

[STATE OF THE FACTORY: YEAR 2](https://weatherfactory.biz/state-of-the-factory-year2/)

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Once again, here’s how Weather Factory is doing, here’s how we thought we’d be doing, and here’s what we’re doing next.

又一篇年报，本篇内容介绍了Weather Factory如何工作，我们对后续工作的看法以及下一步计划。

Welcome to this year’s Giant Summary Post! This is almost twice the length of the post-2018 State of the Factory, because a lot happened. Come for the kitten pictures, stay for the data.

欢迎观看今年的巨型年度总结！这篇的长度几乎是2018年Weather Factory年度报告的两倍，因为今年确实发生了*许多*事。进来吸猫的同时停下来看看我们的总结吧。

As I said last time, these posts serves two purposes. One, it’s likely to be interesting both to other indie devs and to our community, but two, it’s useful to us. It’s a useful exercise to do a transparent retrospective on our year, and also I end up summarising information here that I never actually write down otherwise (I’ve gone back and looked at our [Year 1 post](http://weatherfactory.biz/state-of-the-factory-year-1/) for reference a dozen times).

正如我上次所说，这些总结有两个目的。一方面是满足其他独立游戏开发者和我们社区人员的好奇心，另一方面是因为年报对我们开展工作也有很大帮助。基于我们今年的工作情况做个清晰的年度回顾还挺有用的，我会在这儿写下我未曾以其他方式发表的信息总结（我还回去翻了好几次我们第一年的年终报告作参考）。

The story so far: I’m Alexis Kennedy, and I’m one half of a microstudio called Weather Factory. The other half is Lottie Bevan. In our first year of operation, we made a game, Cultist Simulator, that sold well and won some awards. By the standards of a small creative start-up, Year 1 was very good indeed.

长话短说：我是Alexis Kennedy，微型工作室Weather Factory两位成员之一。工作室的另一位是Lottie Bevan。在我们工作室运营的第一年里我们制作了一个游戏：*密教模拟器*，它销量不错并且斩获了一些奖项。以新成立的小型工作室的标准来说，我们第一年走得可谓是相当顺利。

Here’s what I said last time, at the end of 2018, about our plans going into Year 2:

以下是我在2018年年末发表的关于我们工作室第二年的运营计划：

“What are our priorities now?

“我们现在计划的工作顺序是什么？

In the short term, there are three projects fighting for our attention: the one we’ve codenamed Ophir, the one we’ve codenamed Procopius, and the one we’ve codenamed That Damn Library Game. You can probably expect to see us announce, and likely run a Kickstarter for, one of those this year.

短期来看，我们现在制作中*[[1]](#footnote-1)*项目有三个，代号分别是：俄斐*[[2]](#footnote-2)*，普罗可比*[[3]](#footnote-3)*和那个可恶的图书馆游戏*[[4]](#footnote-4)*。你可以开始期待我们之后的预告了，并且今年很可能以上一个会上到Kickstarter*[[5]](#footnote-5)*上开始众筹。

Our next project will probably be a notch higher-budget than Cultist – same sort of scope, but slightly more adventurous UI and a few months of polish. I’ve never really made a game with polish. So we’ll be growing the team. I expect we’ll be four full-timers at the end of 2019, which might mean we’re five, because once you open the gates, head-count tends to tick inexorably upwards.

我们的下一个项目很可能在预算上超越密教模拟器并且和它共用同一个世界观，但是会有相对创新的UI，还会需要几个月来专门打磨。我从来没有做过在最后需要时间专门润色的游戏。所以我们增添了团队的人手。我希望在2019年年末我们能有四个正式员工，这意味着我们的团队可能就会有第五人加入，一旦你打开了雇员的那扇门，公司的职员数量就会以势不可挡的冷漠速度飙升。

In the longer term…

至于长期计划……

In the longer term, I want to be a two-project studio sooner rather than later. I don’t like us putting all our eggs in one basket, and eventually a project will fail. In particular, as I said above, I don’t like being dependent on one storefront (sorry, Valve! but you know how it is). So I think, in 2020, I’d like us to be doing something ambitious and unusual on a larger scale.”

说到长期，我希望我们的工作室可以尽快转为由两个项目支撑。我不喜欢把鸡蛋放在一个篮子里头，最后唯一的一个项目还失败了。 *特别说明，如我刚刚提到的那般我也不喜欢把游戏只挂在一家平台上发售（抱歉，V社[[6]](#footnote-6)！但你肯定能理解的）。所以我希望我们能在2020年完成更多承载了我们野心的特殊工作。*

I’ll talk more below about how all that went. Let’s take it as it comes.

我会在下文中给出以上计划的发展情况。

**CULTIST SIMULATOR: THE STORY CONTINUES**

***密教模拟器*：故事仍在继续**

We started the year with no deadlines except those we imposed on ourselves, which was a nice relief after last year’s ferociously disciplined march to an aggressive release date. The one commitment we had was this: we wanted and also needed to release at least two pieces of DLC. ‘Wanted’, because there was a fervent community demand for it and we thought it was likely to make us some money, but ‘needed’ because of Perpetual Edition.

2019年我们除了自己给自己添加的截止日期之外没有再加更多，这对于结束了去年凶恶发售日期步步紧逼的我们来说是一个非常好的舒缓。我们当时不得不做的是：希望并且也需要发售至少两个DLC。“希望”一方面是因为社区对此有强烈的需求，另一方面是它能给我们带来收益；而“需要”则是因为永恒版。

Anyone who backed the Cultist Simulator Kickstarter – or bought the beta when we were selling it before launch on itch.io – or bought in launch week – got the Perpetual Edition, which meant we guaranteed all DLC free forever to those purchasers. In order to make that promise mean something, we needed actually to release DLC. Lottie and I reckoned that three pieces of DLC was a decent number for people to feel like they’d got something worth talking about. We’d already released one piece, the Dancer, in October 2018. We planned two more pieces of DLC to release in May 2019.

任何支持了*密教模拟器*Kickstarter 众筹，在itch.io[[7]](#footnote-7)购买beta预售版或是在首发周购买游戏的玩家都获得了永恒版。我们承诺过之后发售的密教模拟器DLC将永久免费提供给永恒版用户。君子一言，驷马难追，我们需要发售DLC（来回馈那些支持我们的玩家）。Lottie和我估算3个DLC是个合适的足以令永恒版用户满意的回馈。我们已经在2018年10月放出了第一个DLC即舞者DLC。我们计划在2019年5月发售另外两个DLC。

Why May? Because that was the anniversary of the release of Cultist the previous year, and that was when we were going to make the ‘Anthology Edition’ available. The ‘Anthology Edition’ was a bundle of the game, with all the DLC, with the soundtrack, with a discount on each. Here’s why, and here’s where, in terms of community relations and audience expectation, things get fiddly and interesting.

为什么选择在5月份发售？因为既是去年发售的*密教*的发售纪念日，又是我们计划推出“集合版”的时间。“集合版”打包了游戏本体，所有的DLC以及游戏原声一起折扣出售。原因就是这些，但是从社区反应和玩家期望来看，事情就显得有些棘手。

The Perpetual Edition seems to have been a success. ‘Free lifetime DLC’ felt like an honourable thing to offer early backers; we think it pumped our sales in launch week; and, critically, it didn’t cost us anything extra before launch. (Well, I had to fiddle about for a couple of days with the Steam and GOG DLC ecosystems so I could make the Perpetual Edition banner show up right for people who’d bought it on those storefronts. Nothing’s ever really zero-cost.)

永恒版看起来很成功。“终身免费DLC”像是我们给早期支持者们的一项荣誉；而永恒版承诺也没有在发售之前增加我们的工作量。（不过我得折腾Steam和GOG平台的DLC系统，让在以上平台购买过永恒版的用户行使他们的权利。天下没有免费的午餐。）

We’d probably do it again.

我们可能会再做一次（永恒版）。

But you can’t please all of the people all of the time, and we had some grumbles from people who liked the lifetime DLC deal and regretted only hearing about the game on day 8, or month 8, when Perpetual Edition was gone for good. If we ever made Perpetual Edition available again, we might upset our early backers,  because we’d assured them it was a one-time deal. If we didn’t, we’d still get those grumbles, and miss a sales opportunity.

但你无法永远取悦所有人，我们也收到了一些来自在发售第8天或者是第8个月才得到消息错失永恒版的玩家的牢骚。但是我们如果再次开放永恒版的购买，就可能伤了那些早期支持者的心，我们曾经向他们许诺过永恒版只会发售一次。不过如果我们不发售永恒版我们还是会收到这些牢骚，并且失去一个利用永恒版吸金的机会。

So we found a middle way. We announced that when we’d released all the DLC, we’d bundle it as an ‘Anthology Edition’. It was effectively the same as Perpetual Edition at a higher price and a year later. Everyone seemed happy with that. The early backers still felt they’d got a good deal, and the latecomers no longer felt they’d missed out entirely.

所以我们找了一个折中的办法。我们会在当所有的DLC都发售之后发布声明，做一个“集合版”。它在内容上等价于永恒版DLC，只不过是在一年之后发售，价格也会更高一点。这样不仅能让我们的早期支持者感到满意，还能让后来的玩家不再懊恼他们错过了一切。

When we actually released the Anthology Edition, though, we ran into some other grumbles. None of these were serious or widespread, but I reckon they’re interesting because they shed light on how easy it is to make well-intended commitments that limit your options later.

实际上当我们发售了集合版之后还是有一些细碎的声音。这些声音既没有造成恶劣影响，也没有广泛传播，但我觉得还挺有意思的，它们说我们完成束缚我们后期选择的善意承诺完成得太容易了。

For example, we released the first DLC, Dancer, at $2.99 / £2.50. We’re pretty certain now that this was too cheap for the amount of content. Even at the time we thought it was probably too cheap. Our players have certainly told us they think it’s super cheap. But we really didn’t know how to price a smallish piece of DLC. We havered over worrying about going too low and too high, and what decided us in the end wasn’t, honestly, generosity: it was that I’d got carried away and spent way too long working on the Dancer. We reasoned that if we set a low price, people wouldn’t expect too much content in the future, and that would allow us to do small pieces of DLC quickly rather than feeling we had to really push the boat out.

