PLAYING YOUR OWN GAME: HOW MOBILE INDIES CAN MAXIMIZE THEIR CHANCES BEFORE GLOBAL LAUNCH

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Co-Founder

EXECUTION LABS

@Ztakk

GDC 2015

YOUR FEEDBACK IS SUPER HELPFUL!

> "A whole lot of numbers and graphs, and Keith was at times less engaging than one might wish."

> "Way to [sic] chart heavy."

> "Took to long to get to the point."

WHY INDIE STUDIOS HAVE NO BUSINESS WHATSOEVER TRYING TO SELF PUBLISH FREE TO PLAY MOBILE GAMES

(P.S. YOU'RE WELCOME)

WHY THE HELL ARE YOU DOING F2P?

- Market is now impenetrable for small developers
- Almost certain financial failure
- Must have a plan beyond this game

A BUNCH OF INDIES COLLABORATING

CARDBOARD UTOPIA

POUPOU INTERACTIVE

OUTERMINDS

switchblade monkeys

sand sailor studio

nine dots

DATA SOURCES AND ANALYSIS

Core RPG

Casual to Mid-Core Brawler

Core Exploration RPG

Core PVP City Builder

<Special Thanks to Lysiane Charest>

A QUICK LOOK AT THE GAMES

Shattered Planet

Big Action Mega Fight

A QUICK LOOK AT THE GAMES

The Order of Souls

WinterForts: Exiled Kingdom

SOME THINGS WE'LL TALK ABOUT

- Understanding the market and your studio's goals
- Where to test/soft launch your game
- Icon testing
- The impact of platform featuring
- Revenue expectations
- Forward-looking approaches

IF YOU MUST, AT LEAST HAVE A PLAN…

GAME OF WAR by MACHINE ZONE
(iOS – FREE)

Grossing	Similarities	Differences	Praised For	Blam
iOS US **Overall #18** Games #12 Strategy #1 RPG #2	Builder game, can only do one action at a time (one worker), troops can be used as defense, similar overall flow, game is in 2D, pretty hardcore, more mature visual style.	Predefined spots for placing buildings, super complex micro systems, global positioning of players on a map, Stronghold is not the only building that dictates progression and unlocks.	Ability to chat with players no matter the language (ultra powerful translation system that makes many jealous!), sophisticated means of social communication, original Hospital mechanic, cool speed up mechanic through the help of allies.	Cluttered guided, ve quest syst inclined t P2W, simi Kabam's *of Camelo* many thir on on the buildings duplicate

TOTAL CONQUEST by GAMELOFT
(iOS / Android – FREE)

Grossing	Similarities	Differences	Praised For	Blamed For
iOS US **Overall #165** Games #150 Action #34 Strategy #30	Combat strategy, bunker mechanic where troops are stored (militia), gate system on the walls, use of catapults, overall flow.	Can build anywhere, no placing tile system, no castle feeling, toony graphical style, not possible to carry troops placed in bunker to the fight, full 3D.	Pretty graphics, impressive sounds, original bunker mechanics, full 3D, nice potion system, being able to adjust the vertical angle, interesting god and potion system.	Clash of Clans with a Roman theme, takes a lot of time to load, 3D glitches with collisions, hard to read in battle, drop of frame rates, horrible selection system, placing building is a chore, too few innovations.

NORSFELL

WINTER FORTS

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CAN I BUY A ~~VOWEL~~ INSTALL?

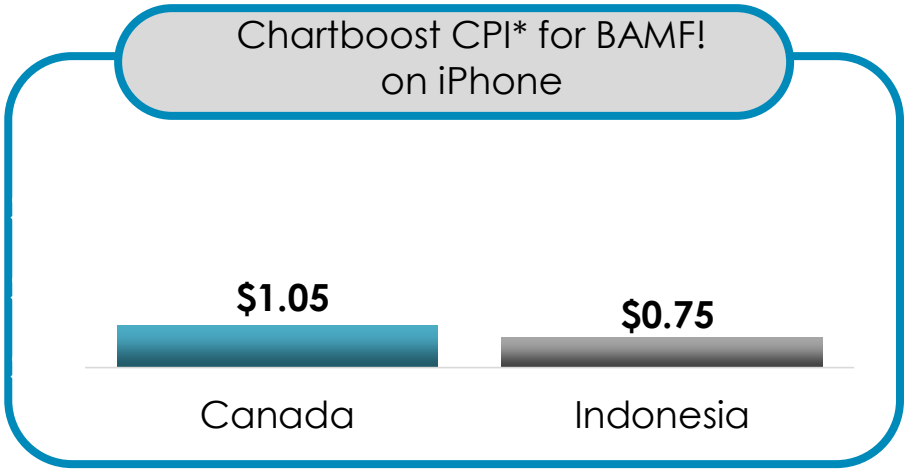
> **In December, CPI for iOS increased to $1.17…Android's CPI increased to $1.41.**
> *–Fiksu, January 2015*

> **The average cost-per-install of an iOS app is 85% higher than that of Android Apps.**
> *–InMobi, September 2014*

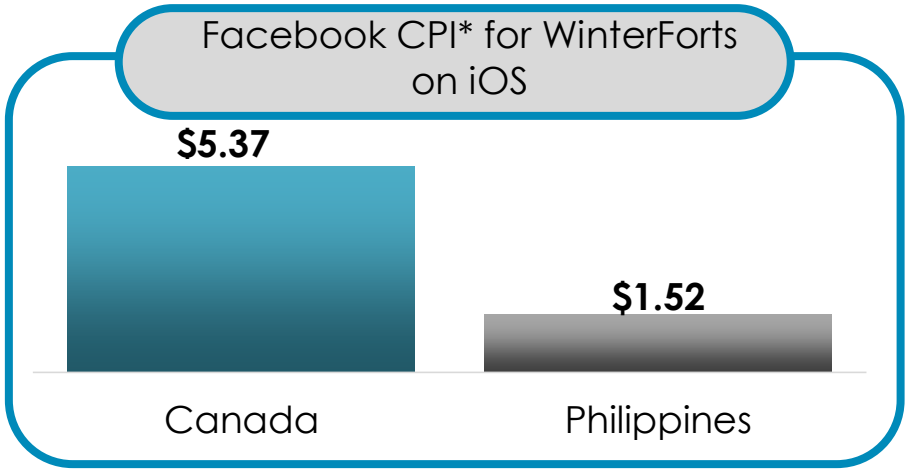
> **SuperData estimates that the current CPI for mobile games in the Apple App Store stands at $2.73 and is trending up.**
> *–TabTimes, March 2014*

WTF?

