

GetJar out to make mobile phone applications free

October 8 2010, by Glenn Chapman



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GetJar has teamed up with Glu to offer a set of the hot [smartphone](#) game maker's premium titles, typically sold for as much three to five dollars, free of charge worldwide.

GetJar will make one free Glu game available every two weeks during the course of two months that started October 5.

"What we are trying to introduce is going to change the whole economics of app stores," GetJar founder and chief executive Ilja Laurs told AFP.

"We are not talking about a one-time promotion but a long-term sustainable business model."

The pilot program will test GetJar's belief that money paid by developers to promote applications at the service will more than offset the cost of buying licenses to give away mini-programs.

GetJar is the second only to Apple's App Store at [iTunes](#) when it comes to programs for mobile devices. More than a billion apps have been downloaded from m.getjar.com and the service logs an average of 100 million downloads monthly.

There are more than 300,000 [software developers](#) registered at the GetJar shop.

Premium Glu games being offered for free include "Brain Genius 2" and "Race Driver Grid" tailored for an array of major smartphone platforms including [Android](#) and BlackBerry.

"In the future we are sure we will be able to provide more and a much wider selection of apps," Laurs said.

"It creates a strong challenge to other [business models](#) based on paid content. You now have a choice to come and pick up an app for free."

He expected the free [app](#) model to prove sustainable for software crafted with relatively low investments of less than a million dollars.

Developers that pour millions into creating games or other programs for [mobile devices](#) should rise into a class of paid content, according to

Laurs.

"Guys that invest in really expensive titles will justify selling apps, but guys working in their bedrooms on weekends to make programs will have to be reasonable," Laurs said.

"In general, these kinds of content might be free. Growing consumer attention and mind share is more valuable."

Games available free in the "GetJar+" pilot come with no ads, registrations or other catches.

"We're excited to partner with GetJar on GetJar+," said Olivier Bernard, a managing director at Glu.

"GetJar's global scale and consumer base allows us to reach an entirely new audience of game-hungry consumers who ordinarily might not be able to buy premium games."

GetJar has become a hot spot for mini-applications for just about any kind of smartphone. The company is venture-backed and has offices in Britain, Lithuania, and Northern California.

Venture capital firm Accel Partners poured 11 million dollars into GetJar earlier this year.

GetJar boasts virtual shelves packed with mini-applications for any type of mobile phone serviced by any carrier anywhere. Developers can make money with in-application transactions such as virtual goods for game characters.

"GetJar is completely open; any developers and any business model," Laurs said. "We just make sure the application is legal, that is the only

thing we care about."

Accel has a reputation for smart bets in the technology sector and the list of firms it has backed includes social networking star Facebook and Chinese Internet search king Baidu.

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