比方说我们以$2.99 / £2.50价格发售的第一个DLC，舞者。我们现在很清楚我们的定价比起它的内容量来说太便宜了些。当时我们也考虑过这个价格是不是太便宜了点。也有玩家跟我们反应他们觉得价格超级便宜。但是我们当时确实没有给DLC定价的经验。我们也过于担心定价过高或者过低的问题，而最终说服我（低价发售舞者DLC）的理由并非是慷慨：我在舞者DLC投入了许多，制作周期过长。我们认为如果把价格设低一些，玩家们就不会太期待之后发售的DLC的容量了，我们就可以迅速出小体量DLC而非（迫于压力）做内容大量铺张的DLC了。

That worked out fine. The Ghoul and the Priest are noticeably smaller than the Dancer, but they’ve sold just as well and no-one’s complained they were light on content. And I wrote them both in about the same amount of time as I wrote the Dancer. This is a big deal when you’re a small team.

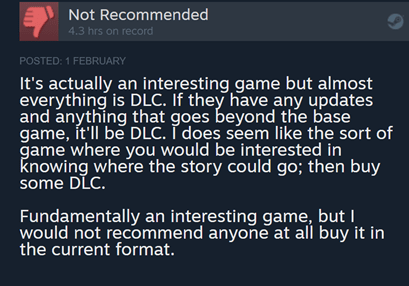
这个决策效果拔群。食尸鬼和牧师的内容比起舞者明显缩水了不少，但是它们卖得和舞者一样好而且也没有人抱怨为什么（同样价格下）内容变少了。我写这两个DLC加起来花的时间和写舞者一个花的时间差不多。对我们这种小公司来说超赚的。

But… we had a couple of folk complaining that the Perpetual Edition was a bad deal, because you only got three pieces of $2.99 DLC. They were a small minority, and the community response to the grumblers was still, eh, it’s still free content. But I don’t think it was a wildly insane complaint.

但是……我们收到了一些玩家的抱怨说永恒版太坑了，因为只拿到了三个价值$2.99的DLC作为回馈。这个回馈太小了，而社区对这些玩家的态度则像‘嗯，可这个是免费的（你们应该知足）’。不过我觉得这个抱怨不算是无理取闹。

Similarly, we got this:

同样，我们还收到了这样的（抱怨）：



不推荐

游戏是好游戏但几乎所有内容都在DLC里。如果他们进行了游戏更新，增加了超越本体的内容，那就是DLC。我觉得这游戏和那些“想知道故事的走向吗？买点DLC”的游戏没什么两样。

本质上是个有意思的游戏，但我不建议任何人在现在这个状态下购买。

I mean, it ain’t so. There’s huuuge quantities of content and story in the base game, and the DLC is bolt-ons. But some customers see three pieces of DLC at the bottom of the store page and decide that we’re gouging our players. I could go in and add a developer reply to this review and explain the whole Perpetual Edition context and talk about all the free updates we did…but when you need to explain your reasoning like that, then you’ve probably already lost.

我想，事实并非如此。本体内容量和故事超超超多，DLC只是（小的）附加内容。但是有的顾客一看见游戏商店页面底下列了三个DLC就觉得我们要割韭菜。我*可以*详细解释，写一篇开发者回复给这个评论说清楚永恒版的来龙去脉然后再说明我们进行的所有免费更新……但是当你需要像这样解释你的逻辑的时候，你很可能就已经输了。

Or take the soundtrack. We agreed early on to split revenues 50/50 with our usual collaborator, [Mickymar](http://www.mickymar.com/Home.html). We released the soundtrack on Steam, GOG and Humble – and also on Bandcamp, Spotify, the other usual places. It wasn’t included in the Perpetual Edition. If you ask the next habitual gamer you meet if a soundtrack is ‘DLC’, they’ll probably say ‘no!’ or at least ‘no?’ DLC is new story content, expansions, horse armour. And anyway we couldn’t have given the soundtrack away for free without stiffing Maribeth and her compatriots.

或者是针对游戏原声的问题。我们和合作者米基玛[[8]](#footnote-8)达成了早期协议：五五分原声的收益。游戏原声除了在Steam，GOG和Humble售卖——还有Bandcamp，Spotify以及其他的常见平台。它不属于永恒版。如果你问你下一个遇见的游戏老鸟游戏原声算不算“DLC”呢，他们多半会说“不是！”或至少会回复“不是吧？”DLC应该是新的故事内容包，游戏拓展，马甲[[9]](#footnote-9)。并且不论如何我们也不能不经玛丽贝斯和她同胞（的允许）就把游戏原声免费发放。

But on Steam, in 2019, soundtracks were sold in the ‘DLC’ section of the game store page. This is just the way their distribution system was organised, and on GOG and on Humble and obviously on Bandcamp and what-all, soundtracks weren’t identified as DLC. In fact, even Steam have just changed it this year and soundtracks are no longer labelled DLC.

但是在2019年，Steam平台上游戏原声被列在游戏商店界面的DLC栏里。这只是游戏商店销售系统的原因，而且不论是在GOG、Humble、Bandcamp[[10]](#footnote-10)还是其他什么平台，显然游戏原声都不被认为是DLC。实际上，甚至今年Steam还更改了页面，游戏原声不再被标记为DLC。

But what this meant was that a number of players, some of whom had supported us since the beginning, logged into Steam to get their free Ghoul and Priest DLC and noticed that there was something else labelled ‘DLC’ that they weren’t being offered free. Again, this was a minority, again, people basically understood the issue, and again, it wasn’t a big deal, but again, it wasn’t an insane complaint and we had to spend some time dealing with it.

*但是*这意味着有一群一开始支持我们的玩家，登录了Steam领取了食尸鬼和牧师DLC之后发现还有一个写着DLC的东西他们没有免费获得。再说一次，这是少数，还有，人们都能理解这个事情（的来龙去脉），又及，这不是个大事儿，以及，这并非一个无理取闹的抱怨，不过我们得花点时间来处理。

The thing is this. When you make a commitment – whether it’s a Kickstarter stretch goal, a release date, or a promise of all DLC free forever to early purchasers – you limit your future options. If you’re a big company, your future options are surprisingly limited anyway, because there are bills you have to pay and things you have to do. If you’re a small company, your agility is your advantage. Anything that locks you in is a risk. And sometimes, with Perpetual Edition and DLC and our previous commitments, we felt like we were most of the way through a game of Twister.

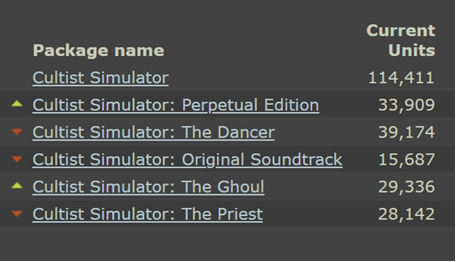
事情就是这样。当你做出了承诺——不论是一个Kickstarter的众筹目标，一个发售日期，或者是给所有的早期买家作出了永久获得免费DLC的承诺——你都限制了你未来的选择。如果你是个大公司，你的未来选项更是以出乎意料的方式被其限制，因为你有必要支付的账单和必须去完成的事儿。任何限制了你的都是风险。不过有时候，看着永恒版、DLC和我们的早期承诺，感觉我们大部分就像是在进行扭扭乐[[11]](#footnote-11)游戏。

It was fine! But it was fiddly. Next time, we’ll know about this stuff in advance. (And we’ll probably get caught out by something completely different.)

其实还好！但是需要细致的操作。下一次我们就预先知晓这些岔子了。（我们也可能被其他难处理的问题缠上。）

Here are the unit sales for Cultist, Cultist Perpetual Edition, DLC and the soundtrack to date (as of Jan 31st 2020, twenty months after release). Don’t worry, I’ll share the revenue numbers further down, too, but I want to focus on the proportions for now. These are sales on Steam: they don’t include keys redeemed from Kickstarter, or from other storefronts. This also means that the DLC numbers you see there are people who’ve bought the DLC, not people who got it free from Perpetual Edition.

以下是密教本体，密教永恒版，DLC还有游戏原声至今（截止至2020年1月31日，发售后20个月）的售卖数量。不用担心，我之后也会放利润额的，只不过现在我想针对数量（来进行分析）。这些只是Steam的销售量：不包括Kickstarter给的兑换key或者是其他线上平台的销售量。而且DLC的数量只包括真正*购买*了的玩家数量，不计算永恒版送出去的人头数量。



So **ONE,** yup, 22% of all our Cultist Simulator sales to date there are Perpetual Edition.

所以**第一**，嗯，*至今已售的密教模拟器总量*的22%都是永恒版。

One way of looking at that is: there are 34K players out there who we can’t generate revenue from by selling them DLC. That sounds like bad news.

一个角度来看就是：有3.4万的玩家我们没法从他们那里以售卖DLC的方式获取利润。这听起来不是个好消息。

Another way of looking at it is: we sold almost 34K copies in launch week. Doing well in launch week – charting at #1, as we did – is really important for the long tail sales of your game. You can recover from a bad launch. People do. But you don’t want to have to. Perpetual Edition helped us do well in launch week. But we’ll never know how much difference it made.

另一个角度来看：我们在首发周就卖出去了3.4万份。很棒的首发周成绩——如图1所示——对你游戏的长期售卖来说*很*重要。你能从一个糟糕的首发情况逐渐回升。可以是可以。但你肯定不想面对（那种情况）。永恒版帮我们在首发周拿了个好成绩。但我们永远不会知道其中的艰辛。

And a third way of looking at it is this: we can still make money by selling any future games to those 34Kish early adopters. It helped us build a core of people who know they can trust us.

第三个观察角度就是：我们之后的游戏发售也能有这3.4万先行者的鼎力相助。这个（数据）帮助我们了解了信任我们的核心人群（的数量）。

But here’s one final way of looking at it. there are at least 90 million active Steam users, and something over a billion PC gamers, in the world. We’ve sold Cultist to about a tenth of one percent of the Steam userbase, and a hundredth of one percent of the PC gamers in the world. Of course the vast majority of those people will never even hear the name ‘Cultist Simulator’, and most of the rest are probably busy playing CS:GO or Fortnite or something. But [to quote Lottie](http://weatherfactory.biz/post-launch-steam-data-cultist-simulator-in-numbers/): “The next time you hear anyone say they’ve tapped out their audience, kick them in the shins. No indie has ever tapped their entire potential audience. We simply do not have the money or resources.”

还有最后一个角度。世界上至少有九千万活跃的Steam用户，以及超十亿的PC游戏玩家。而密教我们只卖给了世界上百分之零点一的Steam用户以及百分之零点零一的PC游戏玩家。当然其中大部分玩家永远都不会听说“密教模拟器”的名字，而剩下的大部分玩家都忙着玩CS:GO，堡垒之夜或者别的游戏。引用Lottie的话：“下次你听别人说他们已经把他们的玩家市场发掘干净了，就踹他们的小腿。没有哪个工作室会拢全所有的潜在用户。我们没那个财力和资源。”

If you’re a small lifestyle business, it pays to keep an eye on the long tail and the long term.

