
FUTURAMA

WORLDS OF TOMORROW



The Rise and Fall of Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow

A look in to the launch and subsequent demise of the 2017 game by Jam City, based on the popular show Futurama

Deck prepared by PkmnTrainerJ

What was Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow?

On June 29th 2017, Jam City (known for match-3 titles) released Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow on to iOS and Android devices.

It was a character collector and city building game, much like EA's The Simpsons Tapped Out and Jam City's own Family Guy: The Quest for Stuff.

However, in contrast to these, Futurama was not currently airing new episodes at the time of release and had been cancelled for many years.

This game mixed things up a little with space battles, later adding classes and abilities for characters as well as PvP.

The game had events written by the writers of the Futurama show and even had some original character costumes exclusive to the game



The launch of the game



Initial trailer (top) and launch party (bottom)



Jam City made a big deal out of the launch of the game, looking to build on the success they had with another FOX show property, with Family Guy: The Quest for Stuff going strong.

This even included a launch party (unusual for a mobile title) with Bachelor Chow snacks, cast and crew of the show and game in attendance and a whole Futurama vibe. Of course, attendees could play the game too.

With it being a mobile title intended for a few minutes of play and then going back when characters finished tasks, there was not a lot to preview and official release came around quickly.

Following the official release, the game started getting regular events where players could earn special time-limited characters

The Rise



In 2017, the game flew to the top of the App Store and Play Store charts, with the Community Manager, known as TinyNixon, maintaining a good presence in the subreddit for the game where most players had congregated. This also brought out some influencers for the game such as WillBits who shared videos on how to complete events

The events and special characters kept coming, with five long week events marked as “episodes” of the show which featured unique mechanic such as boss battles, prize ladders and later there was even a [podcast “episode”](#) of the show with the voice actors of Futurama as well as Chris Hardwick, one of many celebrities added to the game.

As noted, some original costumes for characters were also added, as seen in this concept art for Slurm Duke Fry who never appeared in the show.

Interest seemed piqued amongst Futurama fans, who finally had something new after the show being off the air for many years



← END The Beginning of the end ← END

The second large event was focused on the Robot Hell area in the show, with the Robot Devil playing havoc with the main cast.

Many players will state that due to the mechanics used in this event and the grind required, was the beginning of the end for the game.



The mechanic was such that players had to make bombs to defeat certain enemies, which required significantly levelled characters and vast time sin, as well as great RNG luck with character item drops to create even one bomb. Thus when players were tasked with needing two separate bombs to defeat some enemies, many stopped playing the event.

The community did come together and devise a strategy to do “no bomb runs” but this was then swiftly fixed by the team as they wanted players to either make or buy these items.



User Survey

Before moving on to the end of the game, in August 2023, I sent a survey out on the game's subreddit and the various Discord & Meta channels used.

I also gained some insight about the game from some people who worked on it, and will share these anonymised comments as part of the next few slides.

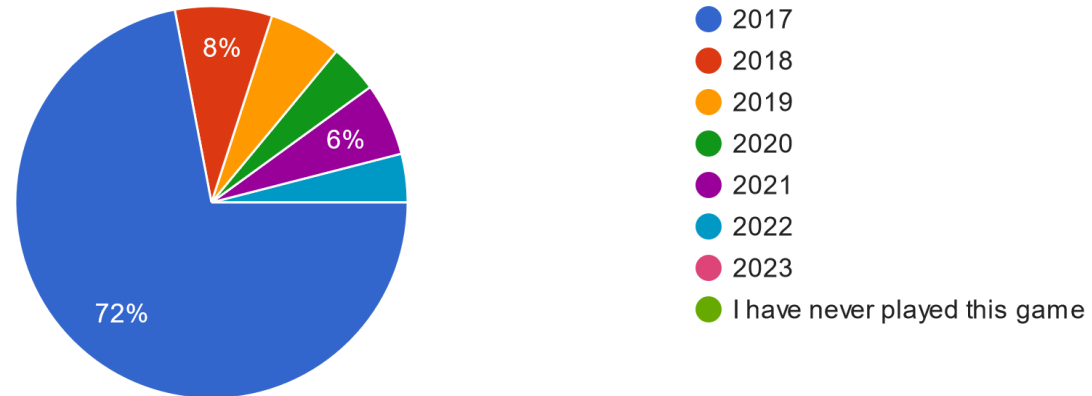
As with any survey done to a certain sect of users, this can be biased and may not represent the playerbase as a whole.

