



Games as a Service is Dead

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CEO-Iron Horse Games



Who Am I?

Mike Gordon

CEO Iron Horse Games

- Publisher on iOS and Google Play
- 1.2M Organic Installs across 7 Titles
 - 1 Launched, Rest in Open Beta
 - Started publishing games in Dec 17
 - All on Google Play





Title Got Your Attention, Right?

- Games as a service is dead if you're trying to do it once you're live. You can still apply GaaS methodology (with some tweaks), just do it in Open Beta and Test Markets.
- In this presentation, I'll tell you how to maximize your installs in Open Beta and what metrics to focus on once your games starts getting installs.





First, What's GaaS?

- Operate titles after they are released to extract maximum revenue from the title and to address any weakness around key metrics (typically retention and monetization).
- The ultimate goal is to create a situation where you can afford to grow the game via marketing while also supporting the team entirely from the revenues that are generated on the game.

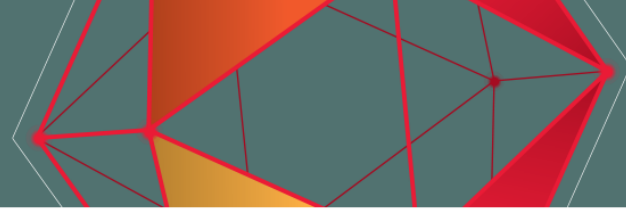




Where Was the Concept First Introduced?

- Platforms: Myspace and Facebook (and Pogo)
- Social Web Based Platforms defined by virality
- Key Characteristics: MAUs in the 14-15 million range were common...with no ad spend. DAU on the top performing games could be as high as 20-30M on FB, with 1-5M on Myspace
- Strong Retention driven by casual titles & lots of social reminders (aka notifications).





Why Did it Thrive There?

- Teams operating their games for minor changes in metrics focused on funnel improvements, virality improvements, ARPDau improvements and retention improvements.
- An ARPDau change of .01 makes a big difference with a DAU of 5,000,000!
- Marketing was a factor but a small one...most user growth came from organic channels.





Why is it Different on Mobile?

- Not VIRAL like Facebook or Myspace.
- Heavier reliance on UA out of the gates.
- Need platform support.
- With all of these changes, The GaaS model stayed the **same.**
- The model needs an update for mobile!





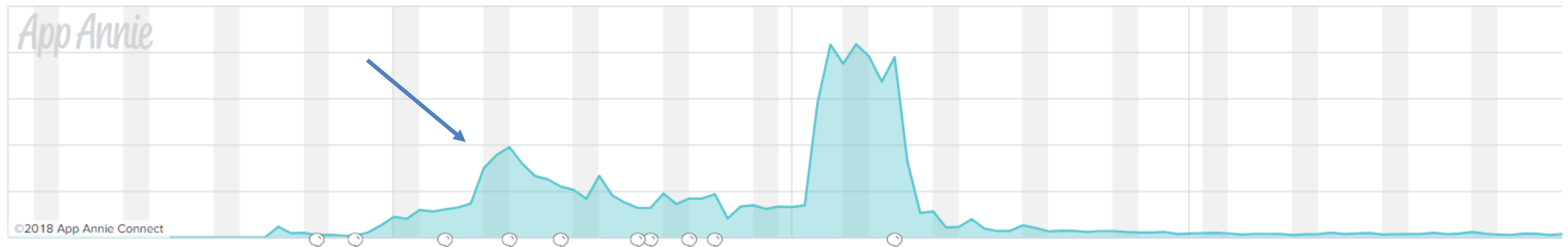
What Do Mobile Conditions Look Like Now?



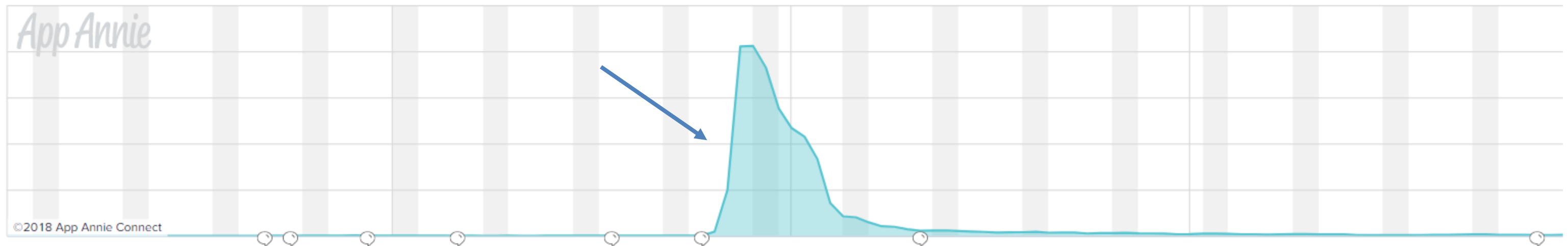


Pre and Post Launch Installs

Google Play



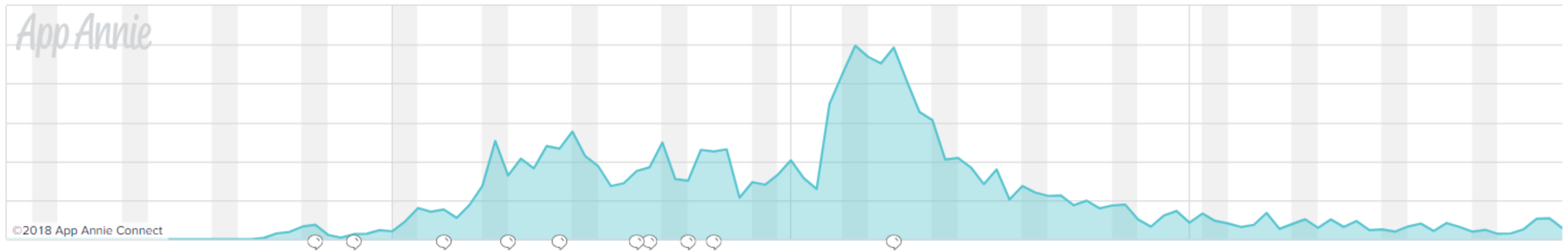
Apple



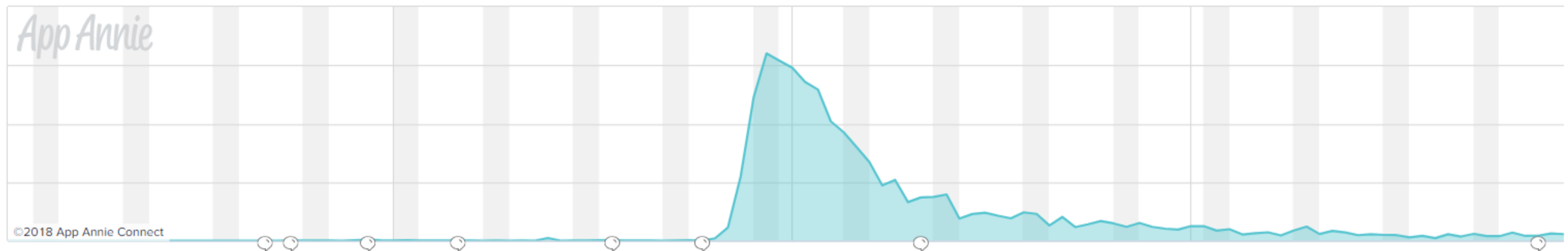


Pre and Post Launch Money

Google Play



Apple





What Does That Mean For GaaS?

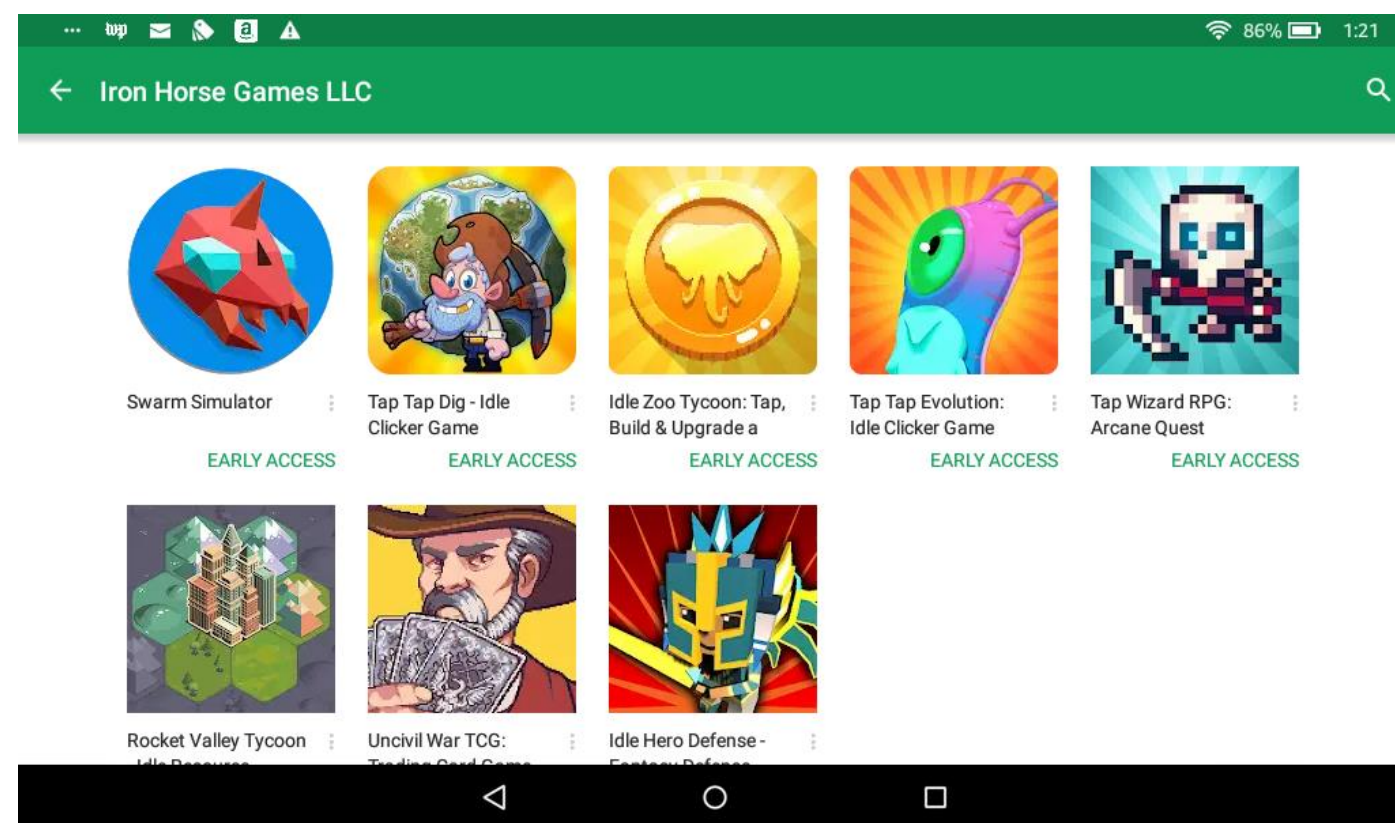
- You get all of your installs and make most of your money early.
- Your early cohorts are the most valuable.
- Re-features aren't as impactful as your initial features.
- Re-features drive 7-10% of your initial installs.
- You need to apply GaaS before the game is LIVE!





