Korean game market in 2013: Transition from online game to mobile game

Mobile game pushed away online game

In the second half of 2012, mobile games slowly overwhelmed online game. Mobile games such as Anipang (20 million downloads, 10 million daily users, 0.3 million simultaneous users) and Dragon Flight easily surpassed the number of online game users. The size of sales, Anipang - 7 million Euros per month, is also non-comparable to any popular online game. Therefore, major game companies such as Neowiz games, NHN and Han Game have shown a bigger interest in the mobile game market than ever. The existing mobile game companies such as Com2us and Gamevil are expanding investment to get ready for the coming keen competition. Focusing on mobile games since the feature phone era, the two mobile game companies are each planning to release 40 ~ 50 new mobile games in the market this year.

Government regulation and rapidly changing market is the new hurdle

Still there are facts that make the market instable. One of them is the government regulations on game. Current government sees the game is closely connected to social issues and regards violent games and game addiction as a cause of crimes. Since the Shutdown policy* by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, and the Selective shutdown system** by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism started in 2012 the industry has been shrunk. The number of games classified by the Game Rating Board in the first half of 2012 is 385 which is 31.5% less than the first half of 2011. Comparing the same period, games targeting users aged over 18 have been increased more than 50% and the other have been decreased about 10%. At this moment, those policies do not apply to mobile games however it will be considered within two years. If so, adding systems for age identification and for shut-down is going to be a huge cost burden for the developers.

Industry emphasizes that the competiveness of the mobile game market is speed. Quick analysis on the customer needs and quick response are the key. Therefore, making a mid-long term strategy is getting more difficult. This results in bringing the uncertainty to the mobile game market.

These factors will lead 2013 to be a year of risk and opportunity to the mobile game market.

*Shut-down policy
Ban all game users aged under 16 from playing online games between midnight and 6:00 am.

**Selective shutdown system
Upon request of parents or legal representatives of a child aged under 18, a game company must block the access of that child to a game during the requested time.