Bot Land Marketing

At least read this section

Goals of this document
- Come up with a marketing strategy for [Bot Land](#) that works well on a very low budget (<$5,000)
    - The way that I plan on offsetting the measly budget is by spending more time on marketing and utilizing the greater resources of the stream's viewers
- Figure out what to prioritize from this strategy

Stream changes
Ever since focusing on marketing and user retention, it's been harder to get the same overall structure for the stream that I used to have. Planning content for the next 1-2 weeks used to be easy to do, but now I find myself struggling to plan for 1-2 days sometimes. Because of this, I cut back the stream schedule from 8 hours/day to 4 hours/day.

Timeline
[Check out the roadmap here](#). In general, I'm aiming to spend about 3 months marketing and finishing Bot Land. That means that coding isn't done, but there will be almost no *new* features at this point.

Long-term marketing

I don't want to just have a flash in the pan at launch and then have the buzz die out around Bot Land. This section contains ideas that can keep that publicity going.

- Go to conventions - these may be more valuable if I'm known as the "creator of Bot Land" instead of just "some developer".
    - Conclusion: I've talked to people in the past about this, and it sounds like the time and money cost of just attending in the first place doesn't outperform what I would gain by improving the code or streaming on Twitch.
- b0ggs: One key thing here, is making sure the marketing pipeline extends out a while. So if you do blog posts, make sure you've got several to go, + streamers and an update or something to keep the hype going for as long as possible.

Ideas

These are still unfiled ideas:

- Add promotional cosmetics that streamers can give out to their audiences. Streamers could give codes out (or just a single code) that would unlock the cosmetic item or just *something*. This is like a cheapo affiliate system.
- Consider allowing folks to be part of a team and the broadcaster can compete against other broadcasters, even if it's just for points at the end of the month.

These are ideas that have already been at least partially filtered into other categories on this list (but could still serve as a reference point):

- Ads
    - Need to figure out exact demographics
        - A/B testing ads
    - Sites to get ads for
        - Facebook
            - Try platform-specific ads: HiDeoo: Adam13531 Ha nvm, it's now renamed to Detailed Targeting > Behavior > Mobile Device Users > Devices By Brand
        - Instagram
        - [13:00] Marpl3x: ads in telegram channels?
        - Reddit
        - Apple search ads - https://searchads.apple.com/ - I get $100 free credit
        - Google - there may be some free ad credit offers floating around somewhere

- - - [09:17] Crasner: All accounts get $300 free credit after their 3rd day of account creation on AdWords @Adam13531 Literally all accounst created
    - StackOverflow
    - [13:15] maybe_a_monad: FYI Twitterrific just release their own ad network and it seems to be reasonably priced
      - - [13:17] maybe_a_monad: Yes, a twitter client with a pretty devoted following
    - YouTube
    - https://www.carbonads.net/
      - - This reaches developers and designers
        - This costs $2500 minimally
  - Other notes
    - Make sure we have apps for whomever we're targeting

Launch ideas

These are ideas that should almost certainly be done, but just not until *right before* the game launches.

- Get press contacts lined up a few weeks ahead of time with articles ready to go at launch.
- [10:09] DigitalSparky: advertise on producthunt?
  - [10:11] A_footlong_sub: Theres tutorials on how to launch on product hunt
  - [12:30] kensodev: For ProductHunt, you should get someone "famous" to hunt you
  - [12:31] kensodev: If you just post there, it will go to the oblivion
  - [12:33] swattkidd: When you put something on PH you can do a lot of things to ensure a great launch. You dont need someone famous (you have an audience) just make sure you have the stream going so people can upvote quickly (also there are some things to consider with time/day you launch). Just some things to look into.
  - [12:34] DigitalSparky: another key thing with PH, engage with the PH staff using the live chat to let them know you're posting and you've a large audience, otherwise PH's algo's will penalise for spam @Adam13531
  - [12:36] RenoInMO: PH has a good presence on maker twitter as well, which might be attracted to the concept of an automated game
- Social media
  - Make an "I quit my job 4 years ago and made a game" post on reddit
  - Subreddits to post to (and this post says which times work optimally for posting to reddit, as does this resource)
    - /r/webgames

- ■ /r/gamedev
- ■ /r/playmygame
- ■ /r/gamemarketing
- ■ /r/learnprogramming - not a great fit
- ■ /r/indiegaming
- ■ /r/FREE
- ■ /r/gaming
  - ● [09:53] iKojan: if u somehow manage to make a fun little short 30 second gif showing everything about the game u could also potentially post it on /r/gaming
  - ● Someone had made a GTA-style game (Geneshift) where they spent a lot of time [making a video](#) specifically for that subreddit.
- ■ [/r/casualiama](#)
  - ● [09:49] kulhur: I think there's some value in "I quit my job and spent 4 years working on a video game, AMA" because I think it's quite common to have this idea to quit your job and work on your dream
  - ● [09:01] JediPotatoPotato: @Adam13531 I think doing some kind of AMA talking more about your journey of quitting your job and workin on this game for 4 years and streaming every day is a good idea. Be careful to not actually link to the game or anything but if you get asked a bunch maybe ask the mods if you're allowed to link it? But most people will just look at your post history to find the game
- ○ [09:35] ST6THEONE: There's a facebook group for indie games

Back-up ideas

These are ideas that should be looked at if I'm not successful via the other ideas that I pursue, i.e. Bot Land isn't successful at launch.

- ● [09:47] PsiMaster54: I think you've said no before, but kickstarter just for the publicity?
  - ○ Conclusion: I don't want to make a KickStarter unless I actually need the money for something, and I don't feel as though I need the money for anything other than marketing at this point given that I have an MVP and I have at least ~10 more months to work on making Bot Land profitable.
- ● [13:34] codephobia: what about a battle pass style thing? monthly subscription which gives you something every month, and quests to achieve?
  - ○ Conclusion: I may want to try this if the primary approach doesn't work.
- ● [15:13] buddha: What about founders (Supporters) packs based on tiers ranging from 1$ - 100k for example? @Adam13531
  - ○ [15:15] buddha: The packs can contain skins, titles , maybe a t shirt , etc etc

- ○ Conclusion: I want to keep this around, but it's similar to KickStarter in my opinion.

Low-priority ideas

These are ideas that if someone did them *for* me, they might be good, but they're probably not worth spending the time doing them by myself.

- Timelapse video of development progress
    - ○ We could pull this from all of the YouTube videos here
    - ○ Conclusion: I think this would be good for a one-liner in a reddit post or a tweet as opposed to a standalone blog post UNLESS the blog post is a post about how I did this.
- Make a HackerNews post about how code execution works in Bot Land
    - ○ Maybe post it on /r/gamedev instead?
    - ○ Conclusion: this probably invites penetration testers, and it would take several hours just to write a blog post on this.
- [12:20] d1r3ct: @adam13531 Hi Adam, did you think about making some sort of educational content (maybe a single video), where someone, who is good at the game, creates an interesting script so that new people can watch a video and get a feel of a good attack/defense
    - ○ Conclusion: this is good once I have more players in Bot Land. Ideally though, the community would be doing this without any push from me.
- [09:30] Minkler: Any way to do a competition / tournament with a prize pool?
    - ○ Bot Land tournament with $100?
    - ○ We'd need to coordinate with a bunch of people.
    - ○ Need to set up rules
        - ■ Need to tell me when the match is going to happen so that I can save the replay.
        - ■ Need to have a PayPal account.
        - ■ <come up with more rules>
    - ○ Conclusion: the big pay-off here is if we can pull in new players, and that would only happen if we advertised the tournament far enough in advance to get new players to join. I don't think I have the advertising reach right now to get those players in. We could also further someone's interest in the game even if they already play, but I don't think a tournament is the best way to do that.
- Come up with some way of integrating gameplay and Twitch. It worked for Dead Cells to double their all-time minutes watched in just a month.
- [14:39] jspp64: a twitch extensions where you can click to start a match against the streamers defense?
    - ○ Conclusion: this probably wouldn't be *too* hard to do, but I don't think it's needed for launch.

- [11:23] NoContent: maybe give a award on BotLand when you subscribe to social media? for example a salvage pack. but after the release
  - Conclusion: I'm not sure what I'll want people to subscribe to after the game is launched, especially if I'm going to cut down on Twitch streaming time.
- Need to set up analytics of my own so that I can figure out which campaigns are working. Bot Land should take in a query parameter or something that lets me track how someone signed up, then it should be saved in the database, that way I can see how each sign-up performs in the long term.
- [09:36] JesseSkinner: affiliate marketing? some benefit to getting your friends to start playing?
  - [12:54] codephobia: @Adam13531 have you considered setting up referral codes so influencers can plug your game and make money off the microtransactions of the people they get to play?
  - [15:12] Adeathane: @Adam13531 what about the thing League of Legends did? for 100k referals you could design your own champion, total biscuit got them like 200k referals, then donated the opportunity to make a wish kid, it was a win win win situation
  - Conclusion: I think this is probably complex to set up, so I don't think it would be good at launch. It sounds very enticing for streamers if they can just get money by playing a game at any time or sharing a code later.
- Upload some videos of people's creative strategies/replays
  - This lets us have more gameplay videos available for free.
  - Conclusion: if I can get people streaming the game, then their viewers will likely take clips and hopefully share those. At the very least, *I* could share those and I wouldn't have to do anything special.
- Contact schools, coding academies/bootcamps
  - E.g. https://lambdaschool.com/courses/cs/web/
  - Conclusion: I have a feeling this is low-ish cost, but also it would be low pay-off.
- Make a pseudo crowd-funding site, e.g. cf.bot.land. It would say something like "I don't actually need crowd-funding, so just tell me how much you *would have* pledged and help me spread the word anyway knowing that you saved that much money". Put the goal at like $400K and allow people to choose increments of $1, $5, $10, $25, $50, or $100. Have fake reward tiers.
  - Conclusion: it's actually a decent idea, but it may take time to develop.
  - Put all the marketing points about having content updates, being F2P, no ads, GDPR-compliance, etc.
- Other game stores (i.e. other than Steam/iOS/Android)
  - GOG
    - [16:09] SpellshaperCZ: but GOG pick its games, you cant just sign up
  - Green Man Gaming
  - Reach out to HumbleBundle
  - Look into releasing on the Discord Store (Nitro)
  - Facebook Game Room

