

# Intuitive vs. Data Driven Design and Conquering the App Stores of Tomorrow



**Alexander Rivan Ronalds**  
CEO @ Argine Consulting

**GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE™ CHINA**  
SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER  
SHANGHAI, CHINA · OCTOBER 19-21, 2014

Intuitive vs. Iterative Data-Driven  
Design & Conquering the Discovery  
Mechanics of the Global App Stores  
of the “Internet of Things” Era



**Alexander Rivan Ronalds**  
CEO @ Argine Consulting

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE™ CHINA  
SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER  
SHANGHAI, CHINA · OCTOBER 19-21, 2014

## Alexander Rivan Ronalds

- A decade of experience building games.
- Shooters, MMOs, Strategy Games, Adventure Games, Social Games, Mobile Games, etc.
- Balanced Worlds was wholly acquired by Kabam in 2012.
- CEO @ Argine Consulting

# ARGINE Consulting

Game development consulting company that creates  
end-to-end solutions for developers.





- Broadest database of individual game events in the world.
- Detailed metrics about monetization sorted by OS, genre, feature, and rankings.
- An information bank for game development teams to optimize their games.

**“A good game designer is  
never wrong.”**

## Why do we believe this?

- Rise of social games & data-driven design
- Changing business models required changing development practices.
- MVPs, more games, shrinking dev costs to launch!
- Fundamental shift in the roll of game designers.
- And it's awesome!



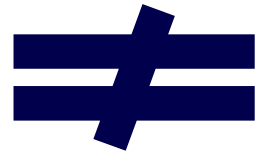






But beware of the dark side.  
For once you start down the  
dark path, forever will it  
dominate your destiny!

**Data Driven  
Design**



**Risk-Mitigation**



## Case Study

- RPG Title for Facebook
- New generation Social Gaming Company

## Problem:

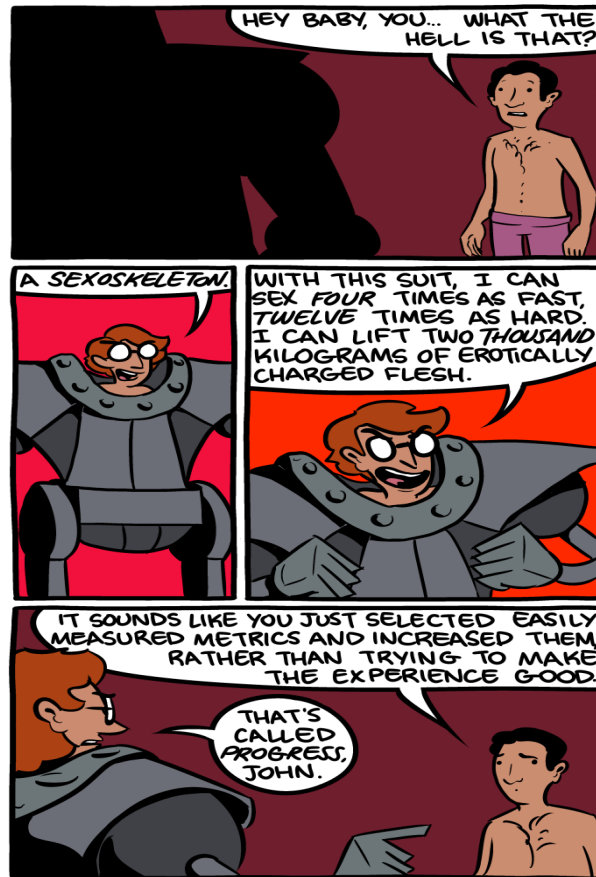
- 40% Acquisition Rate
- 20% D1 Retention Rate

## Workflow:

- Funnel Analysis on Acquisition Rate
- Feature implementation to improve D1



**It Wasn't  
Fun!**



smbc-comics.com

**Source:**

Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal  
[www.smbc-comics.com](http://www.smbc-comics.com)





**“A good game designer is  
never wrong.”**



**“A good game designer is  
SOMETIMES allowed to be wrong.”**

....And a review of Intuitive Design....



