Nintendo turns to smartphone apps for its consoles

The Associated Press

OSAKA, May 4 (Kyodo) — Nintendo Co. is trying to enable users of its game consoles to enjoy popular smartphone applications on their devices in a bid to boost sales and return to profitability on an operating basis in the current business year, company sources said Saturday.

The game console and software maker has offered professional-use conversion software to application developers to make it easier for them to produce smartphone games for use on the Wii U home video game console, whose sluggish sales helped widen the firm's operating loss in fiscal 2012.

Nintendo hopes that smartphone software will help spur sales of its consoles and then lead to an increase in popular game titles for them, the sources said.

A lack of popular games for Nintendo consoles was a chief reason for worse-than-expected console sales and a group operating loss of 36.41 billion yen for the year ended in March, its second straight annual operating loss, which the company reported late last month.

Nintendo will also focus on developing new software on its own, the sources said.

The company is slated to release a new title in the popular Pocket Monster series in October for the 3DS portable device, which is capable of showing 3-D images, while Nintendo President Satoru Iwata said it will roll out some new titles for the Wii U, equipped with a touch screen, from the summer through next year.

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