

A Deeper Dive

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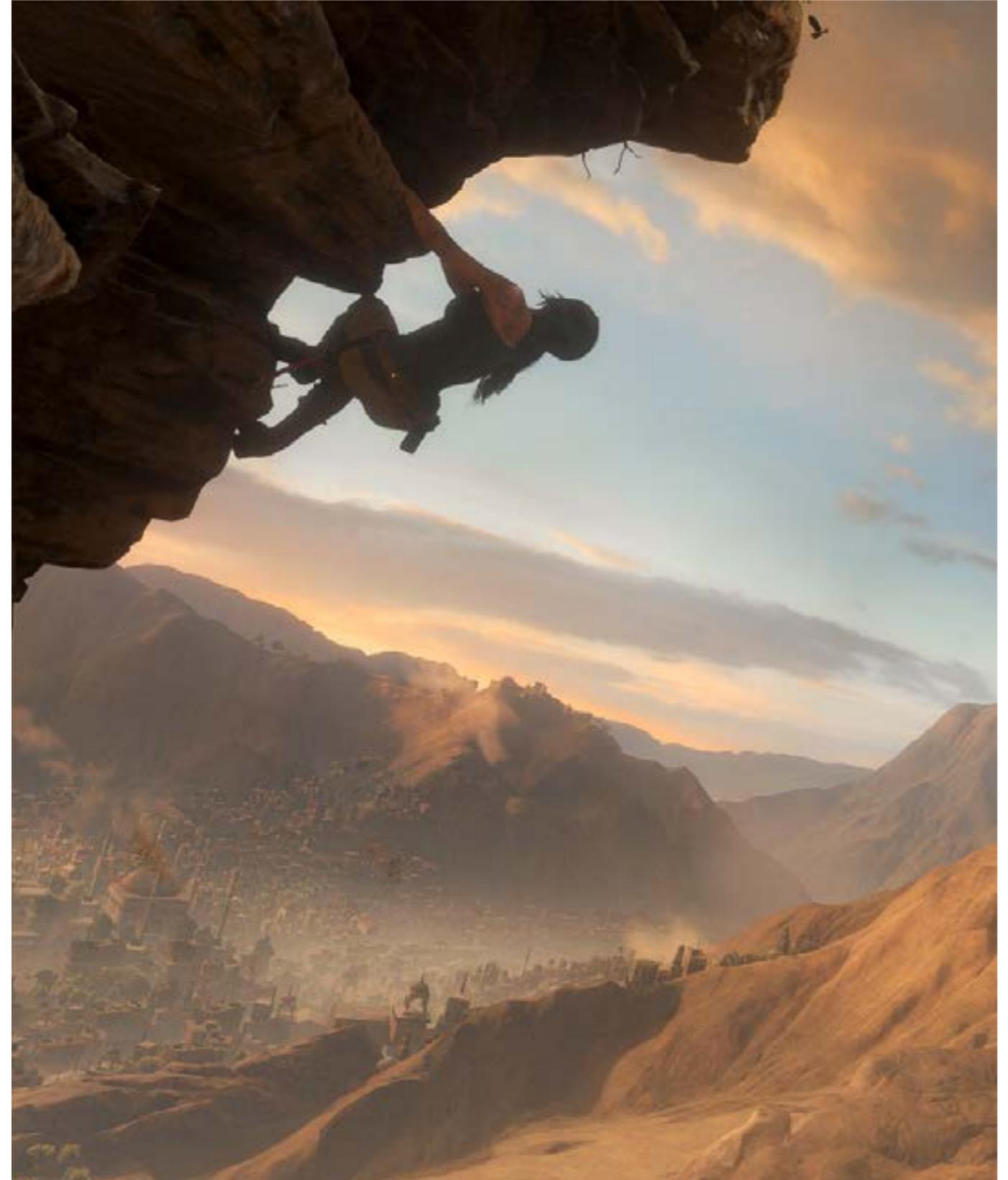


Xbox Newsletter Refresh

The Xbox team at Wunderman was asked by stakeholders to improve the existing newsletter templates with “technical enhancements, deeper personalization data, and overall visual continuity”. Working as Art Director alongside my Copywriter and Creative Director, we conducted a complete overhaul of both newsletter templates, resulting in a more modern and intuitive user experience, increased click-through rate, and standardized guidelines for future designers and stakeholders.

Project History

The Xbox monthly and weekly email newsletter templates were out-of-date and performing low. The design was basic and uninteresting—headline, copy, image, repeat—and on and on. Research was showing that over 70% of our users were consuming email on a mobile device, so the endless scroll and monstrous amounts of content was no longer effective. We realized that we had only a few seconds to captivate our audience, so we ensured that every concept we presented to stakeholders was more personal, more active, and more dramatic than ever before.



Initial Concepts

1 Headlines

The first concept we showed was always the “safe bet”. This one provided everything stakeholders were asking for and nothing too much more.

2 Slideshow

Concept 2 aimed to push the limits and show that there is more that can be done to create an even better experience for our end user.

3 Film at 11

The goal with the last concept was to present something so epic it would not only blow the minds of our stakeholders but also ourselves and our developers.

Concept No. 1

Headlines [Weekly]

INSIGHT

Gamers are drawn to mystery; when their curiosity is piqued, they will want to know more.

IDEA

Personal stats set the scene and lead to cinematic images, descriptive headlines, and evocative CTAs that express the possibilities of fun. Game titles are removed to add mystery and compel readers to dive deeper.

