The Sticky Science of New User Experience

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What is ‘Consumer Insights?’

Qualitative research
Quantitative research
Analytics

Monetization
Retention
Virality

My experience is informed by...

Microsoft

IDEO

LEXUS

simplehuman

MEDAL OF HONOR

THE SIMPSONS GAME

DEAD SPACE

GAMEPRO

PlayStation

zynga poker

Mafia Wars

FishVille

YoVille

KIXEYE

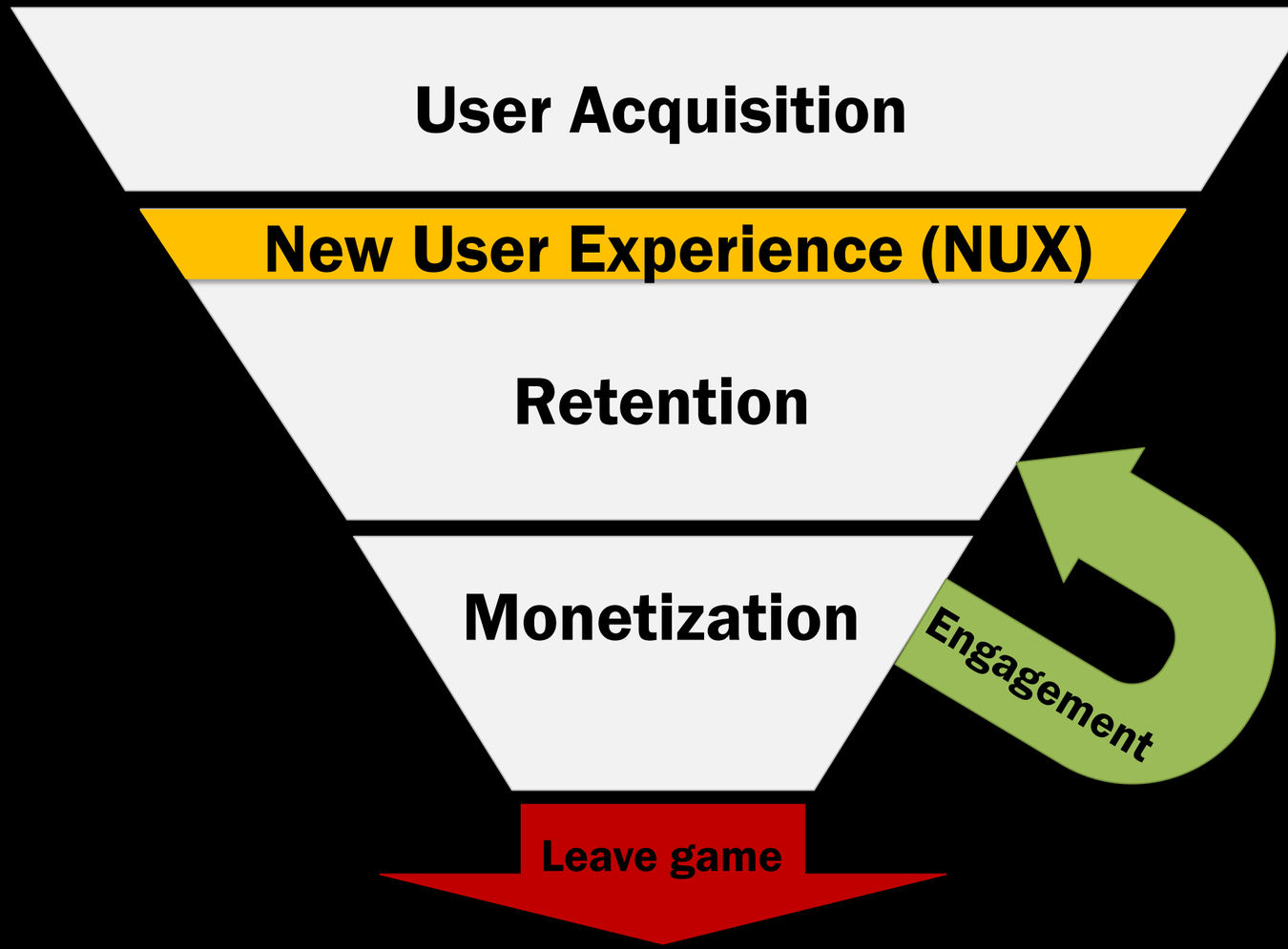
WAR COMMANDER

VEGA CONFLICT

BATTLE PIRATES

BACKYARD MONSTERS UNLEASHED

The player funnel for games



How can you create “sticky” new user experiences?

