

# Design and Monetization Strategies in Highly Successful F2P Games

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# Design-centric Approach

- Let's look at successful F2P games through a game design lens
- This is NOT a talk about any of the following:
  - Metrics
  - Marketing
  - Production Process

# Design Parameters in F2P

- Trying to make money in the F2P landscape
  - Convert users as much as possible and for as much as possible
  - Increase the likelihood that any user will convert
- This means the game must be fun somehow -- why else would players stay?

# Design Parameters in F2P

- The game design includes the monetization.

# F2P Ecosystem Realities

- Most people will never pay anything, and many are actively looking to not pay.
- Most of your money will come from the small percent of whales.
- Therefore, you need to identify whales quickly and build the game to monetize them.

# Types of F2P Games

- I'm going to look at three types of F2P games for this purpose.
  - Single Player
  - Social Multiplayer
  - Hardcore Multiplayer
- Focus on one main example for each.
- Not meant to be comprehensive.

# Single Player

- Games where the core play is entirely by solitarily.
- There may be avenues to compare scores or share results, but you play alone.
- Game Example: King's Saga games (e.g. Candy Crush Saga, Pet Rescue)

# Incentives in Saga Games

- Players are trying to progress.
  - In Saga games, this means completing levels.
- Play is interesting when progress is interesting, and when it is appropriately challenging to progress.



# Progression Map



# Proper Level Difficulty



# Randomness as Obstacle





# Multiple Goal Structures



# Monetization as DDA



# Monetization as DDA



# Other Types of Single Player

- Similar tactics work in other multiplayer games
- Take Endless Runners
  - Achievements and Score and Distance as measures
  - Random level layout in a fixed difficulty range
  - Purchased power-ups as just-in-time boosts to goals

# Core Takeaways – Saga Games

- Focus on level design (variety and challenge)
- Build multiple progression models for hardcore players
- Use just-in-time purchases as player-controlled DDA



# Social Multiplayer

- “Grind” Multiplayer
  - Anyone can advance given enough time.
- Progression is a core system, but it's more strategic than challenge based.
- Multiplayer play is asynchronous, but rich.
- Game example: Clash of Clans

# Social Multiplayer Incentives

- Players are trying to build and protect their advancement.
  - Mostly an individual advancement rather than a progress map
- Teams work together to achieve.
- Teams have rivals and want to hurt them.

# Multiple Advancement Vectors



# Multiple Advancement Vectors



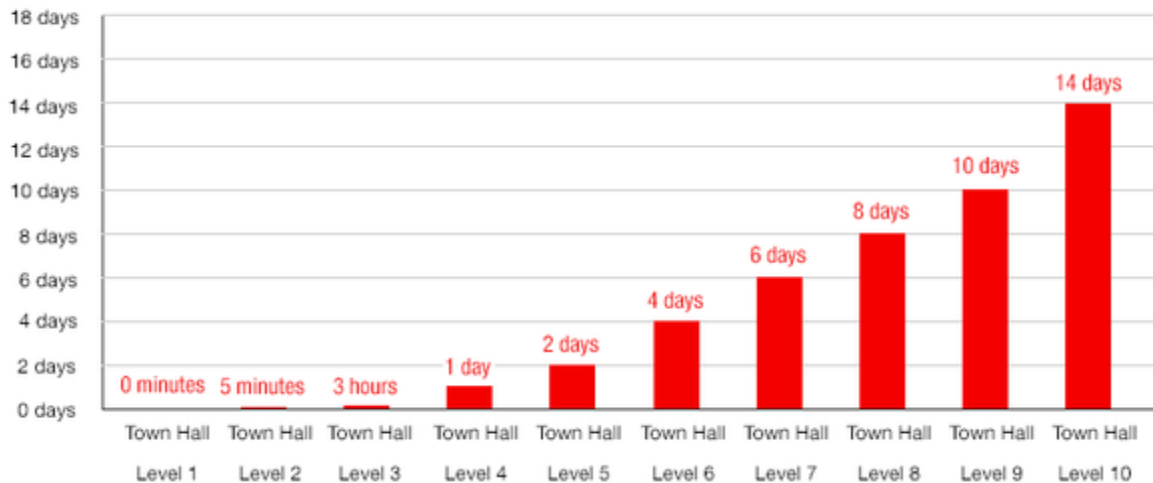
# Multiple Advancement Vectors



# Time Gating



TOWN HALL COMPLETION TIMES IN CLASH OF CLANS





# Time Gating



# Clan Responsibilities





# Clan Responsibilities



A screenshot of a Clash of Clans clan page. The header features the game logo, a shield with two arrows, and the word "TROOPS" in large yellow letters. Below "TROOPS" is the text "Requested/Donated" in blue. The clan information bar shows a rainbow icon, "Members: 47/50", "Type:", and "Required trophies:". The main table lists the top three members with their ranks, avatars, names, and troop statistics.

