

A game analysis Of



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Quick presentation of the company and the game

King is a video game developer for mobile environments that has published more than 200 games and represents a base of around 500 million monthly active players¹. The company became famous after the release of their megahit “Candy Crush” that has been played by millions worldwide and produces an estimated daily revenue of 800.000 dollars².

Despite some slightly decreasing results in 2015, King was very present in the media for the past few months after the announcement of a buy back by one of the giant of the video game industry, Activision Blizzard, for just under 6 billion dollars.

Paradise Bay is a free-to-play simulation game that was developed by Z2 then published after its acquisition by King in early August 2015. In this game, the player is a trademaster in charge of the management of a tropical island populated by little more than a few palm trees and has to trade with the islanders to get the resources needed to develop the activity of his village and explore the island.

As of today the game totals around 30.000.000 installs worldwide and is ranked number 19 in the “casual games” section of Google Play in France and Germany³.

Mechanics of the game

Paradise Bay offers a classic core game loop for simulation games with the possibility to spend soft and hard currency to increase the speed at which you go through that loop.

For a better understanding I will quickly present the two currencies used in the game:



The gold coins are the soft currency in Paradise Bay and can be earned by trading, selling items or bought with gems via the in-app store.



The gems are the hard currency in Paradise bay and can be found in chests, by completing achievements or simply bought using real money via the in-app store. They are a lot harder to obtain without paying.



There is an interesting feature in this this core game loop that isn't present in many simulation games, the possibility to level up the other characters of the game by strengthening your relationship with them. By doing so, you will unlock some rewards while continuing to discover the unique story behind each one of them.



There is many ways of gaining experience to level up in the game:

- Collect resources



- Use those resources to make items



- Use or trade those items to the islanders or other players



- Hunt Critters



- Build mills



- Clear Land



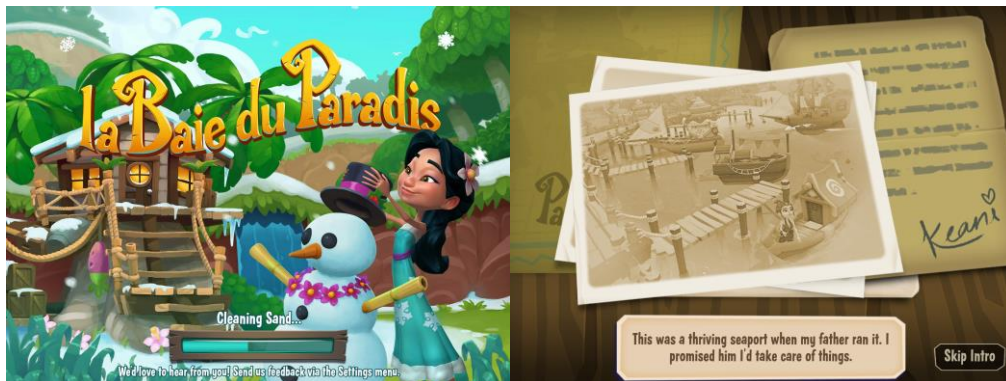
Once you've received enough experience you will automatically level up and receive the associated rewards



And you can continue collecting resources and building new mills.

First time experience

After a quick install from the App Store the player gets to a very cute and colorful loading screen that takes under a minute to load, followed by a short introduction to give some depth to the game.



Once the introduction finished you get acquainted to Keani that will be your guide during your first step in the game. In my case this first encounter didn't last for long as the game crashed within a couple minutes.



I tried installing the game on my phone from Google Play this time and didn't get this same crash so there is a good chance that it might be due to bad luck.

While restarting the game a second time, it proceeded to download more content (470 files apparently) which took about 3 minutes then I was up for another introduction to Keani, with the right background color this time.



At first, Keani will introduce you to the main features of the games: the cute fishing turtle, the fields, how to collect and replant, how to use a shop and its rush function (which is free during the tutorial) to transform resources into fishing nets, and how to collect fish from your turtle. For each one of those actions, an arrow will show the player where to tap and how to use the drag and drop system.