- - Amazon App Store
    - [11:34] JaaimeLM: What about Indiegala?
    - Look into releasing on the Epic Games Store
      - [10:08] iKojan: epic games store dont take games in yet
    - Look at Twitch's game store or just the Twitch Prime offers stuff
      - Maybe just offer free salvage packs. Maybe mention to Twitch that almost the whole game was developed while streaming on Twitch.
    - GameJolt
    - Microsoft Store
    - Kongregate
      - 9:18 sabin_ulti: kongregate.com might be a good platform for marketing your game
      - 9:19 AntiMatterTape: they give bonuses in ad revenue if it's exclusive, or uses their achievement system, as well as some other things.
      - 9:19 AntiMatterTape: You can put your game on kongregate in just an iframe
      - 9:20 AntiMatterTape: but you can still put your game on kongregate and make ad money off of it without an changes
      - 9:20 sabin_ulti: if you add badge(achivements) like win 5 battles. it will hopefully make people try the game for a longer tim
    - [10:12] mantas159159: try posting games on these sites: https://snapcraft.io/store https://linuxmint.com/store.php https://www.linux-apps.com/ http://www.linuxandubuntu.com/linux-store.html @Adam13531
    - Conclusion: GOG and Green Man Gaming may be the biggest, so I may want to focus on those when I get more time.

Rejected ideas

- [09:45] RobbieBillions: maybe this doesnt work in 2019 anymore but what about letting users ask their facebook friends for botcoin/etc.
  - Conclusion: this would require work to be done for a specific social network. There would be UI costs and I don't think it's as popular to begin with anymore. Also, it's probably not popular with programmers.
- [10:21] Izoch: Ok, this is a wild one. Do an ARG. Its pretty high effort, but its "free" especially with your skillset.
  - Conclusion: as much as I'd absolutely love to do something like this, I think it basically boils down to getting enough hype from the original posts that you inject into social media to cover the time cost of creating the scavenger hunt. Also, there would need to be a reward at the end, which could just be 100 salvage packs or something. It's just too risky for the amount of time involved.
- [13:37] ViableClanMember: Idea: broadcast a "BotlandTV" on twitch - 24/7 footage of the current matches, perhaps following the current leader's match

- ○ Conclusion: viewership of the "Always On" section looks like it's pretty low, and this would involve a decent amount of coding/setup to get working in the first place. Plus, I'd have to advertise the stream unless I only expect "browse" traffic.
- cheer300 Hey <streamer name> have you heard of Bot Land?
  - ○ [09:19] V1raNi: It's actually sort of bad manners imo
  - ○ [09:19] V1raNi: intrusive
  - ○ [09:19] EdzNux: When people do that on some stream, it's feels bad :/
  - ○ [09:19] JediPotatoPotato: yeah lots of streamers get so mad when you donate to promote your thing. the large ones at least get super pissed when people do that
  - ○ [09:26] nperry0: ok adam lets turn it around. If some one cam into your channel and said "hey have you heard about rag tag" would you be happy if windy came in and did this if you didn't know him?
    - ■ I'd probably be upset
  - ○ Conclusion: it doesn't sound like this is a good idea to do, at least not from my main account. The upside is that it's cheap, but I don't want to alienate any streamers.
- Bounty board on Twitch
  - ○ Conclusion: I just assume this will be too expensive for me to use (I couldn't find concrete numbers for this). Even if it weren't, I'd rather try reaching out to streamers first.
- [09:52] mantas159159: patreon page for the game?
  - ○ Conclusion: I think that if I were going to spend another year on Twitch without really making money that I'd want to go this route. Otherwise, I feel like this is money for *me* and not for *Bot Land*. The reason this distinction is even important to me is because if Bot Land is making enough money to allow me to program it, then I don't think Patreon is going to add much on top of that. CaptainDisillusion is making roughly $10k/month, but Bot Land would have to make $20-30k/month to be able to grow.
- [09:58] rhymu8354: Talk to mike_inprinciple about his experience in reaching out to influencers on Twitch; he got many people to stream it, but it didn't really translate to any sales
  - ○ Conclusion: I just keep passing over this item. I don't know why I'm hesitant to try it… I think it's because I'm not aiming for sales right now, just people playing the game.
- Consider making a "choose your own trailer" site where you can see the gameplay trailer, a longform trailer, a zany trailer (Rock 'em Sock 'em Robots maybe? Or just robot action figures), a fan-made trailer ([AMT's trailer](#)), a completely false trailer (WoW killer, 4D graphics)
  - ○ Conclusion: it's just like the crowdfunding campaign - it's a lot of work, but if it doesn't reach a huge number of people, it's probably not going to be worthwhile.
- Ask someone to make a Discord bot that alerts people when someone is streaming Bot Land. Maybe throttle the calls to once per hour so that it doesn't spam people?

- ○ Conclusion: there's no one streaming the game, and people who know about my Discord likely already know that they can use #show-and-tell to talk about their stream.

Influencer outreach

Some notes to consider:
- Bot Land isn't an incredibly stream-friendly game. A typical gameplay session involves experiencing the high-level strategy of the game, but then streamers usually dive into the automation section (e.g. writing scripts with Blockly), and I think that this isn't as interesting to watch.
- I should tell streamers about how they can interact with their viewers (e.g. public attack links).
- Should probably send all communications through adam@bot.land
- Dota's Auto-Chess is pretty similar to Bot Land apparently; I should look into it and then reach out to some streamers.

Specific ideas:
- unclemusclez suggested reaching out to streamers whose games involve queue times, e.g. Counter-Strike and Fortnite.
- For smaller influencers, maybe we could just offer in-game currency or salvage packs as "payment"
- Pay for a reviewer to review the game
- Reach out to gaming journalists
- Reach out to review sites
- Reach out to streamers/YouTubers based on their game content
  - ○ Reach out to StarCraft streamers like [LiquidTLO](#)
  - ○ Might be worth reaching out to streamers who play Super Mario Maker since the *concept* is similar.
  - ○ Maybe the Clash games?
  - ○ Maybe the Zachtronics games?
  - ○ Maybe chess?
  - ○ Other strategy/tactics/indie/automation/"thinking" games
- Look at the Steam curation lists like what Skedog is part of
- Could include a highlight reel of Bot Land gameplay
- Could reach out to the "maker" channels specifically
  - ○ [09:00] Crasner: I wouldn't be surprised to see that you have an incredibly large amount of kids that watch these "maker" channels on YouTube. They are interested in building stuff and are trying to learn how to do it so they would at least give it a try @Adam13531

- [09:49] Outfr0st: As for reviewers: Toss a review request to Yahtzee Croshaw. If he makes a Bot Land (Zero Punctuation), it's amazing outreach and lolworthy content, if he doesn't, oh well :P
- [09:26] QbyteFennek: @Adam13531 Are there any games that are similar enough to your game to be relevant to a streamer that streams that other game?
  - [09:26] QbyteFennek: I would maybe target streamers of other browser based games like runescape
  - Factorio
- [10:03] Izoch: Also see maybe if you can reach out / network with Zacktronics. They/he might be able to help out since their games are 99% programming also
- [10:40] LynxTheCat: Might talk to GoPirateSoftware [they just got back from a convention pushing 'Heartbound']
  - Talk to them about conventions at least
- [10:51] tinuscs: What about reaching out to universities or high schools, people that are taking their first programming course might be interested in playing this.