				Troops donated:	Troops received:	
1.		99 	MasterOfAll 	209	78	5125 
2.		46 	Xtrooper 	0	30	2662 
3.		21 	Porcup 	158	22	2012 

# Clan Responsibilities

The interface displays the 'Top Clans' section of a Clash of Clans Clan Tournament. At the top, there are tabs for 'My League', 'Top Clans', 'Top Players', and 'Search Clans'. A red banner at the top right indicates that the top 3 clans receive rewards: 20,000 gems for 1st place, 10,000 for 2nd, and 6,000 for 3rd. The tournament ends in 05 minutes. Below the banner, a list of the top 8 clans is shown, each with a rank, a small icon, the clan name, a 'Tap to view details' link, the number of members, and the clan's score with a trophy icon.

Rank	Clan Name	Members	Score
1.	<b>bonbee canada</b> <small>Tap to view details</small>	50/50	36353
2.	<b>NORTH 44</b> <small>Tap to view details</small>	50/50	36351
3.	<b>NATIONAL ITALY</b> <small>Tap to view details</small>	49/50	35487
4.	<b>Quantum Rage</b> <small>Tap to view details</small>	46/50	32874
5.	<b>The Uprising</b> <small>Tap to view details</small>	44/50	32091
6.	<b>BRASIL AVENGERS</b> <small>Tap to view details</small>	47/50	30849
7.	<b>KPACHAJ PLOWADB</b> <small>Tap to view details</small>	45/50	30263
8.	<b>UAE</b> <small>Tap to view details</small>	50/50	30230

# Clan “Responsibilities”



# Core Takeaways – Grind Games

- Time planning needs to be balanced carefully for all attributes
- Incentives for players to collaborate need to be complex but understandable.
- Revenge structures motivate resource expenditure.

# Hardcore Multiplayer

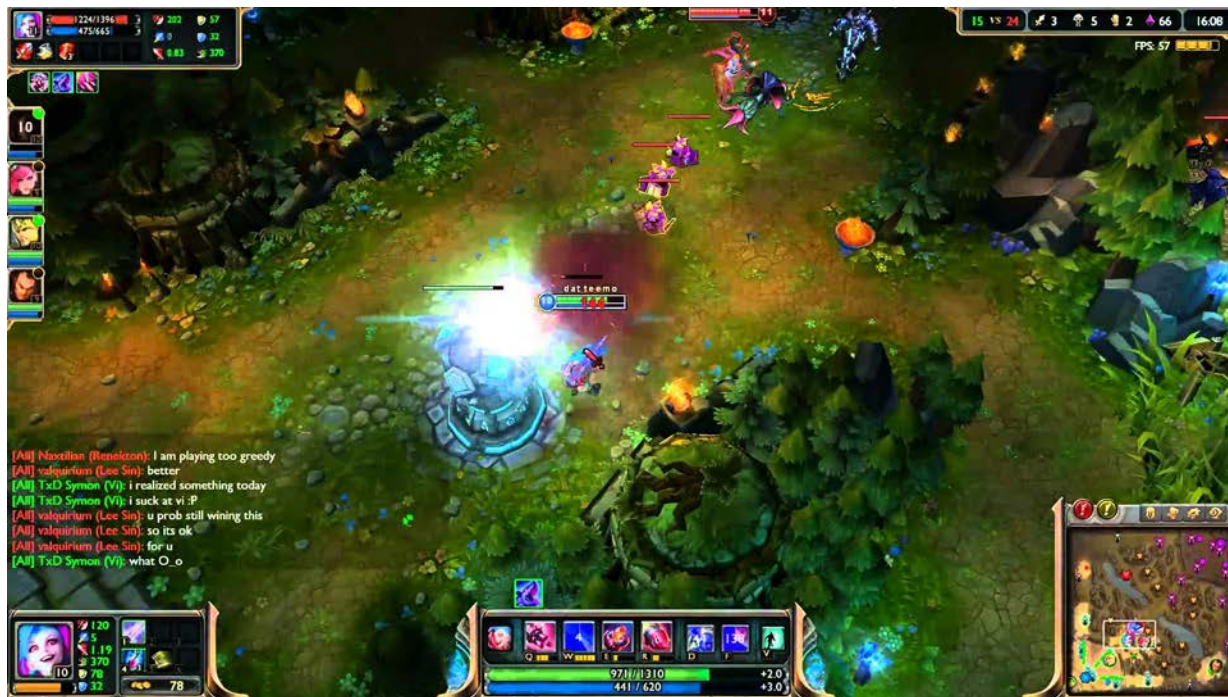
- “Skilled” Multiplayer
  - Players advance based on how well they play.
- These games are strategically deep and difficult to master.
- Multiplayer play is synchronous and involved.
- Game example: League of Legends

# Hardcore Multiplayer Incentives

- Players want to demonstrate their skill.
  - Money cannot trump skill.
- Players specialize and define themselves in relation to the game's mechanics in idiosyncratic ways.
- Groups of players want to play at the same level.