"Luke, you switched off your targeting computer — what's wrong?"

*"...Nothing! I'm all right."*

# Playtesting



# Intuitive Design Data Sources



## Pitfalls of Intuitive Design

- Intuition comes from instinct.
- Data sources are “softer” and more subject to interpretation.
- Emotional connection to the ideas.





Source: Dilbert Comics

## Case Study

MMORPG for PC, First title for studio

## Problem

Schedule overrun by 150%

## Why?

Intuitively  
Driven Design



Emotional  
Attachment



Confirmation  
Bias



## So what have we learned?

- Data driven designers rely on large data sets to make more accurate guesses.
- Intuitive driven designers rely on their vast experience of trial and error to make more accurate guesses.



**Game designers rely on the information available to them to create more accurate guesses.**

**“A good game designer  
is SOMETIMES  
allowed to be wrong.”**

**“A good game designer  
is ALWAYS  
going to be wrong.”**

**“Experimentation and failure is part of the game design process that creates great games.”**

How can we help our designers create experiments that identify failures as quickly as possible?

Game design is a creative process that needs to be kept in check with metrics and analytics.

OR

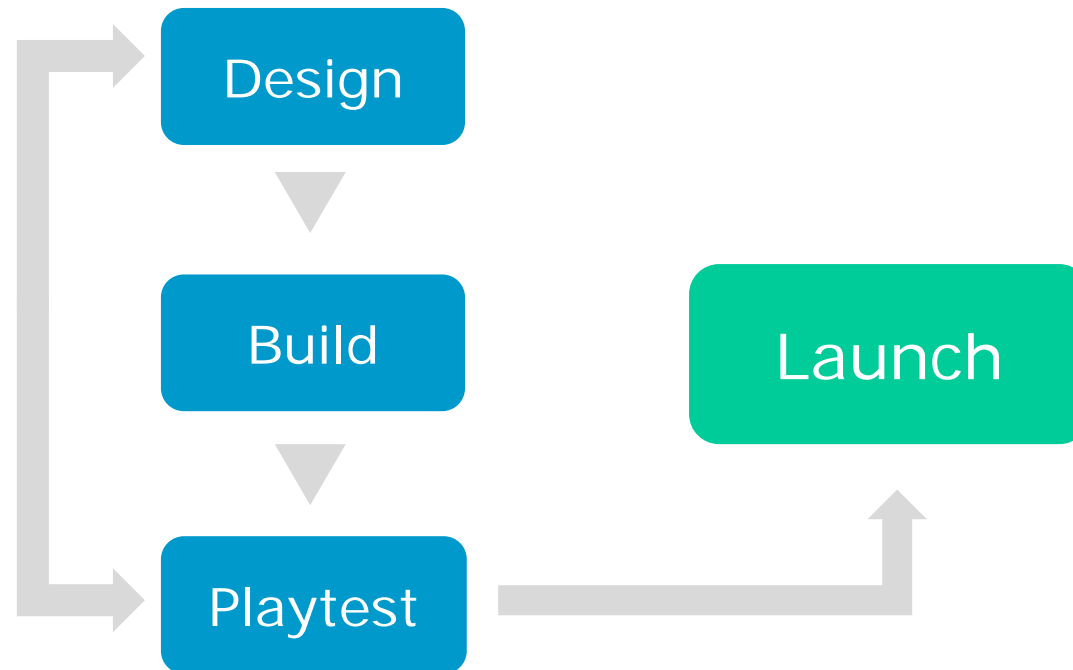
**Intuitive design validated by metrics and analytics.**

