

MapleStory: Analysis

MapleStory Global (PC) & Pocket MapleStory (iOS)

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Introduction

Scope

- Examine the PC and Mobile version of MapleStory.
- Dissect interesting mechanics and monetization techniques.

Methodology

- Playing the PC and Mobile (US) versions of the game.
- Looking at data from App Annie.
- Reading user managed content including the game's Wiki page and Reddit page.



Introduction

Agenda

- [Executive Summary](#)
- [The Success on PC](#)
 - [Prominent Game Mechanics](#)
 - [Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades](#)
 - [Socializing](#)
 - [Vanity](#)
 - [Character Enhancement & Management](#)
 - [PC Monetization](#)
- [The Shift to Mobile:](#)
 - [Mobile Version Overview](#)
 - [Controls and UI](#)
 - [Auto Combat](#)
 - [Monetization](#)
- [Possible Implementation in Strategy Games](#)
- [Appendix](#)



Executive Summary

- Combat is clunky on mobile and fails to imitate the feel of the original game. Nexon did a good job with transferring the existing mechanics, however, the game is just not designed in such a way that benefits from touch controls. [\[Controls & UI\]](#)
- Your character develops slower on mobile when leveling up. You receive less ability / skill points. Ability points behave a little different but skills function basically the same, yet you receive less of them. This makes for a watered down experience for players who are experienced with the PC version, and a slowly paced introduction to newcomers. [\[Mechanics Overview\]](#)
- Interesting Monetization push with a subscription based model on mobile, which combines monetization and retention. [\[Monetization \(Subscription\)\]](#)
- A heavy focus exists surrounding crafting and item upgrading (both versions). There are multiple upgrading systems in place, that allow for continuous upgrading of a single item. This allows for content to be generated naturally by players instead of requiring the developers to constantly create new items. [\[Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades\]](#)

The Success on PC

Analysis of prominent gameplay mechanics
(+ Dissection of monetization elements)

Prominent Game Mechanics

Overview

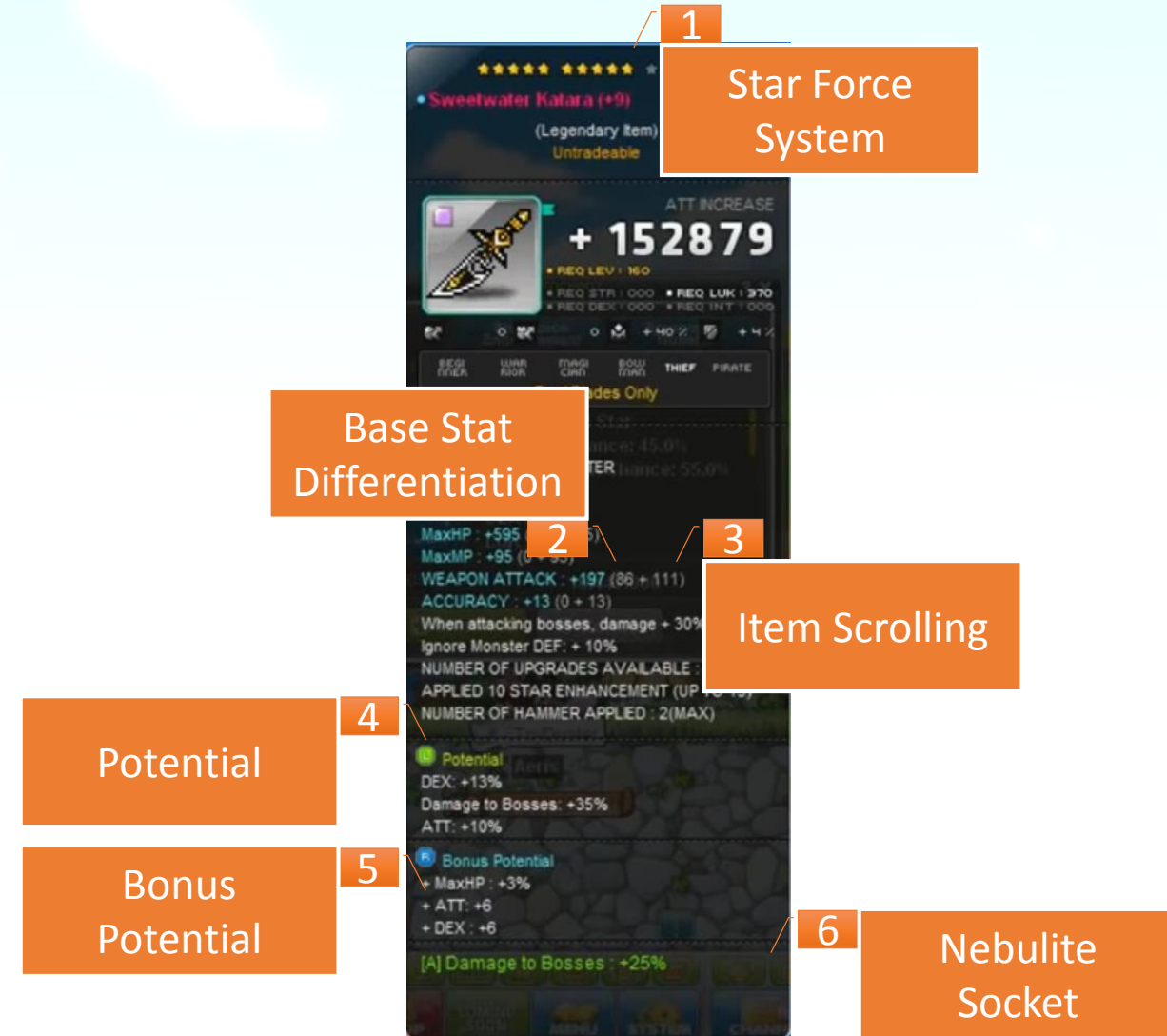
- MapleStory's unique offering as an MMORPG was providing players with a 2D side-scrolling experience, that was nowhere to be found in the MMORPG landscape.
- The game focuses on fast paced combat against multiple enemies at once or one powerful being, combined with platforming and exploration.
- Launched in 2003 (Korea), the game has been a [financial success](#), and a sequel is now in the works (currently in Beta).



Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades

Feature Overview

- A big part of MapleStory is optimizing your equipment to the highest degree possible.
- The entire item upgrade system is constructed around multiple aspects that are all needed to be optimal for the ‘best’ possible item.
- This allows players to generate a seemingly infinite amount of item variations, without requiring the addition of more content from the developer.



Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades (cont.)

Base Stat Differentiation [Soft Currency]

- Almost every item that is generated in the game contains slightly differentiating base stats.
- For Example, there are two daggers of the same item type on the right. One with 132 attack and the other with 133.
- The entire process of upgrading your item is not optimal if the base stats are not the highest possible, as the foundation you start from is lower in strength than other items of the same type.



The same weapon, un-upgraded, having different stats on two different situations. Above average stats are colored in cyan.

Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades (cont.)

Item Scrolling [Hard Currency + Soft Currency]

- The most basic upgrade available for items is the use of scrolls.
- Scrolls enhance the power of items depending on the scroll type and success rate, the lower the success rate the higher the bonus you get for passing.
- An upgrade slot is consumed whether or not the scroll was successful.
- Items have a set amount of slots available for scrolling, so making the best item requires to risk it with lower success rate scrolls for better results.
- Some scrolls also provide protection against unwanted side-effects such as items being destroyed upon failure, or to prevent the use of a slot even if the scroll fails.



Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades (cont.)

Extra Slot Implementation [Hard Currency]

- As items only have a limited item of slots available for scrolling, unlocking more slots is highly beneficial to create a better item.
- Players can purchase a special item that unlocks extra slots if they wish to upgrade beyond the initial limitation, and maximize the item's power.
- You are limited to a maximum of 2 additional slots, which are permanently added to the item.

