

DECISION

FIRST INSTANCE JURY

Complaint by	Consumer
EASA Cross Border Complaints System	Forwarded to CARO by the UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA, www.asa.org.uk) EASA CBC Case 6302
Advertiser	Wargaming
Issue / Complaint	<p>“The latest shop additions picture the "Godzilla" and "Kong" commanders on the ships that are also sold.</p> <p>The information that they are in fact not on the ship while in use is buried halfway down the article, and not prominent enough or any attention brought to it.</p> <p>They also state that they have "unique voiceovers", of which they do not, they are the standard voiceovers.”</p> <p><u>Additional Info supplied by the complainant:</u> “The main pictures of the camo shows the kong and godzilla on the ship directly, suggesting that they're always there. Only hidden in the text far below is that they in fact aren't on the ship in battle. The previous larger ship additions (such as an octopod, which has a large addition on top of the ships frame) didn't disappear when taken into battle.</p> <p>As for the 'unique' voice overs, all previously sold unique voiceovers have been completed, new voice packs for every line the commander could use in battle, and reactions to various events, using new voice actors. These 'unique' voice overs sold within the godzilla and kong packs are the default voice pack standard on any other ship, with a very low volume roar at the end of them. They aren't what is expected of a 'unique' item, as they are reusing all the lines from standard voice overs present in the game since launch.”</p>
Decision issued	Friday 28 May 2021

Advertiser's Response:

«The complaint from the player relates to Titans: Large Pack (“**Pack**”) which is a special offer available to players of World of Warships (“**WoWS**”) from May 10th to May 31st. The complaint addresses two concerns that player has with content of the Pack:

1. Commander Kong and Commander Godzilla (“**Commanders**”) not visible on ship deck while in the battle, and
2. Commanders do not have unique voiceover like stated in the description.

Pack is a type of bundle being a conventional monetization mechanic in Free-to-play massively multiplayer online games like WoWS. By purchasing a Pack, player receives a fixed set of in-game items inside such as: ships, commanders, camouflages, port slots, patches flags and/or special bonuses. This Pack in question is dedicated to release of the movie Godzilla vs. Kong and is a unique collaboration between Wargaming, Legendary and WBEI.

Commanders on the Deck

As for the first claim, Pack's description clearly states what player will receive from purchase of the Pack and this description is entirely accurate. It contains *an unambiguous notice that Commanders are only visible on ship decks only while in the Port*. The description of the Pack also includes other details for players to take an informed decision before purchase such as: when missions will be available, how much experience such mission will bring, etc.

Information about visibility of the Commanders is provided in a separate paragraph commencing with the words *'Please note'* to draw players' attention.

Please note: Commanders Kong and Godzilla are only visible on ship decks while in the Port.

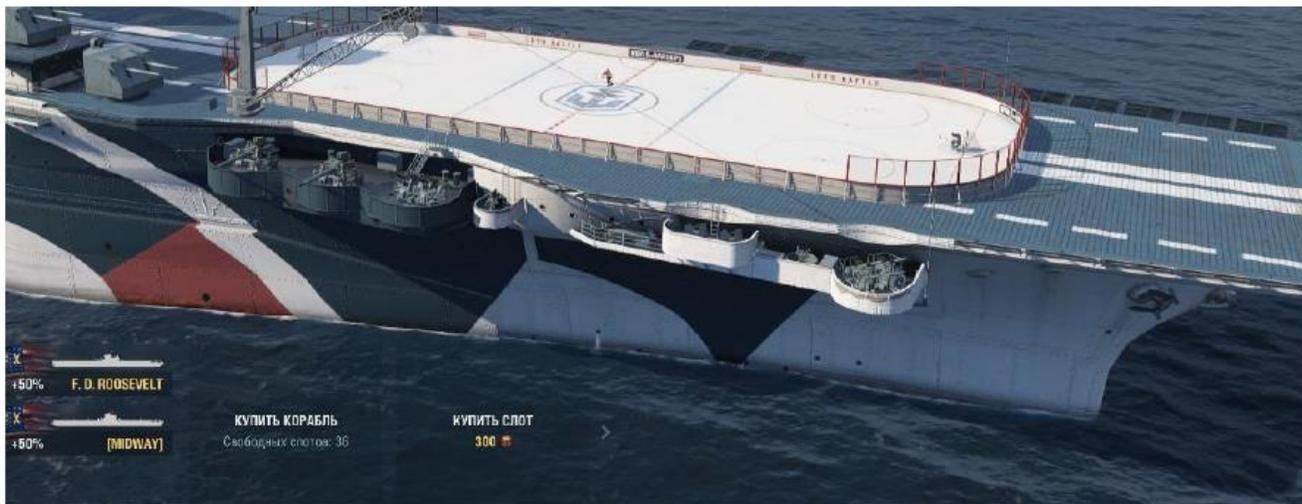
It is located in the first part of the advertising and is preceded by only a few sentences describing technical specifications of the ships being the central component of the Pack. The information about the components of the Pack, including Commanders, is presented in the font of the same size and is outlined in a logical and transparent manner fully comprehensible by an average player. There is and there was no intention whatsoever to hide any information contained in the description of the Pack.

