SAMPLE

The Telegram Mini-App Playbook

How Tap-to-Earn Games Like Hamster Kombat Really Work — and How Not to Get Played

Aiman Sterling

Free sample: Introduction & Chapter 1

putrabooks.github.io

Buy the full book:

Ko-fi

Payhip

Contents

Disclaimer

Introduction

Chapter 1: What a Telegram Mini-App Actually Is

Chapter 2: Who Pays and Why — The Tap-to-Earn Business Model

Chapter 3: The Player's Real Asset — Your Time and Your Graph

Chapter 4: The Anatomy of a Tap-to-Earn Game

Chapter 5: The Airdrop — How "Free" Tokens Actually Arrive

Chapter 6: Listings — Where Money Becomes Money

Chapter 7: Reading a Project Before You Tap

Chapter 8: The Portfolio Approach — Playing More Than One Game

Chapter 9: Time Budgets and the Tap-Hour Math

Chapter 10: Hygiene — Wallets, Permissions, and Account Safety

Chapter 11: The Cash-Out Discipline

Chapter 12: Rug Radar — How Tap Games Steal

Chapter 13: When Telegram Is the Scam — Fake Apps and Phishing

Chapter 14: Taxes, Legality, and the Regulatory Weather

Chapter 15: The Winner's Playbook — What the Successful Farmers Do

Chapter 16: Common Mistakes

Chapter 17: What This Wave Is Becoming

Chapter 18: Your First 30 Days

Chapter 19: Final Thoughts

Final Thoughts

Quick Start Checklist

Resources

Digital Income

This free sample contains the Introduction and Chapter 1. The complete book contains the full contents above.

Introduction

In the middle of 2024, something happened on Telegram that had never happened before: a game about tapping a hamster reached hundreds of millions of user accounts. Not downloads — accounts opening a mini-app inside a messaging platform they already used daily, tapping a cartoon hamster, completing quests, inviting friends, accumulating points toward a token that did not exist yet. Around it, an entire economy bloomed: tap-to-earn exchanges, tap exchanges for in-game tokens, tap games for pets and casinos and fighters, each with its points, its quests, and its promised airdrop. For a few months, the "tap-to-earn" wave was the largest onboarding event in cryptocurrency history — and then, for most of its players, it paid a few dollars per hundred hours and broke their hearts.

This book is the honest study of that wave: how the mini-app economy actually works, who pays whom, why most tap hours are worth almost nothing, and — the reason to read on — how a disciplined minority converts these games into real, withdrawable money, season after season. It is written for the person who is already tapping, or already tempted, or already burned and wondering whether the whole thing was fake. It was not fake. It was a market, and markets reward the players who understand them — which is the gap between the hundreds of millions who tapped the hamster and the much smaller number who walked away with something.

The honest framing begins with what the wave really was. Tap-to-earn games are attention markets wearing game costumes: the product being bought and sold is user attention, engagement metrics, and social graph growth, and the buyers are the game's future token investors and advertisers. Airdropped tokens are the payment mechanism. Understanding this single sentence changes how every game reads: the quests that ask you to open the app daily are buying retention metrics; the invites that ask you to recruit friends are buying the social graph; the "coming soon" tokenomics pages are the prospectus for the investors who will eventually pay for all of it. The player who sees the market structure can price their time in it; the player who does not is the product.

What the disciplined minority does differently — the book's whole subject — is unglamorous: they read projects before tapping, run portfolios instead of romances, budget their hours, guard their accounts with real security hygiene, and cash out with a discipline that feels almost rude. None of it requires genius; all of it requires refusing to farm blindly.

The risks, named now and handled all book: most tap games will never deliver

a liquid token — some from incompetence, some by design; the genre's history includes outright rug pulls, wallet-draining fake apps, and phishing campaigns that used the wave's excitement as cover; and even the successful airdrops have repeatedly priced disappointing after listing, converting months of tapping into the price of a nice dinner. The book's response is the series' standard for every gray market: not avoidance, but hygiene — filters, budgets, containment, and cash-out rules that assume the worst case and let the upside surprise you.

