

Kiribati Game Development: Cultural Transmission, Communities of Creation, and Marketing

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Abstract

The people of Kiribati play a broad assortment of card and board games. The game rules show several innovations that were made outside the purview of the games' manufacturers. The presence and regional development of proprietary board games illustrates product development scenarios that are counterintuitive to marketers. Using game boards and game rules collected in Kiribati, this study offers an explanation on how game development in Micronesia can be understood using cultural transmission theory by locating the Republic of Kiribati both geographically and economically within the Pacific Islands economies and their communities and within their own anthropological context. The findings emphasize the importance of understanding regional and country-specific cultural practices when applying principles of product development, placement and distribution.

Keywords: cultural evolution; gaming; Micronesia; play; Tarawa

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