

ITERATING DESIGN AND FIGHTING FIRES: UPDATING FRUIT NINJA AND JETPACK JOYRIDE

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Chief Creative Officer
Halfbrick Studios

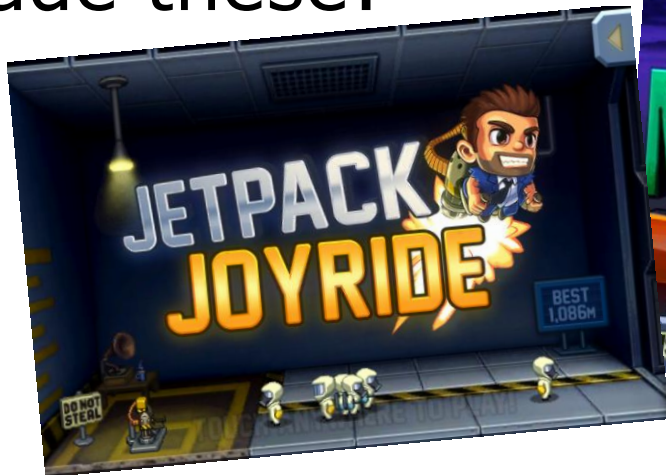
GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA
MARCH 5-9, 2012
EXPO DATES: MARCH 7-9

2012

INTRODUCTIONS!

- Luke Muscat
- CCO @ Halfbrick
- Made these:



WHAT THE HELL IS THIS TALK ABOUT?

- Fruit Ninja update post mortem
- The goals of many of the updates along with the results
- Updating Jetpack Joyride vs. Fruit Ninja.

FRUIT NINJA IOS ONLY

Fruit Ninja 'SD'

- Over 15 million purchases
- Over 40 million updates

Not going to cover HD, Android etc etc etc.

TIME FOR SOME CONTEXT





NEW GOAL

- Ship lean (multiple games)
- If it works, update often
- Lower risk

ENTER FRUIT NINJA



SUPER ULTRA MEGA LEAN

- No 'modes'
- No combos
- No unlocks
- Very few devices
- Completed in 6 weeks by 3 guys.

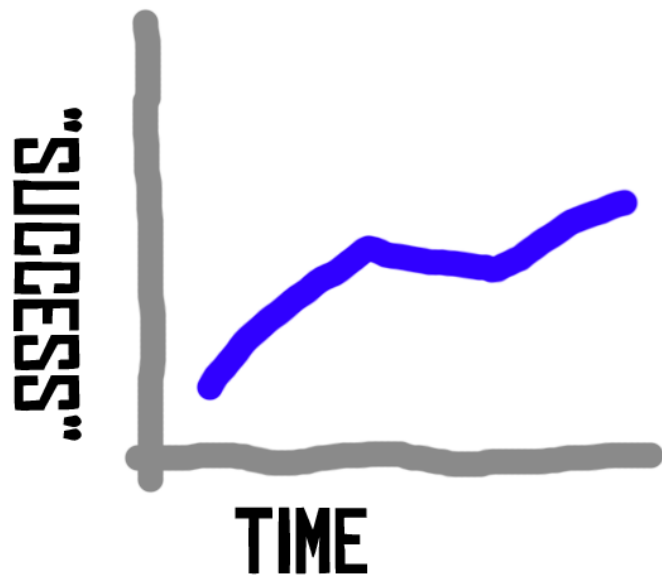


LAUNCH!

Gameplay footage starts about 30 seconds into the video. It's simple, fun and best of all challenging. *Fruit Ninja* also contains Open Feint for global high scores and achievements.

App Store Link: [*Fruit Ninja*, \\$0.99](#)

TouchArcade Rating: ★★★★★



TIME FOR SOME UPDATES

UPDATE 1.01

Current player base: 0!



GOAL

Roll an update really soon after launch to show everyone that we are committed to this game post launch



1.01 GAME PLAN

New Fruits: Mango + Pear

Multi-touch support

Some tweaks and improvements

Optimize performance

UPDATE SUBMITTED, GETTING FEATURED



UPDATE LAUNCHES...



UPDATE 1.01.1

Current player base: ~35,000



GOAL

FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT
IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT
FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT
IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT FIX IT

FIXED IT!



SILVER LINING

People seemed to respond to the fact that we had fixed the problem so quickly, and we won a few fans! Woo!



LESSONS LEARNT

- **Updates can be crippling.**
- **QA effort needs to be increased dramatically**
- **Need to assess the risk associated with each update**
- **Players are 'keeping score' on us**

UPDATE 1.2

Current player base: ~145,000



GOAL



Release something BIG that will warrant a second trailer and a new round of media. Capitalize on the initial growth and success!

AW CRAP



PLAYER FEEDBACK COLLECTION

	A	B
21	SUGGESTIONS - What the people want	# Of mentions
22	Multi-Slice - I want to be able to chop fruit into small pieces & be rewarded for doing so	24
23	Needs more game modes	21
24	zen level (no bomb) where you could release daily stress on purely chopping (Endless mode)	18
25	More Fruit - every fruit imaginable	13
26	Local leaderboards (like Doodle jump)	12
27	Criticals tied to technique instead of making them random (do not understand how I get criticals) - They should be tied to when you slice four or more fruits in one slice	12
28	A Slice And dice Game type where u cut fruit as many times as you can before it falls.	12
29	Bombs don't end your game, they explode and kill all fruit on screen, though they give you a strike	10
30	Different backgrounds / themes	10