Silver Lining?

- There are a lot of tools in place to improve your KPIs pre-launch. It's probably the best it's ever been in regards to Test Market tools/access to potential users.
- Google Play Open Beta is a **GREAT** source of valuable users that can help you improve metrics before launch.





Why Open Beta?

- Anyone anywhere with the link can download.
- Still Rank on Keywords.
- Still Listed in Store Listings.
- No Ratings/No Chart Position.



Idle Sword 2: Incremental Dungeon Crawling RPG (Unreleased)

Iron Horse Games LLC Simulation

Teen

Contains ads · Offers in-app purchases

ⓘ This is an unreleased app. It may be unstable.

ⓘ This app is compatible with your device.

🔖 Add to Wishlist

Install

Manage your app's APKs, review release history, and rollout your app to production, alpha, or beta. [Learn more](#)

← Beta [CREATE RELEASE](#)

Manage testers 1714 TESTERS
Open Beta Testing ▲

Choose how to run your testing program. [Learn more](#)

Choose a testing method Open Beta Testing ▼

Maximum number of testers
If you set a maximum number of testers, the number needs to be at least 1000.

Feedback Channel ⓘ

Opt-in URL
Share this opt-in link with your testers.






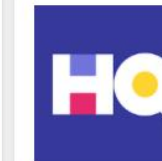
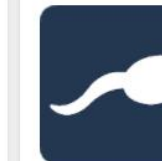
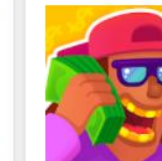
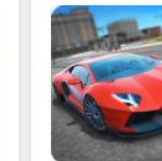
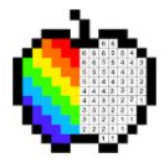




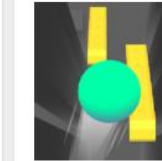








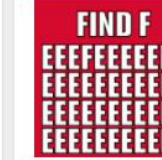

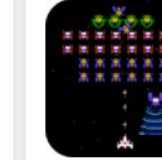

[DISABLE BETA TESTING](#) [SAVE](#)





New Free Games

Top New Free Games

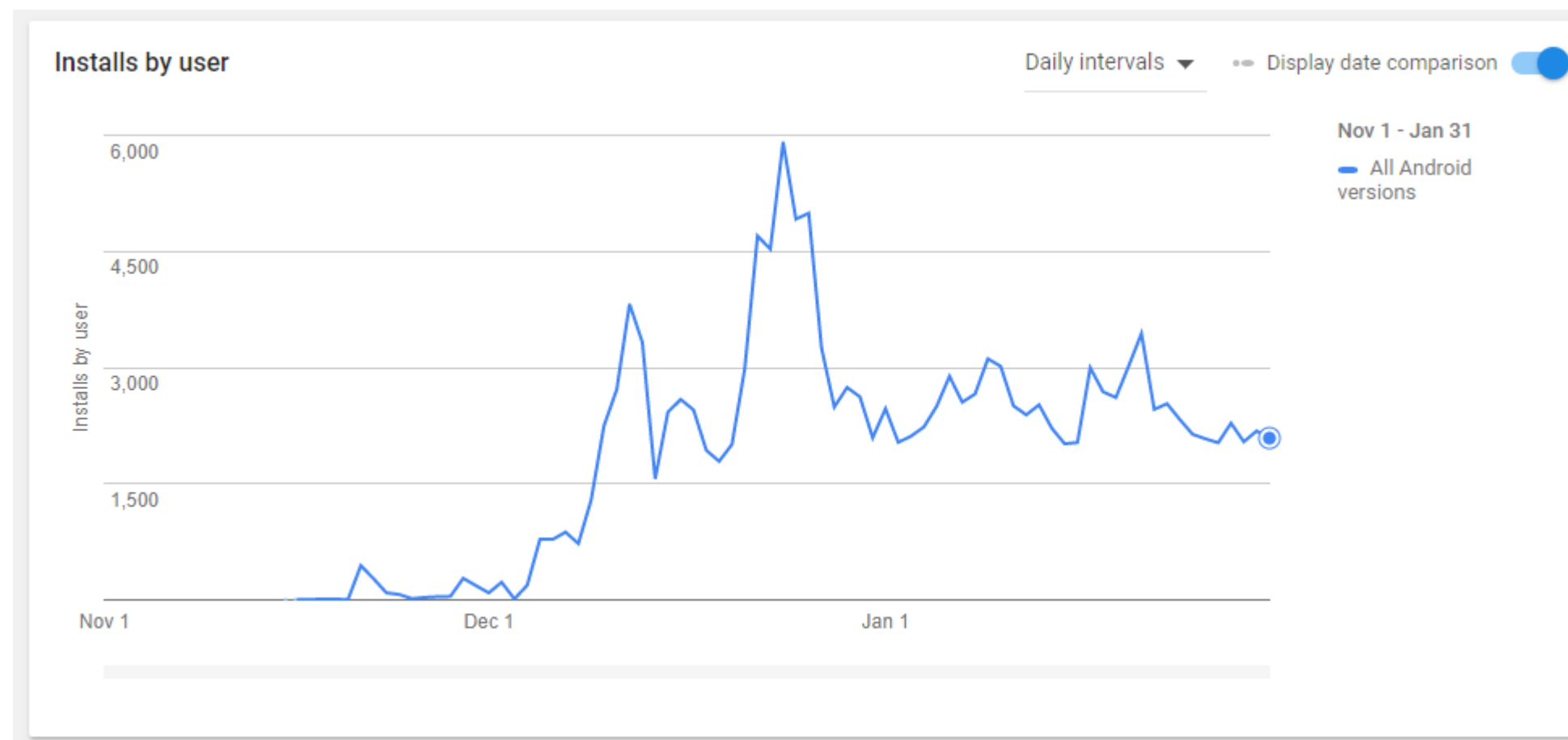
 1. The Sims™ Mobile ELECTRONIC ARTS ★★★★★ FREE	 2. Talking Tom Cat Outfit7 ★★★★★ FREE	 3. Baseball Boy! VOODOO ★★★★★ FREE	 4. Troll Face Quest Spil Games ★★★★★ FREE	 5. Score! Match First Touch Games Ltd. ★★★★★ FREE	 6. HQ Trivia Intermedia Labs ★★★★★ FREE	 7. InstLife InstCoffee Games ★★★★★ FREE	 8. Partymasters - Friends Playgendary ★★★★★ FREE	 9. Ultimate Car Drive TopRacing Games ★★★★★ FREE
 10. Draw.ly - Color by Numbers Color Apps For Free ★★★★★ FREE	 11. Keeper VOODOO ★★★★★ FREE	 12. My Shelf: My Character NTT Solmare Corp. ★★★★★ FREE	 13. Battle Royale of Evgeny evgeny ★★★★★ FREE	 14. Final Tournament TomasJPereyra ★★★★★ FREE	 15. Sky Ball Ketchapp ★★★★★ FREE	 16. Stickman Destruction Stickman games free ★★★★★ FREE	 17. Car Mechanic Simulator 18 PlayWay SA ★★★★★ FREE	 18. Car vs Cops Ketchapp ★★★★★ FREE
 19. Biggest Mega Ramp Million Games ★★★★★ FREE	 20. Diverse Block Shooter WebGame ★★★★★ FREE	 21. Dunk Line Ketchapp ★★★★★ FREE	 22. Muscle Car Simulator Oppana Games ★★★★★ FREE	 23. Pixel Craft: Zombie Exploration Crafting Survival Games ★★★★★ FREE	 24. Solve This In 30 Seconds Retro Games Studio ★★★★★ FREE	 25. Dance School Crazy Labs by TabTale ★★★★★ FREE	 26. Galaga LiberSoft Corp. ★★★★★ FREE	 27. Balls Control GoLeft spol. s r. o. ★★★★★ FREE

- New Free Games is a special chart on Google Play.
- You are only there for a 30 Day Window for Featuring once you launch.
- Open Beta doesn't trigger the 30 Day Window...so you can test without wasting those 30 days!





Open Beta...What's Next?



- You have 1-2 weeks before the Play Store algorithm “finds” your game and begins adding it to different store lists.
- What do you do with your 2 weeks?