When did you start playing Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow?

Of those who responded, over 70% started playing in 2017, when the game launched. It did not pick up any new players when content stopped entirely in 2023.

When did you start playing Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow?

50 responses

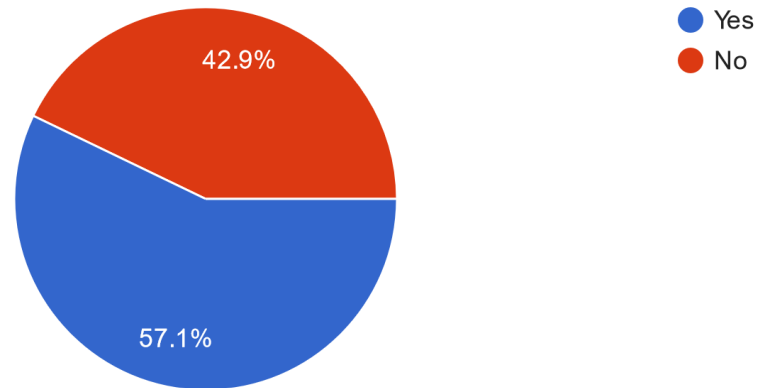


Before playing this game, had you played a city builder/character collector mobile game?

This question used examples mentioned earlier in this deck. For the majority of players, this was their first experience of this type of mobile game.

Before playing this game, had you played a city builder/character collector mobile game?

49 responses

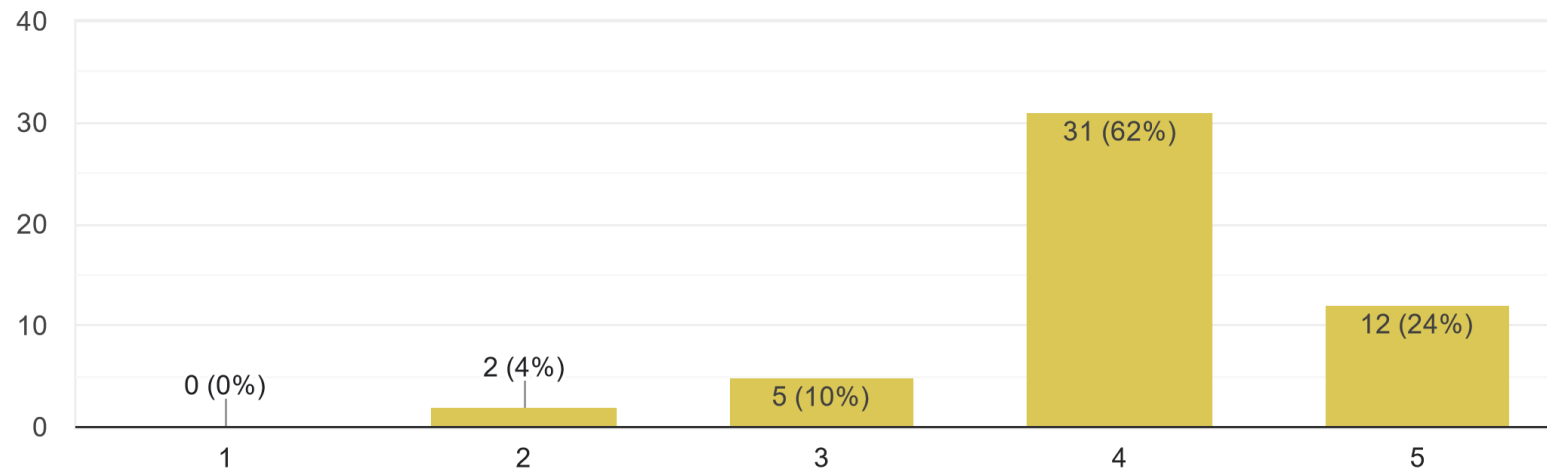


How would you rate the app overall?

