The Road Less Traveled in F2P research

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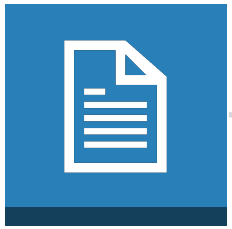
Organization of the talk

Project Background



Age Research

Networks Research

Project Background

How to form a dev/uni project

Trust each other

Get all the lawyers signed off

Create clear boundaries

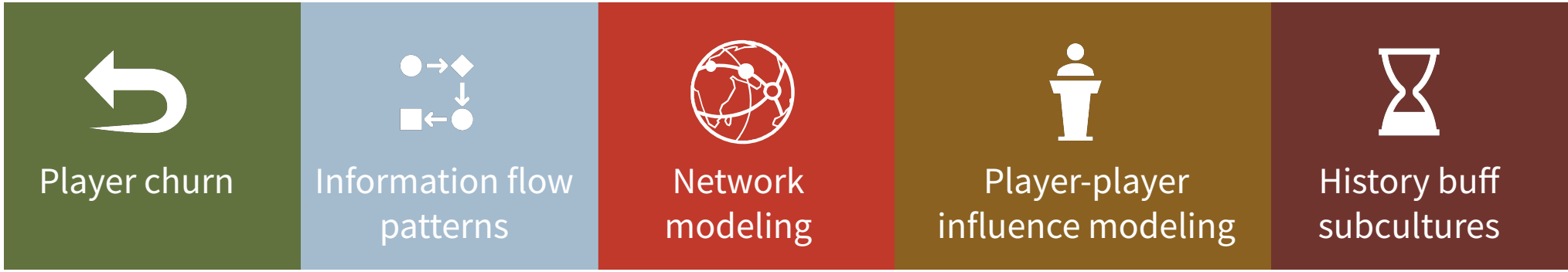
Understand the respective payoffs for each group

Vet topics in advance

Understand the infrastructure and support requirements

File under R&D. Maybe it has a payoff, maybe not.

Topics we explored



Topics we will focus on

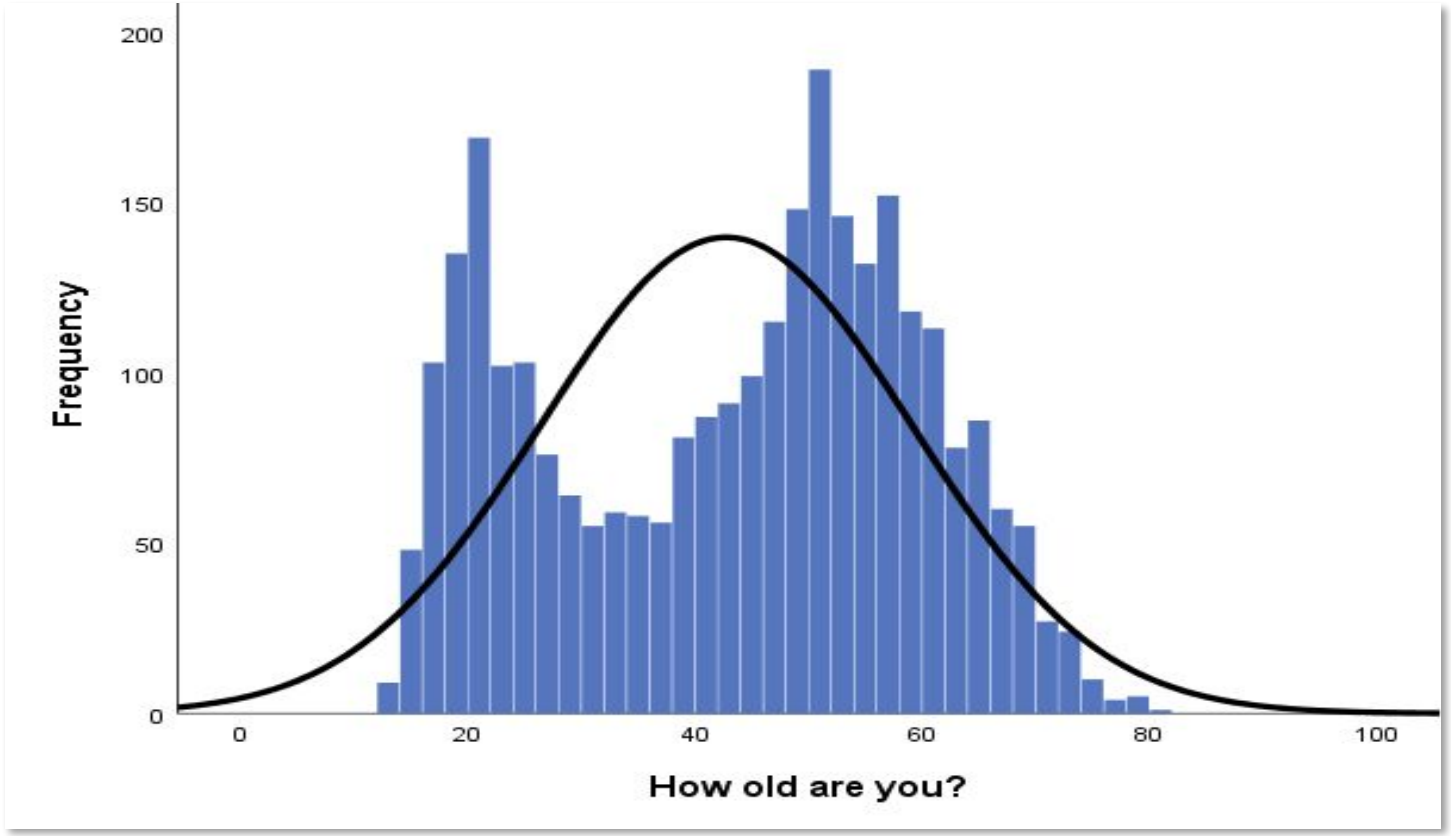
Age factors

Network modeling

Age Research

Why does grandpa tank?