#1 MULTISLICE



BAD IDEAS

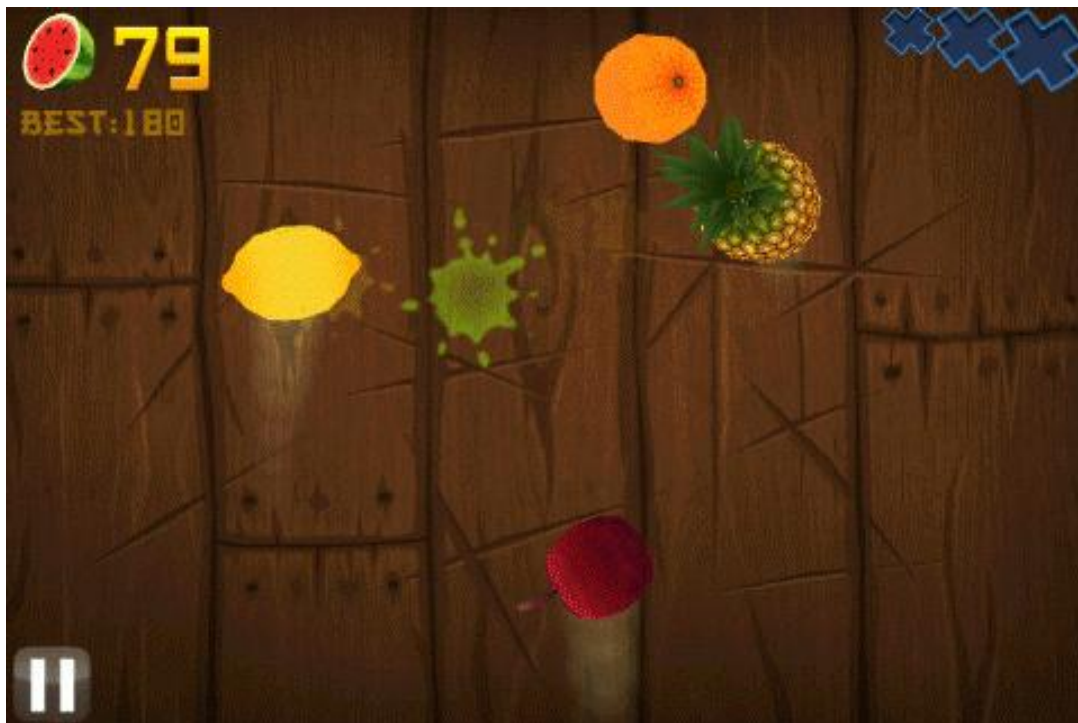
We All Have Them

#2 INFINITE NO BOMB MODE

It gets pretty boring pretty quick, and slicing kind of loses all its meaning



COMBO TIME



TIME LIMIT ADDED

- Mode all of a sudden comes to life!
- Somehow becomes both very relaxing, but if you are going for a high score, extremely competitive.
- Fruit 'waves' highly tuned for combo potential of varying difficulties.

FURTHER UPDATE PROMISE



RELEASE!



Main

Reviews

Forums

New Games

Pod

'Fruit Ninja' Gets a Big Update

posted May 21st, 2010 3:47 PM EST by Brad Nicholson in \$0.99, iPhone games, iPod touch games, News

Fruit Ninja developer Halfbrick seems to have something fun up its sleeves for the iPad platform, but that doesn't mean the studio has bid adieu to the iPhone. The studio's Apple handheld title *Fruit Ninja* [99¢] has received a content update -- one



Fruit Ninja Update 1.2 Released

New zen mode and combo attacks.
US, May 21, 2010

The latest in iPhone and iPod Touch gaming reviews, previews and news.

no dpad

Around the site: First Person Shooter, Puzzler, Platformer, Music, Racing, RPG, A

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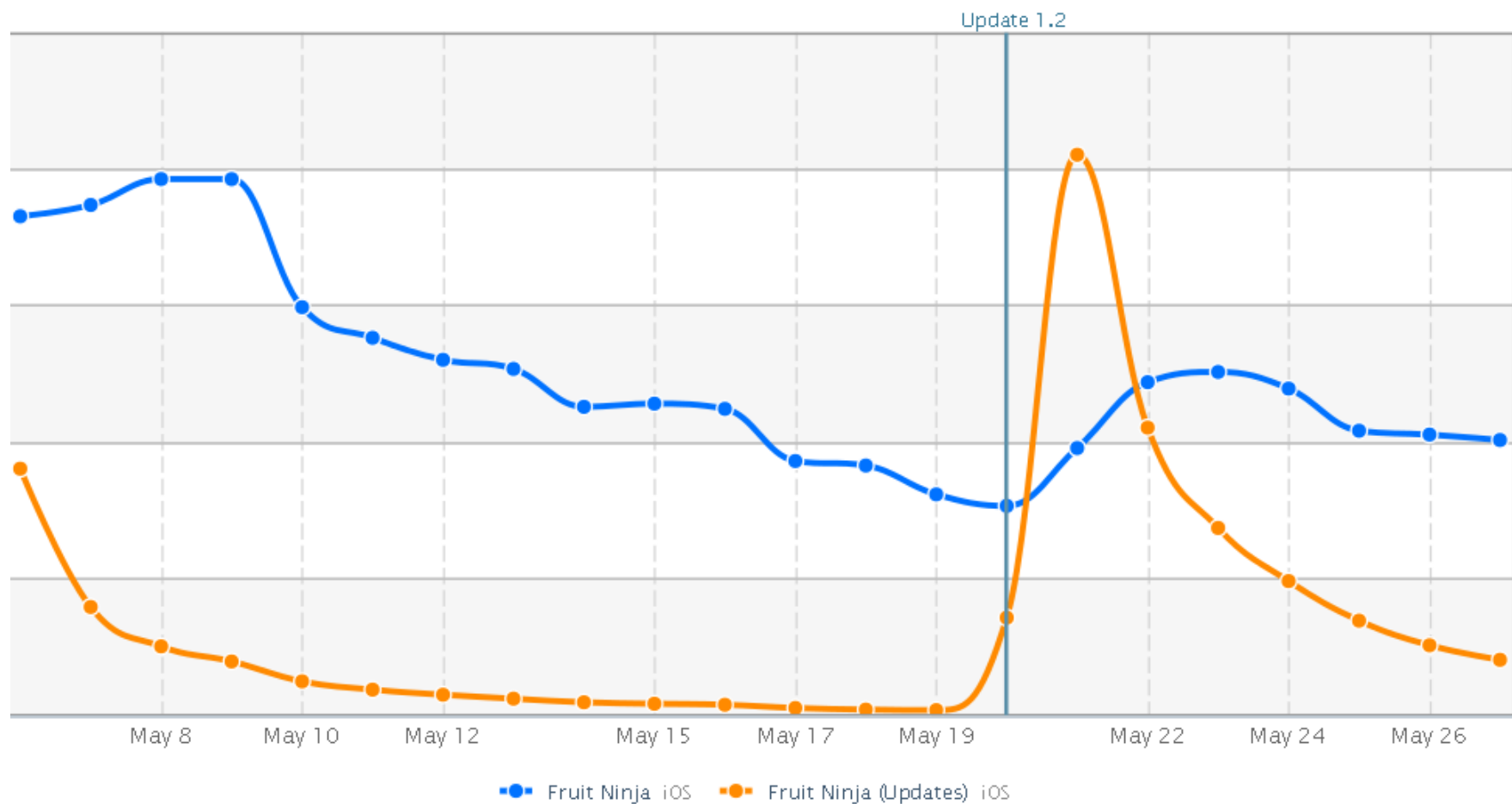
News