It is important to note that Kong and Godzilla are not only Commanders on the respective ships, but also form a part of the camouflage for these ships. As clearly stated in the description, in this case we decided to make camouflage visible only while the ship is in the port. We have taken this decision for the following reasons:

- ✓ Having huge figures on the ships such as Kong or Godzilla during the battle would affect gameplay drastically: models of their size would have a significant impact on estimating which ship parts are being hit by their opponents' shells. Even in comparison to other camouflages with non-standard geometry, the massive Titans would have much bigger effect on aiming at the ship.
- ✓ The two Titans are truly legendary creatures – having them sink to the bottom of the sea because of an unlucky battle would hardly be a dignified fate for them.
- ✓ Due to restrictions in some countries and certain age rating requirements as well as according to Wargaming internal policy and philosophy, we do not allow our players to shoot live creatures.

This is not the first time when the camouflage for the ship offered in a bundle is not visible in the battle.
Below is an example from another collaboration with the famous hockey player Alexander Ovechkin:

Ship in the port (a skating rink with hockey players on the deck of the ship)



Ship in the battle (ship with a regular deck, no skating rink is visible)



Unique Voiceovers

As for the second claim, unique voiceover for Kong and Godzilla Commanders *was (and is) available for players that purchased this Pack from the very first sale of the Pack.*

We would like to underline that, as a successful game publisher, we strive for voiceovers to not only to be interesting and of high quality, but also informative. To this end, we created a new type of sound playback which combines the clarity of the standard notifications and the unique roars of these creatures (Kong and Godzilla). In simple terms, since it was impossible to express Commanders' speech with a growl, it was decided to superimpose sounds of these creatures on ordinary human speech. However, in no way does this solution diminish the fact that the Commanders do have a unique voiceover as promised in the description of the Pack.

We have added this information to the description of the Pack (available here - <https://eu.wargaming.net/shop/wows/main/20112/>) to provide the users the most complete picture of what to expect from the Pack. Please note that this clarification was added after the user has filed his/her complaint on May 10th.

The Commanders have unique voiceovers. The unique voiceovers for Godzilla and Kong are special audio effects that supplement voice notifications when either the Standard or National voiceover is selected in the Settings. You can have an unlimited number of Commanders Godzilla and Kong simultaneously.

Please note: Commanders Kong and Godzilla are only visible on ship decks while in the Port.

Please also be informed that since some players were not entirely happy with the purchases of the Pack, we decided to offer players full refunds for purchased Packs which were available until May 23rd. This decision was taken as a part of Wargaming's goodwill and without regard to the fact that the players were well-informed about the content of the Pack and that there was no misleading or incomplete information in its description.»

Jury Assessment:

1. The jury carefully considered all the information presented to them.
2. With regard to the issue of Commander Kong and Commander Godzilla ("Commanders") not visible on ship deck while in the battle:

The jury understands that usually commanders are visible on ship deck while in battle, although there have been exceptions in the past. In the case of Commanders Kong and Godzilla, for valid reasons which are mentioned in their response, Wargaming, Legendary and WBEI decided that the Commanders would only be visible on ship decks while in the Port. The Jury does not share the complainant's view that this

information is "buried halfway down the article". It notes, however, that the picture of the promotion shows both ships and Commanders in open sea. To that end, it perceives a contradiction between the promotional picture and the text below. Even though the Jury does believe that a player about to spend a significant sum to purchase the Pack, would -and should- read the information below, the Jury is also of the opinion that the information about the Commanders' visibility could have been highlighted more prominently by Wargaming, to avoid causing unnecessary frustration to its customer base, especially since this exception is a departure from standard practice.

Therefore, in the Jury's opinion, the presentation as is, is in breach of **article 3b** of the Cyprus Advertising Code. The Jury would suggest putting an asterisk and relevant note in the bundle content, in close proximity to the names of the Commanders. Amendment should be made **within 5 working days** from the dispatch of this decision. Please note that, for the purpose of assessing the deadline, count begins the working day following the dispatch of this decision.

3. With regard to the uniqueness of voiceovers:

The Jury notes the practical limitations given the said Commanders do not speak per se. It welcomes the clarification added by Wargaming in the text after the 10th of May, and considers the revised text sufficient.