Prep for the Algorithm

- Improve Page Conversion Rate to Maximize Installs
 - Optimize Icon
 - Localize Store Page
 - AB Test Screenshots
 - Preview
- Optimize Your ASO





Store Conversion Rate



Idle Sword 2: Incremental Dungeon Crawling RPG (Unreleased)

Iron Horse Games LLC Simulation

Teen

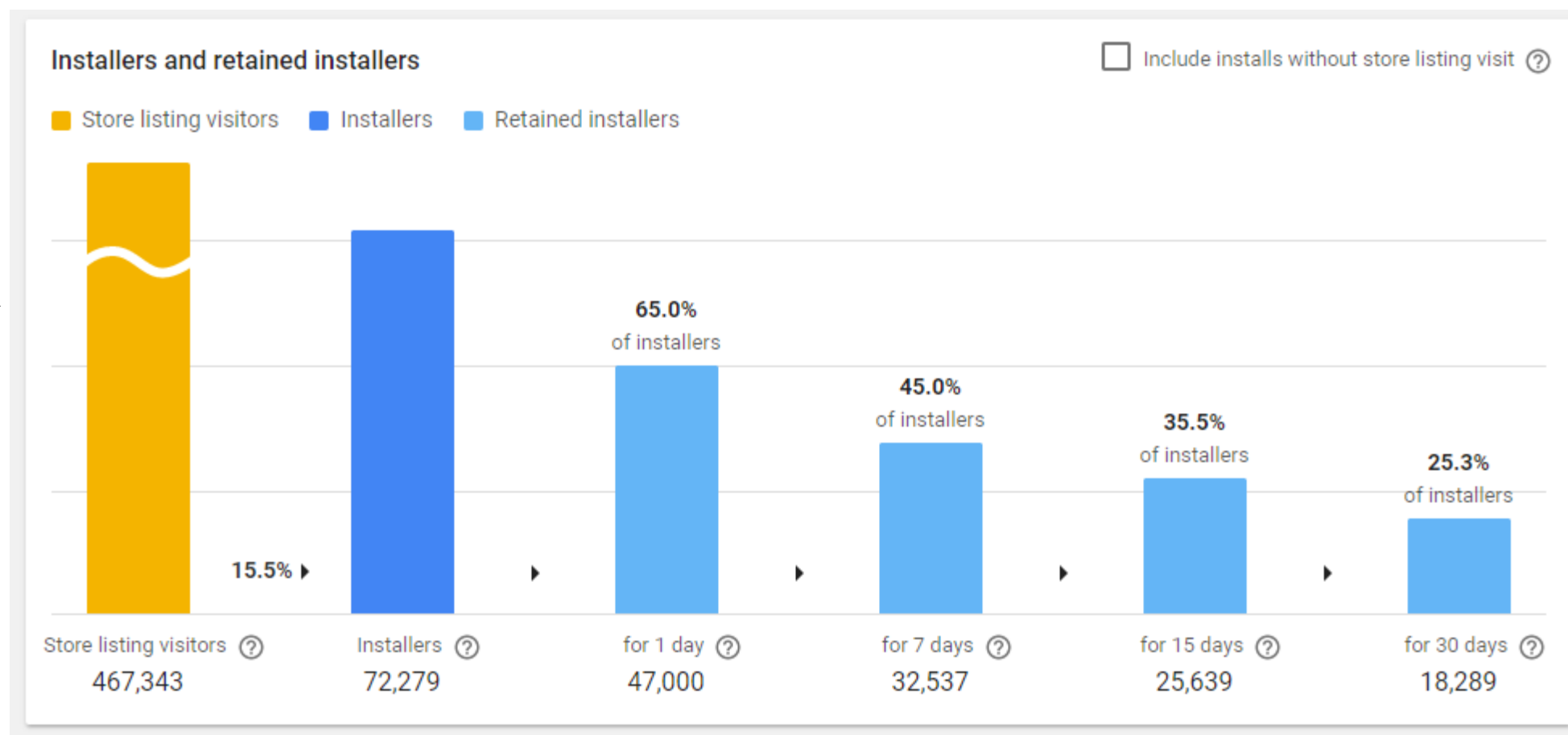
Contains ads · Offers in-app purchases

This is an unreleased app. It may be unstable.

This app is compatible with your device.

Add to Wishlist

Install



Enjoy the #1 action tapping incremental flash game, now in an app! Crawl through tough dungeons, create a party of Paladins, Archers and Wizards to battle monsters and tough boss battles for epic loot in an all new style of roguelike RPG. Tap to guide your heroes through dungeons, find and evolve new heroes, capture monsters and collect powerful upgrades. See if your heroes can survive Idle Sword 2, an epic clicker/pet battler and retro RPG all in one.





Icon Tests

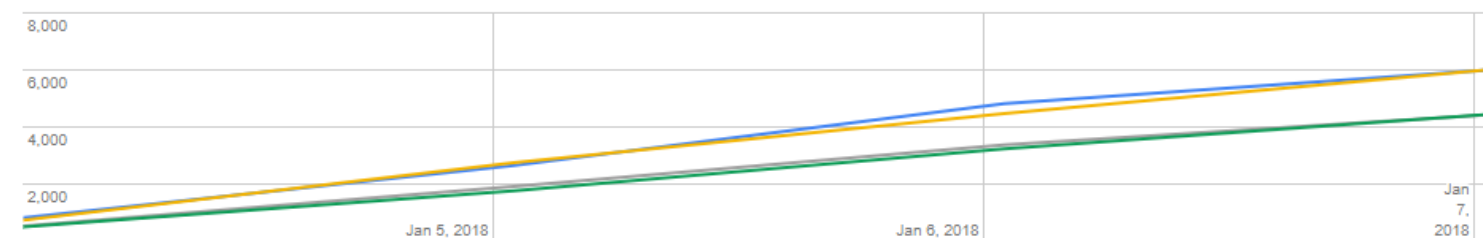
Status ⓘ
Served 3 variants to 50% of users

Started
Jan 4, 4:49 PM

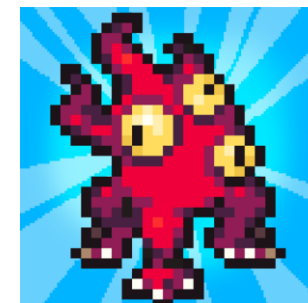
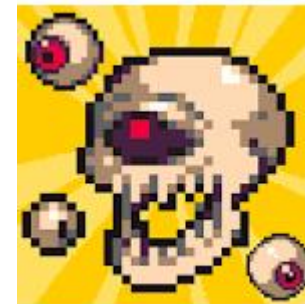
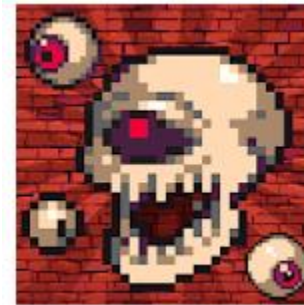
Result ⓘ
Variant "Skull Red" performed best

Metric Installs on active devices ▾

The number of active devices on which each variant of the application is currently installed, scaled up to compensate for the different audience levels.



Variants		Audience ⓘ	Current Installs ⓘ	Scaled Installs ⓘ	Performance ⓘ 90% Confidence Interval
Current Version	👁	50.0%	2,225	4,450	
Skull Yellow	👁	16.7%	1,002	6,012	+24.3% +49.1%
Skull Red	👁	16.7%	1,005	6,030	+27.0% +46.7%
Blue Shield	👁	16.7%	744	4,464	-5.1% +6.8%