App/Play Store ratings are very important as users see them, and developers do what they can to increase these. No respondents marked it as 1, with most settling at a rating of 4.

How would you rate the app overall, with 5 being amazing and 1 being dreadful?

50 responses

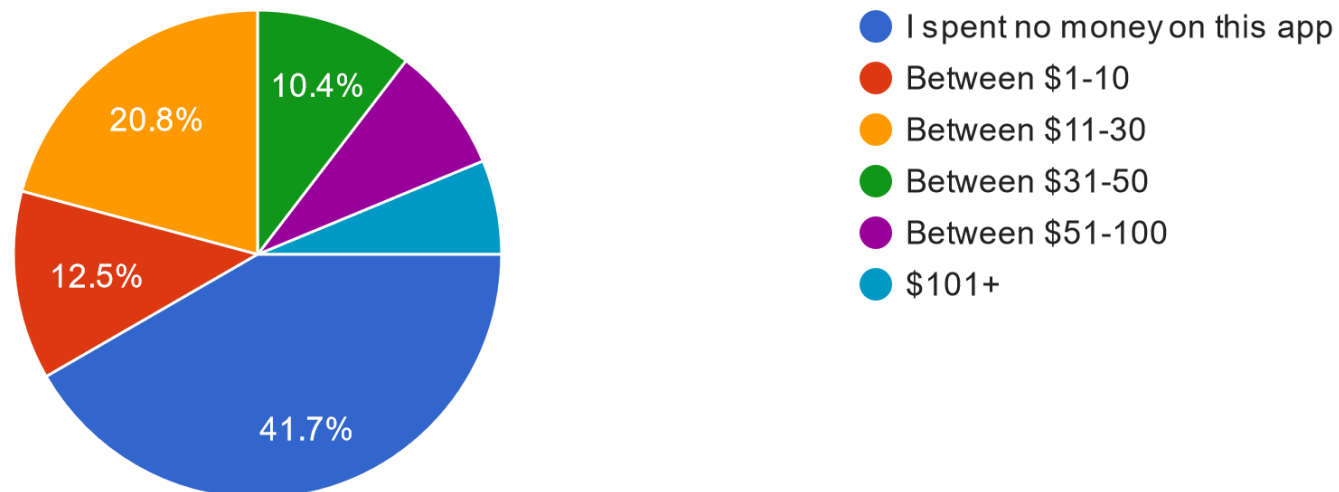


Did you ever spend money on this game?

Apps often come with micro transactions and this game was no different, offering premium currency in exchange for real cash. Most users remained free to play, but over 30% spent between \$11 and \$50 during their play time. 3 users responded that they spent over \$101

Did you ever spend money on Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow in the lifetime of the app? (in USD)

