VIDEO GAME MOOD TAXONOMY | TAXONOMY CREATION & APPLICATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF USERS

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INTRODUCTION

The mood taxonomy, developed by the Game Metadata Research Group, in collaboration with the SIMM, is part of the Video Game Metadata Schema. This project expands upon current research, furthering our understanding of how people percieve and describe the mood of video games and interactive media.

METHOD

Metadata: video game title list with 1500+ entries.
User Study and Exercise: 26 gamers completed questionnaires, were interviewed and asked to apply mood terms to popular video game titles.
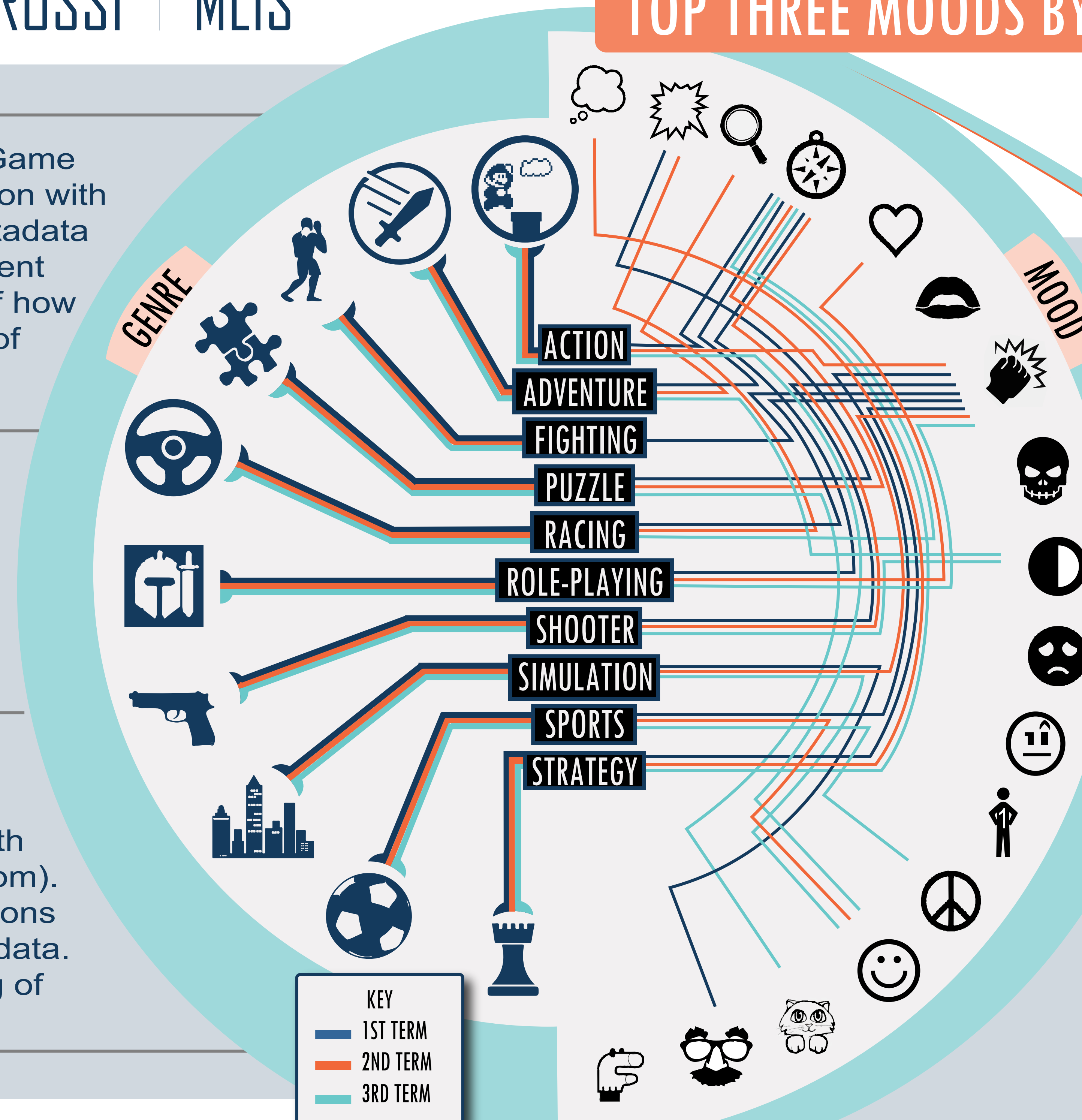
RESULTS

Study Data: interview transcripts and exercise data.
Data Analysis: sample of 300 games with sourced genre and year (from allgame.com).
Term Suggestions: mood term suggestions collected from gamerDNA and interview data.
Mood Clustering: hierarchical clustering of current preferred terms.

