

Maxxor announces global launch of Moonbase online game

Maxxor, a Cape Town-based mobile app developer, recently announced the global launch of Moonbase, a multiplayer online strategy game for mobile phones. Moonbase was initially launched on Mxit in 2010 and found immediate success with South African youth.

The game surpassed one million players, and at peak times generates in excess of ten million page impressions per day and more than 60 million in-game messages per month.

The game has been rated by Brandometer as one of the most influential brands on the Mxit platform. Now Maxxor is aiming to build on that success by tapping into the rapidly-growing global smartphone market with a brand new 3D version of the Moonbase game which targets the Android and iPhone platforms. In the first week of its release, the game has already reached a Top 25 ranking in the Apple App Store's Role Playing Games category.

One codebase for three platforms

Faced with the growing complexity of the mobile phone market and the ongoing "platform wars" between Apple, Google and Facebook, Maxxor decided to use HTML5 as a cross-platform development technology to address all three platforms with a single codebase. Adrian Frielinghaus, head of online games at Maxxor says: "HTML5 allowed us to focus our developers on a single set of skills rather than splitting them up into different teams writing different codes in different languages for all the different platforms. The productivity benefits have been enormous."

Despite being written in HTML5 and being accessible on the web, Moonbase is also available as a downloadable app from Google Play and the iTunes Store. "It is clear that people prefer to use apps on their phones, so using HTML5 for the core application but writing native code to embed the application in the app stores provides the best balance between development efficiency and customer usage preference."

Updating is streamlined

In addition to generating efficiencies in the initial development phase, HTML5 also streamlines the process of updating the application. "Moonbase is a very competitive multiplayer game," according to Frielinghaus, "and we need to ensure that all players have the same version of the app so they aren't able to exploit the differences and gain advantages over other players. To achieve this we ship HTML5 updates to the game that update all players automatically without affecting the native code components of the game which require App Store approval."

Using HTML5 has enabled the game to be more easily ported to new platforms which has allowed the game to have a cross-platform reach which is unique. "The game can now be played on Mxit, on Facebook, on Mocospace (a US mobile social network), on Mig33 (a mostly Asian mobile social network), on an Android phone, on an iPhone or iPad and on the mobile web. All players play inside the same game world regardless of which platform they are on."

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