

2004 IGDA Online Games SIG: Web and Downloadable Games White Paper Summary

Presented by the IGDA Online Games SIG

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Introduction

In 2001, the International Game Developers Association (IGDA) established the Online Games Committee to publish a white paper at the 2002 Game Developers Conference that would help game developers gain an understanding of the business and development aspects related to online games. In its third year of publishing white papers, the SIG has decided to create three separate papers, each focusing on a specific niche in the industry, in order to provide greater detail and analysis in each of three important sectors. This white paper covers specifically PC web and downloadable games, which are typically less than fifteen megabytes in size and do not have a retail box component. The other two papers cover Mobile Games and Persistent World Games. All three white papers can be downloaded for free from the IGDA web site at <http://www.igda.org/online/>. Small and/or independent game development organizations – both current and aspiring – are the target readers for our white papers, as we seek to provide valuable cross-functional industry information not otherwise available to such shops in a cost-effective manner.

The following sections provide a brief overview of the information found in the full version of the Web and Downloadable Games white paper.

Market Overview

The market overview describes the overall global online games market with specific emphasis on online game products, consumer segments, market size projections, and issues and opportunities in online games including broadband. The purpose of this section is to provide a basic market context for the online gaming consumer in the U.S., Europe and Asia across both broadband and narrowband.

Business Models

The business models section covers developer-publisher relationships, revenue models, distribution, and other issues relevant to web and downloadable game developers. The purpose of this section is to provide information on how revenues and costs are generated with respect to different areas of online games. It also offers information on the roles and responsibilities of game developers from a business perspective. A detailed section on legal and taxation issues is also expanded from last year.

Production and Design

The production and design section offers an overview of project management, process, risk management and game design issues. This informative section offers console and CD-ROM developers the opportunity to compare their development experiences with the requirements of developing a web or downloadable game. The section includes several enlightening case studies as well as insight and advice from leaders in this space.

Game Technology Overview

The game technology overview section highlights relevant game client tools and platforms, server-side platforms, and case studies. It also examines issues that developers may face, such as the choice of technology platforms and the technology impact on development costs.

Online Publishers

The online publishers section provides a brief description of the role of the publisher and key points to consider when approaching a publisher for distribution. Developers can use this section as a starting point for investigating with which publishers they may want to do business. Additional detailed and updated information can be found at each publisher's websites, for which links are provided.

How to Download a Free Version of the 2004 IGDA White Papers

The SIG operates year-round with numerous volunteers throughout the game industry. The valuable support of these individuals is greatly appreciated! A listing of the contributors is available in the full version of the white papers. To obtain the free version of the 2004 IGDA White Papers, please visit: <http://www.igda.org/online/>

Volunteering for the IGDA Online Games SIG

Please visit <http://www.igda.org/online/> for information on how you can join the SIG, participate in its various activities, and submit any comments about how the SIG can improve its white papers and other initiatives for next year. Thank you!