Specific influencers

- Look at YouTube Gaming and Mixer as well
- [09:54] Izoch: @Adam13531 On the influencer side, check out **Northernlion**. He likes programming games since he recently started learning coding. Also he seems to be pretty cool and open to promotions. Definitely worth a shot
  - Also, I saw his GDC 2014 talk.
- [09:56] JediPotatoPotato: **TrumpSC** on twitch! He's a starcraft, strategy, heartstone guy that loves brain games
- [10:01] Izoch: Oh another influencer **Quill18**. Hes was an actual programmer before switching to full time youtube and likes games like factorio, programming games etc.
- On YouTube, if you go to someone's channel page, you'll see "Related channels" on the right side. That can be really helpful for finding similar YouTubers.
- Waeldchen: Hello Adam, 2 possible youtuber: 1) **MetalCanyon** (https://www.youtube.com/user/MetalCanyon): he seems to be doing videos for quite a lot of indie games. 2) **ChristopherOdd** (https://www.youtube.com/user/ChristopherOdd): he streams on Twitch as well (and I guess you probalby know him). Additionally maybe you can talk to **GoPirateSoftware** (Twitch). He is quite a bit streamer (for a dev streamer) and he has done some streams where he plays indie games. Sadly that's everything I got. I wish you good luck with BotLand!
- [10:34] LynxTheCat: Oh, um... **GiantWaffle** might be a high view streamer to reach out to. He plays a bunch of Programming Puzzle games like SHENZHEN I/O and While (true) { Learn }
  - [09:58] Twove: big streamer who you could get is GiantWaffle

- - [09:59] Twove: he like semi-programming games
- Message **cohhcarnage** on Twitch to see if he'll play Bot Land when I launch. SiegeGames did this for Crea and got like 200 downloads/hr.
- [10:50] Minkler: Adam **ezekiel_iii** does a weekly indi steam, he's more of an entertainer than an strategist tho
- **Forsen**
- **Sodapoppin**
  - [11:00] walshydev: For soda maybe comment that you should contact **Vulpes**, he is a mod that organises him with games to play. If you wanted Soda to play, Vulpes would be best bet
- [10:58] czoTomo: I believe **DansGaming** is playing indie games often
- [10:59] callgage: **rockleesmile** plays a lot of indie games
- [11:00] Outfr0st: Influencers suggestions: **OfficialStuffPlus** (YT), **NerdCubed**
- [11:01] ABuffSeagull: Adam, I think I've mentioned these guys before, but they're all strategy streamers: **DolphinChemist**, **Shenryyr**, **Arvius_**, **FilthyRobot**
- [12:50] RobinMalfait: Well, **Shonduras** has a esports team Spacestation Gaming, but he also makes vlogs on YouTube, so checkout Shonduras maybe
  - [12:51] RobinMalfait: What I am saying is, shonduras has a vlogging channel AND has an esports team so a lot of the viewers are into esports / gaming
- [15:20] wickedblueninja: **evescout** plays games like this.. he would love it
- [15:23] Adeathane: @Adam13531 **guardsmanbob** has a coding based fanbase and also plays games
- The YouTubers that treeform lists in this article
  - https://www.youtube.com/user/OfficialStuffPlus
  - https://www.youtube.com/user/MasterofRoflness
  - https://www.youtube.com/user/SiberianLemming
  - https://www.youtube.com/user/SpaceMonkey9288
  - https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD069ejAo42e9nvehS30VNA
  - https://www.youtube.com/user/DenSuberCool
- All of the influencers from my spreadsheet I'd shared in #marketing.
- Hmmm! **SeriouslyClara** features indie games on her channel. She always tweets out her reviews to her followers and offers great feedback. She's Twitch's liaison for games that are offered for free with Twitch Prime, and has (or had?) a regular slot on the front page to showcase those games. She's a community manager for a game company and is excellent to work with, I hear. She might be a good fit for you, and there's a possibility that also might be able to connect you with someone at twitch who can appreciate your role as a streamer AND developer.
  - Her boyfriend, **wshand**, also regularly plays indie games, though what game he plays is voted upon by his audience (who largely favor crusty horror games). But he's got great energy and if he's into the game, it's be a great platform to showcase it. I personally have seen great games on

his channel that I've recommended to other broadcasters and my own viewers.
- [12:52] XilumX1: **Traversy Media**? If you heard of him
  - [12:53] XilumX1: Hes a youtube who makes tutorials. I'm not sure if he will be interested but just saying
- [08:53] ViableClanMember: you could try **Acerbic** on twitch
- **Xwater** - hosted him so he saw the trailer already, but he plays Mario Maker (which has parallels to Mario Maker) and is/was a programmer!
- **Gamedevcompany** - He posted the submission link in chat: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1lfgr4xB5AFFkeICfrXvU3D3mWY5JNKS0gV9iGop132c/viewform?edit_requested=true and here is his current queue: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Era6aT9LWjb3L-iL4g7grdqLbMytfiu_roAiskGNcW8/edit#gid=0
- [11:34] adiguno: @Adam13531 Have you checked out **Techlead**'s channel? he does swe videos, 500k subs i think

Demographics

When I set out to make Bot Land, the target audience that I had in mind was "people who play StarCraft but don't have the APM to be a master at StarCraft"

13-30 year olds
Skews toward men
Strategy gamers

+Mobile/casual gamers

I could also consider these people to be part of the demographics:
- Makers
- Programmers
- Education sector (note: if we officially target education, we'll probably need to focus on accessibility)

[08:57] Crasner: To find out demographics you... Have base traffic (us) + interests in similar games > Connect Facebook Pixel > Let run for a few days > Create a Lookalike audience that is automatically created > Facebook optimizes your data dictionary and you can see all the audience information
[08:57] Crasner: They don't even have to log in or anything, it's all behind the scenes
[08:57] JediPotatoPotato: @Adam13531 I think you need to create a survey for your twitch viewers. $10 says we are your demographic. I'm willing to bet they're mostly male, computer or IT backgrounds, I'd wager most of them are parents as well, with an interest in strategy games

[09:04] Crasner: 1. Run Facebook ads targeting those interested in Makers 2. Run Google AdWords with keywords for channels on your list 3. Run a YouTube ad in front of their video. 4. Contact those that are still "small" 5. Contact "maker" websites that are more written-content focused and see if you could do a Blog Post. This would help your websites SEO as well

Bot Land user personas

Overall notes

[This beginner's guide](#) was a good introduction.

The way I wrote these is not mutually exclusive, e.g. Casual / Programmer can be a combination, or Competitive / Socialite.

Competitive

- Description
  - Wants to win
  - Cares mostly about functional items (hardware)
  - Pursues online resources to improve
    - Reads up on strategies
    - Watches streamers/YouTubers to learn techniques
  - Loves leaderboards, rankings, and seasonal rewards
  - Wants ways to share accomplishments
  - Appreciates more detailed descriptions of what happened: damage values, turn order, etc.
- Marketing message
  - Bot Land is all about PvP
  - Grandmaster ranks show the top 200 defenders and attackers
  - Test tons of strategies involving various hardware/chips
  - Excellent matchmaking
  - Twitch spotlight in-game if they want to stream
  - No APM required (this may be good for people who like StarCraft but don't have the speed/dexterity)
- How to reach them
  - Streamers/YouTube
  - In existing competitive games (e.g. StarCraft II)

Collector

- Description
  - Loves cosmetic items and showing them off
  - Finds themselves in the Store / Avatar pages frequently

- ○ Finds opening salvage packs exciting
- ● Marketing message
  - ○ Plenty of ways to show off your items from your avatar to your individual bots. Your avatar shows in everyone's battle log.
  - ○ Eventually, profile pages will be in the game where you can share your favorite bots.
- ● Potential challenges
  - ○ There aren't *so* many items just yet in the game
- ● How to reach them
  - ○ Most likely on message boards for existing games with lots of items, e.g. card games, Rocket League, Dota, CS:GO

Casual

- ● Description
  - ○ Plays a few battles here and there
  - ○ Likes all aspects of the game, perhaps some more than others
  - ○ Loves achievements to get a sense of progression without having to invest large amounts of time
  - ○ Likes roll-ups of what happened to get information at a glance
- ● Marketing message
  - ○ No need to write code, but if you're going to, Blockly is a good entrypoint
  - ○ Games can be watched in 2x, 4x, etc. speeds if you're in a rush
  - ○ No APM required
  - ○ Mobile apps / site make it easy to play on the go
  - ○ Time commitment needed is low
    - ■ Battles are fast (and can be made faster)
    - ■ Missions can be completed relatively easily
    - ■ No need for daily logins
- ● Potential challenges
  - ○ Bot Land is an online-only game and they may want to play offline
  - ○ Achievements aren't in the game
- ● How to reach them
  - ○ Social media
  - ○ Ads
  - ○ Listing on the app stores

Programmer

- ● Description
  - ○ Wants to produce intricate code to accomplish tasks
  - ○ Creates and refines strategies that no one else has done
  - ○ Wants a sense of ownership over each script
- ● Marketing message

- ○ Both Blockly and a subset of JavaScript are supported
  - ○ You can test all of your scripts before entering a real battle
  - ○ Eventually, there will be documentation to detail what each API does
- ● Potential challenges
  - ○ Lack of proper debugging
  - ○ Lack of in-game documentation
- ● How to reach them
  - ○ Coding schools
  - ○ Coding subreddits/forums
  - ○ Ask viewers to spread the word to coworkers

Socialite

- ● Description
  - ○ Wants to play with other people
  - ○ Loves a sense of community and activity
  - ○ Shares accomplishments of all sorts (e.g. competitive, achievements, item acquisition)
  - ○ Hates the idea of a game turning into a ghost town
- ● Marketing message
  - ○ All games are played against real players
  - ○ You can share your defense with your friends
  - ○ Eventually…
    - ■ Profile pages
    - ■ Leaderboards
    - ■ Clans?
- ● Potential challenges
  - ○ Many "basic" social aspects are missing: chat, the planned features mentioned earlier, etc.
- ● How to reach them
  - ○ Social media
  - ○ Referral bonuses

Completionist

- ● Description
  - ○ Wants to get through all of the content in a game
  - ○ Likes doing dailies/weeklies (i.e. missions offered at set intervals)
  - ○ Likes achievements
  - ○ Enjoys completing all content (perhaps likes 100%-ing games)
- ● Marketing message
  - ○ Daily missions are offered in the game
  - ○ Game will continue to be actively developed if it's successful

- Potential challenges
  - There is no single-player content, so any missions have to be against other players
- How to reach them
  - I bet Let's Plays would be good for this since an LP can show off a decent chunk of a game. In practice, this means streamers/YouTubers.

I think it's most worth targeting casual players because they'll be a consistent lifeblood for the game, whereas other players may feel like they've "completed" the game. Casual / Collector combinations are going to be the biggest payers.

