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THE OBSERVATION OF ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS OF STEAM DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION SERVICE

The article is devoted to research on the development of digital distribution and its impact on e-commerce. The actual and potential impact of the introduction of digital technologies on employees and consumers is revealed.

The popularity of digital distribution in general, and computer games in particular, is growing every year. Despite the economic crisis, the revenues of these services have a positive dynamics. The distribution service of computer games enables the user to purchase a computer game or an in-game item on the Internet. The aim of the work is to study the Steam complex as an independent marketing complex with well-developed economic and social composite activities and additional features such as an in-game item exchange. The main additional functions of the digital distribution service and the direction of improving the activity of the Internet store Steam are considered.

Keywords: social network, in-game items, Steam, electronic commerce, digital distribution**.**

Fig.7, Lit.8

Дубель М.В., **Янчук Т.В.**

РОЗГЛЯД ДОДАТКОВИХ ФУНКЦІЙ СЕРВІСУ ЦИФРОВОЇ ДИСТРИБУЦІЇ STEAM

Стаття присвячена дослідженню розвитку цифрової дистрибуції та її впливу на електронну комерцію. Розкрито фактичний та потенційний вплив впровадження цифрових технологій на працюючих та споживачів. Популярність цифрової дистрибуції загалом, та комп'ютерних ігор зокрема, зростає з кожним роком. Незважаючи на економічну кризу, прибутки цих сервісів мають позитивну динаміку. Сервіс дистрибуції комп'ютерних ігор дає можливість користувачу придбати собі комп'ютерну гру або внутрішньоігровий предмет у мережі Інтернет. Досліджено комплекс Steam, як самостійній комплекс маркетингу з добре розвинутими економічною та соціальної частинами діяльності та додатковими особливостями як, наприклад, внутрішньоігрова біржа предметів. Розглянуто основні додаткові функції сервісу цифрової дистрибуції та напрямки удосконалення діяльності роботи інтернет-магазину Steam.

Ключові слова: соціальна мережа, внутрішньоігрові предмети, Steam, електрона торгівля, цифрова дистрибуція.

Рис. 7, дж. 8

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РАССМОТРЕНИЕ ДОПОЛНИТЕЛЬНЫХ ФУНКЦИЙ СЕРВИСА ЦИФРОВОЙ ДИСТРИБУЦИИ STEAM

Статья посвящена исследованию развития цифровой дистрибуции и ее влияния на электронную коммерцию. Раскрыто фактическое и потенциальное влияние внедрения цифровых технологий на работающих и потребителей. Популярность цифровой дистрибуции целом, и компьютерных игр в частности, растет с каждым годом. Несмотря на экономический кризис, доходы этих сервисов имеют положительную динамику. Сервис дистрибуции компьютерных игр дает возможность

пользователю приобрести себе компьютерную игру или внутриигровой предмет в сети Интернет. Исследован комплекс Steam, как самостоятельной комплекс маркетинга с хорошо развитыми экономической и социальной частями деятельности и дополнительными особенностями как, например, внутриигровой биржей. Рассмотрены основные и дополнительные функции сервиса цифровой дистрибуции и направления совершенствования деятельности работы интернет-магазина Steam.

Ключевые слова: социальная сеть, внутриигровые предметы, Steam, электронная торговля, цифровая дистрибуция.

Рис.7, Лит.8

The problem's statement. Nowadays the services are not only performing the function of the internet shops. The social networks, stock exchanges and other ways of cooperation between users began to develop inside of them. It led to the appearance of communities of different mobility degrees. Speaking about the Steam service, there is a fact worth mentioning that the stock exchange of the stuff inside the game has appeared. That is why this topic is current and can be researched by modern scientists including marketing specialists and financiers.

Highlighting the understudied parts of the general problem. The topic of the digital distribution services' development as the marketing complexes is not highlighted enough in modern scientific researches, so the main purpose of this article is to provide the spreading of the information about these objects among the scientific communities. Besides, in the researches concerning Steam the additional services of the digital distribution are not explored.

The analysis of the latest achievements and publications on the explored topic. Many scientists, local and foreign, devote their works to the research of the electronic commerce market development. Worth mentioning are the works of N. Vasylieva, S. Lazarev, M. Makarova, N. Medzhibovska, V. Novak, V. Pleskach, L. Ponomarenko and others. The high relevance level of the electronic commerce market development determines the necessity of the digital distribution research as one of the modern methods of the legal electronic content extension performed by Internet channels without usage of any material medium. Such scientists as Pavel Urlapov and Gabe Newell were involved in this question. The analyses of the publications' data gives grounds for the conclusion that the questions about Steam digital distribution were almost not explored. Among the latest publications the article of Ukrainian journalist Sergiy Galenkin [1, P. 48-51] can be mentioned.

