

UGC AND WORKSHOP IN ARK: SURVIVAL EVOLVED



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Why UGC? (1/7)

Better Engagement & Discoverability

- Mobilize your creative players, fostering a collaborative, evangelical community.



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Why UGC? (2/7)

Feed the Beast

- More content for everyone, less pressure on developer to rapidly deliver new official content to hungry players.



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Why UGC? (3/7)



- Potential for a *unicorn*: breakout mod which adds tremendous value & visibility to the core game!

PLAYERUNKNOWN'S
**BATTLE
ROYALE**



**ARMA
III**



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Why UGC? (4/7)

Customization

- Players can orient the game more to their liking (i.e. on ARK, there are mods that remove the “sci-fi”).



Why UGC? (5/7)

Experimentation & Incubation

- Decentralized proving ground for risky ideas, an incubation area to iterate on user content before it makes its way to other platforms.



- Players may even be able to mitigate bad developer design decisions 🤔.



Why UGC? (6/7)

Extended Title Life Cycle

- Harness the power of your player-base to help your game never grow old, never die. Significantly lengthen product active lifespan.



Why UGC? (7/7)

FUN!

- A chance to see what talented (& crazy) content creators can build on your game, cementing a deeper two-way bond between developer and players!



UGC Drawbacks & Challenges (1/7)

- Technical challenges to implement initial support for UGC & long-term maintenance



UGC Drawbacks & Challenges (2/7)

- Reduction of Official Content's "importance"



UGC Drawbacks & Challenges (3/7)

- Potential fracturing of player-base



UGC Drawbacks & Challenges (4/7)

- Potential exposure of “magic numbers” and unreleased content



UGC Drawbacks & Challenges (5/7)

- Lack of clear end-user support pipeline



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UGC Drawbacks & Challenges (6/7)

- May increase core game download size, depending on technical implementation



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UGC Drawbacks & Challenges (7/7)

- Potential for inappropriate content



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Types of UGC in ARK (1/5)

Maps

- A whole “new” ARK level. They can not change the “base” game content, but simply give you a new environment to play within.



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Types of UGC in ARK (2/5)

Map Extensions

- Additional “sublevels” which can be activated by the end-user to ‘stack’ onto any ARK map



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Types of UGC in ARK (3/5)

Mods

- Stackable sets of Items & Creatures, plus some Non-Stackable capabilities such as changing the core game-



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Types of UGC in ARK (4/5)

Total Conversions

- Capability to replace/modify ANY existing game assets directly, to effectively construct an entirely new game!



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Types of UGC in ARK (5/5)

Total Conversions

- Upside: tremendous power to the content author and easy “no limitations” modification of all game content.
- Downside: disables ‘seekfree’ content, much slower loading.



Technical Challenges to UGC in Unreal Engine 4



- Unreal Editor changes to support “Cooking” UGC, & runtime changes to support loading UGC packages
- Shipping stripped-down “Mod” Editor with integrated SteamCMD
- Unreal Engine 4 ‘Blueprint’ vs C++



General Technical Challenges to UGC



- Runtime capability to dynamically download UGC in-game, and on-demand when connecting to Servers
- Updating UGC via SteamCMD when launching Servers
 - client/server version mismatch headaches



General Technical Challenges to UGC



- Long-term maintenance problems: all future updates ideally need to be compatible with all existing Mods!
- Large UGC tools download, and ongoing development drain to keep it updated during Early Access



Results of UGC in ARK

Roll-Out

- ARK UGC support planned within weeks of ARK's Early Access launch on June 2, 2015
- UGC support Released August 15, 2015



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Results of UGC in ARK

Contests

- Encourage & incentivize the most hardcore content creators. Kick the tires & light the fires!



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Results of UGC in ARK

“ARK Official Mods Program”

- Provide a mechanism by which we can support the best Steam mods and incorporate them across platforms.



Results of UGC in ARK

Official Mod: *Survival of the Fittest*

- Competitive “Hunger Games” style arena team combat, Total Conversion.



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Results of UGC in ARK

Official Mod: *The Center*

- Tolkein-esque high fantasy Map.



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Results of UGC in ARK

Official Mod: *Primitive+*

- Total Conversion focusing on primal survival, without modern or sci-fi technology.