如果你是小型生活式公司，要关注到长期。

**TWO.** Dancer has been on sale since Oct 2018, i.e. 15 months. Ghoul and Priest have both been on sale since May 2019, i.e. eight months, i.e. 53% as much. But they’ve both sold about 70% as much. I think this is because we made as big a splash on the anniversary of Cultist Simulator as we could.

**第二。**舞者DLC在2018年10月开始发售，到现在已经15个月了。食尸鬼和牧师在2019年5月同时发售，已经有8个月，已达到舞娘发售时间的53%。但已取得了舞娘70%的（发售）成绩。我觉得可能跟我们在*密教模拟器*纪念日的大量宣发有关。

**THREE.** Ghoul has sold very, very slightly better than Priest. Ghoul has 12 user reviews, 100% positive. Priest has 11 user reviews, 41% positive. I think the writing in Ghoul is a little better than the writing in Priest, and the design in Priest drew some criticism for being grindy (an Alexis Kennedy game? Grindy? Say it ain’t so). But it doesn’t look like players are very strongly influenced by the user reviews for a piece of DLC… at least one priced at £2.50. (Or very inclined to leave reviews on DLC. The main game is at 2,760 reviews, 80% positive.)

**第三。**食尸鬼比牧师卖得稍好一些。食尸鬼有12篇用户测评，推荐度100%。牧师有11篇用户测评，推荐度41%。我觉得可能食尸鬼比牧师写的更好一些，而且牧师的设计收到了一些对于流程拖沓的批评。（是Alexis Kennedy的游戏？拖拖拉拉的？不应该这样吧。）不过看上去玩家不是很受DLC用户评测的影响……至少对于只卖£2.50的DLC不那么在乎。（又或者更乐意忽视对DLC的测评。游戏本体有2760篇测评，80%推荐。）

**FOUR.** The soundtrack has sold much better than we expected… although our expectations were extremely low. This goes against the received wisdom we keep hearing, that soundtracks don’t sell on Steam. We did sell it as part of a bundle with DLC, which must have helped. And it is, I think, an exceptional soundtrack that does a lot for the atmosphere of a game where atmosphere is more than averagely important. But we were still surprised. Make of that what you will.

**第四。**游戏原声比我们预计的销售情况好得多……虽然我们之前预想的销售量特别低就是了。这个事实和我们听说的不一样，有说法游戏原声在Steam卖得很差。可能是我们把它和DLC打包卖促进了销量。以及，我认为一个额外的音乐包可以在音乐对于游戏比往常更重要的时候有效烘托游戏的气氛。不过我们还是（对实际情况）很惊讶。假如是你你也会有同感的。

***CULTIST SIMULATOR*: LIFE ON MOBILE**

***密教模拟器*：移动端**

On April 2nd, we released *Cultist Simulator* on iOS and Android.

4月2日，*密教模拟器*于iOS平台和安卓平台发售。

Back in June, Lottie already did [a gigantic data post](http://weatherfactory.biz/cultist-simulator-mobile-the-all-singing-all-dancing-data-dump/) on how that went, so I’m just going to re-summarise her main points, and then talk about what’s happened since.

回到6月，Lottie之前写过一篇超大的数据分析讲了（密教模拟器在移动端的售卖情况），所以接下来我将复述她提到的重点，然后说一下在（6月）之后的情况。

**What happened then**

**彼时情况**

* We partnered with mobile publisher/porting house [Playdigious](https://playdigious.com/). ‘Partnered with’ means they took care of porting to iOS/Android, the release, and post-release support, in exchange for a 50% revenue split. It’s been a very good experience and we would unhesitatingly recommend them.

我们和移动端发行商/移植公司[Playdigious](https://playdigious.com/)进行合作。“合作”意味着他们负责进行iOS/安卓平台的游戏移植，售卖和宣发，利润和我们五五分。这是一段愉快的合作经历，无疑要给他们个推荐。

* Sales have been decently good. We’ve proven to ourselves that premium/pay-once can still make enough money for a distinctive game from a small studio to be worth the effort. F2P would almost certainly have made more money, but isn’t our scene and would have required a much bigger ongoing commitment.

销量很棒。证明了DLC付费/买断制对小型游戏工作室制作的特殊游戏来说还是能获取足够的利润。免费内氪游戏虽然挣得更多，但那不是我们的风格，而且需要更大量的持续投入。

* We launched in Simplified Chinese as well as English (see **Localisation**, below). This proved to be a very good decision.

我们的游戏自带简体中文和英语（详见后文**本地化**部分）。这被证明是个正确的决策。

* We co-ordinated with Apple ahead of time and benefited from featuring at launch… but didn’t get featuring in the US. We suspect that’s because ‘Cultist’ suggests guns and Waco in the US, in a way it doesn’t in other parts of the world.

发售前我们和苹果协调过了要有首发折扣，捞了不少……不过美国没有这个折扣。我们怀疑可能跟“密教”一词在美国与枪支和韦科事件[[12]](#footnote-12)联系起来有关，不过其他地区没有这个问题。

**What’s happened since**

**之后情况**

**Post-launch sales**. As of now, 11 months since launch, *Cultist* has sold 120K+ units across iOS and Android, generating €350k+ net (split 50/50 between us and our partner Playdigious). This is, like most of our numbers, very respectable for a micro-indie, but still only crumbs from the big mobile studios’ tables. Lottie’s [best-case estimate](http://weatherfactory.biz/cultist-simulator-mobile-the-all-singing-all-dancing-data-dump/) for Year 1 was 100K units, so we’re pleased with how it’s gone.

**发售情况。**到现在已经发售11个月了，*密教*在iOS和安卓平台共卖出了12万多套，净收入35万多欧元[[13]](#footnote-13)（我们与合作商Playdigious对半分）。这个成绩，对很多像我们这样的小微工作室来说称得上值得尊敬了，但对大型移动端工作室来说不过是桌子上的碎面包屑。Lottie在第一年预计的最优成绩是10万套，所以我们对实际情况很满意。

*Reminder: always, always record your own estimate of your sales, even when you don’t really have a clue. Educated guesses get more educated every time you have data to compare them to. If you share your guesses internally, that helps keep you accountable and allows you to apply a bit of wisdom-of-the-crowd.*

*贴士：永远，永远要记录你自己估计的销售数额，就算你真的一点思路都没有也要硬写。每当你有数据可以比较的时候你的预测便会愈加专业。如果你在内部分享你的推测，这个能帮你更好地组织你的任务，还能让你显得比常人更机智一些。*

**User response.** Our reviews stabilised quite quickly around 4.7 on the App Store and 4.6 on Google Play. This is higher than I expected (and feared) because *Cultist* is notoriously divisive, partly because of its deliberate lack of a tutorial, and mobile audiences are generally expected to require more hand-holding than PC audiences. We do get a handful of one-star reviews saying ‘lol what the hell’ but they’re surprisingly rare. Here’s my hypotheses about why:

**玩家反馈。**我们的评分很快就在App Store稳定在了4.7左右，在Google Play稳定在4.6左右。这个评分比我们预计（担忧）的要高，因为众所周知*密教*是个评论两级分化的游戏，部分原因可能是因为它刻意没有设计新手教程，而手游玩家通常比PC玩家更需要手把手教程。我们收到了一打一星评论说“哈哈哈这是什么鬼”但是这些评论惊人地少。以下是我对原因的猜测：

* We did raise this concern when we talked to Apple. They surprised us by saying it wasn’t too much of a concern, because customers self-select, but we should be clear in the app description that it wasn’t an easy game. So we were.

我们跟苹果交涉的时候充满焦虑。不过令我们惊讶的是，他们回复说没必要担心这个，因为顾客会自己作出选择，不过我们需要在软件描述那里写清楚这不是个简单的游戏。所以我们补上了这一点。

* The price (£6.99 / $6.99) is high for a mobile game. A few years ago it’d have been *too* high (and we applied a hefty launch discount) but higher prices are more common than they used to be for quality games on mobile. So a lot of people buying *CS* were looking for something unusual, and/or buying on the basis of word of mouth, and went in ready to give it a proper try.

游戏的定价（£6.99 / $6.99）对于一个手游来说有点高。在几年前它确实定价*过*高（然后我们做了一个跳水折扣）但是更高的价格往往代表着游戏的质量更高。所以很多人买了*CS*想看看这个游戏到底独特在哪儿，以及/或者因为我们的口碑买了游戏，决定准备进行一次尝试。

* We’ve realised since launch that there really is almost nothing like *Cultist Simulator* on the mobile stores. In fact, there is a real shortage of thoughtful single-player premium games – they exist, but you have to dig to find them. This is obviously because the real money is in F2P multiplayer. It does mean there’s probably still an opportunity for smaller studios like ours.

我们在移动端发售之后发现移动端商店没有*密教模拟器*同类型的游戏。实际上，市场上很缺乏需要思考的买断制单机手游——存在，但需要仔细发掘才能找到。很明显原因在于免费氪金手游把大钱都挣过去了。这也意味着对我们这样的小型工作室来说还有机会。

**China.** Chinese players have responded extremely well to *Cultist*. We actually have a 4.9 star average on the Chinese App Store (Google Play isn’t, officially at least, available in China.) We’ve talked to Chinese fans and developers to try to get a sense of why the reviews are so good; but honestly the thoughts we have are so speculative and subjective, and I’m so wary of generalising about another culture, that I’m wary about sharing them.