SOUTHEAST ASIA IS THE NEW CANADA

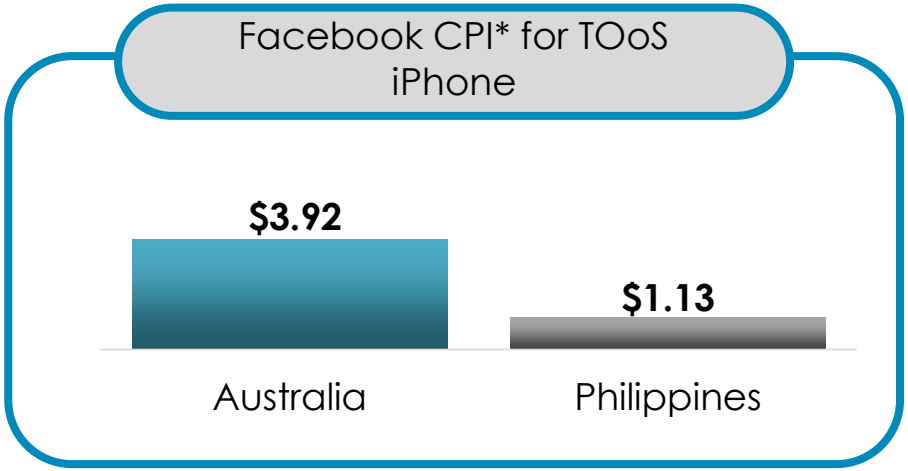


*October 2013

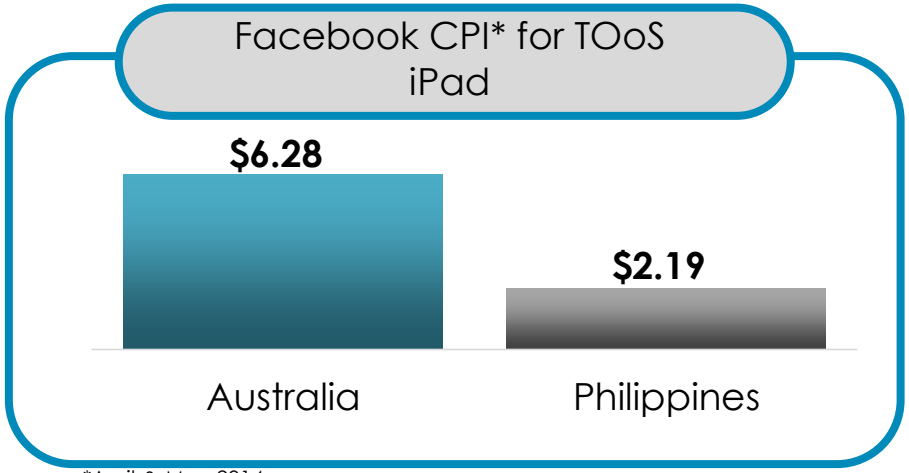


*August & September 2014

IT'S ALSO THE NEW AUSTRALIA

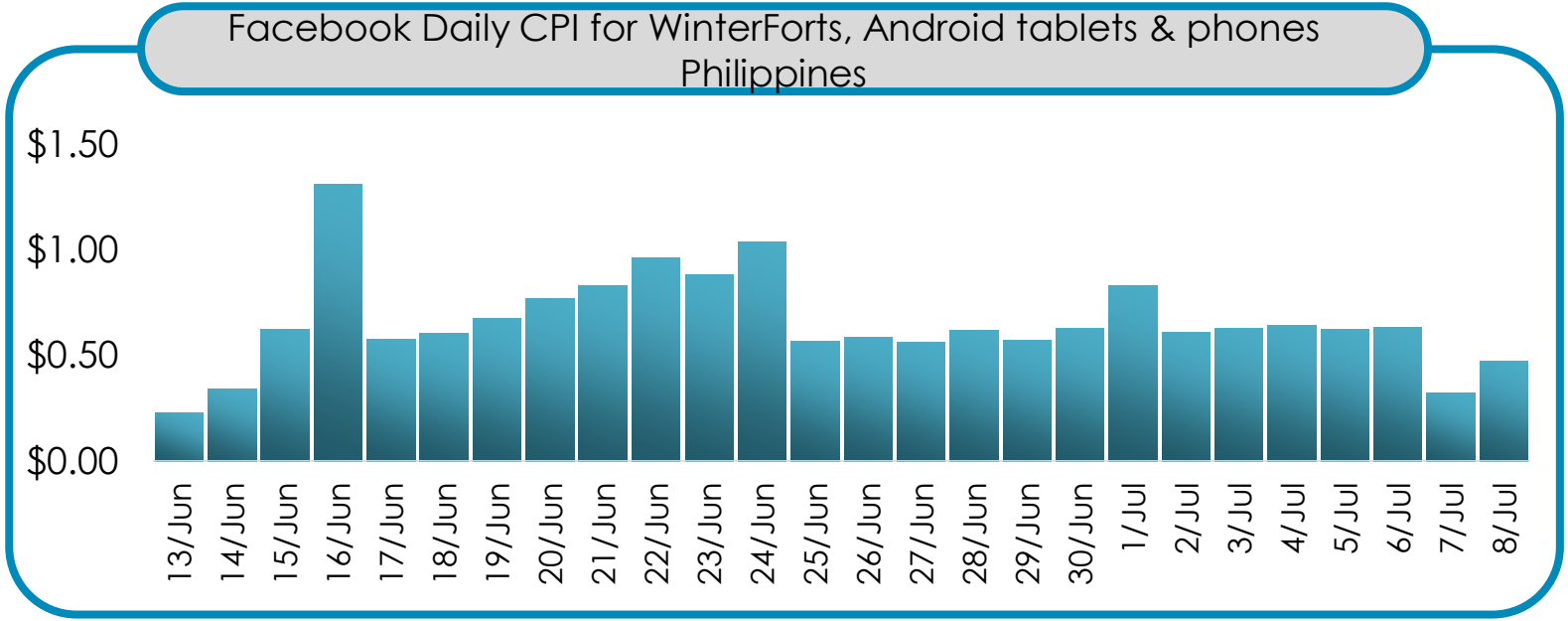


*June 2014

