

# Real dividends at the expense of virtual games

## Belarusian game World of Tanks becomes one of the most profitable in the world

By Yuri Chernyakevich

Hundreds, and even thousands of tanks fighting each other, ceaseless cannonade of tank armament, victory of the strongest armoured contender, who manages to thwart all attacks. This is not, as somebody might think, a schematic description of the well-known Battle of Kursk which occurred in 1943 near Prokhorovka. Similar tank battles are played today, however not in reality, but on the Internet by thousands of people who play the game World of Tanks, created by the Belarusian company, Wargaming.

For those of you who do not know I will explain. World of Tanks is a tank battle simulator created following the success of the multi-user game World of Warcraft. Not so long ago, in August, 2010, the company officially launched the game on the Internet and, after a year or two, this simple computer game, for children and adults, has become one of the most popular in the world. As of today, the site has no less than 45 million registered players of World of Tanks.

But this figure is not the last I wish to tell you about. Here is another one — on January 21st last year, more than 190 thousand people simultaneously participated in the game World of Tanks! This fact has been already registered in *The Guinness Book of Records*.

It is also necessary to mention that these virtual 'tanks' please their developers not only by moral, but also by quite real financial dividends. For example, according to data of

the analytical company SuperData, last year the World of Tanks game brought more than \$370 million to its owners, making it the fourth largest among all online games in the world, that use the 'free-to-play' model. This format allows players to install and play the game for absolutely free of charge. The company-developer receives money resources only for the purchase of various artefacts and options. For example, a player can pay a real \$10 a month and receive virtual money on their accounts that can be spent on improving their tanks, fortifying their armour, acquiring self-propelled guns and so on.

As for earnings for last year, The Belarusian game left behind such giants of the world game industry as World of Warcraft from Activision/Blizzard (with an income of 'just' \$213m), Star Wars: The Old Republic (\$139m) and Counter-Strike Online (\$121m). Ahead of the Belarusians were only such games-strategies as Cross Fire, League of Legends, and Dungeon Fighter Online.

According to the founder of the company, Victor Kisly, the secret behind the success of World of Tanks is simple, "A tank is almost like a car, but more courageous. Our game aroused the interest not only of the youth and computer geeks, the traditional players of similar online games, but also representatives of brave trades like firemen, military men and police. For this reason, in my opinion, our game was to many people's taste."

Victor spends at least one hour and a half to two hours a day on vir-



World of Tanks: a pastime for some, a serious 'campaign' for others

tual combat in order to improve the game. For example, the possibility to use several tanks from one's own 'garage' in battle is under discussion now. If one tank is destroyed, a new tank can join the fight. The founder of the company attentively monitors the reaction of fans of the 'tank battles' on innovative ideas, and even personally communicates with 'tankmen' at numerous meetings which are held in

Minsk, Moscow or Warsaw.

According to international experts, the Belarusian company has a big opportunity for further growth. It is now entering the markets of Asia and America, and preparing a version for tablets and smart phones. So it is quite possible that the impressive figures from World of Tanks, given in this article, will be even bigger at the end of this year.

## Comfort brought to competition

By Sergey Smirnov

### Over 200 Minsk Automobile Works urban buses to run in Olympic Sochi

The buses have already arrived at the capital of the Winter Olympics 2014, having covered over 2,000km. The delivery was conducted after the Belarusian enterprise won the tender. The city's administration noted that 255 MAZ-103 and MAZ-206 city buses will be running along the routes during the Olympic and post-Olympic period.

These buses were custom-made for the Krasnodar Krai. For the first time, Minsk's Automobile Works equipped its buses with a more powerful diesel engine for optimal operation of the air conditioning systems.

All buses comply with international passenger transportation standards, offering comfortable travel for its regular and disabled passengers. Apart from that, the Belarusian vehicles are fully adapted to the Black Sea climatic conditions.

## Rock-climbing wall with cycling track

By Sergey Smirnov

### Grodnoinvest free economic zone to construct tourist and sports centre at Avgustovsky Canal, near village of Rynkovtsy

Design and construction of the tourist centre is to launch this year, in three stages. Tourist facilities will be used for major cultural and corporate events. Architectural plans are now being elaborated, with preliminary designs receiving the necessary approval — to include camp-sites, parking, a rock-climbing wall, a stage and a café. The village of Rynkovtsy is to receive all necessary infrastructure, including facilities serving the existing cycle route and Avgustovsky Canal pier. All types of tourism are being encouraged.

Construction of facilities began last year, including the initiative for a cycling and pedestrian zone within the park; this is now open to the public, with summer-houses providing shelter and shade.

This year, Grodnoinvest FEZ also plans to start construction of a new sports and recreation facility near the village of Peschany — to include a recreational zone, camp-site, and shooting and archery ranges. Leisure areas and a seasonal cafe are to open, alongside washing facilities and other conveniences. The second stage of the project will include construction of offices and a hotel with a cafe, as well as additional approach roads.

## Dedication to stars embodied in sculpture

### Space cafe-restaurant may appear in Minsk

"It would be desirable to create a cafe with an unusual space menu," dreams the People's Artist of Belarus, the laureate of the State Award of the USSR, Ivan Misko. This cafe-restaurant will become part of the scale project which the master has conceived to realise. According to the sculptor's ideas, the alley, where each cosmonaut coming to the capital could plant a tree, will be laid in Minsk. Also, on the side of one building will appear a bas-relief devoted to the subjugators of the Universe from Belarus, Piotr Klimuk, Vladimir Kovalenok and Oleg Novitsky.

Ivan Misko became the winner of the Union State Literature and Art Award for 2013-2014. This honourable award has gone to the founder of many sculptural works and marks a great event in his creative life.



Ivan Misko's space

"Such high estimation of creativity is the breath of fresh air and additional charging for new achievements," noted the People's Artist.

Now the master is preparing for a personal exhibition which will be held in April at the Mikhail Savitsky

Art Gallery. The sculptor will represent several new works, however he does not rush to reveal all the detail, saying that it is omen of misfortune.

Mr. Misko is the author of the whole gallery of sculptural portraits of outstanding figures of avia-

tion. Represented among them are almost all the cosmonauts of the former Soviet Union, including Belarusians Vladimir Kovalenok and Piotr Klimuk, and also the representatives of different countries who were in orbit under the *Interkosmos* programme. For his devotion to the space theme, Ivan Yakimovich was repeatedly awarded diplomas, prizes and memorable signs of the Yuri A. Gagarin Research and Test Cosmonaut Training Centre, while Star City became the second creative workshop of the sculptor.

Actress Stefaniya Stanyuta, writer Yanka Mavr, actor Nikolai Yeremenko and Olympic champion, Alexander Medved, spent more than one hour in Ivan Misko's workshop. In creative co-operation with colleagues and such like-minded people as Andrey Zaspitsky, Nikolai Ryzhenkov and architect Oleg Trofimchuk he created a monument to the Russian writer Maxim Gorky in Minsk, and a monument in honour of mother-patriot in Zhlobin.