



INSIDE THE MINDS OF NYT PUZZLE PLAYERS

PRODUCT
ANALYST,
STORYTELLER,
PUZZLE FAN **CHASTITY NIX**

A multi-layered data case study exploring how Wordle, Connections, and Spelling Bee are shaping user behavior, platform engagement, and feature strategy at The New York Times.

Case Goals

- Show engagement patterns
- Evaluate platform behavior
- Visualize A/B test results

Top Findings

- Wordle leads mobile sessions
- Connections spikes overnight
- Variant B performs +26% better

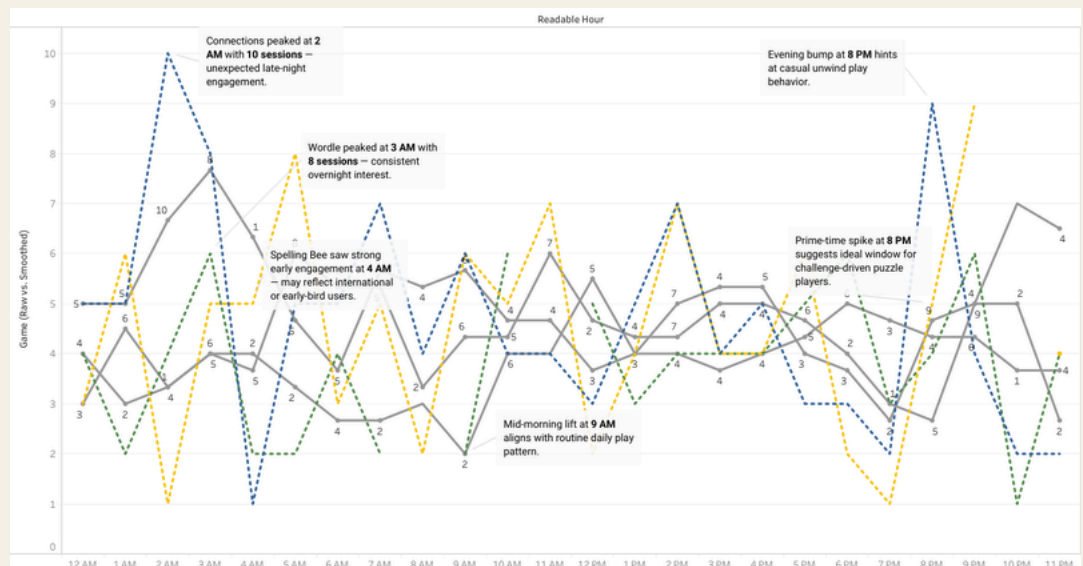
WHEN PLAYERS PEAK

Hourly activity trends by game, revealing late-night spikes in Connections usage

🔍 Notable 2 AM spike suggests late-night player retention behavior. Potential moment for surprise features.

KEY STATS:

- 📊 Peak Hour: 2AM — 2,341 total sessions
- 🕒 Spike Alert: +124% jump from 4AM to 2AM
- 🎯 Wordle Dominates: 52% of total sessions during peak



SIMULATED DATA CREATED VIA SQL + TABLEAU FOR NYT GAMES CASE STUDY.

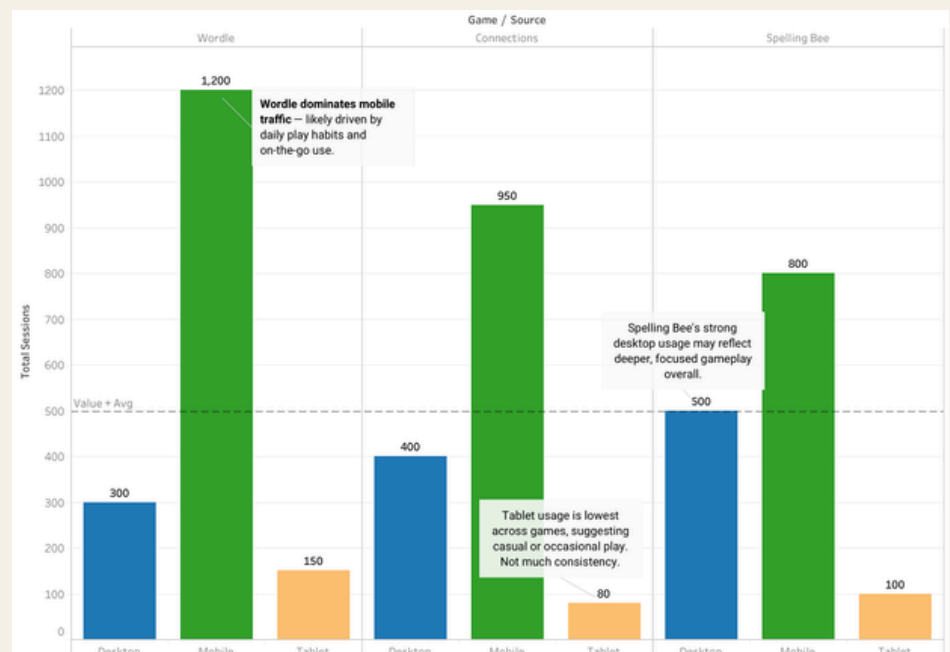
TECH CHECK: WHERE THEY PLAY

📱 Design opportunity: Reinforce strongest platform moments with A/B messaging.