**中国。**中国玩家对*密教*的反响很好。我们在中国区的App Store上得到了4.9的评分（因为一些官方原因Google Play不对中国开放，因而没有数据。）我们也和中国的粉丝，开发者们讨论过我们游戏广受好评的原因；不过实话说我们得到的想法过于主观推断了，我对于概括另一个文化很谨慎，也就是说我对于分享我的想法很谨慎。

However, here’s what our contact at Indienova (who worked with us on the localisation, and with Playdigious as the Chinese PR agency) thought might be reasons for our Chinese success in general:

但是，以下是我们跟Indienova（和我们合作进行中文本地化，以及与Playdigious合作的中国公关）交流整理得到我们在中国市场成功的可能原因：

“*0. That’s the most important one, the game itself is content-rich and good enough.*

*“0。最重要的一点，游戏本身内容量丰富，足够优秀。”*  
 *1. Next, China has a larger population than other countries, obviously.*

*1。下一条，显然中国的人口比其他国家多。*  
 *2. It’s very different to the other games on the ranking list you may have noticed.*

*2。密教与你注意到的销量榜上的其他游戏大有不同。*  
 *3. We reached the core community who are interested in Cthulhu-like things very much accurately, they help us to build a very good public praise. (So we have a good base at the very first time)*

*3。我们精准打入了爱好克苏鲁的核心社区，他们帮助我们进行了很好的公开宣传。（所以我们一开始就有很棒的基础）*  
 *4. Apple featured it and some biggest influencers recommend it once the mobile version comes out. (Then we have a fast growing spread)*

*4。苹果推送了它，一些大网红也在移动端推出之后推荐了我们的游戏。（然后我们的销售额开始飞速上升）*  
  
*5. For me, the Chinese localization is not bad but far from perfect at this moment (we are still working on it).* [Note: this was back in March, and the localisation has gone through two rounds of improvement from our excellent volunteers.] *However, I’m confident that it’s much better than average and it should help a little. (So we should be able to keep a high scores for a longer time.)*

*5。对我来说，中文本地化不算差但是还远达不到现在的完美状态（我们现在还在折腾这个）。[注：这个是3月份的状态，我们棒棒的志愿者早已对中文本地化进行了两轮升级。]但是，我对它的中文翻译水准很自信，绝对超越了平均线，而且可以促进我们的销量。（因而我们能把高分维持得更久一点。）*  
*6. We have a very energetic Chinese players community now, we got 800+ followers on Weibo and 300+ players on our QQ group. We got popular in the timeline of*[*Weibo.com*](http://weibo.com/)*too if you try to search “密教模拟器” on it, ppl talked and shared this game and it will help to bring some more new players.*

*6。我们现在有一个非常活跃的中国玩家社区，在微博有800多关注者，QQ群群员超过了300人。我们在微博网的时间线上也火过，如果你搜索“密教模拟器”，你就会发现人们（在微博上）讨论，分享这个游戏，而这些行为也帮助我们游戏增加了新的玩家。*

( I mentioned earlier that the title ‘Cultist Simulator’ doesn’t seem to have gone down too well with Apple in the US. Our very sensible volunteer loc team were concerned about the connotations of ‘cult’ in China, so they used 密教. We’re told that 密 is something like ‘secret, mysterious, inmost’ and 密教 is a term for the esoteric Buddhist traditions. I like ‘Esotericism Simulator’, actually. Apparently the original Sanskrit term for these traditions means something like ‘Diamond Vehicle’, and I think I like ‘Diamond Vehicle Simulator’ even more. )

（我之前提到过名字“密教模拟器”在美国的苹果商店卖得不太好。我们明智的志愿者汉化团队也关注了“教会”这个词在中国的引申含义，所以他们选择翻译成“密教”。他们告诉我们“密”代表着“秘密，神秘，隐秘”，同时“密教[[14]](#footnote-14)”也是个指代隐秘佛教信仰的名词。实话说我喜欢“秘传模拟器”这个名字。显然，最初形容这些信仰的梵语名词含义类似于“金刚乘[[15]](#footnote-15)”，我想我甚至更喜欢“金刚乘模拟器”。）

**A wrinkle.** We did have one real headache with the Chinese mobile release, and I think it’s worth talking about – because it’s another really good example of how if you’re a small dev, then sensible commitments honestly made can box you in.

**一些波澜。**我们在中文移动端发售上碰到了一件令人头疼的问题，值得拿来一说——作为另一个好例子证明：如果你是个小型工作室，敏感言论很容易让你为难。

We began localising *Cultist* to Simplified Chinese in 2018. Meanwhile, I kept adding free updates – including changes to existing content – to the game. We branched off a stable version for Playdigious to work on porting to mobile. The translators stopped work and then started work later on that version, because it’s not practical to translate constantly changing text. Once I’d finally finished updating the PC version of the game in May 2019, the translators started translating the PC version… which still took months to do, because there was loads of new content.

我们在2018年就开始进行*密教*简体中文的本地化。在汉化过程中，我也一直在对游戏进行免费更新——包括对现有内容的更改。我们特意分了Playdigious一个固定的游戏版本进行移动端移植。翻译们停止了之前的工作然后再从最新版本开始翻译，一直翻译变动的文本太不切实际了。当我2019年5月完成PC端游戏更新时，翻译们才开始工作……因为我又加了一堆新内容，所以翻译们还得再添几个月。

This meant that the mobile game launched with Chinese loc, and without any of the updates. It also meant that the PC version got DLC and updates, but didn’t have Chinese loc until six months after the mobile launch.

这也意为着我们放出的移动端中文版是没有更新内容的。但是与此同时PC版虽然有DLC内容和后续更新，可PC中文会在移动端中文版放出后六个月才上。

This in turn meant that mobile players were unhappy that they had an older version of the game, and Chinese players were unhappy that they weren’t getting a translation on PC. A minority took to Steam to voice their displeasure, posting negative reviews accusing of us of reneging on our promises to translate the game into Chinese, or of employing an incompetent loc team. We got enough negative reviews that it had a noticeable impact on our review score.

反过来说移动端玩家因为他们只能玩旧版本，不开心，而中国玩家因为PC端没有中文，不开心。一小撮人在Steam上表达了他们的不满，打差评指责我们违背诺言，没有进行汉化，或者是指责我们雇了不靠谱的本地化团队。差评已经多到对我们的评分产生了显而易见的影响。

And it was almost impossible to communicate this complicated bundle of reasons for the delays usefully, across the language barrier, to an audience that wasn’t so used to developers communicating openly. I tried posting developer responses in badly Google-translated Chinese, and it didn’t seem to help much. I got grumpy and posted some more defensive responses, and that *definitely* didn’t help.

而把推迟汉化的这堆复杂原因，跨越语言障碍，与不习惯开发者公开沟通的玩家群体沟通清楚几乎是不可能的。我尝试过发表谷歌机翻的开发者回复，但是看来没什么用。我当时很暴躁然后又发了更戒备的回复，*显然*还是没用。

*That was a silly thing to do. It was frustrating that people thought we were deliberately holding back a Chinese translation for our own nefarious reasons. But it’s never a good idea to let your emotions get the better of you when talking to your community.*

*那事太蠢了。令我沮丧的点就在于玩家认为我们出于一些不道义的理由蓄意撤下了中文翻译。但是当你和社区进行交流的时候，让情绪主导你从不是个好主意。*

(I should add that Indienova warned us that releasing earlier on Chinese on mobile might cause this issue, and I failed to take them seriously enough.)

（我得说Indienova之前提醒过我们移动端中文上线更早可能会引起这样的事端，但我当时没有足够重视他们的警告。）

**In summary, we’re very glad we did the mobile port… but it wasn’t zero-risk or free money.** Playdigious took care of the majority of the work, but it ate up a lot of Lottie’s time and a little of mine too. And it had other consequences – from the wrinkle with the Chinese loc that I mentioned above, to the complexities of scheduling releases on multiple platforms. When you’re a small team, complexity takes time.

**总的来说。我们很高兴我们进行了移动端游戏移植……但这并非免费零风险的操作。**Playdigious负责了工作的大头，但也耗费了许多Lottie的时间还有一点点我的时间。也导致了其他的后果——我上文提到的和中文本地化之间的波澜，多平台发售的复杂时间规划。如果你是个小团队，这种复杂工作会很杀时间。

And I think it’s worth saying that, from the start, I’d designed *Cultist* with an eye to porting it to touchscreen devices. I didn’t know enough to do a particularly good job of that, but I actually got a *Cultist* build running on Android as long ago as the alpha, just as a basic sanity check for whether it worked. This is why, for instance, *Cultist* doesn’t use tooltips. When I built *Fallen London*, I put tooltips *everywhere,* because although it’s a web app I was a PC gamer and tooltips are a good way to drill down into information. When *FL* was ported to mobile, this was a colossal pain in the bum, because there’s no way to mouse over and get a tooltip, and tap or tap-and-hold are different kinds of interaction.

我觉得这些值得拿出来讲一讲，在一开始我设计*密教*的时候就计划了要把它进行移动端的移植。我确实不知道该怎么有效完成这个特别的工作，不过我已经有了一个可以在安卓机运行的alpha版本，就像判断能不能操作要过理智检定[[16]](#footnote-16)一样。这也是，例如，*密教*不使用提示框的原因。当我制作*伦敦陷落*的时候，我到处都铺了提示，虽然那是个网页游戏而我是个PC游戏制作人，但提示真的是个塞信息的好办法。但是当*沦敦*进行移动端移植的时候，这就是个大麻烦，因为没法把鼠标移动过去然后显示提示，而轻触屏幕和按住屏幕不放是截然不同的交互方式。

So if you’re thinking about distributing your PC game on mobile – and if you’re developing on Unity, that’s much easier to do – think about it early.

所以如果你想把你制作的PC游戏在移动端分销的话——若你用Unity引擎进行游戏开发的话，移植就会更好做——早点考虑好。

**LOCALISATION**

**本地化**

In 2019, we released Chinese and Russian localisations of *Cultist Simulator*.

2019年，我们发布了*密教模拟器*的中文版本和俄语版本。

This was also something I thought about early. If you’ve been following our work, you might recall that I tried to impose a maximum word count on myself for *Cultist Simulator* of about 70K – or 25% of the length at launch of *Sunless Sea*. This was in part because it had been challenging to localise *Sunless Sea* (the initiative was abandoned after I left) and impossible to localise *Fallen London*, and I wanted to keep the count low. In fact, with free updates and DLC, *Cultist* is almost double its launch size… but that was still practical to localise, though not exactly quick.

这也是我很早就开始思考的一个事儿。如果你一直关注我们工作的话，你应该能回想起来我尝试过强迫自己限制*密教模拟器*的最大字数，大约7万个词——*无光之海*发售时长度的25%。部分原因就是因为*无光之海*本地化太有挑战性了（这个倡议在我离职之后就搁浅了）以及不可能被本地化的*伦敦陷落*，我想把字数保持在一个较低水平。实际上，算上免费更新和DLC，*密教*已经有它发售时体量两倍的大小了……但本地化仍可操作，只不过会慢一点。

I’m using ‘localisation’ and ‘translation’ pretty interchangeably in this post, which will probably upset some experts, sorry! More properly, ‘localisation’ refers to the whole process of making a game suitable for an audience in a different culture.  That can also mean changing UI to suit local preferences, or to accommodate linguistic quirks – or it can mean a more all-encompassing process of culturalisation.