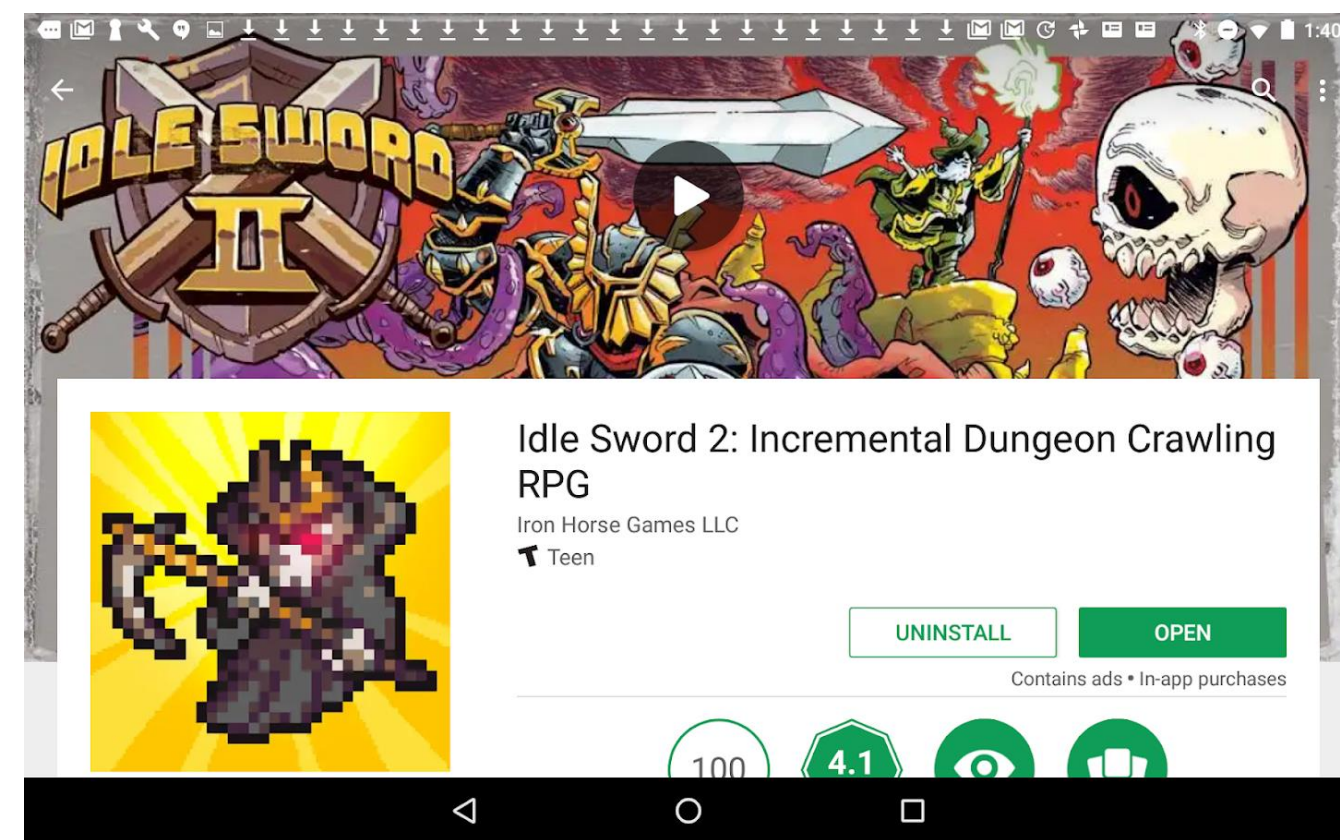
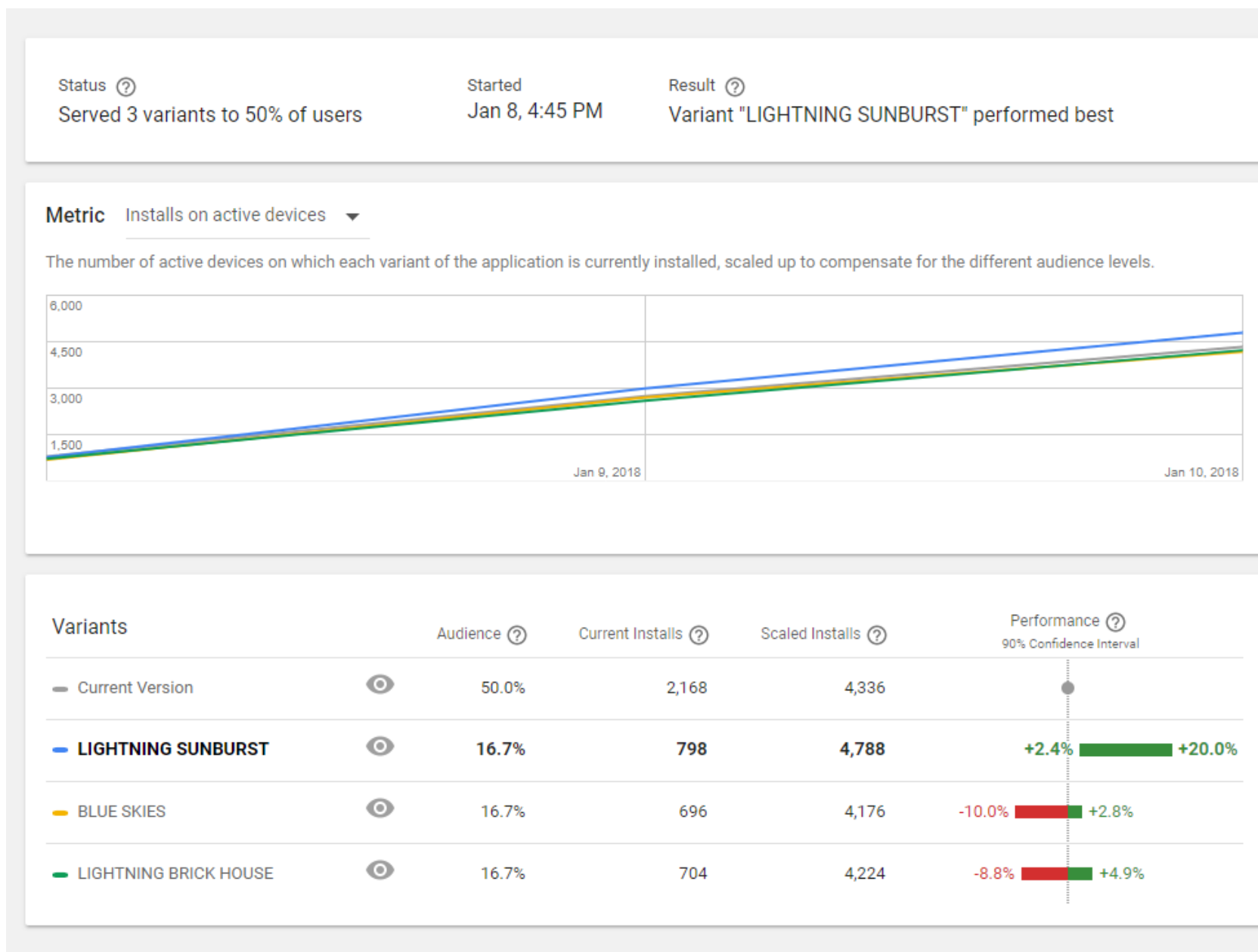
- Test big variations
- Yields 24% Increased Installs.
- DON'T MISREPRESENT YOUR GAME!
- Rotate every 2-4 Weeks.
- Re-Test OLD icons!





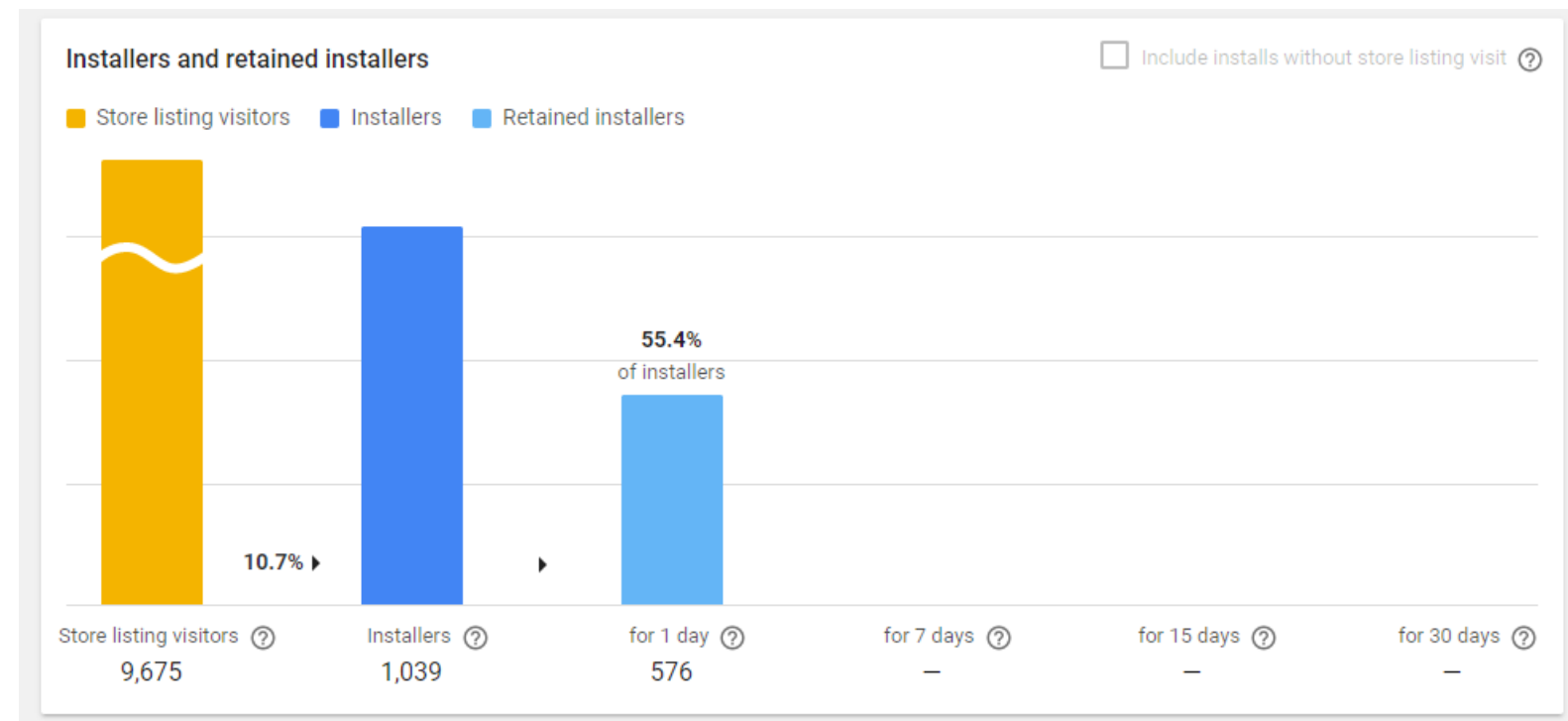
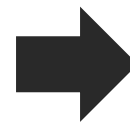
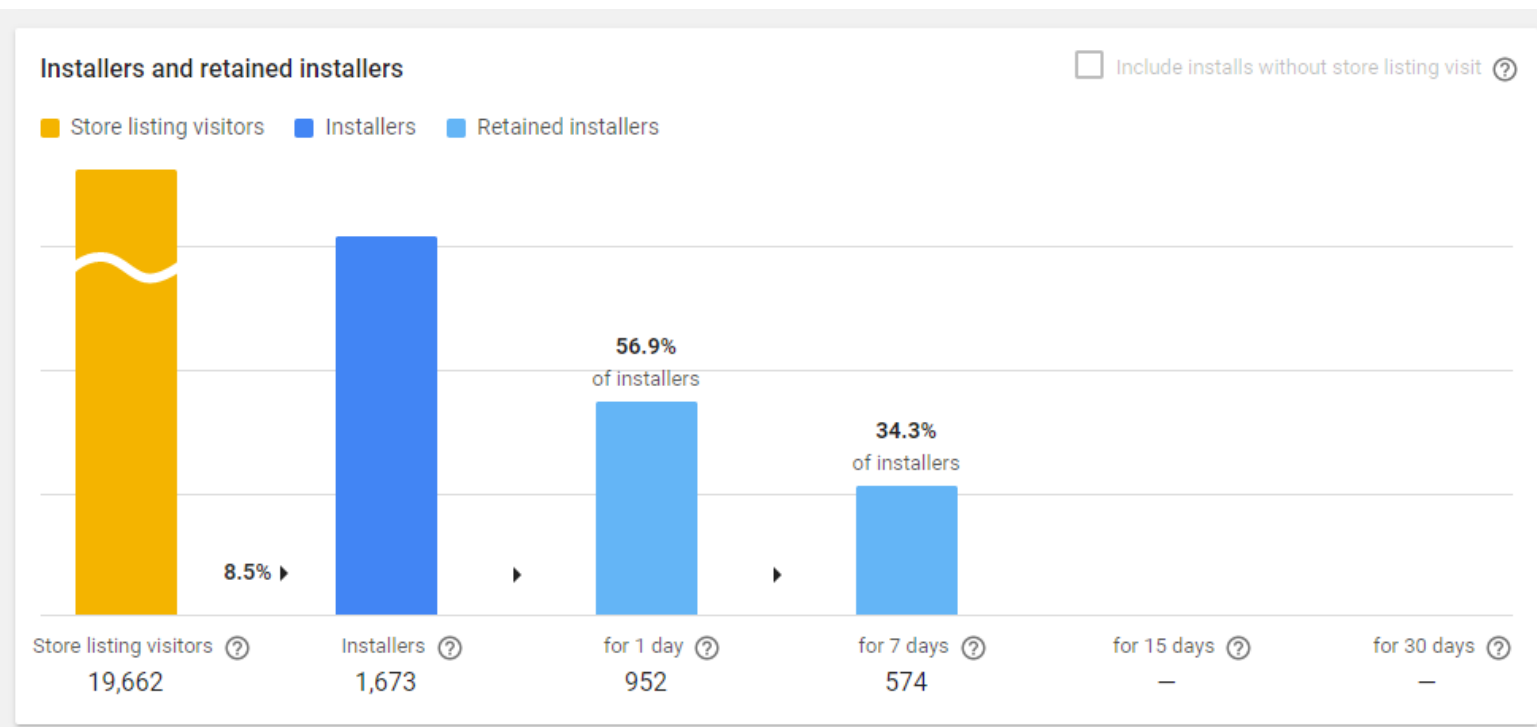
Test Your Feature Graphic!