This one started with a simple graph



42.75	Mean
16.315	Standard Deviation
2858	N

Theorizing the age cycle

Erik Erikson's Lifespan Theory suggests different motivations by life-cycle stage

We hypothesized that compared to younger players, older players would have different motivations, specifically a higher:

- Sense of autonomy
- Perceived fulfillment of competence
- Perceived fulfillment of relatedness

Will there be differences in demographics, play patterns (style, success) or spending?

Results

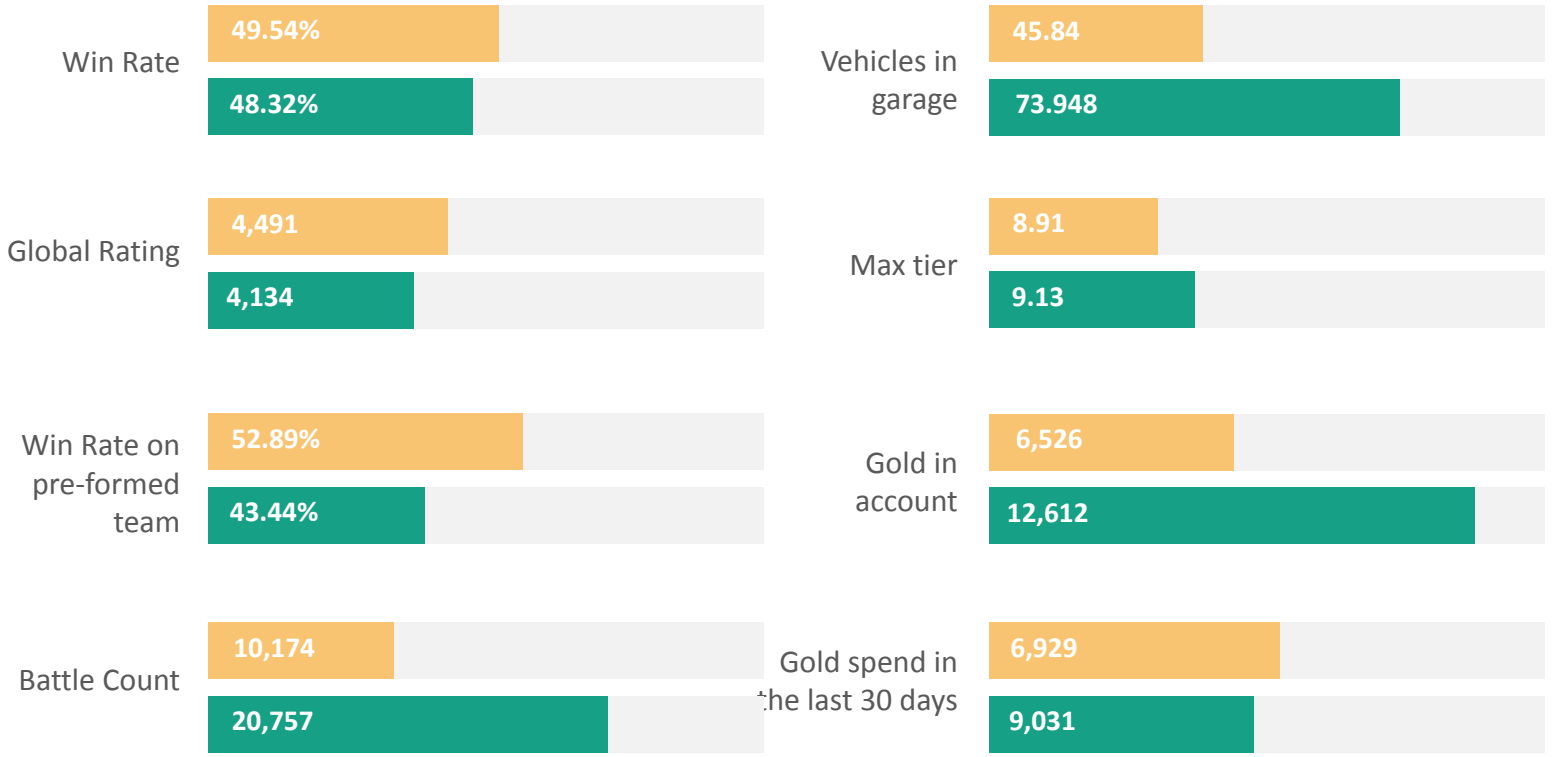
1. The younger players are better-performing (but the best players aren't the very youngest).
2. Older players spend much more and play *a lot* more.
3. There are also about twice as many players in this older bracket!
4. Older players' financial impact is larger per capita and then also another 2x based on sheer numbers.
5. Forget stereotypes. We have players of all age, but especially lots of older ones!

