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Eyeing Asia, Angry Birds to Take Flight ... For Real

Hardcore fans will try to kill pigs during Finnair trip

By Ki Mae Heussner

September 01 2011

Technology

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In an ambitious branding blitz, the popular mobile game **Angry Birds** has already flown from the digital world to the analog world of board games, T-shirts and toys. Now, Rovio, the Finland-based company behind the game, is letting its bulbous, pig-slaughtering birds actually take wing.

With Finnair, Rovio is hosting what the two companies are calling the “longest, highest Angry Birds flight.”

In September, Finnair will fly from Helsinki to Singapore with eight hardcore **Angry Birds** fans, who will compete in the Angry Birds Asian Challenge at an altitude of about 33,000 feet. This week, the companies launched a worldwide search for its cross-continental contenders, giving fans an opportunity to

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said. “Of course, we are both coming from Finland... and we are both heading to Asia. But I like the thinking I see with Angry Birds. All the vision that they have.”

Topics: [Angry Birds](#), [Gaming](#), [Rovio Mobile](#)

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Angry Birds Seasons Moon Festival episode now available on Android and Symbian!

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a growing line of creative tactics aimed at expanding the Angry Birds brand.

In July, Peter Vesterbacka, Rovio’s chief marketing officer (who also goes by the nickname “Mighty Eagle”), said the company had acquired an animation studio and hopes to release a full-length movie in two or three years. According to the AFP, he also said that an Angry Birds cookbook (featuring egg recipes, of course) is on the

way.

“We always want to give awesome experiences to our fans, the fans of Angry Birds,” said Aki Snellman, a producer for Rovio. “This collaboration with Finnair seemed like a perfect fit to reward our most active fans and let them have a unique experience on board Finnair’s flight.”

Jarkko Konttinen, Finnair’s vice president of global marketing, said this particular project isn’t just about building brand equity in general, but about bringing it to an increasingly valuable market—Asia.

“They’re opening up stores in China,” he said, referring to [recent news that Rovio plans to open retail stores across the country](#). “Since they have their eye on Asia and we, although a small airline, see Asia as a growth market, it was very natural that we joined with them in this competition.”

Konttinen said Rovio approached Finnair with the idea during the region’s Midsummer festival in June. They were so taken with the idea that they started working on it immediately, he said.

As a small airline without a huge marketing budget, he said they need to market carefully and creatively. In 2008, to recognize the company’s 85th anniversary, Konttinen noted, Finnair retrofitted one of its planes to resemble a 1950s-style aircraft and dressed its flight attendants in era-appropriate garb.

“We feel that in today’s world where there’s a lot of storytelling, relevant and interesting content is far more fascinating than very straightforward communications,” he