

Video Games Drive Media Market Growth

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Peter Vesterbacka, the creator of the popular video game franchise Angry Birds, at a press event in Moscow. **Denis Abramov**

Russians spent \$1.3 billion on video games last year, a 30 percent increase from the year before, officially making it a more popular form of visual entertainment than movies, Internet giant Mail.ru and Romir Movie Research said.

Russian-speaking residents of the Commonwealth of Independent States, excluding Ukraine, spent 40.8 billion rubles (\$1.3 billion) on video games and 39.3 billion rubles (\$1.25 billion) on movies, Vedomosti reported Wednesday.

Out of this \$1.3 billion, 30 percent was spent on multiplayer online games, 26 percent on social network games, 20 percent on console games, 16 percent on PC games, 7 percent on mobile device games and 1 percent on casual games like Tetris and Space Invaders.

Last year in the United States, \$14.8 billion and \$10.8 billion were spent on video games and movies, respectively.

PricewaterhouseCoopers predicts that Russia's video game sales will reach \$1.7 billion in 2015, the growth primarily driven by online games. In the same year, the company expects that Russia's entertainment and media market will become the fourth biggest in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, reaching \$35.7 billion.

Games becoming more popular than movies are a global phenomenon, said Vladimir Nikolsky, vice president of Mail.Ru. Last year, revenue from games increased 22 percent, while revenues from movies went up only 10 percent, Vedomosti reported.

In Russia, games overtook movies two years ago, said Sergey Orlovsky, CEO of Nival, one of the oldest game developers in Russia. Games are competing against movies not only for consumers' time and money, he said.

"Active video game players like having fun in general, they also watch a lot of movies and listen to music. The movie industry is threatened by pirates, not games," Sergei Kitin, Cinema Park's CEO said.

But news media and books remain the most popular form of entertainment.

The Rospechat press distribution network and the Eksmo publishing house said consumers spent 69 billion rubles (\$2.2 billion) on magazines and newspapers and 60 billion rubles (\$1.9 billion) on books last year.

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