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Giant Interactive's Zhengtu and Sohu's Tianlong Babu

Competitive Analysis



PearlResearch
Market Research and Consulting Services

www.pearlresearch.com
Email: research@pearlresearch.com
PH: 415-738-7660

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Contact

Pearl Research

Phone: 415-738-7660

Email: research@pearlresearch.com

<http://www.pearlresearch.com>

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I. Zhengtu Online and Tianlong Babu

Two emerging titles, Sohu's *Tianlong Babu* and Giant Interactive's *Zhengtu Online* are generating a great deal of buzz amongst Chinese gamers. With 1.5 million peak concurrent users, Netease's *Fantasy Westward Journey* has long been the most popular game in China. However, in recent months Giant Interactive's *Zhengtu Online* has been drawing gamers at an extremely fast rate. It now has close to 1 million peak concurrent users and Pearl Research believes that it still has room to grow. *Zhengtu Online* also has relatively low PC specifications making it accessible to gamers in second- and third-tier cities across China. Another game that has also been gaining popularity is Sohu's *Tianlong Babu* (released in May 2007) which by the end of September 2007, had over 400,000 peak concurrent users and active paying accounts of 690,000. On August 15, 2007, Sohu launched its first expansion pack for *Tianlong Babu*.



Advertisement for Zhengtu Online

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Gameplay

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Zhengtu Online has done a robust job at giving players a platform to challenge and fight each other. Its massive “international” fights are hot topics in Chinese game forums. *Tianlong Babu* uses a more banal system common to most MMORPGs where players can join guilds, player kill (PK) with other players, and gain honor.

One of the weaknesses of *Zhengtu Online* is that it is nearly impossible for a non-paying player to compete with players that pay extra money to upgrade their characters. To accommodate players with more time than money, the company introduced a subscription-based version of *Zhengtu Online* in September 2007.

Tianlong Babu has relied on the popularity of its name and fans of the martial arts novel to draw players. Signature moves done by characters in the novel can be replicated and are nicely animated in the game. *Tianlong Babu's* graphic quality is a bit mixed. While courtyards and palaces are stunning, some of the other scenes are choppy and unclear. However, its gameplay is very simple and relatively fresh because of the large number of professions

Sample

Combat scenes from Sohu's *Tianlong Babu* (left) and *Zhengtu Online*

Marketing Strategies

Zhengtu Online has achieved considerable success thanks to clever marketing, a

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respective titles.



Advertising for Sohu's Tianlong Babu in Taiwan

Conclusions

Although both games have strengths and weaknesses at this stage, Pearl Research

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	<u>Zhengtu Online</u>	<u>Tianlong Babu</u>
Trading System	Characters must fight to gain silver	All players can set up stalls selling their
	<i>Sample</i>	

	<u>Zhengtu Online</u>	<u>Tianlong Babu</u>
Stickiness	Because of the constant wars and <i>Sample</i>	The game is fun for fans of the martial
Key Success Factors	constantly battle each other.	