48 responses

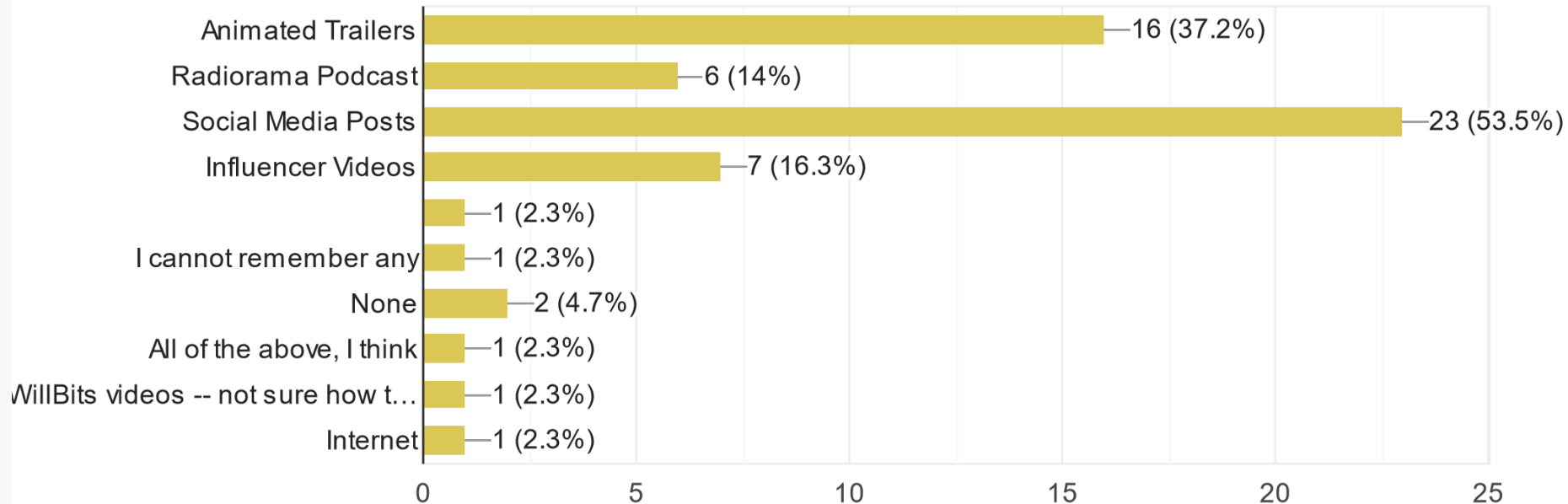


What advertising did you see for the game?

As noted, there were some adverts in the form of trailers, launch parties and the podcast episode. The team maintained an active social media presence for a time on Instagram and Facebook.

What advertising do you recall seeing for the game?

