

Narrative Design App Teardowns

Table of Contents

Casual Apps	2
Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery	2
Candy Crush Saga	4
Royal Match	5
Homescapes	6
Project Makeover	7
Episode - Choose Your Story	9
Choices: Stories You Play	10
Core Apps	11
Raid: Shadow Legends	11
Cookie Run: Kingdom	13
Genshin Impact	15
Diablo Immortal	17
Identity V	19
Lords Mobile	21
Rise of Kingdoms	22
Clash Royale	23
Magic: The Gathering Arena	24
Casino Apps	25
Piggy GO - Clash of Coin	25
Caesars Slots	26
Cash Frenzy	27
POP! Slots	28
Bingo Bash	29
Bingo Blitz	30

Casual Apps

Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery

Overview

- Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery is a casual RPG set in the *Harry Potter* universe.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app incorporates both serial and episodic narratives that tell stories about the player character's experiences as a student at Hogwarts.
- These stories are told explicitly through dialogues and flavor text, and implicitly through character animations, visual effects, music, and mechanics.
- Visually, the app remains true to the world established in the *Harry Potter* books and films.
 - Locations such as the Quidditch stadium and the Great Hall closely match their film counterparts.
 - Designs of legacy characters mimic the likeness of their real-life actors.
 - Other visuals, like flashy spell animations, magical creature designs, and the details of Hogwarts, such as wandering ghosts and floating objects, match their book descriptions or film depictions.
- A first-person exploration mode and Easter eggs (which grant energy) that are hidden throughout the castle encourage exploration and enhance immersion.
 - Some examples of Easter eggs include a house elf sleeping in the dungeons, a werewolf puppy in the magical creatures reserve, and a flying golden snitch in the Quidditch stadium.

Characters

- Players can customize their characters' appearance, outfits, and Hogwarts House.
- The cast includes original characters, such as the main character's best friend Rowan and rival Merula, as well as characters from the *Harry Potter* series, such as Albus Dumbledore and Severus Snape.
- Mini-games allow you to strengthen your friendship with side characters and learn more about them.

Serial Narratives

- The main story follows the playable character as they try to solve the mystery of their missing brother and the castle's cursed vaults.
 - The story is currently split into seven years—each year representing a year at Hogwarts—and each year is split into chapters.
- Most story missions are completed by expending energy to complete individual objectives.
 - Players complete objectives by clicking on a highlighted object that represents an action.
 - For example, in a mission about studying, players must complete objectives such as "read books," "concentrate," or "ask a question."
 - Completing each objective triggers a line of dialogue related to the action.
- Players also attend classes, make friends, and level up their wizarding skills to progress in the main storyline.

Episodic Narratives

- Side quests offer content that is disconnected from the main storyline.
 - For example, there are multiple questlines where the player helps Hagrid take care of magical creatures.

- Side quests offer unique gameplay mechanics, such as bonding with and feeding magical creatures or playing Quidditch.
- There are also shorter, limited-time quests that include characters from the main story.
 - While some limited-time quests are unlocked by reaching a certain part of the main story, others are seasonal, such as the Halloween and Christmas events.
- Non-story events include new mechanics that are themed to fit in the wizarding world.
 - For example, a Halloween carnival event has players complete magical games in Hogsmeade for prize tickets.

Candy Crush Saga

Overview

- Candy Crush Saga is a match-3 puzzle app with a linear, map-based progression.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app tells simple, episodic stories. Though it features recurring characters in a set world, there is little continuity between stories.
- The app tells these stories explicitly through bits of dialogue and flavor text, as well as implicitly through map, UI, level, booster, and character designs.
- The app's visuals combine to create a sweets theme.
 - Players match various candies to complete levels.
 - Most boosters, such as the lollipop hammer and coconut wheel, and obstacles, such as licorice locks and marmalade blocks, fit this theme.
 - This theme is featured in every character and conflict, whether it's fixing a peppermint palace or plugging a fudge volcano.

Characters

- The app's protagonist, Tiffi, is extensively featured in base gameplay and UIs.
 - Tiffi guides players through the first few levels and basic mechanics.
- There's a recurring cast of secondary characters such as Mr. Yeti, who runs the app's store, and Mr. Toffee, who introduces levels and teaches players about new mechanics.
- Bubblegum Troll, the app's main antagonist, instigates most conflicts.
 - The Bubblegum Troll can shapeshift into other forms, such as becoming Gumzilla in the Pudding Pagoda chapter.
- New side characters are introduced with new levels, many of whom reappear in updates.

Episodic Narratives

- Players follow Tiffi and Mr. Toffee as they venture through worlds themed after sweets and baked goods.
- Each world has a character who needs help.
 - For example, the Neko from the Pudding Pagoda world needs help stopping Gumzilla from destroying the pagoda.
- Characters' conflicts are resolved when players complete all levels within the world.
 - Once players complete the Pudding Pagoda levels, Tiffi lures Gumzilla with a chocolate treat and fights him back, making him retreat.
- The app also features seasonal story events with small narratives and new challenges. Players must complete these challenges for rewards and a resolution to the story.
 - For example, in [Gingerbread Chaos](#), Mr. Toffee uses a Sugar Rush concoction to bring gingerbread cookies to life. The gingerbread cookies end up escaping and creating chaos all over.
 - Players must complete base gameplay levels to find a trumpet that will call back all the gingerbread cookies.

Royal Match

Overview

- Royal Match is a match-3 puzzle app with a linear cosmetic progression.
- Players complete levels to earn stars, which are spent decorating rooms in a castle.
 - New rooms are released with each update.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app incorporates almost no explicit storytelling. Instead, it relies heavily on implicit storytelling techniques such as character animations, block design, sound effects, and backgrounds to establish its royal theme and tell simple, episodic stories.
 - Match-3 blocks are represented by crowns, Fabergé eggs, and other medieval castle-themed objects.
 - When players complete a level, animated fanfare trumpets play and players' stars are presented on a tasseled pillow.
 - Level backgrounds reflect the castle area that the player is decorating.