TOP THREE MOODS BY GENRE

The diagram to the left explores the genre breakdown of mood terms applied to a sample of 300 games. The top three mood terms are represented by dark blue, orange, and light blue lines, repectively.

GENRE

ACTION
ADVENTURE
FIGHTING
PUZZLE
RACING
ROLE-PLAYING
SHOOTER
SIMULATION
SPORTS
STRATEGY

MOOD

KEY
1ST TERM
2ND TERM
3RD TERM

CURRENT MOOD TERMS

adventurous · humorous · quirky
aggressive · imaginative · romantic
cute · intense · sad
dark · light-hearted · sarcastic
horror · mysterious · sensual
peaceful · solitary

MOOD TERM SUGGESTIONS

Preferred Terms	Equivalent Terms
• casual*	• charming
• competitive*	• exciting
• epic*	• happy
• friendly/social	• weird
• immersive	• wonder

*Mentioned in both gamerDNA and interview data
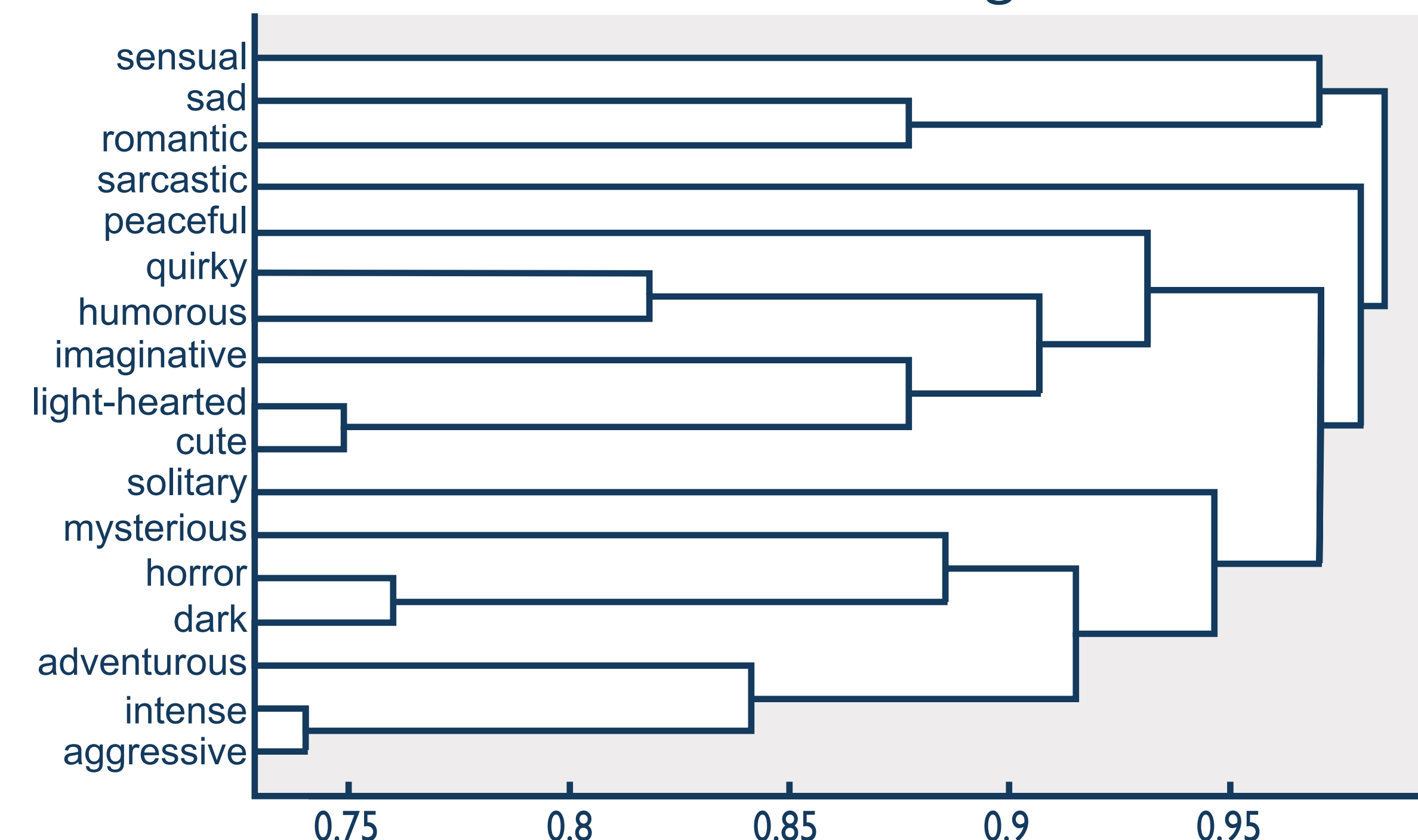
MOOD STUDY DATA ANALYSIS