43 responses

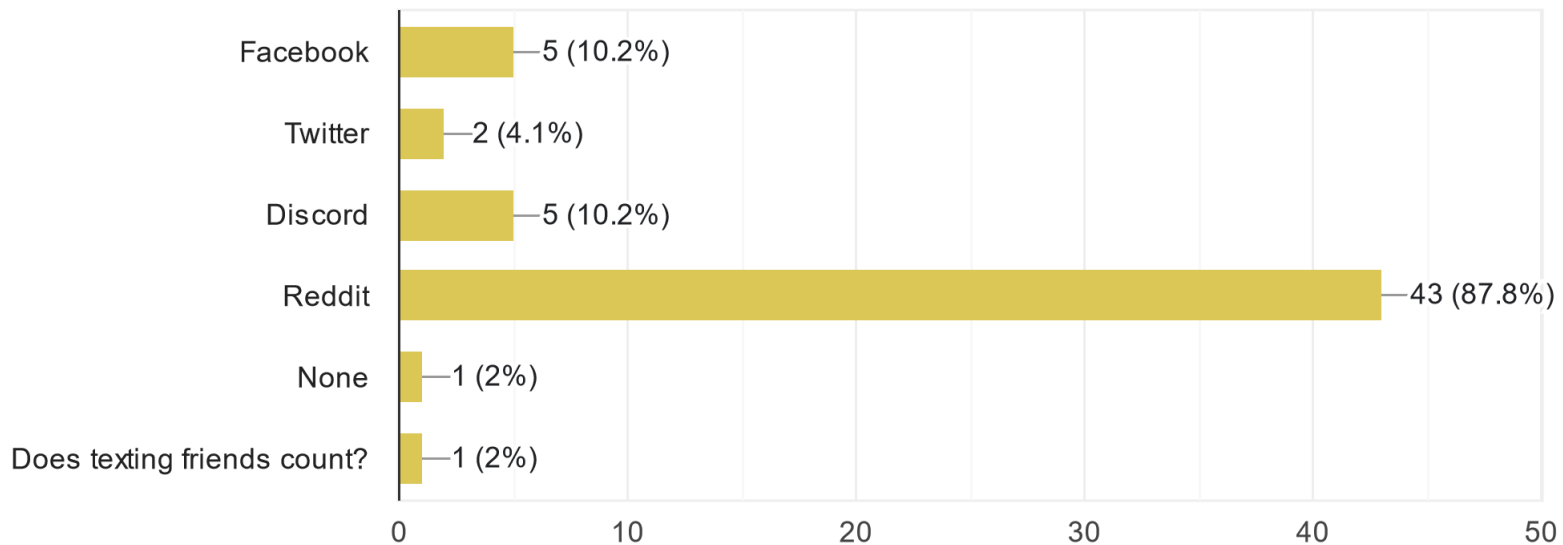


Where did you discuss the game?

This has some bias, being posted on the subreddit. It was however a very active hub and many users first port of call for game issues or event information.

Which social media platforms did you use to discuss the game?

49 responses






Events

Splitting this up, due to the presentation of the charts.

This asked about which events people played. It mentioned all the events in the game.

The top 3 most played were:

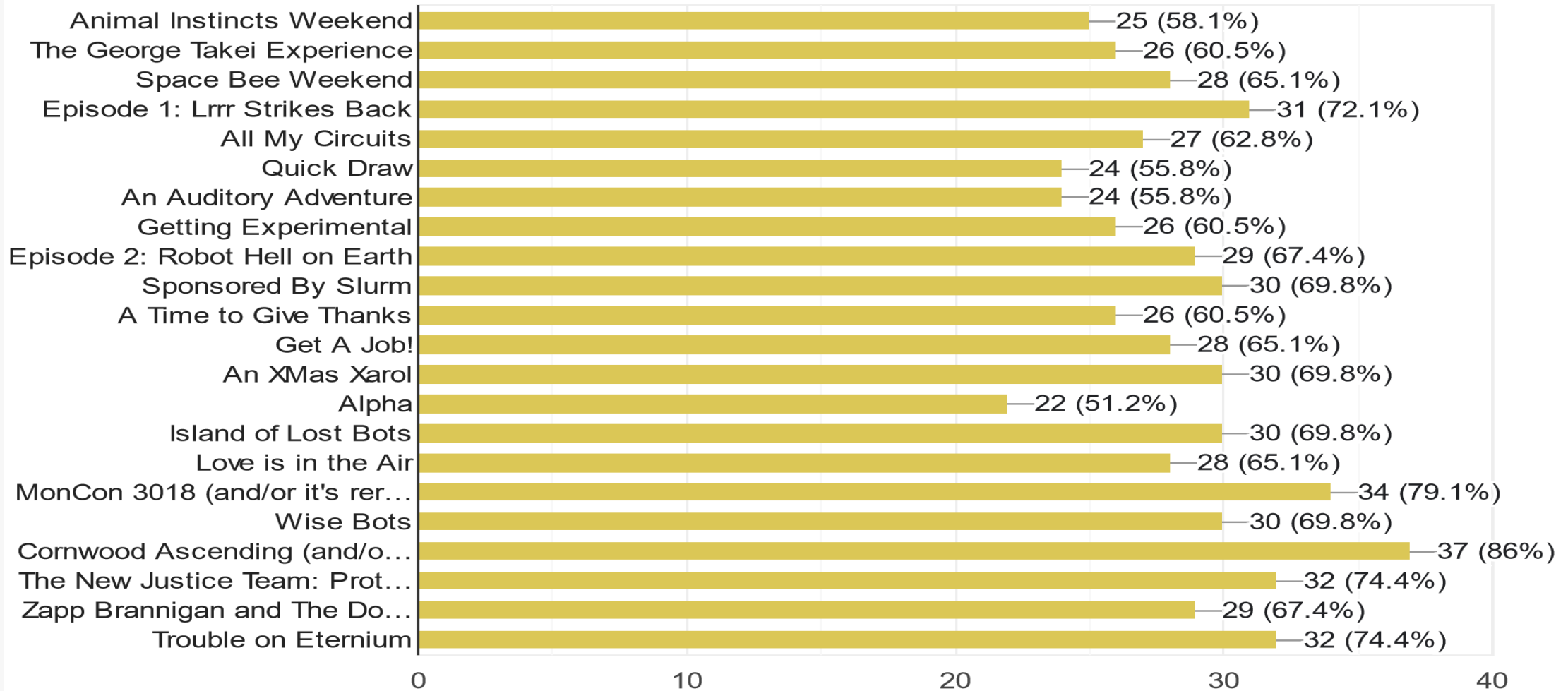
-  **Cornwood Ascending (including rerun)**
-  **Trouble on Eternium**
-  **Episode 1: Lrr Strikes Back**