Characters

- The app's main protagonist, King Robert, appears in almost every UI element and during gameplay.
 - King Robert has a highly expressive face and often reacts to players' actions.
- King Robert's dog, Duke, is the main secondary character and the focus of many events.

Episodic Narratives

- In optional bonus levels, players complete a timed level to rescue King Robert from his nightmare.
 - An animation above the level shows a hazard approaching King Robert.
 - If the timer runs out, he's harmed and players lose their reward.
- Events incorporate simple plots that are conveyed through visuals.
 - In Spooky Rise—a Halloween reward progression—players complete levels to make Duke (wearing a Halloween costume) float up a tree.
 - Reward milestones are represented by doghouses and dog beds that rest on tree branches.

Homescapes

Overview

- Homescapes is a match-3 puzzle app with a home renovation storyline.
- The game is split into three major locations—the Mansion, the Woodland Manor, and the Mountain Estate—that can be renovated. These locations are split into areas that take a certain amount of in-game days to complete.
 - Players complete match-3 puzzles to gain energy for renovations.
 - Locations, and consequently areas, must be completed in order.
 - Each location has a general renovation goal, while each area has its own unique mini-storyline.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app uses an episodic format to tell stories tied to different game locations. The characters and stories remain consistent between releases, but each episode's plot generally stands on its own. Some minor storylines, such as a romance between characters, span multiple episodes.
- Stories are explicitly told through dialogue and in-universe social media posts. In some stories, themed decorations provide implicit storytelling.
 - Major story dialogue is presented through text boxes and conversations between character models.
 - When idle, characters wander around, interacting with the game world and making observations through speech bubbles.
 - The menu, which is modeled after Austin's tablet, features a fake social media app called "HomeSpace." The app includes a news feed that updates as the story progresses, adding minor story-related content and fleshing out the personalities and relationships of each character.

Characters

- Players guide the main character Austin through home renovations.
 - Austin's background as a butler is used to justify his renovation expertise.
- Players are treated as their own character who accompanies Austin on his vacation to his family home.
- Austin's parents, Olivia and William, and his love-interest Katherine are recurring characters.
- An extensive cast of supporting characters—mostly neighbors and Austin's family members—also appear throughout.

Episodic Narratives

- The story begins with the protagonist, Austin, visiting his dilapidated family home, only to discover that his parents plan to sell it. To get them to reconsider, Austin and the player renovate parts of the mansion one-by-one.
 - This gameplay and story loop repeats for each area of the mansion and other major locations.
- Areas have their own self-contained conflicts and resolutions that relate to the gameplay.
 - For example, the Mansion's kitchen area includes a storyline where Olivia and Katherine's mother, Mrs. Broom, compete to be featured on a cooking show. Austin and his friends renovate the kitchen to help Olivia win the contest. She and Mrs. Broom reconcile in the end by bonding over their shared love of cooking.

Project Makeover

Overview

- Project Makeover is a casual simulation and match-3 app where players give different characters makeovers as part of a reality TV show.
 - Players complete match-3 levels to earn currency to complete each step of the makeover.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app primarily uses an episodic format to tell stories about characters and their makeovers. Lite overarching storylines, such as the main antagonist's attempts to sabotage the show, connect some episodes.
- Stories are told explicitly through dialogue, cutscenes, and text descriptions, and implicitly through the visual designs of the characters and their homes.
 - As players progress, they unlock cutscenes that develop the conflict between the antagonist and the makeover team.
- The app also incorporates other implicit storytelling techniques to establish the reality TV and makeover themes.
 - The music is upbeat and reminiscent of the reality TV shows that inspired the app.
 - The match-3 blocks all pertain to fashion, styling, and interior decoration. Examples include shoe boxes, wood floors, clothing buttons, combs, and shirts.

Characters

- The player assumes the role of the director of the Project Makeover reality TV show.
 - Players can choose the director's gender, clothing, and body features.
- The director has a team of professionals that help with each makeover: Francis the hair and makeup stylist, Gigi the fashion stylist, and Derek the home renovator.
- The main antagonist is Greta Von Deta, the embittered former director who was fired from the show.
 - Greta secretly uses Michelle, a supporting character, to spy on the characters and get information about the show.
- Each chapter introduces a new character that needs a makeover.
 - Each character is primarily characterized by their career and an internal conflict that they need to resolve, such as being insecure or a workaholic.

Episodic Narratives

- Each episode centers around a new character and their makeover.
 - Each character's narrative arc follows the same structure: a new character with distinct problems is presented, each member of the team gives the character a makeover, and the character finds happiness at the end.
- The story's overarching conflict centers around Greta Von Deta's attempts to sabotage the show.
 - Players learn of Greta's actions through cutscenes that include her publicly slandering Gigi, kidnapping Gigi's boyfriend, and showing up to each participant's home and berating them.

- There are seasonal events such as the [Christmas Event](#) and [Anniversary Event](#) where players complete challenges for rewards.
 - Dialogue from the app's main characters introduces and concludes these small events.
- In [Timed Makeover Challenges](#), players are tasked with completing a makeover before time runs out.
 - These episodic releases present a narrative arc that is very similar to the app's main storylines: a character finds themselves in need of a makeover, the player completes match-3 levels to progress, and the character is happy and fully transformed by the end.
 - Some of these timed challenges include the cast of *Queer Eye*, a famous makeover TV show.
 - There are also holiday versions of this event type, such as [Timed Makeover - Santa](#).