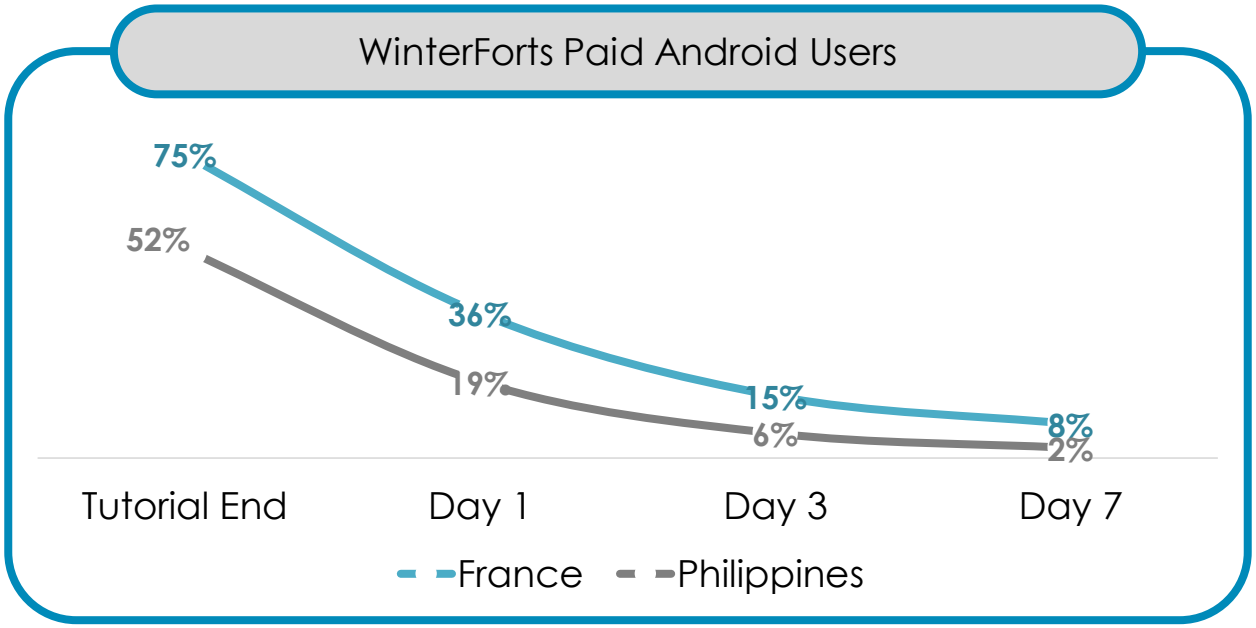


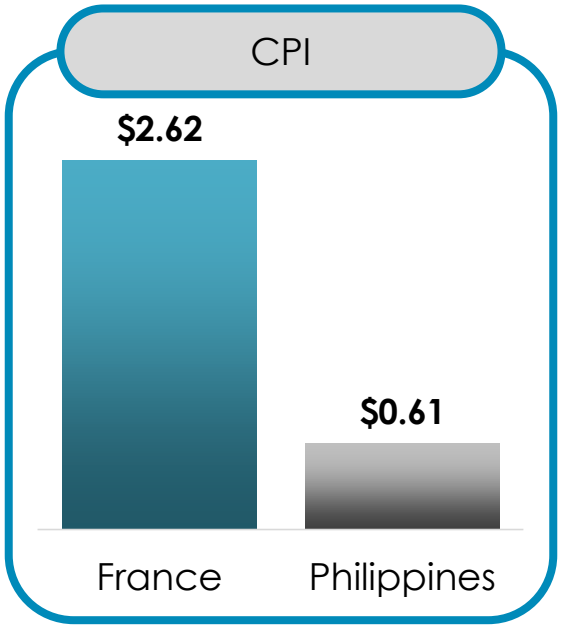
*April & May 2014

SOUTHEAST ASIA IS A BIG PLACE

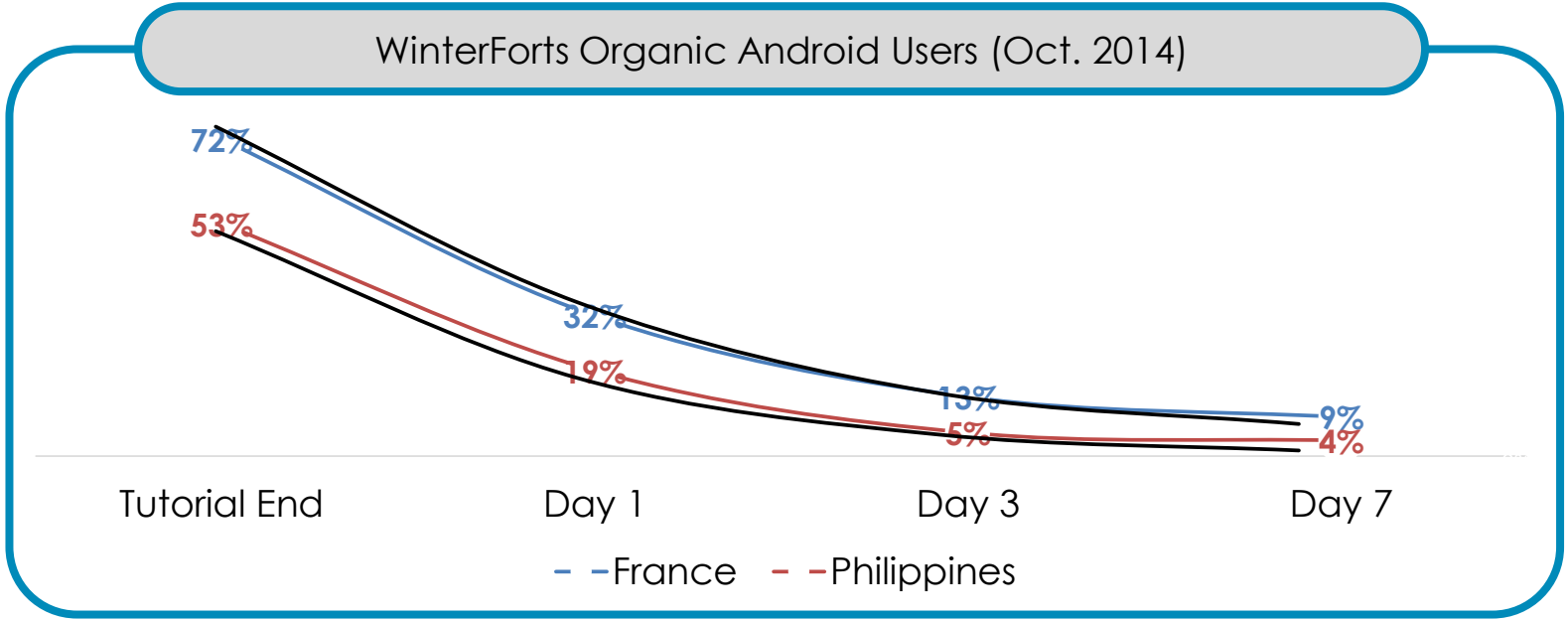


SANITY CHECKING THE NUMBERS

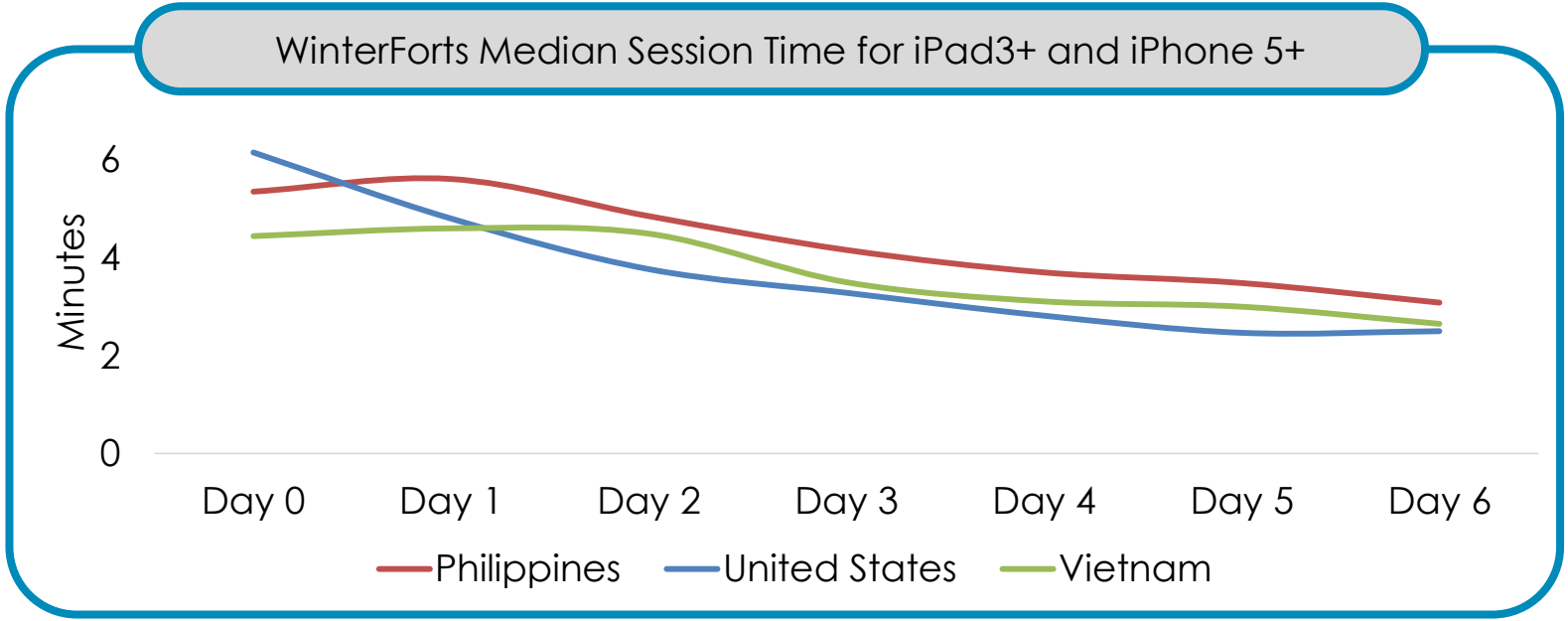