# Blending Intuitive & Data-Driven Design Practices



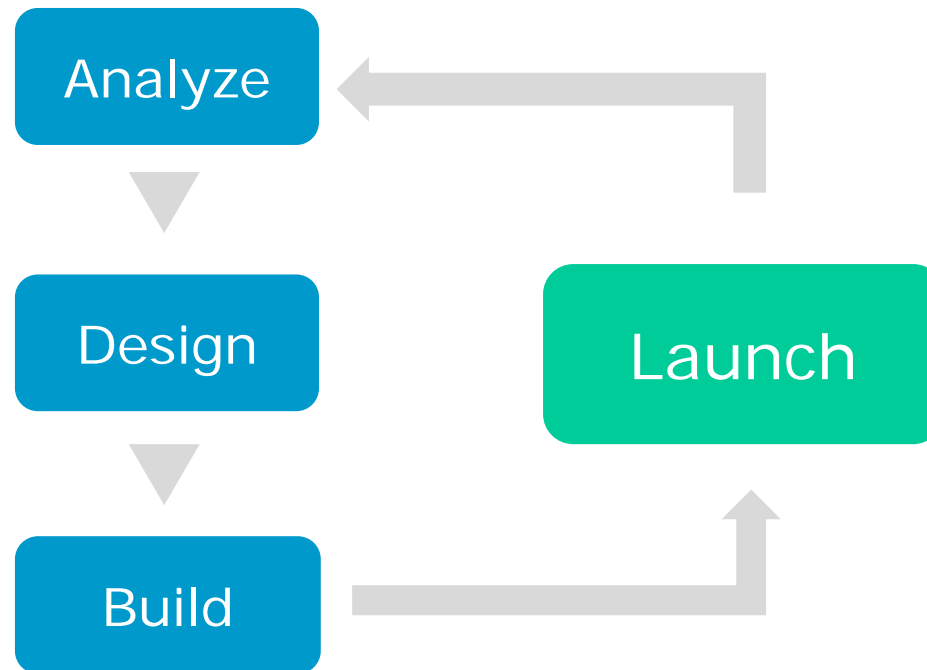
Now, witness the power of this fully operational battle station!

