

Facebook game star Zynga starts online playground

March 1 2012, by Glenn Chapman



The Zynga logo is displayed on the front of the company's former headquarters in San Francisco, California in 2011. Facebook games star Zynga on Thursday unveiled an online playground where people can share passions for hit titles without having to visit the world's top social network.

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Zynga.com will launch this month with CastleVille, Words With Friends, CityVille, Hidden Chronicles and Zynga Poker, along with a promise of lots more social games by the San Francisco-based firm and outside developers.

"We built Zynga.com to give our players more ways to connect with each other and play great social games whether built by Zynga or other

talented developers," said Zynga founder and chief executive Mark Pincus.

"We look forward to bringing more play to the world on our platform."

Zynga played up its [online games](#) community as an expansion of its partnership with [Facebook](#) rather than a quest for more independence.

Zynga rose to success on the [popularity](#) of its titles at Facebook, where millions of people enlist friends in either collaborative or competitive online play ranging from poker to growing virtual [crops](#) or building cartoon cities.

Zynga.com will be connected to the Facebook "social graph" so [game play](#) and actions of friends involved will follow people between the online venues, Zynga general manager Manuel Bronstein told AFP.

"I see this as a great manifestation of our relationship with Facebook that goes deeper into gaming," Bronstein said.

"In the morning you may check your news or social feeds on Facebook and then play games, but late in the afternoon you might just want to play so you go to Zynga.com"

Along with keeping people connected with Facebook play companions, the Zynga website features ways to speed up progress in games and find "zFriends" who share one's passions for titles.

"The reality is that games I like my friends might not like, but there are strangers out there who might share my love for the games," Bronstein said.

"You can make zFriends to find what you need to level up quickly in

games, and be able to keep your family pictures and personal history on Facebook private," he continued.

Zynga.com was also crafted as a platform on which third-party developers could make titles available to the 240 million people who play the company's games each month.

Zynga partners at launch included Mob Science and Row Sham Bow.

"As an independent game developer, we have faced significant challenges in getting players to discover our games," said Mob Science [chief executive](#) Michael Witz.

"The Zynga Platform provides an unparalleled opportunity by letting us focus on building a game that can easily be enjoyed by the millions of people on Zynga's network who already love to play [social games](#)."

Zynga.com will launch globally in coming weeks in 16 languages.

Zynga jumped into the stock market with a billion-dollar listing in December.

Offering 100 million shares -- one-seventh of the company's total -- at \$10 a pop, the maker of Facebook games FarmVille, Mafia Wars and Words With Friends was valued at a whopping \$7 billion.

Zynga stock was trading at \$13.75 a share on the Nasdaq exchange at mid-day on Thursday.

Zynga games are free to play but the company makes money by selling virtual in-game goods to players and serving up advertising. The company sees the potential for revenue to grow if players flock to zynga.com.

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