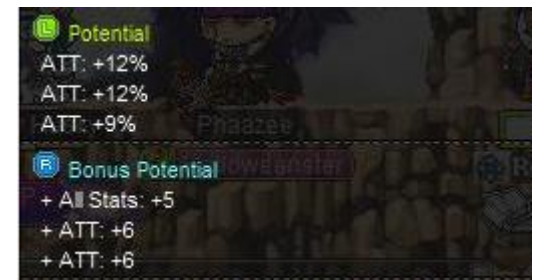


A good way to monetize without creating complex systems, just an increase in capacity. By limiting to only 2 additional slots Nexon has made this attractive enough to purchase but also not overpowered enough to be looked down upon by non paying users.

Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades (cont.)

Potential System (+ Bonus Potential) [Hard Currency + Soft Currency]

- In addition to regular stats, an item can boast a hidden potential. This potential, if available, can provide extremely powerful boosts.
- Potential is tiered to ranks from Rare to Legendary, with the latter providing the best boosts.
- If your item does not have a potential, you can add it with a special enhancement scroll (varying success rate).
- If you are unsatisfied with the current potential, you can [reroll](#) it with a special cube. Cubes also have a small chance to move your item's potential one tier up.
- You can also add a bonus potential to your item, which acts fundamentally the same as regular potential but with lesser boosts.



Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades (cont.)

Nebulite [Hard Currency + Soft Currency]

- An additional boost can be provided via the use of the Nebulite system.
- You can carve a special socket (requires a Nebulite Socket Creator) in your item and insert a Nebulite of a varying grade from [D] to [S].
- Once you insert a Nebulite into your item you will need a special item to remove it in case you wish to replace it.
- You can also fuse one Nebulite with another to create a brand new one.
- Fusing a grade [B] or higher Nebulite requires a special item that can only be purchased with hard currency.



Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades (cont.)

Star Force System [Soft Currency]

- After using up all the upgrade slots on an item, you can further enhance it with the 'Star Force' system.
- Using solely soft currency, the item can be increased in rank and gain stars.
- Stars provide you with small boosts that increase in effectiveness the higher the amount of stars on the item.
- The enhancement process also has a chance of working or not, which also decreases when you advance and gain more stars on the item.
- Failure in enhancing the item can do nothing if you are lucky, move you back one star if you are unfortunate, or in worst case scenarios even destroy the item.



Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades (cont.)

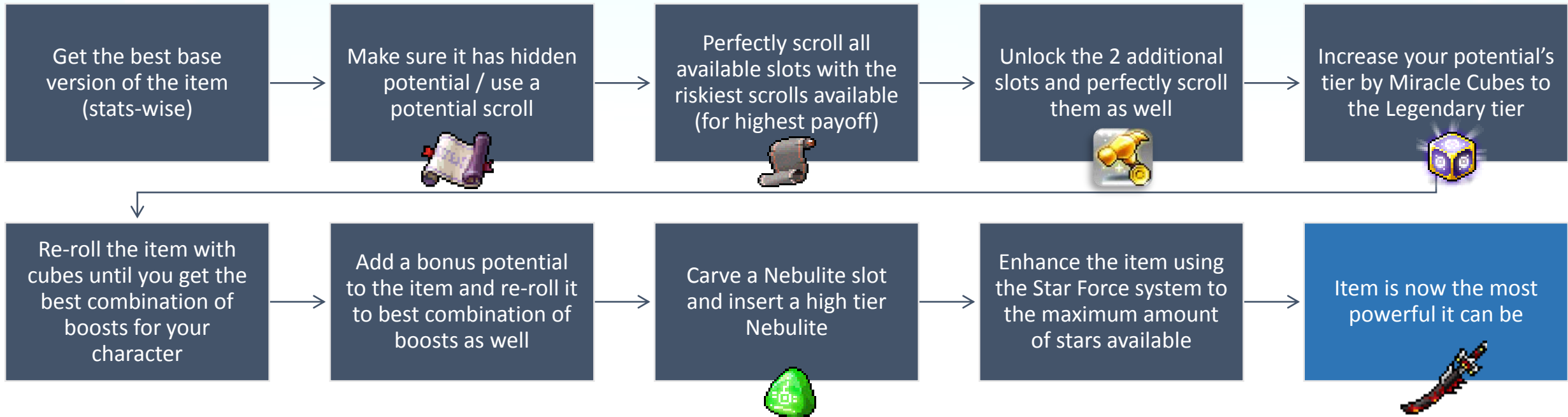
Means of Upgrade	Summary	Means of Purchase
Base stat differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items have varying stats (20~25 attack for example). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as item (Soft Currency).
Scrolling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varying success rate for scrolls, with higher risk giving better bonuses. Supporting scrolls that protect against failure, destruction of item and etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade scrolls with soft currency. Supporting scrolls with hard currency.
Extra slot implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlocks additional slots for scrolling (up to 2). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard currency.
Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides powerful bonuses (usually percentage based). Additional bonus potential can also be applied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial implementation with soft currency. Optimization, resets and upgrades with hard currency.
Nebulite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adds a single bonus (similar to potential). Nebulite fusion: fuse two unwanted together to make a new one. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High grade fusion requires a special item with hard currency. Everything else with soft currency.
Star Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay soft currency for a chance to upgrade the item with random bonuses to it's existing stats. Can only be raised once the item had been fully scrolled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soft currency.



Equipment – Optimization and Upgrades (cont.)

Summary

To recap, to get the most powerful version of an item, you must follow the following steps:



All throughout the process, various items, currencies and systems are used to ensure that the item has the best value.

Socializing

Megaphone

- A special megaphone item can be purchased to allow what you type in to be viewed by everybody that is logged in, even if they are not near you.
- This provides an opportunity to say something to a massive group of players, or offer up an item for sale to a large audience.
- If an item is attached, it can be viewed directly from the megaphone message.



Socializing (cont.)

General Chat (+ Bubble)

- The chat in MapleStory is displayed as common in most MMORPGs, however, there is also a chat bubble that appears above your character's head.
- This chat bubble can be customized via cosmetic skins, the same goes for the character's name tag.

Notices in Chat

- When players perform unique activities, such as crafting rare items, a notice appears on the global chat window.
- This adds social value to doing meaningful things in the game, as other players can see your achievements and aspire to have their name up there as well.



Socializing (cont.)

Party System

- The game encourages playing with a group in many ways.
- Loot is shared by all party members, as well as experience, and some skills even benefit the players more while in a group.
- Some bosses and quests are only available while playing in a party.
- The focus on playing in a group encourages player interaction and is a key part in building a good community.



Socializing (cont.)

Connections through Guilds, Alliances and Marriage.

- Players can join or form guilds that share a dedicated chat and member list, as well as skills that enhance the experience of all members.
- Guilds can be part of bigger alliances that contain a number of guilds, that also share a dedicated chat and member list.
- Two players can marry each other and gain access to special benefits such as an exclusive party quest, items and dedicated spouse chat. Players who get married can invite other players to their ceremony in an extensive social event.



Socializing (cont.)

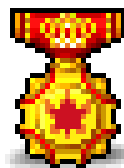
Element	Summary
Megaphone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a message to everybody in the same world, even if they are not near you. • Can be used to showcase items for trade / vanity.
Chat Bubble	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When speaking in chat, a chat bubble also appears above your character with the text you sent. • This bubble can be customized with skins.
Notices in Chat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When performing significant actions, a notice appears in chat to everybody in the same world.
Party System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and loot is shared equally between party members. • Some skills benefit from being in a party, and some bosses are only available when in a party.
Guild System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated chat and guild skills.
Alliance System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated chat and member list, can view and chat with each guild's members.
Marriage System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated chat, items and exclusive party quest • Marriage ceremony that friends who are invited can attend



Vanity

Medals and Titles

- By performing certain activities, reaching milestones and participating in events, players can obtain medals that give them a special title and some stat bonuses.
- These bonuses are usually minor and some players choose to equip rare titles over more powerful ones just for the sake of vanity and standing out.
- Titles are visual to everybody and appear bellow your character.