1. Know your player
2. Pursue ‘easy to learn, hard to master’
3. Give players reason to return
4. Create a social connections
5. Use an iterative approach to development

1. KNOW YOUR PLAYER

Identify your target market

- What are their demographics?
- What other games are they playing?
- Where are they playing?
- Who are they playing with?
- What learning styles should you appeal to?

Learning at the arcade

- Observe players better than you
- Memorize patterns
- Learn competitors’ strategy and tactics
- Spend one quarter at a time

Image courtesy of Brian L. Frank, Wired.com

Learning on your console

- Read the manual
- Buy strategy guides
- Play in-game tutorials
- Invest your money and time to learn

Learning online and mobile games

Readers

- Actively read tutorial text
- Willing to spend time to learn
- Value story and narrative

Cognitive learners

“I hate reading”

- Don’t read text, click mindlessly
- Impatient and easily frustrated
- Want instant gratification

Visual learners

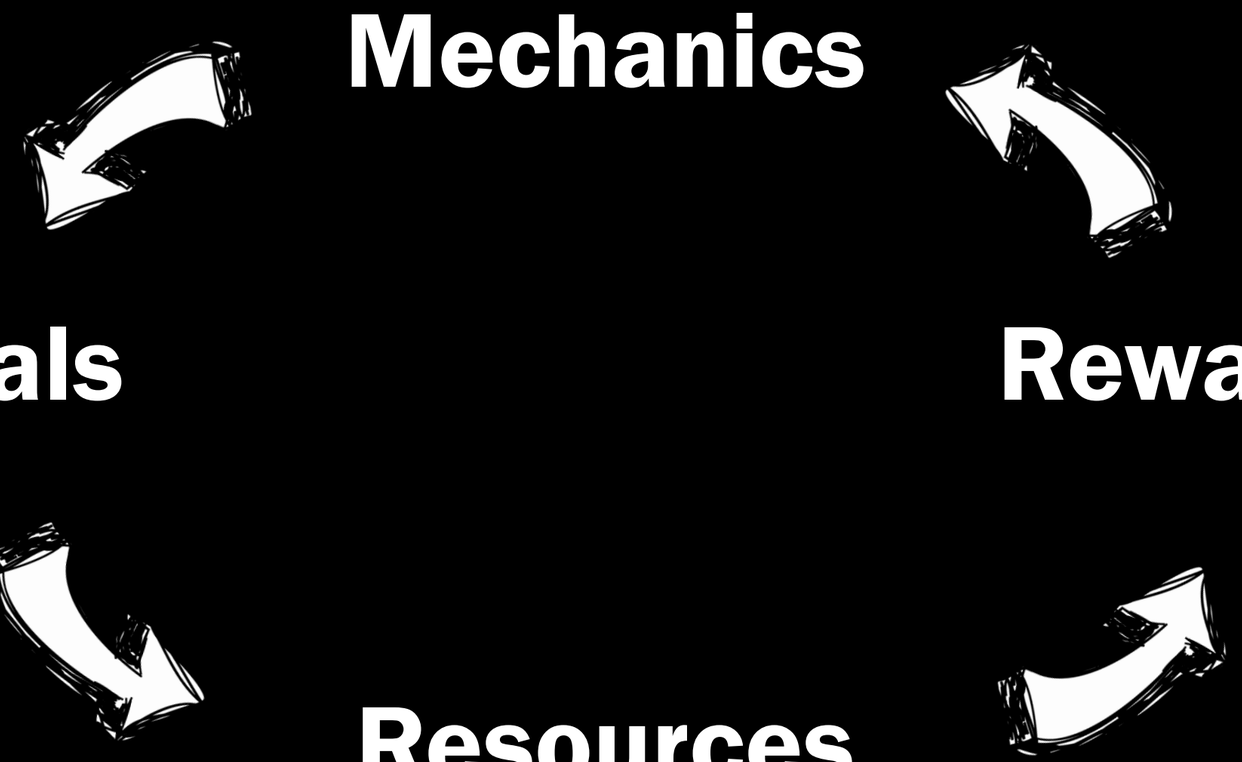
Appeal to both!

