

ATOMIC ARMIES

Atomic Armies game design doc

apps.facebook.com/atomicarmies

Genre and target audience

Atomic Armies is a base-building and war strategy game, set in a bizarre and humorous post-apocalyptic future. Its strategy mechanics are comparable to Backyard Monsters, and its reciprocity elements are similar to those in CityVille.

According to Facebook demographics insights, its audience is 92% male, 72% ages 13-24.

Game loops

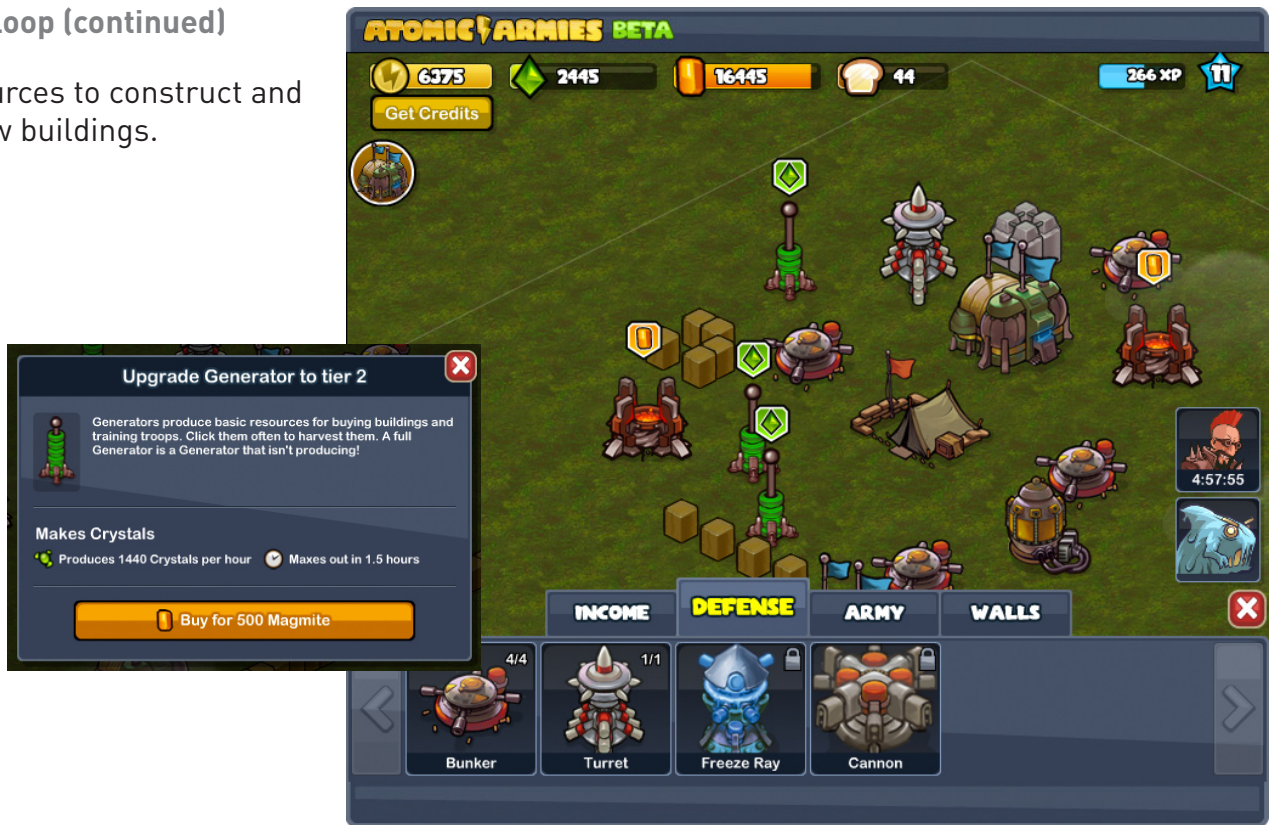
Core game loop

1. NPCs regularly send units to attack your base.
2. You collect loot dropped by units that your defenses have killed.
3. When the battle is over, repair damaged buildings and rebuild destroyed walls.
4. Harvest resources from production buildings.