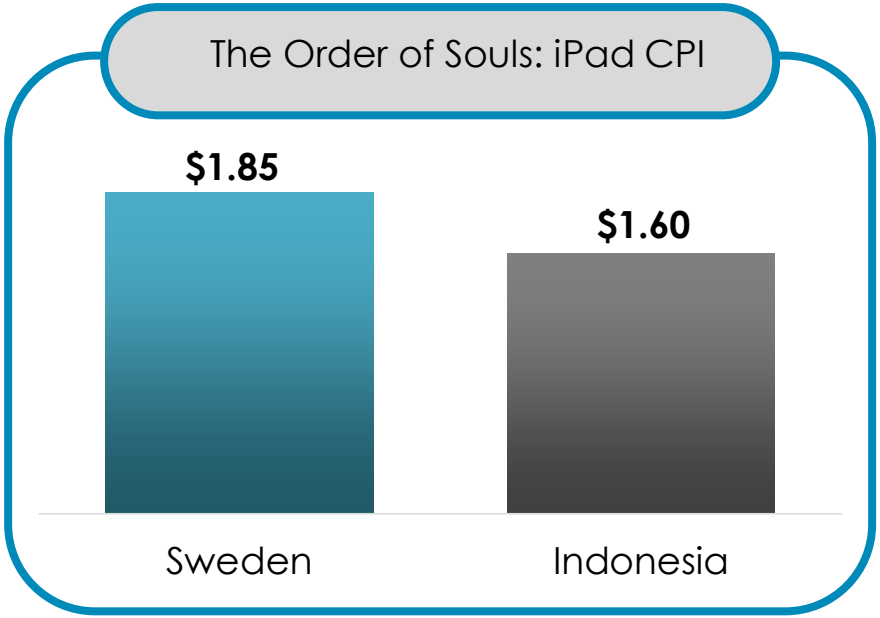
FTUE COMPLETION RATE VARIABILITY

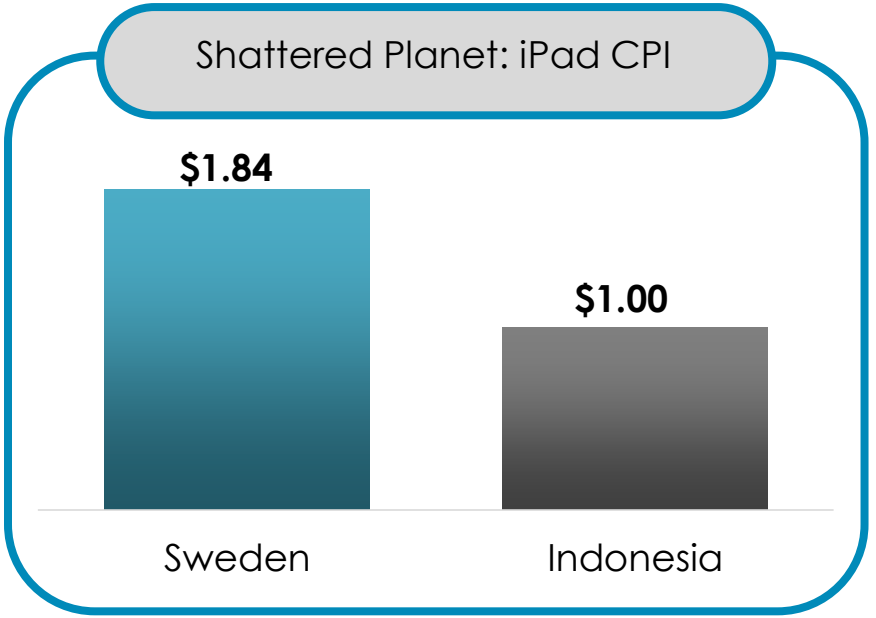


MORE SANITY CHECKING: SESSION LENGTH



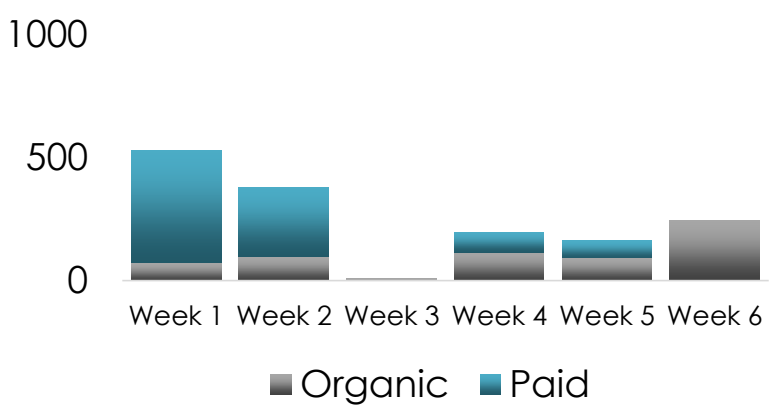
SWEDEN VS INDONESIA: CHARTBOOST



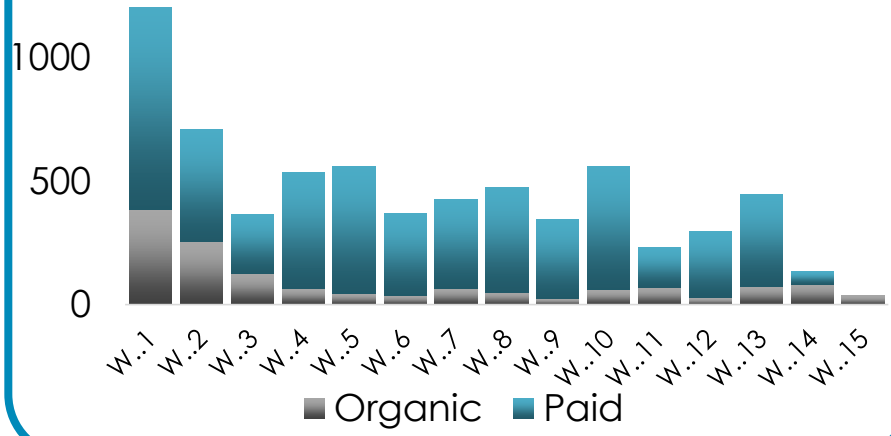