Younger Group

(13-34, average 22.6)

Older Group

(35-80, average 52.8)



Results

6 Younger players rate higher on every factor.

7 Both groups are equally happy with the game and their experiences in it, despite very different success rates.

8 It's working for everyone, despite different intensities and different motivations

Younger Group

(13-34, average 22.6)

Older Group

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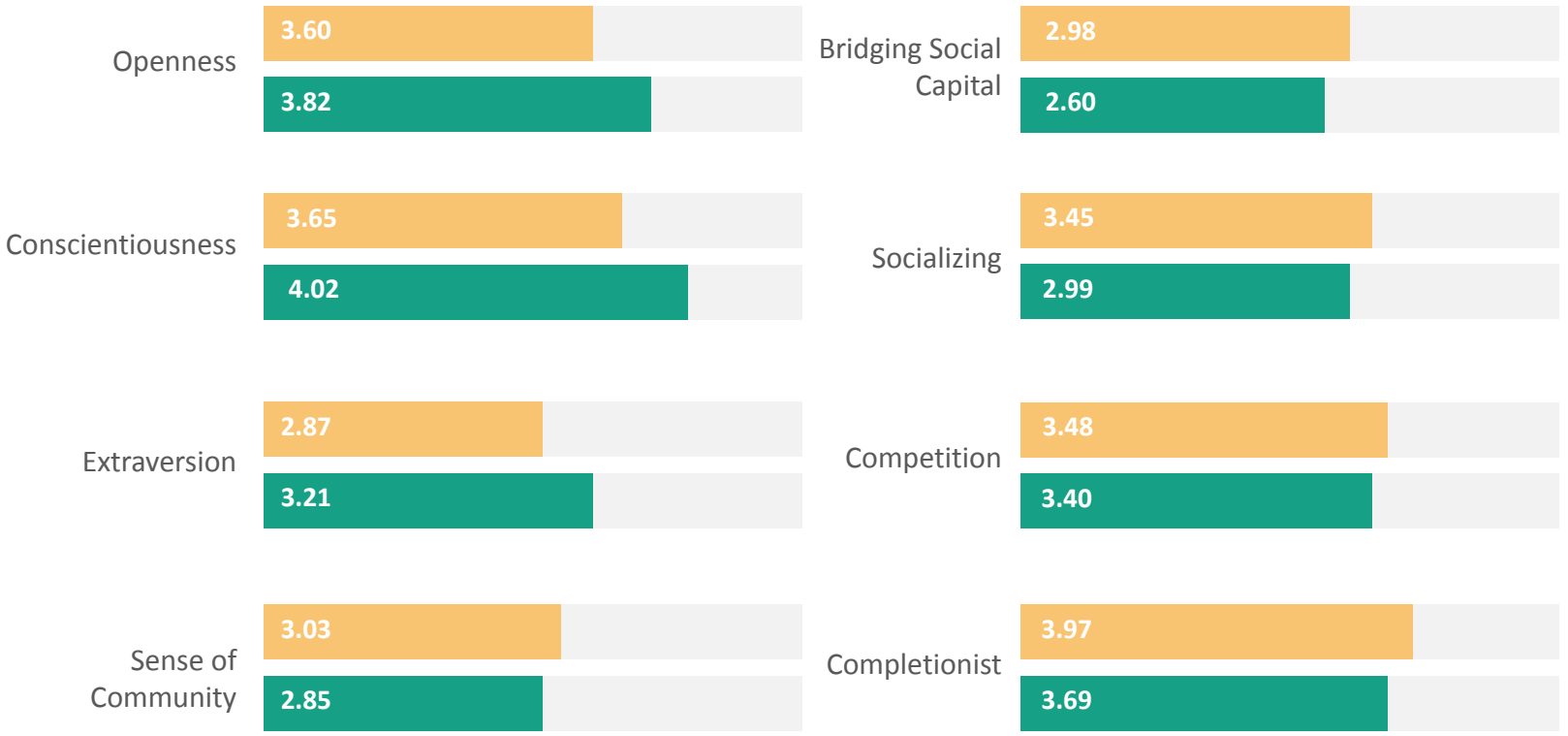


How do we use this information?

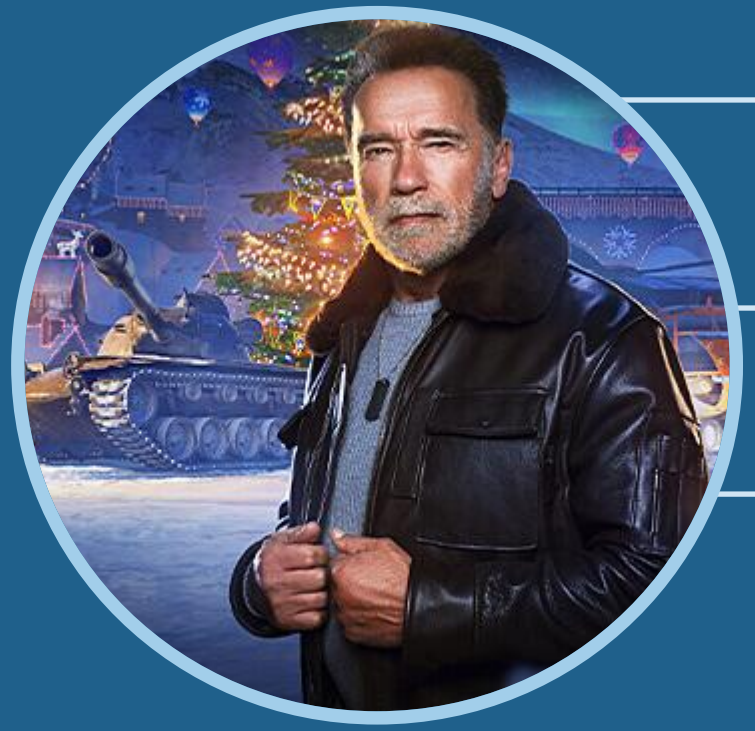
Realization that there is no “one size fits all” with marketing and community