As part of the exercise, participants were asked to apply mood terms to 35 video game titles. Below are the four most recognized video game titles with their applied mood terms.

While a large number of participants applied the same top mood term to *Angry Birds* (light-hearted), *Assassin's Creed III* (adventurous) and *Grand Theft Auto IV* (aggressive) opinion was more split over *Super Mario Bros.*

ANGRY BIRDS
10 5 2 2 2 1

ASSASSIN'S CREED III
10 6 3 1 1

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV
10 4 2 2 1

SUPER MARIO BROS.
10 8 2 1 1
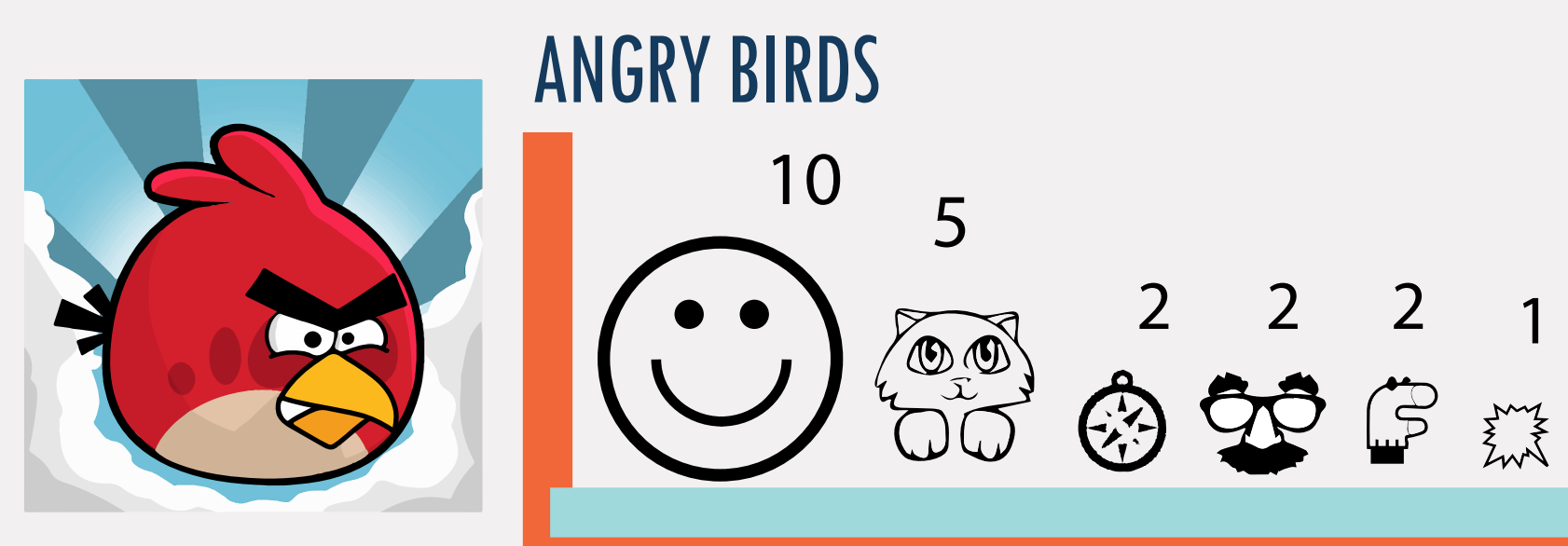
MOOD CLUSTER DATA

Mood Term Dendrogram

sensual
sad
romantic
sarcastic
peaceful
quirky
humorous
imaginative
light-hearted
cute
solitary
mysterious
horror
dark
adventurous
intense
aggressive

0.75   0.8   0.85   0.9   0.95

This graph represents mood terms that appear frequently together in the collected interview data. The results indicate that the mood terms intense and aggressive, light-hearted and cute, and horror and dark are applied often together when describing video game mood. Clustering mood terms will allow us to use groups of particular mood terms instead of individual terms to obtain more consistent results.