

Greentube keeps the channels open

Game developers must work with a wide range of Software Development Kits (SDKs) to adapt their titles to the specific needs of operators and distributors. G3 spoke to UK design house, Mazooma Games, about working with one of the industry's most flexible systems, Greentube's novoSDK

Is the novoSDK solution applicable to all game developers, regardless of scale?

novoSDK is a scalable product that would suit any size of games developer. In fact our in-house novoSDK development team has doubled in size since it started with no issues.

What are the most important elements of an SDK and does novoSDK tick those boxes?

It is important that an SDK is stable, easy to use and flexible. At Mazooma we constantly strive for innovation. novoSDK allows the development team at Mazooma to take the visions from the game designers and turn them into reality. The cross-platform nature of novoSDK enables the developer to code the game once and then output to multiple platforms. Normally a developer would have to adapt the code for each bespoke platform and by removing this requirement allows the developer to concentrate on what really counts - the game itself.

“Convention over configuration” is a software design paradigm, aimed at decreasing the number of decisions developers need to make, gaining simplicity, and not necessarily losing flexibility. Does this concept work in practice when utilising novoSDK and what are the benefits and pitfalls to be avoided?

novoSDK adapts this software design paradigm excellently, a developer can have a basic new slot up and running in hours, with minimal effort or code. Adding features such as Free Spins is straightforward. However, Mazooma by nature tends to develop slot games with mechanics and functionality that have never been developed before. novoSDK still remains flexible enough to accommodate new slot mechanics and functionality. There are occasions where a mechanic has required modifications to novoSDK itself. The novoSDK development team is always helpful and implements the required changes with minimal impact to our business.

What are your main deciding factors when choosing a platform to start development of a new game? Do you try to aim for the largest install base for a chance of high profit; or does the platform itself inspire the core design of a new game idea?

I believe that both factors mentioned above are important aspects to take into consideration when deciding which platform to use when developing a new game. The platform needs to be robust and flexible enough to meet your game design and requirements, but also portable so that the business can expose the game to as many users as possible. The beauty of novoSDK is its portability - we can build a game once and then distribute to a high volume of end-users, across multiple channels with minimal effort. This allows us to maximise our profits against development costs.

Have you developed in the past for alternate SDKs/or are you currently developing for a range of client SDKs - how do they differ, what's the ideal toolset, and how close is the novoSDK to providing everything you need?

Mazooma has been developing games for years, using multiple SDKs. Whilst powerful, often the SDKs have proven too bespoke for our business needs. We run a business model focused on quality of games rather than quantity. What novoSDK has allowed us to do is produce quality games and then mass distribute them across PC, Mobile, Native Android, iOS and now Plurius, providing maximum exposure per game. The novoSDK development team is always releasing updates to the SDK that cater for new devices, platform and compliance requirements, which in turn allow us to expand the reach of our products across different channels and countries.

If you already have the mobile and web development boxes ticked, would you use novoSDK to add the social and land-based channels, or is it an all-or-nothing solution?

Although the social and land-based channels are strong reasons to use novoSDK as a potential solution, the real power lies in its portability. In my opinion, if the developers are going to be developing on novoSDK, it makes sense to expand the utilisation of novoSDK to mobile and web development. The 'develop once, deploy to many' model is a real game changer.

Extensibility is a system design principle where the implementation takes future growth into consideration. It is a systemic measure of the ability to extend a system and the level of effort required to implement the extension. How does novoSDK enable you to future-proof your game designs - how extensible is it?

In my experience, novoSDK has proven to excel as a system designed with extensibility in mind. More recently we have had to implement additional functionality to meet new UK legislation across all of our games [20+]. Traditionally, this would have been months' worth of work on our legacy games. On novoSDK, the changes were implemented by the novoSDK team and all of our games inherited this functionality with a simple novoSDK update.

How important is access to the land-based market, through the Plurius system, in your consideration of novoSDK?

The Plurius system was one of the flagship server-based gaming systems at the ICE exhibition this year and is an impressive addition to NOVOMATIC omni-channel operations. The technology seamlessly links the online and land-based channels and we are now beginning to develop games with the Plurius system in mind.

Are the distribution channels wide enough using novoSDK? What are the advantages of using NOVOMATIC's channels as opposed to distributing through alternative means?

As you can imagine, the NOVOMATIC distribution channels are multinational. Once a game has been developed on novoSDK, it can then be distributed worldwide with minimal effort.

How easy is it to use novoSDK's cross-compiler to create native code on multiple platforms, including: HTML5, iOS, Android, Plurius (.NET), and Adobe Flash - and how do you ensure that the game is the same across all platforms?

It is surprisingly easy to use novoSDK to create native code on multiple platforms. From the developer's perspective, they are only required to develop the game on a Java source code.

How automated and standardised is the process? How much of your time is spent on quality assurance, certification and game launch as part of the process - or are these primarily handled by Greentube? How much of the complex deployment processes do you participate in or is this left to Greentube too?

The process of using novoSDK to convert a game is very automated. This allows the development team to actually focus on creating quality game content. At Mazooma, we have a large QA team, so the majority of the QA process is handled in-house. Greentube handles certification for all the jurisdictions that Mazooma operates in and also takes full responsibility for deploying our content across all Operators and Channels.

Which are the most useful tools in the novoSDK kitbag?

There are many technically useful tools in the novoSDK kitbag. A personal favourite feature of mine is the spectator and replay mode. On spectator enabled sites, such as StarGames, players are able to view others playing the game. This is a powerful feature that can help deliver a more traditional land-based casino feel to an online site. The replay is also a nice way for a player to revisit a 'big-win' or a feature in their previous game.

How much time do you save in utilising novoSDK, and is the cost of utilising the system negated by the savings it delivers?

Utilising novoSDK has completely revolutionised our game development process. Without novoSDK, Mazooma would be required to develop bespoke code for each target platform, potentially costing additional months of development hours per game. The fact that the novoSDK only requires a game to be developed once in Java means that, from a resource perspective, we only have to recruit Java developers and do not have to recruit for specific niche platforms, which can often prove expensive.

How have you found the process of working with Greentube and NOVOMATIC?

We have been working with Greentube and NOVOMATIC for a few years now and it has completely revolutionised our business. The novoSDK is a game changer and allows for quality content development, along with rapid multi-national, multi-channel deployment for maximum exposure. The Greentube team works in synergy with the novoSDK and is both knowledgeable and helpful. I would recommend novoSDK to any game development house.