Episode - Choose Your Story

Overview

- Episode - Choose Your Story is an interactive story platform that hosts both original and player-created stories.
 - Players can sign up to create their own stories and have them published in the app.
- Players progress through the app's interactive narratives by making choices.
 - Though players can change minor details of the story through their choices, the overarching narrative remains largely the same.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app uses an episodic format. Each story is a standalone narrative split into chapters that are released one at a time.
- Stories are told explicitly through scenes with inner monologues and dialogues. These scenes include implicit storytelling through animations, backgrounds, and music.
- Players influence the direction of scenes by making choices about their character's actions.
 - Some choices only change dialogue, while others can lead to different scenes.
 - Some choices require players to spend premium currency.
- Players can buy optional cosmetics, such as outfits and pets.

Characters

- Players create their main character for each story using a robust character customization tool.
 - While players can choose how their character reacts in certain scenes, most of the playable character's personality is predefined by the story.
- All stories have a love interest that plays a significant role in the plot.
 - Some stories have more than one love interest.
 - Players can use the same character customization tool to customize some love interests.

Episodic Narratives

- The genre and the plot of each story vary widely, but most center around romance.
- Stories are simple and lean heavily on archetypes, with brief lines of dialogue and plotlines that are easy to follow.
- Some stories receive sequels.

Choices: Stories You Play

Overview

- Choices: Stories You Play is a collection of interactive stories.
- Players progress through the app's interactive narratives by making choices.
 - Though players can change minor details of the story through their choices, the overarching narrative remains largely the same.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app uses an episodic format. Each story is a standalone narrative split into chapters that are released one at a time.
- Stories are told explicitly through scenes with inner monologues, dialogues, and text descriptions of action. These scenes include implicit storytelling through backgrounds, music, and characters' expressions.
- Players influence the direction of scenes by making choices about their character's actions.
 - Some choices only change dialogue, while others can lead to different scenes.
 - Some choices require players to spend premium currency.
- Players can buy optional cosmetics, such as outfits and pets.

Characters

- Players create their main character by choosing from a set of base models that can be customized with hair and outfit options.
- Most stories have multiple love interests that are involved in the main plot.
 - Some stories have a single love interest that is typically the main focus of the story.
 - Some love interests are customizable.
- Players can determine the fates of certain supporting characters based on their choices.

Episodic Narratives

- The genre and plot of each story vary widely.
- Some stories receive one or multiple sequels or spin-offs.

Core Apps

Raid: Shadow Legends

Overview

- Raid: Shadow Legends is a turn-based RPG set in the medieval fantasy world of Teleria.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app primarily uses a serial format to tell a story that is tied to the main campaign's progression.
 - The app also offers some episodic PvE content, but there is little story beyond each event's introduction.
- The story is told explicitly through in-game cutscenes and dialogue, with more lore found on the app's [Youtube channel](#) and [official lore forum](#).
- The app also uses implicit storytelling techniques, such as character and environmental design, to build its world.
 - Detailed backgrounds and unique enemy designs match the fantasy-inspired setting of each level.

Characters

- The Arbiter, a servant of the Goddess tasked with protecting Teleria, gets players started on their journey.
 - She introduces players to the conflict and guides them through gameplay with tutorials and tips.
 - The Arbiter can also be unlocked as a playable champion.
- Siroth the Dark Lord is the app's main antagonist who has corrupted the world with the Shadow, a force that compels people to do his bidding.
- The player is the protagonist who takes control of a wide variety of heroes on their quest to defeat Siroth, the Shadow, and those controlled by them.
 - Playable characters are separated into different factions.
 - More information about certain characters and their factions can be found in the app's official lore forum.

Serial Narratives

- The main narrative begins with a playable battle between heroes and a powerful dragon.
 - After the heroes fall, the Arbiter explains how the task of defending Teleria from Siroth now falls to the player.
 - The Arbiter resurrects the hero that the player chooses to recruit.
- The narrative is split into chapters that correspond to different locations on a campaign map.
 - Each chapter chronicles the player's journey to find the source of the Shadow and seal it.
 - On the way to the Shadow's source, players defeat corrupted leaders.
 - For example, in the first chapter, players arrive in the Kingdom of Kaerok and defeat its leader, King Tayba, who was controlled by Siroth.
- At the end of the narrative, players close a portal that Siroth was using to bring the Shadow to Teleria, but it's revealed that Siroth will reopen the portal again in the near future.

Episodic Narratives

- The Doom Tower, the apps' primary end game content, is a permanent challenge mode that resets monthly.

- The Doom Tower's backstory is established through a teaser on the app's Youtube channel. It serves as the Arbiter's prison for the most powerful threats in Teleria, but, as the tower's seals weaken, the player must help keep them contained.
- Players progress through a 120-floor tower, defeating waves of enemies on each floor and a boss every 10 floors.
- Players can also unlock secret rooms with unique conditions.
- When the tower resets, the floors are rearranged and the bosses rotate to offer a fresh experience.

Cookie Run: Kingdom

Overview

- Cookie Run: Kingdom is an action RPG with base-building mechanics.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app uses a serial format to tell a story that is tied to the main campaign's progression, but it also offers episodic story content about the world and characters.
- Stories are told explicitly through cutscenes and dialogue, and implicitly through visuals and mechanics.
 - Scenes take place on the overworld map, in battle stages, and in locations in the world.
 - Most dialogue is presented through text boxes and conversations between animated character models.
 - For some scenes, the gameworld itself is the background, while others have illustrated environmental backgrounds.
 - Action is presented through comic book-style illustrations or in-game actions.
- The app builds its sweets-themed fantasy world implicitly through the design of characters, environments, and UI elements.
 - All playable characters are cookies. Side characters, like the Sugar Gnomes and Bear Jellies, and antagonists, like the Cake Monsters, are also based on sweets.
 - Many level-up items, currencies, and in-game locations are sweets themed.
- Character designs, aside from fitting with the sweets theme, also closely match the characters' personalities and combat roles.
 - For example, Chili Pepper Cookie is a brazen, hot-tempered thief who specializes in ambushes. This is reflected not only in her flavor but also in her bright red design, punk aesthetic, and chili pepper-shaped dagger.