One scope note, stated plainly: this is a book about earning from playing, not a promise of income. The genre's honest ceiling for a time-budgeted player is beer money per season, occasionally more when a genuine project lands, with every upside priced as a windfall rather than a plan. If that ratio is unacceptable, the wider series has better-paid uses of gaming- shaped time; if it is acceptable — and for hundreds of millions of people it evidently is — then the pages ahead will make you one of the few who play this wave with their eyes open.

The wave is not over. Telegram mini-apps became a permanent platform category the day the hamster proved the model, and every season since has launched new games, new points, new promises. The players who understood the machine in season one are still farming it in whatever season this book finds you in. Read on, and join them.

Chapter 1: What a Telegram Mini-App Actually Is

Before the economics, the machinery — because the wave's mechanics explain its risks. A Telegram mini-app is not an app store download; it is a web application that opens inside Telegram's interface, launched from a bot or a chat, with no install, no app store review, and instant access to the social context of the account that opened it. That single design decision created the tap-to-earn wave's twin superpowers — frictionless distribution and viral identity — and its distinctive dangers.

Frictionless distribution is the wave's engine. A traditional mobile game loses most potential players at the store: the download, the install, the permission prompts. A mini-app loses them at nothing: a player sees a link in a group, taps it, and is in the game inside Telegram — already logged in, already verified by the account system, already carrying their contact list. The friction that protects ordinary app-store users (review processes, permissions declarations, publisher identity) is what mini-apps skipped by design, which is why the genre can launch a game in a weekend and also why chapter thirteen's fake-app catalog exists: no gatekeeper checks what the game's code does with your session.

The identity layer is the second superpower. Telegram gives mini-apps an authenticated context — the account's ID, and with permission, the player's name, and the social graph reachable through invite mechanics. This is what made the hamster's growth curve vertical: inviting friends was not a share button hoping for clicks; it was an authenticated referral into a frictionless experience, with each new player one tap from their own contact list. For the player, the same fact has a security shadow: the mini- app knows a verified identity is present, and so do the scammers — the phishing described in chapter thirteen works precisely because a mini-app context feels official in a way a random website never does.

The wallet layer is where earning gets complicated. Telegram's ecosystem includes a built-in crypto wallet and a web-app framework that can request wallet connection, which is how tap-to-earn games intend to pay and get paid: points accumulate in the game's database, and the eventual airdrop lands in a wallet the player connects. That connection step is the genre's highest-stakes moment — a real airdrop needs only a receive address; every request for more (signing rights, transfer approvals, seed phrases, spending permissions) is the attack surface chapter ten trains you to refuse. The professional pattern exists because the amateur pattern gets drained: dedicated wallets for the mini-app

world, connected with minimum permissions, holding only what the games require.

The points system is the last mechanical piece, and it deserves demystifying early. Your tap-to-earn balance — coins per tap, per hour, per quest — is a database entry on the game's server. It is not a token, not on any blockchain, not yours in any enforceable sense: it is a ledger the operator keeps, convertible at the operator's discretion into whatever the eventual airdrop and listing make it. Every promise in the genre ("points will convert to $TOKEN at listing") is the operator's promise about their own future decision, and the wave's disappointment stories — points converted at terrible ratios, allocations capped after the fact, regions excluded from the drop — are all stories about that discretion being exercised. The points are real only as claims on an operator's future behavior, and chapter seven's project-reading skill exists to grade that operator before you invest the hours.

Why does any of this matter to a player who just wants to tap? Because every risk decision in this book routes through the machinery: the no- gatekeeper launch model explains why vetting is the player's job; the identity layer explains why the genre's scams are phishing-shaped; the wallet layer explains why hygiene is chapter ten; and the points-as- database fact explains why "but I have 50 million coins!" is not an argument, ever. The machine is elegant — and its elegance serves the operator first. The next chapter shows who the operator serves, and where the money actually enters the system.

End of free sample. The full book is available at putrabooks.github.io