Vanity (cont.)

Unused Items Receive New Purpose

- Some items in MapleStory have existed for a long time, but are no longer effective due to the evolution of the game and its mechanics.
- For example, chairs used to provide fast healing, but are now ineffective as there are skills that do the job better.
- The same goes for mounts, all classes are now generally faster and more mobile than riding on mounts, thus making them less viable as means of transportation.
- However, these two categories of items had since become vanity items that players use to showcase their seniority or financial status.



A group of players, each on their own chair, band together in order to form a giant robot.

Vanity (cont.)

Fame

- A certain stat called 'Fame' is available to players, and basically provides no tangible benefits.
- This stat is often sought after by players of high level, and establishes their standing in the game.
- Fame is only obtained by very few and unique quests, or by other players.
- You can raise or lower fame for one person each day, so players often request to trade fame (the two players raise each other's fame) or plain out buy it.



A character preview window, with arrow buttons to raise / lower fame.

Vanity (cont.)

Event Items / Rare Equipment

- Some events provide players with exclusive items, which players might not have much use of, but can show them off at a later date.
- There is also some rare equipment that players equip just for the sake of showing others that they have it.
- Sometimes players do not need an incentive of extremely powerful items, but rather rare and exclusive items even if they are weaker.
- Players would equip those items in populated areas such as town, and use their more powerful equipment while they are in combat.



Both the pumpkin spear and the red rose weapons are equipped for the sake of vanity.

Vanity (cont.)

Fashion Layer Overlay

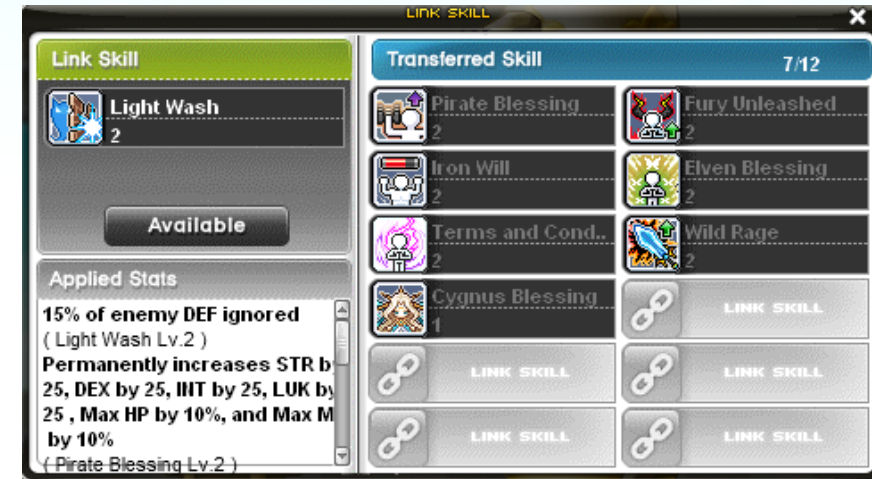
- Players can equip clothes and various items that are put in a separate layer from their standard equipment. These do not provide any benefit in terms of gameplay and are purely cosmetic.
- Fashion items usually have an expiration date, and expire 90 days following their purchase. Some limited items or ones that are given out in events are permanent.
- Due to the nature of stumbling upon players randomly, having a unique look becomes valuable and desired.
- The shop is updated regularly with different new items and offers, and players have constant variation and incentive to update their look, as most of their fashion items expire at one point or another.



Character Enhancement & Management

Link Skills

- Due to the fact that players can create and maintain multiple characters, there is a system in place to empower the player's "Main" or "Active" character through the other characters.
- When reaching a certain level with each character, they can provide a 'Link Skill' to a different character.
- Link Skills can empower your main character in different ways such as increased health or better cooldown times and etc.
- This system can encourage players to experiment with new characters without the feat of 'wasting time'.



The link skills interface window, showcasing the linked buffs and their level.

Character Enhancement & Management (cont.)

Character Cards

- Along with link skills, characters who reach a certain level also generate 'Character Cards' that can be used to maintain a deck that gives bonuses to all of your characters.
- These bonuses can be anything from additional attack power, to increased summon duration and even movement speed.
- The higher the characters' levels the better the cards that are generated.
- Decks can also receive further boost if there is a synergy between characters in a deck, for example three characters who are of the warrior class.



A deck consisted of 3 warrior based classes, results in a 'set' and thus provides an extra boost.

Character Enhancement & Management (cont.)

Offline Benefits Management

- Characters can be put to use while you are not logged into the game via a system called 'Part-Time Job'.
- Players can select a job based on their preferences and needs, and gain special rewards depending on what job they chose.
- For example, resting allows you to gain some experience points if you want to prioritize leveling up, and working in a general store can get you various scrolls if you wish to upgrade some items.
- This is a great way to help players feel more involved with the game while they are offline, and give them a feeling that they are always progressing, if by a little, even while they are not actively playing the game.



The part-time job interface, with a selection of jobs with different benefits.

PC Monetization (Gachapon)

Mechanic Overview

- By purchasing Gachapon tickets, players can access special capsule machines located throughout the game world to win random items.
- There is a guaranteed payout but not necessarily a good or useful item, as the best items are few and have lower odds of paying out.
- Some items are only available from the Gachapon, and most of the more valuable items are vanity based items such as unique chairs.



Added Value

- In addition to the monetization value of the Gachapon system, there is a social value that emerges whenever players are using the Gachapon.
- Other players usually gather around (physically or in chat) to support the player and congratulate rare items.

PC Monetization (Item Shop Categories)

The Shop (Everything Purchased with Hard Currency)				
Equipment Upgrade	Character Enhance	Socializing	Vanity	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miracle Cubes • Nebulite Removers • Nebulite Fusion Coupons • Vicious Hamer • Scissors of Karma & Sharing Tag 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Inventory / Storage / Character slots • Safety Charms (prevent EXP loss) • Bypass Keys (Equipment Req.) • Skill Points / Ability Points Resets • Experience / Drop Rate Coupons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megaphones • Marriage Related Items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character Appearance • Character Fashion Layer • Android Fashion Layer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UI Skins • Transformation Charms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gachapon • Pets • Time Savers (Teleportation, Mobile Item Stores, etc.) • Time Limit Extensions • Familiar Packs • Shop Permits • Monster Life Items (Mini Game)

The Shift to Mobile

Overview & Performance

Controls and UI

Auto Combat (Exclusive Feature)

Monetization

Mobile Version Overview (cont.)

Mechanics Overview

- Pocket MapleStory is the closest that Nexon has ever gotten to recreating the original game on a mobile platform, but it just can not compete with the more complete and potent PC version.
- Overall balance and pace has been changed, presumably to accommodate for the reduced amount of content compared to the PC version. If the balance was the same as on PC, people would breeze through the content too fast.
- Only 3 character classes are available at launch, significantly less than the 32 available on PC.



Mobile Version Overview (cont.)

Adapting to Mobile

- Most of the prominent game mechanics have been brought in their original form to the mobile version.
- A new 'Auto Combat' feature was added.
- Some minor tweaks were implemented to help simplify the gameplay. For example, items are automatically picked up when walking over them, while in the PC version you would have to manually pick them up with a dedicated button.
- Hard Currency is available in the form of 'Candy', and apart from allowing you to purchase items from the store, it is the only way to raise your VIP status.



Mobile Version Overview (cont.)