Celebrity partnerships

Segmentation, along with many other factors

Different appeals to young and older

Develop TV Spot

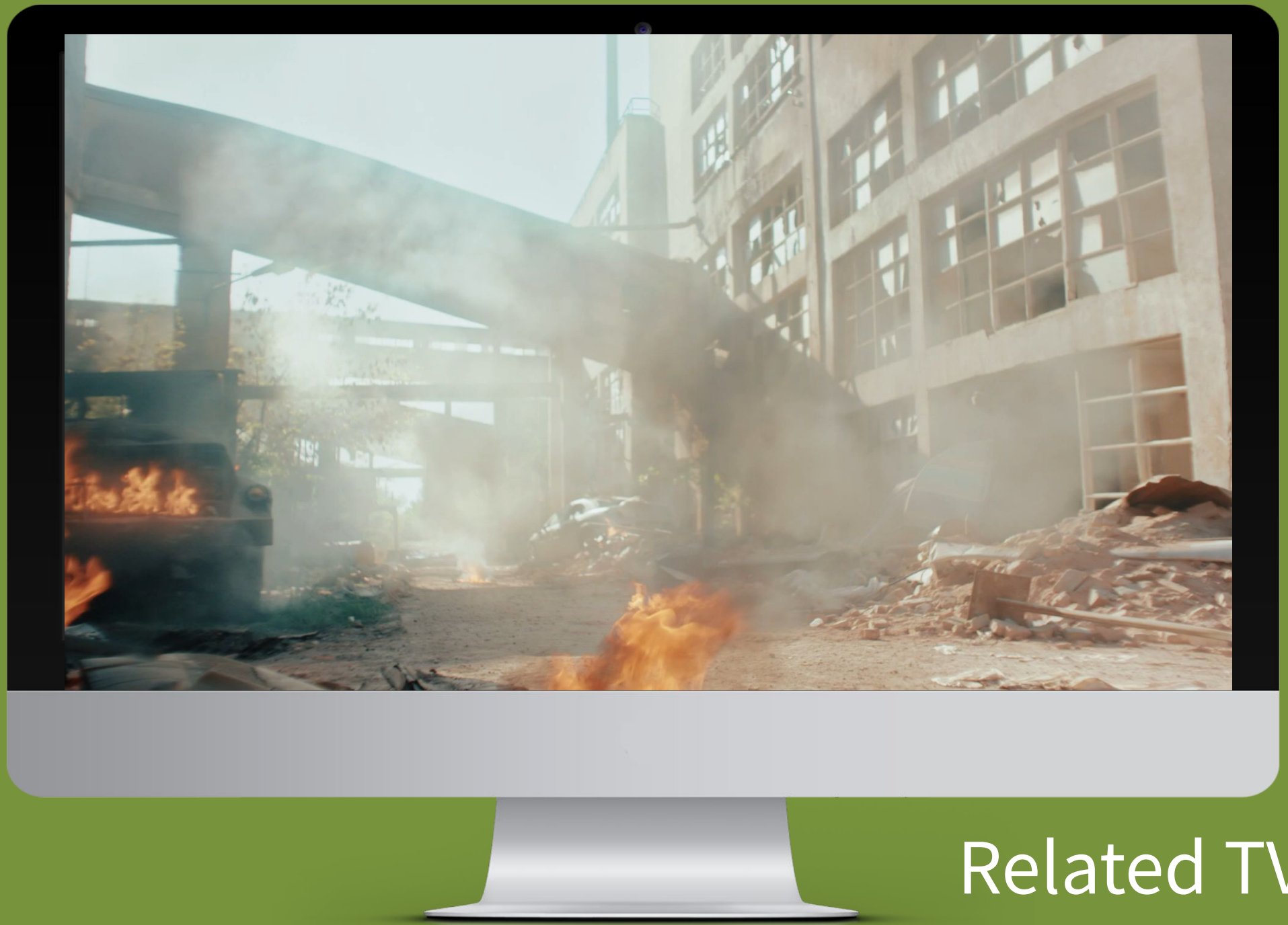


Seek matches with brand ambassadors that resonate with our target demographics—younger and older as two key groups

Impact: Strong community support, strong PR uptick in channels suited to our demos vs. mainstream methods

