

Journey to the West: A Chinese Game Localization Primer

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Part 1: Localizing China's Games

- Chinese Games: A look under the hood...
- Developers and Localization
- ZH-> EN Localization

Chinese Games: A look under the hood...

- Extremely advanced in the browser/F2P space.
- Monetization Trumps All:
 - Emphasis on Fast ROI, Short Game Lifespan
- Rolling Servers (200 or more a week) & Burst Spending

- Evolutionary IP:
 - Re-adaptation and “borrowing” of gameplay, art assets, music and other game elements is **extremely** prevalent.
 - Any successful innovation is often picked up and creatively engineered into new titles soon after the launch.

- Weekly Events/Dynamic Content is preferred over artful story lines and deep content.
- Goal is to constantly have enough playable content to keep people playing and spending, NOT to create an “artful masterpiece” .

Developers and Localization

- Very few developers are ready to localize outside of SEA.
- Localization = Translation
- Emphasis on certain return before investment.
- Strong UI/UX talent is scarce
- Development first, localization last (if at all).

ZH-> EN Localization

Problems

1. UI Constraints
2. Lack of Easily Exportable Language Pack
3. Poor Storyline Quality
4. Differing Quality Standards
5. Perpetually Changing In-game Content
6. Maxed Out Monetization
7. Lack of Support for Overseas Versions

Solutions

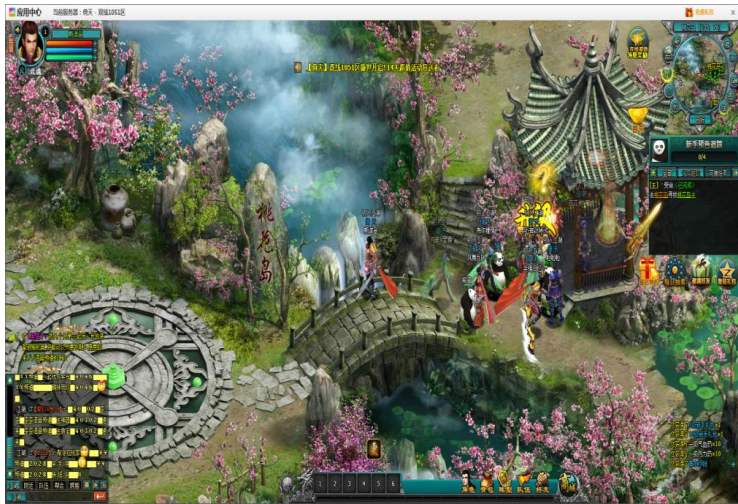
1. Provide a UI/UX analysis before translation begins; use German as baseline length limit.
2. Communicate early on about localization needs and request different formats.
3. Re-writes of plot by in-house game writers.
4. Conduct pro-active meetings and trainings about basic loc. standards that are expected.
5. Ensure establishment of nimble loc processes.
6. In-house mechanics and monetization specialists that can reduce the negative effects of over monetization and increase game lifespan.
7. Communicate early; get localization needs into the contract.

Part 2: Localizing China's Games

General Philosophy:

We believe that games as a form of entertainment have a natural ability to cross borders and cultures.

The East-West Localization Puzzle



- ***Problem: How do you localize a game that is well rooted in Chinese history and culture for a western audience that knows nothing about it?***
- *Inspiration: Infusion of Japanese-themed media that came to the west in the 70s and 80s.*

Potential Solutions?

- 1. Gameplay needs to be solidified and tweaked to fit snugly with the target markets needs.*
 - Tone down monetization and adjust pricing.
 - Add restrictions to trade (level, type of tradeable items, etc)
 - Increase the perceived fairness of the game by reducing the achievement gap between cashers and non-cashers.
 - Maintain and enhance gameplay elements that are most suited for the market.
- 2. Cultural Approachability: Culturally and linguistically the game had to be made approachable to the western gamer.*

What we've tried...

- *Maintain the Core:* Maintain all Chinese visual and audio themes;
- *Yitien:* Transcreate the game in a way that mimics the feel of HK kungfu movies of the 80's that were adapted for the west.

Holistic Localization

- Primary leverage:
 - High Quality Linguistic Localization
 - Content Culturalization
 - Targetted Gameplay Optimization
- Result:
 - Longer product lifespan & higher overall revenues

Takeaways

- More and more Chinese developers are looking towards foreign markets to increase revenue.
 - Understanding and awareness of good localization is lacking.
- Localization outside of CJKV is a foreign concept the vast majority of developers.
 - The Holistic Localization Approach is still developing.
- Key to Success: Ensuring standards and expectations are laid out early and synced up often.
- Chinese-themed games are viable products in western markets.
- Dedication to holistic localization is essential to the success of East-West localization projects.

Thank You!



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