Changes in Pace

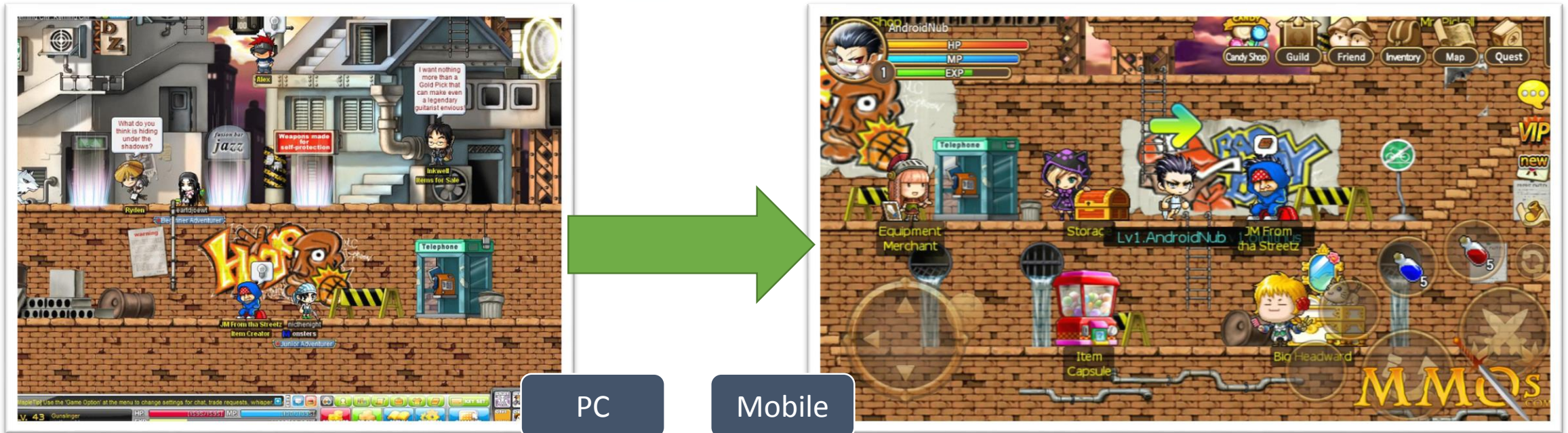
Attribute	PC	Mobile	Notes
Ability Points	5 (constant).	3 (constant).	You always gain less on mobile compared to PC.
Skill Points	3 (constant).	1 – 3 (increases as you level up).	Skills are gained at a slower pace at the beginning of the game on mobile. Skills are mostly exact replicas of their PC counterparts, so having this slower start is frustrating.
Item Level Requirement	5 for early game equipment, or 10 for more advanced equipment (usually).	8 (usually).	You have access to fewer equipment options early game on mobile compared to PC. This later evens out.
Transportation	Have to manually reach most locations, or pay soft / hard currency for time saving options.	Most locations can be traveled to instantly, without any particular fee.	Characters are more agile and easier to control on PC, thus making traveling less frustrating than it would have been on mobile.



Mobile Version Overview

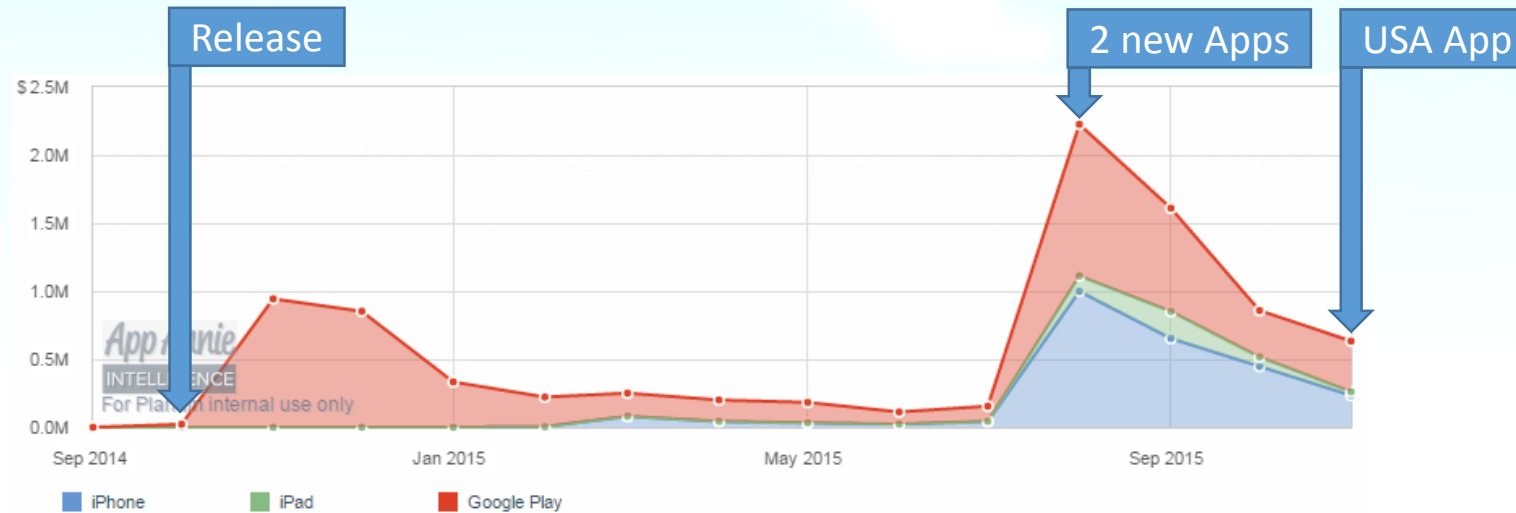
Graphical Assets

- Sprites were transferred as is, including character, equipment, monsters and etc.
- Added mostly UI elements and several new NPCs, but nothing else.
- Saved a lot of time for the art team, while also preserving the appeal of the original PC game.

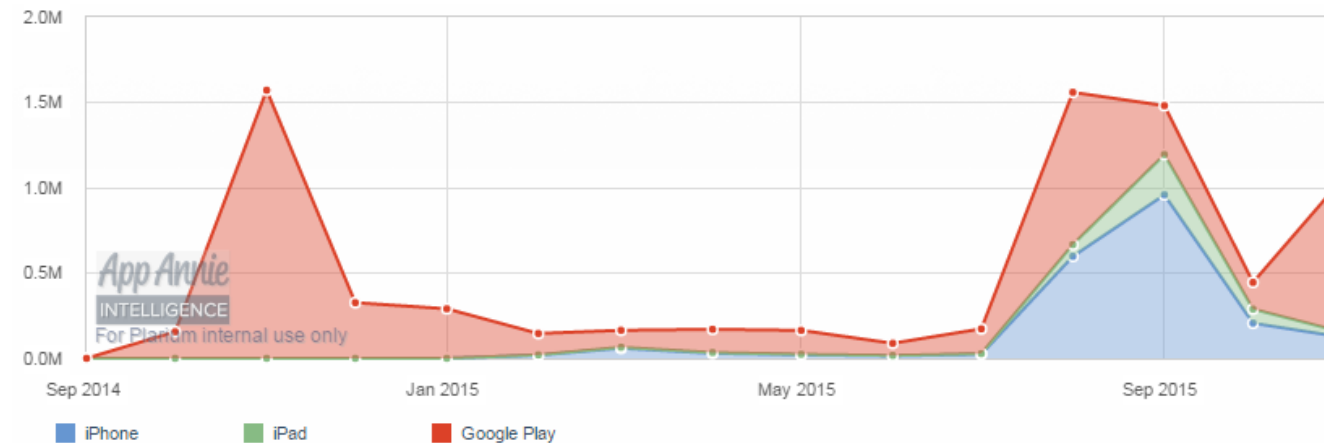


Mobile Version Performance (worldwide)