Reviews

Previews

Editor

'Fruit Ninja' Update: Zen Mode, Combos, and More



LESSONS LEARNT

- **Listen to the fans, but read between the lines.**
- **Updates really can help keep momentum, but it's a lot of work**

UPDATE 1.2.1

Current player base: ~350,000

GOALS

Stabilize our major update incase something is broken.

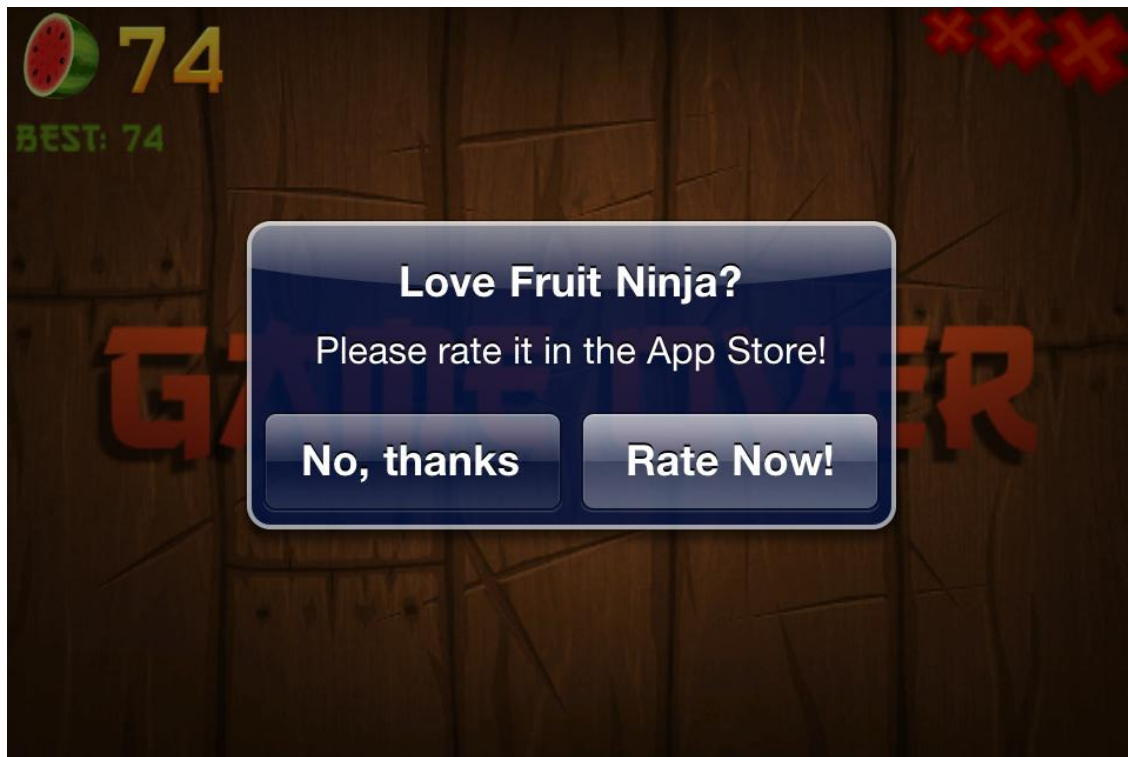
Spark community engagement!



MINDR STUFF

- Added coconuts
- Fixed bugs
- Fixed the game to work properly at 2x scale on iPad

RATE US!



ENTER THE DRAGON FRUIT



RELEASE: FORUM COMMENTS

"How do you find the secret fruit?!"

"Hey, I just scored 350 and guess what I saw? NOTHING! I'm beginning to feel it's a myth!"

RELEASE: FORUM COMMENTS

ArtNJ 

Senior Member



So does the **dragon fruit** avoid your swipes?

Wife says yes, but I dont recall that. Only had it once so I cant be sure.

RATINGS INCREASE

- Number of ratings go way up.
- Solid 5 stars everywhere!

sweeeeeeet !

by **bblb.** on Thursday, February 23 2012 version 1.7.4



super sweet game (: one of my favs !