# Intuitive Design Process

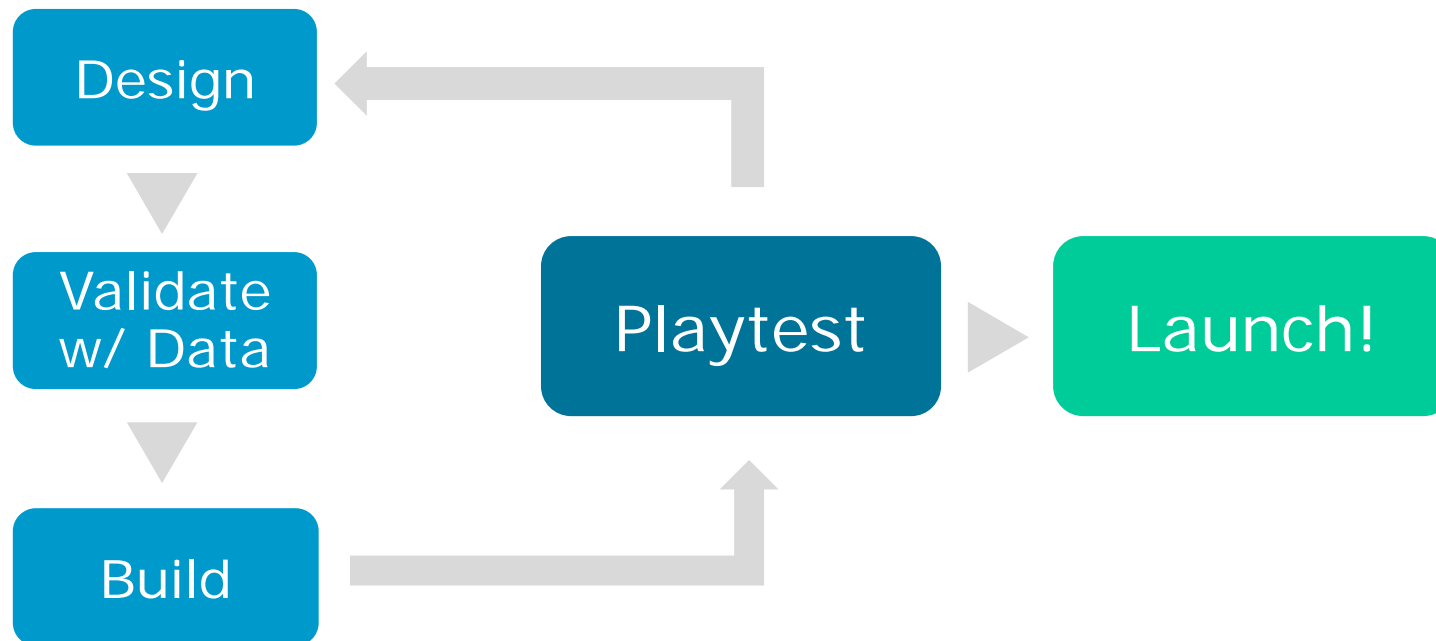




# Data-Driven Design Process



# Intuitive meets Data-Driven Design Process



## Culture

- Everyone should be creating hypotheses.
- It's okay to be creative.
- Wrong is not bad.

## Team Structure

- Creative Director - Jack of all trades
- Designers - Experts in their fields
- QA - Right arm of Design, Culture of Design Team

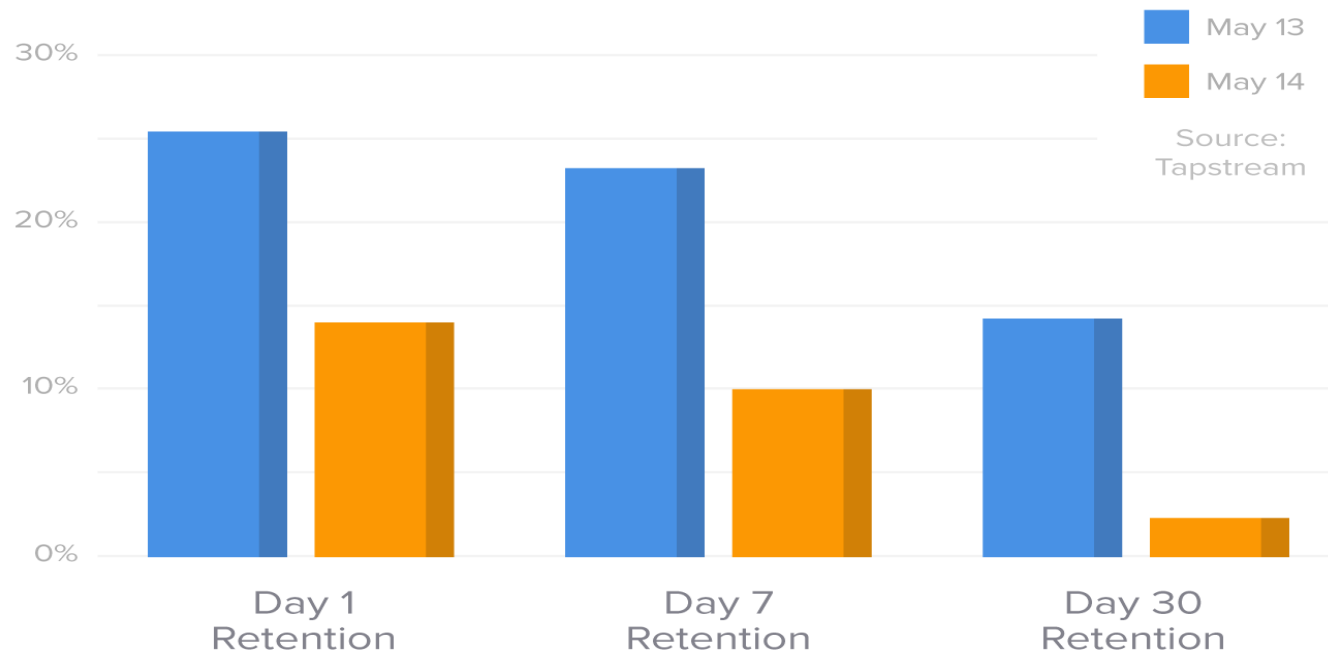
# Playtesting, Playtesting, Playtesting

- Crucial source of data.
- Crucial to the culture of the dev team.
- Crucial to the creative process.

