

## Commentary

### Monetize The Online Gaming Space

Gregg Lavin, Nov 11, 2010 05:00 AM

For Web publishers, generating revenue from the flow of visitors to their sites usually means advertising -- delivering audiences to companies eager to show online ads to them. With the explosion of social media, there are plenty of engaged users, particularly at online gaming sites. With a seemingly insatiable appetite for playing games and accruing the virtual currency needed to maximize play, gamers are ripe for outreach and new opportunities.

Marketers get it, causing a boom in the offer wall space, where visitors earn virtual currency for online games by accepting deals from companies to purchase or subscribe to their products. The downside is that these offers tend to require a real -- not virtual -- financial expenditure. The free gaming points aren't actually so free. p> In the offer wall space, there's a win-win alternative, something free that actually engages while delivering the desired gaming points -- market research surveys.

Market research companies have adopted online panels to complete most of their research studies, and the social media space provides the most diverse demographic of potential panelists. Market researchers are willing to pay publishers for eyeballs -- that is, survey participants who accept offers to take surveys.

**Market research surveys are a safe way for Web visitors to earn virtual currency for online gaming -- without a credit card.** There's a real mania for virtual currency to buy things needed for online games such as "FarmVille," "Car Town" or "Mafia Wars." One way to earn points is through actual game play, but for most people, there isn't enough time in their day to accrue sufficient points. Players are increasingly opening their real wallets to buy points with real money, whether through the game company itself or a third party.

Being rewarded with game points for participating in an online market research survey, however, is entirely free for the participant. There is no hidden cost, and no need to spend actual money. The online survey supplier is the one who funds the game company for points to reward survey participants, and pays Web publishers for the traffic that results in completed surveys. <

Unlike offers that require an actual expenditure -- whether to buy a subscription or purchase some goods -- to earn gaming currency, the player simply completes a survey and earns a specific number of gaming points. It's clean, it's safe, and it's free.

**Unlike a traditional offer, a person looking for virtual goods or currency can log in daily and attempt a survey -- it's an opportunity to earn points every day.** Not every player qualifies for every survey, of course. Each survey requires a particular demographic, geographic or

psychographic profile, so Web visitors must meet the individual requirements of a given survey to participate. Still, a plentiful supply of market research surveys keeps participants engaged and earning points. In this way, market research surveys can be looked at as a *complementary* revenue stream for game developers. Although traditional offers can only be signed up for once by a given user, market research surveys continually refresh for consistent monetization opportunities.

**The companies behind market research surveys are often major brands looking for consumer insights, seeking ongoing engagement with consumers who want to have a voice.** Millions of people around the globe now voluntarily sign up for market research panels as a way to share their opinions and help shape the direction of goods and services in the worldwide marketplace. Incentive rewards such as virtual currency are a vital added bonus, one that savvy Web publishers are recognizing as a way to monetize *and* engage their traffic.