Examples tailored to younger and older audiences

Celebrity partnerships

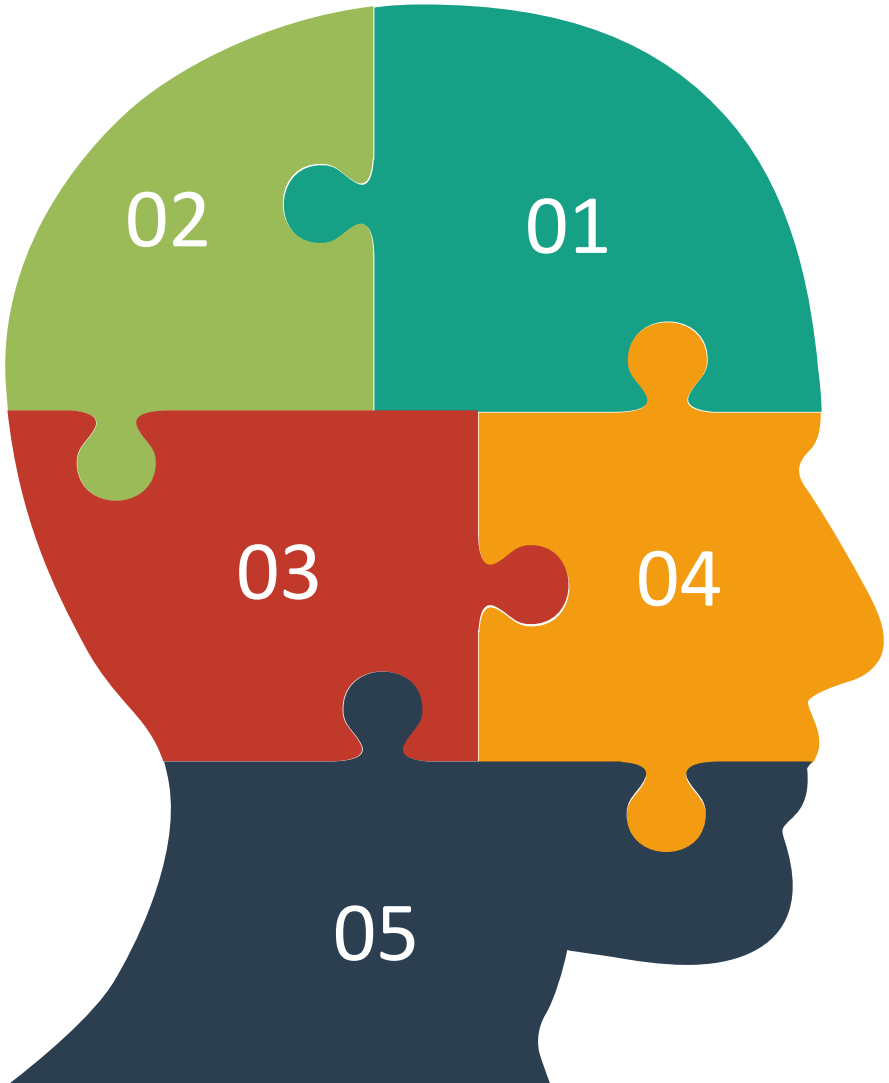


- Acknowledge the older audience
- They are a key feature, not a bug!
- Exploiting the inefficiencies and assumptions out there

Related TV Spot

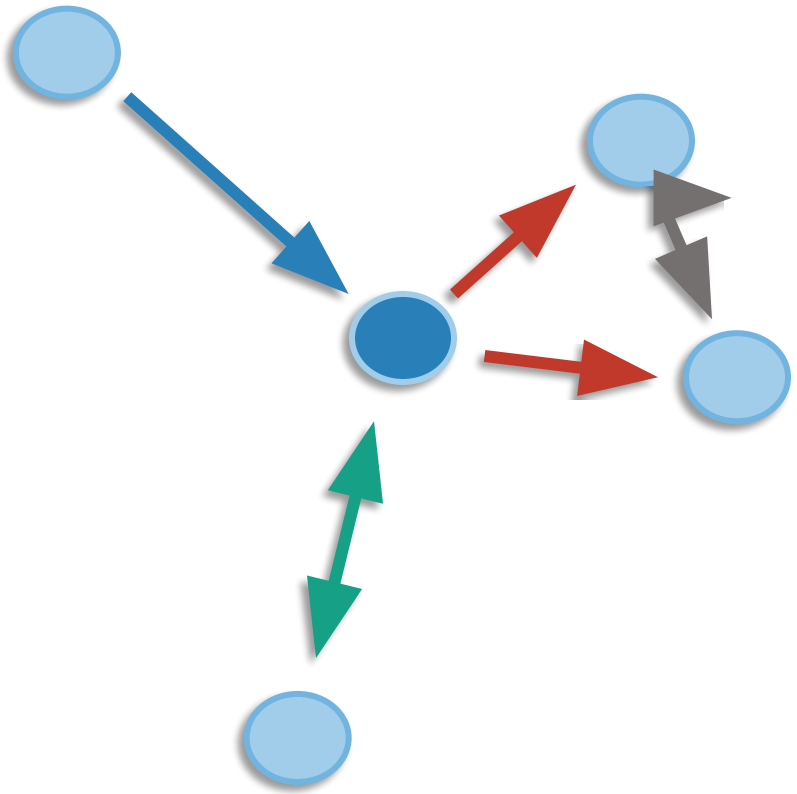

Player Networks

Network thinking

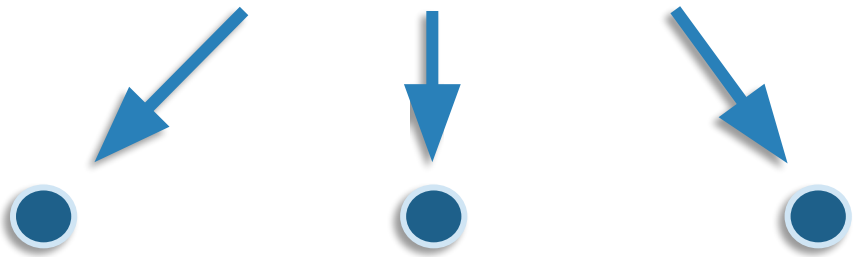


- By default, we look at players as if they were isolated
- This is how they appear in our databases.
- This is not how people actually operate.
- We need to look top-down to see relationships.
- Explains 10-60% of all in-game behaviors (ref: 2016 GDC talk)

Creating player networks



- A map of who is connected to whom at one point in time, or over time.
- Consider different data sources