SOFT LAUNCH UA AND TESTING APPROACH

WinterForts iOS Installs

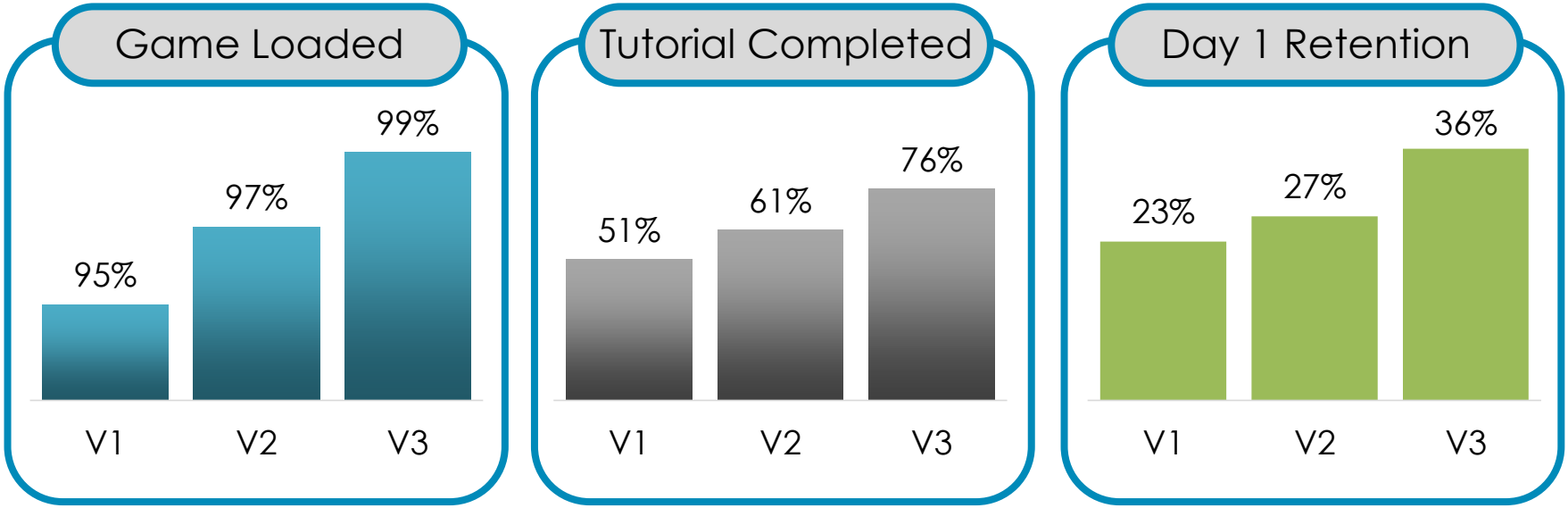


WinterForts Android Installs

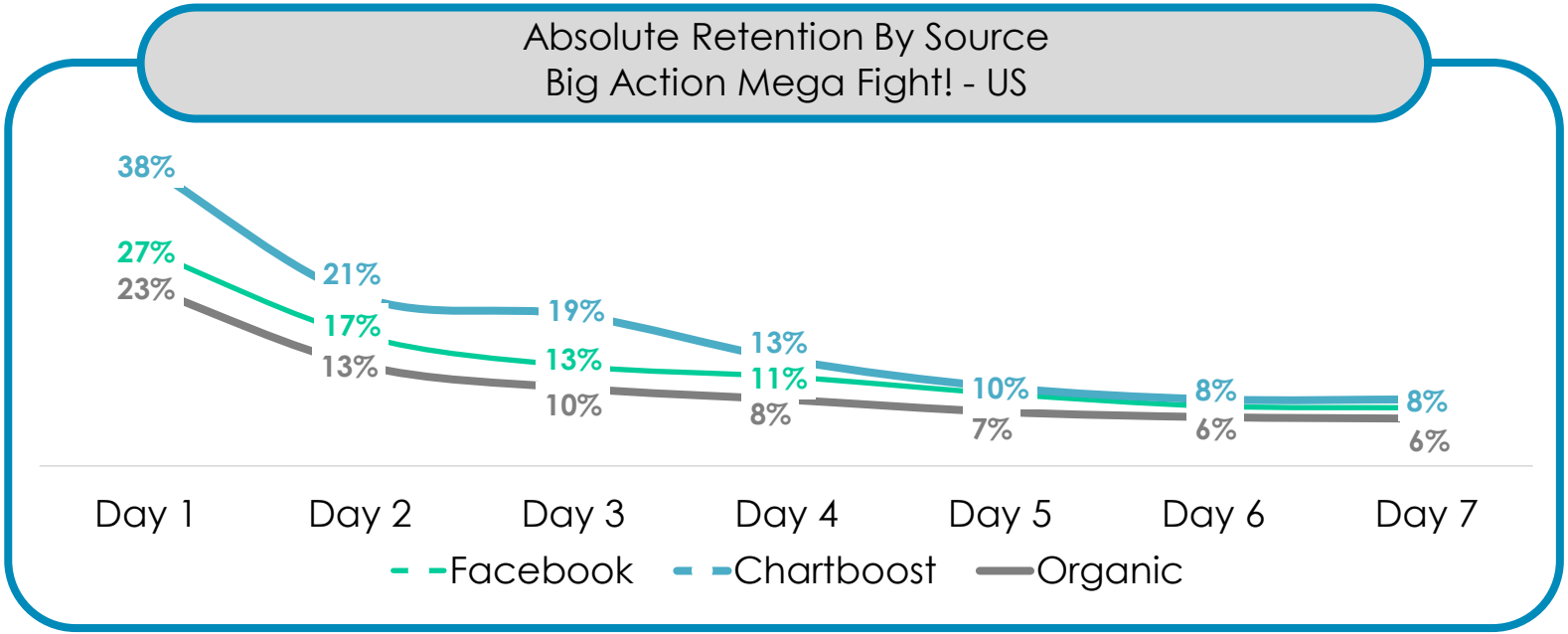


$9k spent during soft launch (3 months, 2 platforms)