这篇文章中我把“本地化”和“翻译”两词的应用混在一起了，如果冒犯了某些专家的话，抱歉！适当来讲，“本地化”更倾向于描述把游戏呈现给不同文化背景玩家的整体过程。也可以代表改变游戏UI以适应当地表达，或者是就语言特性改变（文本显示的）空间——还能是一个包含所有文化化的过程。

[*Offworld Trading Company*](https://store.steampowered.com/app/271240/Offworld_Trading_Company/)*, a game by US-based Mohawk Games, courteously offers a UK English localisation. I believe the only change in the UK-based localisation is that ‘aluminium’ is spelt with the additional ‘i’. God save the Queen.*

*《外星贸易公司》，美式背景的Mohawk Games的一个游戏作品，提供了一个客气的英式英语本地化。我觉得唯一一个英式本地化带来的改变就是aluminium[[17]](#footnote-17)这个词的拼写多加了个i。天佑女王。*

But for *Cultist Simulator*, it was almost all about the translation. We did have to make some button sizes a bit more flexible, because Russian tends to run a little longer than English (while Chinese runs shorter). I’d also hardcoded a lot more of the UI text than I realised – because I’m so used to operating in a monolingual environment – and we had to put significant effort into sorting that out (or rather get [Chris Payne](http://quantum-soup.com/) to sort it out for us).  But mostly, it was the difficulty of translating a large body of deliberately allusive and elliptical text into very different languages with very different cultural references.

但对于*密教模拟器*来说，几乎主要都是翻译问题。我们也给按键大小进行了更灵活的设计，因为俄语（同一文本）往往比英语更长一些（而中文更短。）我也就UI文本问题硬写[[18]](#footnote-18)了我意料之外的许多内容——因为我太适应单语言环境了——因而我们不得不花费大把精力来理清那些（或者准确来说让Chris Payne[[19]](#footnote-19)帮我们把这事儿办妥了）。但更主要的困难在于把那一大堆用典小众文化的草蛇灰线文本译为另一门语言。

**Which languages?**

**选择什么语言？**

We wanted to begin with two or three languages. That would limit our risk, but if we just picked one, we’d probably not learn as much or get as good a sense of how worthwhile localisation might be. This was Lottie’s project, so she made the decision about which. Here’s how.

我们当时打算先从两三个语言开始。控制风险，但如果我们只选择一个语言的话，我们可能就学不会那种判断本地化是否值当的感觉能力。这是Lottie的任务，所以是她进行了本地化语言的选择。以下是决策过程。

She considered EFIGS (English + French Italian German Spanish). The other four are relatively easy to localise from English, and my work’s often been popular in Germany.  EFIGS is also a requirement for some distribution deals. But four languages was a lot; and crucially, their home countries all have a high percentage of good English speakers.

她考虑了英法意德西（英语+法语意大利语德语西班牙语）。相对来说那四门语言从英文本地化的难度更小，我的作品在德国也挺火的。英法意德西也是一些分销的必要抉择。但四个语言太多了；更关键的是，这些语言的本土国家都有很高比例英语优秀的人士。

She considered Brazilian Portuguese. Brazil is often talked about as an interesting emerging market. Portuguese is the most widely spoken European language by native speakers after English and Spanish, largely because Brazil is so big. And Brazil has a low percentage of English speakers. But we hadn’t seen much interest in my work in Brazil; retail prices are on the low side because incomes are low; and there’s historically been issues with piracy there (because games were banned, then heavily taxed).

她还考虑了巴西葡萄牙语。巴西经常被认为是个有趣的新兴市场。葡萄牙语是在英语和西班牙语之下母语者人数最多的欧洲语言因为巴西真的很大。以及巴西的英语人士比率很低。但是我没有在巴西看到人们对我的作品有很大兴致；因为当地收入较低销售价格也属于低价区；还有一些涉及盗版的历史问题（因为游戏之前先被禁止，后又被收以重税）。

She briefly considered Japanese, because we’d heard that there’d been a significant revival of Lovecraft-esque culture there recently, and because it’s a populous country. But translating to Japanese is very expensive, and the market there is of course very mature and competitive.

她还短暂地考虑了日语，因为我们听说在日本最近克系[[20]](#footnote-20)文化特别流行，同时日本还是个人口大国。但日语翻译太贵了，而且日本市场非常成熟，充满了竞争。

But when she looked at our sales data, she noticed that there were *a disproportionate number of sales in Russia and China compared to other countries with few English speakers.* ‘Disproportionate’ was only a little over 1% for Russia and 3% for China, but that still stood out. She remembered a similar effect in the data for *Fallen London and Sunless Sea,* too. It made sense. My previous work seems to have resonated with audiences in Russia (and I think in some other Slavic countries, though it’s very hard to generalise here). And China is just *immense.* I constantly have to struggle to remind myself that the population of China is larger than the USA, Russia and all of Europe put together.

但当她关注我们销售数据的时候，她注意到*和其他英语使用者人数很少的国家相比，游戏在俄罗斯和中国的销售量稍大一些*。“稍大”意为着高于1%的俄罗斯销售数额和3%的中国销售数额，但这数额仍很突出。她也想起了*伦敦陷落和无光之海*中类似的效应。似乎俄罗斯玩家对我以往的作品很有共鸣（我想在其他的斯拉夫国家可能也会有，虽然要概括这个还挺难的）。而中国是个*巨大的*国家。我一直挣扎着提醒我自己：中国的人口比美国，俄罗斯还有所有欧洲国家人口的加和还多。

Of course, Russian is relatively difficult and expensive to translate to from English. And Chinese is about as difficult and expensive as it gets.

当然，从英文进行俄语本地化很难，翻译价格也很贵。译作中文的难度和价格也差不多。

Lottie, however, asked around and was recommended [this volunteer initiative](https://indienova.com/corp/gutenberg/en) by Tanya Short of Kitfox. They’re selective about who they work with, but it offers the possibility of a Chinese translation for the irreproachable price of 0 USD.

但是，Lottie四处咨询，然后Kitfox Games[[21]](#footnote-21)的Tanya Short推荐了这个志愿者方案[[22]](#footnote-22)。他们正在挑选合作伙伴，但这提供了以无懈可击之价格：0美元得到一份中文翻译的可能性。

I’ve mentioned Indienova before, and the relationship is slightly complex, so to clarify:

我之前提过Indienova，关系很复杂，所以梳理一下：

* Indienova put Weather Factory in touch with volunteer translators who localised the whole game to a good standard. Indienova handled project management, and the volunteers did the bulk of the actual translation. As far as I can tell this is one part enthusiasm and one part business development.

Indienova帮助天气工厂联系了进行整个游戏高质量本地化的志愿者翻译们。Indienova负责项目管理，而志愿者们负责完成大部分实际的翻译工作。据我所知，既有激情又有商业发展目的。

* Playdigious, our mobile publisher, contracted Indienova to provide PR support for the mobile launch of *Cultist Simulator*. This was a happy coincidence (except, I guess, that their loc program was successfully generating relationships!)

Playdigious，我们的移动端发行商，和Indienova签约，Indienova为其提供了*密教模拟器*移动端发售的公关支持。这是个愉快的巧合（除非，我猜，他们的本地化项目成功搭起了这个联系）。

We also, ultimately, contracted QLOC, a Polish company with a good rep, to localise to Russian, for about 20K USD, of which our then-publishers, Humble, paid half.

最后，我们也联系了一家声誉很好的波兰公司QLOC[[23]](#footnote-23)进行俄语本地化，我们当时的发行商Humble帮我们支付了两万美元花费中的一半。

So, translating to Chinese. That was a journey, because not only is *Cultist* allusive and enigmatic and poetic and all that jazz, but the references are generally to European culture and mythology.

所以，进行中文翻译。这是个漫长的过程，不光是因为密教那充斥着暗喻隐喻的费解诗意语言，诸如此类的事情，还有个原因就是游戏涉及了许多来自欧洲文化与神话的东西。

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Is “pine” in “pine and knife” refering the plant or the emotion?** | Pine: can you let me know the context on that to check? But if it’s the Pine-Knight, or the Pine and the Knife, then it’s the tree (which is sacred to the Phrygian goddess Cybele, if that’s relevant) |

And then, of course, we had the usual problems with words with multiple meanings in translation.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What is a “Host” in Grail’s ascension? The apostle or the sacred bread?** | ‘Host’ here references the following meanings:  – sacred bread – large number of people – someone who extends hospitality.  The Grail ascension requires a feast with a large number of attendants where the distinction between ‘host’ ‘guest’ and ‘meal’ is blurred. Grail lore also often references Christian lore.  In this case, then, the Host refers to the increasing crowd of guests, hosts and victims coming to the Feast (‘the Vitulation’) |

Then we had questions that I couldn’t answer without sounding like I was high…

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **By ‘The Cross is *imaginary*‘, do you mean ‘The Carapace Cross never existed at all’ or ‘Now the Carapace Cross can only live in one’s imagination’?** | ‘The Cross is imaginary; the change is not’ is a repetition of Teresa’s  *”The wine is imaginary,’ she explained, ‘but the cup is not. To navigate the Mansus one must understand the distinction.”*  … so the same terms should be used to translate this line.  (What it means, more or less, is that ‘real’ vs ‘imaginary’ is a less simple distinction than is commonly understood, and though nothing in the Mansus is physically real, some things have a more primary and current reality.) |

…the questions I couldn’t answer without information that I realised halfway through would be basically useless…

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What is ‘the Labhite’?** | ‘Labhite’ is an invented word with a Hebrew derivation. To speakers of European languages, the Hebrew derivation will tend to make it sound ancient and there are cognates in multiple European languages with ‘Lion’. But it’s an invented word that most people won’t get references from. |

…and the questions I couldn’t actually answer at all. Watch me trying to cover my embarrassment by sounding fancy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Does the name *John Sonne* refer to Sun (the Sun-in-Splendour), *Maevelin* to Wanderer (the Vagabond), *Leo* to Lion (the Lionsmith), *Corvino* to Crow (the Beachcrow)? Any other references like that? We could try to reproduce those references in our Chinese translation.** | Yes to all of these, except that I can’t remember whether I intended Maevelin as the Vagabond or not. Let’s assume I did 🙂  John Sonne is also a reference to Ben Jonson, the seventeenth century English playwright. *The Humours of a Gentleman* is a reference to Jonson’s play *Every Gentleman in his Humour*, but the characters are based more closely on the ones in Jonson’s *Volpone*. This obviously doesn’t need to be in the translation but I thought I’d mention in case it was useful for context. |

We had a shared spreadsheet in which, ultimately, I answered three hundred and twenty seven of these questions over a period of six months.

Russian was a less arduous process. This was because there’s less of a cultural gap, and because we’d learnt a lot about how to work with loc partners during the Chinese translation (a lot of the questions we did get had already come up in the Chinese translation).