Downloads



Revenue

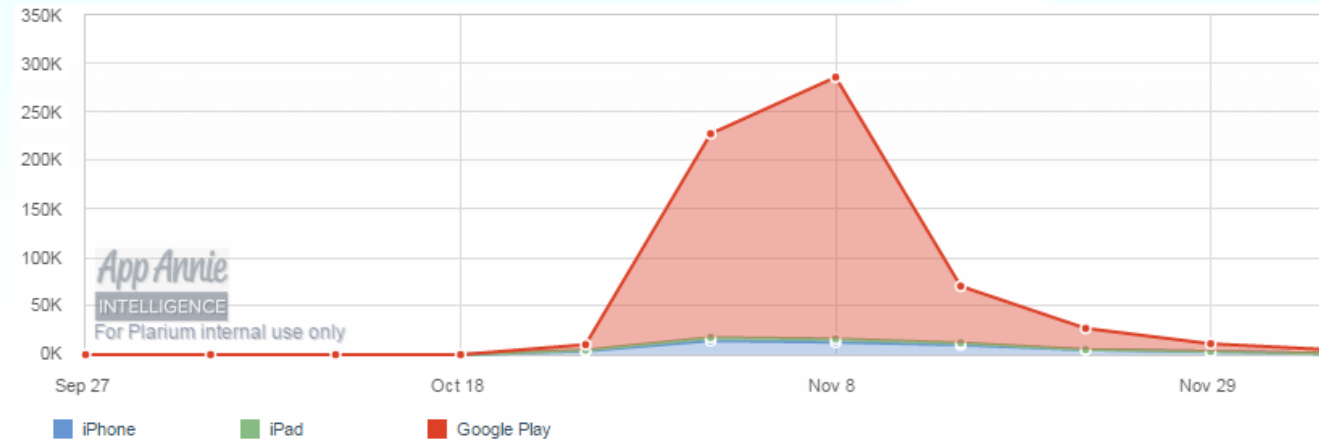


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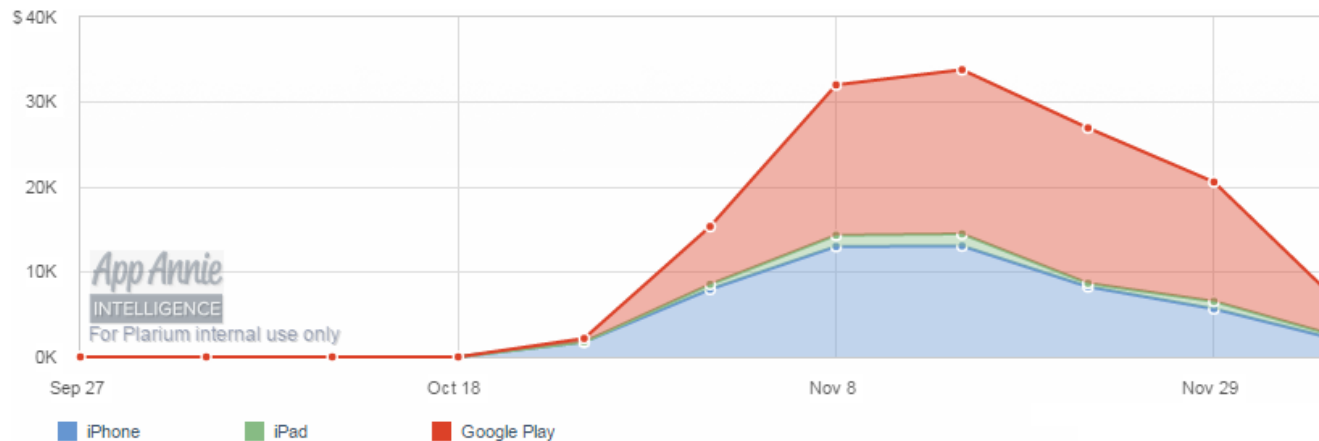


Mobile Version Performance (United States)

Downloads



Revenue





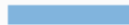



















US App Launch
The marketing push provided more downloads, but the sales bump was minor, and followed by a decline.

Data taken from App Annie.



Mobile Version Performance (US vs. South Korea)

Nov 2015 (US Launch) – All Devices

Country	Downloads	% Downloads	Revenue	% Revenue
Worldwide	1,063,709	100 % 	\$ 639,251	100 % 
United States	615,440	58 % 	\$ 114,146	18 % 
South Korea	126,823	12 % 	\$ 194,408	30 % 
United Kingdom	68,604	6.4 % 	\$ 3,861	0.6 % 
Canada	62,507	5.9 % 	\$ 19,216	3.0 % 
China	38,115	3.6 % 	\$ 56,307	8.8 % 
Taiwan	29,514	2.8 % 	\$ 133,974	21 % 
Indonesia	16,295	1.5 % 	\$ 3,026	0.5 % 
Brazil	15,901	1.5 % 	\$ 1,028	0.2 % 
Germany	12,973	1.2 % 	\$ 1,264	0.2 % 
Japan	11,251	1.1 % 	\$ 81,118	13 % 

- Although 58% of the downloads were in the US, it only amounted into 18% of the revenue.
- South Korea generated 30% of the revenue, while having approx. one fifth the amount of downloads.
- Taiwan had more revenue with substantially less downloads.
 - Japan is close behind on revenue (13%) compared to US, while only holding 1% download share.

Data taken from App Annie.



Controls and UI

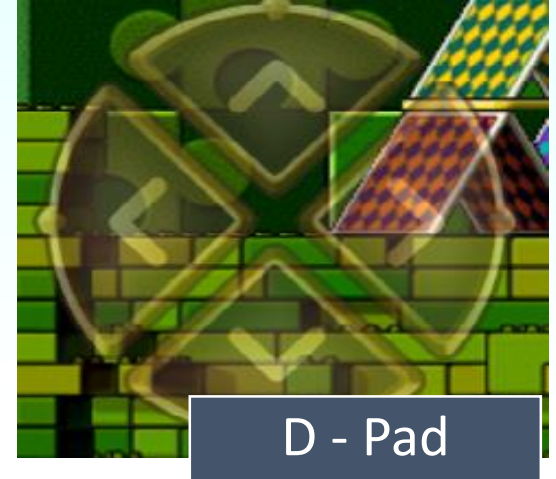


Controls and UI (cont.)

General Observations

- Designed to be played in landscape mode using two hands, and imitates a physical controller on the screen.
- There are two options for movement, a directional stick styled interface and a directional pad styled interface. The interface can be changed in the settings menu, and the default is stick.
- Controls are slightly transparent so that they do not completely conceal what's behind, and thus conserve some 'screen real-estate'.

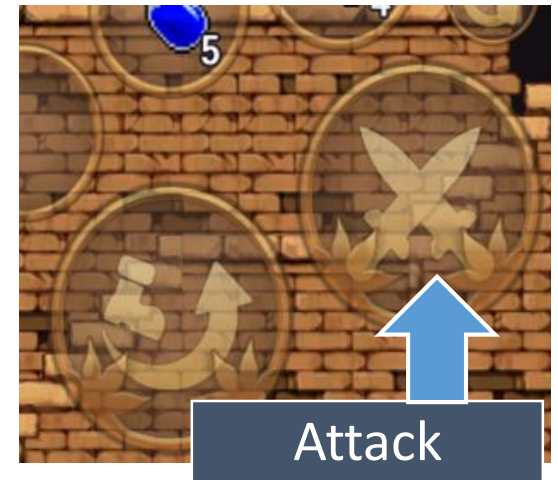
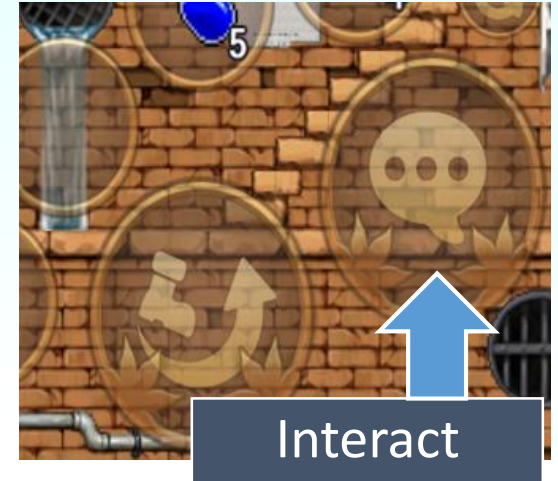
Both options are clunky in their own way, as they require precision without the physical feedback of a physical controller.



