

Taking Games Made in  
China to the Next Level

Charlie Moseley  
Creative Director, Tap4Fun



游戏开发者大会·中国

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE CHINA

SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER

SHANGHAI, CHINA · OCTOBER 25-27, 2015

# Beginning with the Conclusion

Tap4Fun has found success in familiar places from a far-away, unfamiliar place. You can do the opposite by finding players and revenue in far-away, unfamiliar places.

# About Myself

- 33 years old, from Washington D.C.
- Gamer since age 5, when I fell in love with Mario and Final Fantasy
- In China since 2005, working with Tap4Fun since 2010
- Perennial favorites: Civilization & SimCity
- In it for the international hit



# About Tap4Fun

- 5 years old, from Chengdu China
- Focused *only* on multiplayer strategy games
- Nearly 400 “Tappers” & one of the highest grossing mobile developers in China
- Also it for the international hit



# Tap4Fun Games



Island Empire

2011



Galaxy Empire

2011



King's Empire

2012



Spartan Wars

2012



Global Threat

2013



Galaxy Legend

2013

# 2015 Releases



Invasion  
2015



Royal Empire  
2015

# Global Focus

We have never developed a game for just China.

**We make international games for players everywhere.**

# Why This is Meaningful

It's not just about revenue or business.

Games are a breakthrough opportunity for China to interact with people from around the world. I want people to play games made in China, and I want people in China to play games from around the world.

# Why This is Meaningful



Tension between my home country and China has been growing. I wish for the people of China and the United States to find common ground and mutual values and interests.

All creative media in China - music, movies, and games, have the potential to bridge this gap and connect people in a meaningful way.

# Think of the People

When working on a game, I like to think of the people that will play it. When I communicate with them, what will I say? Why is my message important, and how will they understand it?

When you think of people and not RMB, it can change your perspective.



# About World Culture

What makes our success outside of China remarkable is the fact that we are headquartered in China and have had to overcome enormous cultural obstacles.

Many of you have traveled outside of China, but most game developers in China have not. This presents significant challenges when making games for a non-Chinese audience.

Some examples...

# United States



# China



# The Meeting Point



# The Meeting Point

Finding the meeting points between these two vastly different cultures has been something which I have grown to appreciate and enjoy. It's not easy, but when it works, a product can take hold everywhere, not just in the United States or in China. Look for these meeting points where cultures intersect.

# Two Starting Principles

The concept for each game was created to:

**#1: Be something we like.** Make games you like.

**#2: Work in as many regions as possible.** Don't limit your success.

# First Taste of Victory



Island Empire

2011

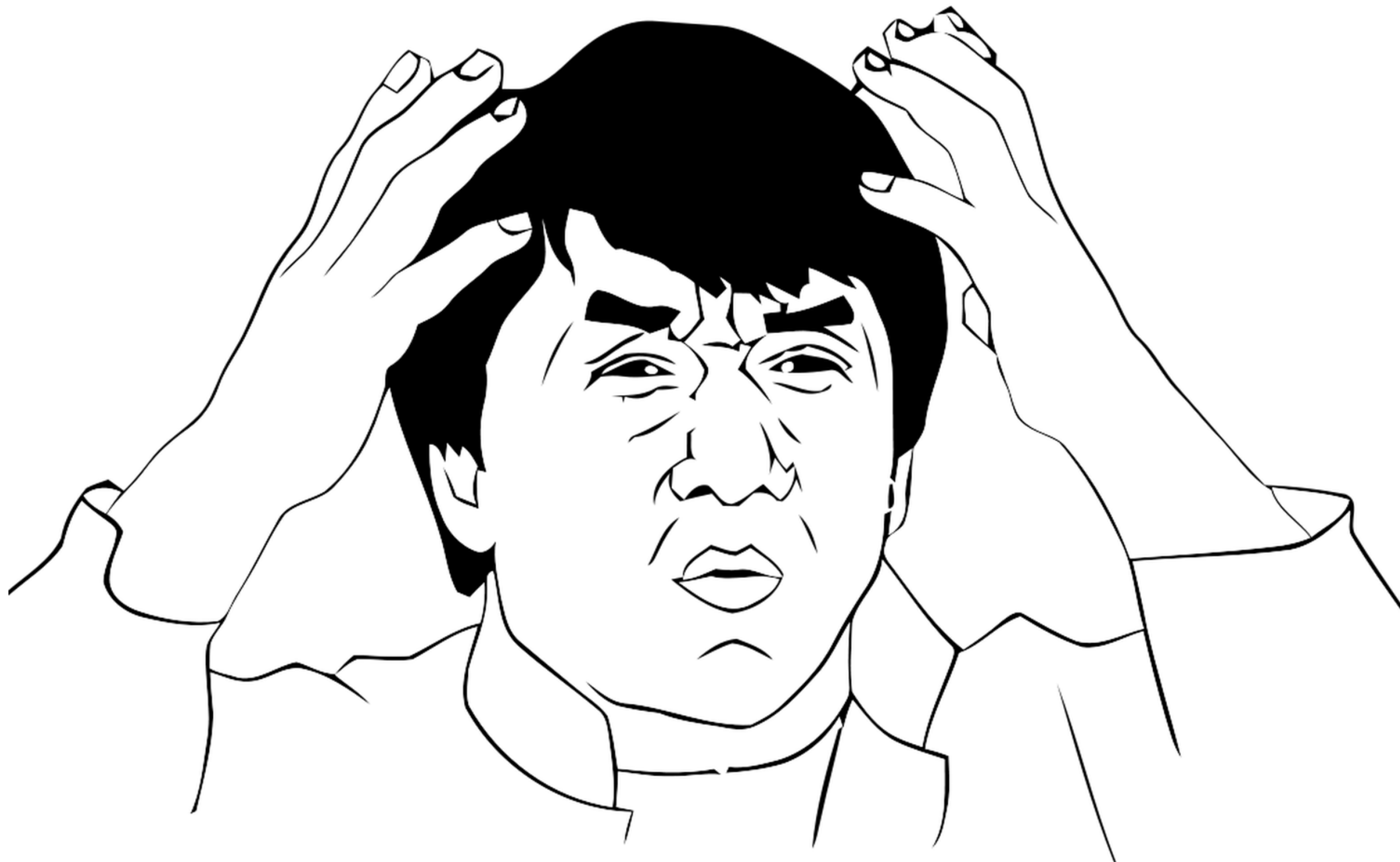
The first lessons start with Island Empire.