Just as with the mobile port, then, someone else did the bulk of the work, but it wasn’t zero cost or risk at our end. It soaked up weeks of both my and Lottie’s time. I guess it’s worth mentioning in passing that I had to fight to suppress my prima  donna instincts, too. I chose the words in *Cultist* very carefully, and seeing them translated into a language I couldn’t speak, with no real sense of how they came across, was painful. Talking to people on both loc teams who were attentive, thoughtful, and fans of my previous work – that helped a lot. But I basically had to nut up and get over myself.

**So how did it go?**

We released beta Chinese loc in September 2019, and full loc in October 2019. In the fifteen months after the release of *Cultist* and before the release of Chinese loc, 3% of our sales were in China. In the five months since then, **36% of our sales have been in China.** It’s currently the country we sell the most units in (#2 is the US with 33%, #3 is the UK with 5%).

We released Russian loc in November 2019 (beta at the beginning, full release on the 25th). In the seventeen months before then, Russia accounted for 1% of our sales. In the two months since then, it accounts for 3% of our sales. That’s a lot less dramatic. **But there are a couple of giant provisos there.** First, it’s a very short period of time which includes two major Steam sales. Second, we released the Russian version with almost no fanfare – no PR, no Daily Deal on Steam as we did with China, very little marketing. (This wasn’t intentional – it was for reasons I’ll talk about later in this post.) So far the additional sales have probably made us back about 50% of the cost of localisation into Russian, but I’d expect we’ll have recouped the whole cost by the end of this year.

All told, then, we’re glad we put the effort into localising *Cultist*, and we’ll likely do it again – with future projects, and with *Cultist* in more languages. We’ll probably start with the ones at the top of this section!

***CULTIST* ON AMAZON TWITCH PRIME**

This is a quick one. We distributed *Cultist* on Twitch Prime. It was a straightforward deal negotiated by our then-publisher, Humble: a flat fee in exchange for a DRM-free build of the game that they could distribute to Amazon Prime users who logged into Twitch that month. I don’t think I’m allowed to say exactly that the fee was. I can say that it was by no means game-changing, but was more than we make from *Cultist Simulator* sales in an average month, even after the 30% publisher cut.

Like *everything* else here it wasn’t quite zero-cost. We had to prepare a unique build for Twitch with some specific requirements. Unfortunately there was a bug in that version. We sent Twitch an updated build, but it doesn’t seem like there’s really a process for distributing updates. So we still occasionally get support requests for help with that build. [We’ve put up a manual patcher here.](http://weatherfactory.biz/twitch-prime-cultist-simulator-bug-update/)

As hassle goes, though, this was minor, and it was basically a straightforward deal that we’re glad we took.

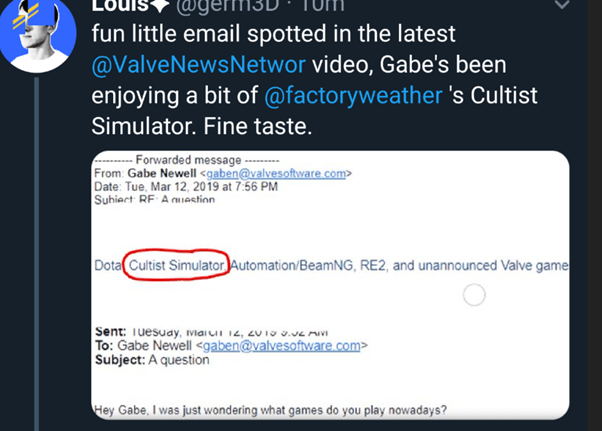
**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

This is pure puffery, so I’m going to keep it short.

In March, *Cultist Simulator* was nominated for two BAFTAs – Innovation, and Debut (we were shortlisted for Narrative, but didn’t get a nomination). Did we win anything? Good Lord no. These were the *BAFTAs*. Debut went to *Yoku’s Island Express* (from another small studio, but brilliantly executed, with Overwhelmingly Positive reviews on Steam), and Innovation went to Nintendo Labo. (Narrative went to *God of War*, obviously).

In July, we won three Develop Star awards – for Best Innovation, Best Game Design, and Best Microstudio. Lottie and I had actually gone out for a quiet dinner instead of turning up to the ceremony, so poor Claire Sharkey, who was handling our marketing at that point, had to give not one but three impromptu speeches for Weather Factory.

Also in March, this happened.



**HIRING AND GROWING**

We wanted our next project to be a slightly more ambitious and polished game than *Cultist*; and we wanted to run two projects simultaneously, so we didn’t have all our eggs in one basket. That meant growing the team.

We did that with some trepidation. It’s a big step to go from ‘romantic also business partners in a flat’ to ‘first actual employee’; but we had a good war chest and far more work than we could handle. So we went very carefully. Lottie and I wanted to make sure we hired competent people with a high degree of integrity whose skills complemented ours, and who could cope well with a high degree of autonomy. We were also keen to hire with an eye to diversity.

The most urgent pressure was to find someone to take over PR & marketing. Lottie was handling that, but she had too much to do already, and we wanted some outside expertise. So our first hire was Claire Sharkey, who we knew and respected already, to handle that side of things. We also needed some Unity expertise and UI expertise – I’m a software developer, but it’s not my strongest skill, and my UI skills are pretty dreadful. We hired Hannah Rose, a smart and versatile Unity developer with a good portfolio, for that. And finally we needed someone to support internal tools, so we could develop content faster, and to work on the unannounced second project. Marc Gagné, a community stalwart who’d built a number of fan projects, was a good fit for that. (We were hiring for a writer, too, when events overtook us – see below for more about that). With those hires made, we were that rare thing in game development, a majority-female development studio.

We got our shortlisted Unity candidates to spend a half-day building prototypes to demonstrate their skills. We paid them their (half) day rate to do that. This gave them an early signal that they could trust us, but it also meant we got code written in earnest that we could use to compare candidates properly. I recommend it. It’s not especially cheap, but it’s a lot cheaper than hiring the wrong candidate.

We also made some unusual commitments – motivated in part by altruism, but also by pragmatism. I think there are good reasons to do all these things, at least at small company size. I know they may not scale.

* We guaranteed a no-crunch policy, and were explicit about how. I’ve been outspoken about this for years, at this and my previous studio. I think the evidence is pretty clear that prolonged habitual overtime damages productivity.
* We committed to being internally transparent about salaries. This was a slightly alarming step, but people always know in the end through the grapevine – or worse, think they know. Publishing salaries internally is a sign of trust, and ensured that if there was an unfair imbalance, we’d be accountable.
* We committed to a profit pool for 2020 – something I’d instituted at my previous studio, that had worked well. Again, the moral argument for profit pools is pretty straightforward, if not very sophisticated. It seems right that employees, as well as shareholders, should benefit if the company does well. But pragmatically, my understanding and experience is that it’s a better way to motivate knowledge workers than either high salaries or performance-related pay. People stop being motivated by high salaries quite quickly after a hire or a  raise –  it doesn’t feel significant any more. And if anyone’s found a good way to run performance-related pay fairly in a small business with highly subjective metrics, I’ve yet to hear about it.
* And we added five zero-notice days off per year (‘duvet days’, ‘mental health days’). I’ve always thought this was just a good idea for workplaces, at least where it’s practical.

[Here’s the Staff Handbook we ran with as an addendum to our contracts](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qQgpmUz0Je5niUvKrSJmlwaAsix9-lcJb9aKy7Dh1bo/edit), which discusses the points above and more. I’ve added a least-restrictive Creative Commons licence to it, so if any part of it is useful, feel free to use it.

**INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTIONS (AND THINGS *YOU* MIGHT WANT TO DO)**

Lottie and I both were very conscious that we had had a fantastic first year. We wanted to pay it forward.

**Mentoring.** My thing was a mentoring scheme, because I had no clue what I was doing when I started out in this biz, and I wish I’d had something like that to help me learn more quickly. We had an informal mentoring scheme available in 2018, but the problem with an informal mentoring scheme is that no-one really has any idea how much time to expect or what to ask for, and from the mentoring side, it’s hard to budget time. So in 2019, we formalised it and spent some time carefully selecting five mentees. The scheme is now defunct, unfortunately (see later in this post for why) but [here’re the original details](http://weatherfactory.biz/mentoring/), in case you want to run something similar.

**Coven Club.** Lottie’s thing was Coven Club, which actually began in 2018 but hit its stride in 2019. Lottie wanted to provide a supportive environment for women working in the games industry – something more welcoming and special than a corner in a pub – so once a month she rented out an unusually nice space and provided snacks and prosecco. Coven Club ran for a year and then, unfortunately, we had to put it on hold (again, see later in this post for why) but [the original details are here](http://weatherfactory.biz/coven-club/) if you’re interested in doing something similar and find it useful. It got a really warm response, and it’s a shame it’s gone.

**Wings Fund.** Lottie also spent some time volunteering for Wings Fund, a venture looking to provide funding for projects for diverse teams. If you’re looking to help with something like that, or if you think you might qualify for funding, they’re [here](https://wingsfund.me/).

**Salaries Spreadsheet.** Lottie also set up and maintains [a spreadsheet of UK games industry salaries.](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1uZF-gfBDHNJE8ebDQUFy49pwrAnCMx8uf6VzNITaOKI/edit#gid=846726335) If you’re hiring, or trying to get hired, you might find it useful. If you’d like to help, do please add your own details via the linked Google Form in there.

We also got involved with Ubisoft’s Open Innovation partnership programme for indies – a really interesting initiative in which indies share their unique experiences and Ubisoft offers expert advice, or other assistance, in return. I gave a day-long workshop at Ubi Berlin, in exchange for expert assistance with our second project, Procopius. In the event, the expert assistance was indefinitely postponed (see later in this post) but my impressions of the programme remain broadly very positive, and I’d recommend it.

Finally, we gave a bunch of talks (GDC, Develop, Disco Montreal, GameDev.lv in Riga, Devspace London, yadda yadda). We posted the slides for our talks [here](http://weatherfactory.biz/data-talks/).

*The games industry is still new, chaotic and uncertain, especially at the indie end. An ounce of action is worth a ton of talk, but a lot of good intentions in our industry get diffused into discussion, and peter out. If you’re enthused by anything I mentioned above, please consider doing something like it yourself. You don’t need permission from the Twitterati or the establishment to do something like this – it’s not presumptuous to try. Good luck.*

***BOOK OF HOUR*S, AND THE KICKSTARTER**

The next game we decided to make after *Cultist Simulator* was not the one we’d expected.