XBOX This week on Xbox
ReallyLongGamerName 1056773
Xbox Live member since 2005 **GOLD**
Your most played game last week
Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare
Your gamerscore increased by XXXX points from last week

Hot on Xbox

Where is Master Chief?
Join the hunt
Peace is shattered when colony worlds are unexpectedly attacked. But when humanity's greatest hero goes missing, a new Spartan is tasked with hunting the Master Chief and solving a mystery that threatens the entire galaxy.
ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

Games on Xbox

From Survivor to Tomb Raider
Accept your destiny
ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

The bat's back.
And he's got wheels.
Drive the Batmobile
ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

Be first to drive the Ford GT
Push the boundaries
ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

Games on PC

Albion needs heroes ... and villains
Choose your legend
ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

Hot Deals

DEALS WITH GOLD
More maps. More zombies.
Ascend
ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

DEALS WITH GOLD
The most brutal Kombat ever
Fight!
ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

Hot in Entertainment

Ultron is here
Watch it tonight
ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

More Fun Things

Finding new friends is fun
Check your Xbox dashboard for friend suggestions
ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

Concept No. 1

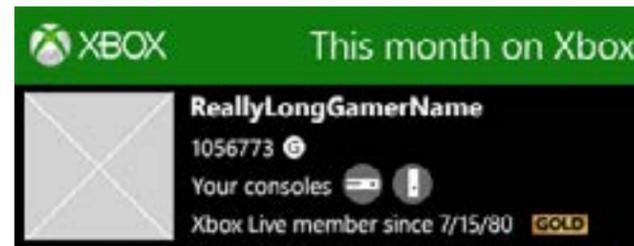
Headlines [Monthly]

INSIGHT

Gamers are drawn to mystery; when their curiosity is piqued, they will want to know more.

IDEA

For the monthly version, the opening statistics become community focused. For example, personal stats are compared and contrasted with community stats. Additional content, such as an event calendar, add further support for the community as a whole and drives the reader toward further engagement.



Your rank among members

Your most played multiplayer game
Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare

Your most played game on Xbox
Halo 5: Guardians

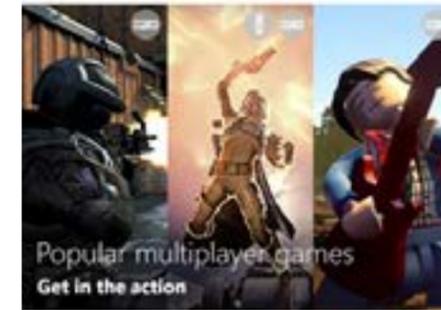


Most played multiplayer game on Xbox
last month



Most played game on Xbox last month

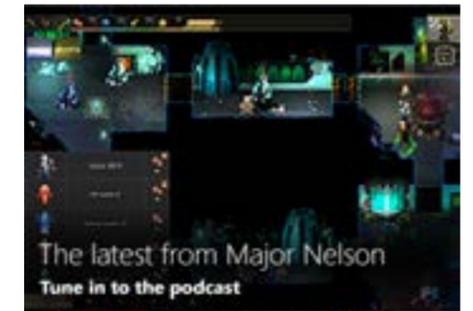
Popular on Xbox



Games with Gold



More fun stuff



Concept No. 2

Slideshow [Weekly]

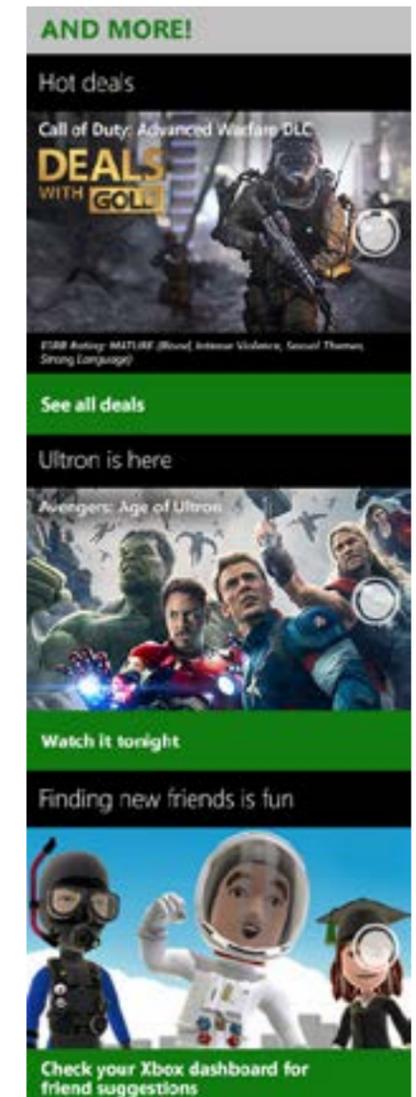
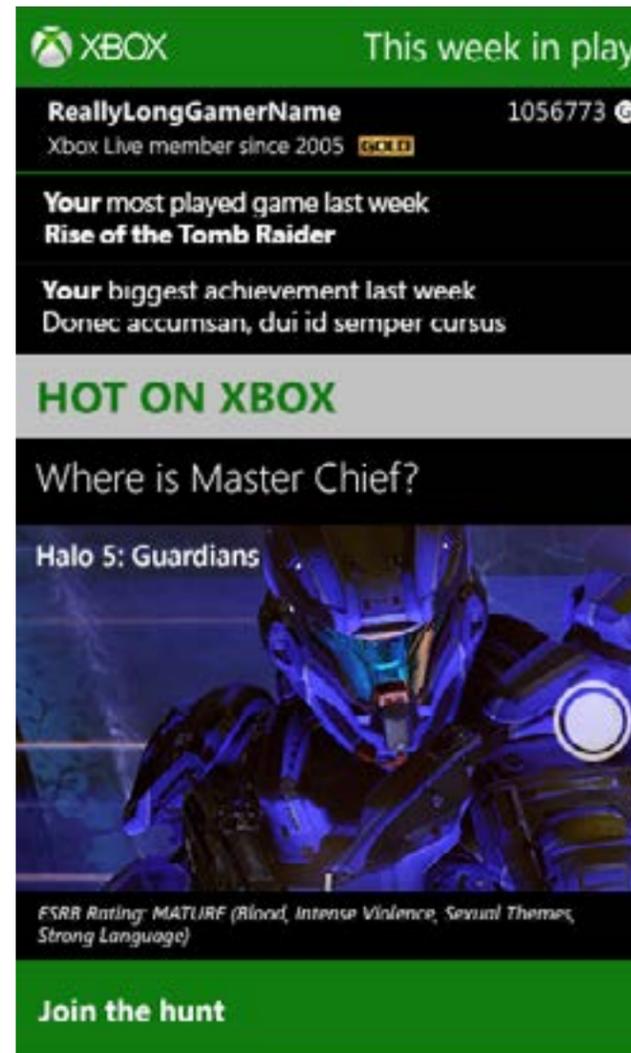
INSIGHT