# Deep Core Skill-Based Play

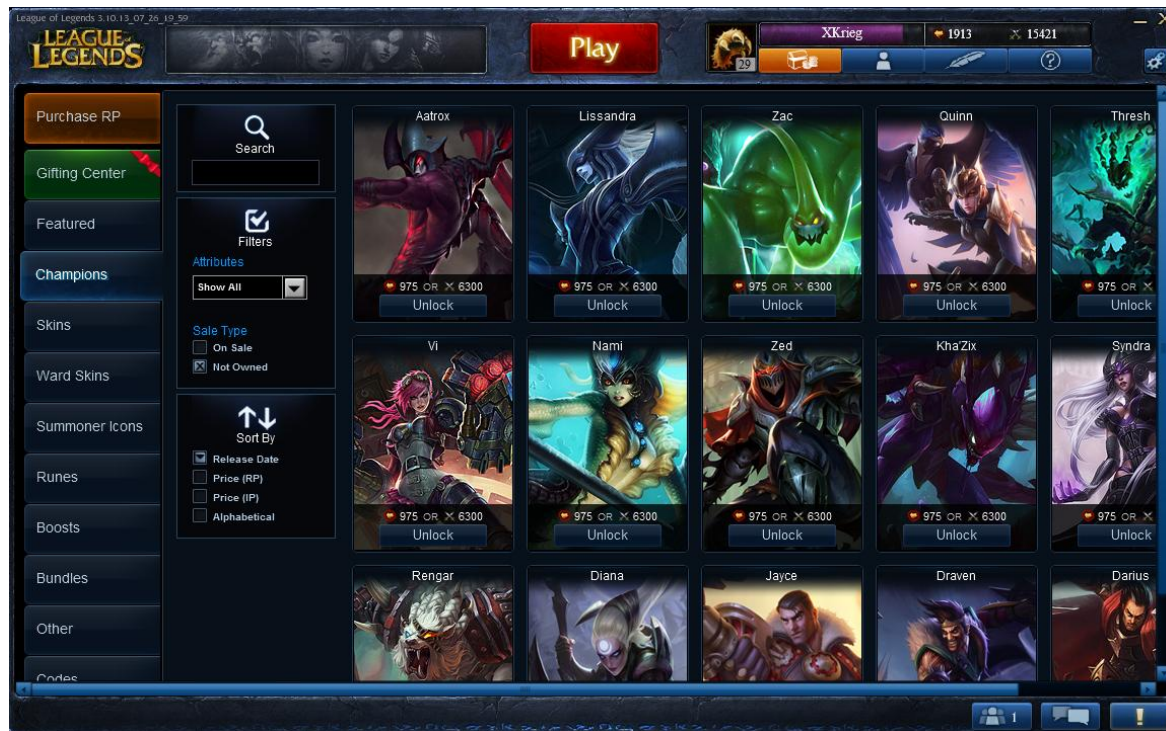


# Deep Core Skill-Based Play

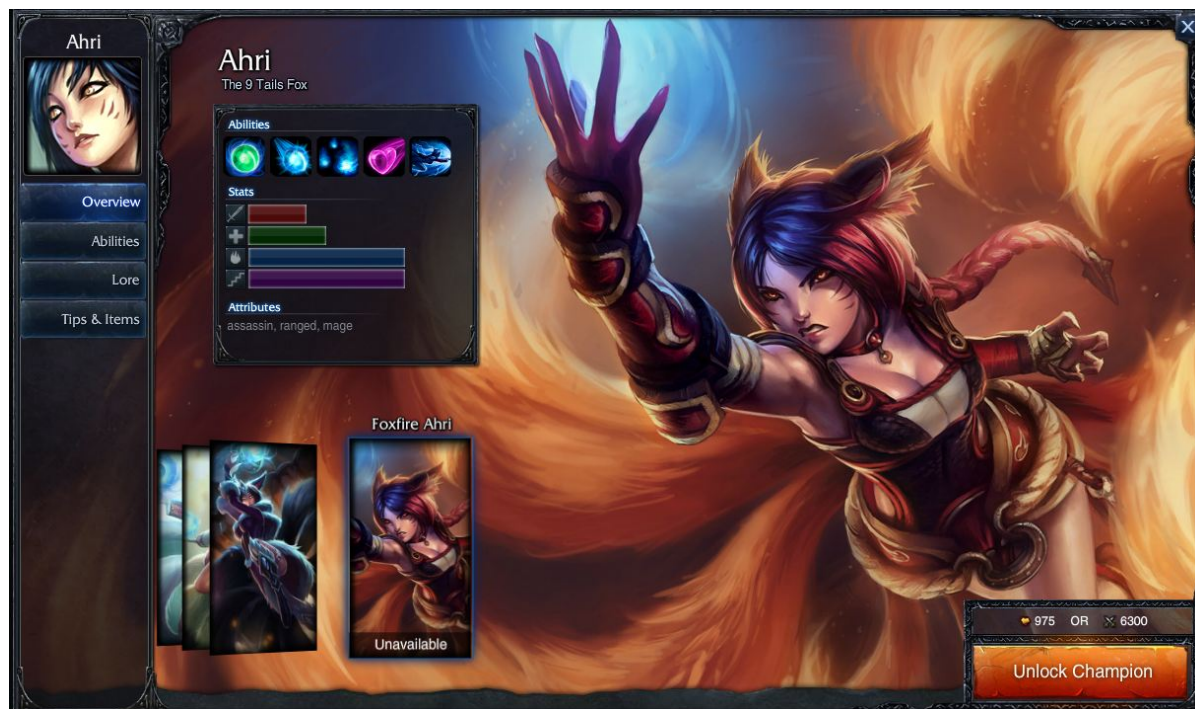




# Gates on Advanced Play



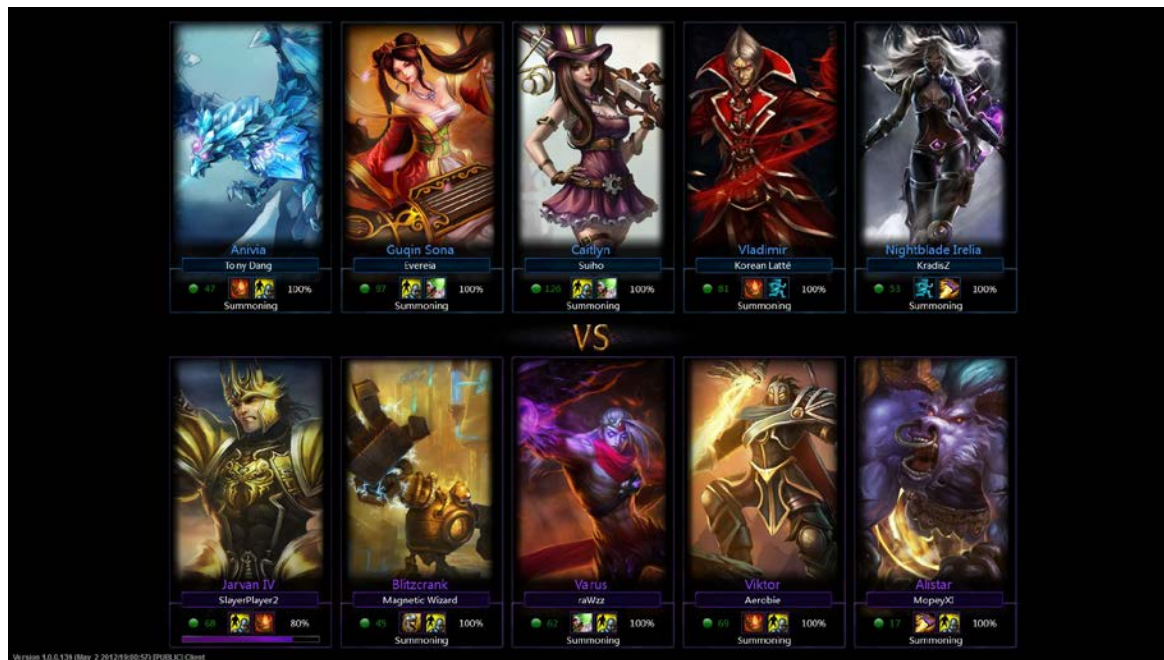
# Vanity Items for Personalization



# Team Play Optimization



# Team Play Optimization



# Core Takeaways – Hardcore

- Monetization gets players to an even field to compete.
- Dedicated players take deep pride in play and will personalize.
- Team incentives create pressure to keep up with each other and thus spend.

# Common Lessons

- Make a complete, but sub-optimal, experience for casual users. Keep them in.
- Explore your mechanics for hardcore motivations and monetize those.
- Understand your audiences community to figure out how status and teamwork manifest.



# Common Lessons

- Make a complete, but sub-optimal, experience for casual users. Keep them in.
- Explore your mechanics for hardcore motivations and monetize those.
- Multiple vectors of achievement make completion both harder and more interesting.

# Common Lessons

- Leverage the social community that your game creates through its incentives.
  - Collaboration and gifting
  - Competition and rivalry



# Thank You

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