Reference/resource links

These are resources that don't require extra notes:
- https://www.eggradients.com/startup-directory - a list of 100 places to contact with your startup, e.g. reddit, Cnet, Mashable, etc.
- https://github.com/mmccaff/PlacesToPostYourStartup#readme - another list of places to submit your startup
- https://presshunt.co/pricing - a site where you pay $130/month to get access to a database of journalists' email addresses. Sounds a little fishy to me since journalists who are interested in covering something would likely have their emails be public through their parent company.

Concrete ideas (something I can act on)

TODO:
- Keep scrounging for influencers, journalists, etc. who may be willing to help. Really dig for this. Consider directly inviting them to the Discord for the sake of helping them spread their own stream/video.
- Make an ad for "Hot single bots in your area" and just have three different Bot Land bots laid out. Facebook or Instagram for it.

Ideas that are too ambiguous or aren't high-enough priority to tackle yet:
- [12:17] jooo_: I know that you can't post about the game on r/programming but maybe you could post your blog post about being a dev streamer? That would probably get some more poeple to the stream on launch day?
- [10:06] Remy_rm: @Adam13531 This may be a stupid idea, but have you considered putting the Bot Land OST on Spotify? It may not be much, but people like such relaxing game tracks. And I think its pretty cheap to do

- [09:54] HiDeoo: Adam13531 Imo, for this to work at a larger scale (people helping and sharing it more), I think you need a Bot Land HypeSquad like the Discord HypeSquad, fancy badges, exclusive rewards, something to incentivize people to share it
- Reach out to TFT players (streamers + YouTubers + Twitter maybe?). Consider asking in a subreddit about it.
- Try to sell Bot Land in just a GIF, then maybe it could replace all of the webms on bot.land. I could have text headers directly in the GIF that explains what's happening.
- Make the iOS App Store page more appealing? Conversion rate is ~15% (93 installs from 901 impressions), although maybe that's good
- Could offer $5 gift cards or something for user surveys on Twitter and ask people to spread the game.
- Show off some of the way larger battles that can take place in a game, even if it's just a single one. Describe the thought process of the players in an exciting way. Maybe put this on bot.land?
- Crasner: There are online directories of professors at universities. Like the entire "school of x". Even taking the stance of seeking advice from their students as what they would do to prepare (say CS students) a raw look into the industry. You don't necessarily have to be teaching? Adam13531
- Contact a school's curriculum department to figure out how to get Bot Land featured in the class room.
- Redo the bot.land autoplay videos
- Skedog: Random thought, but I get emails through IFTTT for posts to /r/gamedeals with the word "free" in them, as do a lot of other people (it is a recommended thing on IFTTT), and I am pretty sure devs can post their game there. Might be worth a post at launch saying "FREE Bot Land" or something.
- https://support-dev.discordapp.com/hc/en-us/articles/360025027772-Sell-Your-Game-on-Discord-How-does-it-work-
- Keep looking for streamers whom I could host that may be interested in Bot Land. I think reaching out to streamers directly is probably just a bad idea at this point.
- Influencer categories to still target (since I haven't had much luck with variety streamers)
  - Indie-specific streamers
  - Programmers
  - Maybe still some strategy gamers
- Getting better response rates from emails/DMs
  - Offer hosting / in-game rewards immediately
  - Reach out to confirmed streamers and ask how to make marketing messages stand out
    - 09:08 PlayingWithScissors Adam, send some emails to the people you know (like Kit) or who has already said yes
    - 09:08 PlayingWithScissors get feedback from them... they get those emails from other people too
  - Add buttons directly into the email for something like "I'm interested in streaming".

- - - [09:15] HiDeoo: Adam13531 I have templates for that if you want, just ping me if needed, it would be easy to add a BL green & blue
- I may need to start picking up more generic marketing knowledge. I consumed all of the game stuff and it makes sense, but now I need to implement specific strategies.
  - Read and summarize this: http://paulgraham.com/ds.html
- Still need to figure out why influencers aren't responding.
  - Consider asking in their stream if they saw my message.
  - Consider pinging them through the same medium as I sent originally.
  - Consider personalizing a site like influencers.bot.land/Adam13531 for each specific person
  - Consider doing more personalized video content
- Contact HonestDanGames about a Sunday stream (which I could be present for). It would likely have to be mid-March or later.
- Put a "tweet about Bot Land" button on bot.land.
  - It can be very similar to how the Crowdfunding page's button worked
- SEO
  - Make pages for what I would have targeted with ads, get them indexed, and maybe even run ads to those pages. I could come up with specific messages to target specific kinds of user personas (e.g. one for the casual player, one for the programmer, etc.). Profile pages in Bot Land can be good for this
  - Blogging is good for this too. Need to rebrand the blog to be more Bot-Land-themed ("start playing here!") and then start making articles like "here's how Bot Land is good for learning code as a beginner".
- Improve styling of share.bot.land/influencers
- http://www.pixelprospector.com/the-big-list-of-indie-game-marketing/
  - Cherry-pick a couple of these each day to figure out what I can learn.
- Play Bot Land on stream more than I currently do, especially closer to launch so that I can have the lenses of both a consumer *and* a streamer.
- Look into content marketing (I think this is already written here on this list)
- From the ad campaign that I ran, I saw "poki" as a search that generated some clicks. I should see if I can get listed on their site. https://poki.com/
- Ad campaign ideas
  - Target programmers with Bot Land and see how far that money goes
  - Target parents who are interested in getting their kids coding
  - Sign up for Google AdWords, wait for $300 of credit, then spend $100 on Demographic A, $100 on Demographic B, figure out which worked better, than fine-tune it and spend $100 on C.
    - Part of the fine-tuning can be picking keywords
      - [12:04] GoldxnGun: @Adam13531 Something I did on my app is target competitor keywords and I was getting A LOT of organic downloads from that. So maybe find similar games and use their buzzwords / keywords to get app store traffic

- - [15:26] Harvey_UK: @Adam13531 You should look at how games like Screeps or HackMud market their games?
- Influencer outreach (see [this section](#) for more)
- Consider offering people free salvage packs at launch if they sign up before launch.
  - Need to figure out how this will actually work if I'm wiping out all progress.
- See if I can get listed on .io site aggregators
- [10:15] PsiMaster54: Look into the various gaming crates? Theres gotta be an indie games crate of some kind?
  - Something along the lines of https://theindiebox.com, https://www.lootcrate.com/crates/loot-play
  - Lootcrate has a 5-games-for-$12-a-month deal, so maybe I could put $5 worth of salvage packs in with Bot Land?
  - Conclusion: it wouldn't hurt to ask them if they'd want to work with me at all
- [09:02] xDiglett: Maybe sites like wehype it or upfluence com for influencer marketing
  - This could help for the Twitch-hosting idea
- [09:59] darkysharky: wouldn't a more targeted advertisement in facebook (people who liked indie games pages) be better? I guess you've already thought about that, but still..
  - [10:02] darkysharky: I agree, I actually have a couple of facebook ads and the one thing that I liked the most is that I A/B tested 2 ads really easily (they support that).. one ad outperformed the other heavily so that information was useful :)
- Write a blog post about the marketing process itself and share that out
- See what it would take to get a badge for Bot Land on Twitch like XipTy has for Kingdom: New Lands - Kingdom: New Lands XipTy: For reference: https://twitchstuff.3v.fi/badges.html
  - [15:03] puj33: @Adam13531 Do you have close contact with the Thomas the guy who developed Kingdom: New Land?
- Ask someone in #marketing if they'd like to figure out how to spread the blog posts that I've already written. I don't think it's worth doing this by myself.
  - [10:58] b0ggs: I'll push again converting notes into blog posts and going content-marketing route
    - Alternatively, I have some blog posts that I never really went "wide" with that may be good to share.
    - 11:30 bilzander you gotta make a tutorial on how you make these docs look so clean
    - 11:30 bilzander would help soo many people :D
- [Make a "Show HN" post on HackerNews](#)
- [12:51] dotjosh: @Adam13531 I'm still willing to contact my old base.. it's been like 3 years.. but let me know
- Ask someone in #marketing to post to /r/indiegaming to see how reddit would work for this.
- Contact the learn-coding sites like CodeAcademy, Udemy, and KhanAcademy
- Try to reacquire old users

- Biggest worry about the game: people will play once and then never come back. I think this is what we've seen so far. As of Sat 11/03/2018, 71% of accounts overall have a single login, and 76% in the last 6 months only have a single login.
- 3:54HiDeoo: Adam13531 You should start mailing these after 1/2 weeks anw if never log again after registration, add some tips / features they have missed, either they get annoyed by the mail but they were already not coming back or will take another look and maybe play more
- 3:55HiDeoo: You can even do that with some lambdas every 2 weeks or so, very cheap calls to RDS / SES
- 4:02Liquidor: @Adam13531 Give freebies to players being away for too long (hidden timer) as well maybe. But this is all marketing stuff
- ↑ Maybe just give out a salvage pack per day for the first 7 days? But only if they log in.
- 4:03Liquidor: @Adam13531 As long as you make it "personal" for those who don't login. I'm subbed to a couple of services/sites/products that make it seem like I'm being singled out for a freebie
- 4:06Liquidor: Salv. packs cost you nothing to give out for free at a certain level compared to the lost player. Just have to figure out when the "ROI" goes positive for that player
- 4:10Liquidor: There's 1 big thing I personally feel is missing, but I told you about that last year too. When I play this game I feel "lonely". It's all "me against the world" with nothing to show for it. So deciding to play this game, I only think about "can I do better this time when I log in?". I miss the community features that you see in most games, specially mobile. Clans, communication, public pages/stats etc. I know now is not the time to talk about this but I guess you know what I mean
- 4:10HiDeoo: Adam13531 If I understood correctly Jonas is doing kinda the same thing too, he is trying to get to 1.0 with polish then huge marketing push, altho his situation is kinda different as he already did a large marketing push during his beta (and he uses monetized marketing)
- 4:14Liquidor: As it is right now (I'm sure that'll change in some way?) the game is pretty closed/walled in. That's not good for organic marketing at least. It's difficult to share and compare and discuss for the average player that doesn't know how to screenshot etc.
- 4:28Liquidor: Anyway random thought: Frontfacing website with the following sitemap: Home / News (Changelogs, new items etc) / Game (documentation etc) / Esports (lol but leagues and rankings and profiles and clubs/groups in the future) / Community (page that leads elsewhere) / Support (Usual FAQ/Github stuff) / Button to play the game. I know all of this makes you wonder "But why?". It's just my own opinion obviously :)
-
- Conclusions:

