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GAMING NEWS

Report: Middleware Market to Reach \$1.3 Billion by 2011

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Middleware has always been an important part of the video game industry. With next-gen games becoming more detailed, intricate and complex developers often turn to middleware solutions to ease the development burden. Epic Games' Unreal Engine 3.0 has already been licensed out to publishers for dozens of next-gen console and PC titles. It's no surprise that the middleware market is expected to grow during the next several years.

According to a new study from Acacia Research Group, the market for interactive entertainment middleware is set to increase from \$718.4 million to nearly \$1.3 billion over the next five years, representing nearly 12 percent growth. This figure includes mobile middleware and ITV middleware as well.

Acacia notes that third-party solutions account for roughly 25 percent of the total spending on game middleware, and third-party middleware sales are expected to rise from just under \$79 million in 2006 to more than \$108.4 million in 2011.

That said, Acacia explains that the middleware landscape is changing and vendors will have a number of challenges ahead of them as more in-house competition arises. "... in-house spending will rise even more quickly as developers build out in-house solutions for increasing platform complexity," the research firm said.

"Game middleware providers continue to see fierce competition in the form of in-house solutions," said Christine Arrington, Senior Analyst at Acacia Research Group. "Meanwhile, the mobile middleware market is still in the early stages but these providers are going to feel the pinch of in-house competition as well; with handset and chipset vendors providing adequate free solutions. Finally, ITV middleware vendors are finally seeing the first real deployments of MHP, with OCAP on the horizon and must innovate to provide solutions much more robust and revenue generating than less expensive standards-based alternatives."

The full 81-page report is available for purchase at the Acacia website or by e-mailing sales@acaciarg.com. The entire report costs \$3742.50, but individual segments for the game, mobile or interactive TV markets are also available for separate purchases.

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