Core game loop (continued)

5. Use resources to construct and upgrade new buildings.



6. Use resources to train units at unit production buildings.



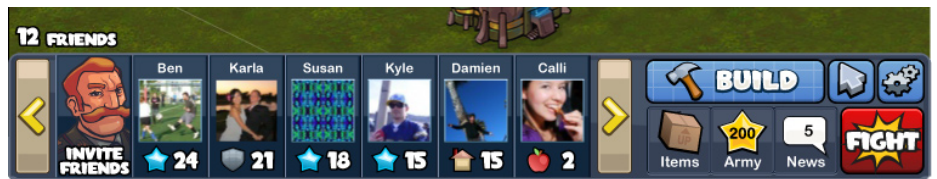
Core game loop (continued)

7. Use these units to destroy the NPC's base, ending their attacks and unlocking the next NPC. During the attack, collect loot when you destroy their buildings.



Social loop

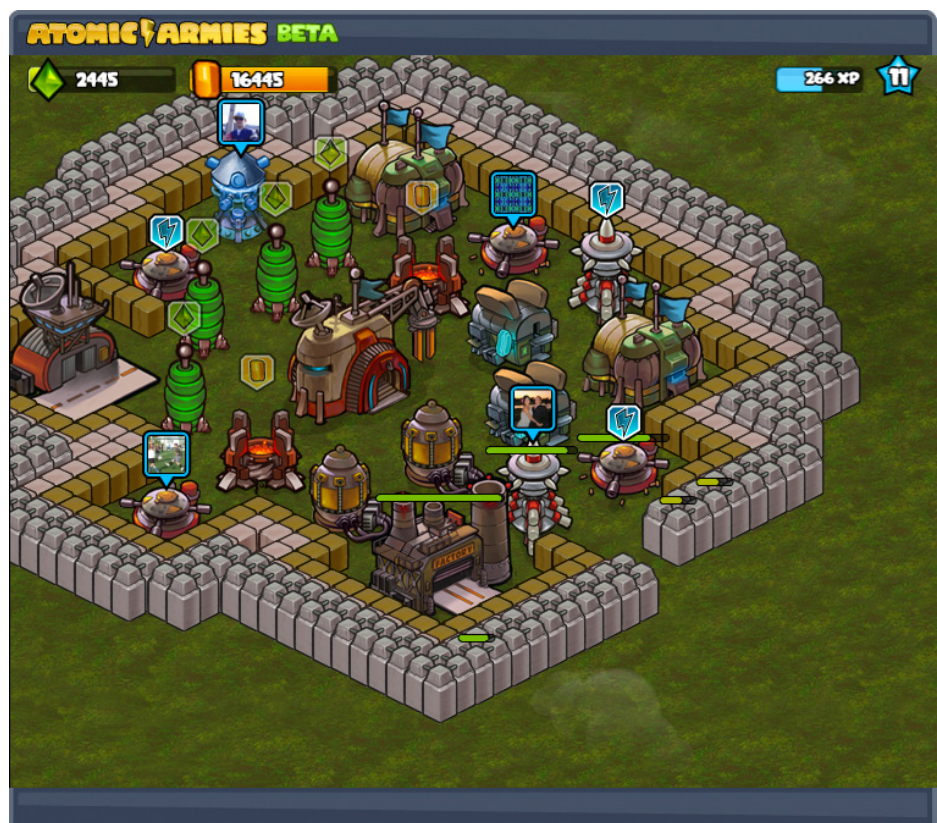
1. Visit your friends in the Friends Bar.