- ○   * Maybe it's worth doing the Profile Pages feature sooner rather than later
- ○   * Launching as "beta v2" may be better than saying the game is fully launched.
- ○   * I think a lot of this may boil down to reacting to WHY players are not coming back. It's possible that people are stopping as soon as they lose or as soon as they hit the scripting section. I need to make sure to steer people more toward the Snippets section if they're going to enter Blockly.
- ○   * Need to highlight news and community interaction points on bot.land. E.g. get people into Discord.
- ○
- ● Contact some press sites
  - ○ IGN
  - ○ Kotaku
  - ○ Gamespot
  - ○ Escapist
  - ○ CNET
  - ○ Giantbomb
  - ○ BuzzFeed
  - ○ Rock Paper Shotgun
  - ○ GameInformer
  - ○ Polygon
  - ○ [15:55] grizzlyDIZZ: You don't need only game-focused sites. The mass market loves to talk about stuff like this. A game that accidentally teaches you code.
  - ○ Pcgamer
  - ○ https://www.exclusivelygames.com/forum/
    - ■ [15:54] neilaiwen: exclusivelygamesis just fixing to launch and already has a good forum going
  - ○ https://n4g.com/
    - ■ This is a good way of finding smaller sites since it seems to just be an aggregation service
- ● [08:54] YgTSkedog: 🤔 Have you considered something like Keymailer? Other free games do it, but I don't know the "cost" to do it
  - ○ YgTSkedog: You could also try Indie Boost if Keymailer is too pricey or something
  - ○ Skedog also said that I may be able to include the Twitch-hosting offer
    - ■ [09:00] YgTSkedog: Because the devs can put messages about their games to the streamers, and something like that would be a "huge" incentive imo
  - ○ [09:02] YgTSkedog: I guess another one to look at would be Terminals.io as they manually review everyone that can get keys for those games - but I *think* they only do games they do the PR work for. I could be wrong about that though @Adam13531

- [09:03] GoonPontoon: Apparently the facebook twitch streamers community is pretty big and might let you share that kind of stuff. ["that stuff" being the Twitch-hosting stuff]
- Add a link to Discord in the game to add more of a community element and a way of interacting with players who bypass the stream (which will happen more as marketing progresses and as the stream dies down)
  - Talk to Jason about the UX for this. Maybe there's a simple solution. It's just a static link anyway.
- Maybe add a page directly in Bot Land highlighting people streaming the game. Or do what Blizzard did and coordinate with individual streamers for a slot on the front page. If we add a tab and work based on the system that I have for telling if I'm online, then maybe this could work. I'd need to assign it to HiDeoo and get UX from Jason.
  - One consideration is that maybe this would lead to mature streams, so I may need to warn about that. Maybe we can check the stream's metadata for that. Alternatively, we could just leave it up to Twitch to handle.
  - Need to consider someone just outright violating Twitch's policies and broadcasting porn, because then it may show as a thumbnail in Bot Land.
- Allocate 3 T-shirts' worth of money to outfitting influencers. They should be people who would never play the game for themselves but are still into gaming.
  - Casey Neistat
  - Maybe some of the Hearthstone streamers I reached out to and didn't get an answer from?
- Reach out to https://www.coolmathgames.com/contact-us and see if they'd be willing to list Bot Land
  - Figure out if EULA is even compatible with this; I'm pretty sure I wrote something about needing to be 13
- [08:59] fargrat: What about a Reddit AMA? I think any kind of guerilla marketing would be best with low budget
- (This may already be on this list) Early-access cosmetics (or even a badge) for players who already had an account.
- Referral systems
  - Maybe just give Botcoin to the first X referrals in Bot Land
  - Consider having a tweet/Facebook button that gives Botcoin.
  - [09:39] ST6THEONE: Have a how did you hear about botland section on registration. Person with the highest references/month gets a 'skin'. Smaller scale but could help boost people coming in consistently. Of course, you'd have to have some requirements…
  - Conclusion: look into the UX for this. I need to alert a player (maybe in the battle log) that they referred someone and give them a reward. I need a cap on this.
    - The reward can be something out-of-the-box like default bot names.
- Talk to Twitch about a front-page slot for the game's launch
- Send codephobia a PM

- ○ [10:26] codephobia: @Adam13531 I work with some people / companies that specifically do influencer / game promotions. Typically with top streamers, but if you want to chat about it off stream you can ping me on discord.
- Go to meetups and see what others have to say/suggest
  - ○ IndieGames Seattle
  - ○ Seattle broadcasters
- Look at demographics survey feedback
- Talk to Jason about reaching out to that interview site again
- Tweet out popular Twitch clips (they're not even necessarily Bot-Land-related)
  - ○ Conclusion: try this and see where it takes me. It's so low-effort that I don't think I should drop it, but I also don't expect too much.
- Make social-media overlays for the stream https://www.strawpoll.me/17299819/r
- Release on Steam - it helps legitimize the game even if there aren't tons of people finding it there (although there likely *would* be people finding it through Steam)
  - ○ Making an Electron app wouldn't be too difficult, but making it more Steam-friendly (e.g. achievements, payments) may be.
    - ■ [09:24] kenkomatix2: @Adam13531 Short hint on https://github.com/jiahaog/nativefier which makes ElectronJS wrappers (web->exe) insanely easy
    - ■ [09:24] luveti: You could use Greenworks to integrate with Steam :D Game Dev Tycoon made it
    - ■ [09:24] luveti: https://github.com/greenheartgames/greenworks
    - ■ Trading cards may actually be a bigger deal than I thought
      - ● [11:50] HUNUING: People use them to level up their accounts
      - ● [11:51] Pawn_: trading cards roughly translate to your steam level or something, is that right?
      - ● It sounds like they mostly drop based on time
    - ■ [11:50] LynxTheCat: I'd say about 10% of my 600 games on steam have 0 achievements
    - ■ [11:50] LynxTheCat: and most of which are 'online only' games
    - ■ You don't have to launch with trading cards available. Apparently Slay the Spire just added them on 1/24/19.
  - ○ Consider the actual "packaging" on Steam, e.g. free vs. $1 with $5 worth of in-game bonuses or something.
  - ○ The number of people who add Bot Land to the wishlist is really important
- [10:04] JesseSkinner: i think botland could suit being on hourofcode.com ?
  - ○ Conclusion: look into this and figure out what it's all about.
- Just putting this all the way at the bottom: make sure to consider all of these launch ideas if the current list has been consumed.

Finished tasks and conclusions

This table just contains high-level roll-ups of tasks. Also, the impact is the impact to *me*, so if I read 10 identical articles, then only the first one will have a non-zero impact since the other 9 won't help me more than the first one will.

If a task takes longer than one day, then the final entry will have the impact/monetary cost rolled up.

Date	Time taken	What I did	Monetary cost	Impact (0 = useless, 10 = amazing)	Conclusions
1/25/19	Minutes	Create a survey for my Twitch viewers	0	3	It was good to figure out who's watching me since that could overlap with *player* demographics. Notes below.
1/28/19	Minutes	Read this - "10 Ways to Improve Your Online Marketing Game in 2017"	0	0	I didn't find this very helpful.
1/28/19	Minutes	Read this - "9 Useful Marketing Techniques for Promoting Mobile Games"	0	2	Generated some helpful TODO items considering the low cost to consume. This was mostly a refresher.
1/28/19	Minutes	Watch this - video by Chris Dwyer - "Cost Effective Marketing & PR for Indies"	0	5	Learned a bunch (notes below).
1/28/19	Hours	Talk to creator of Itch.io	0	7	Talked about processing payments, rolling out on Itch, etc.
1/29/19	Minutes	Watch this - "How to Promote Your Steam	0	2	Took some notes (listed below). Not incredibly helpful

		Games (in 2018) video game marketing"			just *yet* since I don't know if I'm launching on Steam.
1/29/19	Minutes	Read this - "The Importance of Market Fit: Things I Wish I Knew Before Developing a Puzzle-Platformer"	0	4	The article isn't earth-shattering, but the reddit comments were good. See notes below.
1/29/19	Minutes	Read this - "Istrolid's Greenlight experience"	0	1	Can be summed up in one sentence. See notes below.
1/29/19	Minutes	Read this - "An Indie Game Developer's Marketing Checklist (Including Portable Formats)"	0	3	Good reference guide on how to reach out to press, but it's a tad dated (2013). See notes below.
1/29/19	Minutes	Read this - "I've created a game marketing cheat sheet, with all I need to market my game on one page."	0	0	I think this is garbage—little specific information and terrible formatting to boot.
1/30/19	Minutes	Watch this - "Using YouTube to Market Your Indie Game"	0	4	Pretty good for specific tips on interacting with influencers (skip the first 10 minutes). Notes here.
1/30/19	Minutes	Come up with user personas	0	5	Not sure of value *yet*, but it was fun and relatively easy to do. Notes here.
1/30/19	Minutes	Delete old tweets	0	2	I think the more important part is to have a consistent voice from here on out (content should be BL-focused).