We can provide a quick, emotional experience while still providing the opportunity for deeper dives for our readers.

IDEA

In this concept, readers are presented with bold, dramatic images and game titles, but little else. Readers can, however, tap to activate a scroll that provides game details and additional images. Easily scannable, this concept enables readers to physically engage with the newsletter and explore more about the titles they are interested in.

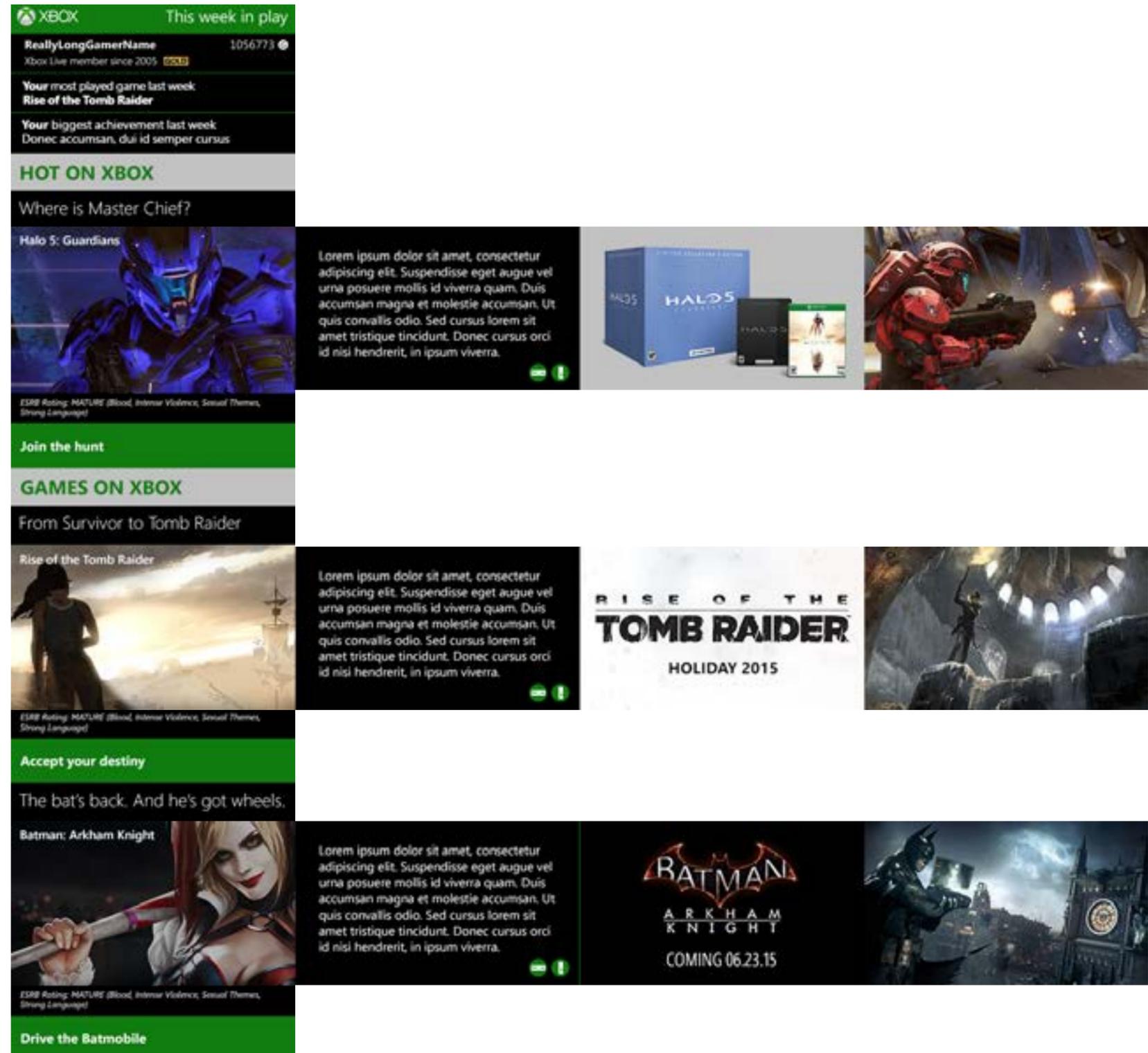
Note: For the desktop, or unsupported mobile, version, the scroll functionality would be removed and only the first image would be shown.



