

LANGUAGE IN THE GAMING INDUSTRY



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INTRODUCTION

It's the gaming industry's moment

In April of 2018, Newzoo predicted that the global games market would generate a total of 137.9 billion dollars, with mobile games accounting for 51% of the global market. The gaming industry is growing at an incredible pace, with 70-80% of its sales volume depending on what Clairfield International referred to as "hardcore gamers". Some of these "hardcore gamers" play for a living.

In its 2018 Annual Report on the gaming industry, Clairfield also estimates that ***"revenues in eSports will continue to rise tremendously around the world"***

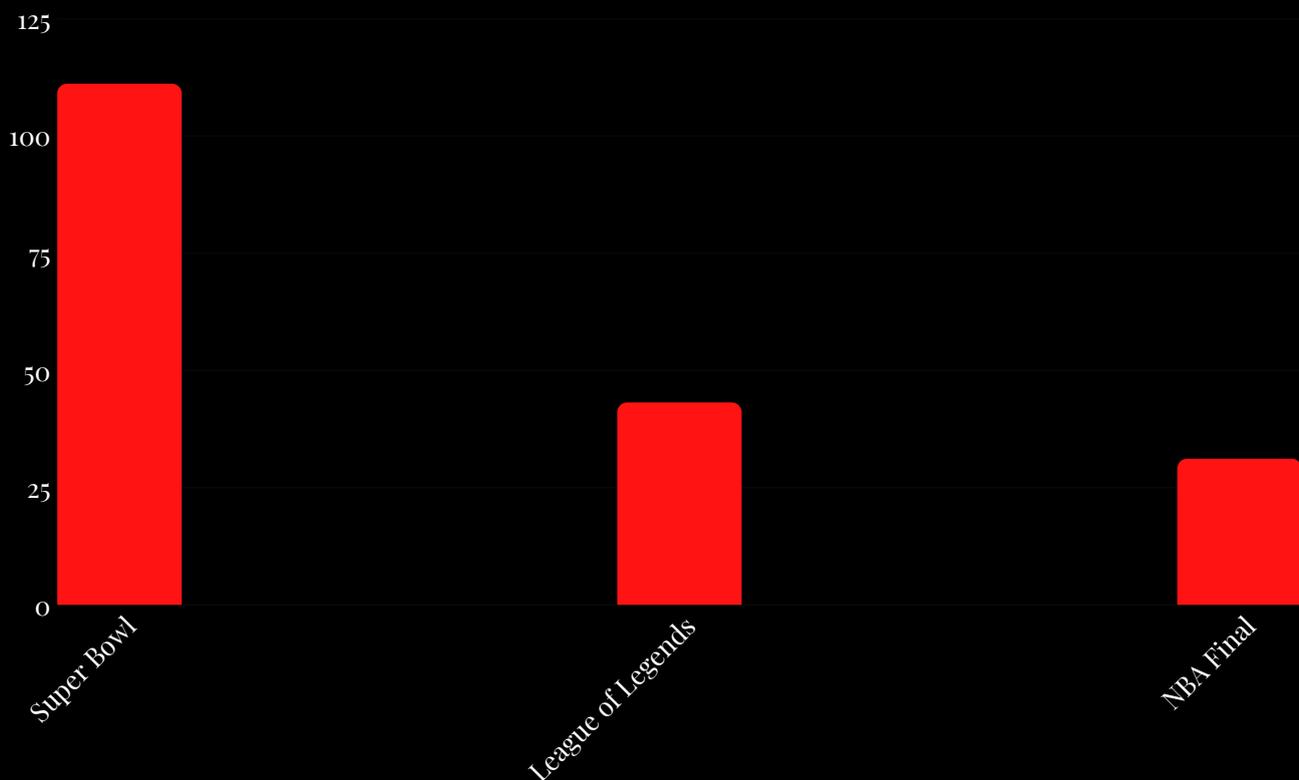
In 2006, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, French Minister of Culture at the time, characterized video games as cultural goods and as "a form of artistic expression," granting the industry a tax subsidy and inducting French game designers Michel Ancel and Frédéric Raynal and Japanese game designer Shigeru Miyamoto into the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

In an interview quoted in The New York Times, Mr. Donnedieu de Vabres said:

"Call me the minister of video games if you want — I am proud of this (...) People have looked down on video games for far too long, overlooking their great creativity and cultural value."

WINNING NUMBERS

"South Korea can be considered the country of origin of eSports. Even though the United States overtook South Korea in terms of revenues in the eSports business, it still hosts one of the biggest tournaments in the world. Additionally, through streaming, those matches are watched by a worldwide audience. As an example, the **League of Legends World Championship Finals in 2016 had 43 million viewers, whereas the NBA final game was watched by 31 million viewers.**" – *Clairfield International*



The prosperity of the gaming industry is undeniable. And, for actors in this game, this is a great opportunity to expand their business internationally with almost guaranteed success.

