

Unity chief steps down after gaming fee backlash

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Online Desk: The CEO of a game software company that drew heavy criticism from gaming developers for trying to rack up fees suddenly stepped down on Monday. Unity, a US company whose software is used to create and run thousands of games including smash hits like “Pokemon GO” and “Genshin Impact,” said CEO John Riccitiello was stepping down from his roles as president, CEO and board chair. “It’s been a privilege to lead Unity for nearly a decade and serve our employees, customers, developers and partners, all of whom have been instrumental to the company’s growth,” Riccitiello said in a statement.

The announcement follows weeks of acrimony that began when the firm said it was going to charge 20 cents every time a Unity-backed game was installed on any device. Anger at the move within the developer community at one point required the company to evacuate its offices after a threat was reported. Ten days later, after a spirited and often vulgarity-laden fightback from studios and developers, Unity rowed back some of the changes. Levying even a tiny fee would have reaped the company big rewards.

Unity claims that its technology underpins 70 percent of the top 1,000 mobile games, and that people download apps made with its software four billion times a month. Tech industry veteran James Whitehurst will temporarily step in as CEO as Unity conducts a search for its next chief executive.