Did you participate in any of the events run in the game? If so, please indicate which events you played.

- Animal Instincts Weekend
 - The George Takei Experience
 - Space Bee Weekend
 - Episode 1: Lrrr Strikes Back
 - All My Circuits
 - Quick Draw
 - An Auditory Adventure
 - Getting Experimental
 - Episode 2: Robot Hell on Earth
-

Did you participate in any of the events run in the game? If so, please indicate which events you played.

43 responses



Statements

This was a question, similar to the one about events, where responders were asked which statements they agreed with.

The top 3 most agreed with were:

🏆 **Jam City should have kept the game running whilst the new Hulu episodes aired**

🥈 **Jam City mismanaged the game**

🥉 **Tie:**

TinyNixon was a good Community Manager

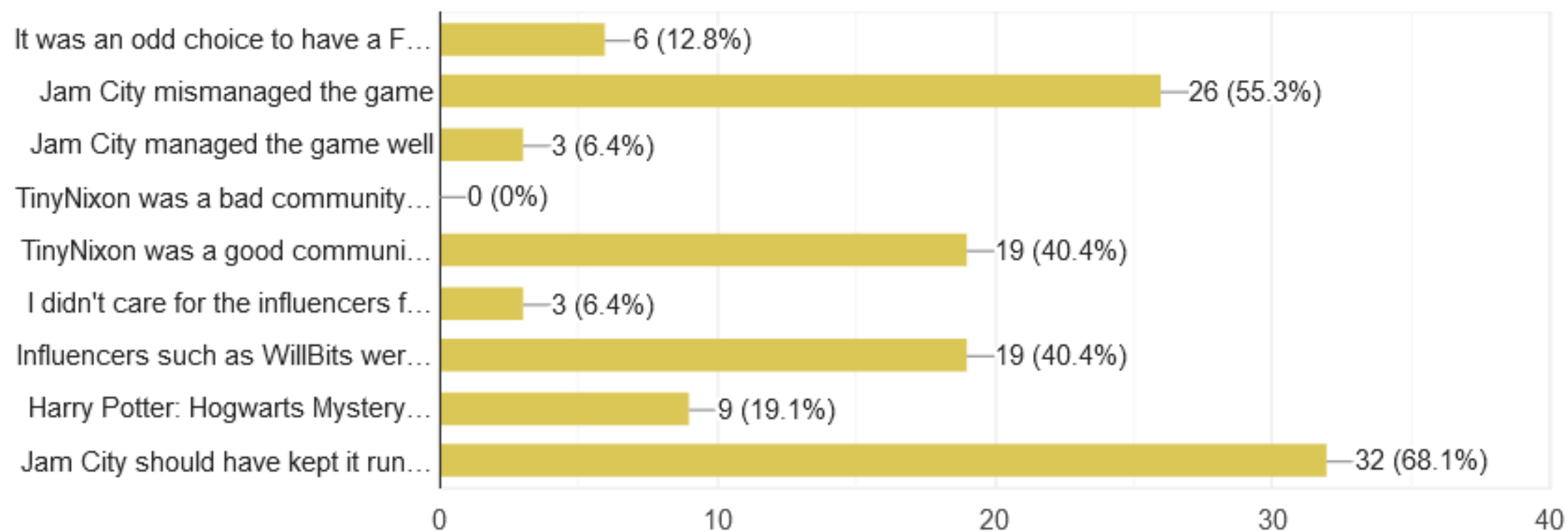
Influencers like WillBits were invaluable to the game

Which, if any, of these statements do you agree with?