Characters

- Players are first introduced to five ancient hero cookies during their battle with the main antagonist, Dark Enchantress Cookie.
 - After Dark Enchantress Cookie defeats the ancient heroes, the heroes and Dark Enchantress Cookie disappear.
 - The heroes reappear as the story progresses, though only three are playable.
- The main character, GingerBrave, along with his friends Strawberry Cookie and Wizard Cookie, make up the player's starting party.
 - Though these characters play a primary role in the story, they can be switched out during combat stages.
- Some playable characters, such as Custard Cookie III, are met during the main story, but most are recruited through a gacha mechanic.
 - Players are offered a free summon early in the story that always results in the recruitment of Chili Pepper Cookie, an important story character.
- Characters can be customized with unique outfits and upgraded with level-up items.
- The Sugar Gnomes are non-playable citizens of the former cookie kingdom who help GingerBrave begin his journey and guide the players through various mechanics.

Serial Narratives

- The prologue reveals the world's backstory through cinematics and a playable battle between the ancient hero cookies and Dark Enchantress Cookie.
- Set on the planet of Earthbread, the app's story follows GingerBrave as he recruits cookies to rebuild the fallen cookie kingdom and defeat Dark Enchantress Cookie.

- There are two main game modes that progress the story: a world exploration mode and a kingdom-building mode.
 - In the world exploration mode, players progress on an overworld map by completing story missions that relate to locations on the map.
 - In the kingdom-building mode, players expand their kingdom's territory, build and upgrade buildings, and decorate their kingdom.
- A dark mode allows players to experience stages of the world exploration mode from the villains' point of view.
 - Dark mode is more difficult but offers more valuable rewards.
 - Some stages unlock story scenes that are part of a six-part story about Dark Enchantress Cookie's closest followers.

Episodic Narratives

- While most side missions are connected to the main storyline, some contain their own standalone side stories.
- The Cookie Odyssey is a permanent story mode with unlockable side-story chapters.
 - The mode currently has three chapters that are each split into days.
 - Chapter 1 is a standalone story, while chapters 2 and 3 are part of the same storyline.
- Limited-time events have their own mini-storylines with unique dialogue and missions.
 - For example, during the BTS crossover event, the main characters prepare for cookie BTS' arrival by completing various tasks like building a tour bus, decorating the kingdom, and picking out concert seats.

Genshin Impact

Overview

- Genshin Impact is an action MMORPG set in an anime-style fantasy world.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app uses a serial format to tell a story that is tied to the main campaign's progression, but it also offers episodic story content about the world and characters.
- Stories are explicitly told through dialogue, cutscenes, flavor texts, and quest text. Additionally, an online [manga](#) goes into greater depth about the app's narrative.
 - Most scenes contain dialogue between animated character models in the game world.
 - These scenes are not just simple exchanges but instead feature dynamic camerawork that gives scenes a cinematic style.
 - Some major scenes are presented via cutscenes with more complex animations.
- The app builds its fantasy world and characters implicitly through its gameplay and the design of its characters and open world.
 - The overworld map is fully interconnected and traversable on foot, accentuating the app's theme of exploration.
 - Players who explore the world are often rewarded with items, quests, and story content.
 - Each playable character has unique skills and can only wield one type of weapon. Both attributes contribute to each character's personality and backstory.
 - For example, Amber is an energetic and passionate character that uses fiery and explosive ranged attacks.

Characters

- The app's protagonists are the Travelers, two siblings who have the ability to travel through different worlds in the universe.
 - In the narrative's opening scene, players choose one of the Traveler siblings as their character: Aether or Lumine.
- Paimon—the app's mascot—is introduced as the Traveler's companion at the beginning of the story.
 - Paimon describes herself as the Traveler's bodyguard, although she mostly gives the Traveler advice and speaks for them during cutscenes.
- The Unknown God, the antagonist, commits the narrative's inciting incident by splitting up the siblings and trapping them in the world of Teyvat.
- The Seven Archons are gods that used to govern each region of Teyvat.
 - The Traveler and Paimon work with the Archons to fight a variety of evil forces.
- The Abyss Order and the Fatui serve as the app's main antagonist factions.
 - It's revealed at the end of Chapter I that the Traveler's sibling has become one of the main leaders of the Abyss Order.
- The app has a large cast of playable and non-playable characters, and each character has a unique backstory, personality, and visual design.
 - Playable characters' actions and motivations have tangible effects on the app's storylines.
 - The cast of characters has attracted a huge fandom, with players discussing not only each character's gameplay utility but also their personalities and relationships.
- As players gain XP from base gameplay, they also gain companionship XP with the characters on their active team.

- Companionship XP raises characters' friendship levels, which unlocks new voiceovers and flavor text about characters' backstories and personalities.

Serial Narratives

- The main story begins with a cinematic that introduces the Travelers, Aether and Lumine, who were traveling between worlds.
 - The Unknown God stops them, splits them up, and sends them to Teyvat without their traveling powers.
 - Players take control of one of the siblings, while the other goes missing.
 - After the Traveler wakes up on a beach and meets Paimon, they embark on a journey to find the Traveler's missing sibling and fight against the antagonists.
- Archon quests follow the app's main narrative.
 - In these quests, players search for the lost sibling and help defeat enemies that are terrorizing Teyvat.
 - As they progress, players travel to new major locations in the open world.
 - Each location introduces a conflict that begins a new story arc.