In January 2019, I was finishing off the extremely savage New Game+ endings (‘not just difficult, but unfair’) for *Cultist*, and I found myself hankering to work on something more relaxed. So I tweeted:

*idea: extremely relaxed Cultist Simulator expandalone  
  
you're a librarian  
  
books arrive in your occult library and you just examine, catalogue and arrange them, then provide them to visitors  
  
very low challenge, lots of careful board organisation*

— Alexis Kennedy 🕯 (@alexiskennedy) [January 16, 2019](https://twitter.com/alexiskennedy/status/1085489922260246528?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

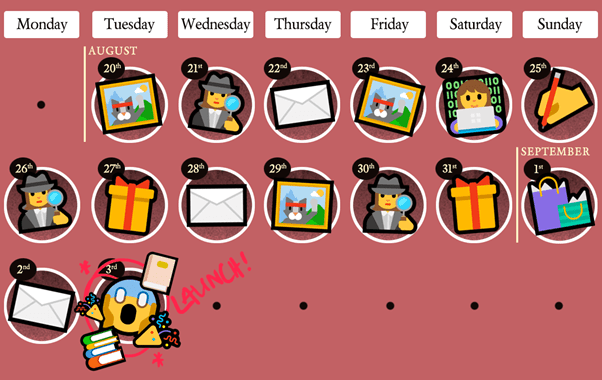
It got an astonishing response. ‘This is what’s been missing from my life,’ people constantly said. In a follow-up tweet, I committed to trying to convince Lottie to let us make the game if we got 1000 RTs. It took about 24 hours to get there.

*“….we have a road map until April for Cultist”,* I wrote in [a follow-up blog post](http://weatherfactory.biz/silence-please/), *“and we had one and a half other projects we were going to do pre-production on real soon. So assuming we make That Damn Librarian Game, then we will need to rejig our planning, and that’s not something we want to promise on a whim. BUT after we get Christopher’s Build / the Major Victories (free update on Jan 22nd, folks!) out the door, Lottie and I are going to sit down and look seriously at how we could make this work. It’s not out of the question that you might see a Kickstarter this year.”*

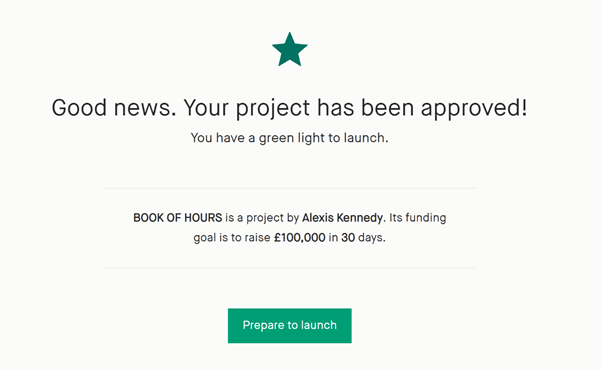
It did mean reworking a lot of planning. But that level of enthusiasm isn’t something a creative business readily ignores. And besides, we *really liked* the idea.

So we contracted [Adrien Deggan](http://www.adriendeggan.com/) for some initial concept art and [Catherine Unger](http://www.catherineunger.com/) to provide us with a visual direction. I started work on the design. Lottie and Claire began spinning up a Kickstarter, scheduled for September. Hannah and Marc began working on the UI and on the tooling for a new content framework. We had a promising initial prototype which we reckoned would be demo-ready before the end of the campaign. And after months of referring to it as That Damned Library Game, we chose *BOOK OF HOURS* as a title.

We wanted to be a bit more ambitious than we had with Cultist Simulator –  probably 1.5x the budget, maybe 2x by the time we’d finished prototyping. That meant about 200-250K GBP. We chose 100K GBP as a Kickstarter funding threshold – not a small ask, but I’d raised almost as much for Cultist Simulator as a solo dev. If we got overfunded to the point where we covered the budget, great, if – more likely – we only raised 100K, we were confident covering the rest with our Cultist monies. And if we failed to get funded, we’d take that as a sign that the pitch wasn’t as strong as we had thought, and we’d rework it.



We were very jittery, but about as confident as you can be on the eve of a Kickstarter. Lottie and I between us had worked on five Kickstarters, four of them successful. We had a strong community and a lot of buzz. We’d shared the pitch with hundreds of potential backers and got buckets of helpful feedback. Lottie and Claire were working through a rich schedule of publicity  and promotional stuf for the two weeks before launch, to get the buzz building towards launch day. I started to hope that it might be our most successful KS ever.



**WHY THE KICKSTARTER DIDN’T HAPPEN**

On August 27th and 28th, a larger competitor went public with a smear campaign against both me and Lottie. It hit the week before our Kickstarter, and on the one-year anniversary meeting of Coven Club (Lottie’s feminist initiative, for which she’d just got funding after a year of Weather Factory paying for it).

Most of you reading this will already be aware of these events, in outline if not in detail. I want to talk about it dispassionately and usefully. The story of this year makes no sense without it, but also, it’s extremely rare for a small business facing catastrophic PR to talk openly about the detailed effects. Posterity, you’re welcome.

It might be difficult to understand what follows without understanding the mechanism of operation of this kind of attack. That mechanism is this: a minority of people will believe the smears, think badly of you, and act accordingly, but the majority will mostly be worried that *other people will think badly of you,* and distance themselves accordingly.

**Commercial effects**

**The *BOOK OF HOURS* Kickstarter never ran**. We had to cancel it two days before launch. The team’s last two months’ work was rendered obsolete.

**All three of our new employees left.** When the extent of the damage to the company’s reputation became clear, we offered them either or both of (i) a week’s paid leave to think things over (ii) a bonus payment of one month’s salary in addition to their month’s paid notice if they chose to resign. They were caught in a situation that they hadn’t expected, and we wanted to give them all the time and space we could.

In the event, all three left. They liked their jobs (“Working here is honestly a dream come true,” I’d been told in a one-on-one the week before the attack) but it was too traumatic and miserable, and the potential damage to their careers was too great. (“I thought I could weather it, but I can’t,” said the last to leave.) We don’t blame them, and they left with our regretful blessing.

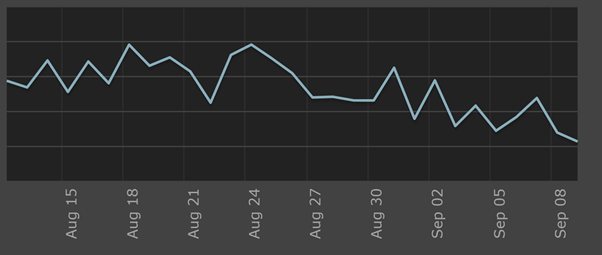
***BOOK OF HOURS* was indefinitely postponed.** We couldn’t make the game as originally envisaged without the two developers I’d hired to make it, and I was incapable of working for some months in any case. (We’ve since resurrected the idea in a different form with a much lower budget.)

**‘Procopius’, our more ambitious second project, was permanently cancelled.** There’s no way we can make it now.

**Our community was devastated.** We were particularly vulnerable to this form of attack because we’d invested so much in a friendly and transparent relationship with our fan base, many of whom now didn’t know what to believe. A civil war erupted inside our community. I had to leave the fan Discord after one of the mods joined in the personal attacks. All told, our mailing list and social media followings – the result of two-three years’ promotional work – were reduced by on average around 25% in the space of a month. (If 25% doesn’t sound as bad as you expected, imagine losing 25% of your home or your salary.)

**Around half of our business partners terminated their contracts and/or their upcoming deals with us.** There are legal reasons why I can’t be specific about which and how, here.

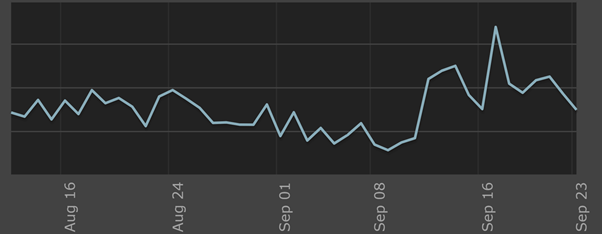
**Revenue from *Cultist Simulator* went into free fall.** Here’s our Steam revenue in the two weeks before the smear campaign hit, and the two weeks after. Any indie looking at this will experience a violent lurch in the pit of their stomach. Sorry about that.



Valve are still a little nervous about sharing sales figures at this level of granularity, so I’ve had to cut off the labelling on the Y-axis, but the delta should be clear: in the course of a week our daily sales plummeted by 75%, and hit their lowest day ever. We had no idea whether that was rock bottom, or whether they’d continue to drop.

If we hadn’t had an exceptional previous year, Weather Factory would have gone out of business rather quickly. (Of course, if we hadn’t had an exceptional previous year, we wouldn’t have registered as a threat to our competitor’s prestige.) In fact, without one stroke of unexpected good timing, we would *still* probably have gone out of business. I was largely unable to work by now, and would remain so for some months. Lottie was better, but demoralised and overwhelmed nevertheless.

This was the stroke of unexpected good timing:



On September 12th  2019 we released the Simplified Chinese localisation of *Cultist Simulator* on the beta branch. This is what it did to our sales graph. We saw another uptick the following month, when we released the full public localisation, by which point Lottie was in good enough shape to do some promotional work.

Eventually, as the months passed, it gradually became clearer what was going on, or people decided they didn’t really give a stuff either way, and our sales recovered to about where they had been. But it was a close thing. The loc release had been scheduled for months. I had often been quietly sceptical of the benefits of a Chinese release, given the time and effort involved in translating the text. It had been Lottie’s initiative from the start; she was right; and it saved the studio.

**Effects on industry contributions**

**Mentoring.** All but one of our mentees withdrew from our mentoring scheme. We had to shut it down.

**Coven Club.** Coven Club was the subject of some particularly vitriolic online personal attacks. Lottie had to put it on indefinite hold.

**Wings Fund**. Lottie was asked to step down from her volunteer work at Wings Fund on the basis that (unspecified) allegations had been made against her character.

**Talks**. All our speaking invitations were withdrawn.

I’m happy to say, however, that the [salary spreadsheet](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/1/d/1Mt7P1q1mT6BicJIlK0fT7lzvwtG_Re_R9c93WoHyxTw/edit#gid=0) is still going as of the time of posting.