Once the fish collected from the turtle, the player goes to level 2 and gets his first rewards, bamboo and more fields, after playing for only 2 minutes or 6 minutes after the install of the game (taking the crash in account).



The tutorial continues with Keani explaining you how to fix a building, use the trade post to check the trades (sort of quests in the game) available. A few bamboos and 4 minutes later and you're level 3 and unlock the weaver and the knowledge for making ropes.



With a new building unlocked, Keani teaches you how to build it, then she explains to you how to develop your relationship with the islanders and what the rewards are. Finally, you will meet Finn, another inhabitant of the island, by rescuing him from a tree.



To make sure that you did understand the all process of building, collecting and trading, you will do it once more for Finn. You should reach level 4 at that point and unlock the woodshop, a new turtle and the knowledge for making boards.



Even if Keani will keep on support you all along the game, we can consider this the end of the tutorial as you will have a lot more freedom from now on.

To sum up, in a bit more than 20 minutes, you managed to gain 4 levels, build a couple buildings, plant 9 fields, acquire two pet turtles and make two new friends.

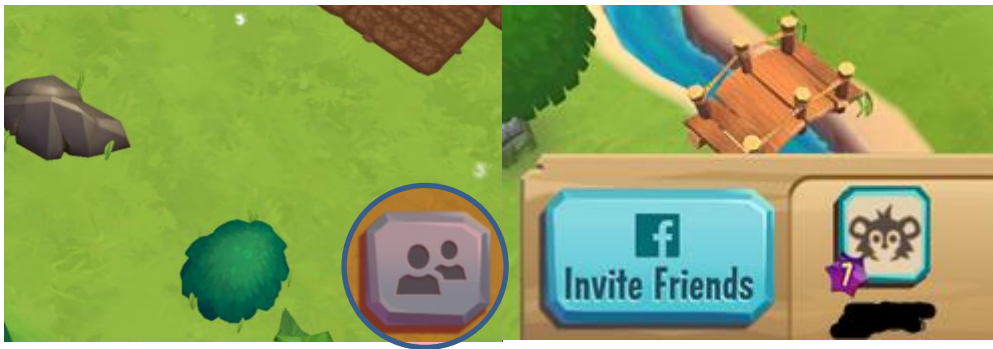


You already have your own little village.

The first thing that catches the eye while playing for the first time is the very colorful graphics that give a sense of holiday to Paradise Bay. This feeling is reinforced by the presence of very cute and lovable characters and the great amount of locked areas that make you want to know more about them and keep on playing the game to discover all the secrets of this island.

Social side

Apart from the socializing with the islander, no mention of the fact that you can add friends or interact with other players is made in the tutorial. You can indeed add some of your friends from level 4, from Facebook (which will get you a 20 gems reward) or from the game center, but the possibilities are very limited at first.



After connecting to Facebook, I only had one of my friends that played the game as well

From level 6 you can unlock the World Market as well as Weysley's Exports to the condition that you clean the areas to get to them. But these two shops will only allow you to trade with other players all over the world, not your friends in particular.

Once you have some friends, you can visit their villages and collect the critters you may find in the sea to gain experience. You will have to wait for your friends to get to level 20 and unlock the Seal House before you can help them in diving missions.

It is also important to note that at the moment there is no chat available to discuss with your friends or even other people. Also, there is no system that would allow you to give resources or trade directly with one of your friends.

In comparison to other games, I found the social side of Paradise Bay very poor and disappointing. It is not the kind of game you would want to play with your friends as there is no real interest in that until you reach level 20. That is really

surprising because as we will see next, King based some of their monetization system on competition between friends.

Monetization

The game is entirely free-to-play, however, for the players who wish to personalize their experience or accelerate the pace of the game, there are two in-app stores:

- One for the soft currency



Screenshot of the gold store on the December the 29th

Gold is fairly easy to acquire during the game, however, cleaning areas or building extra mills can prove to be very expensive from a certain level. This store is for people who need more gold in order to expand quicker and are ready to exchange their gems for it rather than use them to rush construction. However, this store is of little use if the player didn't buy any gems first.

