

Vorble makes opening gambit with digital board game

The pantheon of traditional games being reinvented for the digital age has another contender – Vorble, a 3D mashup of the classic strategy chessboard genre.

It is a mind game played on a spherical “board without edges” and the latest app for social gamers with a competitive spirit.

Vorble, developed by UK-based MegaTree, is marketing itself as a thinking game for players who want something a little more cerebral from their apps than how quickly they can twitch their thumbs.

Its simple rules can quickly lead the gamer into complex strategies, earning it plaudits from Mind Sports experts.

Chief Organiser of the Mind Sports Olympiad, Etan Ilfeld, said: “Vorble is a brilliant 3D strategy game that is simple to learn and provides hours of exercise for the imagination and the mind.”

Gamers can pitch their wits against each other online or against a series of thirteen progressively challenging artificial intelligences (AIs), with personalities such as The Apprentice, Death and the ultimate nemesis, The Banker.

Alex Rix, a member of the Beijing 2008 Mind Sports Olympiad British Go Team, added: “Vorble is a simple game to learn, much fun to play and appears simple at first sight. However, it is similar to Go in that several strategies can be employed and the game is in fact highly complex and repays study. I highly recommend that you try it.”

For Vorble’s inventor, Stuart Fotheringham, it is the realisation of a concept that could only exist because of touch-screen technology.

“I had the idea for the board game without edges many years ago, a sort of chess for the 21st century, but until now the technology did not exist to achieve this. The advent of touch-based smart devices finally made it possible.”

Stuart believes Vorble’s appeal to both the solitary or social player make it an ideal mind game for all manner of players, from children to silver-surfers.

Players also have access to vorble.com which offers access to online rivals, league tables, game stats and replays of their internet clashes.

The app comes as paid-for and free. The free version allows two-player only matches via the internet, supported by advertising, while the paid-for version offers two distinct single-player games against AIs as well as internet matches and costs £1.49 in UK, €1.59 in Europe, US\$1.99 in USA, C\$1.99 in Canada and A\$1.99 in Australia.

Vorble is currently available for iPhone, iPod Touch, and iPad and is localised with English, French, German, Italian and Spanish languages.

Social media links: www.vorble.com ; www.facebook.com/vorble ; @vorble ;

Trailer (embeddable): <http://youtu.be/oVZrKsXeRUI>

Available from: <http://iTunes.com/app/vorble>

Promotional codes available to journalists upon request.

Notes for editors:

Possible angles:

1. Vorble is joining the ranks of 21st-century reworks of board games, alongside Draw Something, the new Pictionary, Words With Friends, the new Scrabble, and online Monopoly. Vorble is a Mind Sport game of similar ilk to Chess, Go, English Draughts / Checkers, and Bridge.
2. Vorble is the product of diversification during recession – MegaTree is a subsidiary of Analysis Success Ltd, a London-based former creator of credit risk systems for banks whose business was severely affected by the financial services crash. Vorble has taken three years to develop.
3. Vorble's artificial intelligences (AIs) were not programmed but evolved. After being programmed with the game rules they were born of natural selection created by cross-breeding the digital DNA of match-winning AIs through thousands of generations. These evolved AIs were recruited as the characters who single players pit their wits and problem-solving skills against.
4. Vorble was created by a globally diverse team, demonstrating that remote teamwork can produce successful results – no-one was in the same location. Stuart worked by video conference, phone and email with programmers and designers throughout the UK and in Australia, New Zealand and the USA.
5. The Vorble theme tune was created by Grammy Award-winning music producer Jackknife Lee who has worked with a variety of artists, including U2, R.E.M., The Cars, Bloc Party and Snow Patrol.

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About MegaTree — <http://www.megatree.com>

MegaTree develops games for smart phones and tablets. Previously MegaTree published 'Gangsta' a multi-player game for mobile phones, initially via SMS and later with WAP technology, which used 'natural language interpretation' of "text-speak" to allow players to participate in an interactive fiction representation of the London crime world. The company was founded in 2003 and was acquired by Analysis Success Ltd in 2006.

About Analysis Success Ltd — <http://www.analysis-success.com>

Founded in 1997, Analysis Success Ltd (ASL) was a boutique technology consulting business that created international credit risk systems and delivered regulatory-driven multinational change programmes in global banks. Since 2009 the firm has shifted focus to mobile application development and publishing.