- It was an odd choice to have a Futurama game when it was not on the air
 - Jam City mismanaged the game
 - Jam City managed the game well
 - TinyNixon was a bad community manager
 - TinyNixon was a good community manager
 - I didn't care for the influencers for the game such as WillBits
 - Influencers such as WillBits were an invaluable resource
 - Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery signalled the end for this game
 - Jam City should have kept it running whilst the new Hulu episodes aired
-

Which, if any, of these statements do you agree with?

47 responses

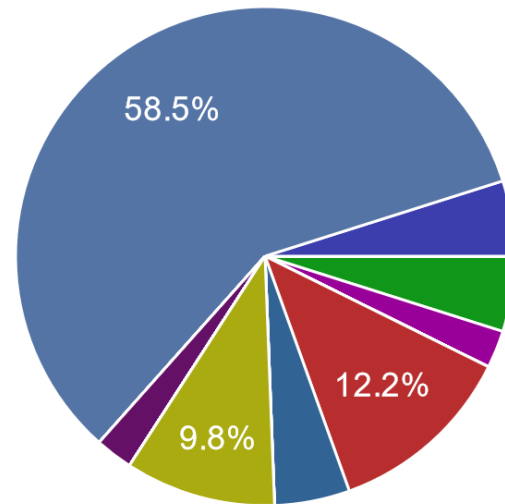


What was your favourite event?

We had a lot of events in the game but the overall favourite was Cornwood Ascending with Robot Hell on Earth and An Xmas Xarol being the runner up. MonCon 3018 and All My Circuits received only one vote each.

Which was your favourite event?

41 responses



- Animal Instincts Weekend
- The George Takei Experience
- Space Bee Weekend
- Episode 1: Lrrr Strikes Back
- All My Circuits
- Quick Draw
- An Auditory Adventure
- Getting Experimental

Former staff comments and insight

As part of the research in to this, I was able to discuss with some former members of the Jam City team as to their view. I have anonymized and summarized this below. This is their view, and does not represent my own.

- In one person's view, they believe the downfall is mainly the strategy of these mobile games. In that there is a lot of initial hype, and the game tries to hook a few whales^[1], leaving others behind.
- One person noted that their view is Jam City only know how to do Match-3 games and “bumble through anything else, sometimes they succeed, but mostly they do not.”
- Once metrics are not met, or a better IP/game comes along, the majority of staff are shifted to help make the new one a success.

In addition to this, on speaking with one of the writers of Futurama, Jam City stopped paying them to write further content which then left the well dry.

[1] A mobile game whale is someone who spends a lot on microtransactions or in-app purchases in free-to-play games.



The Fall

Now we come to the fall and the true start of the end. A mix of things happened from December 2017 to May 2018 that seemed to contribute to the end of the game.

- The event, An Xmas Xarol, exacted a heavy toll of time (as well as poor RNG) on users with levels going to 100, whilst an event was running was too much for some.
- Jam City had several lay-offs at the company, leaving Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow with a “skeleton staff”
- Jam City also partnered with Warner Bros. to launch Harry Potter: Hogwarts Mystery, a visual novel game and moved much of the Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow staff to that title.
- The community manager, TinyNixon, went silent on the subreddit
- In May 2018, Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow would run it’s last full event (there would be a small event and two reruns)



As a result of the layoffs and moving staff around, it's claimed only a skeleton crew now remains on TinyCo's mobile title Futurama: Worlds of Tomorrow.



