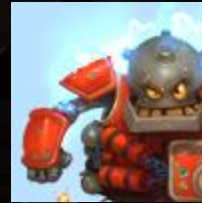## ORIGINAL MARKETING MATERIALS - DS

DS Game Cover Art

DS Print Ad

7) THE ICONS!
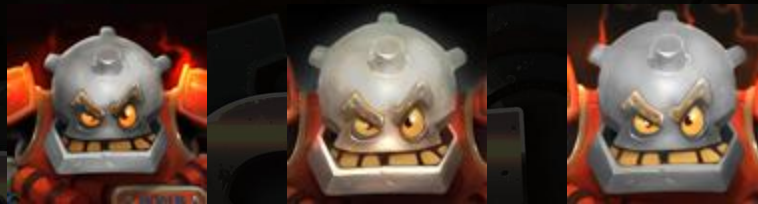

PRE-LAUNCH ICON CONCEPTS

7) THE ICONS!

7) THE ICONS!

LAUNCH ICON (SALE VERSION)

7) THE ICONS!

POST-LAUNCH ICON CONCEPTS

7) THE ICONS!

UPDATED ICON (LITE VERSION)

7) THE ICONS!

8) PRICE

Pricing Tips:

- Be Competitive
- Don't under-price yourself
- Leave Room for Change / Sales

POST-RELEASE TIPS

9) EDITORS

Reach Out To Publication Editors:

- BEFORE you release, so there is a relationship WHEN you release.

- Find Email Addresses / Write Nice Letters

- Use your Promotional Codes – 50 Per Update (only good in the U.S.)

10) CHECK RANKINGS

- Check Ranking / Sales on a Daily Basis
- Be prepared to adjust your Price / App Store elements
- The most important thing for your App's success is making into the Top 25 of any category!
- If you're the #1 App, you sell 15 – 20k Apps a day
- Remember, use all of your Sub-Categories!! *

10+) WORKING WITH APPLE

- Don't Get Impatient With Apple
- This "publisher" doesn't work like the other big guys…
- When they contact you – solicit their advice, and LISTEN!

CONCLUSION

- Take advantage of ALL the tools Apple provides to maximize your product's exposure

- Research! – what other games are doing

- Partner with a free achievement / stat service

- All of these things help "market" your game

- These tips can be applied to other digital distribution markets, as well!

CONTACT INFO

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

Email:

- alan.martin@vogster.com
- alan_h_martin@hotmail.com

Skype / Twitter:

- nalanitram