Online Gaming Continues to Grow in Asia

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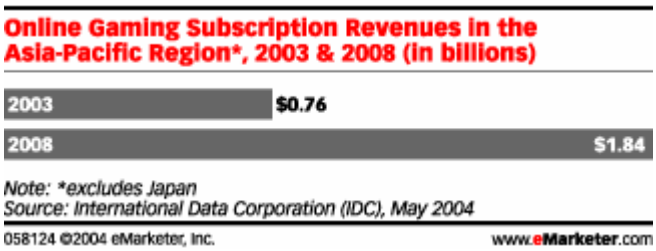
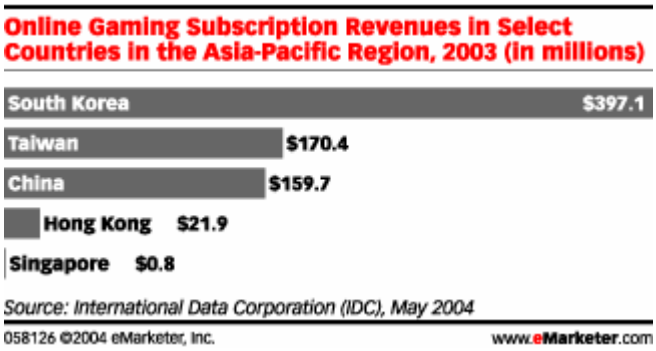
Online gaming revenues in the Asia-Pacific region will reach $1.84 billion by 2008, according to a recent report from IDC.

Driven by the expansion of Internet use, online gaming is gradually becoming a mass market product in the region. A crucial segment of online gaming is massive multi-player online games (MMOGs). MMOGs, particularly of the role-playing genre, offer virtual worlds for users to explore offering sustained adventure through regular updates by developers. Overall, online gaming subscription revenues in the Asia-Pacific region (excluding Japan) are projected to more than double by 2008 to $1.84 billion from $760 million in 2003.



South Korean gamers currently create the most subscription revenue in the area, but by 2007, IDC projects that China will be the largest online gaming market in region. The number of online gamers in the country already grew by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 46% in 2003, driven by the popularity of MMOGs and a substantially greater population than in its neighboring countries. In contrast, the Taiwanese prefer more casual online games like Mahjong or Poker, and play for short periods.

Although about 35% of Singapore's Internet users play online games, and despite expectations that revenues will grow at a CAGR of 22% over the next five years, the country's relatively low population is limiting the interest and investment gaming companies put in the country. Finally, IDC expects significant markets in Thailand and the Philippines to emerge by 2008.



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