**Personal effects, a.k.a. health and wellbeing Year 2**

The most significant of the effects of this kind of experience is, unmistakably, the toll it takes on your state of mind, and that shaped the last four months of 2019 for us. It’s especially difficult to talk about this part dispassionately. So I am going to try for a tone of dry flippancy. But I don’t want the tone to suggest that this is a trivial thing, so I’d like you to be  aware that as I type this, I am remembering last August and September, and my hands are shaking, and yes, I did indeed have a full-on couldn’t-look-after-my-child, emergency-mental-health-referral, Lottie-had-to-explain-to-the-GP-because-I-couldn’t-speak-coherently, Internet-access-restricted breakdown from which I am still recovering. I don’t recommend it. I’ve been through a rancorous divorce, and I’ve been through my brother killing himself. This was worse than either.

I was largely out of action until the end of the year, I still find it difficult to communicate with people unless I know them very well (if you’ve emailed me, sorry, I have to work up to responses!) and I’m unlikely ever to speak publicly again, but I’m now capable of working at my usual pace on light medication.  Lottie’s morale and health have suffered (she has a problem at the moment with recurring nightmares), but she was less dramatically affected and she’s mostly recovered. Some days we’re quite cross, most days we’re pretty cheerful. We’ve mentioned previously that Lottie’s mother was also targeted for some unpleasantness, but she’s a tough lady, she was on the periphery of it, and she’s fine.

On the flip side, the work-life balance issues that I mentioned in last year’s post have been less of an issue lately.

**More about this sort of thing**

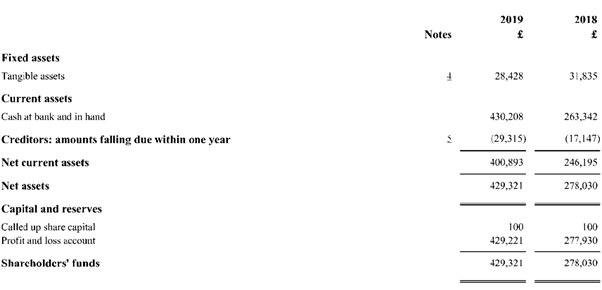
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjMPJVmXxV8>
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/So_You%27ve_Been_Publicly_Shamed>

**YEAR 2: WHERE WE ARE NOW**

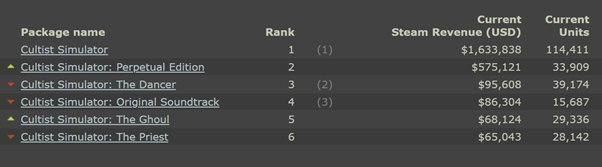
* In summary, in 2019, we released *Cultist* on iOS and Android. We released two more pieces of DLC, the soundtrack, and the Anthology Edition. We released Chinese and Russian localisations. We won some more awards. And for a few months, we were that rare bird, a studio of five with a majority female team and no gender differential in pay.
* Here’s where we were at the end of 2018 compared to where we are now.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **End of 2018** | **End of 2019** |
| two full-time employees | we were five, but now we’re two again and we have no plans to grow |
| two regular freelancers | we’re not working with anyone right now, but probably will |
| two cats | two cats, though one now has a limp |
| three awards | eight awards |
| enough revenue from CS sales to cover our costs and then some, most months | enough revenue from CS PC and mobile sales to cover our costs, most months |
| [a merch store generating a bit of revenue on the side](https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/weatherfactory) | [a merch store generating a bit of revenue on the side](https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/weatherfactory) |
| one moderately exciting announcement you should see this month | (that was the mobile port) |
| One secret guest writing project we hope to announce this year | Crikey, that! That got cancelled for NDA’d reasons unrelated to anything else I’ve mentioned. A pity, it was cool |
| a next game semi-pre-announced with a lot of buzz | This was *BOOK OF HOURS*: we’re working on a smaller version with a tentative launch date of 2021 |
| a soft deadline for more Cultist DLC in April | Yup, we released that! (in May). We have more to say on the topic of DLC, but haven’t announced anything officially yet. |
| ……..a completely bonkers long-term plan that I have yet to convince Lottie is wise. | This was ‘Procopius’, which we can’t make with two people, so it’s dead for good, alas. |
| … | A podcast on odd narrative stuff |
| … | 35K words of a book about ten years in indie gamedev (“A world that’s as glamorous as software development, as well-regulated as jazz, and as stable as a balloon full of frightened cats”) |

Here’s a similar 2018-2019 comparison, but in money.



And here’s our revenue breakdown on Steam for all products to date. (NB this is before Steam’s 30% cut). Revenue breakdown on other platforms is in similar proportion, and in total runs about 10% of the Steam revenue.



Those are numbers since *Cultist’s* launch, i.e. 20 months of sales. My prediction for year 1 PC sales, based on [Jake Birkett’s formula](https://www.gamasutra.com/blogs/JakeBirkett/20180326/317015/Can_weekone_Steam_sales_predict_first_year_sales.php)  and our week 1 sales of 34K units, was 157K units. Actual Year 1 sales on PC, all storefronts, was around 110K units. So 157K was much too optimistic, but still illustrative. The Birkett number still looks useful as a rough estimate, and it’ll help me refine next time.

Mobile revenue: here’s [Lottie’s detailed breakdown](http://weatherfactory.biz/cultist-simulator-mobile-the-all-singing-all-dancing-data-dump/). The bottom line for ‘units shipped on mobile’ was 59K when she wrote that post, four months after launch. It’s now been eleven months since launch, and the total of units shipped on mobile – as I mentioned above – is now 120K, or €350K + net (of which 50% has gone to our partner Playdigious).

We’re ten thousand words in, and nearly done. Here is the traditional kitten picture:



This is Sulochana, one of Lottie’s two beloved ragdolls. What isn’t visible in the picture is the damage to Sulochana’s left front wrist. On 31st of May 2019, the anniversary of *Cultist*’s launch, when Lottie and I were drinking prosecco and marvelling at how well everything seemed to be going, the wind blew open a carelessly closed door and Sulo got on to the balcony and leapt from the sixth floor. She survived, and is mostly recovered, but she’ll walk with a limp for the rest of her life.

That’s pretty much where Weather Factory is now. We were grievously wounded and almost didn’t survive, and we’ll never be what we were, but we go on, and life’s not so bad.

Shorn of metaphor, that means that Weather Factory is just Lottie and me, probably for good. We won’t ever be a two-project studio, and we won’t ever work on the ‘ambitious and unusual [thing] on a larger scale’ that we had planned. But we *will* continue to work on small, carefully scoped, experimental narrative games. I can’t imagine giving talks or mentoring or hanging with the scenesters any more. But we hope to keep sharing data like this; I can probably manage some more design streams; and I intend to keep making games until someone breaks into my house and forces me to stop.

Our plans for 2020, then, are much more domestic than last time:

1. **Spend some of that Cultist money on a house (I’m 48 and renting)**
2. **Get married**
3. **Get *BOOK OF HOURS* to beta. We’re very wary of running another Kickstarter, but we haven’t quite ruled it out.**
4. **More book, more podcast, more fun merch.**

Thanks for reading to the end! I hope it’s been useful. And if you’ve stayed with us through the rough times, we really appreciate it, both of us. A heartfelt thank you. It’s probably meant more this year than any time before or since.

Here’s [our mailing list.](https://weatherfactory.us13.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=97d06a3faac1573fa4330bb7d&id=c3f9b32720)

Here’s [our podcast.](http://weatherfactory.biz/skeleton-songs/)

Here’s [our YouTubes.](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8Xee3KLAJpmzmq8uBQ4Kxw)

Here’s [*Cultist Simulator*.](https://store.steampowered.com/app/718670/Cultist_Simulator/)

And here’s *BOOK OF HOURS*.

译者：刘恂

致谢：柯拉 山颪 Agust 白头鹎 入迷 咖喱

1. 制作中：原文直译为“向着预期目标奋斗中的游戏”。 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 俄斐：《圣经·列王记》中盛产黄金和宝石之地。 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 普罗可比：拜占庭帝国重要历史学家之一。 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 那个可恶的图书馆游戏：当时预计2021发布的Book of Hours，不过现在的预计发售时间改为2022年了。 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Kickstarter：国外一个知名众筹网站。 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. V社：即Valve。Steam是Valve Software开发的游戏平台，密教模拟器目前的PC端发售平台除了Steam还有GOG和Humble。 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. itch.io：独立游戏平台。 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 米基玛：原文是Mickymar，米基玛工作室的名称来自其两位作曲家的名字组合：米基·爱尔博（Micky Erbe）和玛丽贝斯·所罗门（Maribeth Solomon）。 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 马甲：应指游戏《上古卷轴4：湮灭》发布的一个只改变游戏内外表的马的护甲资料片，是当时新一代主机发布的资料片之一。这个DLC并没有给玩家提供什么好处，在当时引来骂声一片。 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Bandcamp：国外音乐社区兼数字音乐平台，主要服务独立音乐人，独立乐队以及音乐爱好者。 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 扭扭乐：一种游戏。玩法是在印有不同颜色的圆点的游戏垫上，根据游戏骰子的指令把手脚放在指定颜色上，跌倒的玩家就会出局，坚持到最后的就是胜利者。 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 韦科事件：即1933年发生在美国的韦科围城事件。末日教派的一支美国大卫教派的总部位于距离韦科14英里的卡莫尔山。该邪教的教主科雷什自称是揭开七印的羔羊。该邪教因为储存运送违禁品被美国政府围剿，混战中山庄被大火烧毁，对峙中80名邪教教徒在枪战和大火中葬生，科雷什也葬身火海。 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 35万多欧元：约人民币274万。 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 密教：即密宗，中国佛教宗派之一。 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 金刚乘：即密宗或者密教，同注14。 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 理智检定：跑团游戏的梗，当玩家操控的调查员看到了过于猎奇或者血腥的场面时往往需要进行一个理智检定，扣除/不扣除相应的理智值。 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. aluminum：铝的英文。 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 硬写：即硬编码，指在软体实作上，把输出或输入的相关参数（例如：路径、输出的形式、格式）直接写死在原始码中，而非在执行时期由外界指定的设定、资源、资料、或者格式做出适当回应。——<https://blog.csdn.net/u013176681/article/details/51026546>。 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Chris Payne：英国工作室Quantum Soup Studios的董事总经理。 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 克系：指克苏鲁神话式。 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Kitfox Games：游戏公司，既是游戏开发商也是发行商。 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. 志愿者方案：链接通往Indienove的游戏古登堡计划页面。游戏古登堡计划是一个Indienova组织发起的半公益性质的项目，主要目标是打破语言和文化的屏障，把海外优秀游戏作品和资料本地化后引入中国，探索健康的本地化服务模式，积淀有价值的信息库。——https://indienova.com/corp/gutenberg/。 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. QLOC：即QLOC Company，进行过黑魂重制版的PC移植，和Indienova也有合作项目。 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)