Controls and UI (cont.)

Dual Functionality Button (Attack / Interact)

- The attack button substitutes as the interact button, as they are never required to be used simultaneously.
- This allows to save UI space, as the button automatically switches between attack and interact depending on the situation.



If possible and intuitive, a button can have dual functionality depending on the situation. This can greatly preserve UI space, which is ideal when dealing with small screens.

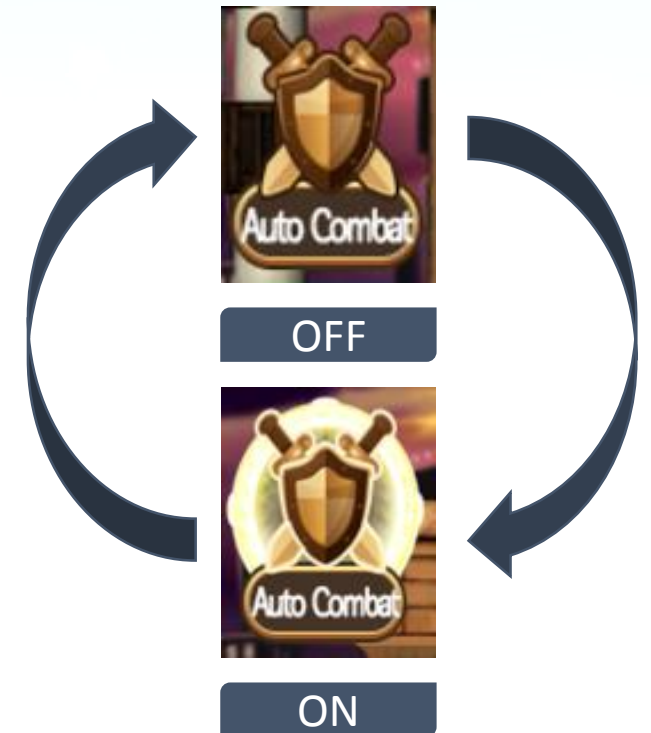
Auto Combat (Mobile Exclusive)

Overview

Players can toggle an option titled 'Auto Combat' ON / OFF via a dedicated button. When on, this will cause your character to automatically roam the map and attack monsters.

General Observations

- Probably added due to combat being more clunky with the mobile control scheme.
- This is very different from the mentality with the PC version, where something like this would be considered a form of cheating.
- It is not present in any of the previous attempts of mobile ports.
- This feature must have been a heated point of discussion when developing the game, due to the above statements.



Monetization (Capsule Machine)

Replacing the Gachapon from PC is a new 'Capsule Machine', where players can use soft / hard currency to obtain random rewards.

Players can now use both soft and hard currency, however, items that are generated from the hard currency machine are generally better.

You can also select the category of item that you wish to try for; Amor, Weapon or Accessory.

The best rewards are only available through the Super Premium machine.



Monetization (PC Implementation in Mobile)

Original Mechanic	Implementation	Notes
Scissors of Karma	Same	An item that enables untradeable items to be traded.
Town Teleport Rock	Limited	Can not register maps and re-visit them, only available locations are pre-defined towns.
Megaphone	Same	
Angelic Buster Costume Skins	Same	A cosmetic only skin for a specific class.
Miracle Cubes	Similar	Cubes provide less powerful buffs, and have had their functionality split into Miracle (granting potential) and Chaos (resetting potential).
Pets	Similar	As you now loot items automatically, pets are just for healing / vanity purposes.
Gachapon (Renamed 'Capsule Machine')	Similar	Functionality as detailed in ' Capsule Machine ' slide.
Scrolls	New	Scrolls can now be purchased with Hard Currency.
Mounts	New	Mounts are now a premium item and cost Hard Currency.



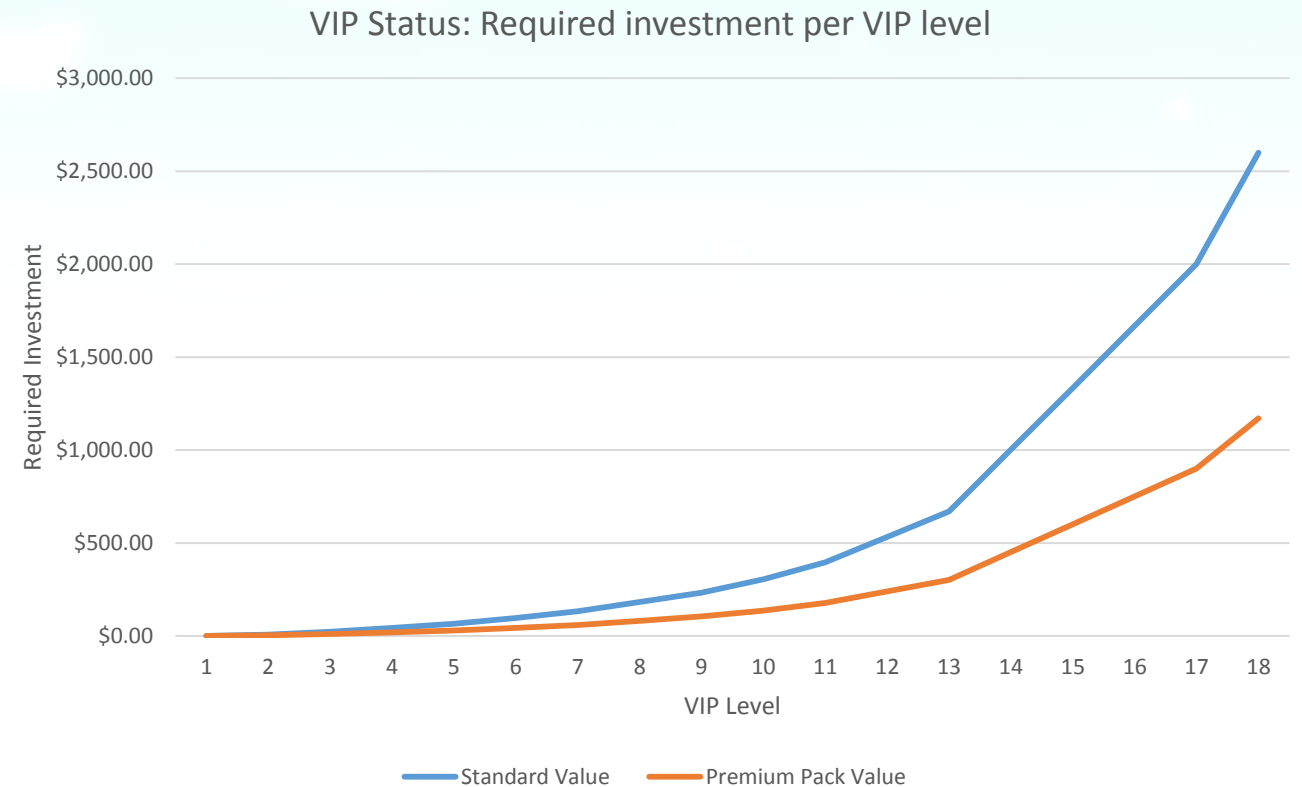
Monetization (VIP Status)

- VIP Status can only be obtained by purchasing Hard Currency. After purchasing a certain amount, you will unlock a new level of VIP.
- Once you reach a new VIP level, this will be your new permanent level, until you reach a higher level by purchasing more hard currency.
- VIP rewards are distributed daily, and you must log-in each day if you want to receive them, otherwise you will miss them.
- VIP milestone levels (due to rewards):
 - VIP 5: (2) Free Premium Capsule Tickets first available.
 - VIP 6: Stonewall Blessing first available (Character Buff)
 - VIP 8: (2) Free Super Premium Capsule Ticket first available.



Monetization (VIP Status cont.)

