

Free to Play

The term Free to Play, or F2P, describes a game as being obtainable for free legally, as the publisher does not charge for it. It does however not grant any more rights to the game, such as distributing it, changing the code or re-licensing it. It means, you are not charged for playing it, and getting it for playing.

It comes in different flavors:

- Really free to play: No cost will come. The game's functionality is available entirely.
- Limited free to play: The game can be played for free, but some parts of it are only available when paying for it.
- Pay to win: This is a variation of limited free to play, as you *can* play it for free, but in order to really be successful or progress in the game, you still have to buy certain things, such es crucial items or the game itself, in order to get the needed items. This variation is widely regarded as problematic and undesired.

There are many ways how such a game can actually be financially possible. Donations, crowd funding and similar fund-raising are classic approaches to the general problem of money gathering. Also a combination of a free to play version and a payed version may can be available. Another model is that the server hosting itself for a game may create an income for the game company, while the actual game itself is available for free. It is also a practice, to sell ingame-items, that may not even do a lot or nothing game play wise but can make the game more customizable for the player (such as different skins for the player and his items, special variations of items or gimmicks).

The mentioned pay to win of course gives a strong incentive to actually spend money on the game. Sometimes it is even necessary to continue to pay money in order to keep certain advantages in-game or to progress further in the game. In a narrower sense, all these practices are not really free to play, as obviously not all aspects of the game are obtainable for free. This is also part of the reason why such games are mostly frowned upon.

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