



breaking

October 18, 2012

Angry Birds to teach particle physics

The vengeful Angry Birds cardinal sets his sights on a new target: teaching kids particle physics.

By Signe Brewster

CERN and Angry Birds-creator Rovio announced last Friday that they will team up to produce a learning program for children between 3 and 8 years old.

The partnership will focus on the Angry Birds Playground brand, which is designed to make learning about physics fun and accessible for all ages. It is based on Finland's national kindergarten curriculum.

"It's not so much to teach kids in a serious way, but to bring them into science in a playful and inspiring way," says Rolf Landua, head of CERN's education and outreach group. "Rovio has quite a comprehensive educational program, which is available on the Internet. To hook onto that and provide content that gives young children an idea of what CERN is doing and what modern physics is about with the help of the little angry birds, I think that's quite promising."

The birds in the Angry Birds game are angry because pigs stole their eggs. Landua says that in the Playground game, children will walk around an island and search for traces of the eggs. As they do so, they will be asked to solve puzzles, some of which will relate to CERN research.

The announcement took place at the annual Frankfurt Book Fair, which is the largest publishing fair in the world. CERN Director General Rolf-Dieter Heuer and Rovio Chief Marketing Officer Peter Vesterbacka shook hands to seal the agreement.

"We are also discussing further collaboration with Rovio, perhaps on physics games for older children, or the development of a new game around the Angry Birds in the CERN universe," Landua says.

Rovio released Angry Birds in 2009, after which it quickly became a hit on the iPhone and other devices. The company has since adapted the characters for use in other products, such as playgrounds and the new educational system.

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