2. PURSUE ‘EASY TO LEARN, HARD TO MASTER’

Create the foundation for your game

- What is the story?
- Who are the characters?
- How are UI and controls introduced?
- What skills can be taught now? Later?

Guide players through core loops



Provide short & long term goals

Goals	Strategy Game	Puzzle Game	Motivation
Immediate	Collect resources	Pass this level	Progression Relaxation
On-going	Beat another player	Beat a friend’s score	Competition Revenge
Long term	Stay at top of the leaderboard	Stay ahead of my friends	Pride Status

3. GIVE PLAYERS REASON TO RETURN

Introduce depth and complexity

- Mission and achievement systems
- Aspirational items and rewards
- Weekly or monthly events
- Notifications for major in-game events

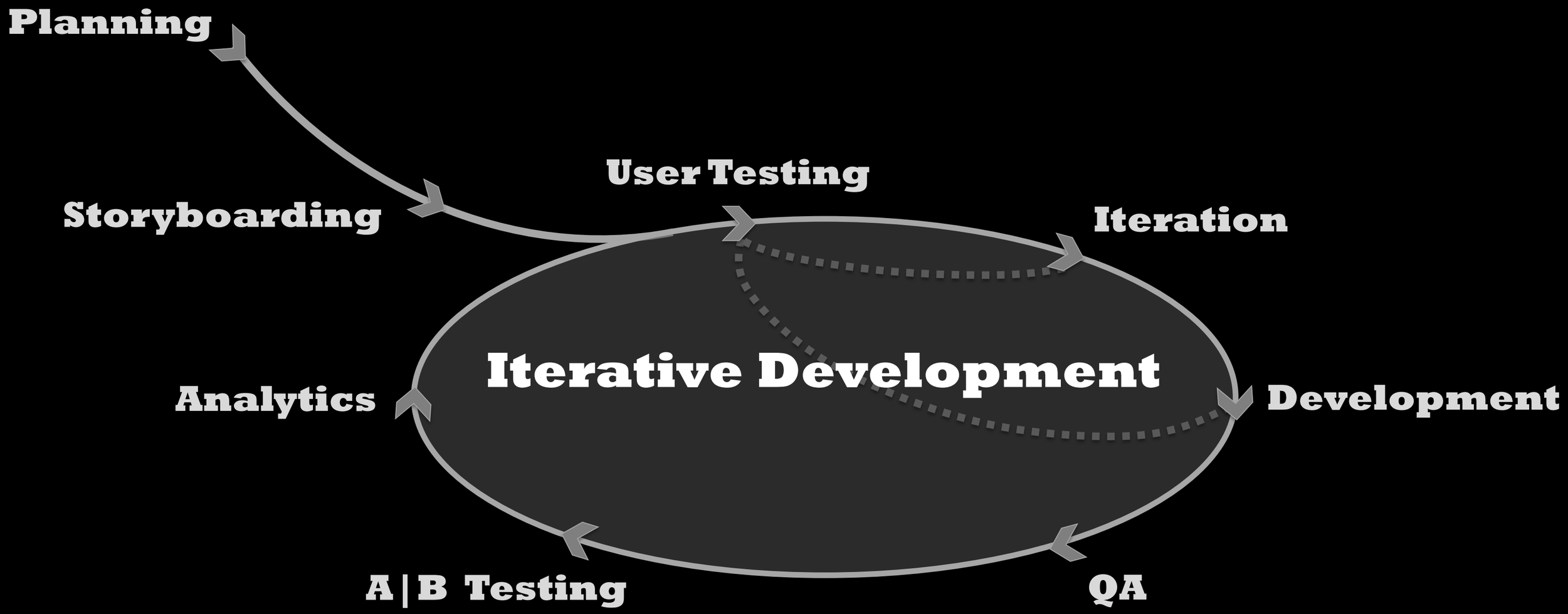
4. CREATE SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Create community with social interactions