VIP Level	Candy Required	\$ Worth by regular purchase	\$ Worth by premium pack (30 days)
1	1,000	1	0.45
2	7,000	7	3.15
3	23,000	23	10.35
4	43,000	43	19.35
5	66,000	66	29.7
6	96,000	96	43.2
7	132,000	132	59.4
8	n/a	182	81.9
9	232,000	232	104.4
10	304,000	304	136.8
11	396,000	396	178.2
12	n/a	532.5	239.625
13	669,000	669	301.05
14	n/a	1001.75	450.7875
15		1334.5	600.525
16		1667.25	750.2625
17	2,000,000	2000	900
18	2,600,000	2600	1170
19	n/a		
20			

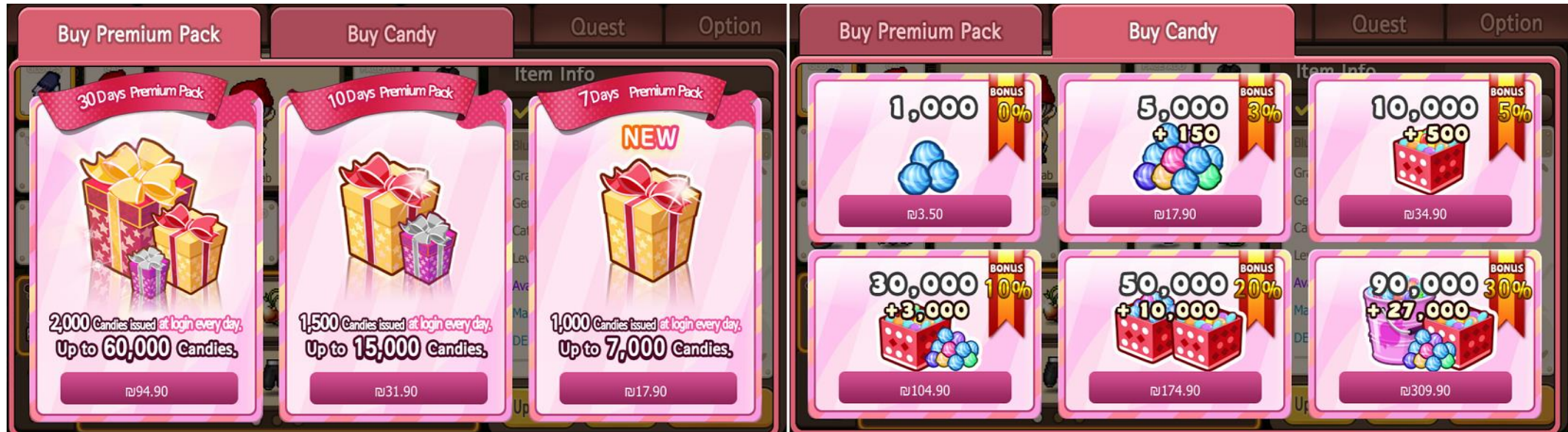


*Green data is n/a or estimated median. Data taken from Wiki + Reddit.



Monetization (Subscription)

- The best value proposition for players is the 'Premium Pack' service.
- The concept of this method is that players receive considerably more hard currency for their money, but it is distributed in smaller chunks and throughout a certain time period.
- This is an interesting system that mixes retention with monetization as players are required to log-in daily and collect the rewards.



Monetization (Mobile Pricing)

Item	Price (HC)	Value (\$)	30 Day Premium Pack Value (\$)	Type
Miracle Cube	1,100	1.1	0.495	Item Upgrade
Chaos Cube	2,400	2.4	1.08	
Scissors of Karma	1,000	1	0.45	
Town Teleport Rock	500	0.5	0.225	Convenience
Megaphone (5 pack)	500	0.5	0.225	Vanity / Socializing
AB Character skin	5,000	5	2.25	
Premium cap	1,000	1	0.45	Mystery Box
Super Premium cap	5,000	5	2.25	
EXP Capsule (1 hour)	1,000	1	0.45	Time Saver
EXP Capsule (4 hour)	2,800	2.8	1.26	
EXP Capsule (8 hour)	5,600	5.6	2.52	
EXP Capsule (1 day)	10,000	10	4.5	
EXP Capsule (7 day)	49,000	49	22.05	
Pet / Mount (1 day)	120 - 990	0.2 – 0.99	0.05 – 0.4	Vanity / Convenience
Pet / Mount (10 day)	500 – 4,950	0.5 – 4.95	0.2 – 2.3	
Pet / Mount (30 day)	1,000 – 9,900	1 – 9.9	0.45 – 4.45	
Nickname Change Ticket	8,500	8.5	3.8	Vanity
Fashion Items	800 – 3,500	0.8 – 3.5	0.36 – 1.5	



Monetization (Value Perception)

Package	Price	Value Tier	Allows you to Purchase
1,000	\$1	1	Pet / Mount (1 Day), EXP Capsule (1 hour), Scissors of Karma, Town Teleport Rock, Megaphone (5 pack), Premium Capsule Machine (1 spin).
5,000 (+150)	\$5	2	Super Premium Capsule Machine (1 spin), AB Character Skin, Miracle Cube (up to 4), Chaos Cube, EXP Capsule (4 hour), more of the above.
10,000 (+500)	\$10	3	Nickname Change Ticket, EXP Capsule (8 hour), EXP Capsule (1 day), more of the above.
30,000 (+3,000)	\$30	3.5	More of the above.
50,000 (+10,000)	\$50	4	EXP Capsule (7 day).
90,000 (+27,000)	\$90	5	More of the above.
7,000 (7 day premium pack)	\$5	2.5	Everything from Tier 1 + 2 (with higher quantity), EXP Capsule (8hour).
15,000 (10 days premium pack)	\$9	3.5	Everything from Tier 1 + 2 + 3 (with higher quantity).
60,000 (30 days premium pack)	\$27	4.5	Everything from Tier 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 (with higher quantity).



Monetization (Value Perception cont.)

Premium Pack vs. Regular Purchase:

- The game pushes you to opt for the Premium Pack ‘subscription’, by offering more beneficial rewards.
- You get more “bang for your buck” when choosing the Premium Packs, so they are of higher value.
- Basically, unless you are in immediate need for a specific item that is very pricey, the Premium Pack is always the better option for you.

Price Point	Premium Pack	Standard Purchase
\$5	7,000 Candy	5,000 Candy
\$10	15,000 Candy + save \$1	10,500 Candy
\$30	60,000 Candy + save \$3	30,300 Candy

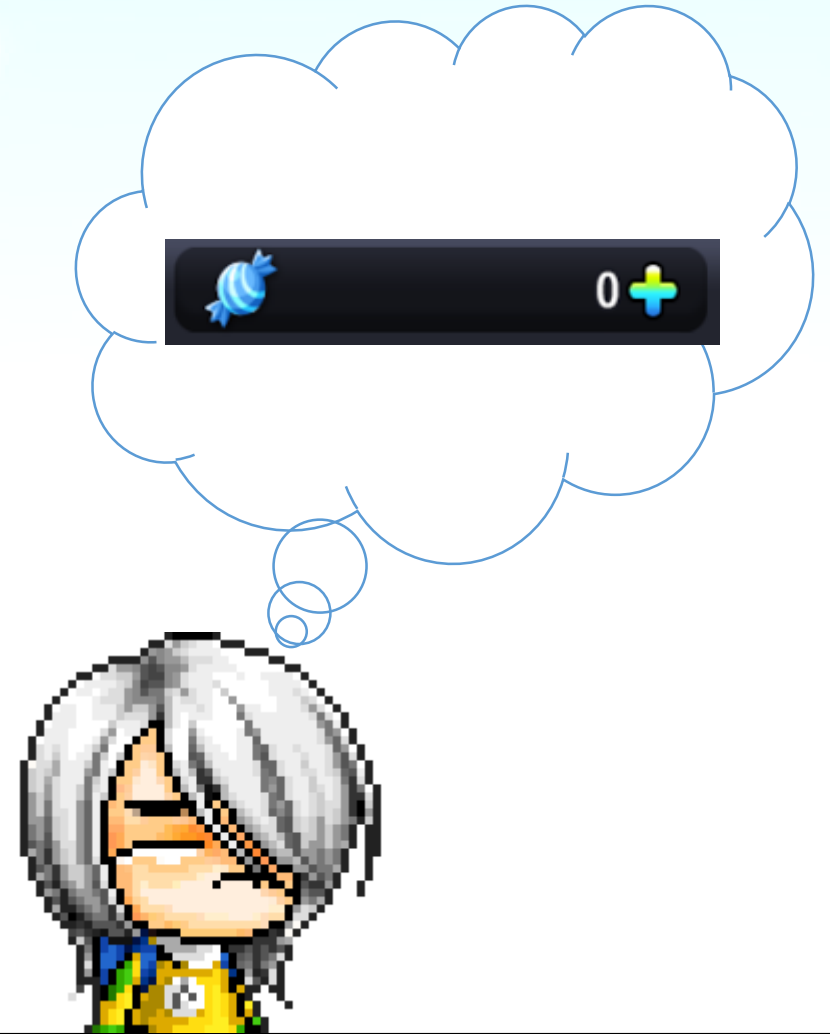
Purchases Utility:

- When advancing in “value tiers” with regular purchases, there are certain offers that only allow you to purchase more of the same items from the previous “tier”.



Monetization (Purchase Incentive)

- Hard Currency is very rarely received, and you can not learn the benefits of purchasing items from the store.
- You do not even receive trial version of items, or in low quantity.
- Besides providing no incentive to make a purchase, this might also drive people away from the game in general as the value of items is not explained.
- Players who are familiar with the PC version understand the purpose and utility of certain items more intuitively, but to new players these items are a mystery.



Possible Implementation in Strategy Games

Implementation of mechanics and concepts for Plarium strategy games

Overview

Mechanic / Concept	Value
Notices in Chat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vanity value to the player performing the action. • Encourages players to engage with the game and reach milestones. • Allows advanced players to spot potential targets (drives PvP).
Titles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appealing to various types of players (killers, explorers, achievers). • Rewards engagement and activity.
Fame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages players to interact with each other, offers a way to gain by interacting and socializing.
Customizable Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages player to return to the game and activate the building's power, but overpowered enough to make players who are unable to log-in feel that they are missing out. • Allows players to make informed choices depending on the situation, adds a small layer of strategic planning.
Monetization by Subscription	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuses monetization and retention into a unified element. • Offers look very attractive compared to standard purchases.



Notices in Chat

Description:

When players craft a rare item, or perform a significant task in the game (reaching hero's max level, for example), a notice will appear in the global chat to celebrate the achievement.

Examples:

“[Username] has successfully crafted [rare item]!” or “[Username] has reached level 50, congratulations on this amazing achievement!”.

Value:

- Vanity value to the player performing the action.
- Encourages players to engage with the game and reach milestones.
- Allows advanced players to spot potential targets (drives PvP).
- Fairly basic feature to implement.

Monetization:

- Indirect via increased engagement.



Titles

Description:

When players fulfil certain achievements, they can gain 'Titles' that can be attached to their hero. These titles are viewable to everybody upon inspecting your profile, and also provide a small bonus.

Examples:

Train 50,000 units to unlock the title [War-born] which provides 2% unit training speed boost.

Raid 100 resource sites to unlock the title [Raider] which increases the amount of resources you yield by 3%.

Value:

- Appealing to various types of players (killers, explorers, achievers).
- Rewards engagement and activity.

Monetization:

- Indirect via increased engagement
- Lock the active title for a certain period of time, and if players want to swap titles faster they need to purchase a special item. [\[Optional Suggestion\]](#)



Fame

Description:

A stat that can not be independently raised on your own, but only by other players. A form of vanity that player can aspire to collect by engaging with other players. Once per day, you can raise a different player's level of fame, but not your own.

Note: not effective so much for strategy games, as there are not many situations that arise naturally that support the concept.

Examples:

After receiving a generous amount of resources from a clan member, you raise his level of fame.

Value:

- Encourages players to interact with each other, offers a way to gain by interacting and socializing.

Monetization:

- Indirect via increased engagement.

Customizable Benefits

Description:

A certain building that provides you with timed benefits based on whatever you choose, depending on your current situation and needs in the game. This bonus requires you to return to the game and activate it once the timer runs out.

Examples:

If you are in need of resources the most, you can set the building to provide 2% resource production boost.

Value:

- Encourages player to return to the game and activate the building's power, but not overpowered enough to make players who are unable to log-in feel that they are missing out.
- Allows players to make informed choices depending on the situation, adds a small layer of strategic planning.

Monetization:

- Let players stop the current process using a special item before the timer runs out, in case they changed their priorities. The item is rarely obtained from daily rewards but can be purchased in the store. [\[Optional Suggestion\]](#)



Monetization by Subscription

Description:

Offer 'subscription' based packages that are of higher value, but give the player their reward in small doses daily instead of in one instant.

Examples:

More value for your money, but requires daily log-in (retention) in order to get the most benefits.

Value:

- Fuses monetization and retention into a unified element.
- Offers look very attractive compared to standard purchases.

Monetization:

- As detailed above.



Appendix

Further reading

Financial Reception (PC)

TOP 10 MMOs by Worldwide Revenue for 2014 YTD

Rank	Title	Publisher/Developer	Revenues (millions, YTD)	Worldwide Marketshare	Rank for same period in 2013
1	League of Legends	Tencent/Riot Games	\$946	11.9%	4 ▲
2	Crossfire	SmileGate/Neowiz	\$897	11.2%	2 ▲▼
3	Dungeon Fighter Online	Nexon	\$891	11.2%	1 ▼
4	World of Warcraft	Activision/Blizzard	\$728	9.1%	3 ▼
5	World of Tanks	Wargaming	\$369	4.6%	5 ▲▼
6	Maplestory	Nexon	\$240	3.0%	6 ▲▼
7	Lineage I	NCSOFT	\$178	2.2%	7 ▲▼
8	Counter-Strike Online	Valve/Nexon	\$148	1.9%	8 ▲▼
9	DOTA 2	Valve	\$136	1.7%	20 ▲
10	Hearthstone: Heroes of Warcraft	Activision/Blizzard	\$114	1.4%	—
Worldwide MMO Revenues			\$7,974		

Notes: Revenues shown are for the period January to September, 2014. Ranking based on approximate share of the worldwide market, here defined as the combined revenues ("Worldwide MMO Market Revenues") for both free-to-play MMOs and subscription-based MMOs categories. All revenue figures are based on the spending data we collect from developers, publishers and payment service providers active in the space, totaling 37 million unique paying gamers across digital platforms. We welcome both questions and comments: www.superdataresearch.com

← Back to Prominent Game Mechanics (PC)



Follower NPC (Vanity and Character Enhancement)

Androids (PC only)

- Androids provide an additional boost to your character via a mechanical heart that can be upgraded in various ways.
- They also add a vanity value by allowing players to customize their looks, similar to how you can customize your character.
- Androids are visible to everybody and are constantly following you around.



Monetization Potential with Miracle Cubes

Getting a really great potential requires luck and a large amount of cubes.

Players can receive a potential to their satisfaction with several cubes, however, to get the really high rank and powerful combinations you would usually have to use up as much as a hundred cubes (if unlucky).

Players who prefer not to risk a decent potential would stop rerolling sooner, but those who wish to put in the extra money can receive highly beneficial results.

A regular cube sells on the PC item shop for around \$1, that means a potential \$100 revenue from a single rerolled item.

Nexon are not revealing their data, but it is my assumption that a lot of the revenue from MapleStory is generated by the selling of miracle cubes.



[Back to Potential System\(PC\)](#)

