

BUSTER'S BREAK OUT

LOGLINE: Break through sludge slabs and soak up the light as Buster, the little demon that wants to be more holy than hellion! But beware... will the slabs release light orbs or mini-mines? Can Buster break out and reach the heavenly realms?

CORE SPIRITUAL CONCEPT: *Grace and Sanctification*

The player will be encouraged to pursue sanctification through grace with Buster and be rewarded for gathering light for as long as they can, while constantly improving focus, endurance, and discernment to reach higher levels of mastery.

PILLARS: Character-driven, Nostalgic, Visceral, Robust

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

Demographic: Everyone, 8+

Genre/Subgenre: Arcade, Casual (Hybridcasual Model) - Pinball/Bricks Breaker

Challenge Level: Easy increasing to hard. Mini-mines increase. Blocks take more hits to break. The ball moves faster. The paddle shrinks.

Pace: Fast. Needs dedicated attention. Ability to pause.

Competitiveness: Moderate. The player is trying to beat their own high score with every session and collect achievement badges representing Buster's transformations.

Platform: Player needs mobile device. (Apple/Google initial release). Aim to release on other platforms with a patch for expansions (Steam, Netflix Games, Luna, etc.)

Skills Required:

- Aim/Accuracy: Precise movement of the paddle and bouncing the ball toward certain objectives.
- Spatial Awareness: Understanding the physics of bouncing/spinning the ball toward an objective and predict where it might land, while catching falling objectives from broken sludge slabs.
- Pattern Recognition: Recognizing pattern of gameplay along with changes in gameplay as the difficulty level increases. Recognizing patterns in cause and effect of catching objectives and reward/achievements. Realizing hit

count increases when breaking blocks in later levels and using that to change strategy.

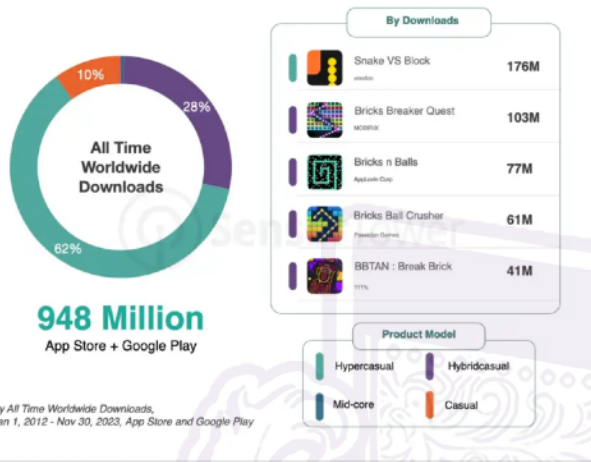
- Strategy and Planning: Players use strategy to increase their score by balancing points received or subtracted for objectives caught/missed and plan power up use accordingly.
- Adaptability: Player should be able to adapt to changing rewards and level design (hit counts, objectives, etc)
- Problem Solving Skills: Unique objective combinations present problems a player must solve to adequately level up both in Buster's transformations and world levels.
- Hand-Eye Coordination: Using two buttons, player needs to move the paddle and coordinate bouncing the ball at different angles to break bricks.
- Focus and Concentration: A pause button is available, but continuous active gameplay with increasing speed and difficulty requires focus and concentration.
- Patience and Persistence: Character interaction/interruption, continuous gameplay, and requiring all blocks be cleared to move to the next level require patient play and persistence through moderate setbacks.
- Competitive Spirit: High score records as a game end-state require a moderate competitive mindset.

COMPARISONS/MARKETING

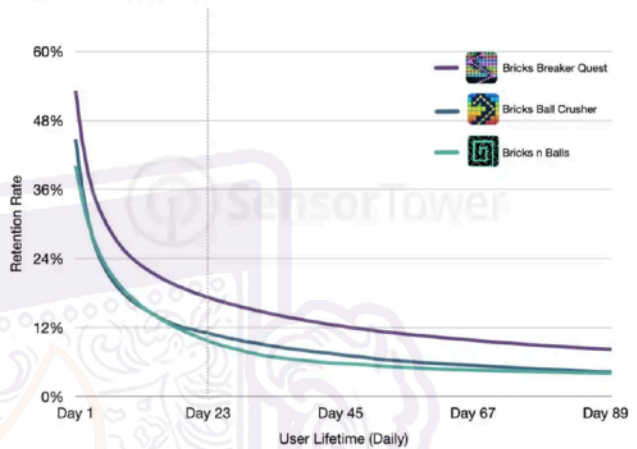
Pinball/Bricks Breaker (mobile) games retain players and attract organic downloads with stability, simple mechanics, and maybe one intriguing twist or game addition. Success (measured by downloads and revenue) has largely relied on the Hybridcasual Product Model, defined as:

- *Easy to understand main mechanics that require low cognitive effort like Hypercasual games.*
- *Simplified long term Meta-Features like Character Collections and Progression, inherited from Mid-Core games.*
- *Hybrid monetization strategies, featuring currency bundles and progression packs from Casual games, and interstitials and rewarded ads with implementations similar to hypercasual games.*
- *Often, lower production costs than casual games, and thus the use of more generic assets, codebase and logic from other projects, in a Hypercasual fashion.*
- *A broad appeal to multiple audiences due to its unique combination of Mid-Core, Hypercasual and Casual personas.*

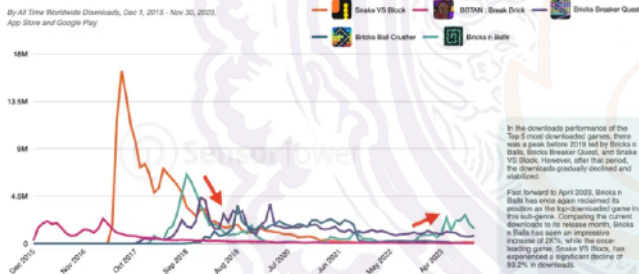
Note for future iterations: pinball/bricks breaker games on Steam rely largely on game mechanic innovation and pleasant interfaces that make spending hours in the game attractive.



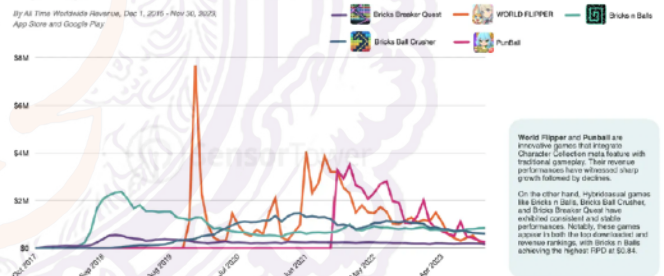
Data Source: Sensor Tower -Acquisition & Churn - Retention
Oct 1, 2015 - Nov 30, 2023, US, App Store



Top 5 Most Downloaded Games Performance



Top 5 Highest Revenue Games Performance



NARRATIVE DESIGN

Backstory: Buster has tried to be good. But he can't seem to stave off the sludge that keeps him trapped in hell. Just as he's about to blow his top, a single beam of light bursts through the blocks. Buster covers at first. But then, slowly, reaches up. A LIGHT ORB hurtles into his open claw and BOOM! The light orb barrels into the sludge, knocking it to pieces. Buster immediately transforms, only a little at first. His snake eyes round out and suddenly he can see it—the heavenly realm he's longed for! Here's his chance to BREAKOUT!

Grace and Sanctification— Grace is a gift from God. And we can't really play the game of life without it. Buster receives the light orb as a gift offered by the heavenly realms and immediately kicks off his journey of sanctification. He breaks sludge slabs and starts leveling up, transforming physically and ascending from hell. But God's grace doesn't end there! Rewards wait in the sludge slabs in the form of more light to be collected. But as God often does, sin is brought forward as Buster transforms and matures. The game gets harder, not easier. And grace/light is the only way to make it through.

Is Buster doing everything on his own, by his own efforts? Absolutely not! The only way to continue breaking sludge slabs is with the light orb. But does it require effort and interaction with grace and with sin/pain that emerges from playing? Yes! The player should be learning to pursue an active role in killing sin while appreciating the grace and multiple lives they have to play and collect more light. Every interaction Buster has with the light, the mines, sludge slabs, and world ascension echoes the trials and joys of our own faith journeys through this life.

Core Narrative Loop

- *Intro:* Cinematic introduces Buster, the sludge slabs keeping him in Hell, and the gift of the LIGHT ORB that can break bricks.
- *Core gameplay:* Bounce the light orb and break through bricks to transform Buster and level him realms by catching more light orbs.
- *See progress/world changed:*
 - Buster interacts with the play (good and bad)! And he slowly transforms when he absorbs light orbs.
 - Climbing out of hell becomes a visual journey as the interface becomes less hell-ish and more heavenly.

