

Angry Birds plot global domination

July 22 2011, by Chris Lefkow



Angry Birds was launched as an iPhone application in 2009 and it is now available on a host of other devices, including Android smartphones, the iPad, Sony PlayStation 3 consoles and even through Google's Chrome Web browser.

Look out Nokia, Angry Birds are plotting to knock you off your perch as Finland's top company.

Peter Vesterbacka, the chief marketing officer of [Angry Birds](#) creator Rovio, outlined the company's global ambitions during an appearance Thursday at the Fortune Brainstorm Tech conference in this Colorado ski resort.

Wearing a bright red sweatshirt with a picture of an Angry Bird on the front, Vesterbacka, whose nickname is "Mighty Eagle," said downloads of the addictive Angry Birds game had hit 300 million.

"That's a good number but our goal is to be the first brand with a billion fans," he said.

Rovio launched Angry Birds as an [iPhone](#) application in 2009 and it is now available on a host of other devices, including [Android](#) smartphones, the [iPad](#), [Sony PlayStation 3](#) consoles and even through Google's Chrome Web browser.

It currently has 120 million active users on [mobile devices](#).

Angry Birds involves catapulting cartoonish birds into fortresses built by egg-stealing green pigs but Vesterbacka said Rovio is "not a games company."

"What we are building is a next generation entertainment franchise," he said. "I think we're the fastest growing consumer franchise ever."

Vesterbacka said Rovio has acquired an animation studio and begun producing two-minute animated Angry Birds shorts and a full-length movie is two or three years away.

"We're working on new Angry Birds experiences," he said. "We'll expose a bit more of the Angry Birds story."

The Rovio executive said the company's next project is its first book.

"It's the Angry Birds cookbook," he said.

"We'll have three different books coming out this year," Vesterbacka said. "And we're self-publishing because we can."



Peter Vesterbacka (pictured in January), the chief marketing officer of Angry Birds creator Rovio, outlined the company's global ambitions during an appearance Thursday at the Fortune Brainstorm Tech conference in this Colorado ski resort.

Asked by a questioner in the audience how much of Angry Bird's success could be attributed to "luck," Vesterbacka appeared to get a little bit, well, angry.

"First of all we are very analytical so Angry Birds was built to be a hit," he said. "We tried to eliminate luck at every stage of the process."

And secondly, "we built 51 games before Angry Birds so it wasn't like we were an overnight success," he said.

Vesterbacka also said Rovio has successfully expanded the Angry Birds franchise from the virtual world to the real world despite being repeatedly advised that it would not work.

"We have been told time after time that we're not supposed to do movies, books, toys," he said. "We sold like eight million toys."

It's not "rocket science," he continued. "If you are strong brand, if you have a strong following of fans you can do anything."

At the end of his appearance, Vesterbacka was asked whether Rovio could one day dethrone mobile phone maker Nokia as Finland's most important company.

"Yes," the "Mighty Eagle" replied, before walking off the stage and tossing a yellow stuffed Angry Bird toy into the crowd.

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