

Game developer Mojang 'living the dream'

Written by Johan Nylander

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International investors flock around Mojang, the small Swedish company behind the wildly popular Minecraft video game. No wonder: Last year the Stockholm-based firm made a profit of more than \$100 million. That's a lot for a company with only 25 people.

Minecraft, a sandbox indie game originally created by Swedish programmer Markus "Notch" Persson, was released in 2011 and has spread like wildfire, mostly by word of mouth.

Part of its success can be attributed to the fact that the game was created in close collaboration with players, according to Patrick Geuder, business developer at Mojang.

"Early on in the development process, players could exchange ideas with Markus," he said. "New versions were released regularly, which made players intrigued and feel involved."

One example of the user-developer collaboration is that the game was translated into 160

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languages with the help a Minecraft user community, Geuder explained.

Being based in Stockholm is also an advantage, Geuder pointed out.

"There are many competent developers here, although more and more companies compete for these talents," he said. "Sweden's early broadband penetration probably helped support gaming development here."

Reuters recently reported that many investors would love to get their hands on Mojang, which last year had a 1.5 billion kronor (\$232 million) turnover, most of which was profit.

Sean Parker, Napster co-founder and one of Facebook's earliest investors, tried to convince the founders to allow him to have a stake in the business. He was turned down. He's not alone: The founders say they have turned down offers from more or less every major gaming company in the world.

"We are living the dream, really," Carl Manneh, CEO of Mojang, told Reuters. "An exit would be huge, but do we really need that money? In our case, we have the cash flow. We have more money than we need."

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