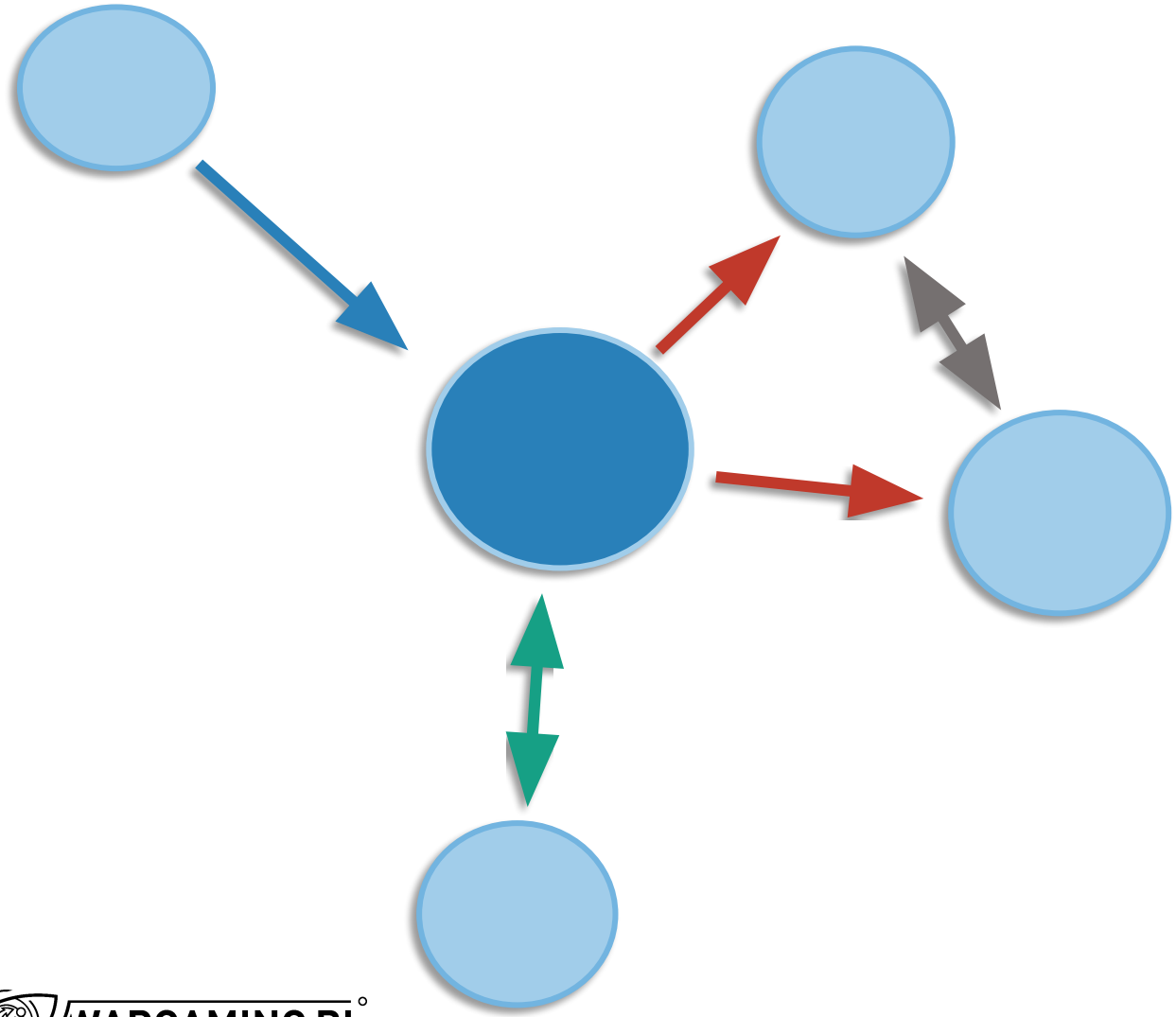


Friend list (in WoT context, not as meaninnotgful)

Sending text chat (good, but misses VoIP)

Actively decide to co-play (parse out matchmaking)