[Show Original](#)

WOW!!

by **Gallagher4444332221** on Thursday, February 23 2012 version 1.7.4



Very addictive

[Show Original](#)

Mr fruit ninja dude

by **Ifystaxhucivic** on Thursday, February 23 2012 version 1.7.4



Awesome game!!!

[Show Original](#)

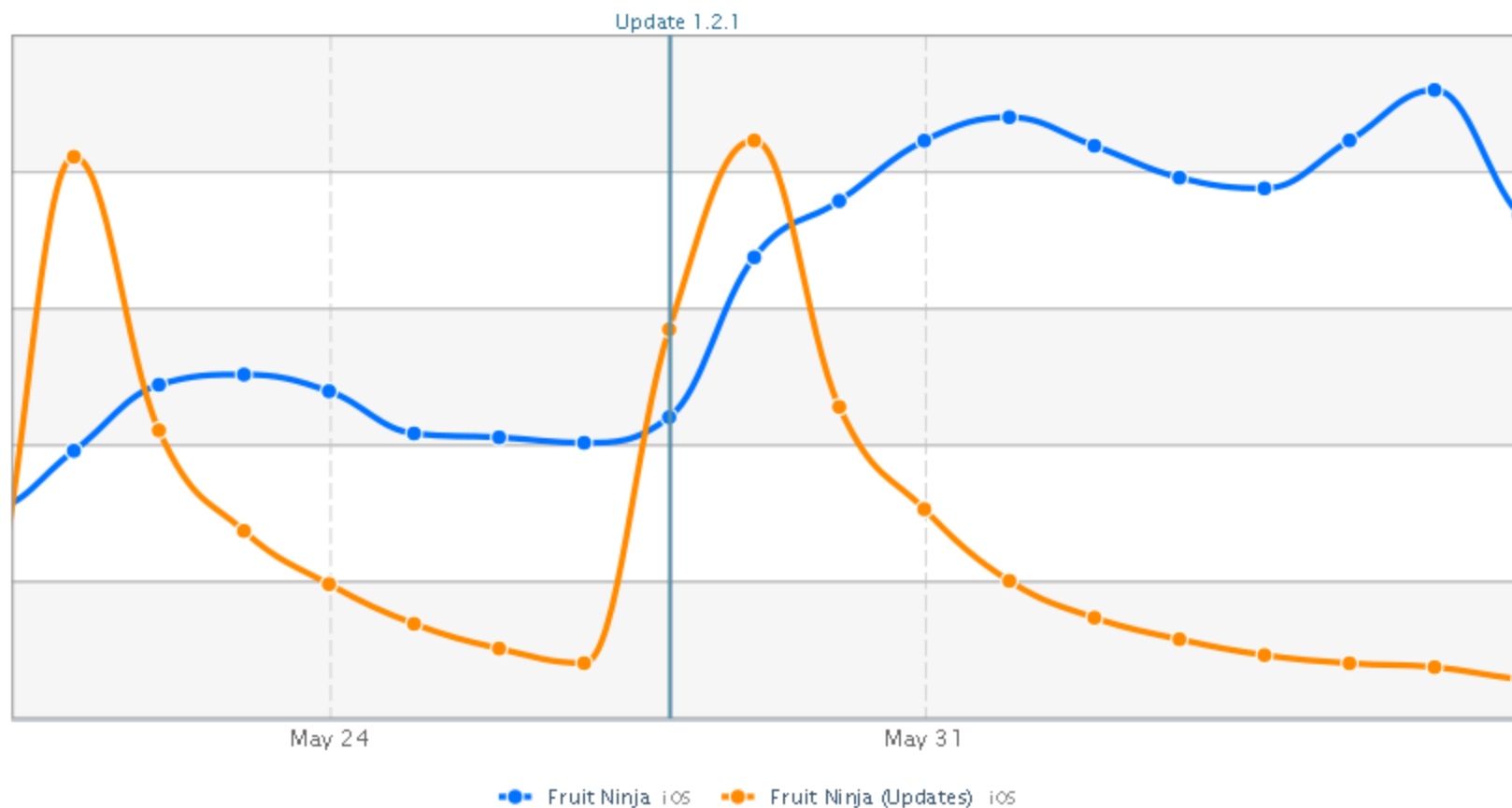
Fruit ninja

by **Jingajinga12** on Thursday, February 23 2012 version 1.7.4



I love fruit ninja

[Show Original](#)



LESSONS LEARNT

- **Chasers seem like a good model.**
- **Important to have the content side of the chaser ready to roll before the previous update even lands.**
- **Ratings matter!!!**

UPDATE 1.3

Current player base: ~500,000



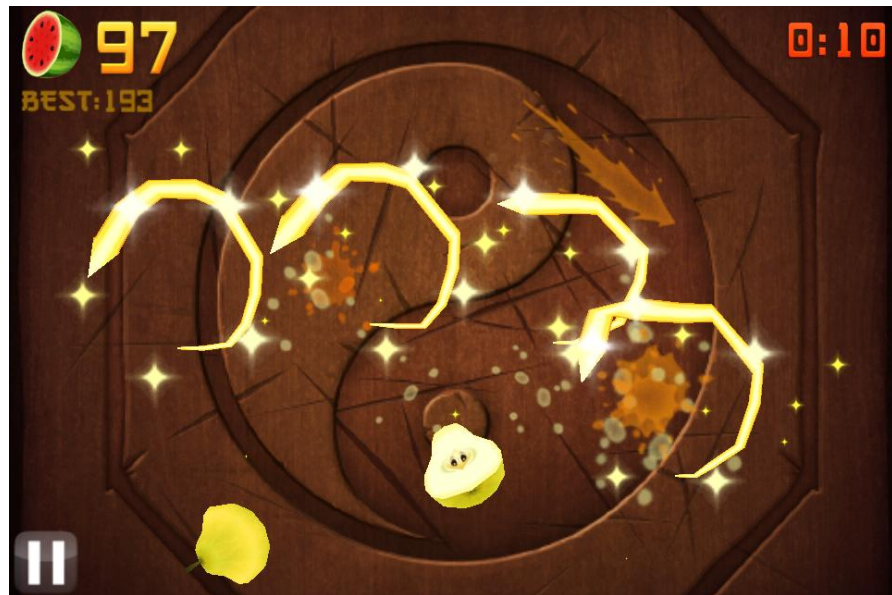
GOALS

Make the game more
'sticky' and less throw
away entertainment.