- Yields 10% more installs.
- First image folks see with your icon.
- Rotate every 2-4 Weeks.





Add a Preview

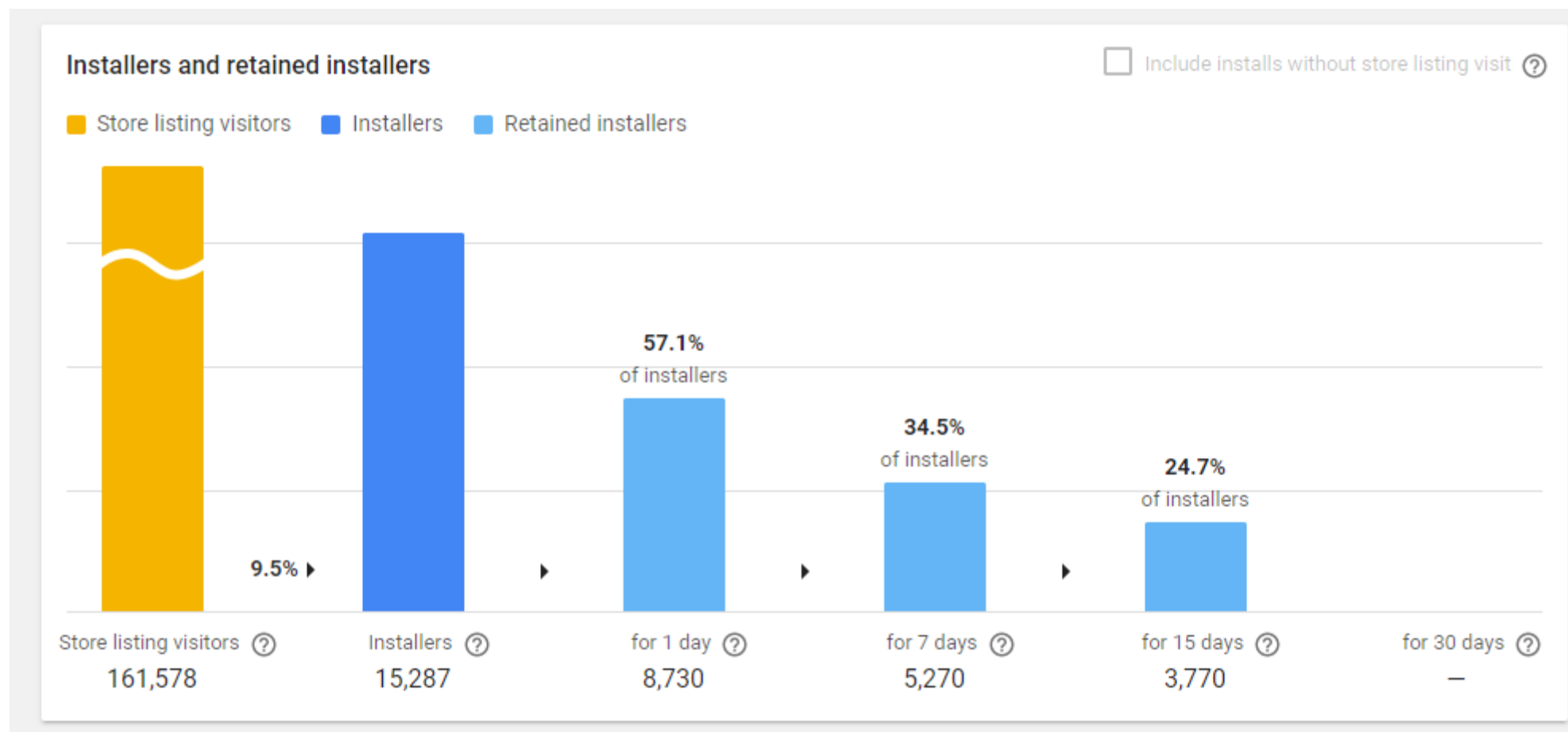


- 2 percentage point + increase in CVR.
- 3-4k USD for a decent 15-20 second trailer.
- Rotate scenes for a quick refresh!
- There is a catch....





Localize Store Description/Screenshots



- 1-2 percent points of Conversion Rate Gain per Geo for Description.
- 1-2 percentage points of Conversion Rate Gain per Geo for Screens.

OneSky





AB Test Screenshots



Uncivil War TCG: Trading Card Game (Unreleased)

Iron Horse Games LLC Card

E Everyone

Contains ads · Offers in-app purchases

i This is an unreleased app. It may be unstable.

i This app is compatible with your device.

Installed



- 5% Install Gain.
- Test BIG VARIATION!
- DON'T MISREPRESENT YOUR GAME!
- Rotate every couple of months.
- Re-Test OLD screenshots!





Add Landscape Screenshots

- Even if your game is in portrait.
- 7% More Installs.
- More Impressions on the Google Play Store



PHONE

TABLET

ANDROID TV

WEAR OS



8/8 screenshots

Variants

Audience ?

Current Installs ?

Scaled Installs ?

Performance ?

