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## About Certain Affinity

- [www.certainaffinity.com](http://www.certainaffinity.com)

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## Goals

- Leverage analytics to help inform games design and optimize monetization
- Quantify and improve overall retention, monetization, and virality of Age of Booty: Tactics
- Provide timely cadence of analytics driven feedback to influence development and live team

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## Approach

- Establish data driven decisions as a key pillar of the design process starting in pre-production
- Integrate Google Analytics to understand and optimize UI flow, customer behavior, and accessibility
- Leverage GA for A/B testing to better understand estimated price elasticity and impact of marketing campaigns

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## Results

- Moved the total time spent in game vs. other screens from #4 to #1
- Optimized average turn duration from 3.08 minutes to 2.10 minutes
- Reduced screens per session from 15.5 to 8 (cleaner UI/less back and forth)
- Reduced time per screen from 2 minutes to 1:33

# The Google Mobile App Analytics was pivotal in identifying and influencing pre- and post-release design decisions for Certain Affinity's first mobile title, Age of Booty: Tactics

*"Google Analytics was a vital component of our overall development process. It enabled us to quickly identify areas of needed improvement which would have otherwise limited our potential success once in the market."*

*- Patrick Bergman, Business Development Manager*

## Background

Certain Affinity is one of the most experienced independent game developers in the industry. Based in Austin, Texas, with more than 80 full-time employees, they have shipped more than a dozen products with combined sales of more than 75 million units. The most notable among those are co-development on the Left 4 Dead, Call of Duty, and Halo franchises. Most recently, Certain Affinity has been working on their first mobile Title, Age of Booty: Tactics

Age of Booty: Tactics is an asynchronous turn based tactics game hybridized with a collectable card game. Certain Affinity wanted a solution enabling them to measure and analyze specific metrics to influence both the pre-release and post-release designs of the game. They researched a number of analytics solutions, but were frequently frustrated by the cost, size, and limited flexibility offered.

## Ramping Up Reporting

Certain Affinity has used Google Analytics for website analytics since 2005, and began talking to mobile partners after becoming aware of Google Analytics' (GA's) application in mobile gaming. Given their existing experience, the relative cost of the platform, and the extensive feature set, Certain Affinity quickly and easily integrated GA into the game. The early inclusion of GA into the design process resulted in easy access to analytics to assist in influencing direction across design, art, and ultimately production.

## UI Optimization

Google Analytics provides an intuitive way to understand engagement across multiple screens and events. By leveraging engagement flow and average screen time analytics, Certain Affinity understood when specific areas within the UI were either too complex or buried to drive the desired behavior. They identified that the storefront was overly complex and required significant streamlining to become easily accessible. Additionally, they found that a number of options within the menus were too complex and lead to users looping within the UI prior to engaging in an actual game.



## Gameplay Duration

Certain Affinity wanted to better understand the average duration of play to optimize the experience on mobile. Given that users tend to spend less time gaming on their mobile devices than in the console space, it was vital to ensure the game was consumable and enjoyable in the “bite sized” engagement window. Certain Affinity leveraged session durations to understand the existing top-level behavior. In analyzing the data, they found that the typical session was over 25% longer in length than was ideal. They tracked events such as turn submission, undo, and return to main menu to identify any behavior that was artificially extending the average duration of play. Certain Affinity then specifically targeted optimization to the areas requiring the most work.

## Custom Dimensions

By leveraging Google Analytics Custom Dimensions, Certain Affinity could measure analytics across a number of key metrics in the mobile gaming space including retention, virality, and monetization. While this data was not widely used until launch, the ability to verify collection was instrumental in ensuring a successful soft launch. “The flexibility GA provides is quite amazing. While no analytics provider will ever have everything you need out of the box, it is great to have a solution that allows us to implement our own requirements [through custom variables], so easily!” explains Certain Affinity’s Lead Server Engineer.

## The Power of Data

Since Certain Affinity began leveraging Google Analytics, there was a shift in how they develop and implement within their studio. Development is no longer a strictly qualitative process, but is supported and elevated through the use of analytics and data on a daily basis. Reporting is streamlined due to the increased simplicity, fidelity, and accessibility that Google Analytics provides.

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### About Google Analytics

Google Analytics is the enterprise-class analytics solution that gives companies rich insights into their digital audiences and marketing effectiveness. With features that are powerful, flexible, and easy-to-use, companies large and small can measure engagement to create more effective marketing initiatives, improve user experience, and optimize their digital strategies. Sophisticated conversion attribution and experimentation tools help savvy marketers determine the best allocation of media and resources to drive results. For more information, visit [google.com/analytics](http://google.com/analytics).