2. Click defensive structures that need help to give them damage buffs and earn XP.

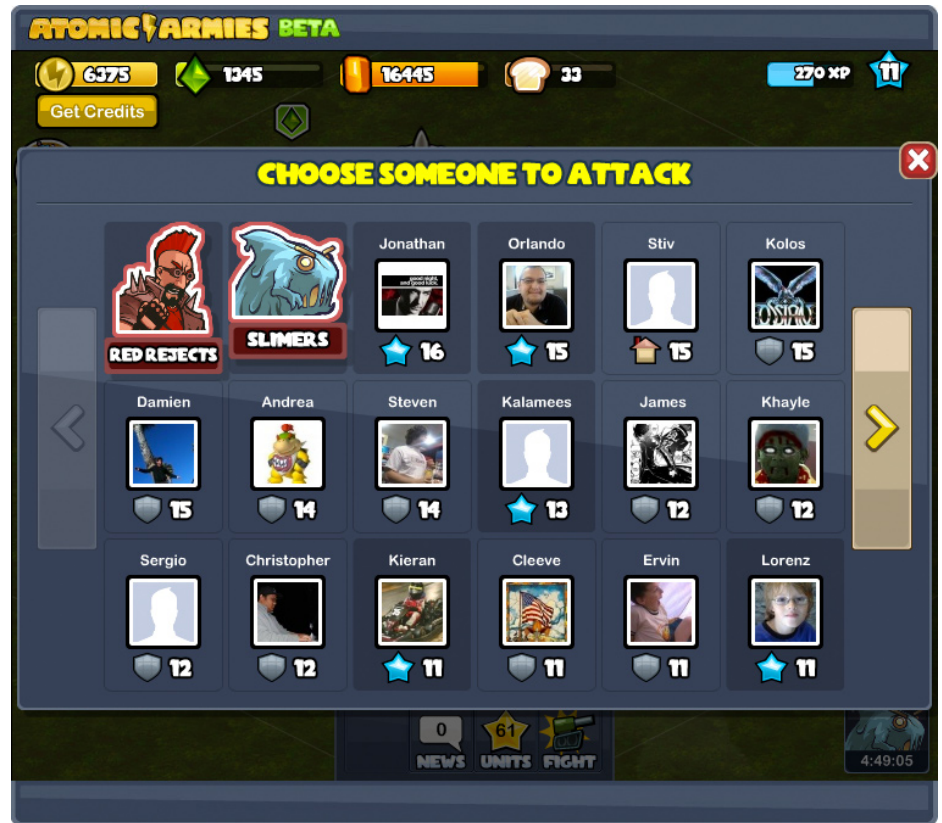
3. Collect resources and repair buildings to maintain your friend's base and earn XP and resources.

4. Your friend will be notified that you helped him and will reciprocate.



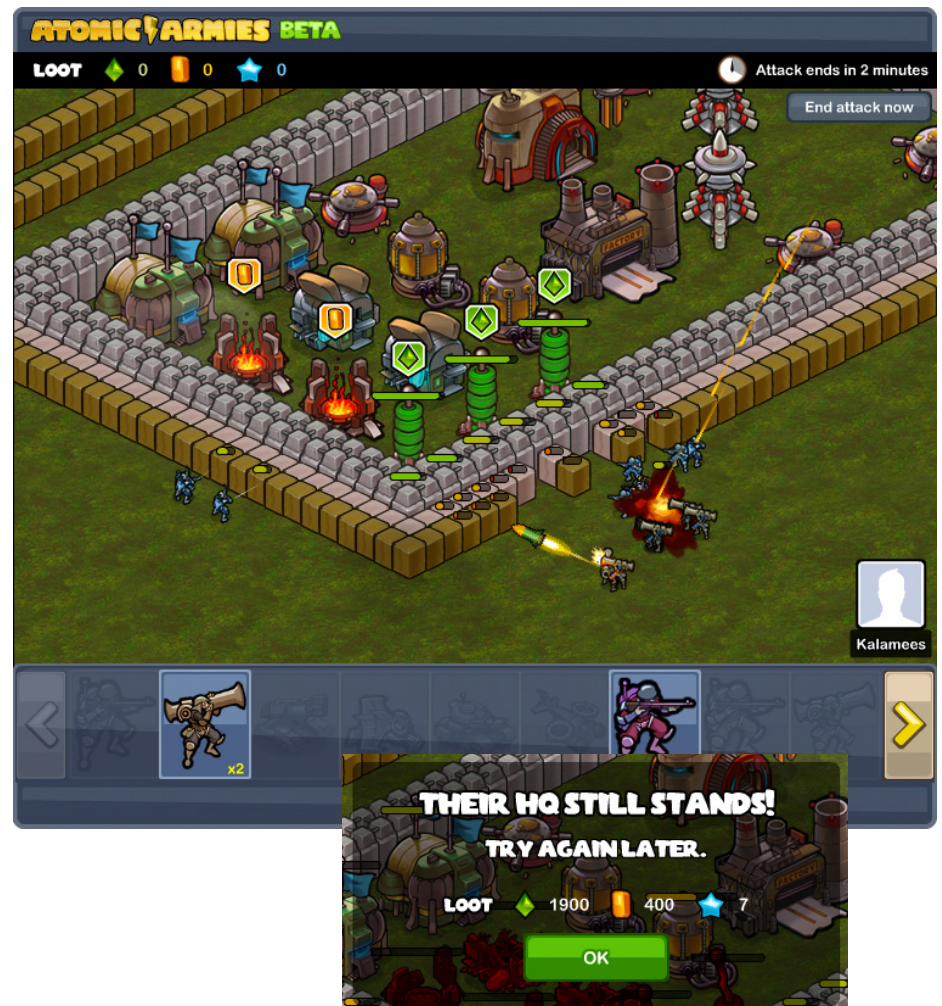
PvP loop

1. After you are notified who has attacked you and what units they used, you can choose to counter-attack or to attack someone else.



