Zynga mines arcade games with "Ruby Blast"

June 19 2012

Zynga seeks to mine the popularity of another arcade style social game with the release of "Ruby Blast" for play at Facebook or at the company's online arena.

Zynga on Tuesday sought to mine the popularity of another arcade style social game with the release of "Ruby Blast" for play at Facebook or at the company's online arena.

The new title builds on the success of "Bubble Safari," which rocketed to popularity on Facebook after its launch in May.

"Bubble Safari" and Zynga virtual poker game "Texas HoldEm" were the most played games at Facebook on a daily basis, according to figures from industry tracker AppData.

"Ruby Blast" was the first collaboration between Zynga's studios in

Seattle and Beijing.

"Being here in Seattle adds to the creative vision of the game and our team comes from the core videogame industry," said Zynga Seattle design director Jonathan Grant.

"On the Beijing side they have been awesome at the execution of development and a lot of the nitty-gritty."

Backgrounds of those on the game's team ranged from having worked on blockbuster videogames such as "Halo" to making casual games for moms or directing an animated film set for release later this year.

"We came up with a really great combination of ideas for an overall unique experience that has really compelling game play," Grant said.

"Ruby is a pretty unique character with some quirks unlike any other character in social games."

The game character is Ruby Stone, described as an "awesome international intrepid archaeologist" who travels the world digging up treasures and surmounting obstacles.

Play is tried-and-true "match-three" style where beating levels and scoring points depends on quickly clicking on clusters of three or more virtual gems of the same color.

"We wanted the game to be simple and approachable; something my mom could play," Grant said. "It is all about scoring points. The wrinkle is that you have 40 seconds to play."

Drilling down shrewdly can unearth extra time or other "power-ups" such as extra seconds of play or blazing meteors or cherry bombs that

blast away stones.

Social features in the game include a leader board that ranks friends according to high scores, with prizes awarded weekly to those in the top three positions.

Zynga planned to enable friends to compete against one another in real time.

"Ruby Blast" is the first Zynga game optimized to take advantage of graphics capabilities of Adobe Flash 11 Player to add rich animation scenes to play.

"It will feel new to players with some innovation, cool social features and a look and feel unlike anything out there on Facebook now," Grant said.

The game was rolled out in 15 languages and could be found online at apps.facebook.com/rubyblast or at zynga.com.

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Citation: Zynga mines arcade games with "Ruby Blast" (2012, June 19) retrieved 25 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2012-06-zynga-arcade-games-ruby-blast.html

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