Episodic Narratives

- There are three other quest types that have optional narrative content: commission, story, and world quests.
 - Commission quests are the app's daily challenge feature.
 - Commissions are randomly assigned depending on what region players select.
 - These quests have smaller stories, such as an NPC requiring a small task to be completed to solve their problems.
 - Completing 8 commission quests awards story keys.
 - Players spend story keys to unlock story quests, which expand upon playable characters' backstories and personalities.
 - Depending on the quest, players must reach a certain act in the Archon storyline and reach a certain adventure rank—which is leveled up by completing most types of quests.
 - These quests include voice-overs, cutscenes, and multiple objectives.
 - World quests teach players about Teyvat by requiring them to help characters with small tasks.
 - World quests are unlocked by talking to NPCs throughout Teyvat.

Diablo Immortal

Overview

- Diablo Immortal is a fantasy MMORPG within the *Diablo* franchise.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app uses a serial format to tell a story that is tied to the main campaign's progression, but it also offers episodic story content about the world and characters.
- Stories are told explicitly through dialogue, cutscenes, and flavor text.
 - Major scenes, such as when players enter new areas or finish key quests, feature lengthier dialogues and occasional cinematics that set up major gameplay goals.
 - Smaller scenes, such as those that occur during side quests or the middle of questlines, feature simple dialogues between characters that set up minor gameplay goals.
- Implicit storytelling occurs through the gameplay and the visual design of the characters, environments, and UI.
 - Each class' appearance and combat mechanics reflect their personalities and backstories. For example, the barbarian—an arrogant, brute warrior clad in primitive armor—has skills that encourage an aggressive, close-combat playstyle.
 - The realistic art style combined with a gothic horror aesthetic emphasizes the world's corrupted nature.

Characters

- Players choose their protagonist from one of six hero classes: barbarian, crusader, demon hunter, monk, necromancer, and wizard.
 - Every class experiences the same storyline, but each class has different dialogue to reflect their backstories and personalities.
 - Players can customize their hero's appearance when they begin the game.
 - Equipment changes the in-game appearance of heroes.
- The app's antagonist is Skarn, a demonic creature who works for the franchise's main villain, Diablo.
- Deckard Cain, a recurring character in the *Diablo* franchise, is one of the main NPCs who guides players through the main storyline.
 - Other legacy supporting characters, such as Akara, Charsi, and Kashya, also make an appearance.

Serial Narratives

- *Diablo Immortal* is set between *Diablo II* and *Diablo III*, but players do not need to know the storylines from either game to understand the app's plot.
- The app's main narrative starts five years after *Diablo II*, which ended with the destruction of the Worldstone—a mountain-sized crystal that allows its controller to create and destroy worlds.
- Players are tasked with traveling across Sanctuary—the app's world map—to collect the Worldstone shards.
 - Skarn is also trying to collect the shards in order to restart an endless war between heaven and hell.
 - Players progress in the main narrative through the app's main questline, which involves defeating increasingly powerful bosses that hold the Worldstone shards.

Episodic Narratives

- Players trigger narrative and challenge-based side quests by talking to NPCs, paying the Adventure Seeker character, or randomly encountering them during the main story.

- Narrative quests mainly contribute to worldbuilding, giving players the opportunity to help NPCs and learn more about Sanctuary.
- Challenge-based side quests task players with goals such as defeating a number of enemies, defeating enemies before a timer runs out, or killing a specific elite enemy.
- Around the halfway point of the main storyline, players can join the Shadows or Immortals clans.
 - This narrative arc is mainly told through exposition that adds worldbuilding details.
 - Immortals are some of the most elite, powerful heroes in the world of mortals, while the Shadows are a secret group formed to keep the Immortals' power in check.
 - Each clan is exclusive and requires entering a lottery because there are a limited number of spots available on each server.
 - Being part of either clan gives players access to episodic challenge quests.
- Players unlock elite quests after defeating Skarn and completing the app's main quest.
 - Elite quests are the app's endgame content. Compared to normal side quests, they are longer, have multiple sections, and offer more robust narratives.
 - In the elite quest Stranger in the Sands, players ally with a demon hunter to find his apprentice and defeat a demon that can recreate memories.
 - During the quest, the protagonist finds the apprentice and traverses through her past memories of her village being destroyed and her family members being killed.
 - The quest ends with an elaborate cutscene of the apprentice killing the demon, overcoming her past traumas, and becoming a demon hunter.

Identity V

Overview

- Identity V is an PvP survival horror game with a suspenseful storyline about deadly games.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app uses a serial format to tell a story that is the basis for its PvP gameplay. It also features episodic narratives, some of which build upon the serial narrative by developing the characters and world, while others are completely disconnected from the main story.
- Stories are explicitly told through dialogue, cutscenes, and text.
 - Major plot points include cinematic cutscenes with voiceovers from the main character.
 - Players unlock written clues as they progress in the story.
 - Players unlock diary entries that reveal more about characters.
- The app supplements these stories implicitly through the gameplay and the visual design of the characters, environments, and UI.
 - The core PvP gameplay reflects the story itself; the battles that players engage in are reenactments of the battles that the main character is investigating in the story.
 - The color palette is dark and dreary, with dimly lit rooms and a nighttime setting.
 - The UI resembles aged documents.
 - Currency, such as echoes and clues, also align with the mystery and memory themes.
 - In the gacha mechanic, players use clues to unlock memories that contain cosmetics.
 - Character designs are cartoonish and unnerving. They reflect the roles of the survivors and hunters.
 - While survivors have a doll-like appearance with frail builds and button-eyes, hunters have a monstrous appearance with imposing builds and inhuman features.

