Strategic Information Systems Initiative: Creating a Mobile Emulator Platform for Nintendo's Legacy Games

Strategic Information Systems Initiative Final Group Project - Gaming Industry Team

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Strategic Information Systems Planning Process

Strategic Information Systems (SIS) Planning is a critical step in aligning Nintendo's technological investments with its strategic goal of expanding access to legacy titles on mobile devices. The following outlines the structured planning process for the initiative to develop an official Nintendo emulator and game platform for mobile:

1. Situation Analysis

Nintendo currently operates a closed hardware ecosystem, which restricts legacy game access to older consoles or unofficial emulators. This lack of access leaves a major revenue opportunity untapped, as many consumers turn to illegal emulators to play titles such as older Pokémon, Mario, or Zelda games. Nintendo has the IP rights, brand power, and technical ability to offer a legitimate solution via mobile platforms — where global usage is at an all-time high (Statista, 2024a).

2. SIS Mission

To develop and implement a secure, user-friendly mobile emulator platform that enables Nintendo to re-release legacy game titles, reduce piracy, and expand its market reach into the booming mobile gaming sector — estimated to reach $100.54 billion by 2029 (Growth Trends in the Mobile Gaming Industry, 2024-2029). This aligns with Nintendo’s broader mission of providing accessible, nostalgic, and innovative gaming experiences for all ages.

3. Strategic Goals

- Reclaim market share lost to unofficial emulators and imitator games.
  Increase mobile gaming revenue through digital re-releases of legacy titles.
- Create a centralized platform for classic Nintendo games across iOS and Android devices.
- Strengthen brand loyalty and cross-generational engagement.
- Reduce piracy-related litigation and protection costs.

4. SIS Objectives

- Launch an official Nintendo Emulator App on mobile by Year 2027.

- Port and make available at least 30 classic games within the first year.
- Achieve 10 million app downloads in the first 12 months (Obedkov, 2024).
- Ensure platform security through robust cybersecurity investments.
- Enable user profiles, cloud saves, and secure in-app purchases.

5. Gap Analysis

Nintendo lacks an official presence in the mobile retro gaming space, with current mobile offerings limited to new mobile-native games (e.g., Pokémon GO, Mario Kart Tour). While the company possesses the legacy IP and fan base, it lacks the platform infrastructure and mobile-friendly distribution model for older titles.

Bridging this gap requires:

- Building or licensing emulator technology optimized for mobile.
- Creating a scalable platform with in-app purchasing and community support.
- Securing all necessary legacy title assets for re-release.

6. Strategy Formulation

The core strategy involves **developing an official emulator app** and **digital storefront** under the Nintendo brand. This will leverage in-house IP, legal exclusivity, and nostalgia marketing to directly compete with emulators and mobile imitators. Key partnerships with Apple and Google will ensure store placement and promotional visibility (Piskunov, 2025).

7. IT Architecture Planning

The platform will be cloud-enabled with the following components:

- **Frontend**: Mobile application (iOS/Android) with emulator UI and storefront
- **Backend**: Game library storage, user data management, account authentication
- **Security Layer**: End-to-end encryption, fraud detection, DRM enforcement
- **Support Tools**: In-app reporting, live chat, and community forums

8. Resource Planning

Key resources for the SIS initiative include:

- **Development team**: Emulator engineers, mobile app developers, QA testers
- **IT infrastructure**: Cloud storage, CDN, server-side APIs
- **Marketing**: Influencer outreach, launch campaigns, nostalgia-based PR
- **Legal**: IP protection, terms of use, compliance with app store policies

9. Implementation Timeline (Sample Phases for target 2)

Phase	**Timeline**	**Milestone**
Phase 1	Months 1–2	Emulator R&D, legacy game selection
Phase 2	Months 3–5	Mobile app prototype and internal testing
Phase 3	Months 6–7	Closed beta with community testers
Phase 4	Months 7–8	Public release and marketing campaign
Phase 5	Months 9–12	Performance optimization, game rollouts

10. Performance Metrics

To ensure success, the following KPIs will be monitored:

- User adoption rate (downloads, retention)
- Revenue per user (in-app purchases, subscriptions)
- Emulator performance (crash rate, compatibility success)
- Support ticket resolution time
- Decrease in reported piracy case

Industry Analysis

The gaming industry is massive, with many indie companies, AAA game developers, console manufacturers, and even companies that dabble in multiple areas. Nintendo is not only a massive console developer, but it is also the most iconic game developer, with some of the most valuable IPs in gaming. With names under their belt, such as Mario, Kirby, Pokémon, Link, and Zelda, Nintendo owns not only the gaming industry's most iconic names but also some of the most iconic systems. The Gameboy, DS, Game Cube, Nintendo 64, and Wii. With all of this being said, Nintendo contributes heavily to the gaming industry's revenue. "In 2022, the global gaming industry generated an estimated $184.4 billion." (Arora)

Threat of new entrants: The gaming industry of consoles has a high barrier to entry, while game development is low. Both follow similar trends of high and low through development costs, switching costs, and emerging indie and tech firms.

