

## Gaming forum puts spotlight on India

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PUNE: Action, role-playing, strategy, arcade, cards, racing and sports games have emerged as the top gaming categories that are a hit among Indian users, as per September 2013 data, said Rajesh Rao, chair, Nasscom Gaming Forum, here on Friday, addressing the NASSCOM Game Developer Conference.

The forum featured experts from the gaming industry presenting tech and middleware sessions, round-tables and one-on-ones with mentoring and legal advice.

Sharing India and global app trends in the conference, Rao said that games like Candy Crush Saga, Subway Surfers and Temple Run 2, among others, are some of the top games in India in terms of downloads. "The top ten countries by total iOS App Store and Google Play downloads as per September 2013 data are the United States, which is at the top spot, followed by China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, India, Brazil, United Kingdom, Germany and Mexico," he said.

Rao said that the country has seen over 100 indie (independent video games) start-ups in the last two years.

Yoichi Wada, chairman of a Japanese video-game developer, publisher and distribution company, said that the company has decided to expand its operations to India, where it sees great potential. "Game playing in India has become easy with the advent of smartphones and tablets. Also, the emergence of free-to-play business models have contributed to the growth of the Indian game market," Wada said.

He added that as per his company's projections, all sections of the Indian population will gradually contribute to the revenues of the Indian gaming industry. "When we enter the Indian gaming market, we would aim to 'culturise' global games for the Indian market, develop leading Indian games for the Indian market and also develop Indian games for the world market," said Wada.

"We currently do not plan to bring console games to India. The most important factor to make games successful in India is reducing the initial cost. We therefore want to start with providing games for smartphones and tablets," he added.

Every game developer and gaming company now has a snapshot of the laws that they can refer to during the process of development and commercialisation of a game, courtesy a recent white paper put together by Nasscom Gaming Forum, along with Nishith Desai Associates, a law firm. The paper was presented at the conference in Pune. Experts from the law firm presented the white paper, which also gave an overview of the laws affecting the interactive gaming industry in India.

"The development of a game involves development of ideas, software, visuals, testing the game and its actual launch and commercialisation. However, each of these activities brings with it a host of legal and regulatory issues and compliances that have to be carefully considered by every game developer operating in India. Laws relating to foreign investment, exchange control, payment systems, may have a grave impact on the structure of a gaming company's business model and viability", stated the report. The report said that laws that have an impact on the game's content, whether related to intellectual property and celebrity rights or even obscenity and violence, are equally important.

The white paper touched upon the laws affecting the content of casual and social games, such as prize competitions and other related laws, laws affecting action-based and violent games, intellectual property rights issues, personality rights issues, the impact of telecom laws on mobile gaming and other laws affecting the gaming industry, like restrictions under exchange control regulations and duty of Internet service providers under the new rules notified under the Information and Technology Act, 2000, among others.