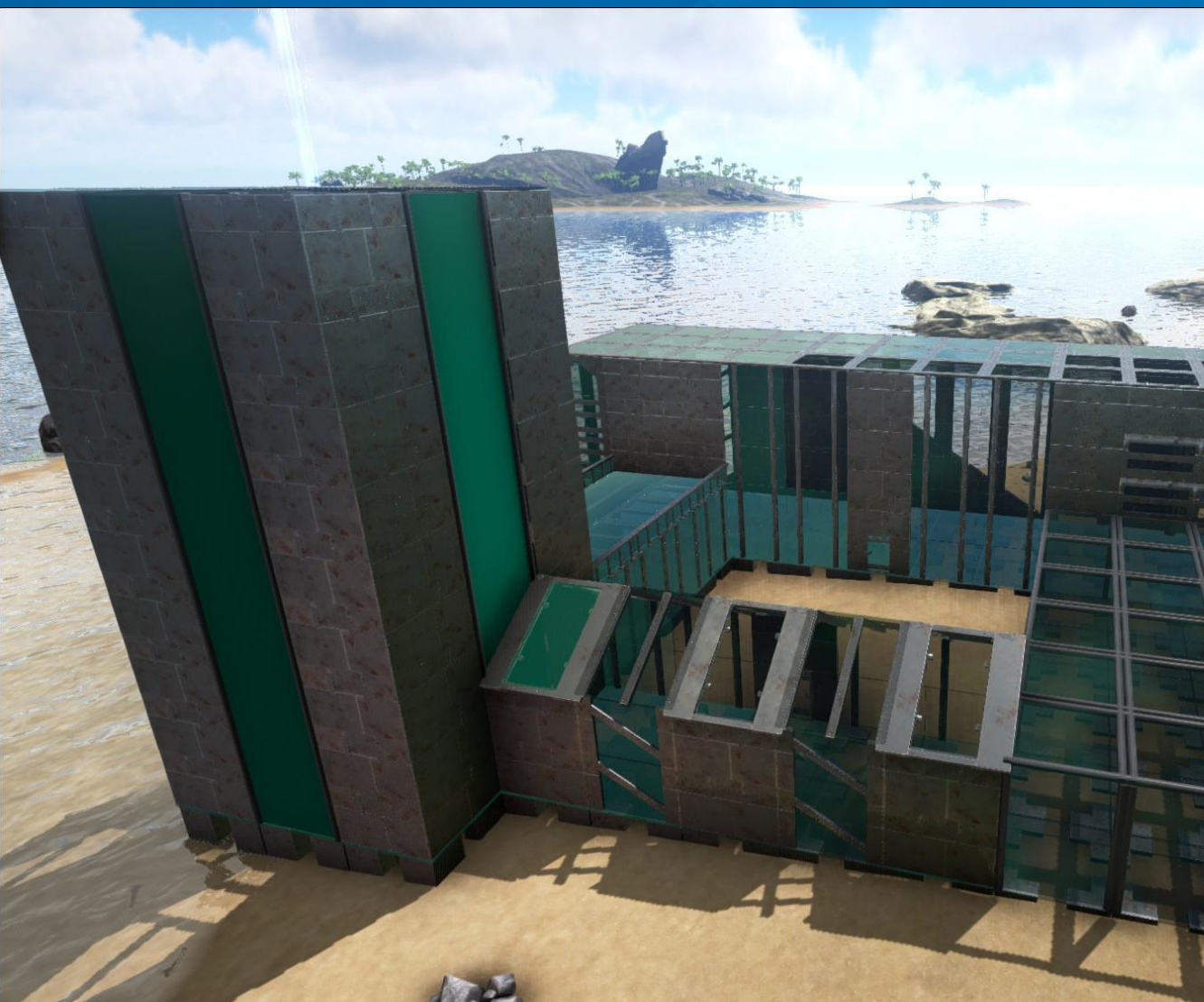
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Results of UGC in ARK

Metrics

We estimate approximately 60% of entire ARK Steam player-base plays on servers running UGC!



GlassMetal Mod (618,889 Subs)



Annunaki Genesis Mod (437,535 Subs)



Valhalla Map (268,702 Subs)

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Results of UGC in ARK

Future Plans

- More power for the Unreal Editor UGC Cooking:
- More game functionality exposed to Mod-able Blueprint/Script.
- Runtime: better client visibility into what Mods a server is running



UGC Requests to Valve, pretty please!

Direct Paid / Premium UGC:

Would allow top-tier of content authors to make a living from their work, would provide developers even more incentive to build powerful UGC features.



UGC Requests to Valve, pretty please!

More Workshop Storage Space: Would allow larger, more complex UGC.



UGC Requests to Valve, pretty please!

UGC Release “Branches”: Would allow authors better capability to manage and QA upcoming builds of their content before releasing to the general public, without having to juggle multiple content ID’s.



UGC Requests to Valve, pretty please!