1/30/19	Minutes	Reach out to Twitch about a front-page slot	0	N/A	No response yet; will update.
2/1/19	Hours	Start presskit / trailer rough drafts	0	N/A	Not done yet. The trailer is taking forever.
2/2/19	Minutes	Work on trailer rough draft (mostly for concepting)	0	N/A	Not done yet.
2/5/19	Hours	Work on trailer rough draft	0	N/A	Not done yet.
2/6/19	Hours	Work on trailer rough draft	0	N/A	Not done yet.
2/8/19	Hours	Work on trailer rough draft	0	N/A	Not done yet.
2/11/19	Minutes	Read this - Pixel Prospector's "How to Contact Press"	0	4	Seems like this links to many other resources, so at this point, I'm getting some specific contact information, but not much *new* general info. Notes here.
2/11/19	Minutes	Watch this - Everything You Need To Know About YouTubers But Were Afraid To Ask	0	0	No novel information here.
2/11/19	Minutes	Read this - Gamasutra How to Annoy a Games Journalist with A Press Release	0	7	This was great. Lots of candid insights from people who you may reach out to. Notes here.
2/11/19	Minutes	Set up Google Ads	0	0	Not done yet. This was also super frustrating.
2/12/19	Seconds	Apply for Twitch front-page slot	0	N/A	This probably won't result in anything for at least 10 months. At no point did I get to say

					when or *why* I wanted it.
2/12/19	Minutes	Set up https://share.bot.land/influencers	0	N/A	Just wanted to be able to share something with potential streamers/YouTubers.
2/12/19	Hours	Set up Google Ads	$10/day	N/A	See notes below.
2/13/19	Hours	Trailer work	0	N/A	
2/15/19	Hours (total: days)	Finish trailer	$ (not being specific here, but not too much money)	10	See notes below under "Gameplay trailer learnings"
2/18/19	Minutes	Start new Google Ad campaign targeting programmers	$	N/A	
2/18/19	Hours	Set up crowdfund.bot.land	0	5	It was a good idea that didn't get a ton of traction (partially due to my /r/gaming post being deleted)
2/22/19	Minutes	Added some branding/links to blog.bot.land	0	2	This was stupidly difficult to do because I am a Wordpress idiot.
2/25/19	Minutes	Finish presskit	0	?	https://share.bot.land/presskit
2/25/19	Minutes	Apply for a D-U-N-S number.	0	1	This is needed to be able to publish an iOS app. Notes here.

2/25/19	Minutes	Apply for Keymailer	0	?	This can help connect me with influencers.
2/25/19	Minutes	Apply for Terminals.io	0	?	This can help connect me with influencers.
2/25/19	Hours	Make stream overlays for social media	0	?	StrawPoll here - the time taken was mostly spent fumbling with stupid Phaser 3's docs/examples
2/26/19	Hours	Revamp presskit.	0	?	People didn't like the original one. :(
3/1/19	Hours	Panic.	0	10	This was not a good day. 😢
3/4/19	Hours	Misc. stuff (influencer stuff, D-U-N-S, Keymailer) - secret project	0	10	The "secret project" will likely be impactful.
3/5/19	Hours	Follow up with influencers	0	5	Lots of emails, lots of analyzing. Almost everyone responded to my follow-ups even though most of them said Bot Land wasn't for them.
3/6/19	Hours	More influencer outreach, Keymailer setup, D-U-N-S / Apple follow-ups	0	5	This stuff just needs to be done.
3/12/19	Hours	Email YouTubers	0	N/A	
3/12/19	Hours	Email YouTubers	0	N/A	
3/15/19	Hours	Make this video	0	N/A	Not sure what the impact is yet.

Quick summary of each week:

- Week 1: learn about marketing, contact Itch about payments, start presskit

- Week 2: work on trailer
- Week 3: work on trailer, start Google Ads campaign
- Week 4: start another Google Ads campaign, work on https://crowdfund.bot.land/ as a zany idea
- Week 5: influencers, influencers, influencers, influencers.
- Week 6: crowdfund.bot.land, influencer outreach, enroll in Apple Developer program and Keymailer.
- Week 7: YouTuber outreach
- Week 8: shift back to development (see the notes in "Overall learnings")
- Weeks after 8: I felt like it wasn't worth it to keep track of these any longer. :|

Overall learnings

- I had marketing in mind from day 1 by streaming on Twitch, and it was massively helpful. By the time I got to "officially" entering the marketing phase, there were several hundred Bot Land accounts already. A lot of people offered to help with various things too, but even just being able to ask for feedback on my other marketing materials/ideas/strategies was valuable.
- Getting people to help design this document was a *great* idea. I went from 0 to 17 pages in 8 hours and had a lot of blind spots covered.
- I kept hearing how developers should consider marketing from before the time they even start coding, but I never knew what that meant. I found out that it does *not* mean advertising, promoting, and PR. Instead, it's identifying what your target audience is, figuring out a middle ground between your artistic vision and a commercial success, networking, and just generally having some kind of plan (what will you launch on, how will you monetize, etc.).
- Coming up with user personas forces you to put yourself into the position of a persona that isn't your own. It's a fun process to spend even just 15 minutes coming up with rudimentary personas and trying to identify how you'd market to that particular person.
  - The personas came in handy for coming up with an ad campaign since you can essentially only market to one at a time (e.g. competitive players will search for different things from casual players).
- Gameplay trailer learnings
  - Try to sum your game up in one sentence, then get the trailer to communicate that sentence. E.g. "Bot Land is an online, automated strategy game." Showing things like customizable bots is nice, but if people don't understand the core gameplay by the end of the trailer, then you've failed. Even if the automation aspect didn't come through well enough, then I would have failed.
  - A trailer is like a résumé in that both *only* exist to get people to the next step: playing or buying your game. For a free-to-play game like Bot Land, this is slightly easier since no purchasing needs to take place at all. Regardless, the trailer is massively important because:

- - - People are fine investing 30-60 seconds in watching a video to figure out if they'll like a game
    - It's easily shareable
  - I learned a lot about Shotcut, choosing fonts, etc. - [all notes here](). Despite all of that, I don't think I'd ever use Shotcut again for a project that needs to be as polished as this. Multi-track editing slowed to a crawl, exports failed due to audio transitions, audio exported with little clicks/pops in it, the program crashed frequently, and certain things are just way too difficult to do (e.g. working with keyframes, changing a video transition, or trying to get text to look nice with HTML). I felt like I was fighting the program more than the video at most points.
  - Asking for feedback at each step along the way helped *greatly*. I'm not great at visual designs, so I got a lot of feedback on what effects to use or how to present something in a way that makes it clear.
- After 7 weeks of doing marketing, here are my conclusions so far (writing this on 3/18/19):
  - There are certain things that I did that were valuable:
    - Research/learning
    - Setting up the presskit
    - Making the trailer
    - Try out an ad campaign
    - Influencer outreach
  - However, I learned that influencer outreach was not fruitful. My original goal was to send out completely personalized emails and then refine those emails based on what worked so that I wouldn't have to take ~30 minutes per person. I didn't get responses most of the time unless I followed up a week later, and even then, the responses were almost always "sorry, I'm not interested". There were a few people who said they might stream the game, but as of right now, no one has made a single video on Bot Land whom I didn't meet through the stream (i.e. there were *some* people who streamed the game, but they found out about me first and then the game second).
  - What I take from the influencer outreach is that any of these things may have increased the response rate:
    - Offering monetary compensation
    - Casting a *much* wider net
    - Targeting indie-specific YouTubers
  - I don't have too many more marketing ideas that I feel comfortable doing before having mobile apps and a better new-player experience (i.e. in-game documentation), so I'm going to switch back to the only thing that *has* been effective: longer development streams. I get roughly one new player every 6 minutes of my stream. Not all of them stay, but I don't have any other way to get new players right now since I couldn't convince influencers to touch the game.
- I'm very TODO-list-oriented, but with marketing, I didn't have a concrete set of things to do on any given day after the "obvious" stuff was done (like make a trailer, make a

presskit, etc.). I think that following the same general organizational patterns that I follow for code is helpful—take an ambiguous task like "reach out to influencers" and break it down until it's "email Adam13531 with this template".

General conclusions

Most other conclusions in this document are either "overall learnings", which would be applicable to almost any project, or a specific resource (in which case it's rolled up somewhere below). This section contains conclusions that I came to through non-linkable resources (e.g. chat, ideas I'd recorded a while ago, etc.).