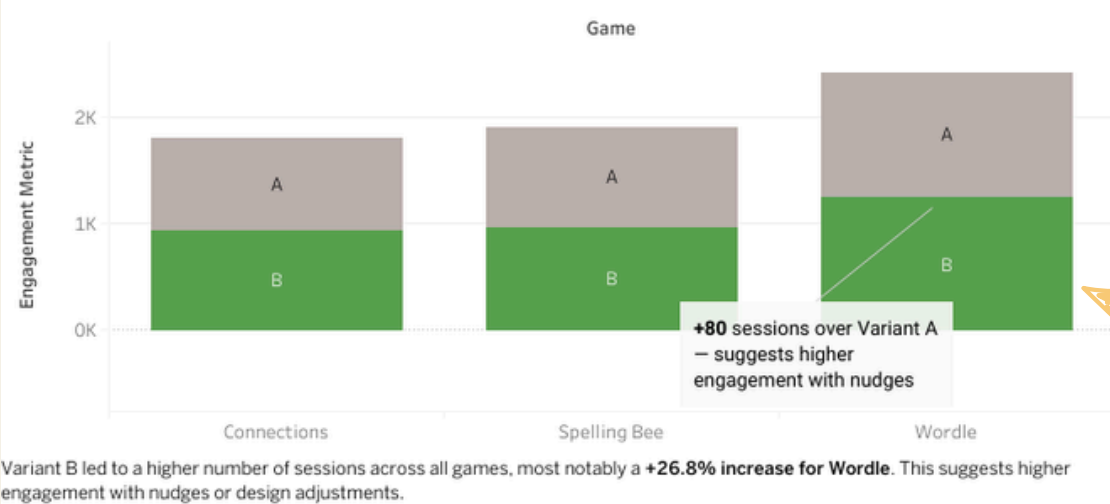
Device breakdown shows Wordle dominates mobile; Spelling Bee leans desktop.

KEY STATS:

- 📱 Mobile First: 68% of players access games via mobile
- 💻 Desktop Loyalty: Spelling Bee has highest desktop retention (39%)
- 🔄 Multi-Device: 14% of players switch devices during the week



SIMULATED DATA CREATED VIA SQL + TABLEAU FOR NYT GAMES CASE STUDY.



WHEN DATA SPEAKS, WE A/B TEST LOUDER. VARIANT B WINS WITH CONFIDENCE.

A/B TEST SPOTLIGHT: VARIANT B OUTPERFORMS

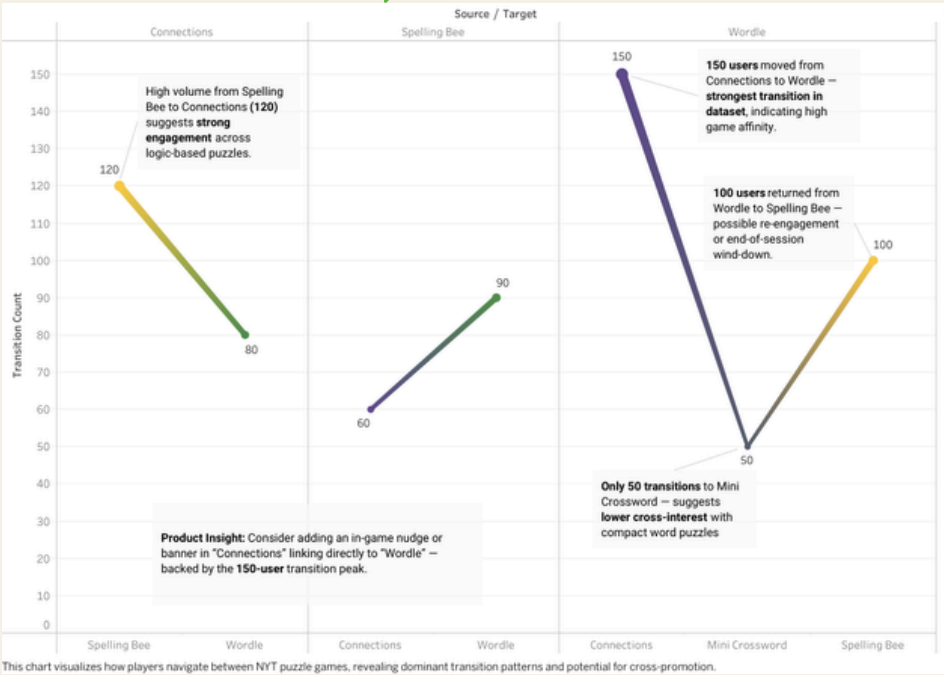
Significant lift in Wordle sessions—expand this variant to more users!