The task's statement. The aim of the research is the analyses of the Steam complex to prove that it is an independent marketing complex with well-developed economic and social activity parts and additional specialties such as the stuff stock exchange inside the game.

The main material display. It is difficult to rate Steam as an independent social network. The service has components that are responsible for the social functions. The Steam Community appeared in 2007. It went through many stages of formation before becoming what it is now. The community updates constantly, as well as the shop. The social component of the Steam is the main reason of this program's constant development.

The Steam community has all the features inherent in the social networks. The players can change the design of their web page and communicate with other players with the help of chat.
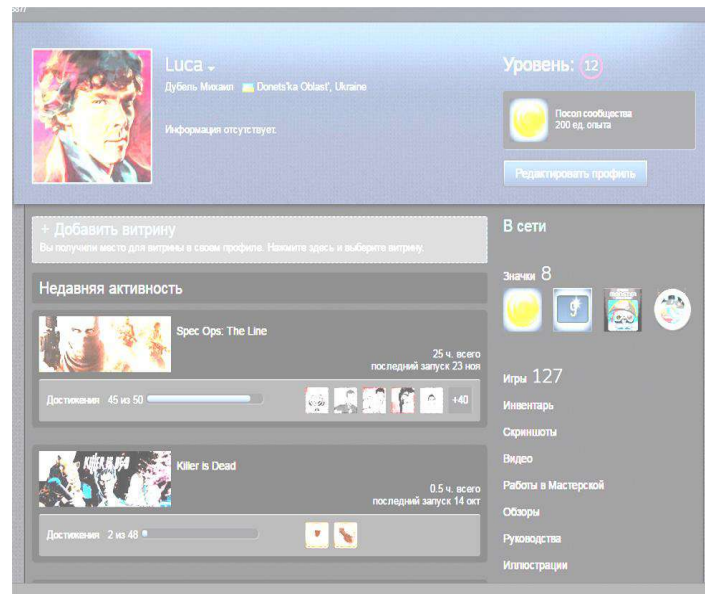
Fig. 1. Interface of the Steam service player [2]

On the picture 1 you can see the nowadays look of the Steam network gamer's page. Each gamer can change his page a little by adding the additional information about himself or his achievements in different aspects of the Steam service, such as the amount of games purchased, progress in the gaming process or even such specific art manifestations as crafts in the Steam workshop. Every player has his rank. This rank can be improved in several ways. First is collecting the stuff belonging to some certain categories inside the game. Second is being the active player of the Steam service. Sometimes players spend money on improvement of their ranks. There are some tasks inside the Steam system that do not belong to any certain game and can be performed by service player of any rank.

Fig. 2. Main tasks from the Steam service [3]

On the picture 2 you can see general tasks that can be performed in the Steam society. Those tasks are connected with the players' social activity inside the Steam service in general.

The possibility of participants' competition in different categories of achievements is a very important part of any social sphere. The developers of Valve Company decided not to miss the chance of providing their service with such opportunity. Most of the games have a system of achievements that allows players to compete with each other. Now these achievements are even added into the older games to make them more attractive and to increase the interest in playing them.

Fig. 3 The system of achievements in the computer game Counter-Strike:Global Offensive [4]

As you can see on the picture 3, some games have a global achievements system. It shows the percent of players that managed to achieve some certain result. Among the achievements there are some that were performed only by few players. Players that successfully went through difficult obstacles are respected in the Steam Community.

Among the achievements and communication, the Steam Community has a lot of other items thanks to which players continue using it. For example, players can create closed groups devoted to some certain game. In such groups they can communicate in the general chat, join for spending time together including playing online games.

Also players have possibility to vote and choose games for awarding in different categories during the sale. There is an option of writing comments on the games from the shop. The social sphere development helped the independent game developers to produce their goods because players by estimating the games' first versions can leave positive comments about them and it will male this stuff interesting for the investors.

Observing the social function of Steam as an attempt of creating its own social network it is obvious that the Community cannot be a full substitute to a social network. But disregarding some disadvantages, Steam succeeded in its main task – convergence of players. That is why the amount of its active players grows each year.