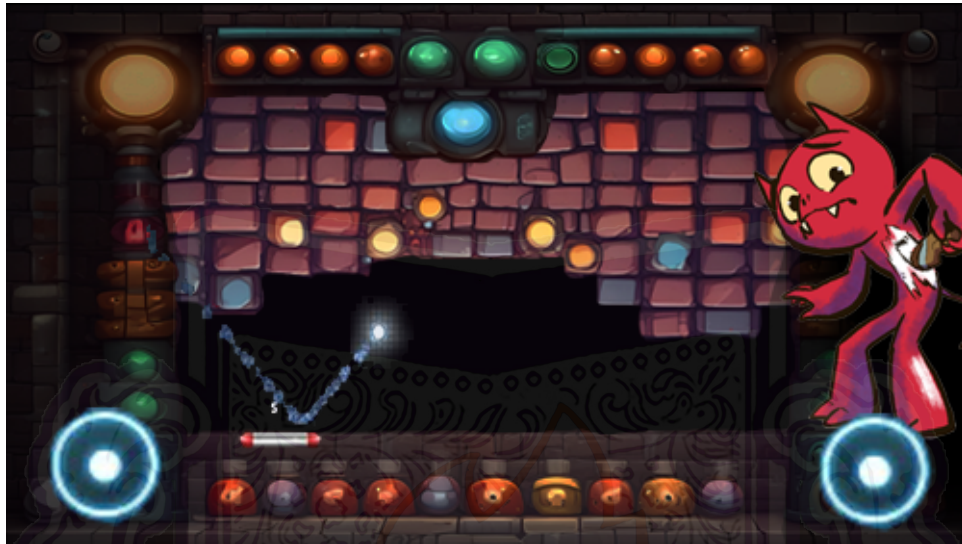
Narrative Goals

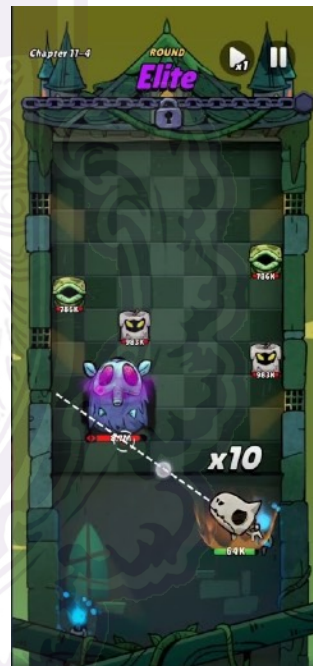
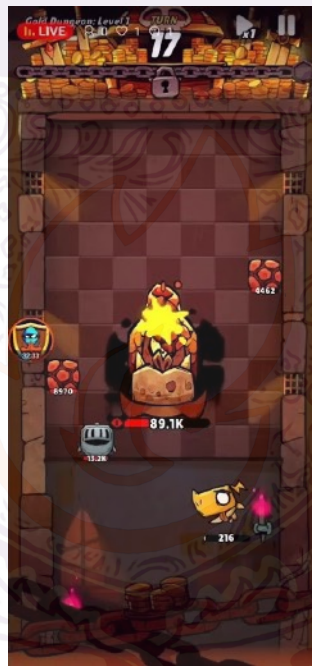
- How does Buster get from hellion to holy (an internal shift)?
By grasping for light and avoiding or facing the dark with strategy and discernment.
- Portray Buster's ascent through worlds towards the heavenly realm by using light to break through the sludge keeping him blocked and bound (an external shift) .

Narrative Delivery Methods/Opportunities

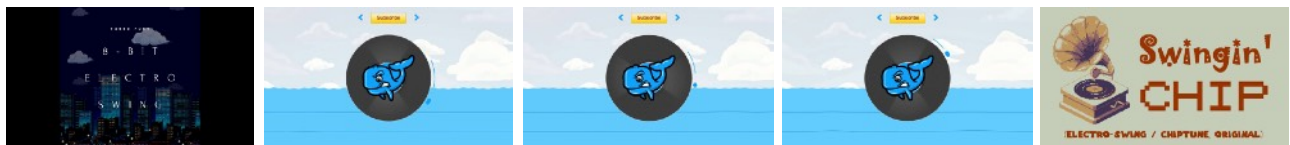
- AUDIO/VISUAL -

General Aesthetics: Influences- Dragon BUURP!, Derek Laufman, Cuphead





Music: Chip Tune (8-Bit) Electro Swing



Intro cinematic: Buster can't break through the sludge, gets angry and defeated, but when the light shines down on him, he receives the light orb which immediately breaks sludge slabs.

Buster's look and animation: Raging, dancing, laughing, and other action loops triggered by gameplay reinforce Buster's transformation by grasping light or being hit by the dark.