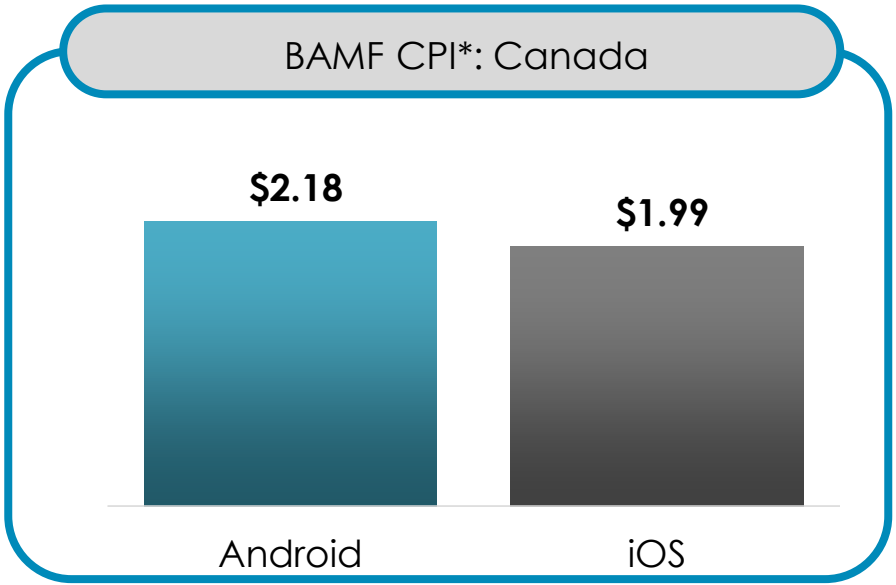
THE VALUE OF FREQUENT UPDATES: WINTERFORTS UTILIZATION OF ANDROID

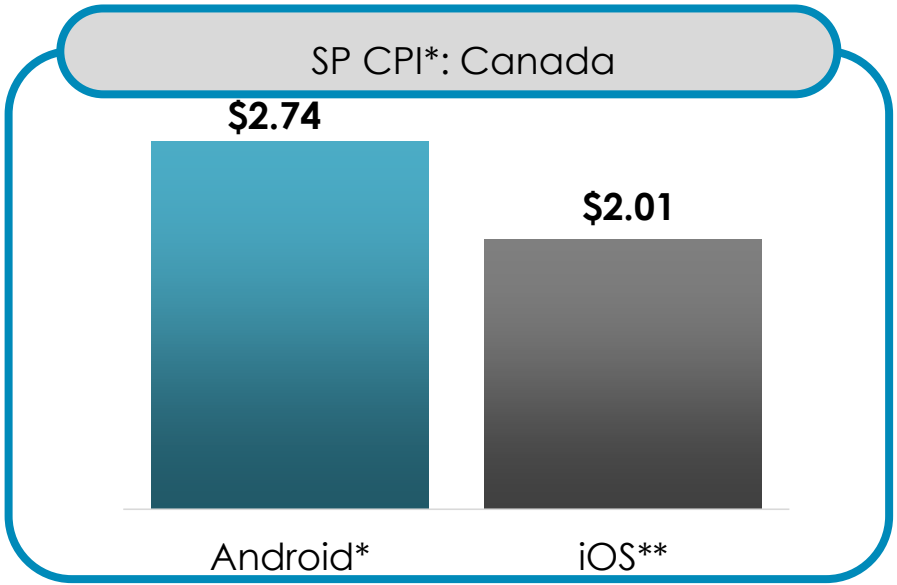


THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTRIBUTION



IOS VS ANDROID CPI'S: FACEBOOK





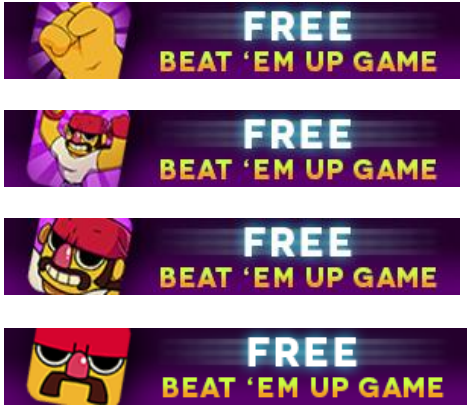
*February 2014 **January 2014

HOW NOT TO DO ICON TESTING

Attempt #1

CTR Range: .52%-.57%

Attempt #3



CTR Range: .44%-.52%

Back to the Drawing Board!

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HOW (WE THINK) TO DO ICON TESTING

.717% CTR

1.085% CTR

.618% CTR

1.194% CTR

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SHATTERED PLANET ICON

Round 1

.8% CTR

Round 2

1.3% CTR

1.1% CTR

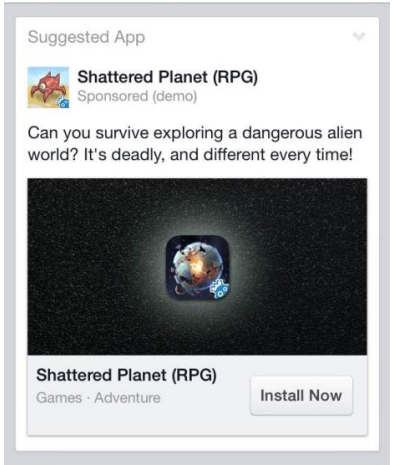
Round 3

1.7% CTR

1.8% CTR

1.6% CTR

Developer's Choice



Example Ad

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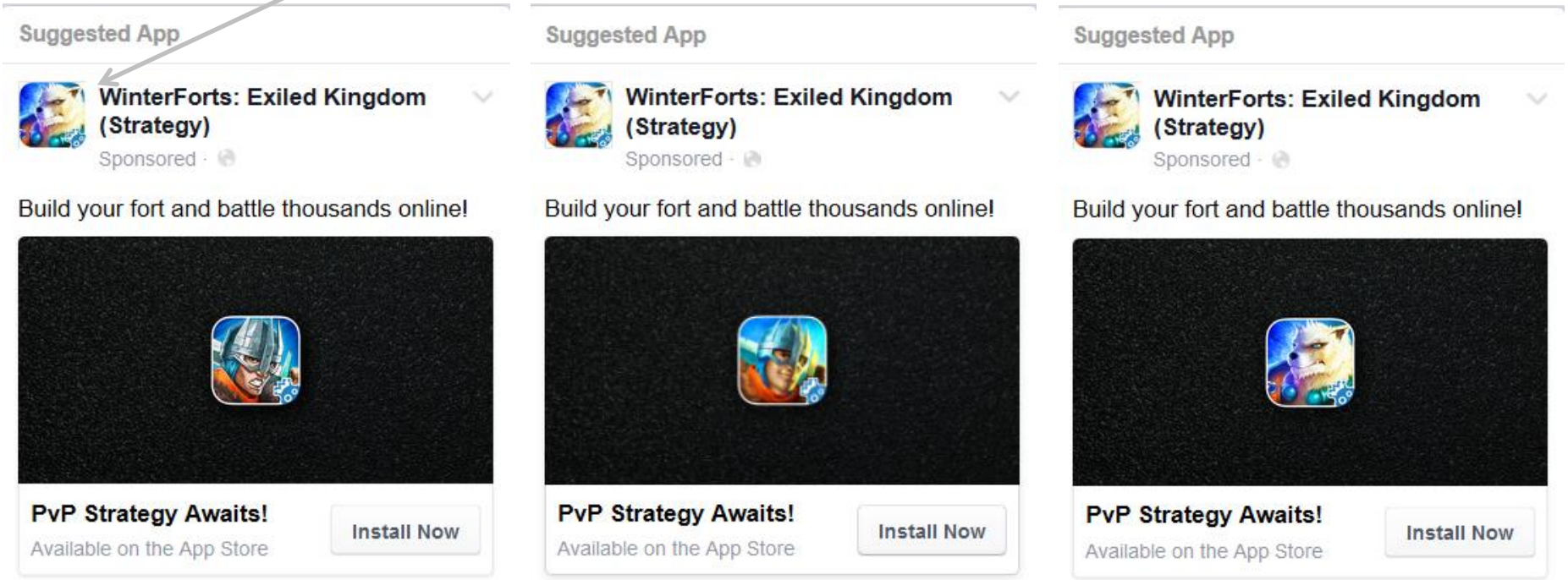
STILL DOIN' IT!

