

Facebook fans get to play out celebrity fantasies

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CelebrityMe was available at the world's leading social network on Monday as the first offering from Seismic Games, a startup launched by veterans of Activision, Vivendi Universal and Pandemic Studios.

[Blockbuster](#) console game titles worked on by Seismic founders Greg Borrud, Chris Miller, or Eric Gewirtz include horror [shooter game](#) "F.E.A.R." and a "Star Wars: Battlefront" action title based on the legendary film series.

"Facebook allowed us to provide this casual, light-hearted fun experience without a player having to be a hardcore gamer," Gewirtz said while demonstrating CelebrityMe for AFP.

The traditional console [game makers](#) saw hit [social games](#) at Facebook based on addictive play components such as hunting and gathering but perceived a lack of levity, according to Gewirtz.

"There wasn't a lot of comedy," he said, referring to hit online social games that involve running virtual farms or constructing make-believe castles.

"The fantasies in games weren't in line with real-world fantasies," Gewirtz said. "We were asking ourselves where the movie star and rock star fantasies were."

Seismic opened shop in Los Angeles in January with two million dollars in initial funding from a roster of investors that includes venture capitalist Tom Matlack and undisclosed entertainment industry bigwigs.

"CelebrityMe" lets players take pretend journeys from obscurity to fame, with victory marked by making it to stardom.

"We have basically drawn from all of the celebrity fantasies of pop culture and let you participate in them," Gewirtz said.

Players customize animated characters which are used to explore faux Southern California neighborhoods such as Venice Beach and Hollywood Boulevard, where they make mini films, music videos, or TV shows starring themselves and Facebook friends also signed up for the game.

Movie themes include science fiction, crime drama, and "vampire

romance." Once players unlock all of the film options, they are free to mix genres by directing their own films.

"You could decide to start with a medical drama and then cut in the middle of surgery to a super-hero action scene and then bring in a vampire before rocking out in a concert," Gewirtz said.

"There is a celebrity scandal component too of course," he added. "You can go on dates and get caught cheating."

Players can glitz characters with outfits or accessories bought with credits earned in the game or with real-world money.

Outcomes of mini-games such as three-card Monte affect scenes in films, which get reviewed by pretend critics before being posted at Facebook.

Points are earned based on reviews, with players having the option "of course" to bribe critics.

Players don't have to spend money through the game, but doing so speeds up play, according to Gewirtz.

"Facebook is all about expressing who you are to the world," said Seismic chief executive Gregg Borrud.

"CelebrityMe takes it one step further by tapping into players' real world interests and dreams and delivers on the fantasy of living the celebrity lifestyle."

Information about the game was available online at [facebook.com/seismicgames](https://www.facebook.com/seismicgames).

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