

SOCIAL PRO DAILY

OMGPOP Expands Facebook Offerings With HTML5 Based Gem Rush

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Single player, arcade-style puzzle games are not in short supply on Facebook, but OMGPOP's brand new game Gem Rush stands from the crowd out thanks to its slick graphics, rock-solid execution and integration of Facebook's Timeline system.

According to our traffic tracking service [AppData](#), Gem Rush currently has 30 monthly active users and 10 daily active users.

Developed by OMGPOP veteran game designer Will Chen, Gem Rush is best described as a blend of Dr. Mario and Puyo Puyo. In the game players race against the clock to steer pairs of gems onto columns and try to make sets of three or more. Once matched, the gems explode, and any gems left above will fall down and create chain reactions. The faster the player makes matches the more the score multiplier racks up, and the more violently the gems explode. Clear an entire screen of gems and it fills up again from the bottom.

Every time a user levels up, they receive a 1% score multiplier bonus, meaning the more one plays, the higher their score will be. While this makes it easy for players to

keep hitting new personal bests, it also gives higher-level players a distinct advantage over new players on the game's leaderboards, even if they technically have the same skill level.

Social features in Gem Rush are limited to leaderboards and weekly tournaments where players can win medals for having the highest score among their friends. While it's simple and fast to invite friends to compete against you in weekly tournaments, Gem Rush doesn't reward the player with extra items or power-ups for recruiting more players.

On the monetization front, Gem Rush is also a very simple package; there is no soft currency in Gem Rush or premium items to purchase. Instead the game monetizes by allowing players to purchase life refills, eliminating the five minute wait it takes for each one to regenerate on its own.

What might be the most interesting thing about Gem Rush is its development pedigree. The game is part of OMGPOP's much larger ongoing project to create their own HTML5 framework for Facebook games. While HTML5 may still be an evolving set of standards, it's perfect for OMGPOP according to Christian Montoya, the company's VP of product.

"The game loads very fast," said Montoya. "That's because all the screens aside from the actual gameplay screen are HTML5, not Flash. This framework allows us to launch similar games on Facebook very quickly and even gives us the ability to launch HTML5 games in place of Flash games as well."

However, where the real advantage lies with HTML5 is in the time it takes to implement Facebook's new features. While Facebook announced Timeline at the end of September, most apps on the platform, including brand new social games, are still using the old permissions system — i.e. requesting access to a user's friends, or to post as the user. Because Gem Rush was developed in HTML5, OMGPOP was able to

quickly incorporate Timeline, which lets players share less personal information and exercise greater control over how they broadcast the game's activity updates.

“Whenever Facebook announces new features, we can have them live on Gem Rush almost immediately,” explained Montoya. “When Facebook announced Timeline, our developers were able to get the features working within a day. Obviously we believe that integrating new social features gives us a huge advantage on the platform, so the value proposition is not a question. We believe that a lot of new games aren't using Facebook's newest features because they don't have infrastructure that allows them to iterate quickly on those features. We don't have that problem.

Montoya also hinted Gem Rush may see life on other platforms and as a mobile app, which seems to be a natural move for the company, as the game's HTML5 framework, makes it much easier to bring the game to iOS, Android or Facebook's mobile app.

You can follow Gem Rush's progress using [AppData](#), our tracking service for social games.



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