MAKING IT STICKY

- Long term goals with rewards
- Pretty much every shop ever

NEW BLADES AND BACKGROUNDS



CUSTOM BACKGROUNDS?



INTERFACE DESIGN



INTERFACE DESIGN

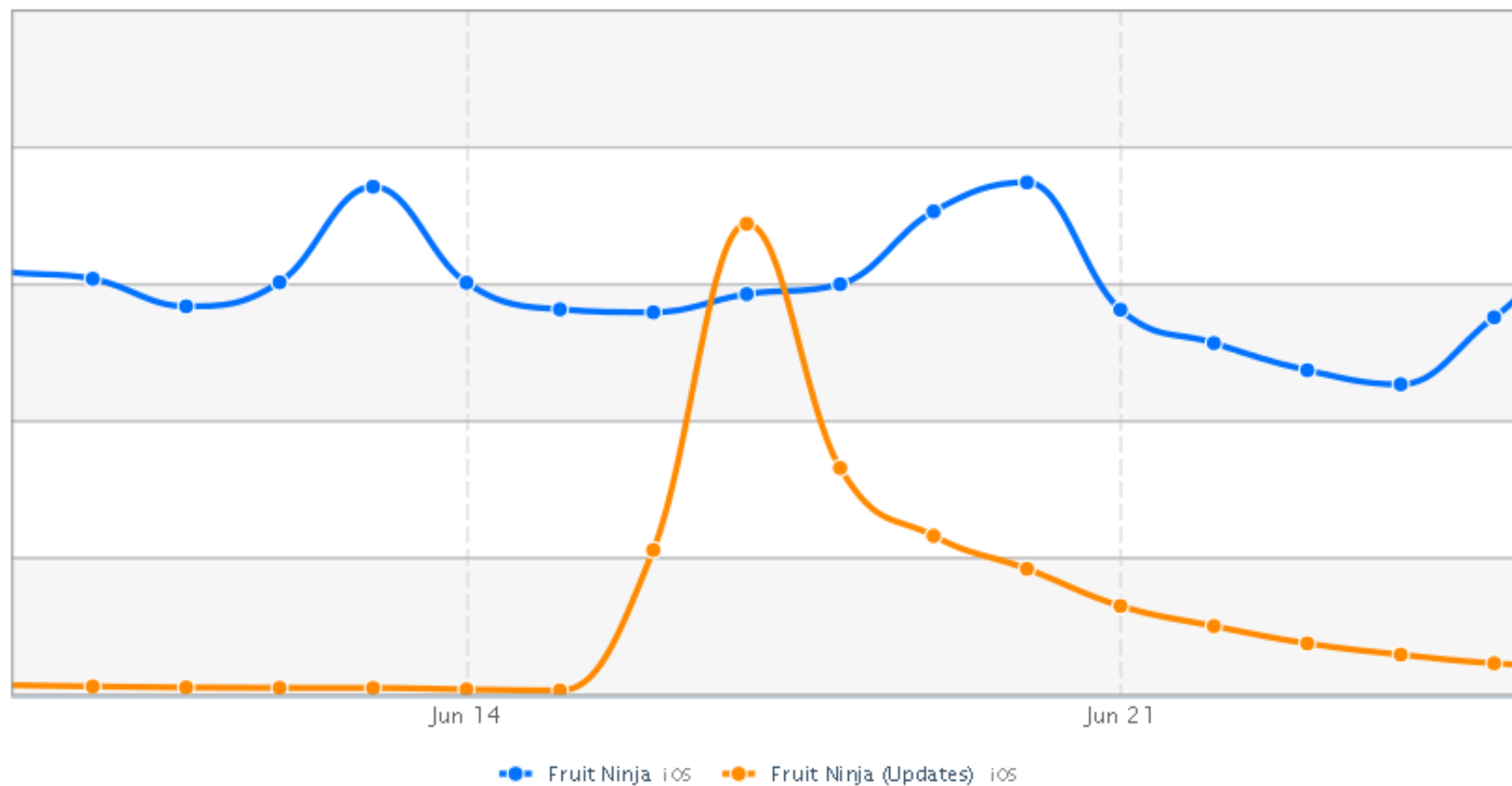


UNLOCKING



RELEASE

- Solid reception! Almost as good as 1.2
- iTunes reviews instantly change to blade and background requests galore!
- Anecdotally, we know people are sticking with the game for longer.



LESSONS LEARNT

- **While achieving goals, it is important to never compromise what has made the game successful in the first place!**
- **Updates are NOT magical silver bullets.**

UPDATE 1.4

Current player base: ~Almost 1 million

GOALS

Make another mode. That worked out pretty good last time!



POWER UPS [ARCADE MODE]



POWERUP BANANA'S, BUT IT NEEDS MORE



POWER UPS...



6 WEEKS OF WORK...

Looking good, but still needs some love, we really want this thing to pop...