World shift design/animation: Realm ascension and reward felt through animated transitions and level aesthetic design.

- MECHANICS -

- **Grasping for Light:**

- Light transforms Buster through orb collecting, levels him through various circles of hell, earth, and heaven with point translation, converts for AOE play bonuses or can be left to accrue for extra lives.
- The light orb is only effective when it's being used against sludge slabs to break through crud and release the treasures and traps inside. Not collecting or just losing it means ending Buster's journey early wherever he may be in the world levels.
- If light isn't spent to transform Buster, he won't be able to move up through levels. His transformation must be part of the use of light or play gets stuck at certain levels.

- **Avoiding/Facing the Dark:**

- Mini-mines come in two forms— Spiky mines bring forward sludge slabs from the interface background and dark mines set Buster back on his journey by stealing light.
- Catching spiky mines may make Buster rage when sludge slabs emerge from the background, but it also creates more opportunities for Buster to break through sludge and collect more light. Acts as "facing" the darkness buried within us. The player can avoid those mines entirely but it makes for slow progress.
- Dark mines serve as an example of things that steal light from our lives and should be avoided. There's no game play advantage, but players might find it fun/funny to see Buster rage out.

GAME DESIGN

Primary Game Mechanics

Paddle Movement & Light Orb Bounce:

- Player controls the paddle and bounces the light orb to hit and break bricks.
- As objectives release (orbs/mines), player uses the paddle to catch them.

Breaking Sludge Slabs:

- Sludge slabs must be cleared from every level to advance.
- When broken, slabs release objective (orbs/mines) to be caught or avoided.

Limited Lives:

- Player starts with 7 lives. Once lives are spent, the game is over.
- Light meter can accrue for extra lives, but player must use strategy to balance accruing extra lives and expending light for an AOE brick break.

Gravity and Physics:

- Physics (spin, impact velocity, etc) effect the ball play. Gravity always attracts the ball back to the bottom of the screen.
- Player controls the paddle coded for maximum response and premium control.

Obstacles and Challenges:

- Ultimate game challenge— break bricks and catch/avoid objectives while keeping the light orb in play.
- Various mechanics (hit count, objectives, speed, paddle size) balance to make the game more challenging at higher levels.

Strategy Mechanics:

- Player must use strategy to balance spiky mine engagement, light AOE brick break, extra life accrue, Buster transformations, and point accrue.

Scoring System:

- Points awarded for brick break combinations, objective catches, leveling through realms, and Buster transformations.
- Badges awarded for Buster transformations.

Objective Completion:

- All sludge slabs be cleared to progress to the next level.
- Buster must be transformed within certain proximity to level progression or the level repeats.

Level Progression:

- Game moves through groups of levels called realms. Objective is to reach the heavenly realm.
- Level progression is hindered if Buster doesn't meet certain requirements.
- Challenge increases through level progressions.

KEY FEATURES

Light/Dark Affect Buster: Buster is the biggest draw in this retro classic arcade game. His interaction with the player and how they play the game (playing with light/dark) lends weight to otherwise straightforward mechanics in a way never experienced in a bricks breaker.

33 Levels per World: There's plenty of gameplay offering a robust experience! Every world showcases an entirely new aesthetic, while levels change and hint at the freedom in Buster's break out.

Buster Badges: Why should a player come back when they have to start at level one every time? To encourage the player to remember their progress and strive for the next level or goal, "Buster Badges" are awarded for every transformation Buster undergoes. Locked badges are visible, hinting at what's to come.

Visual and Audio Aesthetics: Reviews of one of the most popular bricks breakers on Steam cite the soundtrack as one of its best features. *Dragon BUURP!* reviews constantly cite the excellent artwork. *Buster's Break Out* will offer both in a way that reinforces its pillars of nostalgia and visceral gameplay.

RISKS

Game bloat. Similar or adjacent games pack the game with skill picks, constant rewards, and other "incentives" that seem to retain or engage the player, but are not appropriate for this game. The temptation to complicate the game should be avoided.

Deceptive simplicity. Both in dev/execution and gameplay, *Buster's Break Out* seems elegant in its simplicity. But having never developed a game, the risk lies with not spotting difficult development or attempting unreasonable development. Gameplay will likely need additional testing for similar reasons.

OPPORTUNITY

Bridging audiences (Christian and secular) through themes that emerge through gameplay and utilize something taboo like a demon character.

Pinball/Bricks Breaker templates are available in the Unity Assets store and can provide a foundation to work from.