Concept No. 2

Slideshow [Weekly]

Each scroll allows readers to see additional game images and get a short overview of the featured content.



Concept No. 2

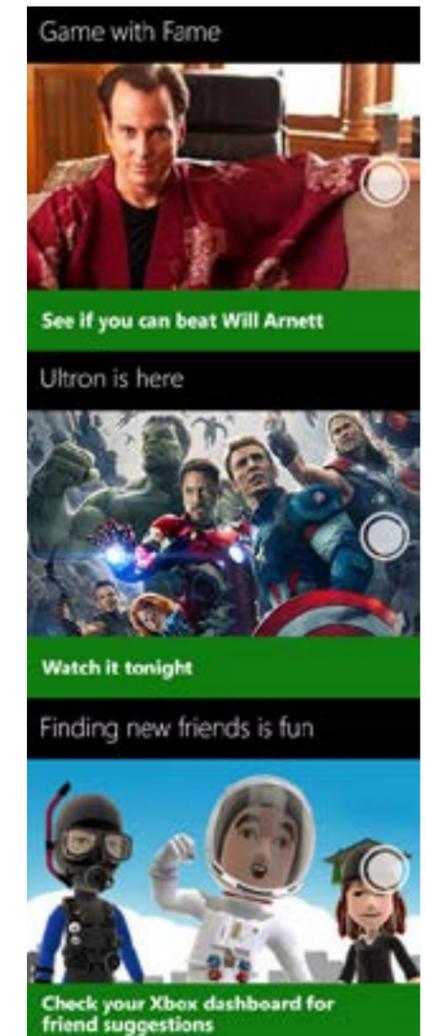
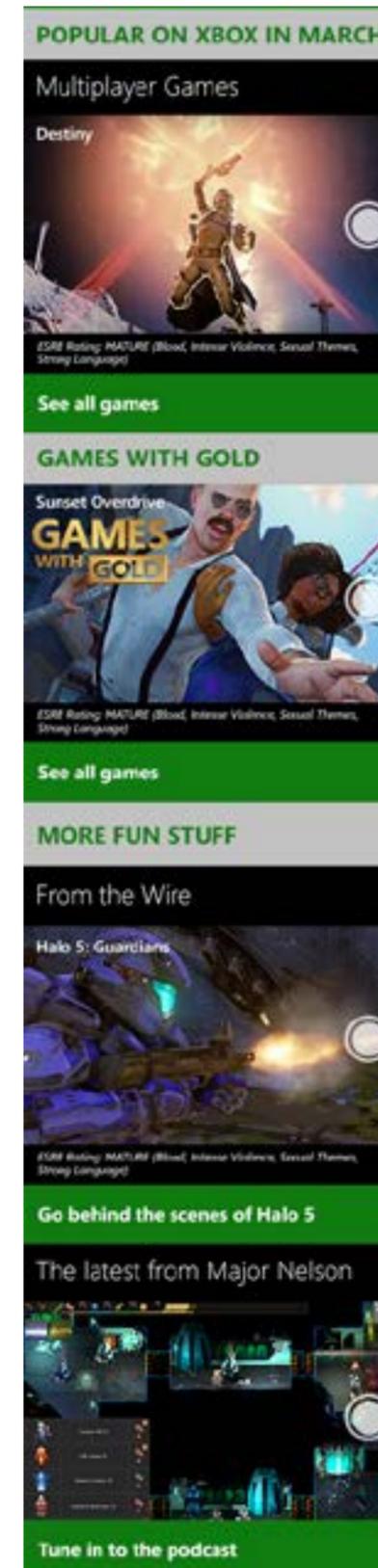
Slideshow [Monthly]

INSIGHT

We can provide a quick, emotional experience while still providing the opportunity for deeper dives for our readers.

IDEA

The monthly version shows the same functionality, but the stats have been changed to reflect the community and additional content is included.