**C-C-C-C-COMBO
BREAKER!**



Social gaming network

Invite friends

Matchmaking

Leaderboards

Achievements

GIZMODO

UPDATE 1.4

Current player base: ~1.4 million

GOALS

~~Make another mode. That worked out pretty good last time!~~

BE ONE OF THE FIRST REALTIME
MULTIPLAYER GAMES OUT USING
GAME CENTER

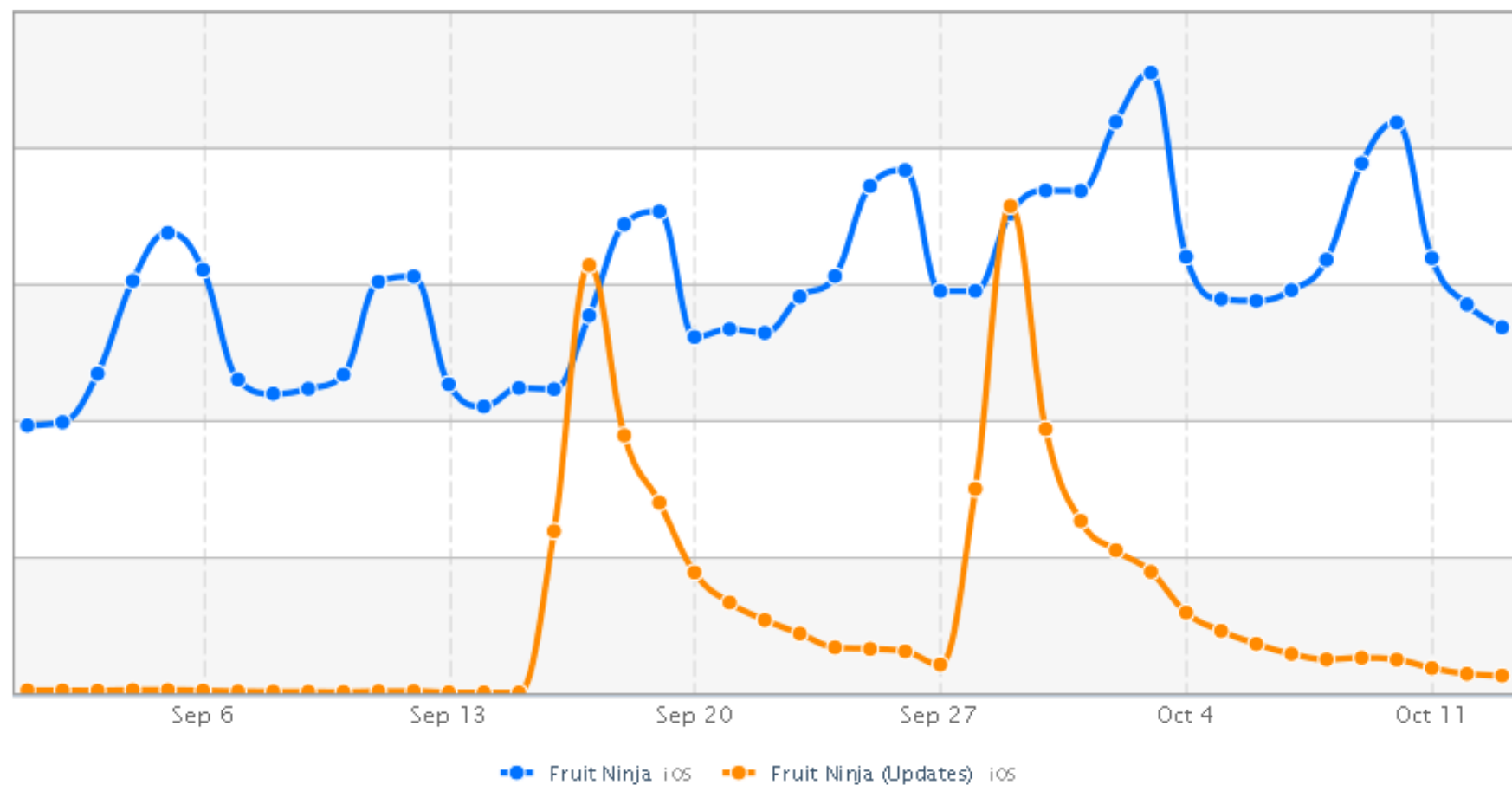


STRIKING WHILE THE IRON IS HOT



AWESOME COVERAGE

- Huge amount of press for being one of the first
- Very positive reviews on the mode
- Lots of love from Apple, being featured, headlining categories etc.



LESSONS LEARNT

- **You can't plan everything**
- **The Mobiles markets are crazy, and sometimes you have to be crazy to keep up with it.**
- **Top level visibility matters!**

UPDATE 1.4.5

Current player base: ~2.1 million



GOALS

Finish off Arcade Mode and completely blow everyone away!

WHERE WERE WE?



STILL NOT QUITE 'POPPING'

- Has gotten too complicated
- Our 'sanity testers'; Nat, Emma and Chloe all dislike it.