2. Attack the player's base with your units and collect loot from destroyed buildings during the battle. Your units will automatically attack nearest targets but you can also specify which targets they should attack.

3. The player is defeated when you destroy his Headquarters building. Defeating the player places him under protection for a short period of time, while failing to defeat him leaves him open to further attacks.



Core game systems

Experience and level

You level up through the collection of XP. You gain XP primarily by collecting resources, though you can get additional XP by building, upgrading, and repairing buildings, and by destroying enemy units and buildings.

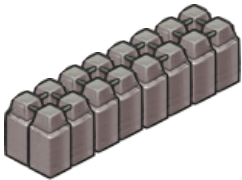


Levels are used to gate game content such as buildings, building upgrades, NPCs, and quests.

Buildings



Buildings are used to defend and fortify your base, produce and store resources, train units, and craft special weapons. Some buildings are required for core game functionality (e.g. the HQ is required for constructing buildings and engaging in battle).



Special wall buildings can be used to erect barricades around your base, blocking the paths of attacking units and either funneling them through entrances or slowing their progress.



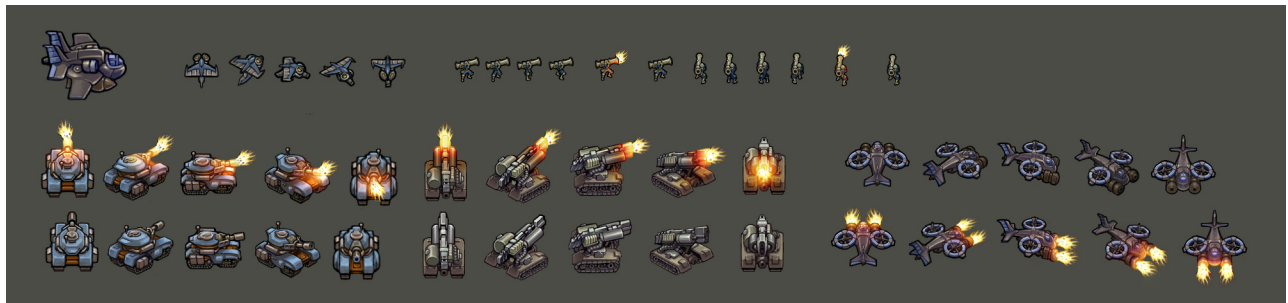
You spend resources to construct buildings. Building construction can be sped up by spending currency.

You can spend resources to upgrade buildings for additional functionality or increased effectiveness. Upgrades can be sped up by spending currency.

If a building is destroyed, you must repair it before you can access its functionality. Repairs can be sped up by spending currency.

Units

Units are trained in your base and are used to attack NPCs and other players. They have varying abilities and attributes (airborne vs. ground, speed, range, splash damage, damage amount, and hit points).



You spend resources to train units. Training can be sped up by spending currency.

Units that are not killed during an attack are returned to your army for re-use in future attacks.

Special weapons

Special weapons can be used during battle to damage or disable defending structures, or to buff attacking units.

They are crafted out of inventory items.



Non-Player Characters (NPCs)

NPCs attack your base on regular time intervals. Once you attack an NPC and defeat it, the attacks will cease, but another one will come soon to take its place.

Virtual goods

Special goods such as resource packs, base expansions, avatar images, and protection can be purchased with currency.



Resources

There are three in-game resources: Crystals, Magmite, and Food.

Crystals are the common resource and are used for purchasing basic buildings and units. Magmite is the rare resource and is used for purchasing advanced buildings and units. Both resources are produced on an interval by certain buildings, creating an appointment gaming mechanic. They are also occasionally given as rewards.

The last resource, Food, is made available in fixed amounts by constructing certain buildings, and is used to establish a cap on the number of units you can have in your army at any given time.

Inventory items

Inventory items are collected by destroying buildings during battle and by receiving them as gifts from friends. They can be crafted into special weapons.





Credits

Credits are the purchasable virtual currency. They can be spent on speedups (building construction, building repair, and unit training) and on virtual goods (unlocking buildings, resource packs, protection, and base expansions).

