



Impact of real-world trading into online video games



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Abstract

In the world of online gaming, every individual user has virtual currency they use to build their character or enhance their gameplay. As some individuals work towards obtaining currency there are users who reduce the enjoyment of earning virtual currency by using real world trading. The issue with real world trading for in game currency involves both business and in-game economy considerations. For the in-game community, players who buy currency are trying to progress quicker in the game without having to spend the time to earn their progress. Usually, players who indulge in buying currency are using third-party resources that required hours to generate currency for other players to buy. For the rest of the in-game community that work towards their wealth it is a very unfair advantage that some people who have income to spend for more currency in game which leads to an economy crash because of the mass influx of currency being moved around in game.

Introduction & Research Question

Introduction: Online video games have become a big part of the gaming community. Many individuals who play these online video games vary in ages from teenagers to working adults. Working adults, they may not have the time to actively play to achieve any goals they have set forward in the game, which also applies to younger individuals but in a different mindset stating that they do not want to work for their goals and rather “pay to win.” This is a term that describes the use of real money to gain virtual currency or items to reach their goals quicker without having to put forward the required effort.

Research Question: The objective of this research is to determine the impact of real-world trading for online video games from third party markets.

Hypothesis: In my research, I’ve found that real-world trading has been an issue in online video games and more players are prone to buy currency with real money then work for it themselves. However, there are risks to buying currency which can involve tracking and selling of personal information.

Research Design & Data Collection

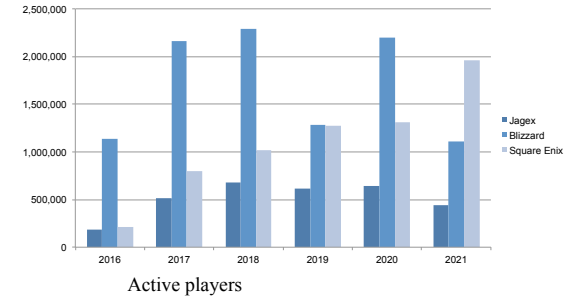
In my research I used a lot of Google and Google Scholar to find most of my articles. When searching for the specific company about their real-world trading would often bring me to forum posts on their website which would talk directly about what their methods were to combat it. There were a few gold selling websites that I reviewed, and they’ve also listed other services they do such as selling items, accounts, and power leveling services which is having someone train your account for you.

Results

The results of this research indicate Venezuela is one of the many countries in addition to China which actively participate in gold farming. According to Barboza (2005), China represented approximately 80% of all gold farmers nearing 100,000 full-time workers in 2005. Since 2016, Venezuela has experienced economic problems due to their hyper inflation rates rising to one of the highest in the world. But in the time period since their research the value of their currency was reduced to nothing and they needed to outsource to find a different method to acquire money, which included MMORPG’s and farmed gold. Many of the farmers often used Bitcoin during their sales which is a form of money laundering. Companies like Jagex tried to combat these farmers by introducing a bot detection system and removing them from the game to reduce the number of accounts being used to farm for gold and introduced their own form of in game currency for players to buy with real money and sell to other players for gold. The average monthly minimum wage was around \$2 but for the people who worked farming gold earned between \$20-\$60 per month.

	Runescape	World of Warcraft	Final Fantasy 14
Gold	\$0.225/M	\$0.013/K	\$1.310/M
Items	\$10-\$7,000	\$15-\$3,800	\$10-\$700
Accounts	\$20-\$3,500	\$40-\$8,000	\$40-\$1,750
Services	\$5-\$400	\$5-\$1,000	\$10-\$650

Real world trading services



Discussion

of acThe real-world trading in online video games is a category to be able to stop individuals from selling for a profit off a company’s game. Throughout the research it was a quick realization that in the video game industry especially if your game is free-to-play there is only so much that can be done to counter the gold farming industry from making and selling. But as the company tries to combat it with bot detection software or limiting the amount of wealth that can be transferred in one transaction, people will try to find methods around it. There can be a few more methods companies could try but the only drawback could be deterring newer players from playing. One method could be since all accounts that are logged into the server that the game is being hosted on are being tracked in game if there is a large amount of wealth being transferred between players who’ve had no interactions with, or total play duration of the account can be held in a temporary banning. During this time of banning, staff can have a set time of 3-5 days to assess whether the gold was just being given to the account with no prior conversations. If there is nothing suspicious found during the days, the account can be released that had the money transferred to it. This can deter some newer players because friends could give them money to help them in their adventures on the game and being falsely banned could give them less incentive to play if this were to happen every time. Another method is like the first but have the trade sit in a pending offer for a few days without the banning outs to assess that the accounts may be friends or a gold farmer and a customer.

Conclusions

Through the research in this topic, it seems that although there is a problem with online gaming and the transactions that happen outside the game for real currency but there are only s many ways to defend against this since not every single transaction can be stopped. The safest method would be putting a temporary hold on accounts when a large sum of money is transferred over to an account that has had no relation to it being location from login services. Until the account has proven that it is them or transferring to another account for an acceptable reason it should be held in a temporary ban. The future research that can be done is to have a constant monitor over the transactions in accounts that are only a few weeks/months old and where the money travels to. Tracking the login details for where those accounts have logged in can provide information of where there are the most traffic for these types of accounts that are farming gold to sell. But placing them into temporary bans until there is valid proof of no intention to sell would be the best path of moving forward until another failsafe method comes forward to stop these transactions.

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