Bargaining power of suppliers: Since Nintendo operates as both a console and game developer, its bargaining power compared to suppliers is exceptionally high. For their consoles, there are many sources they can get the components needed. And for games, they do most everything in-house, so there are no suppliers.

Bargaining power of Buyers: This is where there are moderate threats. While Nintendo's customer base is large and very loyal, they are still subject to price sensitivity; this

can be seen right now with their Switch 2 release and games where they have prices above the average, and there has been backlash.

Threat of substitutes: Being in the broad category of entertainment, there are many substitutes people have options for other than playing video games. Even drilling down into the gaming specifically, there are 2 other major consoles and a plethora of other games consumers can play, other than Nintendo.

Industry Rivalry: The gaming industry is very saturated. The console is slightly less than consoles, but with the other two major competitors of Sony and Microsoft in the world of PCs, there are many ways to play video games. With games specifically, it takes so much for a game to be noticed and make money. Luckily, with Nintendo's iconic IPs, the attention is already on them, but that doesn't take away from their need to innovate their games and make them better.

Nintendo rivals the other two major console manufacturers of Sony, PlayStation, and Microsoft, Xbox. "In 2022, Sony held 45 percent of the console gaming market worldwide, while Microsoft held almost 28 percent of the market, compared to just over 46 percent and 25.5 percent in 2021, respectively. Meanwhile, Nintendo's market share decreased in 2022 to 27.7 percent from just over 28 percent in 2021" (Arora). Aside from the consoles, there is also the PC market, where there are an immense number of manufacturers of many different parts that go into making the gaming system run. Some people would consider a PC a broader term than a console, as it is a system to play video games on. But with all the aspects and customizability, it is hard to put it in the same category as the all-in-one console.

IS couldn't be more important in the gaming industry; from E-shop game purchasing to personal accounts, to voice chat and matchmaking, IS is everywhere. In the current industry market, consumers buy their games online and hold digital copies of games. No longer going to stores to get physical Disk copies. Gamers live for their profiles, where they can customize multiple aspects not only to express their individuality but also to show off their achievements in their favorite games. In many games, there is multiplayer where you prove your skill against

others, either individually or with a team of your peers. All of these not only use IS but rely on it to function and perfect it to be better than the competition.

As with every industry, the goal posts are ever moving, meaning that what was new and exciting today is being overshadowed by the newest and greatest. We can see this with the rise of VR gaming, “the console wars”, and the battle for exclusives. It is hard to predict what innovations the future will produce, but not only will IS have a hand in making it work, but it will be pivotal in infrastructure, maintenance, and management.

Overall, it is hard to think of many other industries that rely on IS as the gaming industry. Where everything is run online through servers, crafted with coding, and maintained through constant bug fixes and updates.

Firm Analysis

Bringing older Nintendo games to mobile devices represents an innovative initiative aimed at tapping into a new demographic of mobile gamers while simultaneously capitalizing on the nostalgia of longtime fans. This firm analysis focuses on examining Nintendo's Business Model Canvas – in conjunction with the initiative's potential risks and challenges – via a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis. Utilizing the SWOT matrix reveals the unique approach Nintendo has taken to remain a dominant player in the gaming industry, despite growing competition from Sony's Playstation, Microsoft's Xbox, and the Gaming PC market.

Strengths

- Brand Power and Nostalgia
  Nintendo's franchises like Super Mario, The Legend of Zelda, and Metroid enjoy enduring popularity and evoke strong nostalgic emotions among millennial and Gen Z gamers, providing a significant competitive advantage.
- Cost-Efficient Development
  Porting or emulating older games is significantly less costly than developing new intellectual properties or AAA games. This creates an attractive return on investment potential. (Piskunov)
- Digital Strategy Alignment
  By making legacy games available on mobile, Nintendo achieves its strategic goal of growing and strengthening its gaming offerings while engaging users beyond its proprietary consoles.
- Trusted Brand Identity
  Nintendo's reputation for high-quality, family-friendly gaming provides them with a foundation of trust among consumers, increasing the likelihood of a successful mobile launch.