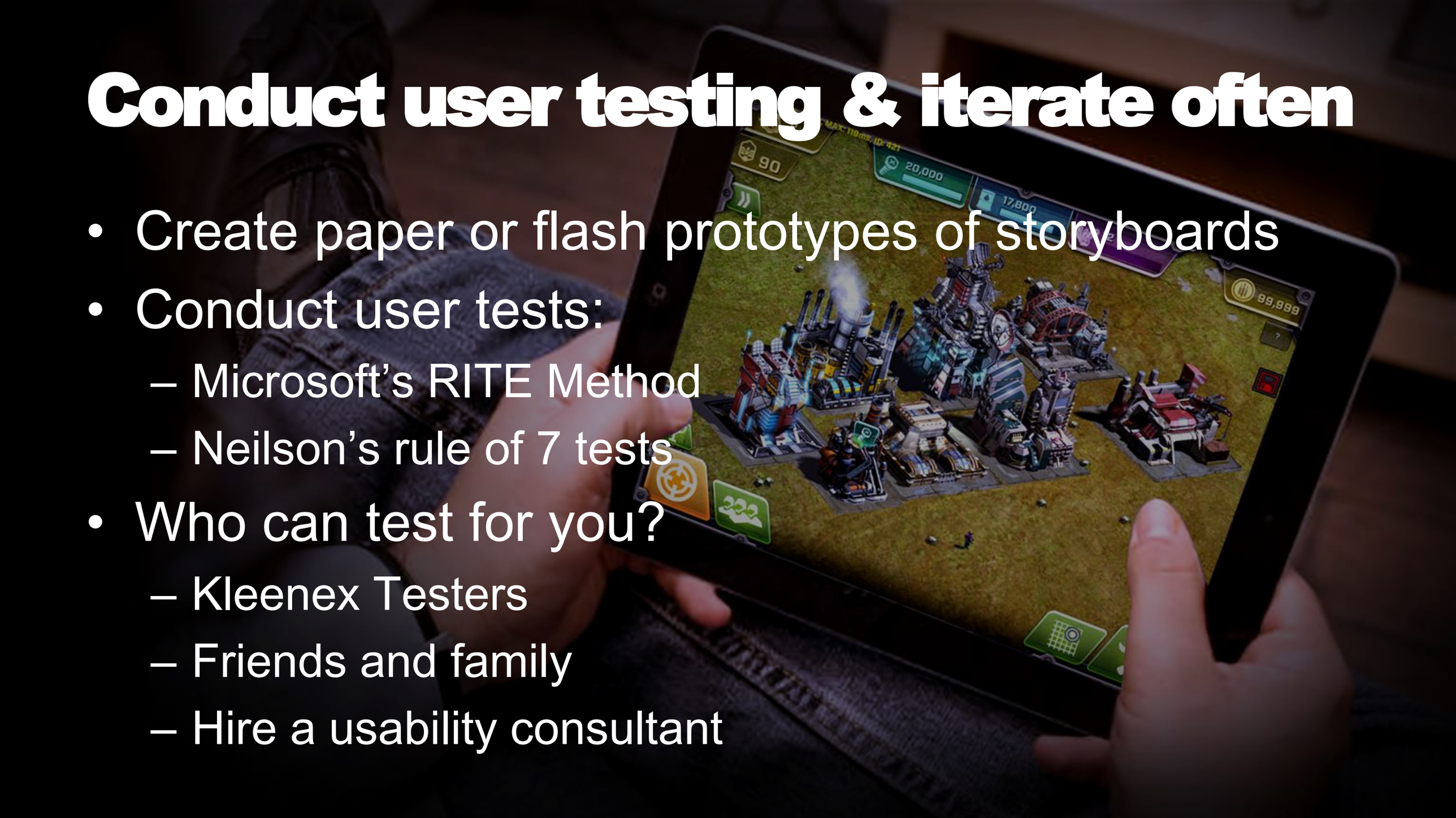
- Communication
- Charity
- Cooperation
- Comparison
- Competition