Sadly, Facebook now forces you to use whatever small icon is currently live.



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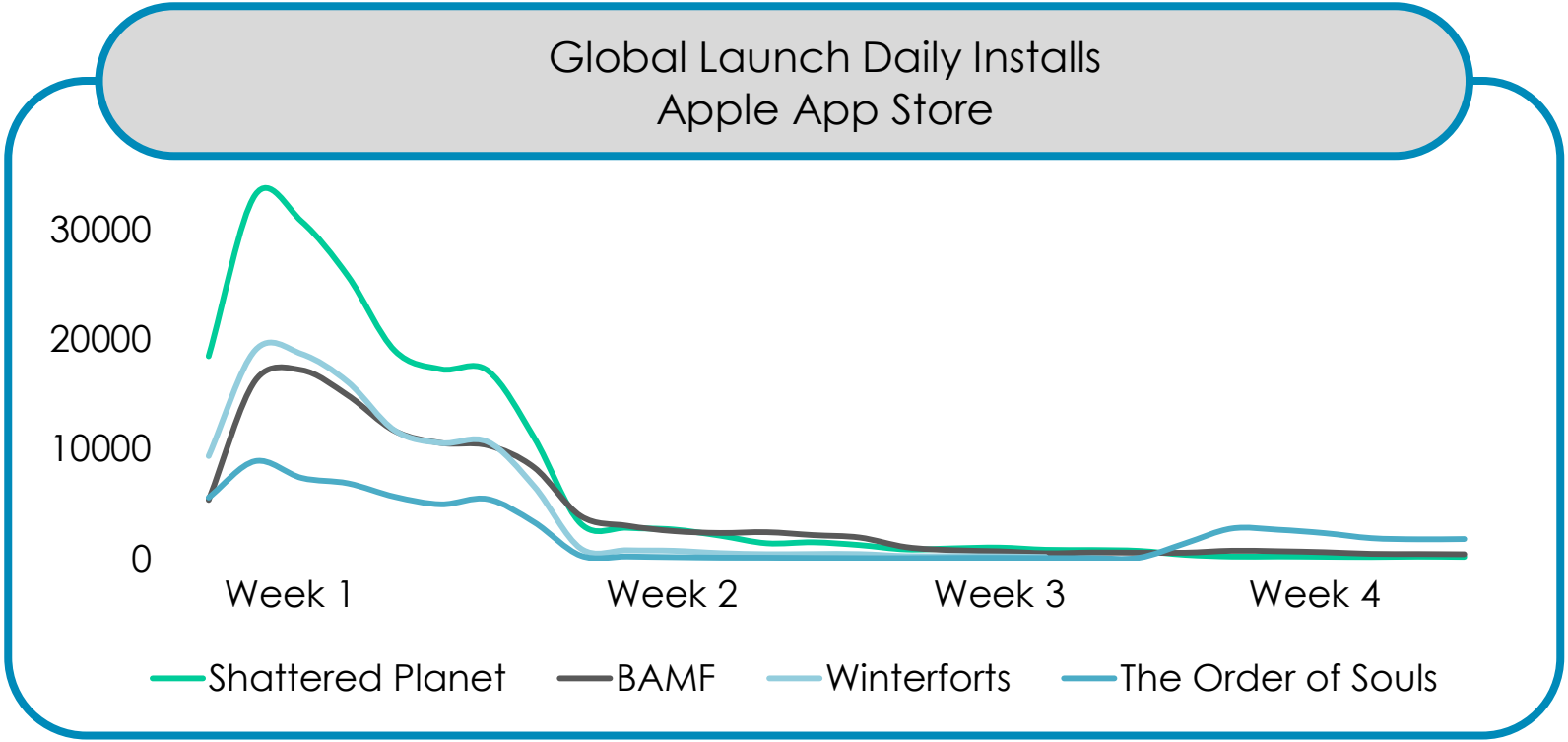
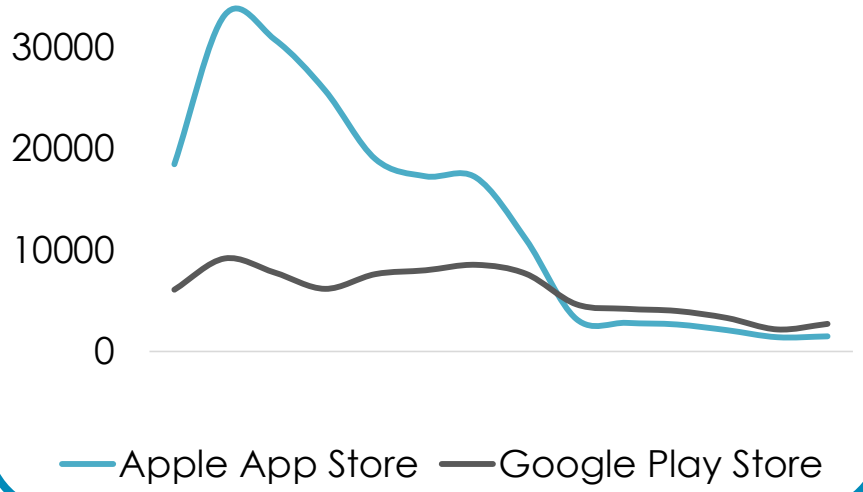
APPLE FEATURING IMPACT