Weaknesses

- Control Scheme Limitations
  Many of Nintendo's legacy games were designed with physical controllers in mind.

Adapting these games for touch screen input methods could lead to poor user experiences for certain titles.

- Platform Compatibility Challenges

  Ensuring consistent performance and responsiveness across a wide range of Android and iOS devices introduces technical complexity and potential compromises in the user experience.

- Licensing and Rights Issues

  Some titles may involve rights held by third-parties (music composers, voice actors, etc), which could delay or prevent re-release without renegotiation.

- Brand Devaluation Risks

  Releasing legacy titles at lower prices for mobile may conflict with Nintendo's traditionally “premium” pricing strategy.

Opportunities

- Rapidly Expanding Mobile Market

  The global mobile gaming market is projected to surpass $120 billion in 2025, with increasing smartphone availability and improved device capabilities enhancing potential reach. (Statista)

- Flexible Monetization Models

  Additional revenue can be generated through multiple approaches:

  - One-time game purchases
  - “Freemium” models with additional in-game purchases
  - Subscription-based access to in-game functionalities (similar to Nintendo Switch Online)

- Cross-Generational Appeal

  Older gamers can re-experience classic games from their youth, while younger users can discover classic titles for the first time – building multi-generational user engagement.

- Global Distribution via App Stores

  Android's Google Play Store and Apple’s App Store provide immediate access to an international user base, reducing barriers to entry and offering scalable growth.

- Community Engagement & Influencer Marketing
  Retro gaming communities and influencers can be leveraged to generate awareness and foster early adoption.

Threats

- Piracy and Sideloading
  Classic games are already vulnerable to piracy via third-party emulators. Mobile distribution increases the risk of unauthorized use, particularly on open platforms.
- Market Competition
  Competitors such as Square Enix (the makers of Final Fantasy), Capcom (the makers of Street Fighter), and Sega (the makers of Sonic) have successfully launched retro titles on mobile and have been in the mobile market for extended periods of time, intensifying competition for user attention.
- Platform Fees and Regulations
  App stores typically retain between 15% to 30% of the revenue generated by an app and impose strict compliance guidelines, which could reduce profit margins and limit pricing flexibility. (Apple & Alphabet Terms/Policy)
- Short Gameplay Durations
  Retro games tend to lack plot length and depth, potentially affecting user retention unless expanded with new features or added content.

Business Model Canvas, Value Chain Analysis, and Information System Use

- Business Model Canvas (BMC)
  Nintendo's BMC is built around its proprietary technologies and iconic intellectual properties (both games and services). Nintendo physically develops and distributes its own games and consoles. Additionally, Nintendo also develops and distributes products and services for third party game developers and retailers to create and sell products bearing the Nintendo trademark.
- Value Chain (VC) Analysis
  Nintendo's VC focuses on creating and delivering quality games and consoles at affordable prices, all while maintaining operational efficiency.

    - Primary Activities: Sourcing hardware, internal game development, product distribution via the eShop and physical retailers, global campaigns.
    - Support Activities: Centralized leadership, hire/retain skilled creative talent, invest in game hardware, close relationships with suppliers.
- Information System (IS) Use

  Nintendo develops and manages three major information systems:
    - Nintendo eShop: A platform for digital game distribution and transactions, personalized user experiences, and regional content management.
    - Nintendo Switch Online: Provides cloud services, multiplayer capabilities, and access to retro game libraries for subscribers.
    - Developer Tools: Provide SDKs and integration services for third-party developers to publish games on Nintendo platforms.

Bringing classic Nintendo games to mobile presents a compelling opportunity to reach a broader audience, tap into a booming market, and reinvigorate beloved titles. With careful execution – particularly around the user experience, licensing, and pricing structure – this initiative could deliver an additional stream of revenue while reinforcing Nintendo's digital transformation goals and strengthening its position in the global gaming ecosystem.

Customer Life Cycle Review

As gaming nostalgia continues to thrive and mobile devices grow to become the most widely accessible gaming platform, bringing classic Nintendo titles to mobile offers a unique opportunity for the company to reconnect with longtime fans while capturing a younger, broader audience. This customer life cycle review outlines a comprehensive approach to launching and sustaining this initiative, guiding users from initial awareness through to the retirement of the product. By leveraging nostalgia-driven marketing, seamless user experiences, and demographic-driven engagement strategies, Nintendo can ensure that its legacy not only resonates with existing fans, but also introduces a new generation to the magic of its classic games. The following customer life cycle review breaks down each stage of the customer journey, detailing the key objectives, tactics, and touch points that will drive growth, retention, and engagement across the mobile gaming landscape.

