



Game Review: Angry Birds

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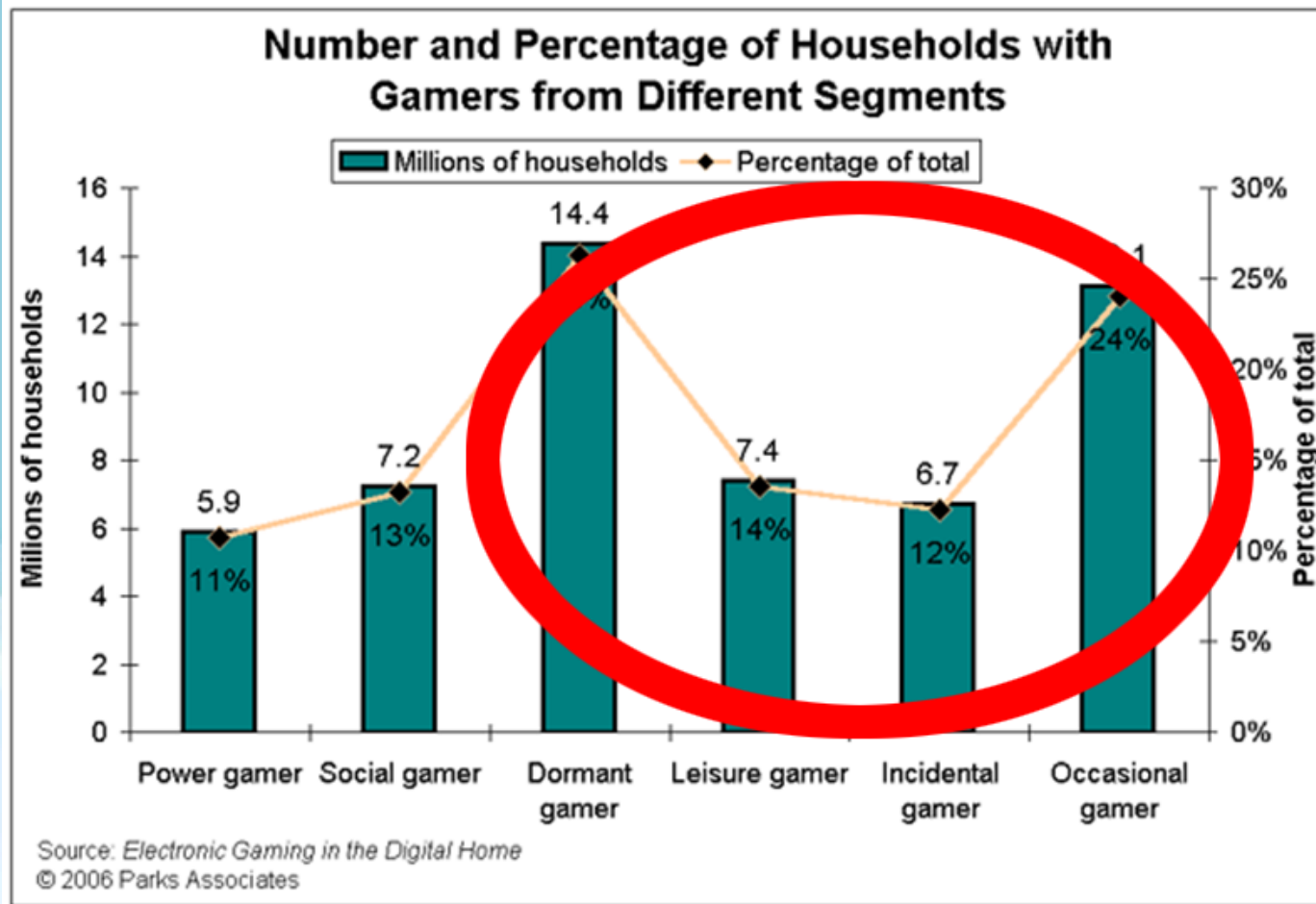
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Why Angry Birds?



Basic Game Information

- ❖ Title: Angry Birds 1.6.3 for iOS platform
- ❖ Developer: Rovio Mobile (designed by Jaakko Iisalo; published by Chillingo)
- ❖ Genre: Petrary physics puzzle game targeted at casual gamers
- ❖ Price: free limited release; \$0.99 full release
- ❖ Hardware Requirements: Compatible with iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad. Requires iOS 3.0 or later



Quick Overview

- ❖ Very thin and whimsical plot:
 - Flightless birds are launched kamikaze-style at egg-stealing pigs via a giant slingshot.
 - The pigs hide in various fortifications made of glass, steel, wood, stone and other materials.
- ❖ The game is divided into several themed chapters, each consisting of 15 or 21 stages.
- ❖ The goal of each stage is to kill every pig using the small stock of birds provided to you.



