PlaytestCloud

Testing with PlaytestCloud helped Kooapps increase daily active users by more than 10%

Goal:
To improve Day 1 retention and the game's total daily active user (DAU) counts.

Solution:
A blend of single-session and longitudinal playtests with iterations on design, game modes and more.

Results:
With playtest iteration, Day 1 and Day 3 retention increased by 10%, while game tutorial competitions increased in 40%.

"With PlaytestCloud we are able to quickly iterate on our ideas and spend less time wondering if we're on the right track."
– Chun-Kai (CK) Wang, CEO **Kooapps**
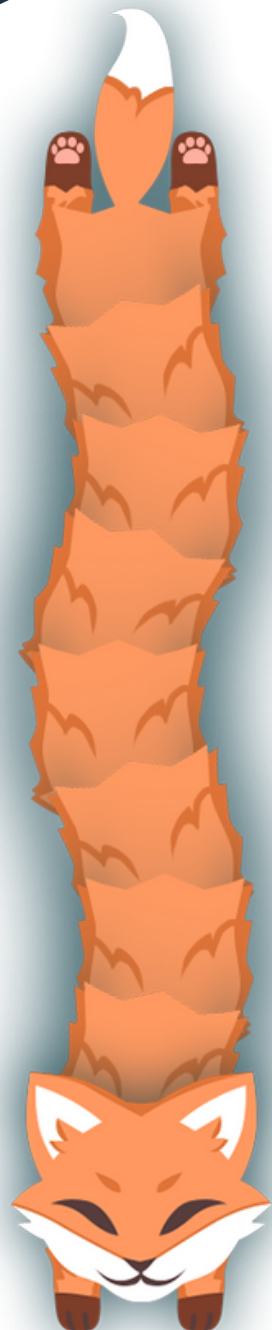
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THE CHALLENGE

Kooapps is a premier gaming studio and publisher with over 250M downloads across their portfolio, including casual games such as Stacky Bird, Pictoword, and Snake.io. By regularly iterating their games alongside PlaytestCloud, Kooapps has grown their user base from 2M to 25M+ monthly active players in just three years. Today, they continue on their mission to keep building great player connections through amazing daily experiences and flawless game design.

That's why, when Kooapps purchased Snake.io in 2019, they were eager to scale the game quickly through impactful design upgrades. "We knew the game was compelling," says Chun-Kai (CK), founder & CEO of Kooapps. "With so much potential we wanted to make the game experience smoother and increase player longevity through great design."

The challenge was therefore to improve Day 1 retention and the game's total daily active user counts. In clear sight of their goals, Kooapps connected with PlaytestCloud to learn about the game's target audience – a more youthful and interactive audience than other in-studio games they'd designed in the past.

The challenge? To interpret player data points and translate these into functional game features. As CK admits, it's all about coming up with the right answers for what a user truly wants. "When we understand our audience, we can better understand what content they will love," he says.

THE GAME PLAN

The first step for the Snake.io team was to experiment more, which meant listening to players' thoughts as they played the game. Here, PlaytestCloud worked in tandem with the team to collect player data through a blend of longitudinal and single-session playtests. These player insights helped Kooapps move in the right direction for new features and product development, and supported the brainstorming process as they worked to achieve their in-game monetization goals.

To begin, Snake.io's design was overdue for an update: "It's best to start with art style updates, since it's easier to isolate the results of that change," says Lyra. She also learned from playtesting results that players who can customize their snake in different ways are more likely to come back and play the game. In collaboration with their internal art director then, Kooapps began to experiment with new gameplay designs and special player skins.

Playtest data also indicated that users wanted to see how they compared to other players. Kooapps responded by iterating to improve score visibility and update leaderboard access for all player levels. As Lyra explains, "while we developed new gameplay modes, we also explored the different rewards players would play for, and what truly incentivized our audience."

Kooapps next focused on developing a way to showcase (and even reward) player progress as users grew their snakes larger and larger.

"We learned through PlaytestCloud that users want to feel like they are progressing through the game," says CK. Here the team designed a reward structure to help players 'level up' their gameplay experience between sessions, instead of having to restart a new game every time they logged on.

Lastly, PlaytestCloud data revealed that the game became less interesting for players when their snakes got too big. Kooapps started to experiment with a live event game mode to keep the game challenging, and to benefit users who really liked to kill other snakes.

Empowered to play with live event boosts and power ups, as well as a 'boss snake' challenge, players were soon able to partake in monthly live events to win special skins and rewards usable during casual gameplay. These events also gave veteran players opportunities to compete for a special 'boss snake skin' and high placement on a newly designed boss leaderboard.

ACHIEVEMENT UNLOCKED

When Kooapps started measuring the results of their game iterations alongside PlaytestCloud, they found that game engagement had jumped significantly–including a 40% increase in game tutorial completions! "We are very lucky to have Snake and have it do so well. The revenues for the game are at an all time high.", says CK Wang, CEO at Kooapps. The art-style upgrades alone increased Day 1 retention metrics by 5%, while score visibility and reward progression updates improved Day 3 retention by a cumulative 10%.

To the pleasure of the whole design team too, the game's well-iterated live event modes were an incredible success for reward video conversions, which are key to Kooapps' revenue strategy. "Rewarded videos are a great point of monetization, and when players watch them, it's a great indicator that players want to play your game," says Lyra. As a result of live events and other changes made with the help of PlaytestCloud, 10% more players opted to watch video ads to receive a reward, paired with a simultaneous 10% increase in Day 1 retention.

So what's next for Kooapps and Snake.io? "We have a bunch of new features we want to implement, including user generated content and more in-app purchase options," says CK, who is already looking to book another longitudinal playtest campaign focused on week-one player retention. "We're always experimenting with different features and optimizations, so we like to regularly check in with our audience and test out new ideas through playtests about every six months."