1. Requirements Stage

- Objective**:**

  To encourage interested customers to explore and consider downloading the games.
- Key Tactics:
  - Free Trials/Demos: Offer free versions of select games (or limited-time demos) to let users experience them before committing to a purchase.
  - Game Reviews/Ratings: Highlight positive user reviews and expert opinions from prominent, reputable figures in gaming media to validate quality.
  - Gameplay Previews: Share videos, trailers, and in-game snippets to give users a taste of the experiences they could have.
  - Marketing Campaigns: Utilize digital ads, influencer partnerships, and social media engagement to inform potential customers about the initiative. Showcase nostalgia-driven ads that feature popular games, emphasizing the experience of reliving childhood memories on mobile.
- Customer Touch Points:
  - App store landing pages.
  - Social media platforms (X, Instagram, TikTok, Twitch).
  - Nintendo’s official newsletters or email campaigns.

2. Acquisition Stage

- Objective:

  To convert interested customers into active players by encouraging them to download and play the games.
- Key Tactics:
  - Easy Onboarding: Simplify the game setup process to make it seamless for new players.
  - Mobile Optimization: Ensure the games are well-optimized for mobile devices, with intuitive controls and consistent performance across a variety of devices.
  - Personalization: Offer players customization options like personalized avatars, skins, or special in-game items tied to their progression.
  - Cross-Platform Integration: Allow players to connect to their progress from games on legacy Nintendo systems to continue on mobile.
- Customer Touch Points:
  - App store download pages.
  - In-game tutorials or “getting started” guides.
  - Push notifications to remind players to play or complete certain in-game milestones.

3. Ownership Stage

- Objective:

  To keep players engaged with the game and the Nintendo ecosystem by offering continuous value.
- Key Tactics:
  - Regular Updates: Introduce new content, special events, or seasonal challenges to keep players active.
  - Community Building: Develop a community around the games through social media groups, in-game leaderboards, or regular challenges.
  - Rewards Systems: Implement a “loyalty program” that rewards players with exclusive items or limited-time content for regular play.

    - In-App Purchases: Offer optional purchases (like character skins, power-ups, or exclusive content).
- Customer Touch Points:
    - In-app notifications and alerts.
    - Social media platforms for engagement.
    - In-game leaderboards and events.

4. Retirement Stage

- Objective:

  To encourage repeat gameplay and keep players coming back for long-term engagement.
- Key Tactics:
    - Push Notifications: Use reminders to re-engage players who may have stopped playing for extended periods of time.
    - Seasonal Updates: Align new features, content, or events with holidays or milestones within the Nintendo brand to boost player retention.
    - Exclusive Content: Reward loyal players with exclusive items or content that is only available for returning users.
    - User Feedback: Actively seek feedback from players to streamline the user experience and implement requested features.
- Customer Touch Points:
    - Push notifications and email newsletters.
    - In-game alerts about new content or events.
    - Feedback forms and player surveys.

Metrics to Track

To assess the effectiveness of the customer life cycle at each stage, the following metrics should be monitored:

- Requirements: Impressions, reach, social media engagement, click-through rates on ads, download rates, time spent on landing pages.
- Acquisition: Conversion rate (downloads), first-time user retention rate.
- Ownership: Daily active users, monthly active users, in-app purchases, playtime.

- Retirement: Churn rate, customer lifetime value, user feedback scores.

By focusing on these stages and tactics, Nintendo can effectively introduce their classic game catalog to mobile users while ensuring sustained user growth and engagement.

Value Creation/Appropriation & Budget

Nintendo's $20 million Strategic Information Systems initiative is key to breaking into the $100.54 billion (Yahoo Finance) mobile gaming market. Pivotal to this strategy is creating an officially licensed emulator for users to access games that are not available on produced consoles. By producing the emulator, Nintendo estimates to generate $150 million within two years (Astle).

This initiative tackles the issue of the lack of official access points to play older Nintendo games. It aims to keep newer console sales stable, while adding additional revenue to their $1.8 billion revenue from their existing mobile games (Long). Introducing a gateway to the nostalgic Nintendo games along with the support and development of new titles, will broaden the revenue streams of Nintendo. By the year 2027, Nintendo expects to break even on its SIS investment.