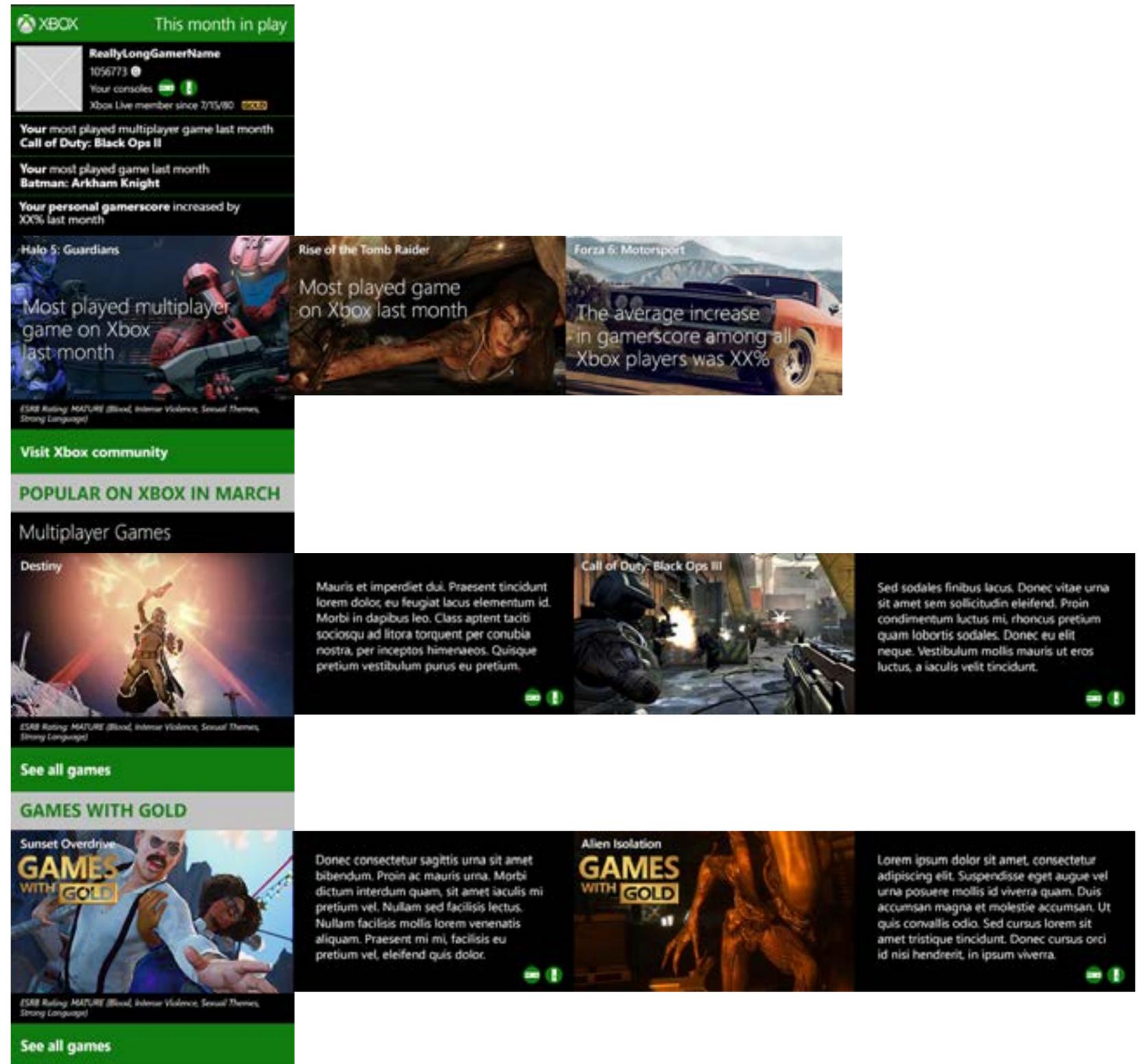


Concept No. 2

Slideshow [Monthly]

Again, each scroll allows readers to see additional game images and get a short overview of the featured content.

We would put a cap on the amount of slides per section at 4, but there would be no requirement to fill all 4 slots.



Concept No. 3

Film at 11 [Weekly]

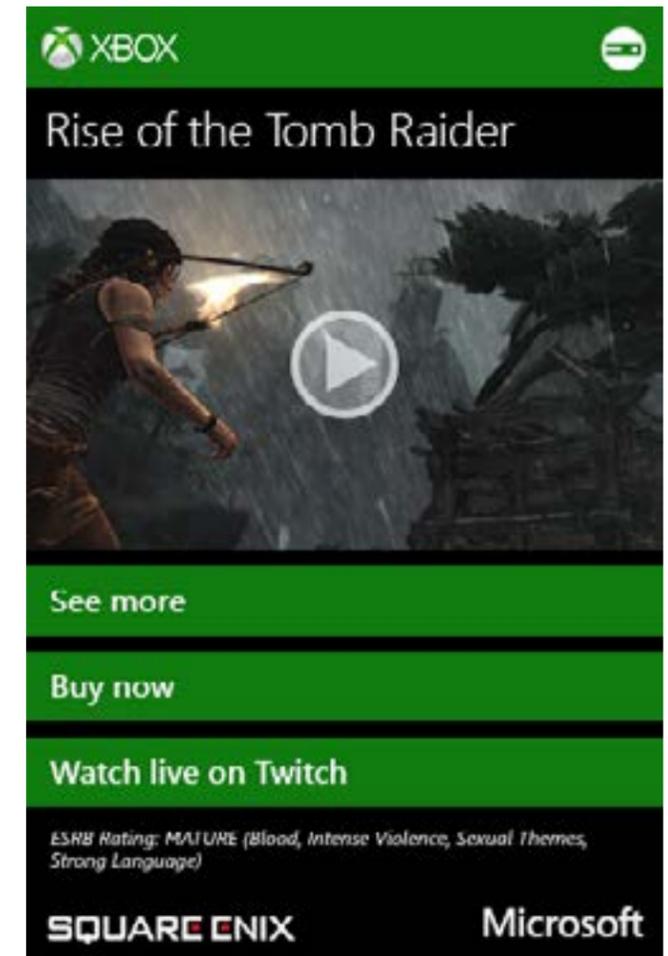
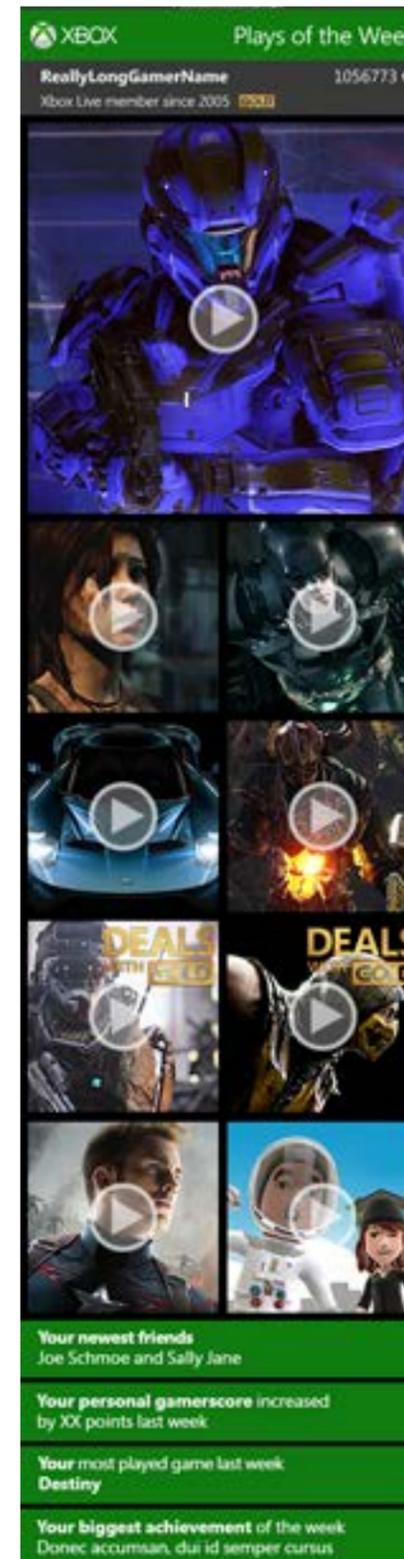
INSIGHT

