FredGames Pitch Script EN

Webgames

Everyone has some spare time every now and then, and an excellent way to spend it is by gaming. Your phone is always within reach and you could game on that, but phones and tablets lack the computing power, a large screen, and a practical controller to provide an engaging experience. Mobile games are stupid. For an immersive virtual experience there are of course options like consoles, gaming PCs, and so on, but then we'd be talking about a hobby, not a pastime. Hmm, if only there was a middle ground, something with the immersion of PC, and the accessibility of mobile.

Browser gaming can be done on any PC or laptop. Nothing needs to be paid, downloaded, or installed. On browser game websites, aka web game portals, players look, click, and play. It's ideal, and thus, it's no surprise that web gaming was once staggeringly popular. Once, web games sprouted in the thousands across the internet. But then, it all suddenly disappeared.

It's evident from the numbers. From 2010, it suddenly went downhill until sea level. Browser gaming was once a significant piece of the gaming market pie, now just a crumb. Browser gaming is now 1% of the total 200 billion, so 2 billion, and decreasing by 15% per year. It's not looking too good, and at this rate, web gaming will completely disappear.

So, what's going on? Why has the browser game market dried up?

Money

Some people blame the rise of mobile phones, others link the death of web gaming to the death of Flash, the create-and-play software of the time, but I, I think something else. I think it's just a matter of money.

Web games and advertisements don't seem to go well together. A constant field of banners is unsightly, and video interruptions in gaming isn't even really an option. In a YouTube video, an interruption is somewhat possible, the people were only half-watching anyway, but in the middle of someone's game, they won't even come back.

Web games are hard to monetize and that's a big problem for the web game portals. If a platform with content creators doesn't generate enough revenue, it can't fairly compensate the creators. Consequently, creators stop delivering

quality content, and without new content you of course lose users that bring the cash. It's a vicious cycle: less money → worse content → fewer users → repeat

The only reason browser gaming ever existed is because developers once asked for nothing in return. Once, it was new, exciting, and fun. But ye know, everything new turns old. Web game development was a hobby, but crystallised into a job, a job that didn't pay, and yes, then it goes under.

Indies

PC games can currently be found on digital game stores like Steam. The games in these kinds of stores are offered in a format that contrasts with web gaming.

Web games: free │ stream   │ promotion primarily by platform
PC games: paid │ download │ promotion primarily by developer

So, gamers on Steam first discover a game, somehow. Then, they research that game to determine if it's really worth it. Only then do they decide whether to purchase the game or not. Discovering, researching, and investing, quite a hassle compared to watching a YouTube video.

For large AAA publishers, this format isn't a problem, they have the money and status to get the necessary attention. But what about independent game developers? So not the big game companies, but the indie game developers. Well, they're not having fun.

Steam gamers don't take 50-cent games serious, it's not worth looking at, let alone investigating and buying. Additionally, smaller games are less profitable due to the constant cost of business matters like marketing, whereby Steam doesn't help much. On top of that, small games on Steam are often scams and thus get shadowbanned.

Games on Steam have to be big and polished, which is far beyond scope for most indies. Making a game, the indies can do, but a market-ready product? That's a different story. The average development time on Steam is 2 years, I repeat: the average. That is crazy long. Firstly, it's not at all enjoyable to work on the same project for so long. Secondly, the developer goes without income for a long time, which is a problem for many. But most destructively, this makes it a very risky venture. Imagine sacrificing a piece of your life for a masterpiece, only to see it disappear into oblivion, seconds after launch.

So, yeah, game development is not much fun with this system. Developing a game already involves a massive amount of tasks: coding, designing, art, music, and so on. If on top of that, there's a bunch of business aspects, such as marketing, hiring, or setting up a complete community by, for example, making devlogs on YouTube – something I see a lot currently – well then it'd resemble an one-man orchestra.

I think developers just want to create and share, but instead of a world of creativity and recognition, they end up in a world of business and money.

Casuals

Steam appears to be intended for 'the gamer'. These individuals have the motivation to pursue and search quality content and are willing to spend money on it. They are integrated into the gaming network and can be reached through everything related to gaming.

'Casual gamers' don't have such motivation, they don't care that much. Sure, they'll play a game if they are handed one, but they don't actively seek it out, make difficult decisions or throw money around. Reasonable enough of course, so it's no surprise that there are more casuals than die-hards.

To get the casuals gaming, you need to offer them something fun, free, easy and accessible. No problem, can be arranged. But where they at? How do you reach them? They're not in the gaming network after all, they're just regular people. To reach them, you would have to advertise heavily and everywhere, which obviously isn't profitable.

Notice the problem here?

Problem

The indies want to create smaller games, while the casuals want to play those games. The problem is that these parties fail to meet each other. Now, indies are without a secure job, and the casuals without gaming content.

Solution

The solution is simple: we need a new browser game platform that CAN effectively generate revenue from web games, so that the creators can be adequately rewarded. Then, the indies would be able to create small, easy and low-risk projects, while the casuals would have a place to easily find and play a bunch of free games.

The question is, how? How to monetize web games?