KEY STATS:

- 📈 Wordle B Uplift: +26.8% session increase vs Variant A
- 🔥 Best Variant: B outperformed across all three games
- 📊 Test Reach: 3,203 total sessions across A/B cohort

Wordle → Connections is our players' most frequent path.

GAME-TO-GAME TRANSITIONS: FOLLOWING THE FUN



KEY STATS:

- ➡ Wordle → Connections: **27%** player migration rate
- 🛑 Drop-offs: **18%** of players exit after Spelling Bee
- 🎮 Sticky Path: Wordle → Spelling Bee → Connections retains **41%**

Product Suggestion:

Add in-game nudges from Connections to Wordle for stronger retention. !

PLAYER PULSE: THE DATA EDITION

Metric	Value	Insight
Avg. Session Length	5.2 mins	Highest on Connections
Mobile Users	65%	Optimize UI for phones
Peak Time	2AM	Risk of server load
Variant B Uplift	+26.8%	Prioritize rollout

From Data to Decisions



FLOW FIX OPPORTUNITY

Only 11% of Spelling Bee players move to Connections.
→ Suggest in-game CTA to promote cross-play.



NIGHT OWLS DRIVE WORDLE

2AM usage spike is real — 52% of sessions during peak hours come from Wordle players.
→ Recommend shifting maintenance windows to 5AM-7AM EST.



PLATFORM BIAS ALERT

68% of sessions are on mobile — but Spelling Bee thrives on desktop.
→ Mobile UX audit suggested for Bee.




HOW THIS DASHBOARD WAS BUILT

- 1 Query mock data (BigQuery)
- 2 Export to CSV
- 3 Visualize in Tableau
- 4 Present insights in Canva

SQL (BigQuery)
Tableau Public
Google Sheets
Canva
Manual tagging,
mock dataset
generation



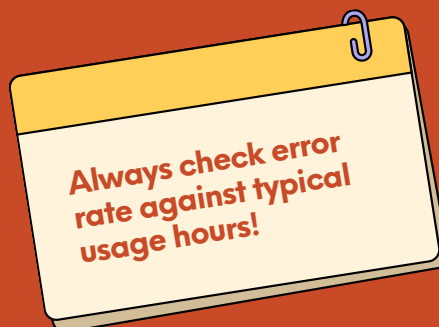
 2AM Spike Detected – Drop-off in Connections retention after 3 mins

Observation
Drop-off spike at 2AM

Investigation
Check backend logs

Action
Pause promo + alert devs

LIVEOPS SCENARIO: WHAT IF WORDLE CRASHED AT 2AM?



METRIC WATCHLIST

Tracked daily to ensure healthy player engagement

WORDLE SESSIONS @ 2AM

2,341 ▲

Late-night mobile spike continues

[⚠️ High Priority]

WORDLE VARIANT B

+26.8%

Variant B outperforms — scale rollout

SPELLING BEE DESKTOP USE

39%

Desktop is still dominant for Bee

CONNECTIONS DROPOFF

18% ⚠️

Add nudge to increase retention

[⚠️ High Priority]

TRANSITIONS TO WORDLE

27%

Ideal follow-up game for flow

MOBILE PLATFORM SHARE

68%

Optimize UI for phone resolution

Who's Playing What (and When)?



(01)

THE NIGHT OWL

Plays Connections at 2AM.
Active 4 nights/wk.



(02)

THE COMMUTER SOLVER

Starts Wordle at 7:30AM
daily.



(03)

THE PUZZLE HOPPER

Jumps from Spelling Bee →
Wordle → Sudoku.

What Next (When I'm on the NYT Team)

- ✓ RUN EXPANDED A/B TEST (VARIANT B)
- 🔄 ADD WORDLE NUDGE TO CONNECTIONS FINISH SCREEN
- 📱 OPTIMIZE WORDLE MOBILE UX (SESSIONS 2X DESKTOP)

Turn moments into habits. Let the data guide the design. ✨



WHY THIS MATTERS

This project simulates the day-to-day responsibilities of a NYT Games Product Analyst. From A/B testing strategy to peak-time monitoring and user journeys, this dashboard reflects how I approach data, storytelling, and player experience.

I'M READY TO BRING THESE INSIGHTS TO LIFE — AS YOUR NEXT ANALYST.

Let's build better
puzzles together.

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