Quests

Early in the game, Quests act as an extension of the tutorial and are used to introduce the player to more game content and features. Later in the game they are used to encourage viral growth or monetization in exchange for game content.

Social and viral

Helping friends

Visiting friends' bases and helping them (repairing buildings, collecting resources, assisting defenses) gives you rewards and incentivizes you to invite more friends to play. Sending requests for the same creates a reciprocity dynamic.

Gifting and requests

Inventory items for special weapons and quests can be requested and gifted among players, creating a reciprocity dynamic.

Publishing to stream

Major accomplishments prompt you to publish your milestone to your stream. Examples include defeating an NPC or player in battle, completing a quest, and surpassing a friend in level.

Story and characters

The game is set in a post-post-post-apocalyptic future where anything can happen. The world is populated with all kinds of dangerous and wacky mutants, robots, aliens, and other creatures.

You are assisted by a friendly character called The Chief, who guides you through the tutorial and provides you with reports of recent battle activity.



Most of the game characters consist of NPCs, with whom you are at war. The first four NPCs are:



The Red Rejects: A bumbling Mad Max-style biker gang that puts on a tough front but always gets its ass kicked.



The Slimes: Blobby slimy aliens with massive single-cell buildings.

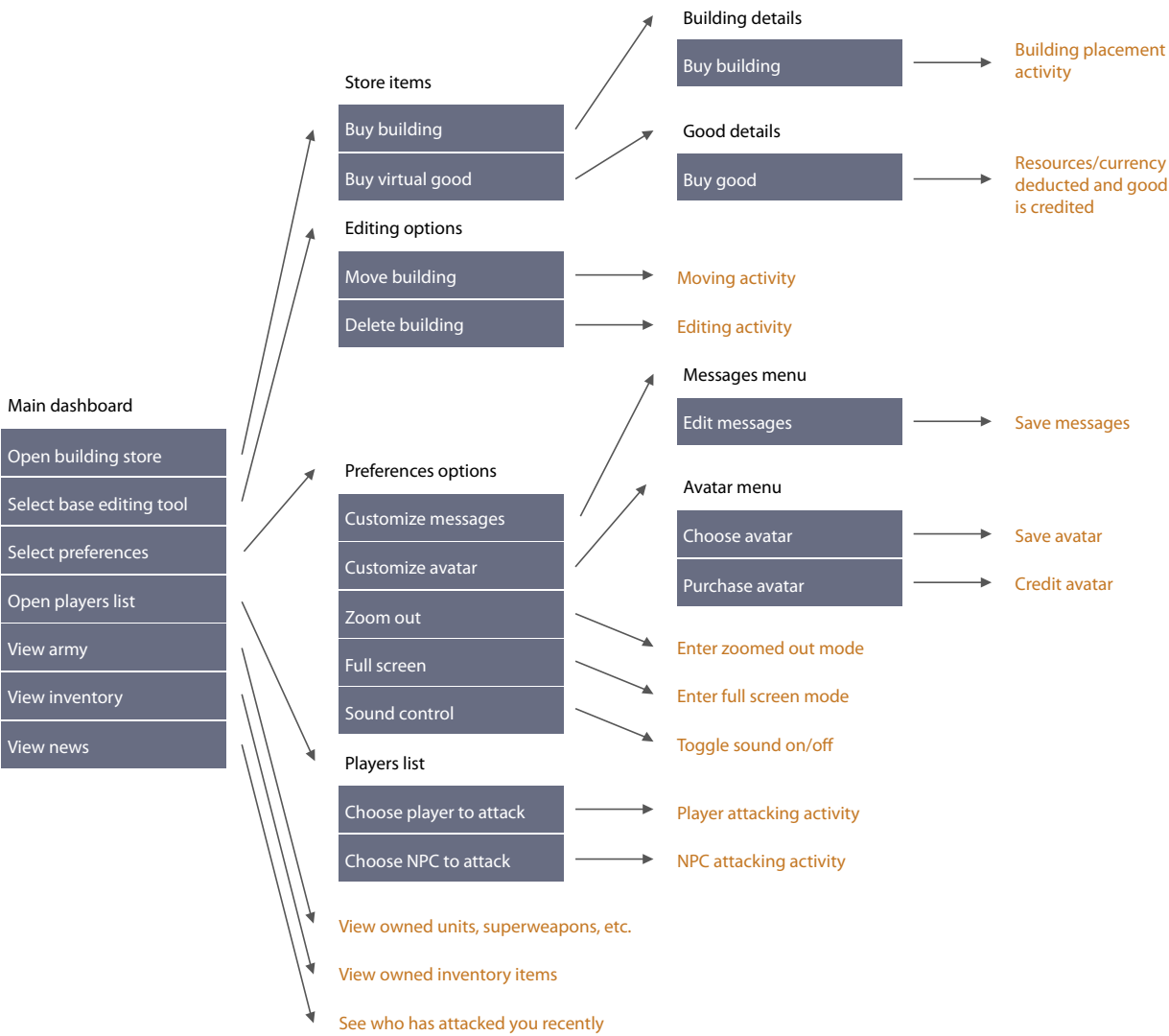


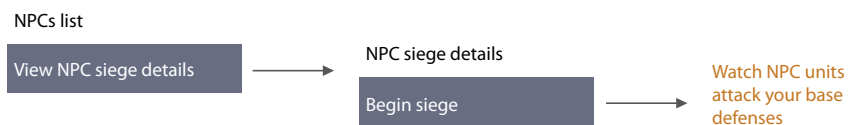
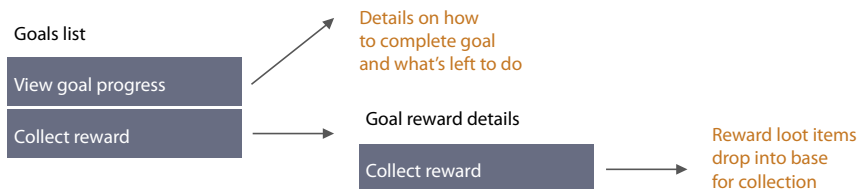
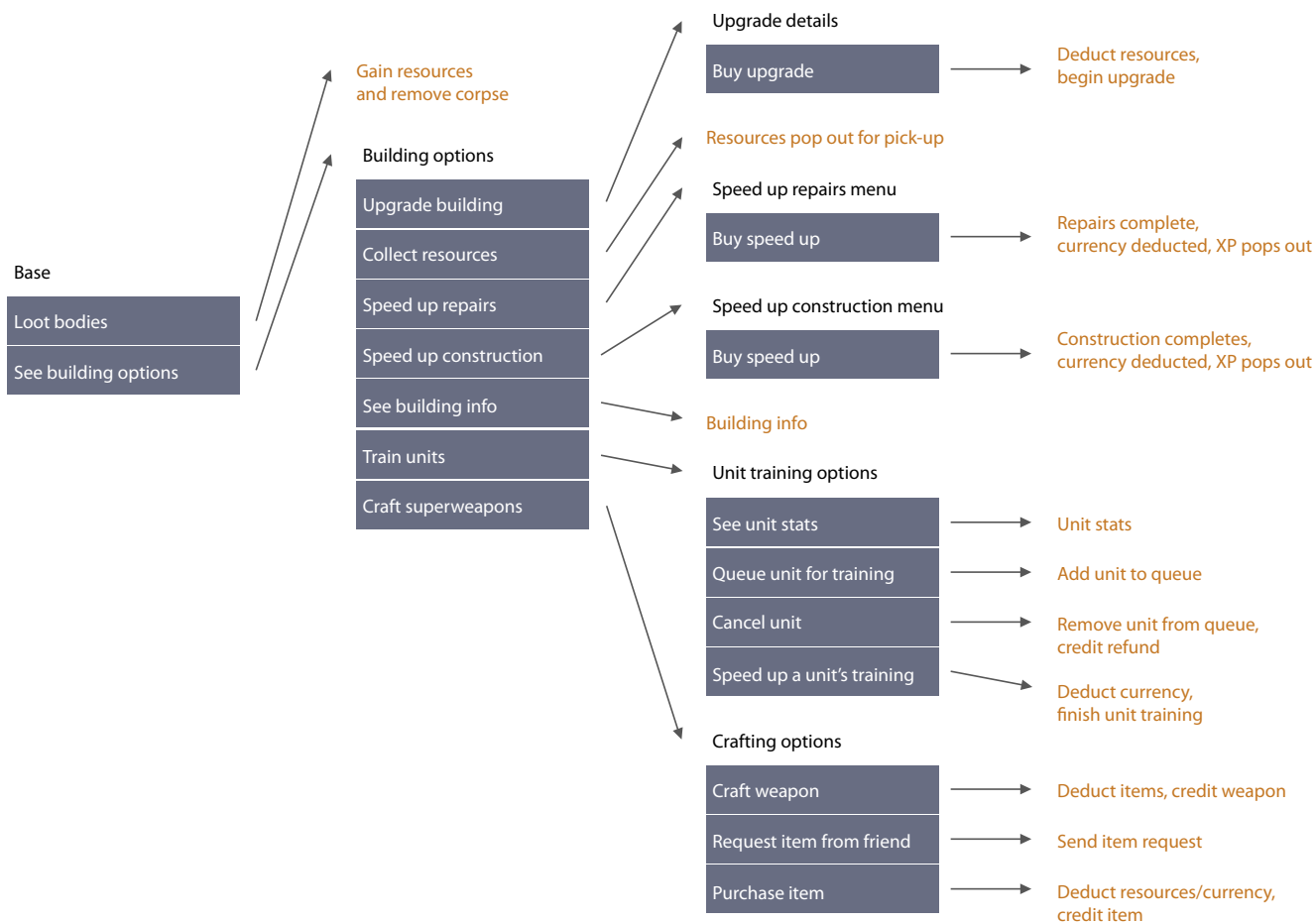
Bread Faction: Mutated sandwiches that haven't forgotten their eaten brethren... they are out for revenge!