5. USE AN ITERATIVE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Great user experiences don't happen overnight



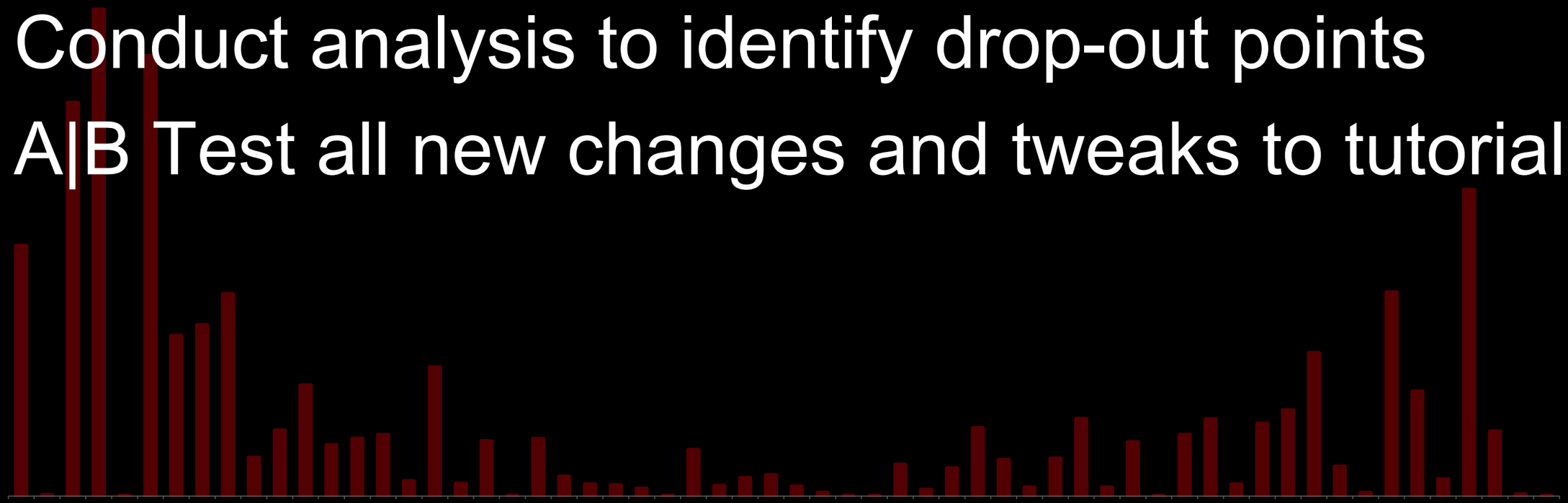
Conduct user testing & iterate often



- Create paper or flash prototypes of storyboards
- Conduct user tests:
  - Microsoft's RITE Method
  - Neilson's rule of 7 tests
- Who can test for you?
  - Kleenex Testers
  - Friends and family
  - Hire a usability consultant

Use analytics to ID trends

- Build event tracking in your game
- Track each tutorial step as an event
- Conduct analysis to identify drop-out points
- A|B Test all new changes and tweaks to tutorial



How can you measure stickiness?

DAU / MAU

Daily active users / Monthly active users

Monitor your New User Metrics!

RETENTION

- Retention = D1R/D3R/D7R
- DAU / MAU
- Tutorial completion rate
- Tutorial drop-off
- Session length
- Timeplayed
- Churn rate
- Visits per DAU

MONETIZATION

- ARPU, ARPPU
- Payment conversion rate
- Average transaction value
- First purchase trigger
- Paying user cohort
- LTV

“You almost cannot reward the player enough in the first 15 minutes of a game”

- Sid Meier -

Keys to Retention

- Teach core gameplay loops
- Provide clear goals – long and short term
- Use positive reinforcement
- Incorporate intuitive UI & UX flows
- Make it fun!

Keys to Monetization

- Demonstrate strong ROI on first purchase
- Tap into emotions such as:
  - Nurturing
  - Revenge
  - Gratitude
  - Pride
- Reduce friction in payment flow

Traps to avoid

- Teaching everything in the tutorial
- Making the player feel dumb
- Requiring players to provide personal info before they are invested in the game
- Spamming players to invite / post to their friends
- Dark UX

Words of wisdom

- Start planning your tutorial early
- Build time in your schedule for multiple iterations
- Have a 5th Grader play your game
- Don't be afraid to scrap it and start over!

QUESTIONS?

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