

Midcore Game Failure: Harry Potter Wizards Unite

Summary

A game backed by a massive IP having fans in billions, developers like Niantic and WB, was doomed by the beginning.

In this report I am going to try and conclude why did this game, one that was quoted by Niantic “would run for at least for a decade”, shutdown within 3 years of its launch.

Harry Potter Wizards Unite

But before we dive into why the game failed, let's see what it was all about.

A decade ago, with the movie release of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2, the IP was at the peak of its power.

Estimated to be worth \$25 billion, the assumption was it would continue an upward trajectory, moving into other mediums and spinoffs films, such as Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them.

Of course, there had been plenty of successful games but nothing of note on mobile.

Then it happened. Warner Bros. went for the big guns.

In November 2017, it was announced that developer Niantic would take on the IP as its next big follow up to the smash hit that was (and still is) Pokémon GO.

Surely a match made in mobile heaven. Being able to explore the Wizarding World, brew potions and cast spells is exactly what every young muggle dreams of.

Where It All Went Wrong

18 months after the announcement, the location-based title began rolling out, and immediately you could see the issues.

It became very clear that this was more of a Pokémon GO clone than a true Harry Potter experience. That seems to have been the problem from day one, with nothing changing now nearly two years on.

- Living in the shadow of Niantic's catch 'em all phenomenon, Wizards Unite focused on bringing Pokémon GO players across, instead of making a case as to why "Potterheads" should jump in. That was its first mistake.

- The game needed more to be done than just duplicating the features of its successful older sibling.
- Without a strong community behind it, there was no one to tell others to get involved.
- The game had no wand fights between players, it was designed to have all the players on the same team working together for the Statute of Secrecy. With low numbers of player there wasn't any real social connect between its players.
- Outside of Pokémon GO, location-based games have failed to set the world alight. Wizards Unite has been outperformed and outshined by its stablemates
- Hodge-podge game design and direction tethered it on a cliff edge. There were numerous complaints about how inconsistent the game was with rating the players spell tracing.
- A limited inventory space meant the players had to pay to increase it. This led to Wizard's Unite becoming an almost P2W game
- It was soon criticized that the game was hamstrung by monetization and the design from such

Conclusion

Harry Potter Wizards Unite had the potential to become a phenomenal AR game on its own, but felt like a duplication of Pokémon Go. Its biggest mistakes were possibly that it could not utilize the IP and had nothing original to offer. It failed to capture the interests of the Harry Potter fan community simply because of its ineffective design and monetization plans.