90% Confidence Interval

— Current Version



50.0%

2,001

4,002

— variant



50.0%

2,140

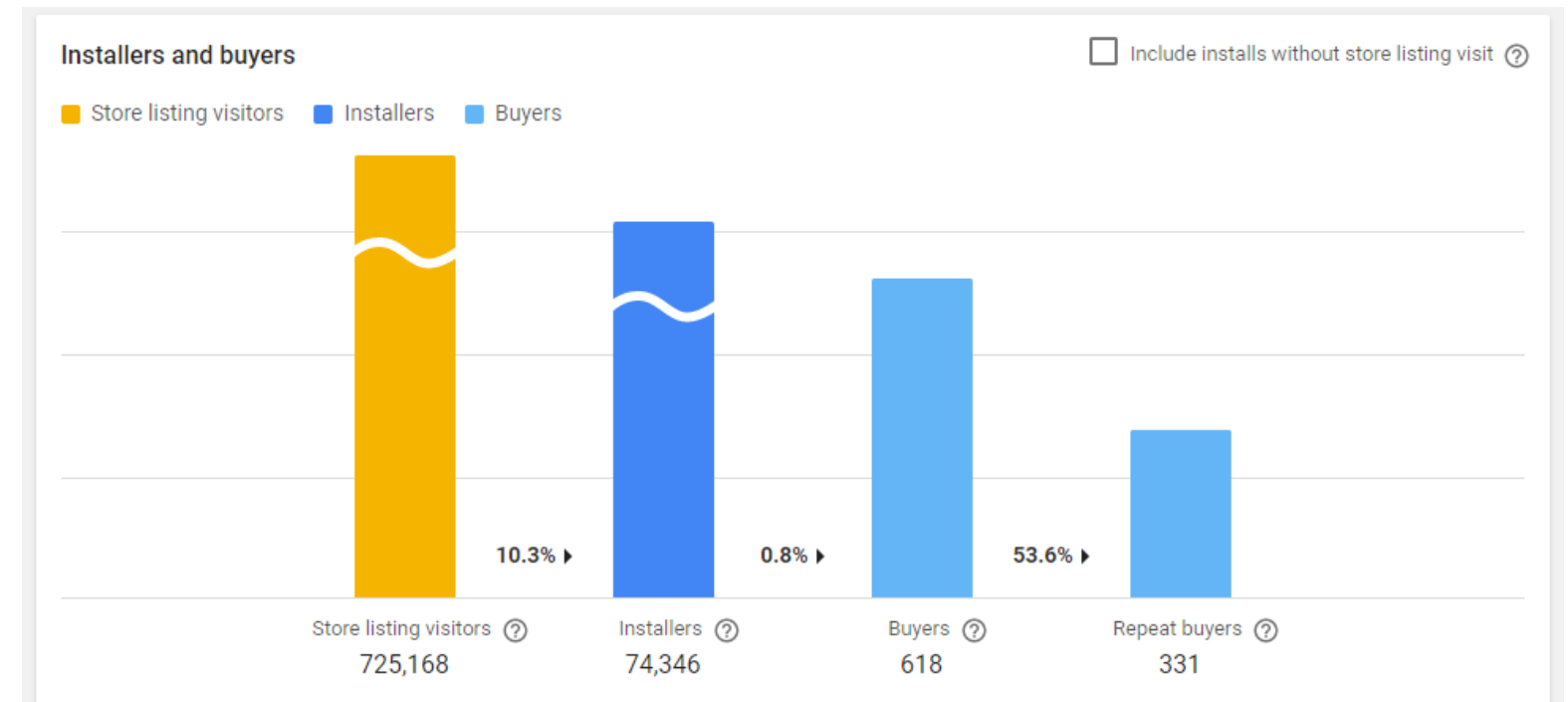
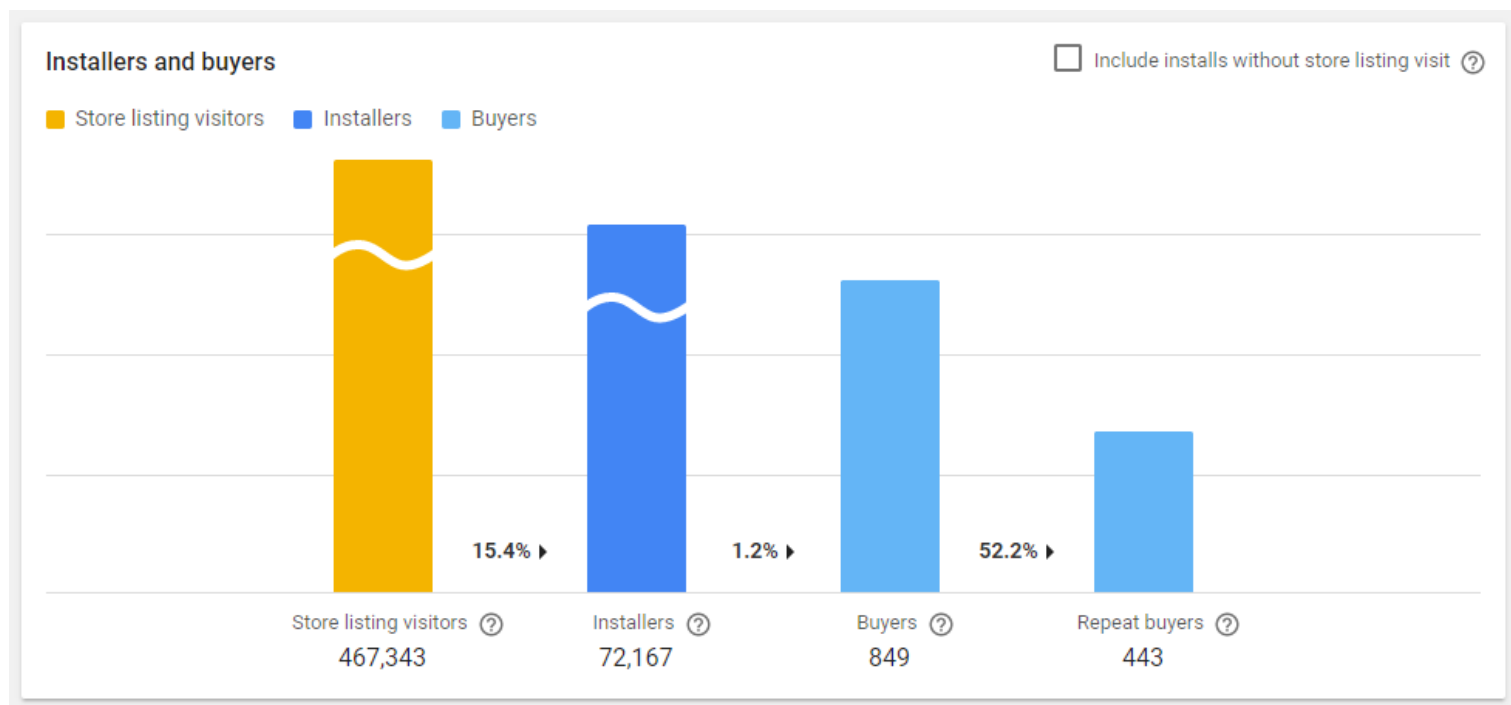
4,280

+1.6% +14.7%



Notes on Conversion Rates

- Drops over time.
- 15-20% is common early, can drop sub-10% after several months in Open Beta.
- Your job is to rotate creative to keep it up.





Meta Data Matters

Product details

ENGLISH (UNITED STATES) – en-US

Languages (12) ▼

Manage translations ▼

Fields marked with * need to be filled before publishing.

Title *

English (United States) – en-US

Idle Sword 2: Incremental Dungeon Crawling RPG

46/50

Short description *

English (United States) – en-US

Click & Tap in this SUPER TOUGH Dungeon Crawler! Over 100,000 Installs!

71/80

Full description *

English (United States) – en-US

Enjoy the #1 action tapping incremental flash game, now in an app! Crawl through tough dungeons, create a party of Paladins, Archers and Wizards to battle monsters and tough boss battles for epic loot in an all new style of roguelike RPG. Tap to guide your heroes through dungeons, find and evolve new heroes, capture monsters and collect powerful upgrades. See if your heroes can survive Idle Sword 2, an epic clicker/pet battler and retro RPG all in one.

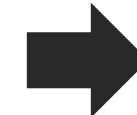
This is an action clicker game like you've never seen. Straight from the intense flash game, you'll have to battle monsters, sell equipment, upgrade your skills and form a party of mystic Wizards & stalwart Paladins to go deeper into perilous dungeons. Use your God

2915/4000

Please check out our [Metadata policy](#) to avoid some common violations related to app metadata. Also, please make sure to review all the other [program policies](#) before you submit your apps.

If your app or store listing is [eligible for advance notice](#) to the Google Play App Review team, [contact us](#) prior to publishing.

- Title
- Short Description
- Full Description
- BUNDLE ID!
- Update Text



Idle Sword 2: Incremental Dungeon Crawling RPG (Unreleased)

Free Simulation (Games)

Create Alert

Open in Google Play

Keywords (ASO)

[About this report](#)