# Island Empire

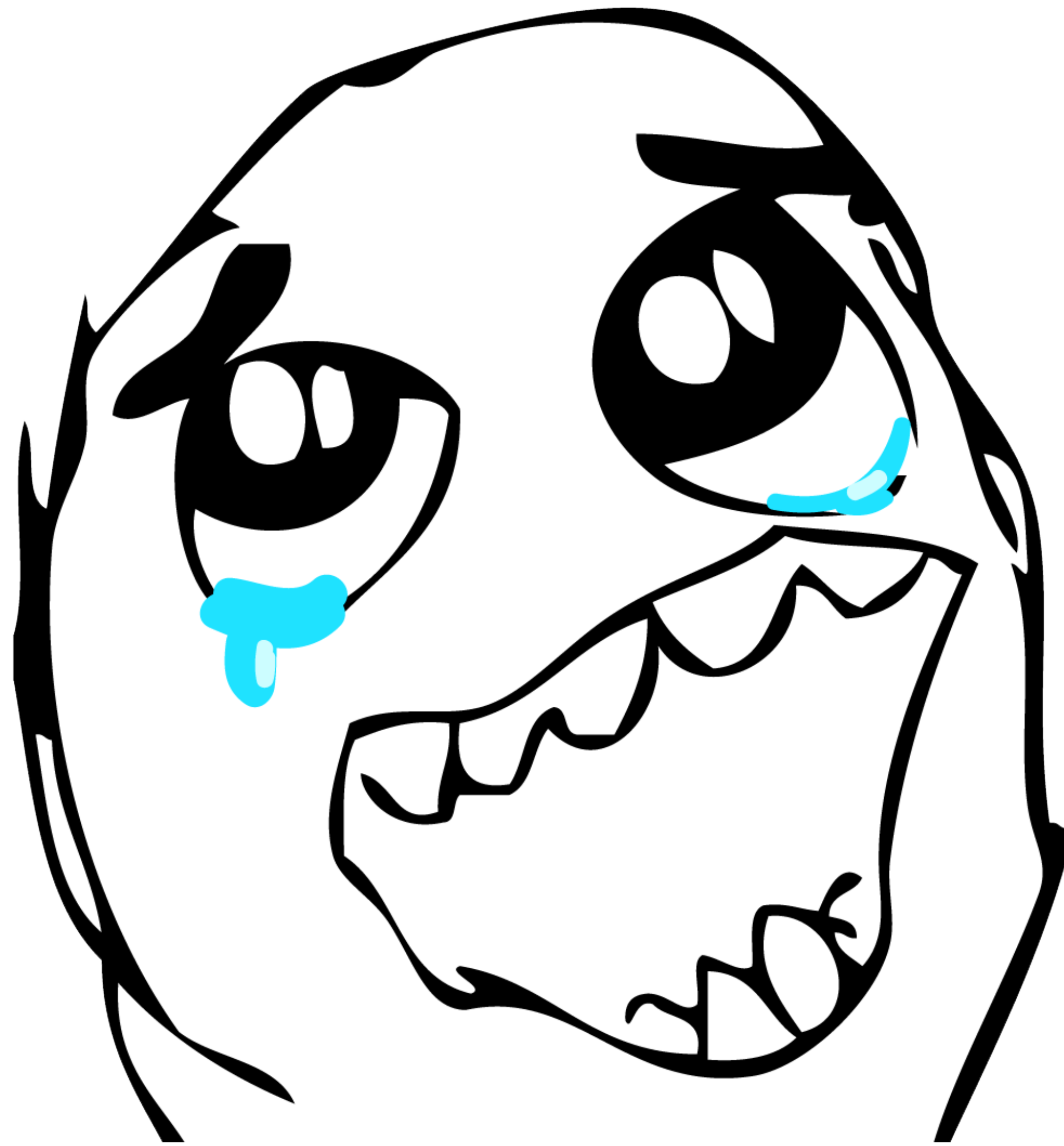
- Our first game
- Production took about 3 months
- Rushed to release and iterated for nearly 4 years until being recently retired
- Found early success in U.A.E. and Middle Eastern countries. Not localized.
- This led to mixed emotions...



