[GB] Self-regulatory body issues reprimand for “Dungeon Keeper” freemium game ad

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On 2 July 2014, the British advertising industry’s self-regulatory body, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), reprimanded the electronic game manufacturer Electronic Arts (EA) for an advertisement for its “Dungeon Keeper” game.

The “Dungeon Keeper” game is a so-called Freemium game, i.e. the game is, in principle, free, but players can acquire equipment, credits and so on, via in-app purchases in order to progress further in the game.

The ASA acknowledged that, in principle, it was possible to complete the game without spending money. However, it would take much longer and limit gameplay to such an extent that players were likely to repeatedly find themselves in a situation where they felt compelled to make in-app purchases. EA had previously explained that there was no need for players to spend money and that “Dungeon Keeper” was similar to many other Freemium games. However, the ASA disagreed and ruled that the e-mail advertising campaign in which EA had called the game “free” should be considered misleading.

According to the ASA’s decision, EA may no longer advertise the game in this way and, in future, must tell customers that playing it without in-app purchases can limit gameplay as mentioned above.

ASA adjudication, 2 July 2014

http://www.asa.org.uk/Rulings/Adjudications/2014/7/Electronic-Arts-Ltd/SHP_ADJ_258907.aspx#.U7ZETLF05xk

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