Country/Region

United States ▼

Save

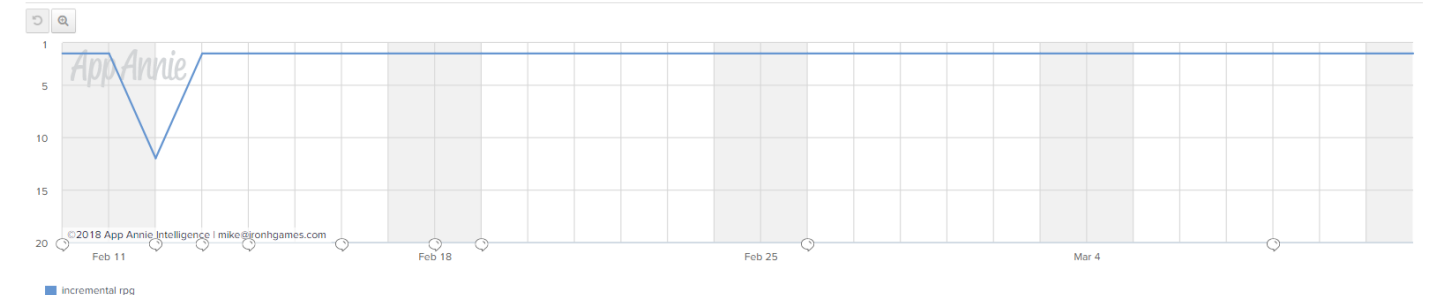
Export

Date Range

Feb 10, 2018 - Mar 11, 2018 ▼

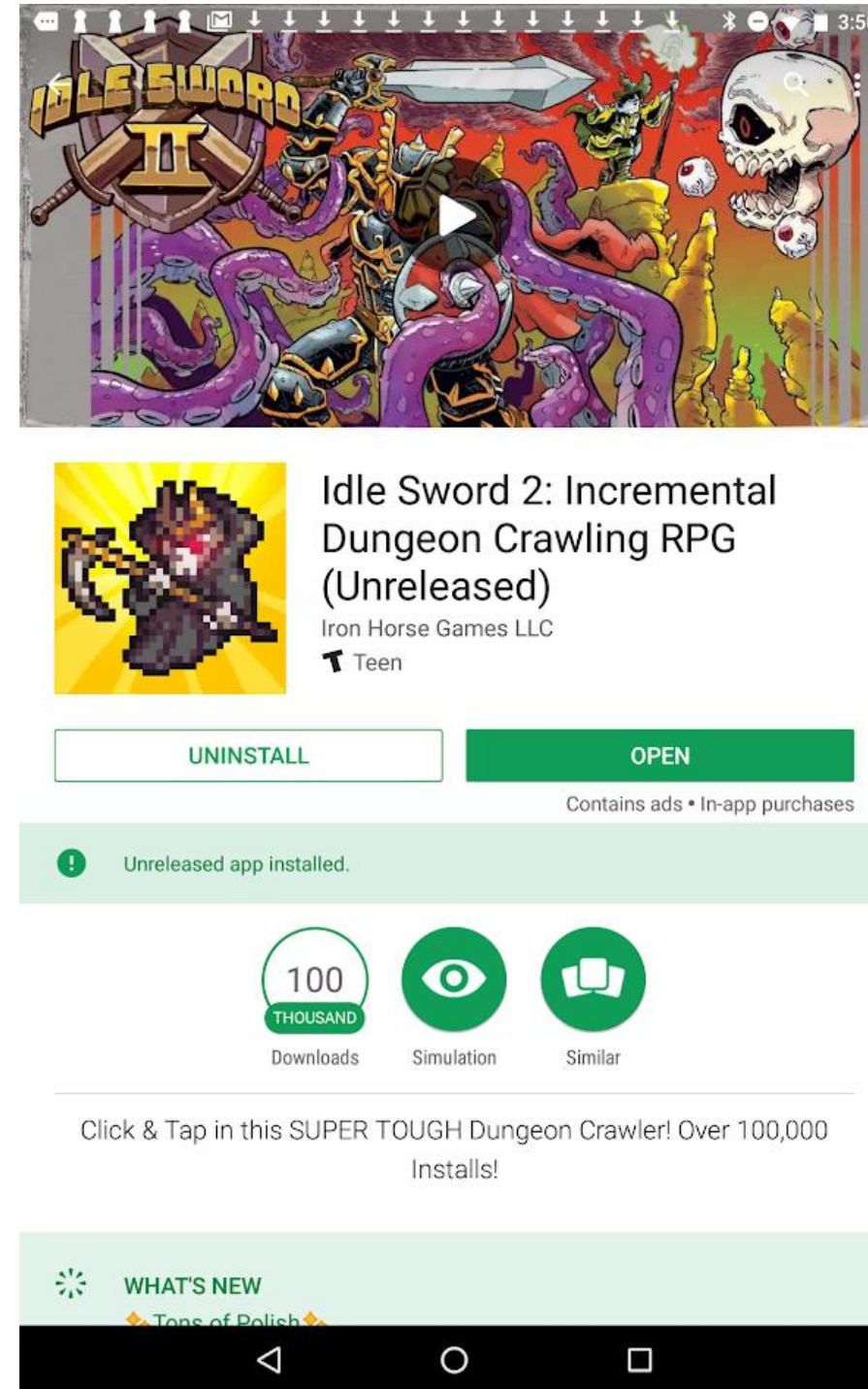
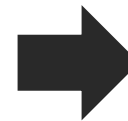
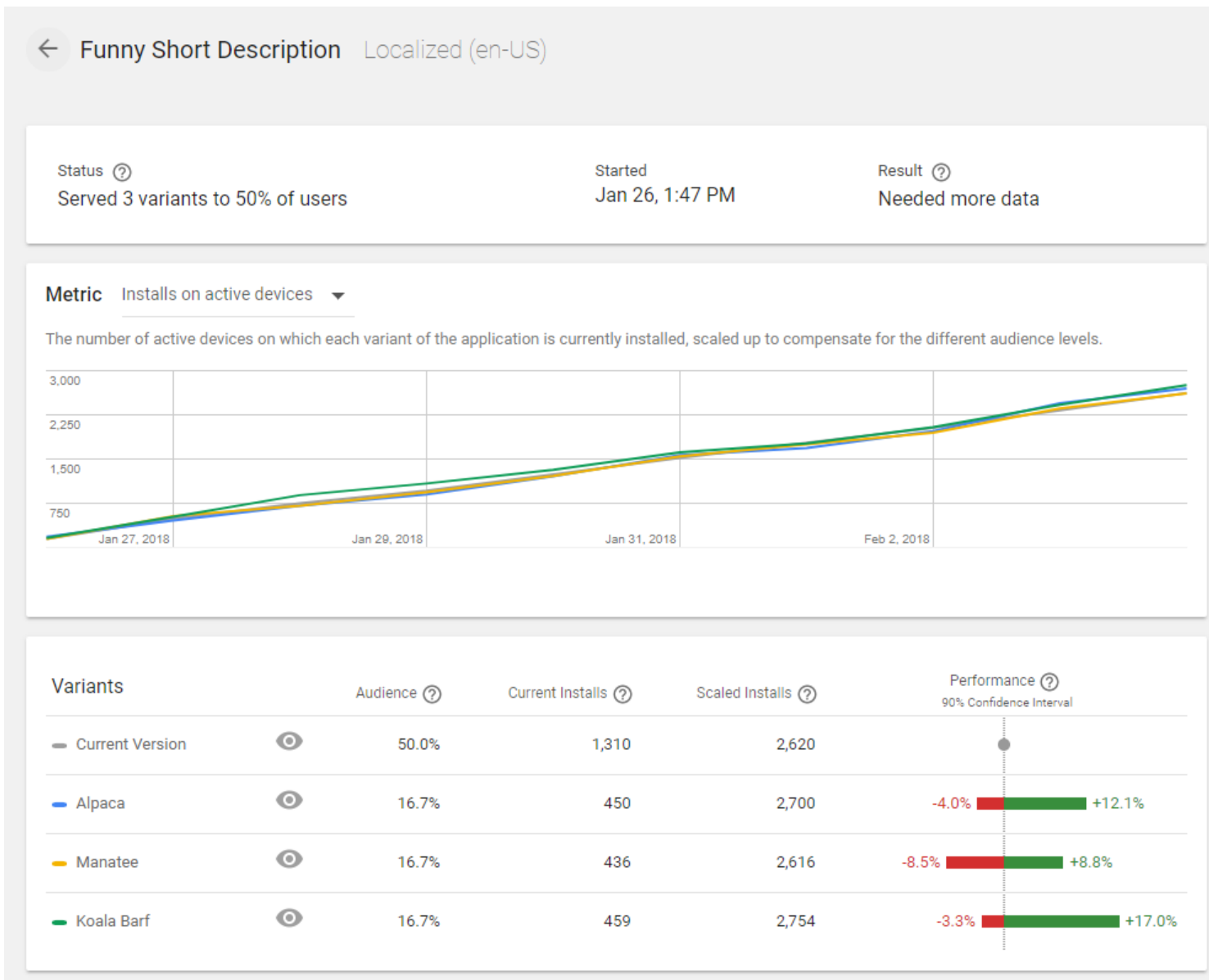
United States - Feb 10, 2018 - Mar 11, 2018

Keyword Rank Traffic Share Search Volume Difficulty





Test Your Short Description!



- 5% More Installs
- Helps with ASO





Metadata Matters

- Bundle ID is factored into ASO
 - NOTE: this can't be changed once you upload your first APK
- Ranking when algorithm Kicks in can equal 50k additional installs+
- Keywords (without violating TOS)
 - Get specific (game & free are useless keywords unless you have the most generic name on the planet)

[App Promotion](#) [Metadata](#) [User Ratings, Reviews, and Installs](#) [Content Ratings](#)

Metadata

We don't allow apps with misleading, irrelevant, excessive, or inappropriate metadata, which include the app's description, title, icon, screenshots, and promotional images. We also don't allow user testimonials in the app's description.

Here are some examples of common violations:

1. See how much our users love us:

"It was easy to find the right dog for me and my family!"

**** Jack Lavelle

2. You can see black dogs, brown dogs, white dogs, big dogs, medium dogs, small dogs, dog leashes, dog training books, dog bowls, dog toys, dog accessories.

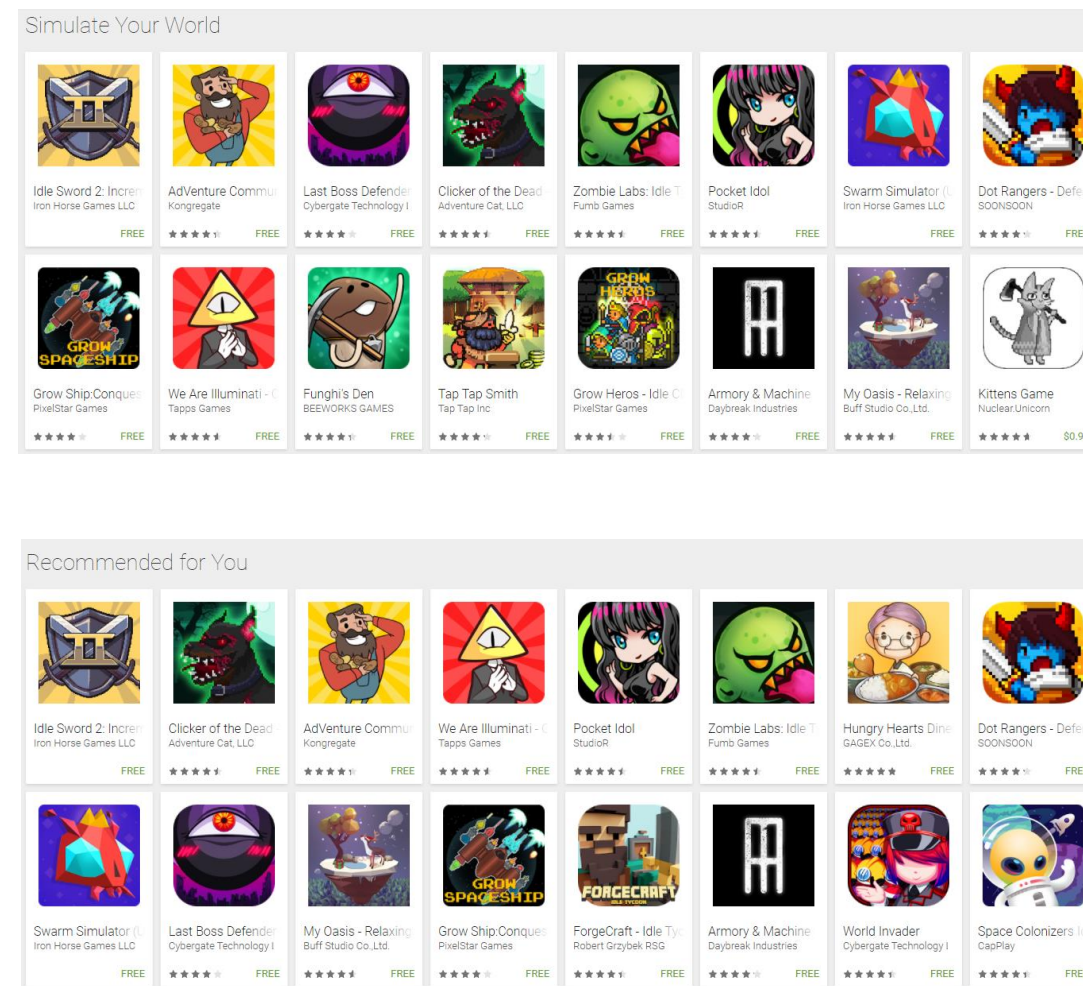
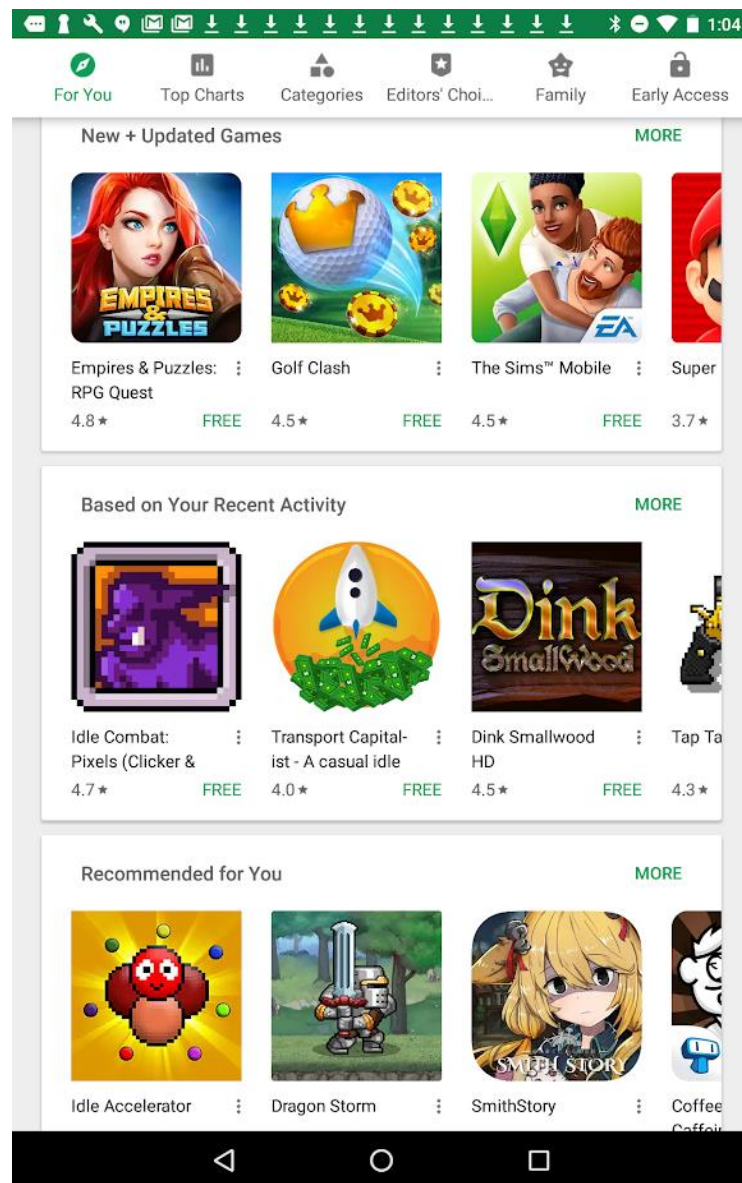
3. It's like playing Pet Rescue Saga, but in real life!