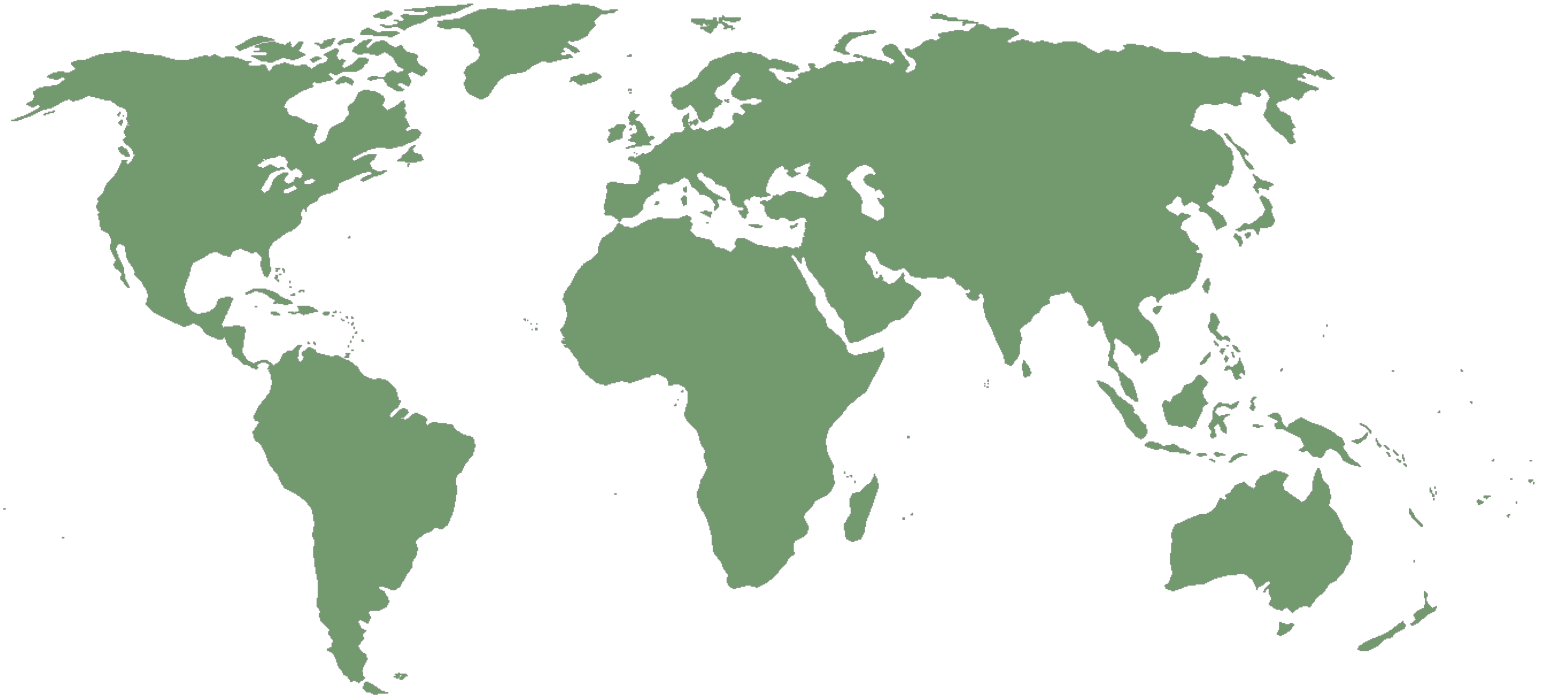
Island Empire



Emotion #1: Confusion



Emotion #2: Joy



Suddenly you realize that there are many possibilities.

# Island Empire

Island Empire taught us two important lessons which helped build Tap4Fun:

**#1: We can make games.** We should make games.

**#2: We need to think big.** Success can be found anywhere.

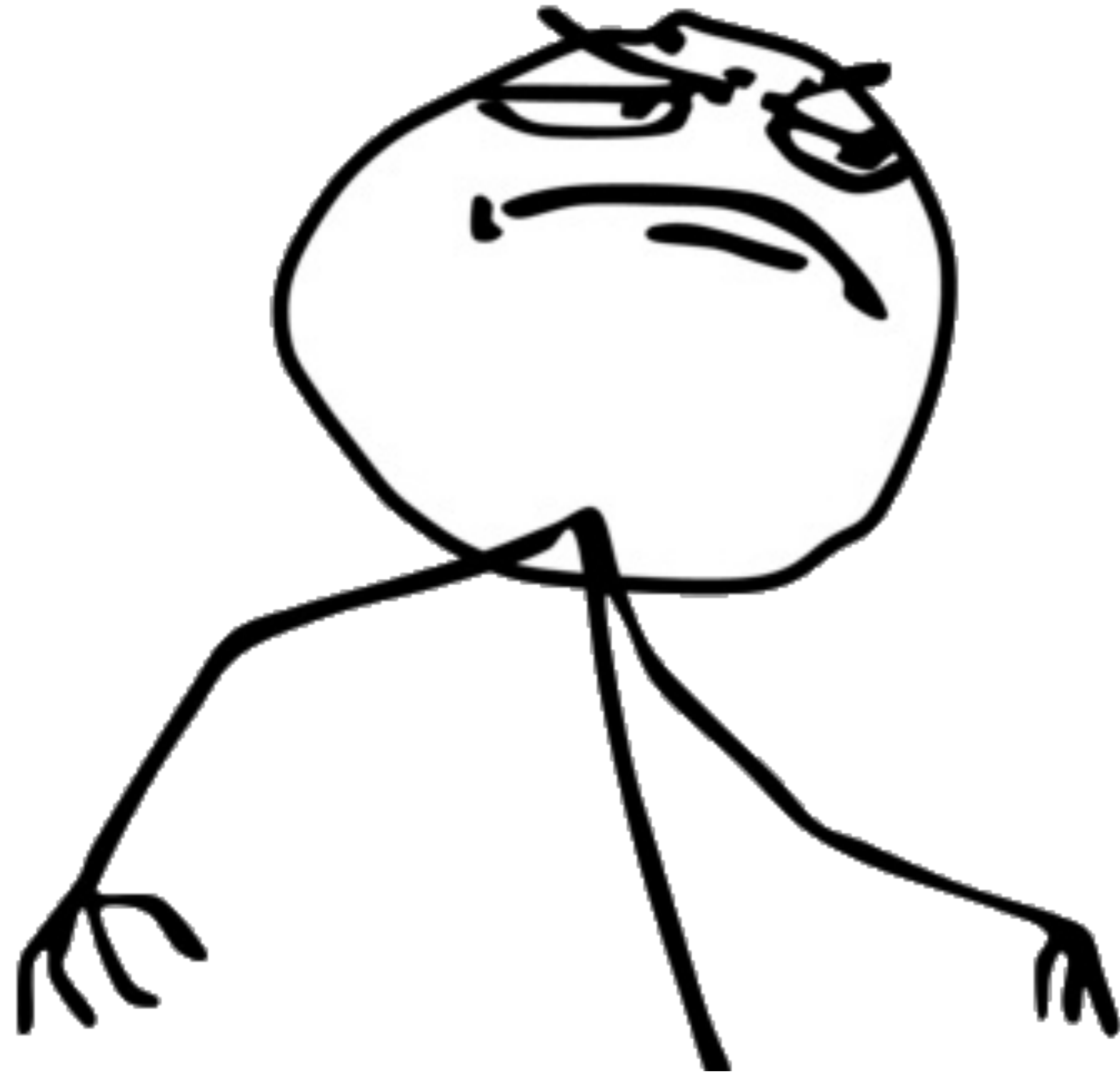
Fast forward three years...

# Galaxy Legend



Galaxy Legend

- Our sixth game
- Production took twice as long as Island Empire
- Becomes a huge success in Russia, a country we've still never been to. Localized into many languages.
- Which led to this feeling...



We got this.

You shouldn't think like  
that, because...

“When you get  
overconfident, that's  
when something snaps  
up and bites you.”

*Neil Armstrong*



Instead of letting opportunities  
manipulate your emotions, think  
soberly about the challenges.

# Localization

- You will likely need them in countries which aren't proficient in English
- The value of being top 5 in a small economy versus a small fish in USA or Japan
- Big developers like Ubisoft and Gameloft often make 15+ localizations for a game, but at what cost?
- In-house versus outsourcing
- Experimental: crowd-sourced localizations

