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 Gamasutra
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Features

IGE: Inside The MMO Trading Machine

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Introduction

Anyone associated with online games and MMOs in particular will likely know of dominant in-game item trading firm [IGE](#), which was founded in 2001 by Brock Pierce and Alan Debonneville. The two principals were, according to the company, "keen to identify the need for a safe, reliable trading platform to support the then 'gray market' RMT of v between MMO game players."

But, of course, the concept of trading virtual items and currency has also controversial one at times, with the item trading and 'gold farming' phen remarked upon in the media and gaming world. The situation was brought earlier this year, when U.S. magazine PC Gamer announced that it would carry print ads from MMO item-selling companies.

At the time, PC Gamer EIC Greg Vederman commented: "Lately, 'gold farming' companies such as IGE and Power Leveling — companies whose business is the accumulation and (potentially illicit) real-world sale of virtual MMO props like gold, in-game items, and characters — have begun running ads in magazines. For the record, PC Gamer's official stance on these types of companies is despicable: not only do they brazenly break many MMOs' End-User License Agreements, but they all-too-often ruin legitimate players' fun."

In addition, a number of those in the MMO community have been concerned that IGE has been serially acquiring major MMO content websites in a fashion, including major item listing sites Allakhazam and Thottbot and a portal OGaming - none of which explicitly list IGE or its parent company on their 'About' pages. This has led to speculation regarding further item website integration in the future.

Feature
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THOTTBOT About This Site

FAST EASY
POST A JOB NOW!

Almost all data contained here was gathered directly from the WoW client, using a patcher using the Cosmos patcher, be aware that collection is disabled by default. If you'd like to enable the Thottbot plugin.

Process diagram:
 WoW client >> WoW client >> Thottbot client >> Thottbot website >> Thottbot website >> Thottbot website

The last step, from the Website to You, still requires manual reading of data, but I hope to interface any day now. In the meantime, monkeys are available with skull cutters and we write the data directly on the surface of your brain. While this may not sound like a great wait until you get a whiff of those markers.

For those in areas without monkeys, click a link on the left or enter text into the search box.

The IGE-owned Thottbot

In fact, IGE has been relatively low-profile in terms of press coverage this time rising to the top of the MMO item trading industry. One of its few recent announcements has been a partnership with Chinese auction website Alil announced earlier this year to offer items on Alibaba's Taobao online trading platform, an important because major competitor Ebay has been restricting auctions on its commercial service, citing EULA issues.

However, Gamasutra managed to gain the opportunity to sit down and speak with James Clarke, IGE's chief operating officer in Asia, during our time in Shanghai (Clarke is largely based) last month. We had a chance to find out more about his role at the company, but also IGE's plans itself, giving a rare insight into the workings of the MMO trading titan.

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