



BATTLENET®

A POST-MORTEM

Austin GDC
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INTRODUCTIONS

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THE BATTLE.NET BACKSTORY

Launched in 1996 with Diablo

The world's first integrated matchmaking service

Evolved over the years: StarCraft, Diablo 2, Warcraft 3

At launch, the whole worldwide service ran on a single box!



BATTLE.NET CLASSIC POPULARITY



**12 MILLION
PLAYERS**



**11.5 MILLION
PLAYERS**

As of 01/01/2009



OVER THE YEARS, TIMES HAVE CHANGED...

Evolution of the Online Game Service

Digital Distribution Goes Mainstream

The Social Network Revolution

And At Blizzard, This Little Game Launched in 2004
with 12 million users...

XBOX facebook

Apple iTunes

tm W OF

amazon.com.



Game Center

BATTLENET

INTRODUCING THE NEW BATTLE.NET

Our Vision:

Create the world's premier online game service that powers all Blizzard titles and connects our community

Our Goal:

Enhance the fun factor of Blizzard games and extend franchise longevity by facilitating kick-ass online gaming experiences

OUR EXECUTION PLAN

- Staffed the team
- Built the new service from the ground up
 - Orphaned the classic service
- Launched the new Battle.net and SCII on July 27
 - Integrated with WoW around the same time
- It was one hell of a ride...and many lessons learned

POST- MORTEM TOPIC #1

THE DEEPLY INTEGRATED APPROACH

The Vision:

- Seamless integration between the game and the service
- Leveraged back-end game services
- Enable custom game-specific features that other services can't provide

The Reality:

- We deeply integrated with SCII and delivered awesome custom features
- ...but, it was a sprint all the way and pretty stressful



POST- MORTEM TOPIC #1

THE DEEPLY INTEGRATED APPROACH

What We Learned:

- It is bloody expensive – a full client re-write each time

 - Real tradeoff between generic vs. specialized services

- Working with the game teams was rewarding but challenging

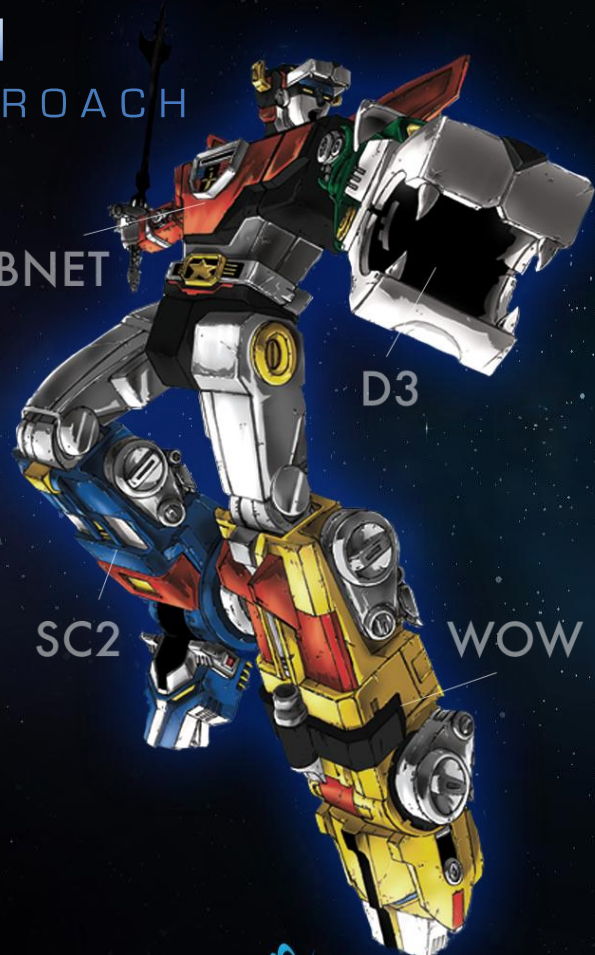
- Getting the integrated UI and UX right requires a lot of work...and a lot of iteration

BNET

D3

SC2

WOW



THE EVOLUTION OF NEW BATTLE.NET UI – LATE 2007



THE EVOLUTION OF NEW BATTLE.NET UI – EARLY 2008



THE EVOLUTION OF NEW BATTLE.NET UI – LATE 2008



THE EVOLUTION OF NEW BATTLE.NET UI – SUMMER 2009



THE EVOLUTION OF NEW BATTLE.NET UI – JANUARY 2010



THE EVOLUTION OF NEW BATTLE.NET UI – BETA



THE EVOLUTION OF NEW BATTLE.NET UI – SHIP



POST- MORTEM TOPIC #1

THE DEEPLY INTEGRATED APPROACH

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 - Real tradeoff between generic vs. specialized services

- Working with the game teams was rewarding but challenging

- Getting the integrated UI and UX right requires a lot of work...and a lot of iteration

- Get started early, and partner 50/50 with the game team to share vision and workload

BNET

D3

SC2

WOW

POST- MORTEM TOPIC #2

IDENTITY & REAL ID

About 799,720 players on Battle.net

The Vision:

- Unify the Blizzard community via creation of a common social network around our games

- Introduce concept of a single unified cross-game identity

- Address issues with anonymity and accountability faced on classic Battle.net service

The Reality:

- Community was more receptive to real identity concept than we initially thought

- Real ID was successful in some contexts (in-client social, Facebook, cross-game chat) and less successful in others (forums)



POST- MORTEM TOPIC #2

IDENTITY & REAL ID

What We Learned:

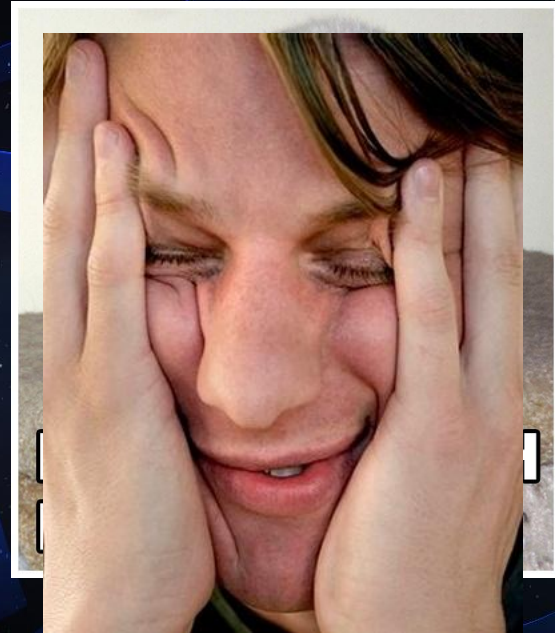
- Anonymity is important to gamers

- The tiered identity approach was the right call
(but more work)

- Loss aversion is a powerful thing

 - Adding features is one thing, taking them away is another

- Take a measured and incremental approach to
these types of ideas (and provide options)



POST- MORTEM TOPIC #3

WOW INTEGRATION

The Vision:

- Unify our new social network with the most successful MMO of all time

- Introduce cool new features to the WoW community at the same time

The Reality:

- We pulled it off (barely)

- It required tons of coordination and many months to get it right (and added risk)

POST- MORTEM TOPIC #3

WOW INTEGRATION

What We Learned:

- Integrating with a community of 12 million users and not f-ing it up is a huge challenge

- 5 years is an eternity when you are talking tech about game service integration

- Understand your customer – don't assume that your social features are right for every user and situation

- Integrating game service and MMOs can be challenging in other ways (logistics, compatibility, deployment, etc.)



i don't care about
your stupid
**MAFIA
GAME!**

i don't care about
your stupid
**FARMING
GAME!**

POST- MORTEM TOPIC #4

LAUNCH COMPLEXITY

The Vision:

- Launch SCII and the new Battle.net side-by-side
- Sim-launch around the world, and support a multitude of payment methods and business models

The Reality:

- We launched on 5 continents and in 13 languages
- We had a smooth launch and lived up to “Think Globally”
- Tying all these pieces together was like landing a 747 on an aircraft carrier



POST- MORTEM TOPIC #4

LAUNCH COMPLEXITY

What We Learned:

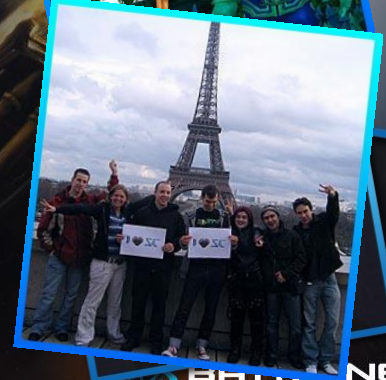
- Think through this stuff early

- Really understand what is important to your customers in each market

- Build in the tracking mechanisms to evaluate success and failure

- Understanding regional challenges (latency, grey market and governmental issues) is the key to success

- Don't under-estimate the work (and get really good billing guys)



POST- MORTEM TOPIC #5

BUILDING & GROWING BATTLE.NET

The Vision:

- Create the living game service and evolve it with each game
- Tightly integrate with each Blizzard game and dev team
- Build and scale a Battle.net team to pull it off

The Reality:

- We've grown 4x in the last 18 months
 - 12+ more open heads, including art, design, production and engineering
- Online game service experience is a rare commodity out there



POST- MORTEM TOPIC #5

BUILDING & GROWING BATTLE.NET

What We Learned:

- The bar has gone way up from 10 years ago
And launching the service is just the beginning...

- Managing multiple projects and customers is challenging

- Key talent is the difference between success and failure

- Listening to our customers has been critical to our success

- Few people understand just how hard it is to design and build this stuff

- Design iteration is just as important here as it is with game titles

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.The eBay logo, featuring the word "eBay" in its characteristic multi-colored font (red, blue, yellow, green).The Xbox Live logo, with "XBOX" in green and "LIVE" in orange, both in a stylized, blocky font.The Google logo, featuring the word "Google" in its multi-colored font (blue, red, yellow, blue, green, red).

Q&A



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