

APP DEVELOPER HITS THE JACKPOT WITH GREAT GAME APP AND ADMOB SMART BANNER ADS



AT A GLANCE

Who they are:

- Rich Woods
- www.exobyte.net
- Norwich, UK

Goals:

- Initially, have a fulfilling hobby
- Transform hobby into potential full-time job

Approach:

- Created Euro-style slot machine game, "Cherry Chaser"
- Deployed smart banner ads on Google AdMob

Results:

- Over a million downloads
- 99% fill rate to boost income
- Maximized clickthrough rates at 1.09%
- Began making \$100 a day, with virtually no upfront investment

Rich Woods thought it might be a fun hobby to create a simple slot machine game app for Android, "Cherry Chaser." His purpose? "Initially, I wanted to learn Java and test the various game libraries available, but my efforts grew into far, far more," says Woods.

Despite his humble anticipations, Woods published "Cherry Chaser" on Google Play and added banner advertisements through AdMob, Google's platform for app developers to earn revenue and advertise their apps. He felt that AdMob was simple to set up and had the potential to generate some income.

Cherry Chaser's popularity wildly exceeded his expectations. It operates like a European-style slot machine, which typically offers more complexity and levels of game play than typical U.S. slot machines. Users also can earn virtual prizes such as trophies and medals to keep things interesting.

Worldwide sensation

Soon, Woods had avid fans in places as far-flung as Spain, Netherlands, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Russia, the U.K., and the United States. Woods takes pride in his creation, making it as fun and glitch-free as possible. He quickly localized it into various languages to cater to his loyal followers. The app was self-sustaining financially, almost immediately.

One month later, Woods' simple slot machine game had over 300,000 downloads, and that number began climbing rapidly. "With help from AdMob's consistently high fill rate of 99%, I was soon earning as much money through my game-writing hobby as I was from my 'day job' in IT. That translates to about US \$100 a day, with almost no up-front investment," says Woods.





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Rich Woods

Just right for multiple devices

A year later, Cherry Chaser has more than a million downloads and 100,000 active users. It is making remarkably good earnings through AdMob smart banner ads with clickthrough rates of 1.09% and eCPMs of 80-100 cents. Woods gravitates to the smart banner ad format because it makes his game feel tailored to fit when running on devices with larger screens. Smart Banners are new ad units that will render screen-wide banner ads on any screen size across different devices in either orientation. Smart Banners help deal with increasing screen fragmentation across different devices by “smartly” detecting the width of the phone in its current orientation, and making the ad view that size.

In retrospect, Woods is pleased that he chose AdMob for several reasons. AdMob is the market leader and is very well known. Its software development kit (SDK) was easy to integrate with his app. And the 99% fill rates can’t be beat. He tried other in-app advertising options whose fill rates hovered around a disappointing 12%. Plus, he says, the payment from other ad networks was unreliable and slow. Not so with AdMob which make payouts in local currencies.

From hobby to full time gig

Although writing apps is still a hobby, Woods calculates that he’s about a year away from being able to become a full-time app developer. If he had it to do all over again, he wouldn’t change a thing. His advice to other app developers is to make superbly high-quality games that are engaging, localized for different markets, and have great music and graphics.

Woods’ game development efforts were self-sufficient straightaway with income from AdMob. He’s now created a paid version of his app the replaces the banner ad with an animated coin tray. He’s tracking metrics and reports from Google Play so he can continue to improve his apps.

Today, 1,120,121 unique users in the world have downloaded Cherry Chaser. Next, Woods is hoping to break into Korea to entertain enthusiasts there. He’s now creating his third game, “Plasma Duel,” and has already decided to use AdMob as his primary means of monetization.