

## THE KEY TRENDS OF VIRTUAL GOODS MARKET

Video game industry is relatively young and its inception has developed as upgrade mechanical slot machines. But then, it separated as an independent sphere of the “social market surrogates”, so-called by Kotler [1, 174].

Today we have a strong market for which sales exceed the scope of film business: in 2009, after the global economic crisis, it was sold nearly 273 million units, which together gave \$ 9.9 billion income; in 2014 this figure reached \$ 24 billion (compared to \$ 10 billion of the film industry). The general revenue from the sale of equipment, advertising and all products complement-game industry, including the markets of mobile devices, in 2013 worldwide reached \$ 70 billion. And that's not counting the money in circulation in cybersport: World Cup finals of team video game SMITE™ in January 2015 gathered \$ 2.3 million prize fund with the presence of 2.9 million broadcast viewers around the world [2; 3].

In the US 67% of households have at least one video game user [4]. All investments in video game or specific equipment are usually venture. And if in the case of households we are talking about a false decision when purchasing a device, or order a digital product, on the side of companies we deal with the unpredictable reaction of a very sensitive to the content and quality of the goods (even more than the price) consumer market, which can neutralize the existing price elasticity of demand (within reason) with exceptional characteristics of good.

At present time there is an opinion, and not without reason, that the market for smartphones and tablets is very promising for the future of it, and it recently started to explore larger companies. In 2011 the number of mobile devices has increased from three hundred million to half a billion. In 2013 alone smartphones and tablets based on iOS and Android there were about two billion [5].

Although there are some specific features: text reviews of mobile games is not spread, much less read them, so choose from hundreds of thousands of proposals difficult. As a result, even, with a high-quality product, for developers it is very difficult to stand out from the rest.

But the attractive features of the market is also significant: it collected numerous audience, more than social networks; touch control combines the simplicity and accessibility and offers huge scope for creativity; users are often in a vulnerable position (while on the road, waiting in a long, etc) and sell their goods easier. Mobile devices have built-in payment of mobile operators - this is extremely important; and the relative backwardness of hardware (compared to specialized devices—PC, game console) and small screens have positive impact on budgets and prevent driving technological race; and as mobile devices are relatively constant accessory, it is not going a big shifts on this platform in the future.

In addition, the market entered a phase of maturity now. Unpretentious arcade quickly began to lose popularity. Instead, players now need something more complex, more serious games. Available ruthless competition and exorbitant prices for advertising (which grow on weekends and holidays twice or three times), and trade services «Google Play» and «App Store» saturated proposal, and even a good product can be completely unnoticed. So now the mobile market remained large companies with several innovators, authors of successful products, and financial success is based on the principle of gaming goods monetization gameplay.

There are different views on mobile platforms market bubbles: some believe that it has exploded, others - that it is in the process of formation.

Speaking about smartphones and tablets, the number of game developers on the PC and game console offers the ability to integrate devices; for example, a racing simulator core gameplay is on the screen, while mobile device is going to contain map, background information and more as support.

Significant progress is in the releasing into production virtual reality glasses Google Glass™ and Oculus Rift™, which give an idea of the digital entertainment industry shift to a whole new level, with a strong marketing campaign, which in addition to media advertising, thematic exhibitions allows potential customers to test now product. One should be careful, because the first kind of deception through the vestibular apparatus body feeling not too pleasant and need at least half an hour to normalize coordination and addiction to the output device of its kind.

Interesting trend is noticeable in terms of consumer market segment of video games, there is an increasing number of female players (47% in 2014, compared with 42% in 2012) as well as the older generation (so the average user age of video games is 34 years) - for US statistics [2; 4].

There are changes also in the promotion policy itself: many games is completely free to play, or at least trial, with the investing in their further development and improvement as opposed to top-goods to which a pre-order is common before the official release.

Do not deny the fact that in the world with a population of over 7 billion only about two and a half billion people use the Internet. However, regions with low access to a worldwide network gained rapidly increasing presence by opening new markets with their specific cultural segments for major developers and pioneers of the industry.

#### References:

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5. Dean Takahashi: Mobile growth will fuel global game market that hits \$86.1B by 2016: VentureBeat is the leading source for news and perspective on technology innovation. – Read more: <http://venturebeat.com/2013/06/06/global-games-market-to-hit-86-1b-by-2016-as-mobile-charges-ahead/>