Game videos and trailers provide a more immersive, more engaging experience than a block of copy ever could.

IDEA

Personal stats set the scene and lead to cinematic images, descriptive headlines, and evocative CTAs that express the possibilities of fun. Game titles are removed to add mystery and compel readers to dive deeper.

On the far right is an example of the video landing page. The video plays right away and the viewer has the opportunity to either go to the product page, purchase the game, or watch a live feed from Twitch.



Concept No. 3

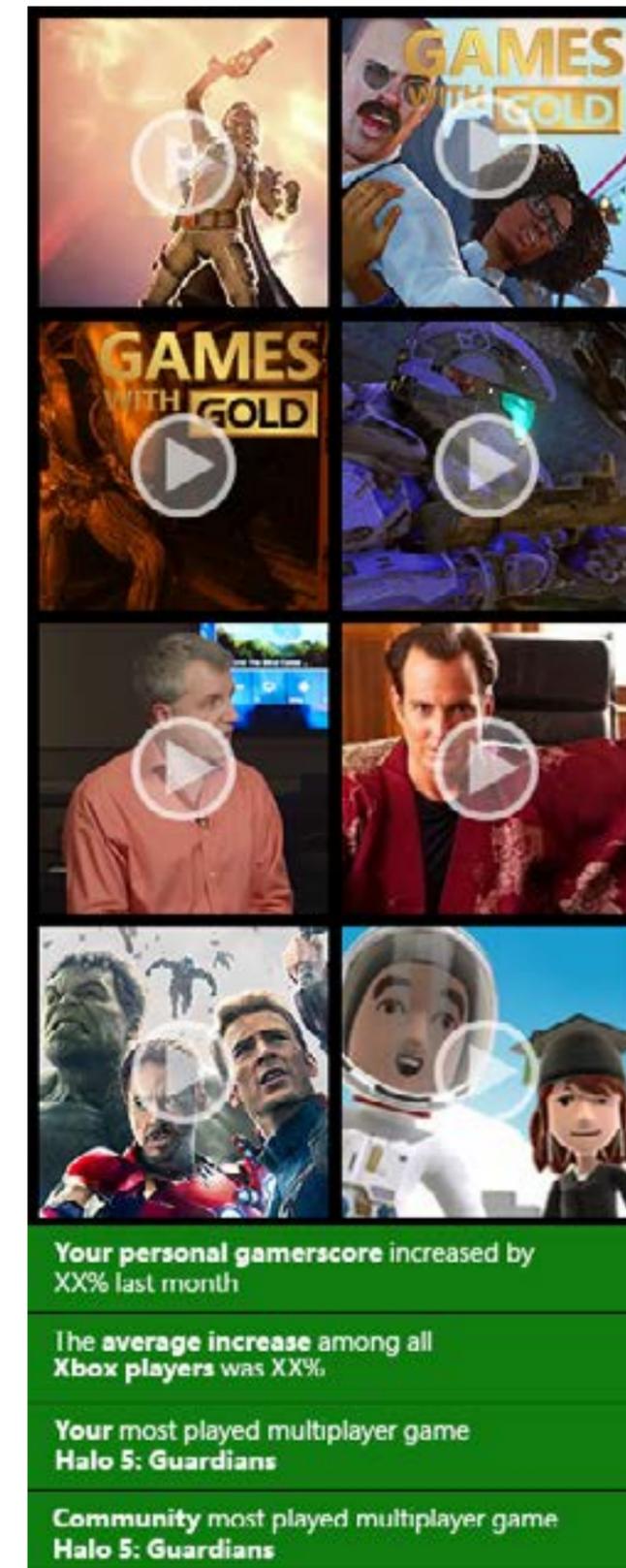
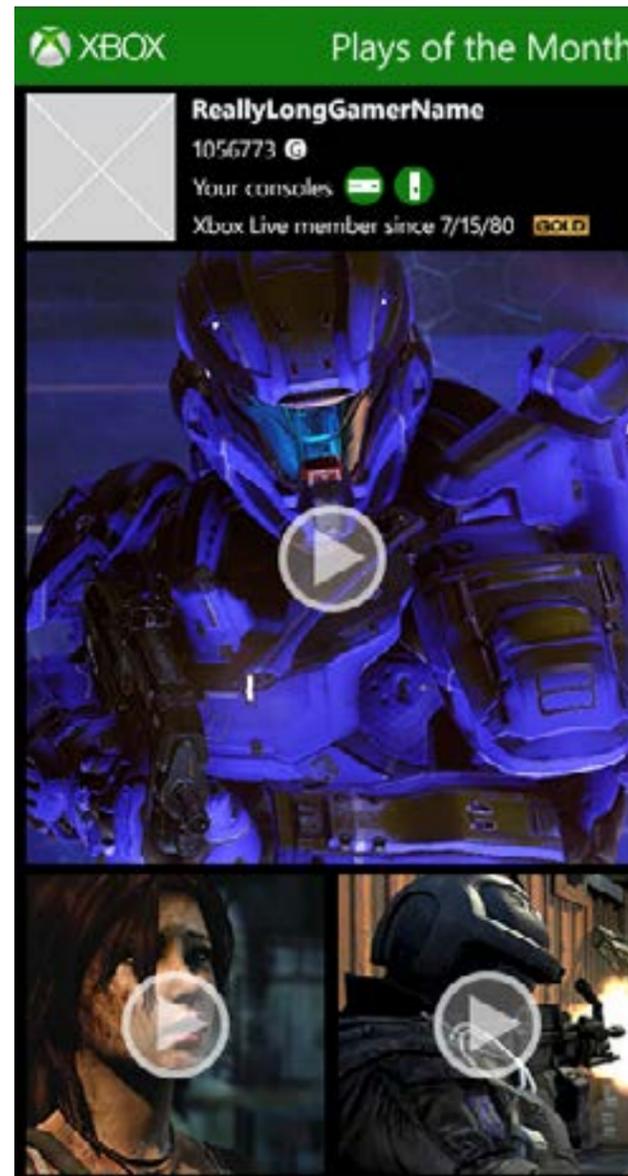
Film at 11 [Monthly]

