

Zynga lures mobile gaming exec away from rival EA

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(AP) -- Online game maker Zynga Inc. has lured away an executive from rival Electronic Arts Inc.

The hiring of Barry Cottle, announced Thursday, underscores the escalating rivalry between rapidly growing Zynga and Electronic Arts, a video game stalwart.

Cottle, 50, had been overseeing Electronic Arts' push into mobile and online gaming for the past four years. The diversification beyond packaged video games has paid off. In a memo sent to Electronic Arts' employees Thursday, CEO John Riccitiello said the company's digital revenue surpassed \$1 billion for the first time last year.

Zynga has emerged as a major competitor with series of hit games such as "FarmVille" and "Mafia Wars," that have primarily been played on Facebook's social network.

In an effort to become less dependent on [Facebook](#), Zynga is trying to expand its reach. It's counting on Cottle to help it realize those ambitions as its executive vice president of business and corporate development.

The company didn't disclose how much it's paying Cottle to leave Electronic Arts.

Zynga is flush right now, having just raised \$1 billion in an [initial public offering](#) of stock completed last month. It's the most money raised by a

U.S. Internet company since Google Inc. went public in 2004.

Investors so far aren't embracing Zynga like they did [Google](#), whose [stock price](#) has never dipped below its IPO price of \$85 per share. Zynga's shares, in contrast, still haven't closed above their IPO price of \$10. The stock finished Thursday at \$8.45, up 12 cents.

Cottle will report to Zynga's chief operating officer, John Schappert, and be based in the company's Los Angeles office. Zynga is headquartered in San Francisco.

Before joining [Electronic Arts](#) in 2007, Cottle worked at Palm Computing and the Walt Disney Co.

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