- I think that staggering the broadcasts of influencers will be more beneficial than getting everyone to stream on the launch day. If everyone streamed at once, then that could potentially push Bot Land into a high enough category on Twitch where it starts attracting "browse" traffic. However, I find it unlikely that Bot Land would get enough viewers for that to happen. Instead, I think it's better for the streamers to take a liking to it, then they can continue to stream it later. Plus, this keeps the hype up for longer; people may follow Bot Land on Twitch and find bigger or more professional streamers casting it.
- I should get some streamers to stream it as soon as guest accounts are ready. This can potentially help inform how I launch.
- Google Alerts are great for seeing how your presence is growing on the Internet.
- Aggressively following people on Twitter is against the TOS. I followed 100 accounts manually and was followed back by two. Two more gave one like each on recent tweets. I don't know if there's more value to following people than to potentially get them to follow you back since you're likely not actually reading their content if you're following in such large volumes.
- Marketing as a streamer with a following presents interesting opportunities:
  - Hosting is a great way to get someone's attention. As soon as you sign off, go seek out channels that may be a good fit for your game, that way you've got a lot of people to choose from to host.
  - You've probably got a lot of networking connections already made, and there are a lot of people who can help in ways you may not expect. E.g. I ended up asking jhovgaard about the general feeling of despair when reaching out to Twitch streamers, which is something that I wouldn't have ever thought I'd need help coping with. 😐
- Reaching out to Twitch streamers has not been fruitful. I had a *very* good response rate (I had heavily personalized each message) and an incredibly low interest rate. Jhovgaard said that I would likely have better luck with YouTubers. Also, YouTube provides more "permanent" content.
- The crowdfunding campaign got exactly 500 backers in ~30 days. If I'd tried posting to reddit again, it might have worked out better, but I dropped the ball posting from my main account to /r/gaming since the post got deleted.

[Google Forms survey](#) for viewers

Aggregate results (123 responses):
- ~84% are between 17 and 32 years old
- ~98% male
- Bot Land:
  - ~38% have played for 10 or more minutes
  - ~32% have never played but are interested in playing
  - ~20% have played, but only for <10 minutes
  - ~11% have never played and don't want to
- Programming experience
  - 4.9%: none
  - 19.5%: <2 years experience
  - 40.7%: 2-5 years experience
  - 35%: 5+ years experience
- Do you consider yourself a gamer:
  - 76%: yes
  - 24%: no
- Countries of my viewers (determined via Twitch stats of the last 50K views rather than this survey):
  - U.S.: 27%
  - Germany: 11%
  - UK: 8%
  - Canada/Sweden: 4% each
  - Poland/NL/France/Russia: 3% each
  - Everything else is 1% or less

Conclusions: this is *heavily* biased by the kind of people I attract as a streamer combined with the demographics of people already on Twitch, but I think it could still be helpful given that the 70% of the people polled have either already played Bot Land for >10 minutes or are interested in playing.

[Chris Dwyer video - Cost Effective Marketing & PR for Indies](#)

- Brand is important - my Bot Land Twitter should be just for Bot Land, or at the very least, it should all fit the "voice" of Bot Land (so jokes are fine if they're somehow helping Bot Land; picture Wendy's).
- "Execute on what makes sense" - what worked for Company X may not work for you. The real-world examples Chris gave were around specific games:
  - One game had memorable characters, so they made a plushie that ended up selling out quickly.
  - One game had early access that got people involved on Itch's forums, got them extra content, etc.

- One game had a great world, so they made a novel and an audio novel.
      - One guy already had a huge following, so he made a dev blog.
  - In the Q&A, someone asked about whether it was too early to start marketing his game since he only has the core mechanics working and nothing to really show off yet. Chris said that there's a difference between marketing and promoting, and that you don't want to promote too early. He says that marketing is the set of grand principles that you're going to push through your promotion. This makes a lot of sense - you should still think about branding, SWOT, etc., but you probably don't need to publish something like "here's a screenshot that looks basically the same as last week's screenshot".

How to Promote Your Steam Games (in 2018) video game marketing

The biggest takeaways from this were really just how Steam works from a sales perspective, which I didn't know a lot about.

The number of games released on Steam per year has been increasing steadily since 2015: 3k → 4k → 8k. That's 20 games per day or 100 games per week.

Most sales happen during sales periods (e.g. summer sale, winter sale).

You can only discount your game once every 60 days.
    You can time your weeklong deals so that you're competing with fewer games that are on sale.

Specific tips from the video:
  - Address comments, positive or negative
  - Show that you're alive - update your store page
  - Optimize your thumbnail - have a clear a legible image
      - They suggest A/B your thumbnail testing via external ads
  - Look through steam curated lists
      - You can only connect with a maximum of 100 curators
  - Visibility rounds - when you update, you can get put into the "recently updated" section. You get 5 rounds by default, and selling well will add more.
  - Community coupons - you can opt in to coupons that people can get via experience points (I think)
  - Wishlists are super important on Steam... they're like viewer numbers on Twitch when reaching out to sponsors.

Reddit post: [The Importance of Market Fit: Things I Wish I Knew Before Developing a Puzzle-Platformer](#)

The article talks about Life Goes On, a puzzle platformer that sold ~60k copies over three years (and that time includes a free expansion that they launched and periods of significant discounts).

Key takeaways from the article:
- As mentioned in [the Chris Dwyer video](#), marketing does indeed start at the beginning of your game, but it doesn't mean promotion/advertising/PR. It's just creating a product that fits a target market.
- They say they didn't understand their target audience and had poor product/market fit, so they ended up "failing" (in that they couldn't monetarily support their studio).
- Puzzle platformers aren't very streamable; they can be frustrating to watch, and there isn't any replayability in Life Goes On.

The comments, on the other hand, seemed to provide more insight than the article itself:
- [[link](#)] Studying the market before making a game is good, but games take years to develop, so the exact market will change in that time. Find out *where* to reach your market. E.g. there are certainly people that like puzzle platformers, but you need to be able to find them, and Steam on its own may not be the way to do that.
- [[link](#)] This is a good analysis of their specific failures. The trailer doesn't exactly pull you in and glorify the hook of having to die to solve puzzles.
- [[link](#)] Positioning is important - it's not like you launch into a single market and you're done. You can find out that a different demographic entirely likes your game, then you should start promoting it to that demographic.

Istrolid's Greenlight experience

[Istrolid](#) is a game relatively similar to Bot Land (except that it's realtime). The sole point in the article is that Let's Plays are *everything* and that Facebook/Twitter/IndieDB/blogging is all garbage.

I think it's important to put this in perspective with one of my overall learnings: one size does not fit all. Let's Plays worked for Istrolid, but they're another tool in the toolbox.

With that said, due to how similar Istrolid is to Bot Land, having treeform's list of YouTubers is a nice bonus; I can add those names to the influencers list.

[An Indie Game Developer's Marketing Checklist (Including Portable Formats)](#)

- Press kit checklist: meaningful screenshots, video, press coverage you already have, game info (summary of team), fact sheet (social media, prior releases), logos/awards
- There are tips on *how* to write a single email to the press. Be casual, have a descriptive title, etc.
- There are tips on *who* to contact, but keep in mind that this was back in 2013.

NorthernLion GDC 2014 talk - [Using YouTube to Market Your Indie Game](#)

- There was a good "do/don't" list for when actually reaching out to influencers:
  - Do
    - Use email
    - Include a link to the game
    - Be brief - 3-4 sentences
    - Explain your game's value - "this is why my game's cool" - be excited, show passion, rather than just going through the motions. Remember that the influencer needs to "sell" this game to their viewers.
    - Use Twitter - if you don't get a response via email, gently ping them on Twitter.
      - You can ping via email too; they may have missed the email.
  - Don't
    - Do interest checks, e.g. "are you interested in covering this game?"
    - Feel inferior - no need to downplay the game and your involvement. The influencers need people on their channels too. Talk to people as if they're peers like any other professional interaction.

[Pixel Prospector - How to Contact Press](#)

This is a PDF from an editor about how to structure your contact.

- Assume the editor does not know what your game is about (i.e. don't expect its existing marketing materials to have made it to them already)
- Editors get lots of mail, so interesting subject lines and concise emails help.
- The "flowchart" for an editor is typically: scan subject → scan email → look at screenshots/video → check out game → decide to feature the game. If at any point, they don't like what they see, they won't move on to the next step.
- Make a spreadsheet to keep track of who you reached out to
- Try sending the email to yourself first to see if it gets marked as spam
- Spell-check your email
- Contact them whenever you have something newsworthy, e.g. any time you move to the next big phase in your game (early video, beta launch, real launch)

- Hit some key points
  - Game description
  - Release date, price, platform
  - Links (press kit, the game itself, etc.)
- You can let them know you're open to questions or available for an interview.
- Example subject line: "Bot Land - new automated strategy game"
- Section 3 has "who to contact" ([reference](#))
  - Spreadsheet of indie game sites [here](#)
  - Spreadsheet of video game sites [here](#)
  - Spreadsheet of genre-specific sites [here](#)
  - Big list of YouTubers [here](#)
  - Other lists like [Linux game sites](#), [iPhone game sites](#), etc.
- After sending email...
  - Subscribe to the site via an RSS feed to stay updated, that way you can see if your game was featured.
  - Thank the editor.
  - Follow up on reviews in the comment section.
  - Update your spreadsheet
  - Keep them in mind for future updates since they already published you once

[Gamasutra How to Annoy a Games Journalist with A Press Release](#)

- Don't send anonymous or impersonal emails.
- Figure out who your target's audience is.
- Don't follow up too soon after the first correspondence.
- Assume they know *nothing* about your game, and assume that they don't care about something like "we have a playerbase of X" or "we got a new VP".
- Avoid marketing words since editors are sick of reading buzzwords/fluff constantly, e.g. don't say "game-changer".
- Don't overhype your game, just sell it.
- A video game journalist is not just a conduit to their audience, so don't say things like "please post this and do it in this way".
- Editors who shared their feedback in the article:
  - [Frankcifaldi](#)
  - [Morrisatlarge](#)
  - [Thomascurtis](#)
  - https://twitter.com/tinycartridge
  - https://twitter.com/RaveofRavendale
  - https://twitter.com/ferricide
  - https://twitter.com/pattheflip
  - https://twitter.com/krisgraft
  - https://twitter.com/leighalexander
  - https://twitter.com/necrosofty