In this document, we'll go over some localization challenges and provide a data-fueled analysis of this promising landscape.

WHY LOCALIZATION IS ESSENTIAL

Localization isn't limited to the translation of a game. It also entails analyzing the game with a culturally-sensitive attention to detail, in order to ensure that the gaming experience is as similar as possible, across languages and across cultures.

Localizing means making sure that the player can experience and relate to the story in the same way as would a player from the game's original culture. The goal of localizing is to avoid creating a distance between the game and the player, to speak in the gamer's language.



In Game on! Burning issues in game localisation, Carme Mangiron Hevia, Chair of the official M.A. in Audiovisual Translation at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, and the translator of Final Fantasy VIII, IX, X, X-II and XII, recognizes video game localization as an essential practice:

"...localisation is often considered a necessary evil by developers and publishers. As game technology advances and the costs of developing triple A titles (the equivalent of cinema blockbusters) soar, localisation has become essential in order to sell as many copies as possible around the world and maximise game companies' return on investment. As such, localisation has become an important process in the game industry, which cannot be overlooked by developers and publishers if they want to achieve global success..."



THE TIME TO EXPAND **IS NOW**

The gaming industry offers great international opportunities.

According to the aforementioned report by Clairfield International, *"the largest gaming markets worldwide are China, the United States, and Japan."*



Compared to its forerunners, the European market is small, with Germany, the United Kingdom and France generating an accumulated revenue that is approximately one billion dollars below Japan's yearly revenue. But this also implies great opportunities for international companies:

It's a continent of high GDPs with an underdeveloped industry.



Clairfield places special attention on the German case: *"...Germany can be considered a global gaming hub. There are several German companies, such as BigPoint, Gameforge and Wooga that are well-known, even beyond Germany's borders, for their online browser games..."*, but still, its gaming industry is underdeveloped, lacking in blockbusters with international, competitive appeal.

This is partially due to a lack of developers and publishers, and partially due to a lack of public funding. **When it comes to certain type of triple A game, Germany's market is clear of local competition.**

THE TIME TO EXPAND **IS NOW**

But Europe isn't the only place game developers should consider expanding to. Nor are the USA, China and Japan.

Nowadays, few cultural phenomena aren't globalized.

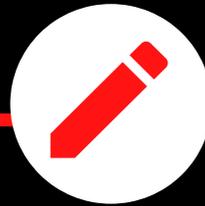
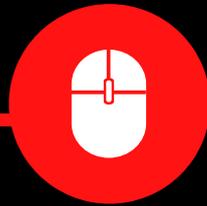
In 2016, a report by Newzoo found that **the gaming industry in the MENA region** (defined as the Middle East and North Africa) **had a year-on-year growth of 26,2%.**

According to Jeroen Schollosser, MD of Equinix for the MENA region, its potential lays on the fact that half of its population of nearly 400 million is younger than 25 years of age. Writing for gamingindustry.biz, Lara Noujaim, director of publishing at Game Cooks noted that "...while Arabic is one of the top five spoken languages around the world by population, the number of Arabic titles on app stores is still surprisingly low..."



THE CHALLENGES OF GAME LOCALIZATION

Many translation scholars, including Jeremy Munday and Minako O'Hagan have considered video game localization as a hybrid type of translation, since it combines elements of software localization, AVT, and literary and technical translation.



Localizing certain games requires extensive knowledge of a **scientific or technical field**, while working on others might involve creating new versions of **rhymes and narrative passages as evocative as their originals**.

On the other hand, for game developers looking to expand internationally, the game itself isn't the only material subject to translation and cross-cultural adaptation.

Marketing material, the company's website, the game's manual, its description in online stores and its prepaid cards.



THE CHALLENGES OF GAME LOCALIZATION

Basically, these are the main challenges a video game localizer will be facing:

Reproducing the **original gaming experience**, within the constraints of its framework, in a way that resonates with a player from another culture.



Accurately translating all **technical and literary** features of the game itself.

Accurately translating **related documentation** (manuals, guides, policies) to make them understandable to a new player.



Adapting related material so the player can **establish a relationship with the game**, its story, and the company behind it as would a player from the source culture.

The effort to appeal to a new type of player is multifaceted and complex. Its ROI is high, but so is its cost. It can only be left in the hands of experts.

THE ANSWER

*A turnkey solution
by an expert team.*

Our international team includes professionals from many fields, including the gaming industry. We can provide developers and companies of all cultures and budgets with the professional help they need, adapting their games along with all their related material, to appeal to any demographic, in any market.

For every language pair we cover, we offer mother tongue linguists and native marketers who can assist you, not only due to their expertise but also thanks to their insider view of your target culture.

So, why not give us a call? Our customer services team is available 24/7. Reach out to us as soon as now and become a global player.

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