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Title: Hearthstone, can it keep up with Blizzard’s Behemoths

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For those of you who don’t know Hearthstone is the latest game from the massive company Blizzard. Blizzard has done what very few companies have been able to do in the gaming space, and that is produced years of applications without a major flop.

The first Blizzard game I ever played was Battle Chess in 1993 when I was 5 or so years old. The game was memorizing, and I wouldn’t be lying if I said I played it mostly for the animations. Since 1993 Blizzard has MicroLeague Baseball has left the calm waters of casual games. It has instead chose to focus its energy on the more hard core fan base. In between Starcraft(see Korea), World of Warcraft, and Warcraft (specifically DotA). This all changed with the game Hearthstone. I don’t mean to say the game doesn’t have a hard core following, it does. What this game possess that most of its predecessors don’t is a certain degree of approachability.

Lets me tell you about my first time playing DotA playing against human opponents vs my first time playing Hearthstone. DotA… I choose a hero from a massive list with no idea what each can do, so I choose the coolest one juding by their headshot. I have no clue where to go, so I follow teammates, which gets me yelled at by my teammates. I then start hitting bad guys, who kill me, and I get yelled at. So I run back to where I was standing, wait for the non-npc bad guys to go away, then kill all the little ones. I do what I later learned is called pushing, then the humans show up and kill me, and of course get yelled at. This repeats until I have no confidence in electronics left, and consider becoming omish. I understand this is a Mod… switch out DotA with Starcraft 2 2v2 its pretty much the same story.

Contrast this with Hearthstone, I have played a tutorial, I understand simple mechanics, I have a prebuilt deck, which isn’t going to win any championships, but with a little luck, I can beat the player I am matched against. I lost my first game, what do you expect? It wasn’t a blow out, and the match ended with “well played”. Still unknown if thats a compliment or an attempt at mockery. I learned a little bit about my deck, and my strategy. I was ready to play again!

This isn’t to say that the game isn’t complex. I have friends like Eric Starling who constantly beat me, but unlike DotA, WoW, or SC2 I don’t feel as though I need to bury 10,000 hours in order to compete.

Another facet of the game that increases its approachability is cost, it’s free! Now of course you can buy additional cards(5 random cards in a deck), you can also purchase single player campaigns. None of these things are necessary to gather all the cards, though. Simply playing for an extended period of time will gain you enough in game currency to buy all the cards you want.

A lot of people originally questioned if Hearthstone, a game available on the iPad had the ability to keep gamers entertained for as long as its predecessors. I predict yes! With the caviot that it will never have the large daily active users or hourly active users that a game like WoW demands, but my prediction is that its players will continue coming back for a quick game every month for years to come.