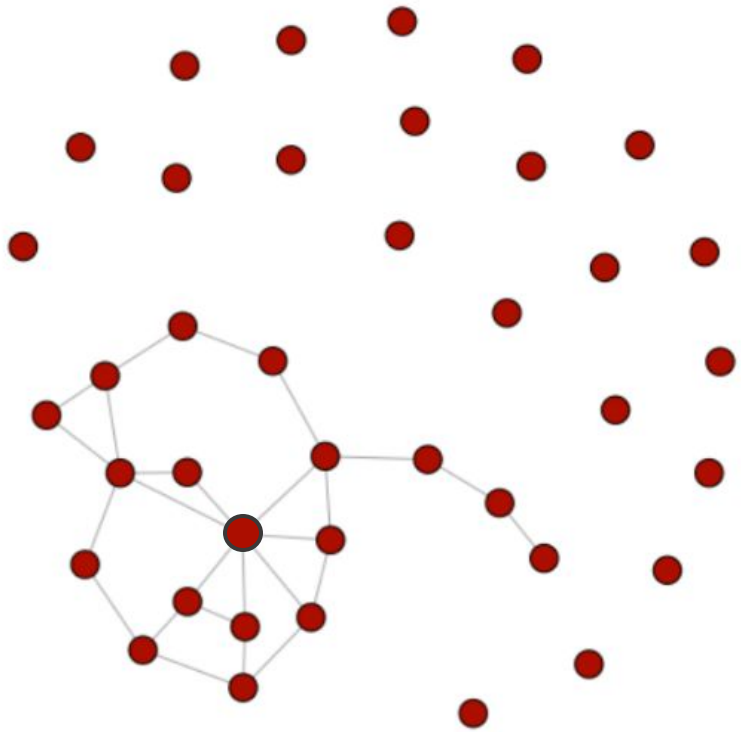
Creating player networks



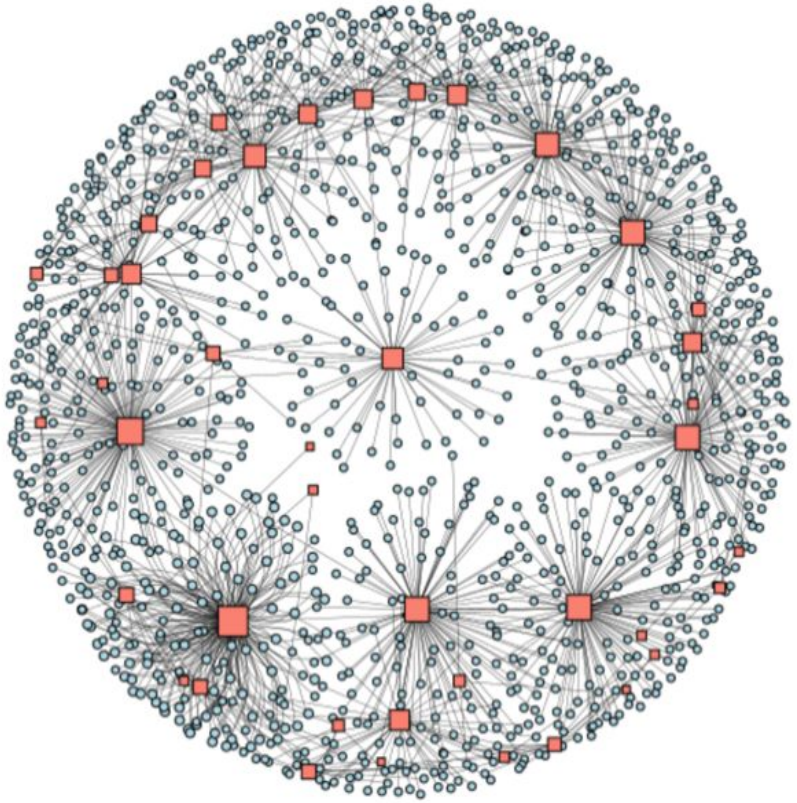
- Actively decide to co-play (parse out matchmaking)
- Context is key:
  Filter out “Random Battles,” focus on team matches, platooning

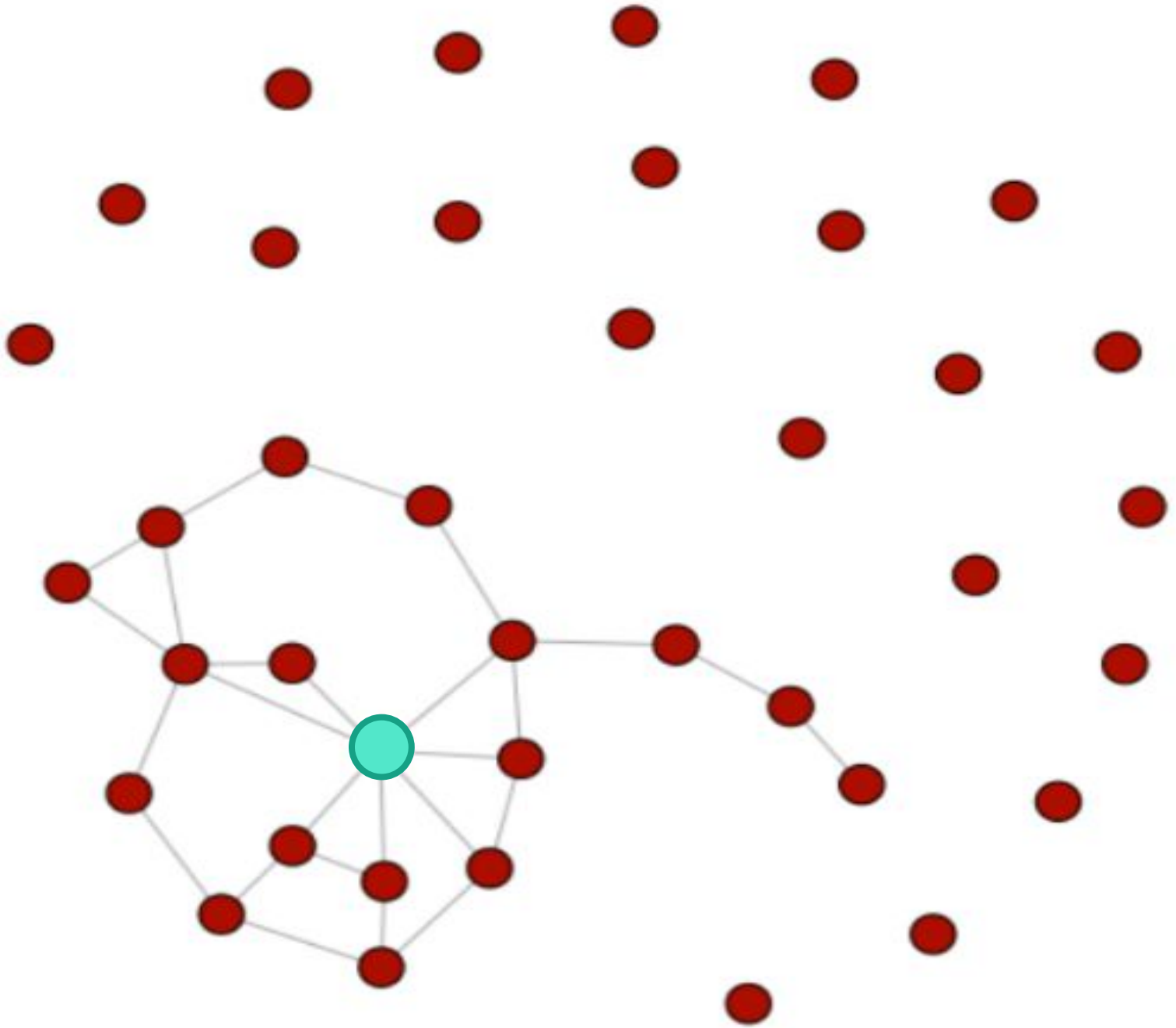
Example networks

One Clan



Across Clans





One Clan

In this clan, the players don’t all play together.