It is interesting to notice that King changed the amount of gold per gems during the week that I was playing the game, so the company is still adjusting the values of the in-app store as we can see below.



Screenshot from the gold store on January the 6th, the amount of gold for the same price have almost doubled

In a week the price of gold passed from 5 gold coins for a gem to 9 gold coins for a gem. Also, the amount of gold you can get for a gem is roughly the same whichever pack you decide to get: from 9,14 gold coins a gem for the smallest pack to 9,39 gold coins for the biggest.

- The other one for the hard currency



Gems are harder to come by in the game but they can be used for almost everything, from rushing a construction, to buying gold, to cleaning an area. This currency is for the players that prefer to pay to avoid spending too much waiting time in the game.

Number of gems	Price in €	Gems per each 1€
100	1,99	50,25
260	4,99	52,10
550	9,99	55,06
1150	19,99	57,53
2800	39,99	70,02
7250	99,99	72,51

Unlike gold coins, buying a more expensive gem pack will give your up to 44% more gems per euro spent.

In addition to gems, players are also offered a starter pack that is only available for 3 days at low level and costs 2, 99€ for 210 gems and a king crab pet which is a good deal and a way to incite players to spend money earlier, before they are even sure they like the game.



According to the Appstore⁴ there should be other bundles available but I didn't get any other offers while I was playing so it is possible that those offers are only activated at a certain level or that King uses them to test the players' behavior and see which offers are more profitable.

The main reason why people would spend money in the game is because after the level 8-9, the resources take longer time to be produced, building and cleaning land becomes more expensive and it takes a lot more time and effort to trade and level up. Buying gems allow players to have an easier access to the most fun part of the game which is discovering all the different parts of the island, which you can have a preview off to keep you hungry for more.



*Who wouldn't want to see what there is to sell in this bazaar
or what is hidden in that cave?*

Discovering and building is not the only reason why a player would want to spend his money, stocking space quickly becomes an issue and you find yourself to have to juggle in-between the fields and the shops to be able to collect all your resources, nothing that can't be solved with a few hundred gems.

I think a smaller part of the player population also spend money to make sure that they have the most beautiful island for them to enjoy and for their friends to visit. Almost a fourth of the building menu is filled with decorations that won't help you in term of leveling up or going forward, but they look nice and allow you to customize your island as desired. Unfortunately, King didn't spend much time on the social mechanics to make this feature useful.

Comparison with Hay Day from Supercell



Paradise Bay and Hay Day are two very similar games. The most obvious thing you will notice when starting to play both at the same time, apart from the fact that one is in a farm and the other on an island, is the difference in the visual. Hay day was published 3.5 years ago while Paradise Bay is a fresh out of the oven game with really cute and agreeable graphics that do make you feel like you're in holiday.

The core game loop is basically the same minus the interaction with the characters of the game which give Paradise Bay a really nice and warm atmosphere.

In 3 years, King had enough time to learn from one of the best simulation game and make it better, the graphics are nicer, the animations are smoother and it is more fun to play. There are also more things to do in Paradise Bay than in Hay Day, like going to hunt the critters to get some experience, or clear an entire piece of land to find a treasure chest. It is just too bad that King didn't take as much time to develop the social features, like allowing you to message your friends, being part of a group, being able to see your friends' achievements and statistics while visiting them.

But Paradise Bay is still for me a better version of Hay Day as it allows the player to escape and feel like he is on a tropical island, surrounded by a group of digital friends, at least a few minutes a day.

Ideas that could be implemented in the game:

- Placing two turtles in different bodies of water could have an influence on the time they need to collect their fish.
- Having a small notification in one of the corner of the screen when one of the trades is ready to go. At the moment there is a notification on the board but you're not always watching it, and a sound notification but most people play without the music.
- Being able to help your friends or call on your friends when you need for help. For example you need more fish or more coffee, you can borrow the turtle and field of one of your friends once a day. The higher the level the more turtles and field you can borrow.
- Chat to converse with your friends
- System that allows the player to bargain in the world market, the vendor sets a price to which you can do a counter offer.

Sources

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