Characters

- Orpheus, the main character, is a private detective with the ability to experience scenes of the past by interacting with written records.
 - Formerly a novelist, he lost his memory in an accident and now has a sinister second personality that emerges when he sleeps.
 - Orpheus can be customized with various costumes or replaced in the overworld by another playable character's model.
- Other characters are split into two groups: the survivors and the hunters.
 - Each character has a real name and a descriptive alias. For example, the survivor Emily Dyer is known as the "Doctor" and the hunter Leo Beck is known as "Hell Ember."
 - Characters can be obtained either through the main story or by purchasing them with currency.
 - Characters can be customized with skins, accessories, and pets.

Serial Narratives

- Orpheus arrives at Oletus Manor to search for a missing child, but the focus of the story is on the manor's mysterious games.
 - In these games, four survivors would face off against one hunter. While the former attempted to escape by decoding cipher machines to unlock exit gates, the latter would try to eliminate them by blasting them off in rocket-propelled chairs.
 - By uncovering written clues, Orpheus is able to view these past games and uncover more about the characters involved and their motivations.

- His investigation also reveals more about his mysterious backstory and his connection to the manor.
- The main storyline is split into two main parts: the prologue and the Time of Reunion update.
 - The prologue introduces the mystery of the games and Orpheus' backstory.
 - The Time of Reunion update is split into three acts that explore the mysteries set up in the prologue.
- Players progress through these sequential storylines by controlling Orpheus as he explores Oletus manor and completes missions.
 - Missions either involve interacting with objects in the manor or completing objectives in PvP matches.
 - PvP matches mirror the games that Orpheus is investigating, with players controlling either one of the four survivors or the hunter.

Episodic Narratives

- Deduction quests are character-specific missions that are completed by accomplishing a set of gameplay tasks during PvP matches.
 - Completing deduction quests awards a costume and unlocks a few lines of that character's lore.
 - For some characters, completing their deduction quests also unlocks their diary. Players take control of that character and play through their diary's storyline, which plays similarly to Orpheus's mode.
- Completing a set of tasks on survivors' birthdays or on hunters' character days awards an icon of that character and a letter related to them.
 - While a hunter's character day can be their birthday, it can also be other important dates, such as the date of their first murder or their death.
 - The authors and recipients of the letters vary. Some are written by the character themselves, while others are either written to or about the character by someone from their backstory.
- Seasonal events add minor story content, such as new lines of dialogue from playable characters and brief side stories set in the world.
- Some story events are connected, though they focus on standalone stories.
 - For example, events centered around Mr. Inference and Lady Truth take place in an alternate universe where they solve various mysteries. During each event, the player helps them solve a different mystery by interacting with documents, answering questions, and collecting clues.
- Call of the Abyss events are tournaments with themes based on novels written by Orpheus.
 - Each event has a distinct theme and backstory, though they have little story content beyond this.
 - Players join teams to compete in PvP matches.
 - Players earn rewards based on the number of matches completed
 - Rewards include themed cosmetics, such as character skins and pets.

Lords Mobile

Overview

- Lords Mobile is a 4X strategy app with base-building mechanics in a medieval fantasy setting.

Storytelling Techniques

- Explicit storytelling is extremely limited. An opening cutscene outlines the app's backstory and sets up the current conflict. Aside from this initial setup, there is no narrative content that guides gameplay. Instead, the app's setting and mechanics allow players to create their own stories through their actions.
 - Before the app's narrative begins, an Emperor had defeated the Black Dragon and brought peace to the lands.
 - Once the Emperor died, warring factions tried to overtake the throne, leading to the app's current conflict.
 - Players can choose how to build and upgrade their kingdom and which heroes to use.
- Minor explicit storytelling is presented through flavor text and external sources, such as [YouTube videos](#).
 - Each hero has flavor text that can be accessed through the hero selection UI.
- Implicit storytelling occurs through the visual design of the app's environments and characters, which reflect its medieval fantasy setting.
 - Music, in both menus and levels, is inspired by the fantasy genre.
 - Characters have designs that reflect their class and personalities.

Characters

- There are a wide variety of playable heroes, each with their own unique personality.
 - Players start with a knight named Oath Keeper Wesley, who is the last remaining member of an elite clan of warriors.
 - Players unlock heroes by completing multi-stage hero quests.
- Heroes are split into three classes: strength, intelligence, and agility. Heroes' personalities, visual designs, and skills align with their classes.
 - Strength heroes are close-quarters fighters with aggressive personalities, such as the Barbarian, Berserker, and Vengeful Centaur.
 - Intelligence heroes are calculating, magic-based characters such as Incinerator the fire mage and Dream Witch, a dragon that transformed herself into a human.
 - Agility heroes include archers, thieves, and assassin characters such as the Death Archer and the Prince of Thieves.

Episodic Narratives

- Events such as [Moonlight Fiesta](#) and [Winter Festival](#) incorporate small narratives through flavor texts and visual rewards.
 - The [Moonlight Fiesta](#) seasonal event celebrated the Chinese Mooncake Festival, where players collected Moon Boxes as a daily login reward.
 - Moon Boxes are used to upgrade a Lunar Rabbit, and each upgrade awards players with resources and boosts.
 - The Lunar Rabbit inhabits players' kingdoms throughout the event's duration and is purely cosmetic.

Rise of Kingdoms

Overview

- Rise of Kingdoms is a 4X strategy game with base-building mechanics in a historical setting.
- Players choose from a pool of 13 historical civilizations such as Egypt, Rome, and China, and take control of that civilization's commander.
- Players advance their civilization through various eras, from the Stone Age to the Feudal Age.

