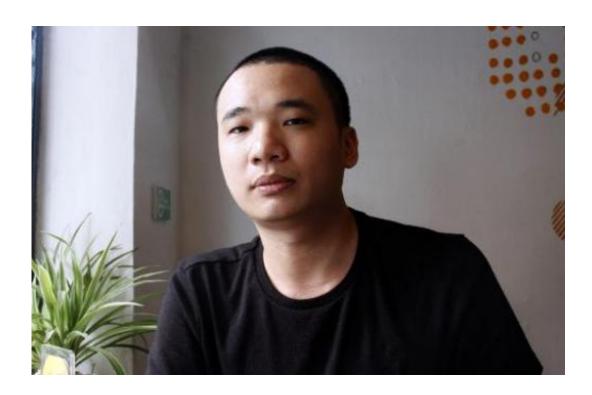![PHYS.ORG]

Vietnam's hit game developer pulls plug on Flappy Bird (Update)

February 10 2014, by Cat Barton

Nguyen Ha Dong, creator of the game Flappy Bird, is pictured in Hanoi on February 5, 2014

The Vietnamese developer behind the smash-hit free game Flappy Bird has pulled his creation from online stores after announcing that its runaway success had ruined his "simple life".

Technology experts say the addictive and notoriously difficult game rose from obscurity at its release last May to become one of the most

downloaded free mobile games on Apple's App Store and Google's Play store.

"'Flappy Bird' is a success of mine. But it also ruins my simple life. So now I hate it," the game's creator Nguyen Ha Dong tweeted.

"I am sorry 'Flappy Bird' users, 22 hours from now, I will take 'Flappy Bird' down. I cannot take this anymore," he wrote Saturday in a message that had been retweeted nearly 140,000 times by Monday afternoon.

Flappy Bird was not available on the US or UK Apple app stores on Monday.

"It is not anything related to legal issues. I just cannot keep it anymore," Dong tweeted from his @dongatory handle—which has seen its follower count grow by tens of thousands in the last few days.

Flappy Bird features 2D retro-style graphics. The aim of the game is to direct a flying bird between oncoming sets of pipes without touching them.

Dong has said in interviews that his brainchild was pulling in as much as $50,000 per day in revenue from online advertising banners.

Online commentators have speculated that Nguyen Ha Dong took down Flappy Bird after being pressured by Japan's Nintendo

The free game has been the number one app in Apple's iOS App Store in more than 100 countries, according to An Minh Do, editor at the Tech in Asia online media company.

Withdrawing the game "may be a PR stunt or may be due to legal pressure or maybe he's sick of the press. That is not clear yet," Do told AFP.

Some Vietnamese online commentators have speculated that Dong took down the game after being pressured by Japan's Nintendo—Flappy Bird's simple graphics appear to owe some debt to Nintendo's early Mario brothers games.

But a Nintendo spokesman told AFP Monday: "Our company has not taken any action this time."

Local online newspaper VNExpress quoted Dong—who also has two other games in the top 10 in online stores—as saying he created the game in a matter of days following "a weird design style".

After revealing the sizeable revenues Flappy Bird was bringing in, Dong has been subject to a torrent of criticism and abuse in Vietnamese online forums, leading some observers to speculate that it prompted his decision to withdraw the game.

"The whiff of money created a storm of jealousy, dragging down a shining new talent," Quan The Dan wrote in an op-ed in VNExpress.

Supporting Dong would "help Vietnam start to shine on the world technology map" and it was a shame that parts of the Vietnamese online community turned on him instead, he wrote.

Avid fan Tran Khanh Tung wrote on the VNExpress site that it was a "deadly mistake" to remove Flappy Bird from online stores.

"Mark Zuckerberg never thought of letting Facebook die, even for a second," Tung wrote, urging Dong to fight for the future of his games, for himself and other Vietnamese software developers.

Vietnam has a small but thriving software and games development sector and the global publicity surrounding Flappy Bird is likely to help it grow, experts say.

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