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Privacy Is the Price: Player Views and Technical Evaluation of Data Practices in Online Games

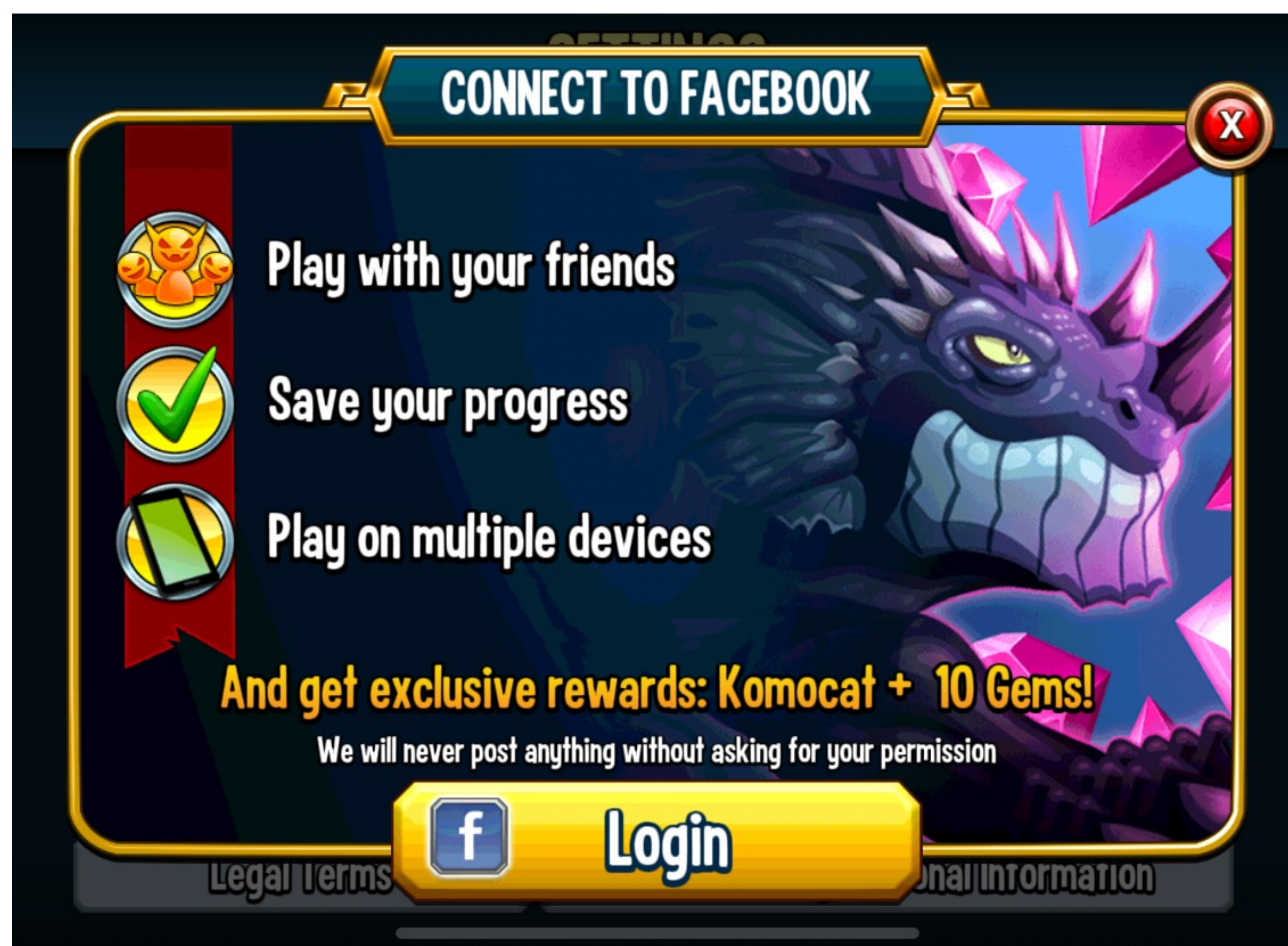
- Games collect user data for different purposes: **personalisation, ads or tracking.**
- Risks around sharing personal information: **security, privacy and integrity risks.**

How do users select games?

- Users would not download games that have **negative reviews** or asked for **extensive** personal information.
- **Paid games** and **games without advertisements** were considered **more secure.**

Dark game designs facilitating data collection

- **Forcing installation** of third-party apps (e.g. anti-cheat apps).
- **Sharing user data** with third-party apps.
- Social media integration (**receiving gaming awards** or **disclosing contact information**).



Study method

Online screening survey

Between 16th of Feb and 24th of March 2022

(N = 283 responses)

Semi-structured interviews

Remote interviews for around 30 minutes

(N = 20 participants)

Evaluation of data collected by games

Analysis of games reported by study participants

(N = 21 games)

Qualitative insights from users

- Users **blocked** permissions requesting access to **photos, browser history, location files.**
- Users expresses **lack of trust** towards game developers' ethical practices.
- Voice chat is **unmonitored** risk of receiving **threats and inappropriate comments** from other players.

Figure 1: Connecting to social media and rewards on Monster Legends

Screenshot from mobile version of game
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