4. Want to have something in common with Selena





Google Algorithm Kicks In



1-2 weeks after releasing into Open Beta, you start to get listed in different categories!

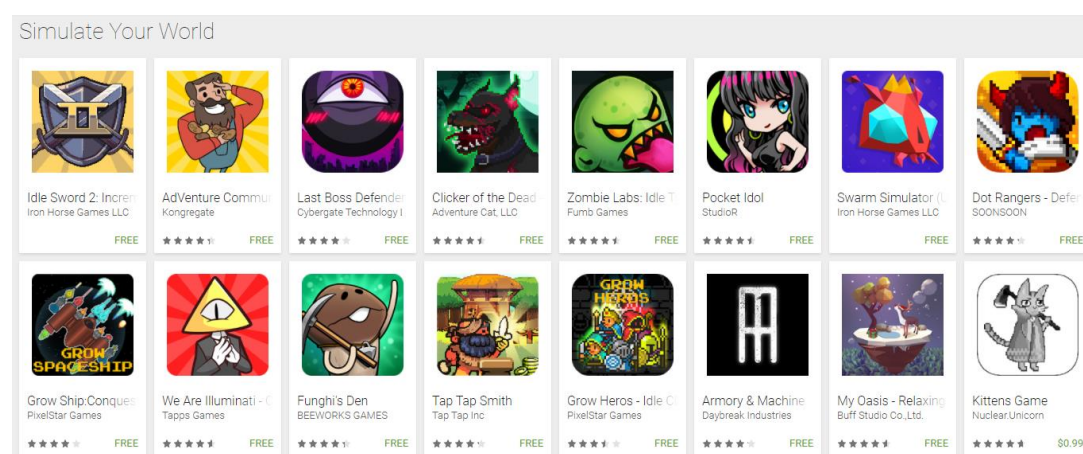




Impact of Category Featuring



- Thousands More Installs per Day.
- Big Jump in Keyword Ranks.
- Faster AB Test Completion.
- Doesn't last forever...you'll see a dip after the first 30 days....Make the most of it!





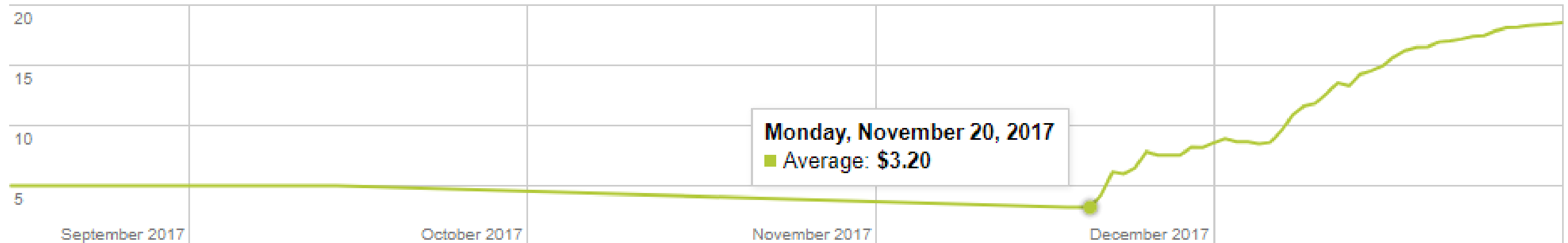
You're Getting Installs, What Do You Focus On?

ARPPU

Chart aggregation:

30-DAY ROLLING AVERAGE

DAILY AVERAGE



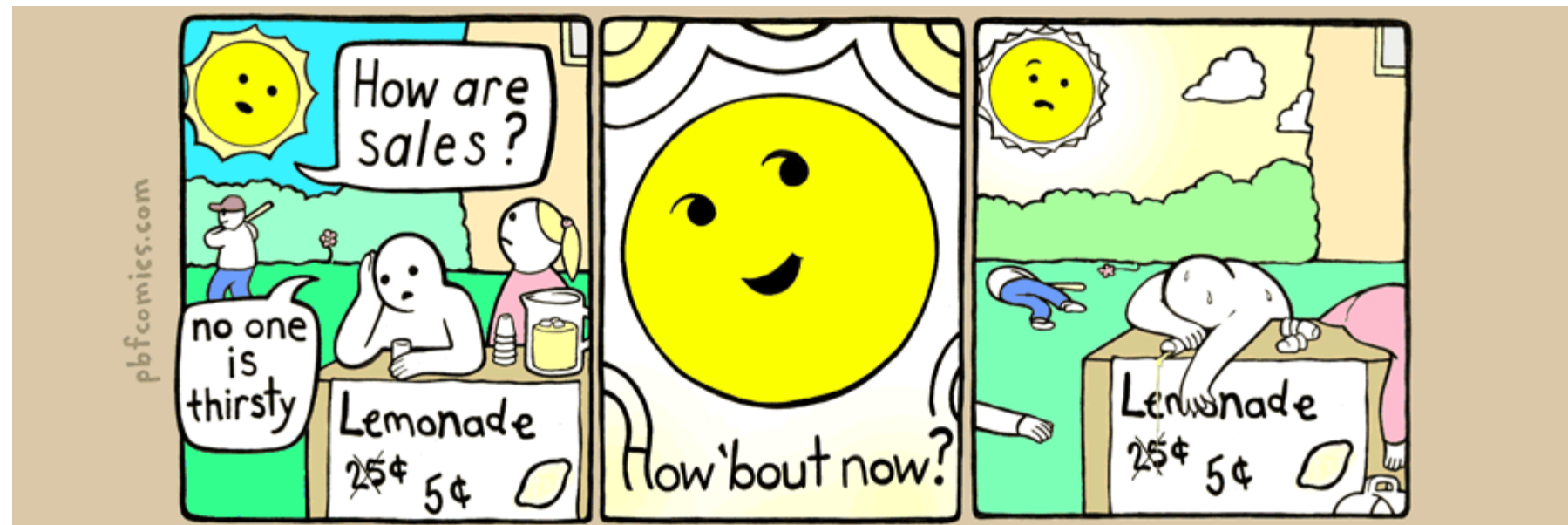
The table below shows the ARPPU (Average Revenue Per Paying User) for the lifetime of your application (ordered by total revenue).

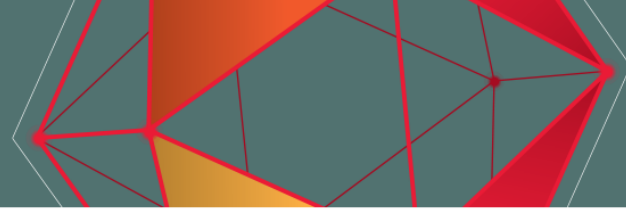




Why Focus on ARPPU?

- Changes quickly
- Easier to change than retention
- Conversion rate is largely capped (1-3%)





What Do You Do?

- Prepare like you have 1 shot at generating money on your game...because you do. Utilizing Open Beta and Early Access on Google Play can be HUGELY helpful in optimizing your game pre-launch.
- Use Google's Tools tells them you care and are invested in their platform and should receive their support.
- GaaS isn't totally dead...it just needs to happen pre-Global Launch!