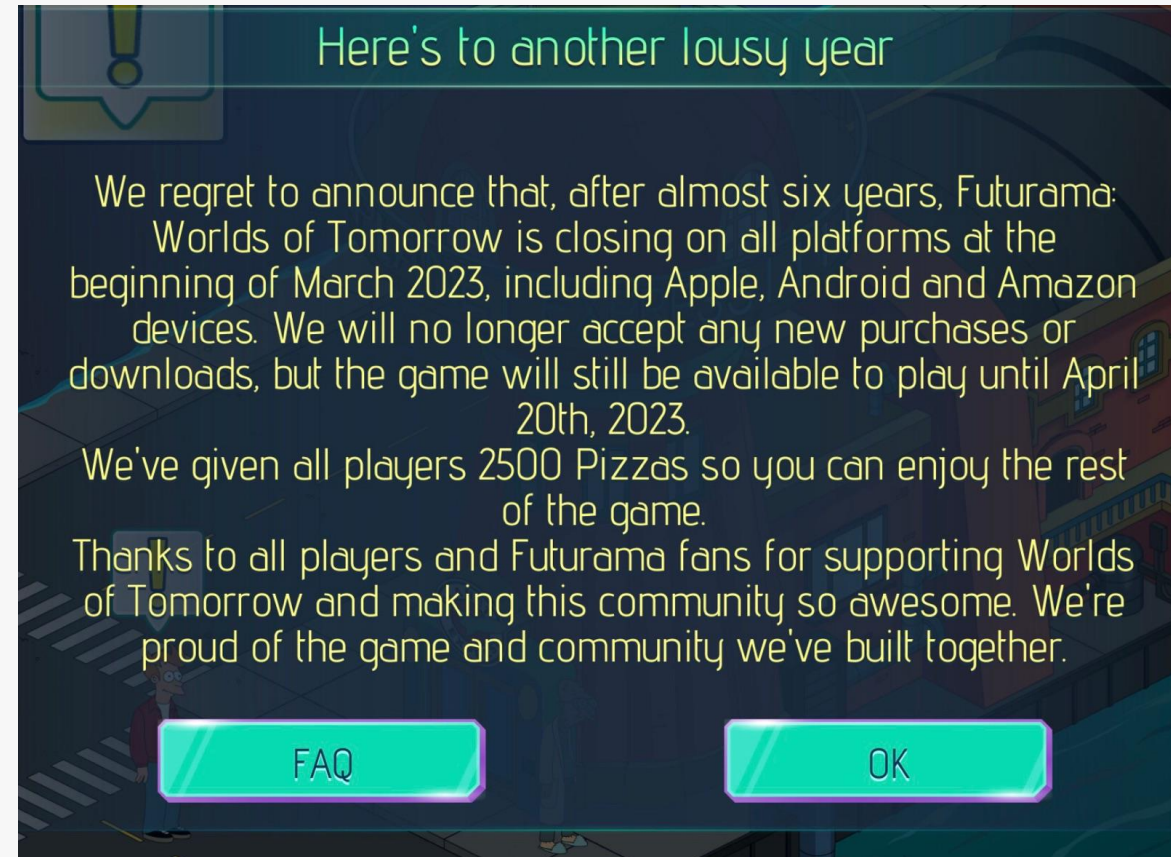
☠ The End ☠

After the small event and two reruns, content in any shape all but stopped from the game and no events ran. There was a small lootbox where users could get old and new characters but this stopped being updated in July 2019, but some characters were added for premium currency purchase only in later years.

It was then announced the game would be closing, a few months shy of the new episodes airing on Hulu/Disney+.

The community manager returned to offer their condolences, and the players shared their final shots of New New York and wishes that the game had stuck around a little longer.

Whilst I do not offer my own view of why the game did not last, you can draw your conclusions from the data provided.



Questions & Follow Up

I am looking for Community Manager roles and enjoy sharing and studying data. If you'd like more details, or to have a discussion about any roles you have available, you can contact me through these channels.

LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/pkmntrainerj/>

Threads - <https://www.threads.net/@pkmntrainerj>

Discord – PkmnTrainerJ

Reddit – u/PkmnTrnrJ

Website – pkmntrainerj.com

Also happy to have a discussion about this deck or any of the other games I have done these for.