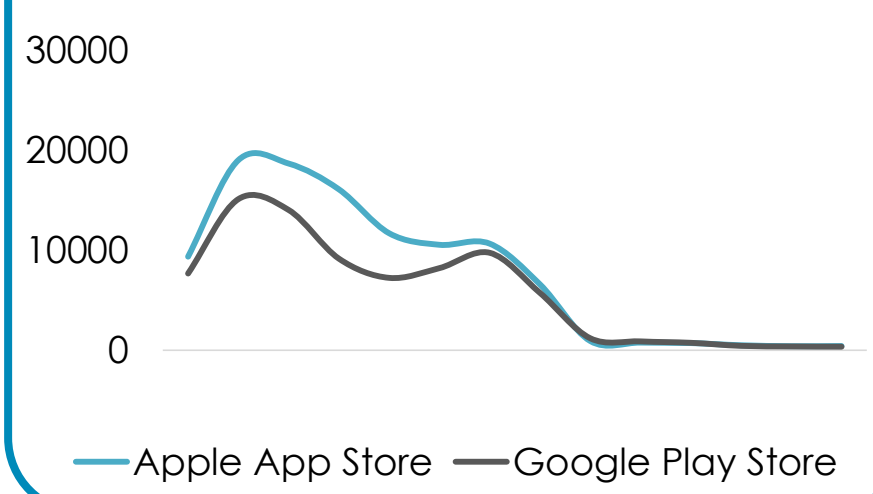


APPLE & GOOGLE FEATURING IMPACT

Global Launch Daily Installs
Shattered Planet

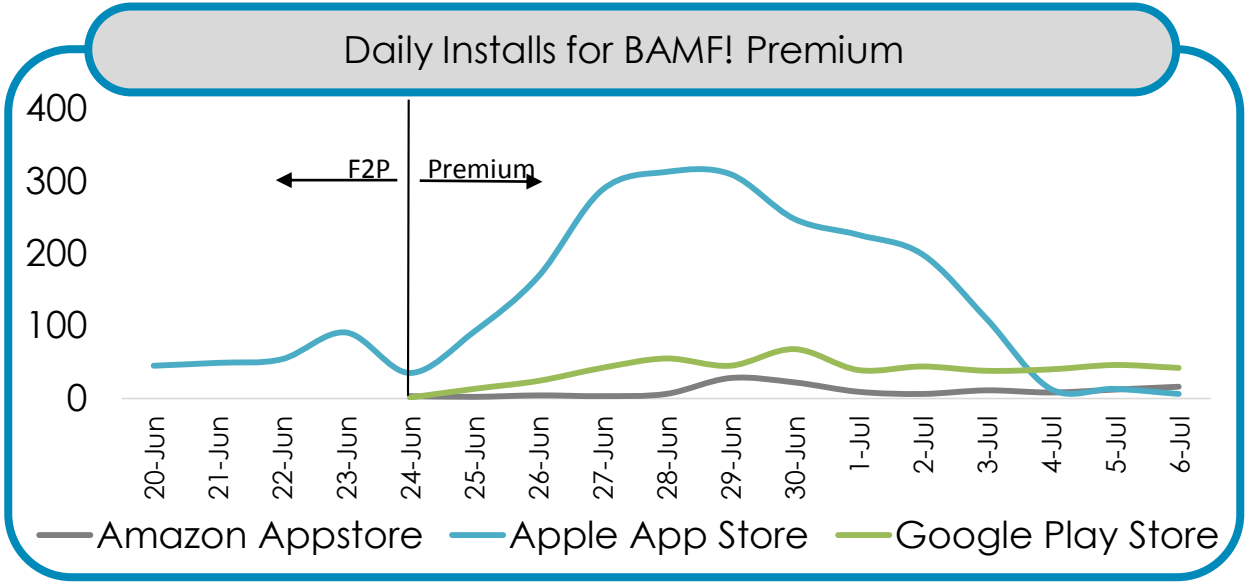


Global Launch Daily Installs
WinterForts



NORSFELL: F2P AS PUBLISHER PROOF

DOUBLE STALLION: F2P AS A SPRINGBOARD



DOUBLE STALLION: F2P AS A SPRINGBOARD

Utilized F2P engine for project deal

Secured VC seed funding

Received CMF funding

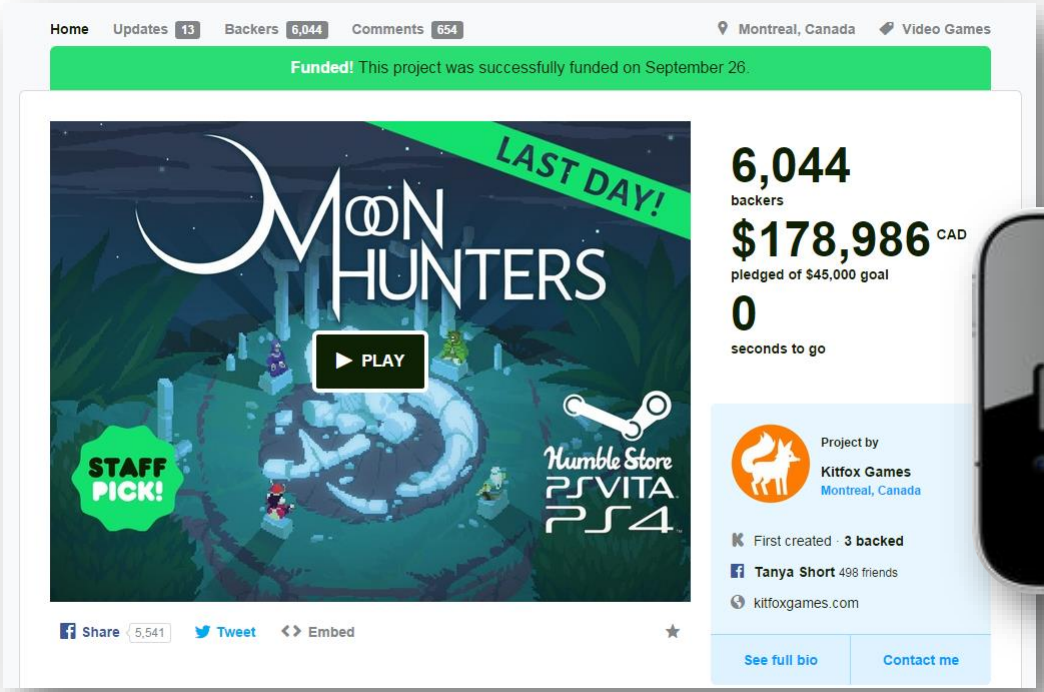
KITFOX: F2P AS A MARKETING TOOL

Results?
Two Months, F2P Mobile: $20k
Two Weeks, Premium PC: $45k

Average time to Greenlight: 90 days

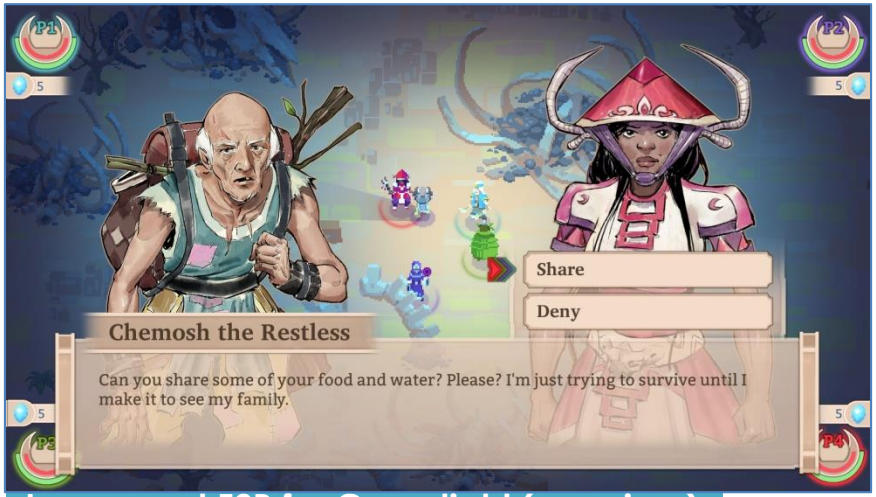
Shattered Planet time to Greenlight: 8 days

KITFOX: F2P AS A MARKETING TOOL



EXECUTION LABS

KITFOX: F2P AS A MARKETING TOOL



Leveraged F2P for Greenlight (premium)

Used F2P eyeballs for Kickstarter

Named by PC Gamer and Rock, Paper Shotgun a “2015 game of the year”

WHY INDIE STUDIOS HAVE ~~NO~~ SOME BUSINESS SELF PUBLISHING FREE TO PLAY MOBILE GAMES IN CERTAIN SITUATIONS

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