The Steam Community managed to conjoin players from different countries. These connections catalyzed the service development. The stuff inside Steam games, available for the exchange and sale, has appeared. It created the ground for the Market appearance where the centralized trade of different stuff categories was performed.

Highly developed Steam social network demanded the application of the process of the stuff exchange between the players in order to improve the relationship inside the service community. Because of this Valve first produced some inside stuff that dropped while playing games from corporation – the service developer. Players loved the stuff and the exchange between the people from different parts of the world has started. Growth of this stuff's popularity led Valve to opening of the new game section where players could design the stuff's look themselves. With time the analogues of such stuff began to appear in the other developers' games. Thus, the motivation basis for some of nowadays players appeared.

The stuff exchange led to the appearance of new class of players – traders. They did not care about the game itself. They only exchanged stuff inside the game.

Stuff exchange can be on money or barter. Service developers understood that freshly made stuff also needs to be sold. That is why the Market was invented – it was a kind of stock exchange inside the game which allowed any player to join, whether he had stuff or not.

On the picture 4 you can see how the Stem Market looked in December, 2016. On the right you can see a list of games that have stuff available for the exchange and sale.
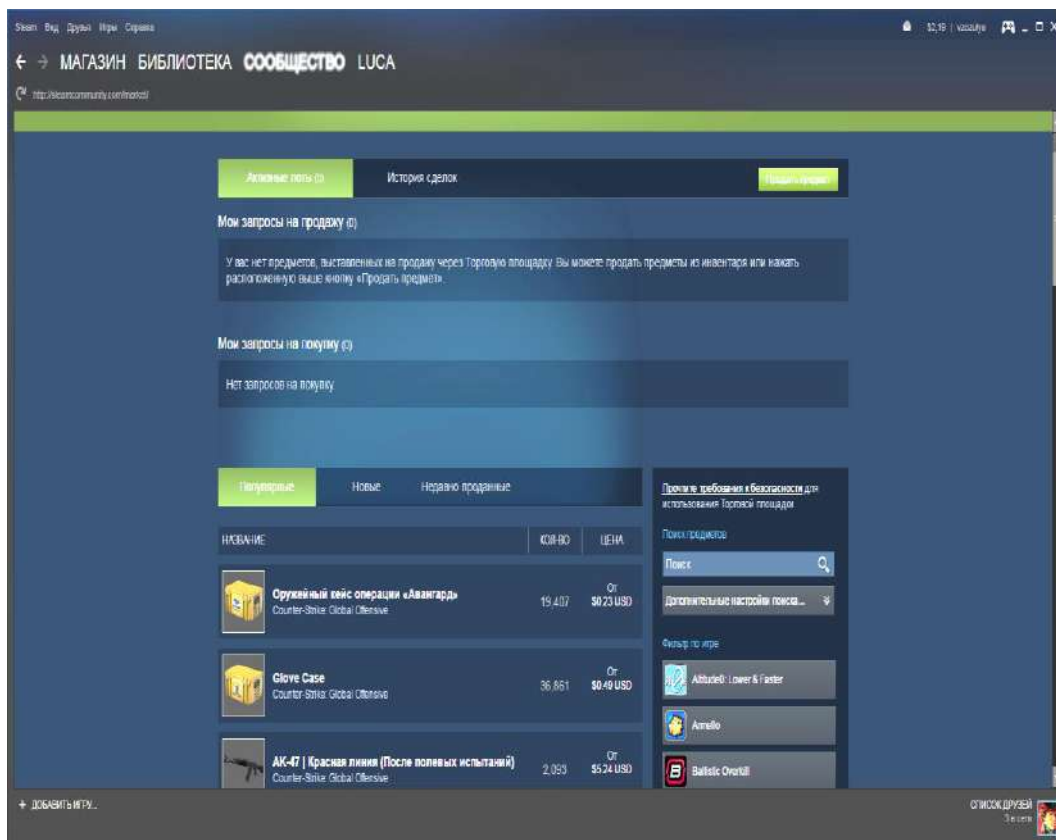

Fig. 4 The look of the Steam's Market [5]

Fig. 5. The inventory of the game Counter-Strike : Global Offensive [6]