INSIGHT

Game videos and trailers provide a more immersive, more engaging experience than a block of copy ever could.

IDEA

Following the lead of the weekly version, the monthly newsletter uses the same reflect page functionality and incorporates timely and community-focused content.



Results & Challenges

As expected, concept three blew their minds but was too much of a stretch. Stakeholders were understandably concerned about the lack of readable, upfront content. They loved the swipe capabilities from concept two, and the intrigue of concept one, so the finished iteration was a robust blend of both.

One of the main challenges and push-back we had on this design from the dev team was the overlaying text on image. It would take much more attention to design and detail than the previous template. With frequent designer turnover, constant last minute changes, and tight deadlines with no wiggle room, live text was deemed necessary by our dev team. Fair point. We came to a compromise to make all text live, expect for titles, as we didn't want to completely lose the intrigue aspect. We also liked that this allowed us to have control over line breaks and interaction with the image. Most last minute content changes occurred in the ESRB rating or the actual body copy (e.g. a release date change).

subject line: <Gamertag>, the next chapter of Halo is here

Plus Arkham Knight, Rise of the Tomb Raider, and more
| [View as web page](#)

XBOX Plays of the week

 ReallyLongGamerName
1056773
Your consoles 
On Xbox Live since 7/15/90 

Your most played game last week
Rise of the Tomb Raider

Your biggest achievement last week
Halo: The Master Chief Collection—Legend

Recommended on Xbox

Where is Master Chief?

Peace is shattered when colony worlds are unexpectedly attacked. But when humanity's greatest hero goes missing, a new Spartan is tasked with hunting the Master Chief and solving a mystery that threatens the entire galaxy.

Join the hunt

ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

Games on Xbox

From survivor to raider

Accept your destiny

ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

The bat's back.
And he's got wheels.

Drive the Batmobile

ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

Be the first to drive the Ford GT

Push the boundaries

ESRB Rating: MATURE (Blood, Intense Violence, Sexual Themes, Strong Language)

Forward Thinking

In order to get ahead of any future discrepancies, I suggested we make a set of guidelines for stakeholders as well as the Wunderman internal team. These include things like character limits, suggested content, pixel dimensions, etc.

This was the first time standards of any sort had been created internally or for stakeholders for this project or any like it.

Xbox Newsletter Internal Guidelines Monthly

Subject line No limit, but ideally 50 characters

Eyebrow ~100 characters, including "] view"

User info Gamertag
Gamerscore
Your consoles, with appropriate icon
On Xbox Live since XX/XX/XX
Gold icon, if user is Gold

Personalization fields Community relative user data and (e.g., *Your most played multiplayer game on Xbox*)

Community fields Community-specific data and act First 2 should coincide with user p (e.g., *Most played multiplayer game*, *Average increa*)

ESRB For modules with multiple games, 1 line = 30 characters max

Section headers 1 line = 30 characters max

Images 1280x800px minimum
*Image template = 600x375px
Refer to template located

Headlines Emotionally-driven, descriptive of 1 line = 28 characters max
2 lines = 56 characters max

CTAs Writing style is dependent of content
Game CTAs are evocative of game
Other CTAs are clear/straightforward
1 line = 46 characters max *CTA, *Body copy = live text

Additional slides (Games with Gold) 2 games highlighted per module, 1 = Game 1 image w/ headline, 2 = Game 1 copy = ~250 charac, 3 = Game 2 image w/ headline, 4 = Game 2 copy = ~250 charac

No additional content Some modules may have no addit Remove button in these cases
*Can either be 4 images with button/s 1 image without button/scroll function

*Internal notes added in green

Xbox Newsletter Internal Guidelines Weekly

Subject line No limit, but ideally 50 characters or less

Eyebrow ~100 characters, including "] view as webpage"

User info Gamertag
Gamerscore
Your consoles, with appropriate icons
On Xbox Live since XX/XX/XX
Gold icon, if user is Gold

Personalization fields User-specific data and achievements (e.g., *Your most played game last week: <game name>*, *Your gamerscore increase last week: XXXX*)

Section headers 1 line = 30 characters max

Tap for more Animating "X" button, reader taps for additional slides (see below for details)