Cuddlebot: A Model 5 Cuddlebot that, due to a factory error, has the poorly-coded "Kill All Humans" app installed.

Core UI flow





First user experience

Loading screen

The loading screen gives people a taste of what lies ahead by showing them an action-filled screenshot of the game. It also lets users interact with a radioactive-looking particle simulation to distract them from the load time, and shows game tips to let people know about game features.

Tutorial

1. After the game loads, you're greeted by a view of your base and an image of The Chief puking. This gets your attention because, heck, it's puke.
2. Red Rejects immediately attack your base and The Chief guides you through the process of constructing defenses and watching invaders get slaughtered. The immediate violence and action gives you a taste of why the game is fun.
3. The Chief guides you through the process of attacking and destroying the Red Rejects. Now you understand the core game loop.
4. You return to your base victorious, and The Chief asks you to help out his outpost. He prompts you to click on his icon in the Friends List, and collect resources and repair buildings in his base. This shows you how you can benefit from helping friends.
5. Back in your base, The Chief explains the resource system to you, guides you through the construction of your first resource-production building, and gives you a bunch of resources and currency to get you started. Then he tells you to watch for quests, and leaves.

Protection

After completing the tutorial, you are put under protection so you can build your base up and explore the game without being destroyed by other players.

Quests

Quests appear to guide you through some tasks to get you started, such as building a Barracks to train troops, growing your army, and building other resource-production structures.

First NPC

Your first NPC, the Red Rejects, also appears, to give you the impression of a looming threat and to give you an antagonist to fight against.

Metrics

Metrics are critical to gauging how well we are meeting our player's demands. Here are some of the questions we will answer through the constant refinement of what and how we measure.

Retention

Tutorial: When do players quit during the tutorial?

Game progress: At what level do players quit?

Game burnout: How often do players login? How long are game play sessions? What is the lifetime of these users?

Quitting: What can we correlate with a player's decision to quit (too many battles lost, exhausted all game content, no friends in game, etc)?

Milestones

How long does a player play before inviting a friend?

How long does a player play before purchasing currency?

Pacing

Leveling: How quickly do players progress through the game?

Resource collection: How many resources have been collected at various points in the player's progress (measured both by level and by time spent playing the game)?

Unit production: How many units have been trained at various points in the player's progress?

Loot collection: How much loot has been collected?

Battling: How many battles have been fought?

Growth

How many invites does a player send to his friends, and at which points in the game?

How many requests for gifts?

How many gifts are given?

How many posts are made to the player's stream?

Monetization

Which store items are most popular (powerups, refills, unlocks, vanity items)?

Which speedups are most popular (construction, repair, unit production)? How often are they used?

Sound and music

The general sound style of the game is playful, cartoonish, and light. During combat, the sound style shifts to become more visceral and hardcore. Musical cues are used to signal the of battles and player accomplishments. Sound effects are used to highlight UI and game object interactions. Units and buildings have action-related sound effects which, along with other environmental sound effects, lend atmosphere.

Play the game now at: apps.facebook.com/atomicarmies