

Pigs' revenge as 'Angry Birds' makers launch new game (Update)

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A child touches a "Bad Piggies" stuffed toy from the "Angry Birds" game during a news conference in Taipei on September 27. "Angry Birds" maker Rovio launched a new title allowing users to play as the "Bad Piggies" from the smash-hit game, and take revenge on the birds who attacked them with slingshots.

"Angry Birds" maker Rovio launched a new title Thursday allowing users to play as the "Bad Piggies" from the smash-hit game, and take revenge on the birds who attacked them with slingshots.

Rovio Asia senior vice president said the lavish launch ceremony in the Taiwanese capital Taipei was the first in a series of global events.

"We decided to choose Taipei as the place for the first global launch as it is one of the cities where 'Angry Birds' has been widely downloaded," he said.

"Angry Birds" involves using slingshots to launch little birds at fortresses built by green pigs—an absurd, addictive game that became the world's most-downloaded app, and spawned a franchise of merchandise and media tie-ins.

It helped the Finland-based Rovio turn a profit of 48 million euros (\$60 million) in 2011, on sales of 75.4 million euros, but follow-up titles have not met with the same success and interest in the original game is slowly declining.

Thursday's ceremony, which took place at city hall, was attended by Taipei Mayor Hau Lung-bin who described himself as a fan and offered a brief demonstration.



"Bad Piggies", the newest game launched by Finnish Rovio Entertainment, is played on a tablet in Helsinki. "Angry Birds" maker Rovio launched the new title allowing users to play as the "Bad Piggies" from the smash-hit game, and take revenge on the birds who attacked them with slingshots.

Later, the words "Taipei" and "Bad Piggies", as well as the game's icon, were projected on to the sleek steel-and-glass walls of the Taipei 101 skyscraper where they will remain for two days.

In July, the company launched a new title, "Amazing Alex", which debuted at number one on the iPhone Top Apps chart but has since dropped out of the top 100.

Analysts said that Rovio, which has said it will seek an initial public offering some time next year, is hoping "Bad Piggies" could help renew interest in the franchise by extending the original game's universe.

"'Bad Piggies' will make 'Angry Birds' more than just a game. It will create stories for fans and give depth to the popular app," said I.C. Jan, from Taipei-based venture capital company appWorks Venture.

Jan said the new game is part of the company's efforts to pave way for the IPO, which included the establishment of the world's first "Angry Birds" theme park in Helsinki in May, followed by another one in Britain in August.

"The company knows that it has to integrate the virtual and physical worlds after an unexpected huge success in the virtual front since 2009," he said.

Founded in 2003, Rovio said earlier this year that it is considering a stock market listing by the end of 2013 but that shareholders have not yet decided whether to go ahead.

It has previously mentioned New York and Hong Kong as possible exchanges for the IPO.

"Bad Piggies" was launched on iOS, Android and Mac on Thursday, and

versions for Windows Phone, Windows 8 and PCs will follow at a later date, the company said.

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