Continued Game Profit

This initiative has Nintendo capture both casual mobile gamers and Nintendo fans. The idea is to create a library of games available that users could purchase to access and play older titles. This platform allows continued profit to be made off games that no longer need active support and assets readily available.

This could be done through two options. The first option being a purchase to own format. Where each game is priced at a premium price and users will only need to purchase once to play. The second option is offering a subscription model. By having users pay an amount per month, this would allow users to access the entire library as long as their subscription is active.

Cracking Down on Illegal Emulators

An official emulator allows users to naturally stray away from unofficial emulators. This saves the time and resources needed to threaten with legal prosecution and carry out a lengthy trial to take down emulators. As well as, provide a legal and safe way for users to enjoy Nintendo products.

Budget Outline

The SIS initiative's $20 million budget allocation focuses on development and long-term support of the emulator. This will allow Nintendo to have a smooth release and uphold its reputation in providing games that are iconic and family-friendly for all.

1. **Emulator Development ($5M)**

   The most critical component of this initiative is ensuring that the development of the emulator is released in a stable manner. This includes on release, ensuring there are no game-breaking bugs and immediate day one patches.

2. **Game Porting and Enhancing Experience ($4M initial, $200K per game)**

   To keep interest and relevance, not all legacy games need to be released at the initial release of the emulator. The first release could contain ~18 games, totaling $3,600,000, for the initial launch, with approximately $200,000 additional costs to port additional games.

3. **Marketing Campaign ($5M)**

   This allocation is to leverage social media channels such as X, Youtube, and Instagram to promote and engage with the community.

4. **Cybersecurity ($2M)**

   Ensure the protection of intellectual protection, game data, and securing online connections. As well as, ensuring the safe keeping of payment details and security of transactions.

5. **Community/Support ($2M)**

   Resources to answer questions linked to the marketing campaign leading to the release of the emulator. In addition, an increased number of personnel to manage the inquiries and questions during the initial release and further questions by the community.

6. **Development/Operational Expenses and Contingencies ($2M)**

Funds addressed for operating costs and unseen expenses that could occur during development.

Feasibility Analysis

Upsides of the SIS Initiative:

Nintendo's Strategic Information Systems initiative, developing a proprietary emulator for smartphone devices, is designed to capitalize on the growing demand for mobile gaming while limiting unauthorized distribution and emulation of their games. This initiative allows Nintendo to reintroduce its extensive legacy game catalog directly to a global audience in an all-in-one platform officially supported by Nintendo. This move unlocks a host of new recurring revenue stream through digital downloads, subscriptions, or in-app purchases.

Market Potential:

In order to fully grasp the lucrative potential for mobile adoption, we must look at similar cases from competitors. The success of Activision-Blizzard's Call of Duty: Mobile underscores the clear demand for mobile gaming. Launched in 2019, Call of Duty: Mobile surpassed 1 billion downloads within five years (Obedkov) and comfortably generating an average of over $300 Million per year (Clement). Similarly, the success story of PUBGE Mobile developed by Tencent continues to exceed expectations worldwide by contributing over $1.3 billion annually to Tencent's balance sheet (Clement). By introducing a proprietary emulator, Nintendo can similarly rejuvenate its classic titles for a new generation of players, unlocking substantial revenue through digital sales.

Sustainability of Advantage:

The proposed SIS initiative offers sustainable advantages for Nintendo, it's also economically feasible. The initiative offers high returns on investment related to development and operational costs. Nintendo already possesses the intellectual property, reducing costs of title accusations. On average Nintendo spends around $15 million annually related to software development and $600 million related to game development (mergentonline). The primary costs would be centered around software development, quality assurance, ongoing updates, and compliance with app store policies. The initial development & deployment costs of comprehensive mobile gaming apps are estimated to be over $1 million (alwin) while the porting process to mobile are expected

to cost $100,000+ per title (Piskunov). Overall, Nintendo as an industry leader is well positioned to successfully develop this initiative and remain competitive.

Additionally, Nintendo can continue to maintain their advantage by taking legal action against developers of third-party emulators. Nintendo has in the past sued the developers of Nintendo Switch emulator Yuzu, “accusing them of willingly facilitating piracy at a colossal scale and requesting a Rhode Island court shut down the emulator and seize and destroy all copies of it owned by the developers” (Pequeño). Yuzu, the emulation software, allows users to play Switch games on Windows PC and the games are often obtained by piracy. By eliminating piracy and maintaining an official emulation platform, Nintendo can take advantage of the market demand.

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