Adcoins

When people say they hate ads, they don't mean that literally. You see, ads aren't annoying, they're being annoying, there's a difference. Ads like in a YouTube video interrupt, that is the annoying part, without that it's just a video. Right? Well then, I can work with that. I think that by implementing an in-app currency the following system can be realised:

- Users need coins to access the platform's content.
- Users earn coins by watching video advertisements.

Rather straightforward, I know, but don't let its simplicity deceive, it's kind of a big deal. This way users can watch ads in bulk and save up coins, as to consume ad-free content for a good while afterwards. You hear that right:

Ads... without interruptions, that is the power of the "Adcoin System". By the way, users cannot simply click on the ad-feed and walk away. Attention gets tested by an occasional quiz/captcha. Paying attention gets bountifully rewarded.

Product

So, I want to start a new online web gaming platform that sells its own advertisements, that's the product. When I say advertisements, I'm not referring to worthless banners, I'm talking about 10-60s non-skippable/blockable fullscreen videos. Advertisers first upload a video and pay for a view target. The video then enters a queue. The platform displays the videos in the queue to the users FIFO. The ads get removed once the view target is reached. The ads aren't targeted, that's no use considering that the userbase is already sorted due to the content being similar. The pricing is simply determined based on supply and demand, specifically the ratio between the number of viewers and advertisements, or the queue.

Many viewers & few ads = short queue = low price

Few viewers & many ads = long queue = high price

Normally, ad-management or ad-auction systems are quite complex. Not here, there is only one channel and that makes things very straightforward.

Explosion

I believe that web games with this advertising model would be profitable, but even if that were only slightly true, it would still be very much significant. You see, it doesn't take much to crank the vicious cycle backwards. That can be done by rewarding the developers more than is fair, the more, the better:

More money to the devs → better content → more users → repeat

With each new revolution of this wheel, the game developers would get paid more, and more. No doubt the gossip on this will spread and that not only attracts more developers, they'll also put in more effort. If this loop keeps turning, well then at some point, there would be high-quality games being uploaded that would cost 5, or even 10 bucks on Steam. An abundance of top-notch games, completely free for the taking. That would not attract, no no, it would cause an explosion.

"Oh, a gaming website, how nice, how cute, well, good luck with that." You've got the wrong idea, that's not the situation. The situation is that I've made a discovery. I've discovered how ads can be made less annoying, and with this innovation, I hope to take a nice juicy bite out of the entire gaming pizza. I'm not

talking about a fun, cozy gaming website, I'm trying to tell you that I can make an army watch a mountain of ads. I'm talking about a bomb of a business and giga profits. 10 billion dollars, there, that's how much Reddit is worth, and Reddit has 500 million monthly users and a weak advertising model. My model is easily 10 times stronger, and 50 million to me seems but a popular YouTube channel.

Other

  Besides the advertising model, I have many more ideas that deviate from traditional web gaming conventions.

  - Thumbnails for example, all gaming websites always clutter their pages with images of the games. This doesn't work at all, a random jpg says nothing about a game. I propose only working with videos. A video feed, think of TikTok, where players can just lean back and relax, and keep watching gameplay snippets until they come across something that interests them.
  - Fullscreen exclusively. For some strange reason, old portals always put the game in a small frame in the middle of the page, makes no sense.
  - Tags. The games are not categorised into genres like action or strategy, they get described by tags, by which they can be found much more effectively using a tag-based search engine.
  - Gamification. The platform itself is a bit of a game, profiles have levels, scores, stats, you can earn badges and achievements, and so on. This creates a bond between player and profile, which is engaging and encouraging.
  - Devtools. Developers are not left to their own devices but receive tips, tools, APIs, and maybe even a complete web game engine.

Timing

  The timing of this project is perfect.

  - All the competition is either dead or hanging by a thread.
  - The AAA gaming industry is not doing well, publishers are too greedy, and gamers are fed up.
  - Browser technology is still evolving, WebGPU is in the act of replacing WebGL, offering better graphics and performance for internet based games.
  - AI is advancing rapidly, game development will get even easier.

Team

  At time of writing I don't have any co-founders, so it's basically just me. Having said that, do understand that the obvious hard part here is developing the website. For that, I'm already in contact with web development company

'Crebos International', consisting of 65 developers and designers that have experience with game websites. They for example build: playtoearngames.com

Funding

To execute this project I'll eventually need as much as 1 million dollar, but smaller steps are possible. Either way, each of the following points should cost roughly the same.

- Platform development, by Crebos.
- Initial content, at launch there won't be any users, and thus, developers aren't going to upload their game. To overcome this and to get the ball rolling, existing content could be purchased, or devs can be hired to create the initial content for a regular salary.
- Marketing campaign, only when there is enough content can promotion begin. I'm thinking just Google ads, Reddit, TikTok, YouTubers directly, etc. For now I'll just assume that this campaign also reaches advertisers.
- Else, just everything else, too much to list.
- Error, I always want to maintain a generous margin of error for surprises and issues.

FredGames

FredGames.com is set to become a new browser game platform for the gamer and the casual, the artist and the businessman. And that's that.