# Marketing & User Acquisition

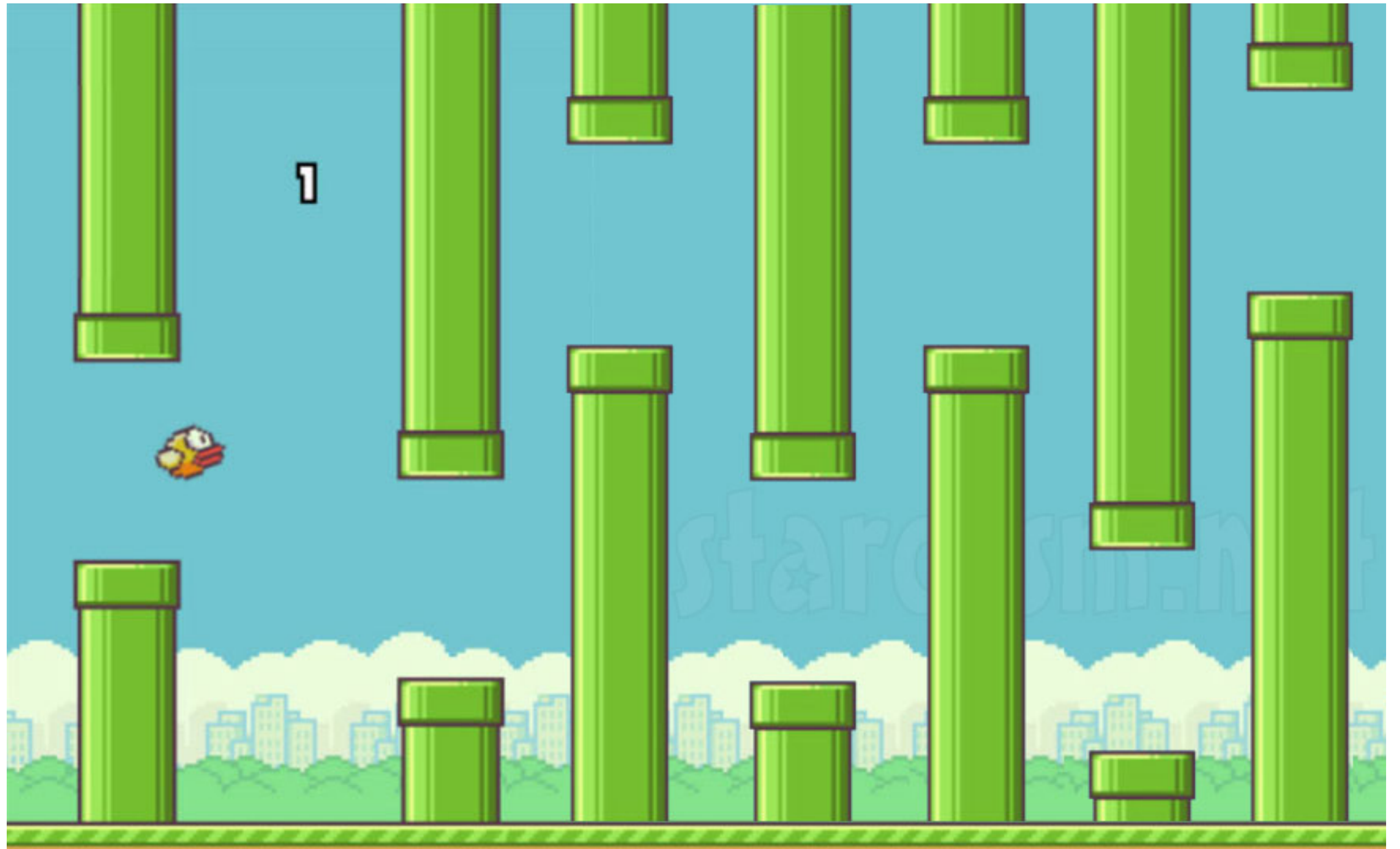
- Different countries have different platforms, not just the App Store and Google Play (eg. China)
- The skyrocketing cost of User Acquisition
- Tons of pitfalls when buying users. Be careful.
- Acquiring local partners in key markets can make all the difference
- Focus on community building. Facebook is essential, but consider unconventional options like Youtube videos or a blog. Interact.