Hero content Body copy (~250 characters) to be shown below slide 1
Recommended: replace slide 2 with additional game screenshot (see below for details)
*Can only be 1 hero per newsletter

ESRB = live text

Images 1280x800px minimum *Image template = 600x375px
Refer to template located on server

Headlines Emotionally-driven, descriptive of content 1 line = 28 characters max
2 lines = 56 characters max

CTAs Writing style is dependent of content
Game CTAs are evocative of gameplay/game actions
Other CTAs are clear/straightforward (e.g., "watch")
1 line = 46 characters max *CTAs = live text

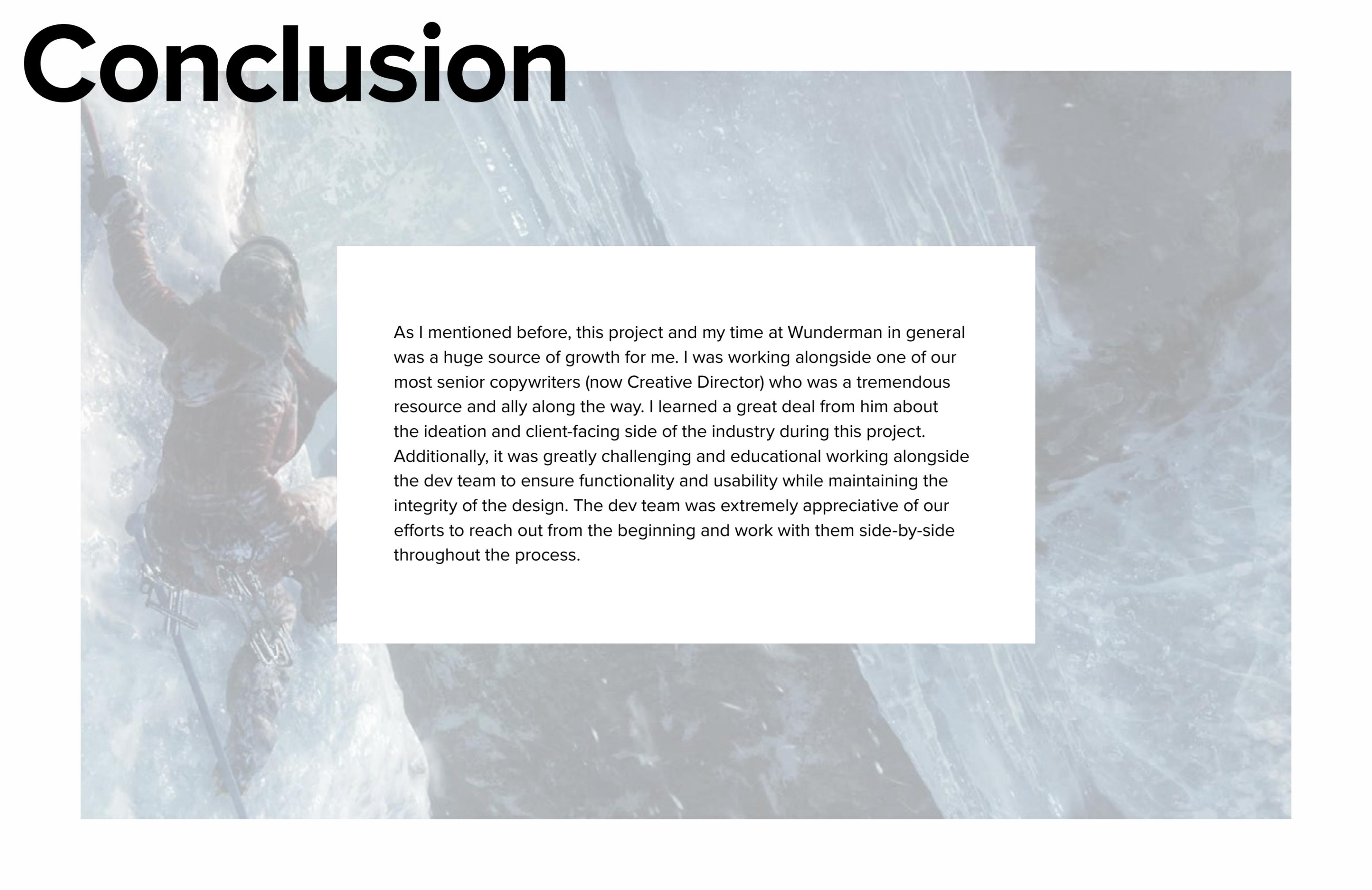
Additional slides (game content) Number of slides must be 4; suggested game content below
1 = Intriguing image with headline
2 = Body copy (see below for details)
3 = Game screenshot
4 = Recommended: box shot w/ logos, bundle shot w/ logos, additional screenshot, etc.

Slide 2 Body copy = ~250 characters
Console icons = bottom right (until after Holiday 2015)
Recommended: Include game name in this slide
*Body copy = live text

*Internal notes added in green



Conclusion

A person in a red jacket and helmet is rappelling down a rope on a mountain peak. The background is a vast, snowy mountain range under a clear sky.

As I mentioned before, this project and my time at Wunderman in general was a huge source of growth for me. I was working alongside one of our most senior copywriters (now Creative Director) who was a tremendous resource and ally along the way. I learned a great deal from him about the ideation and client-facing side of the industry during this project. Additionally, it was greatly challenging and educational working alongside the dev team to ensure functionality and usability while maintaining the integrity of the design. The dev team was extremely appreciative of our efforts to reach out from the beginning and work with them side-by-side throughout the process.

Thank You!

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