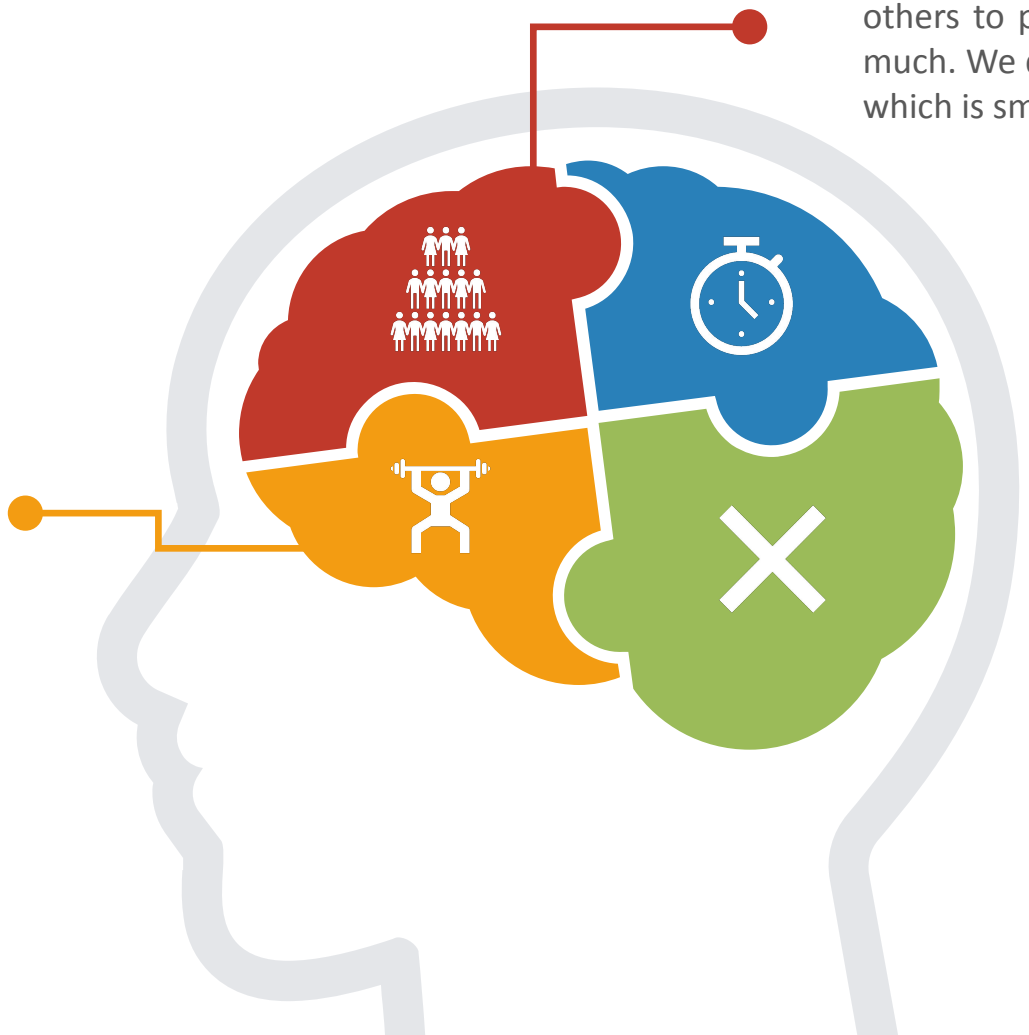
Over half never play with other members at all.

A sub-cluster reveals a core group.

Inside this group some are clearly more important, like this guy.

Network findings

Social Value: Which players influence others to play or spend more, and how much. We derive a value for each player, which is smarter than base LTV.



Identifying influencers allows us to target them and achieve ripple effects in retention and monetization.

Leveraging the findings

Dynamic Platooning

- We identified that many players came into the product without a social structure but had a latent demand to be in a social group. We implemented ‘dynamic platooning’ (where you could create a team on the fly within the game), very successfully.
- Impact: Higher rates of socialization, leading to consequent higher retention and monetization.

Referral program

- Targeted rewards for bringing in high-quality friends. An incentive system for co-playing more, getting friends to catch up faster.
- Impact: Modest short-term ROI, but long-term a clear win, with stronger networks, skills, and player stability/LTV.

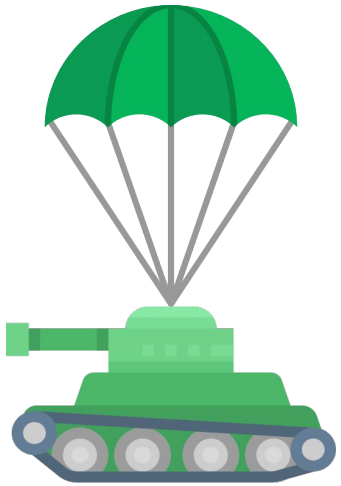
Converse of connected players: solo

- Derived from their network position, i.e. those who don't opt into groups or battles with others. "Alone together" phenomenon.
- Profiled via survey data, combined with DWH data

- Solo players made up 36% of the player base
- Playing only ~1/4 as many battles
- Lower success and win rate
- Conclusion: underserved with solo-oriented content

Leveraging the findings

Battle Royale Mode



- Fun mode specifically targeting the solo player
- One of our most successful modes ever

Road Map/Future Considerations

02

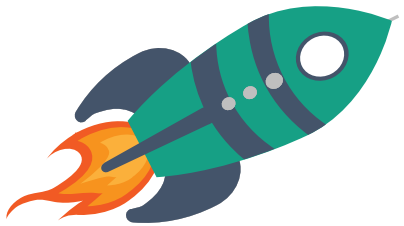
Test friend-based monetization by piggybacking on small-scale influence

03

Test network-based matchmaking and referrals.

01

Leverage player Social Value for churn prevention: stop negative friend cascades

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