Storytelling Techniques

- The app has no overarching narrative. However, players create their own stories by choosing how to build and upgrade their civilization and commanders.
- Explicit storytelling occurs through commander bios and voice lines, which provide historical context.
 - Each commander has an optional, lengthy bio in their information menu.
 - Most characters have voice lines in their civilization's native language.
- Implicit storytelling occurs through music and the visual design of the app's environments and characters.
 - Each civilization has its own musical theme.
 - As players progress, the appearance of their buildings changes to match the new age.
 - Though the characters are highly stylized, their armor, clothing, and weapons are based on historical designs.

Characters

- Each civilization has a starting commander, but more commanders can be recruited through gacha mechanics.
 - While the lowest-level commanders are generic combat units, most are based on real leaders from history with some mythical exceptions.
 - Players can recruit commanders from any civilization. For example, while a Chinese civilization may start with Sun Tzu, they can also recruit commanders like Charlemagne or Queen Tamar of Georgia.
- A nameless counselor guides the player through mechanics and gameplay goals.

Clash Royale

Overview

- Clash Royale is a real-time strategy app with tower defense and card collection mechanics.

Storytelling Techniques

- There is no overarching story, but the app's setting and mechanics allow players to create their own stories through their actions.
- Minor explicit storytelling is presented through character bios and external sources, such as the [Clash-A-Rama!](#) animated series on YouTube.
 - Character bios are simple and humorous. For example, the Knight's bio compliments "the sheer awesomeness of his mustache."
- The app's PvP gameplay implicitly tells a story about two kingdoms at war.
 - Players assume the role of a king defending his kingdom and attacking opposing kings.
 - Players use character and ability cards to simultaneously defend their towers and castle while attacking their opponents' towers and castle.
 - To personalize their kingdom, players can customize their battle banners and tower skins.
- The app's bright, cartoonish designs emphasize the silliness of the characters and world.
 - For example, the Archer's pink hair reflects the app's lighthearted, non-realistic take on fantasy.

Characters

- Clash Royale features familiar characters from the *Clash* franchise such as the Knight, Archer, and Giant.
- Characters' visual designs reflect their personalities and gameplay roles.
 - For example, the Knight is handsome and well-armored, while the Barbarian is muscular, shirtless, and often depicted shouting.
- Players collect these characters in the form of cards and deploy them on the battlefield.

Magic: The Gathering Arena

Overview

- Magic: The Gathering Arena is a collectible card app with optional lore.

Storytelling Techniques

- Magic: The Gathering Arena's narrative takes place outside of the app, but the game's lore appears in-game explicitly through flavor text and voice lines, and implicitly through character designs, animations, and sound effects.
- Planeswalkers—the major characters—have limited, optional narrative content.
 - Planeswalkers are the most powerful and iconic heroes and villains from *Magic: The Gathering* lore, such as Ajani Goldmane and Liliana Vess.
 - When Planeswalkers are selected in the menu, they play one of multiple voice lines.
 - Each Planeswalker has a description with a few sentences on their background.
- Some cards feature flavor text that includes lore details such as locations and characters.
- Some cards have special animations or sounds that are triggered when they are played.
 - For example, the Sanctuary Cat meows when it is summoned.
- Players can express themselves through cosmetics like card sleeves, pets, and avatars.
 - Cosmetics are based on creatures and items from the *Magic: The Gathering* world.

Characters

- Players can choose an avatar from a variety of unlockable Planeswalkers.
- A wisp character walks the player through the tutorial but disappears once they have progressed far enough in the game.

Casino Apps

Piggy GO - Clash of Coin

Overview

- Piggy GO - Clash of Coin is a casual casino app with a vacation theme.

Storytelling Techniques

- Piggy GO does not include any explicit storytelling.
- The app conveys its vacation theme implicitly through its mechanics and visual design.
 - Characters' starting outfits resemble road trip attire, such as Pipi's utility vest, fishing hat, and disposable camera.
 - Locations have unique themes, with some replicating real locations while others portray fairy tale worlds. Some locations are themed after IPs, such as the *Stuart Little* location.
 - Players spend currency to build themed structures in each location.
 - Characters travel between locations in an RV.
 - Players collect cards associated with real-world locations. Completing a themed set awards dice.

Characters

- Players start with the pig character Pipi, but they can also unlock two other pigs, Lili and Dada, and a cat, Abby.
 - Each character has a unique skill that can be leveled up.
 - Characters speak brief phrases and make sounds to express their emotions.
 - Players can unlock alternate outfits for each character.

Caesars Slots

Overview

- Caesars Slots is a slots app with themed slot machines and lite story mechanics.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app features simple episodic narratives that are conveyed implicitly through machine designs.
 - Machine's themes are created through symbols, animations, music, sound effects, frames, backgrounds, and bonus mechanics.
- Some machines, features, and events include explicit storytelling through brief cutscenes and dialogue.
- The app's general theme is inspired by ancient Roman aesthetics.
 - The UI incorporates purple, red, and yellow into its design.
 - Some UI elements are decorated with golden laurels.

Characters

- Players are referred to as "Caesar."
- A character inspired by Julius Caesar acts as the app's mascot.
- A woman in a Roman outfit guides players through gameplay mechanics.

Episodic Narratives

- Each machine has a unique theme that implicitly tells a simple story.
- Some events offer more in-depth story content.
- In the Voyage of Discovery event, players complete gameplay tasks to collect chests containing story-related items.
 - A cutscene sets up the story of Julius Caesar's hunt for treasure and attack by pirates.
 - Players progress on a map by completing item sets that correspond with steps in the story.
 - Individual items represent a part of each story step, both visually and through a text description.
 - For example, the Rome's Port item set includes a wrecked ship that Caesar examines, a ferry master giving out tickets, and Caesar's crew boarding his ship.
 - After completing every item set, players receive a large currency reward.
- In [The Hunt for Volcanus](#) machine, players spin a fantasy RPG-themed slot machine to slay monsters.
 - A cutscene shows a tavernkeep giving bounties to an adventuring party.
 - Landing bounty poster symbols activates free spins, during which players battle a series of monsters.
 - Players defeat monsters by landing bags of coins until they reach the final boss, Volcanus.