On the picture 5 there is a list of Counter-Strike: Global Offensive game stuff. Mostly there are boxes with various content inside, which drops randomly. Others are the weapon of different types and qualities. Also there are keys that help to open boxes and safes. Each item has its price that changes constantly. Prices on weapons in CS:GO vary in the interval from 3 cents to 426 USD. Weapon differs mainly by its look. Players with the help of stickers can make up brighter custom models based on standard ones, and they are called the real examples of modern art in the inner circles. Also the weapon types differ from each other by their quality, that means some of them are called a trash, and some of them are considered to be exquisite. Besides, there are collections of different stuff that include examples of a very limited edition.
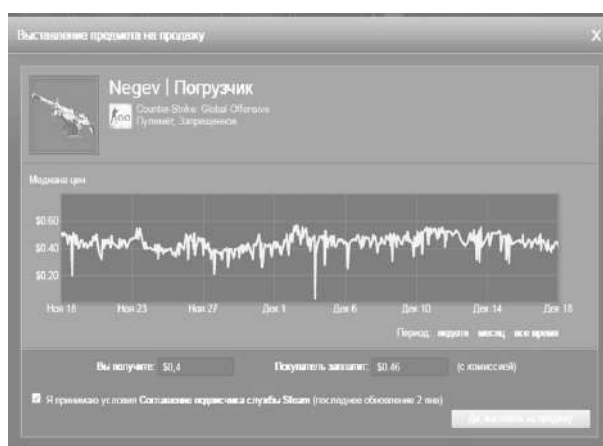

Fig. 6. The Market's peculiarities seen on the example of a certain stuff item [7]

On the picture 6 you can see the dynamics of prices on a certain item in CS:GO game in Market during the last month. The price changed from 3 cents on the 4th of December up to

57 cents on the 4th of December. Also you can see the difference between the sums received by salesman and customer. The difference between them is the commission taken from the sales procedure and it is the income of Steam. The service developer receives commission from any purchase performed in the Market.

While analyzing the main periods of increase and decrease of the prices on stuff inside the game, it is impossible not to note the influence of sellouts in the Steam shop. During this period the amount of stuff in the Market increases, and this means that the unit price decreases.

The negative factor for this part of the Steam service is the existence of sites, where their inside stuff can be purchased beyond the Market. For example, Steam-trader [8]. Such sites create their own inner stuff stock exchanges that can influence the official game Market, for example, by creating the additional number of the stuff on the service market that decreases the price of each unit on the market.

But the real threaten for the Steam Market came not even from such sites, but from the criminals that try to assign another people's stuff. For better understanding of the mechanism of fooling the player, the process of the stuff exchange inside the game should be observed in more details.
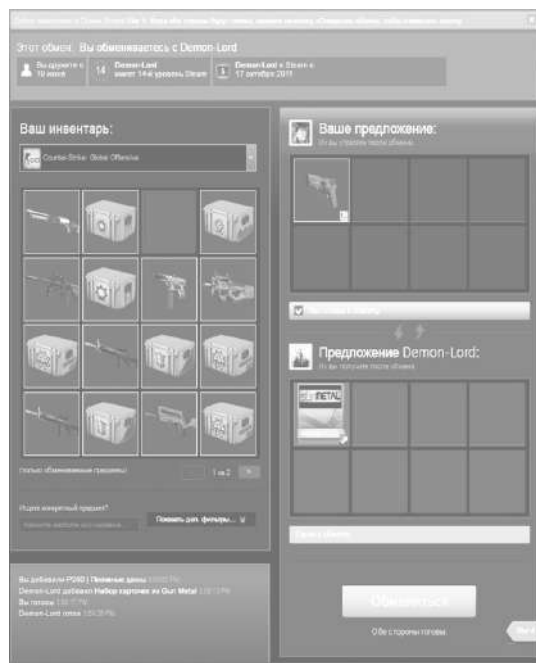

Fig. 7. The stuff exchange in Steam

As you can see on the picture 7, for performing exchange in Steam service an item must be replaced from the player's inventory to the propositions' compartment. After this both players must agree with the conditions of the stuff exchange in the service. Then, after the interval that lasts a couple of seconds, the exchange is performed. The criminals, using the shortcomings in the system, took their stuff away from the propositions and received other people's stuff. Of course, deceived people wrote complaints to the Steam administration. The criminals were blocked and forced to give the stuff back. But each of those people had several accounts, and they moved the stuff between the inventories. Then they sold it on the stock market.

The Valve management constantly improves its service and makes the process of exchange between the players more transparent. The number of robberies in the service significantly decreased.

As a conclusion, we can make a statement that the Steam's digital distribution service of computer games is an integral complex, in which the development of one direction leads to the improvement of the other one's work. That is why the new ways of increasing the amount of clients and refining the conditions of use for the already existing and reliable Steam clients are constantly appearing in the service.

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