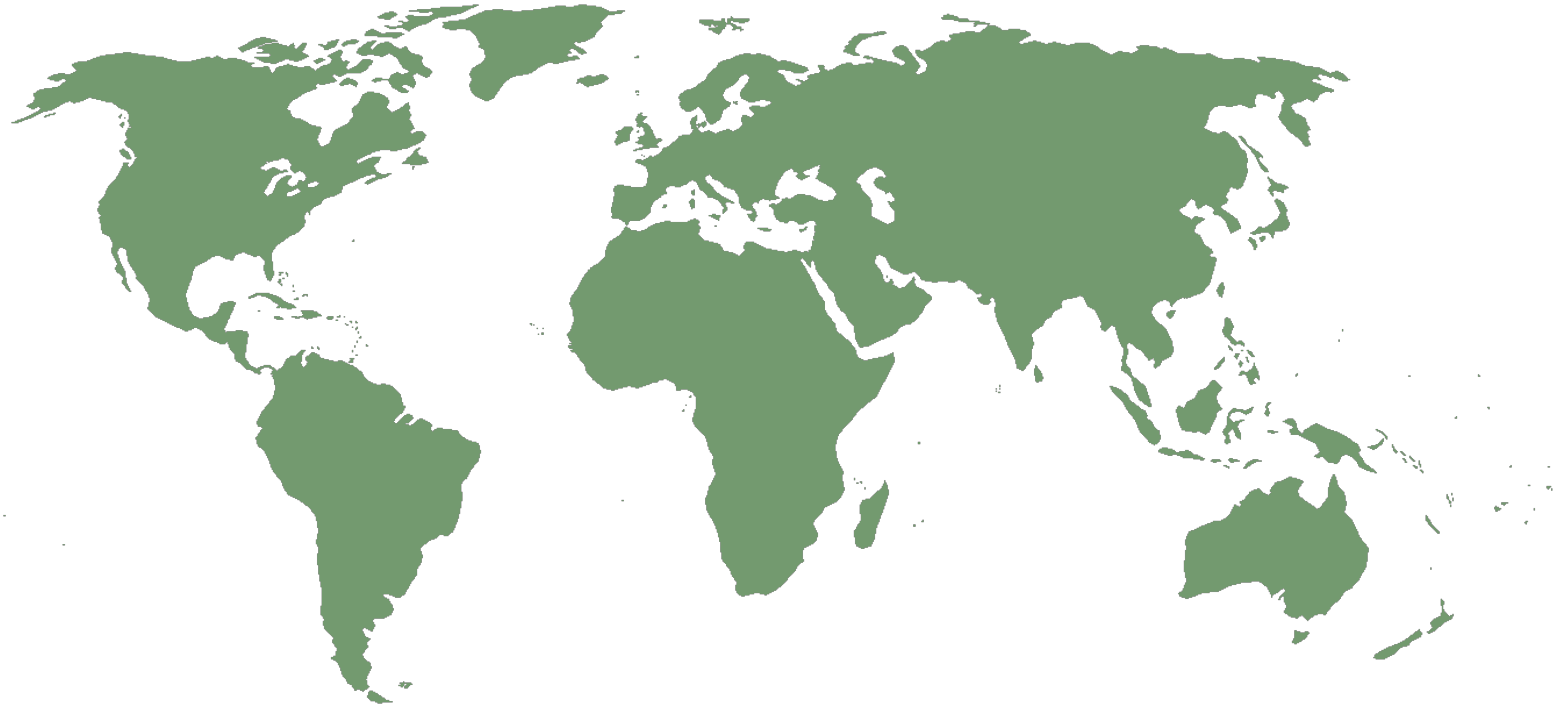
# Customer Support

- Extremely important, depending on the type of game that you develop. Our games demand significant support infrastructure
- Highest value users are likely to interact with support, or be turned away by support
- Localized support: telephone, email, live support. We do email and provide specialized support for our highest-value players
- In-house or outsourced? Advantages to both
- Support staff numerically exceeds the rest of the company

# In Summary...

It's not going to  
be easy.





When you find an exotic country or region that loves your game, it can change everything.

Charlie Moseley

@justcharlie

[charlie@tap4fun.com](mailto:charlie@tap4fun.com)