SteamCMD Library: Rather than separate command-line tool, a linkable library would make integrating into Unreal Editor UI, or any application, more seamless.



UGC Requests to Valve, pretty please!

Multi-user “Shared” UGC ownership:

Would make it easier for larger-teams to co-manage a UGC, upload builds, maintain the Workshop page, etc.

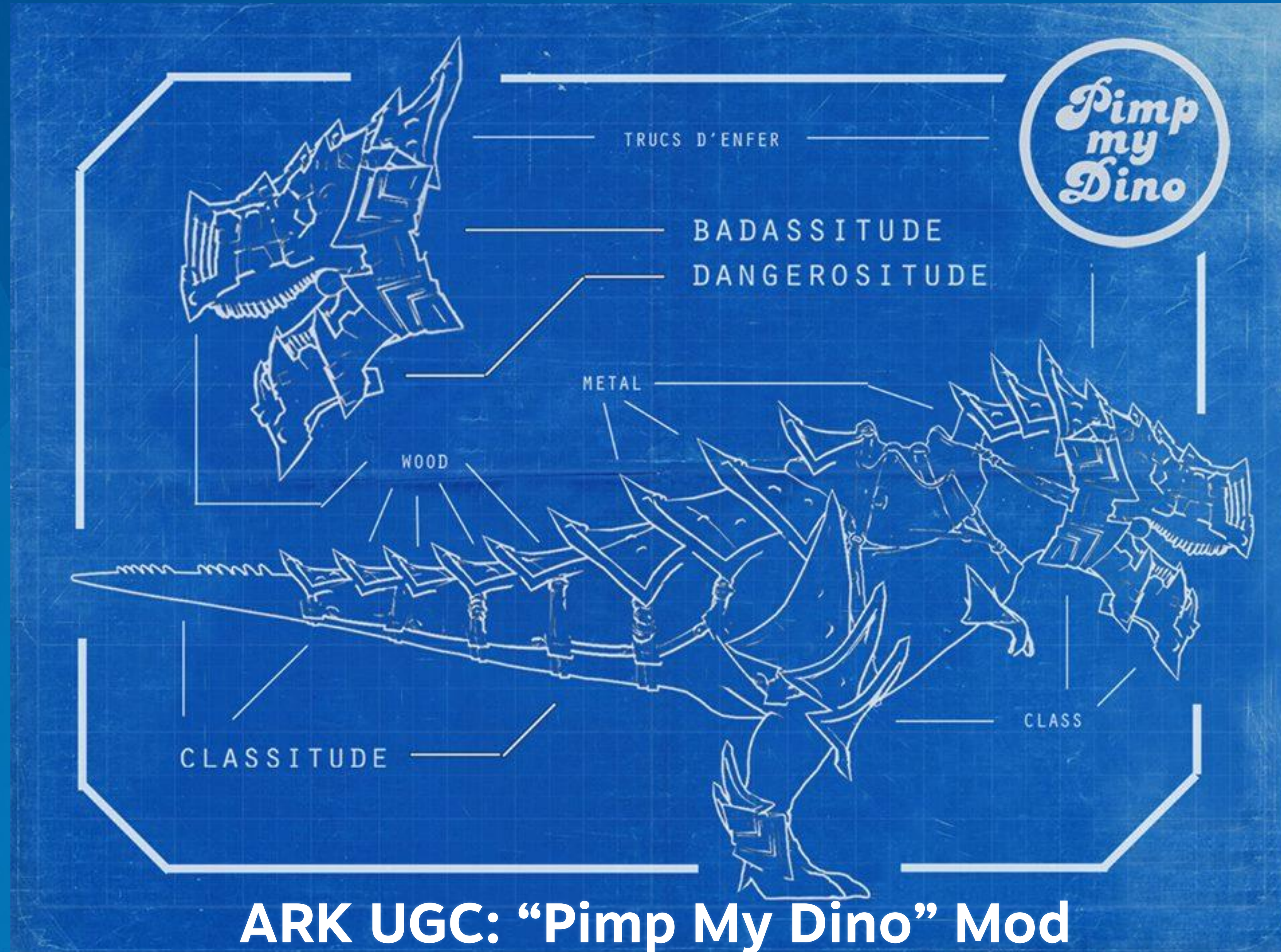


UGC and Workshop: The Takeaway

- Tremendous commercial upsides to UGC, stronger community & product.
- Some technical challenges, depending on feature-set.
- Above all: It's fun! You will wake up every day to find something new within your game. Awww



THANK YOU!



ARK UGC: “Pimp My Dino” Mod

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