HARDCORE VS. CASUAL



TIME TO CUT



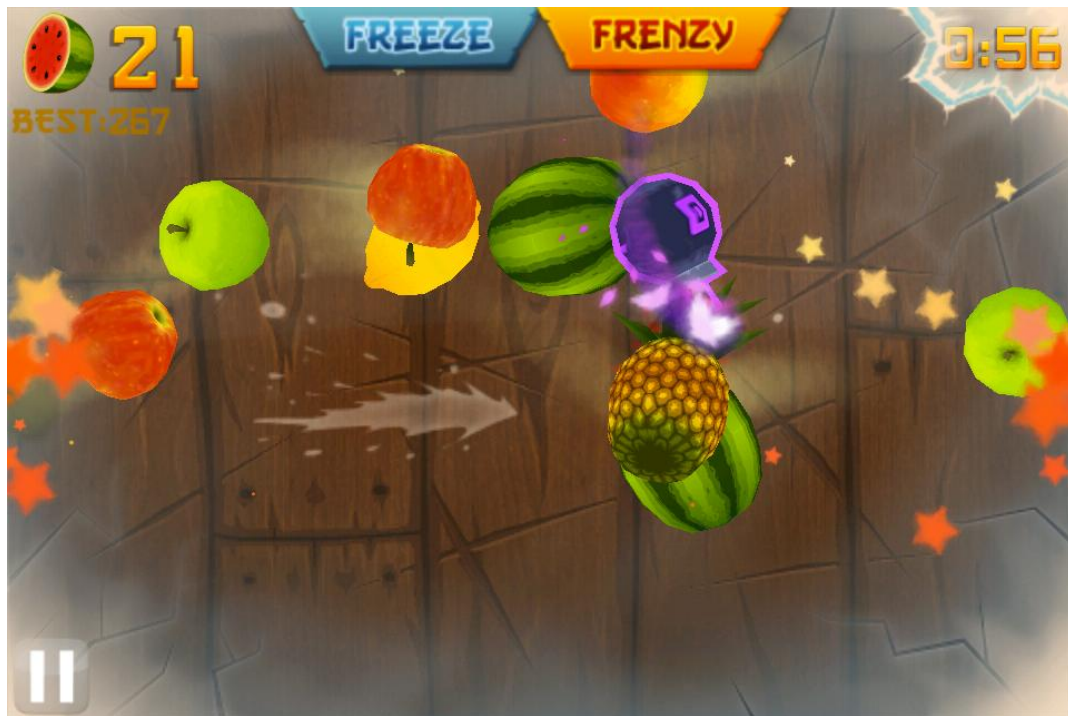
OCCAM'S RAZOR

Your theory is too complex

CUT CUT CUT CUT



SIMPLICITY ALLOWS NEW OPPORTUNITIES



BLITZING VISIBILITY



CAN'T IMAGINE THE GAME WITHOUT IT...



RELEASED... FINALLY!

Fruit Ninja - Arcade Mode trailer

HalfbrickStudios



Subscribe

40 videos ▾

"I can't believe how long the banana mode is taking. I don't think its even a real thing"