Google Ads

- INCREDIBLY FRUSTRATING TO GET STARTED. I had so many questions and seemingly no answers, and their tooltips are broken on Chrome:
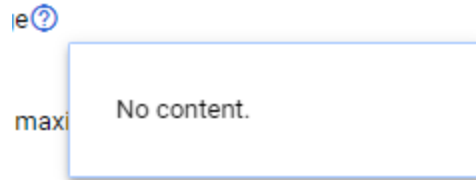

- Thankfully, their phone support is fast/good, and they answered my ~4-5 questions in a total of maybe 10 minutes over two calls.
- All other notes are here (Knowledge → Websites → Google Ads)
- 2/13/19 - 2/17/19 (or so) - ran a $10/day campaign for 5 days. The goal was to get clicks on https://bot.land/ . I think four of the five days were when bot.land had the old trailer. I only targeted the U.S., didn't allow unknown age/gender (that way I could actually learn something about my demographics), and had search terms like "strategy game", "indie game", "free-to-play game", "multiplayer strategy game", and "automation game". I only allowed searches from computers, not mobile devices (since there are no apps yet).
    - Goals
        - Figure out how Google Ads works
        - Get $100 free credit by spending $50
        - Narrow down my demographics
    - Results
        - 42 clicks
        - 1060 impressions
        - Cost per click: $1.31
        - Total cost: $55.19
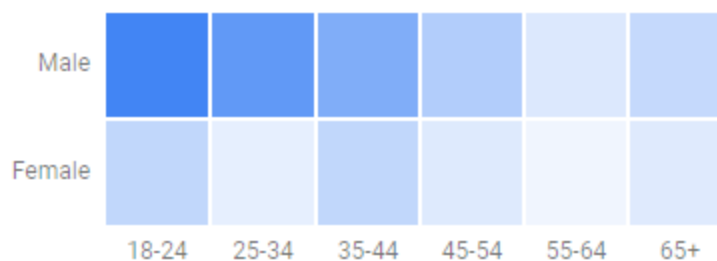
    - Conclusions
        - Tweaking/banning search terms is important. I had "free-to-play game" as a search term and got 9 clicks through that, but I assume people are looking for Candy Crush or something when they do a search like that.
            - Some search terms are ludicrous: "eye scary game", "watch latest english full movies online for free without downloading", "download

a women strip t game". Those each resulted in 1 click. If I were spending more than $50, I'd definitely want to spend a *way* longer time banning certain terms to try not to pay for these kinds of clicks.
- I don't have a way of tracking whether those 42 clicks turned into accounts in Bot Land.
- Starting a new campaign on 2/18/19. Putting a maximum bid of $1.50 CPC.

D-U-N-S number

- This is needed (at least in the U.S.) to be able to publish to the iOS store.
- I originally applied through [here](#). I got a phone call the next day from a D&B manager or something saying that she'd put me in touch with customer service. I was on hold for a while before she came back saying that the process has changed, and now you just have to go to https://developer.apple.com/support/D-U-N-S/ to apply. I did that, filled out the form, emailed her back (2/26/19), and she said that I just have to wait now (up to two weeks they said in an automated email). No idea if applying through D&B as I did initially helped expedite things.
- On 3/4/19, they called, but I missed it, then they missed my email, so we ended up talking on 3/5/19 to get everything sorted out. She said it'd take 24-48 hours from here.
- 3/6/19 - got the D-U-N-S number. Total time from start to finish: about 9 days?
  - Once I had the D-U-N-S number, I filled out the Apple side of things, and in about 40 minutes they called me and asked some very basic questions. I asked what the next steps were, and it's basically just to accept the contract and pay the $99.

[The Bullseye Framework for Getting Traction](#)

- Distribution (as opposed to products) is why a product fails.
- There are [19 traction channels](#) (e.g. blogs, social ads, offline ads, SEO, etc.). Identify a specific thing you can do for each. This forms your "outer ring" of the target. When you find something that works, narrow just that one thing down until you get to your bullseye, then stick with it until you've exhausted the benefit you get on your investment.

Terminals.io

I applied on 2/25/19 and didn't get a response until 3/5/19 (although maybe that's because I didn't register for an account until 3/4/19, but the site didn't make it clear that I even needed an account in order to get a response). They said:

> Oh no! We couldn't approve your Terminals.IO account for Media status
> This can happen for a number of reasons, for further details please read below!
>
> Hello Adam,

Thanks for your interest in Terminals.io! We're not quite yet at the point where we're able to let devs set up their own Terminals--we're hoping to open things up in the coming months--but we'll be sure to let you know when that's possible. In the meantime, we have what we call Terminals.io Launch Packages available.

For $1500, the Terminals.io Launch Package is a middle ground between do-it-yourself and full-scale service through Evolve PR. It helps get your game in front of the 15k+ media and influencers who use Terminals, and includes code distribution, two news blasts to relevant contacts, two hours of professional consultation, feature placement on Terminals, and reports.

If you'd like to sign up for a Terminals.io Launch Package, inquire about other Evolve PR services, or would simply like more information on any of this, send us an email at terminal@evolve-pr.com with some details on your game.

Have a great day.

Regards,
Stephanie // Evolve PR

IMO, Terminals doesn't seem like it's worth it when Keymailer exists. Also, apparently the emails they send out aren't mobile-friendly.

I had to link my YouTube account just to be able to create an account in the first place, but I didn't like the permissions they had, so I disconnected it (and then deleted the OAuth token through https://www.youtube.com/account_sharing)

Big List of YouTubers (takes a while to load)

I went through all of the YouTubers who listed their likes/dislikes. Lots of channels are dead/inactive. On the other hand, some have grown *a lot* (e.g. ChallengeAcceptedInc is listed as having 100k-500k subs, but they have 4.4M as of 3/11/19, or GamingFTL, who had <5k and now has 100k). Most of the people who've blown up tend to focus solely on one kind of content.

It took me something like 6 hours to go through all of the people on the list and send out emails. I contacted somewhere between 20-25 people.

136 places for getting free traffic

- The subreddits all suck; sort by top of the last month and you'll see that none of them have traction for video games.

- 10words.io - I signed up. Figured it wouldn't hurt.
  - It took 8 days for it to be accepted (3/26/19), and Bot Land now has an estimated feature date of 4/22/19. Their stats on the "upgrade" page show this: "517 Daily Subscribers | 1299 Weekly Subscribers | 41% Avg. Open Rate | 12% Avg. Click Rate". So these are really low stats, but it was free and it's for an audience that otherwise may never have heard of Bot Land.
- Submitted a blurb to All My Faves.
- Some of these other sites are better suited to having mobile apps available, e.g. allstartups.info. Pitch: "Bot Land is a free, automated strategy game. Make bots, battle other players, and rise to the top!"

Ridiculous ideas

- [09:10] rhymu8354: Go to one convention, then afterwards go back in time and _not_ go. Compare revenue from both timelines. Kappa
- [09:33] denisdonuts: borrow strangers phones to make a call, then install botland.
- [09:37] DigitalSparky: literal viral marketing... malware distribution of game :P
- [09:38] Lefteous: @Adam13531 report yourself as missing so that your face ends up on milkboxes and then put out a reward for finding you and the reward is a ton of botland coins
- [09:48] IAMABananaAMAA: @Adam13531 do Hot Ones on youtube, eat the spiciest wings of your life, then get a 30 second shoutout on the end Kappa
- [10:11] QbyteFennek: Fix a critical bug in ubuntu and lowkey add botland as a base install in the PR
- [13:27] ISD_Schogol: I have an idea adam. just fake a breach in your database and email everyone that their hashed email was leaked but it should be fine. Then switch to the main topic of the email which is that botland launches in a couple of days Kappa

How can I help?

Lots of people have offered to help in various ways. When it comes to marketing, there are different levels of involvement. Regardless of what you can do to help, I greatly appreciate it! I feel the need to say this explicitly: I can't offer payment for anything at this point.

Very low involvement (typically a few minutes or less)
- Subscribe to social media channels
  - YouTube
  - reddit
  - Twitch category for Bot Land
  - My Twitch channel
  - Twitter

- - Facebook
  - Discord
- Tell your friends about Bot Land
- Play Bot Land
- Like/retweet content

Medium involvement (typically less than an hour)
- Inject Bot Land into social media conversations. Try not to be spammy about this; provide some meaningful content while working Bot Land in. For some examples
  - If you see a post on reddit about "what's your favorite web game?", you could post about Bot Land.
  - If you see a post about Twitch streamers who do unusual things, you could post my stream and mention the appeal of watching coders.
- Suggest to your favorite streamers that they check out Bot Land
- If you ever see any opportunities for Bot Land, e.g. there's an ongoing conversation somewhere online or there's some kind of contest/convention/whatever, let me know about it.

High involvement (typically >1 hour)
If you'd like to be more involved than the average person, let me know, and I can add you to the hidden #marketing channel on Discord. This would be for if you're willing to do tasks like:
- Reach out to people
- Make picture/video content
- Help brainstorm ideas
- Community management
- Etc.

Growth

(this has been moved to another document)