Player's Role

- ❖ The player controls the trajectory of each bird as well the distance it will travel by using simple iPhone gestures.
- ❖ The player may also activate special powers associated with different types of birds, typically while the birds are in flight.
- ❖ The true mental challenge of the game consists of figuring out how to kill every pig by making the best use of the ammunition available, and by finding the structural weaknesses of the buildings that the pigs are hiding beneath.



User Interface

- ❖ Very intuitive.
- ❖ The player controls the aim and tension of the slingshot using simple, intuitive tap-and-drag gestures.
- ❖ The player may also activate special bird powers by tapping anywhere on the screen.
- ❖ No special hand-eye coordination is required making the game accessible to people ranging from small children to senior citizens.



Scoring

- ❖ The player is awarded from one to three stars upon successful completion of each stage.
- ❖ More stars are awarded to players who manage to complete a stage using as little ammunition as possible.
- ❖ Successful completion of every stage within a given chapter unlocks the next chapter.
- ❖ The stages are not especially difficult to complete, allowing even novice players to advance and feel a sense of accomplishment.
- ❖ Striving to complete each stage with three stars keeps the game interesting for more advanced players.



Gameplay

- ❖ Players are not under any time pressure which keeps the stress level down, and makes it easy for players to set the game aside and pick it up later.
- ❖ The physics engine provides a very realistic simulation of gravity, momentum, and inertia as the birds are launched and structures collapse.



Artwork, Sound, and Music

- ❖ High-quality 2D artwork worthy of a modern cartoon series.
- ❖ The graphics are bright and colorful enough to attract the attention of children, but not so “cutesy” that adults would be embarrassed to play the game.
- ❖ Upbeat, carnival-themed soundtrack replete with funny squawks and pig snorts can get a little annoying, but easy enough to switch off.



Instructions and Documentation

- ❖ As new game mechanics are introduced, instructions are provided in the form of simple diagrams with pictures (no words) depicting what the player should do.
- ❖ There doesn't seem to be a way to go back and review these screens after they are closed.
- ❖ The user interface is intuitive enough that most game mechanics can be discovered through experimentation.



Game Review: The Good

- ❖ The price point (\$0.99) and ease of acquisition/installation (e.g. don't have to buy any special hardware) make the game extremely appealing to a vast audience of players who do not typically invest in video games.
- ❖ The lack of time pressure and simple gesture-based interface makes the game accessible to players with poor or average hand-eye coordination.
- ❖ The lack of time pressure and staged progression makes it easy to set the game aside and pick it up later (the perfect game to fill your time during short breaks wherever you might go).



Game Review: The Good (cont'd)

- ❖ The artwork is bright and colorful enough to attract the attention of small children, but not so “cutesy” that adults would be embarrassed to play the game.
- ❖ The gameplay is balanced enough to allow novice players to advance, while still plenty of optional challenges for more advanced players.
- ❖ Trying to find the best way to solve each stage can be mentally rewarding and addictive.



Game Play: The Bad

- ❖ The upbeat carnival-themed soundtrack can be annoying, especially to adults, but is easily muted.
- ❖ There doesn't seem to be any way to go back and review the various instructional diagrams after you close them.
- ❖ The challenges can get a bit repetitive after a while; there are not enough new game mechanics introduced at each stage, and the ones that do exist are often not that interesting.



Comparison w/ “Cut the Rope”

- ❖ Like “Angry Birds”, “Cut the Rope” is a multi-staged puzzle game with realistic physics, and downloadable to various mobile devices.
- ❖ As “Cut the Rope” progresses through the various chapters, intriguing new mechanics are introduced that redefine the game and keep it interesting (i.e. reverse gravity buttons, magic hats, etc.). These new game mechanics make the new mechanics introduced within Angry Birds seem boring by comparison.



Comparison w/ “Cut the Rope” (cont’d)

- ❖ A number of mechanics within “Cut the Rope” place the player under acute time pressure; several stages require lightning reflexes and good hand-eye coordination to complete.
- ❖ These factors make the game more stressful and frustrating than “Angry Birds”, and can be a real turn-off to casual gamers.



Conclusion

- ❖ “Angry Birds” does a terrific job of appealing to an extremely vast and broad audience of people who would not typically consider themselves as gamers.
- ❖ The remarkable success of “Angry Birds” in tapping into this relatively new market segment is evidenced by its download rates in the first year:
 - 30 million copies of the free version downloaded.
 - 12 million copies of the paid version downloaded.
- ❖ Compared to newer competitors, Angry Birds suffers from repetitiveness and a lack of innovative new mechanics as the game progresses; the game could be improved if they introduced some new physics-bending game mechanics, such as. teleportation “worm-holes”, or gravity-reversal.