0:18 / 0:54



Like



+ Add to ▾

Share



2,627,687



Fruit Ninja - iPhone Update 1.2 Trailer

by HalfbrickStudios

36,699 views



Fruit Ninja HD - iPad Trailer

by HalfbrickStudios

298,358 views



Fruit Ninja - iPhone Trailer

by HalfbrickStudios

548,348 views



Age of Zombies - iPhone / iPad trailer

by HalfbrickStudios

112,769 views



OVER 1000!!! - HIGH SCORE - Fruit Ninja

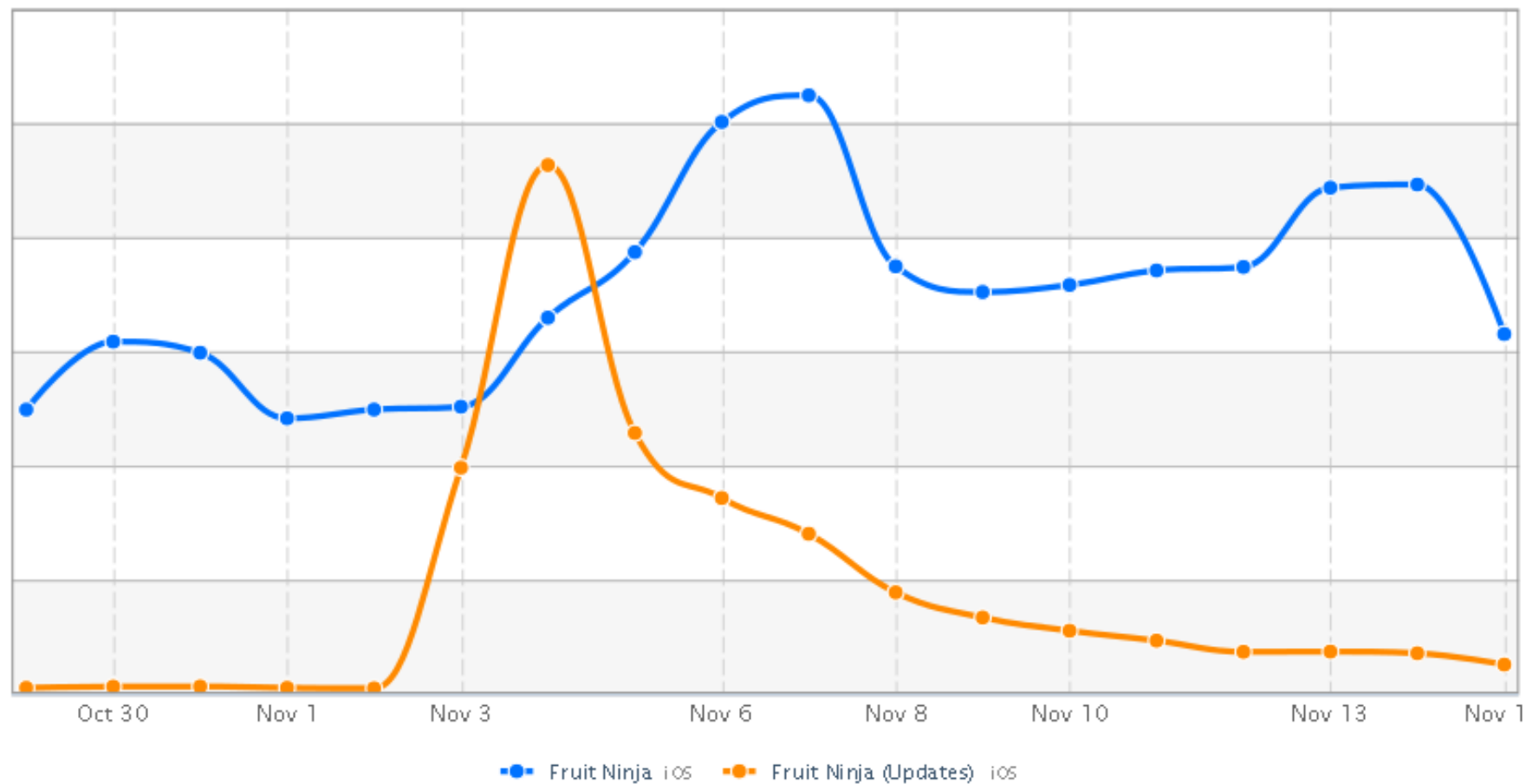
by aranciameccanica777

1,556,439 views



Cut the Rope:

Fantastic Fruit



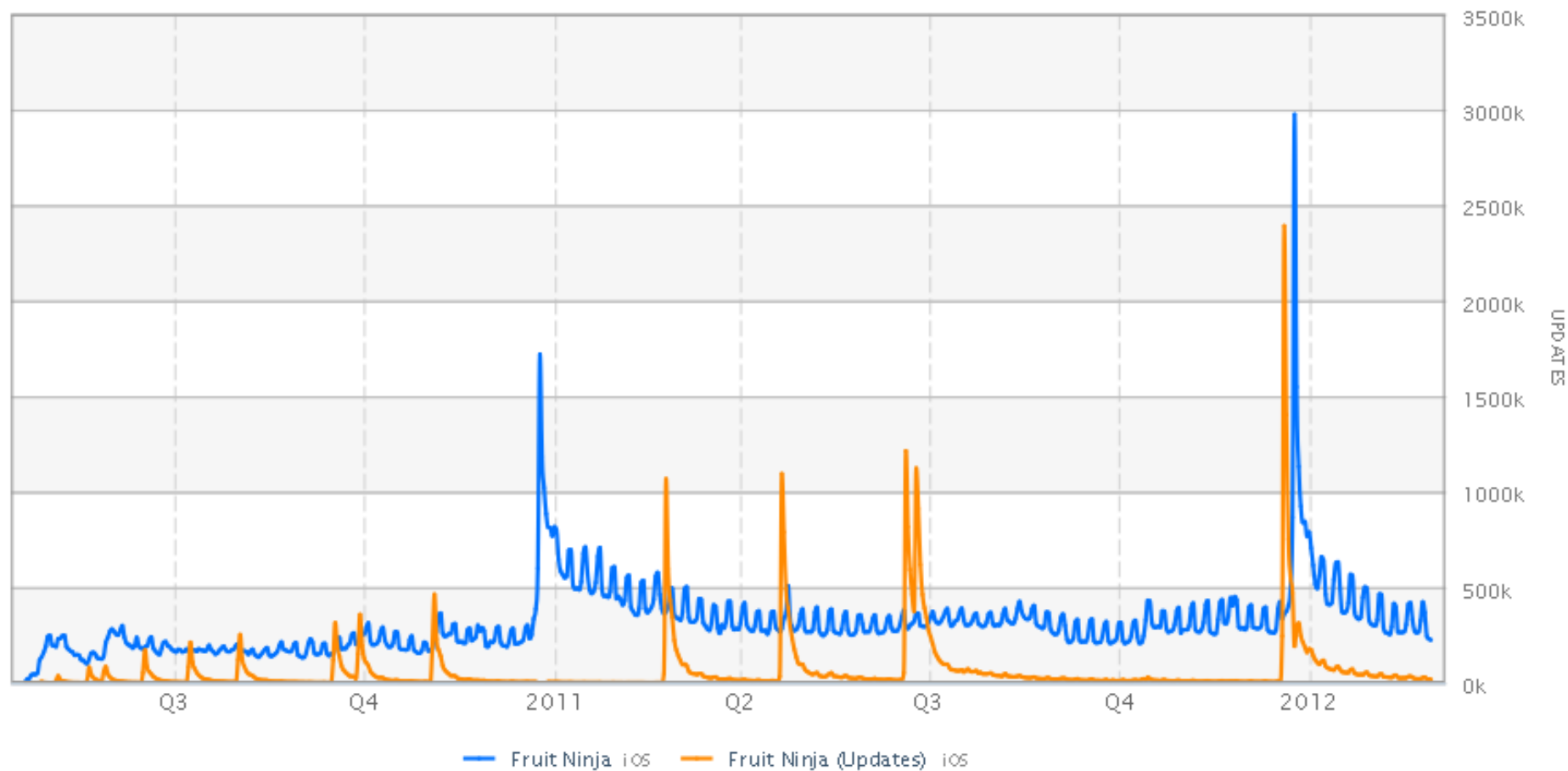
LESSONS LEARNT

- **Took a large risk investing so much time and effort into this update, it ultimately paid off. This was a much better result than getting it out a bit earlier then iterating our way up to success.**

LESSONS LEARNT

- The bigger and more 'complete' the game is, the harder it is to create substantial updates.





PASSING THE BATON





NEW PROBLEMS

- Couldn't ship lean, App landscape had changed dramatically.
- 9 months development
- Almost 20 meg (Fruit ninja shipped @ 9)

NEW PROBLEMS PT. 2

- Had tried to make it easy to update and extensible.
- Pure size, scope of the game made it extremely difficult.
- Spent all our time fighting fires.

4 MONTHS:



GADGETS



CONTINUED SUPPORT

- Languages
- Platforms
- Much more!
- We are still learning



THANKS!

LMUSCAT@HALFBRICK.COM