**CRUCIAL!**

# Conquering The App Store of Tomorrow

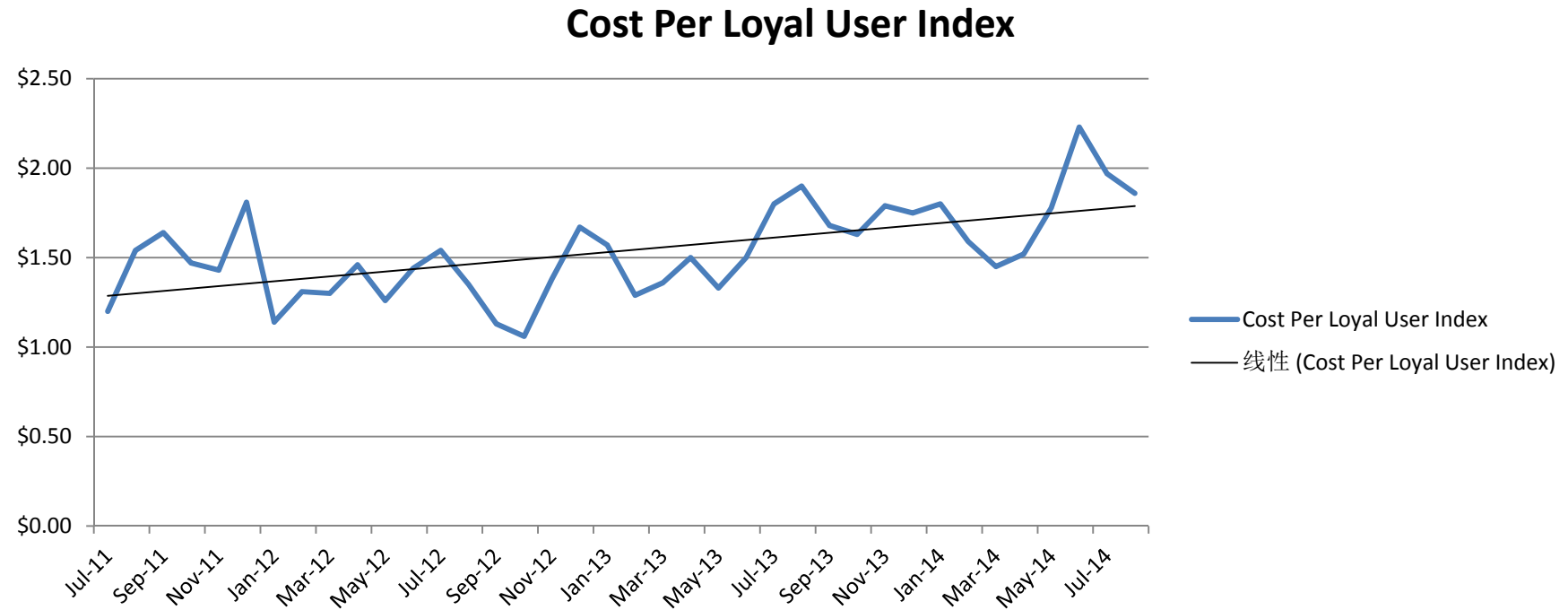
## 50% drop in D1 Retention in 1 Year



Source: TapStream



# Rising Acquisition Costs



Source: Fiksu Indexes

## Development Budgets on the Rise

- More competition -> Fidelity goes up
- Fidelity goes up -> Higher production budgets

## Innovate or Die



If they follow standard Imperial procedure, they'll dump their garbage before they go to light-speed. Then we just... float away.

*...With the rest of the garbage.*

# Alexander Rivan Ronalds

## CEO of Argine Consulting

[alex@argineconsulting.com](mailto:alex@argineconsulting.com)

Twitter: ProductZero

[www.argineconsulting.com](http://www.argineconsulting.com)