Cash Frenzy

Overview

- Cash Frenzy is a slots casino app with a wide variety of themed slot machines.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app features episodic narratives that are conveyed implicitly through machine designs.
 - Machine's themes are created through character and symbol designs, music, UI elements, backgrounds, and bonus mechanics.

Characters

- Mr. Cash, the game's cartoon mascot, guides players through new mechanics.
- Some machines are themed around specific characters.
 - For example, the [Bonny Buccaneer](#) machine heavily features its titular pirate character as well as a number of supporting characters through voice lines, an animated model, and symbol art.

Episodic Narratives

- Each machine has a unique theme that implicitly tells a story.
- Some machines stick to a simple but consistent aesthetic.
 - For example, the [Jungle Tiger](#) machine features a jungle backdrop, tropical music, animated animal symbols, and a simple ruin-like frame.
 - There are no extra gameplay elements or goals that relate to the theme.
- Other machines use more varied formats with implicit storylines, unique gameplay goals, and distinct visuals and animations.
 - For example, on the [Fox Heist](#) machine, players help cartoon foxes steal treasures.
 - The machine features a dark city backdrop, heist-film-inspired music, character and treasure symbols, and a frame that resembles the pillars of a museum.
 - An animation of characters sneaking into the building plays when players first enter, and a police car drives across the screen when they leave.
 - Characters have voice lines that play during certain spins.
 - When players land on a bonus spin, they can choose to rob either a bank, mansion, or museum. Players click items to steal them.

POP! Slots

Overview

- POP! Slots is a casino app where players can play slot machines in locations based on real Las Vegas casinos.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app uses implicit storytelling techniques, such as visuals and mechanics, to create an immersive casino experience. Aside from some instructional dialogue from characters, there is no written story.
- Casinos match their real-world counterparts.
 - For example, the app's rendition of the Luxor features the real hotel and casino's sphinx and pyramid design.
- Inside each casino, players can choose between various slot machines.
 - Players guide their avatar through casinos by tapping the screen.
 - Player avatars can sit at any free seat at their chosen machine.
- As players spin, the screen is split between their avatar seated at the machine and the machine's UI.
 - Players can see other players' avatars seated beside them at the machine.
 - Certain machines have multiplayer bonus levels that players complete together on a large in-game screen.
- The app also features episodic narratives that are conveyed implicitly through machine designs and visual story events.
 - Machine's themes are created through symbols, animations, music, frames, and bonus mechanics.

Characters

- Players choose their avatar from a premade set.
 - Players can customize their avatar with outfits.
- The game's cartoon mascot guides players through new mechanics.
- Other characters, like Max the cat, are featured in limited events.

Episodic Narratives

- Each machine has a unique theme that implicitly tells a story.
- Players can unlock visual story scenes in the recurring POP! Stories event.
 - Each event has a new set of scene images with a different theme.
 - Players purchase packs that contain stickers that are fragments of each story's scenes.
 - Players complete story pages by collecting all the stickers to create complete images.
 - After completing every story page, players earn a large currency reward.

Bingo Bash

Overview

- Bingo Bash is a bingo app with a wide variety of themed bingo games.

Storytelling Techniques

- This app tells simple, episodic stories that align with each game's theme.
- The app tells these stories implicitly through visuals and music that match each game's theme, as well as explicitly through brief dialogues.

Characters

- Each themed bingo game has its own characters.
- Games based on existing IPs like [Grumpy Greetings](#) and [Monopoly Bash](#) use characters from their respective franchises: Grumpy Cat and Mr. Monopoly.
 - Grumpy Cat and Mr. Monopoly both have brief dialogue snippets during gameplay.
- Some characters are nameless and don't have any dialogue, such as the three people on a tropical vacation in Tropic Bash.

Episodic Narratives

- Each game has a conflict that is resolved by winning games of bingo.
 - In Tropic Bash, patrons are shown waiting to be served drinks.
 - Players earn tiki-themed drinks by winning bingos.
 - The tiki drinks are then served to patrons on a tropical vacation.
 - In [Get Clucky](#), players help farmer Francis save his chickens.
 - Bingos award hammers that players use to free chickens from boxes.
- Some events introduce simple conflicts that can be resolved by clearing unique boards. Themed collection tasks also offer additional rewards.
 - For example, in [Paddy's Punch](#), players clear a board to unite leprechauns.

Bingo Blitz

Overview

- Bingo Blitz is a bingo app where players complete PvP bingo matches to progress on a map.
 - Locations on the map are based on real cities such as Sydney and Hong Kong.

Storytelling Techniques

- The app conveys its world travel theme implicitly through sound design, backgrounds, and mechanics.
- Each location has background art and music that is inspired by its real-world location.
 - For example, New York's background features the Brooklyn Bridge and Empire State Building, and its music is jazz inspired.
- The announcer's voice changes to match the accent associated with each location.
- Players advance on a map of islands connected by drawbridges.
 - Each island has its own set of locations to complete.
 - Players complete locations by placing daubs on treasure tiles to collect themed artifacts.
 - After completing an island's locations, a drawbridge lowers to allow access to the next island.

Characters

- Colorful cartoon cats Mitzy and Blitz teach the player the app's mechanics.
- Players can choose a cartoon human, mouse, or cat icon.