

Final Fantasy 23 Localization Project

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Project Charter

Project Title: Localization Of Final Fantasy 23 For English-speaking Countries

Project Manager: Jeremy Whitenect

Project Sponsor: Square Enix

Project Timeline: 6 months (Start Date: January 1st, 2025, End Date: July 1st, 2025)¹

Budget: \$500,000

Project Purpose and Justification:

The goal of this project is to expand the franchise, Final Fantasy by localizing the most recent game, Final Fantasy 23, from Japanese to English. We will translate the language, as well as cultural references, so they make sense to different English-speaking audiences. English speakers are a wide audience, this game series is episodic, and it is known in English parts of the world due to the internet, so this project will surely increase our revenue.

Project Objectives:

- Translate all game text into English, including character dialogue, item descriptions, UI, UX, etc. Also adapt slightly for different English dialects.
- Implement English voiceovers for the dialogue of the main story.
- Adapt specific Japanese cultural references, themes, metaphors, and symbols to English versions that our target audience can understand.
- Make considerations to censor the game where applicable to ensure that keeps no greater than a Teen rating.
- Do user testing to ensure the localization has no mistakes and hits the themes of the original.

Project Scope:

- Complete text translation.
- Changing of jokes, references, themes, etc. to make sense to an English-speaking audience.
- Redesigning of assets that have Japanese specific jokes, references, themes, etc.
- English dubbing of the audio for the main story.
- Testing of the localization.

Key Deliverables:

- Complete text translation.
- Audio translation of the main story.
- Culturally adapted game assets.
- Quality assurance testing and reports.
- Final localized builds.

¹ See Appendix A

Project Milestones:

- Month 1: Translation of game script kickoff
- Month 2: Completion of game translation, start of localization.
- Month 3: Completion of localization and start of recording.
- Month 4: Completion of recording and integration of recording into game.
- Month 5: Localization of assets and integration of assets into game.
- Month 6: Quality assurance testing and final approval.

Stakeholders:

- Project Sponsor: Square Enix
- Development Team: Developers, translators, localizers, voice actors.
- Quality Assurance Team: English speaking and bilingual testers who may be interested in this game.
- Marketing Team: The team that will create marketing materials for the different English-speaking regions.
- End Users: English-speaking players who this localization is marketed towards.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies:

- Risk: Translation or Localization delayed.
- Mitigation: Work with more than one team at the same time to allow for some buffer room.
- Risk: Voice over delayed.
- Mitigation: Start working on marketing, as there can be a slight overlap with implementing both.
- Risk: Potential misinterpretation of culture, resulting in controversy.
- Mitigation: Consult with experts during localization phase.
- Risk: Potential of going over budget.
- Mitigation: Make weekly budget review meetings.

Success Criteria:

This project will be successful if our localization is released on time, meets the same quality as the original, is rated T for Teen or lower in all regions it is being released. On top of that, it will be successful if players react favourably to this release.

Business Case

Executive Summary:

Localizing the video game Final Fantasy 23 is a project with the goal of increasing its reach by localizing it for English-speaking audiences. By translating the text, dubbing the main story into English and changing some aspects of the game that only make sense to a Japanese audience, this game will be able to resonate with a more diverse audience. This project is sponsored by Square Enix, the original developers of Final Fantasy 23, and is estimated to cost \$500,000. This localization will extend the lifecycle of the game, and increase Final Fantasy's appeal internationally.

Problem Statement:

Final Fantasy as a franchise has a fan base that spans the world, especially from English-speaking regions. But, Final Fantasy 23 is currently Japanese exclusive. This not only limits the reach it currently has worldwide, but it also limits its greatest potential when it comes to earning revenue. Ever since the late 90s and early 2000s, there has also been an increasing demand for localized content, and that has not gone away. As a result, this project aims to reach these English-speaking markets which have such a great demand for this game.

Objectives:

Translate text: Every piece of text including main story text, item descriptions, character dialogue and whatever text may be read by a player at any point, no matter how obscure, will be translated into English.

English dubbing: Every piece of dialogue for the main story will be dubbed over in English by professional voice actors to keep the emotional integrity of the original performances.

Localization: References, jokes, themes, and everything of that nature will be adapted to make sense to English-speaking audiences. All dialogue that is changed will still keep the spirit of the original text.

Censorship: As Japan is often more lenient with their age rating systems for video games, and our aim is to have a rating in the 13-17, some aspects of the game will have to be censored. Our goal will be to keep in this range while still keeping with the spirit of the original game.

Quality assurance testing: There will be an extensive testing phase to ensure that not only there are no localization issues, but that the localization keeps in line with the original text. As a result, it will be tested largely by bilingual testers.

Justification:

When it comes to the localization of Final Fantasy 23, it is not just a localization but a business opportunity. Ensuring the game releases in English-speaking countries means that the revenue it generates will very likely double compared to its original release in Japan. Localizing the game will:

- Increase the sales of Final Fantasy 23
- Increase the presence of Square Enix in English markets
- Grow the player base for not only this game, but the franchise as a whole, leaving room for greater profits in the future
- Keeps the Final Fantasy franchise relevant and stay in the minds of players living outside of Japan

Financial Considerations:

- **Total Budget:** \$500,000
 - **Translation and Localization:** \$200,000
 - **Dubbing (Actors, Studio, etc.):** \$150,000
 - **Artists For Asset Redesigns:** \$50,000
 - **Quality Assurance and Testing:** \$50,000
- It is expected that the return on investment for this project will be great as after this is localized, it will be able to reach almost every English-speaking country. Even if this project does not do as well as predicted, it is still almost sure that a profit will be made as long as the proper time and effort is put into this project.

Success Criteria:

The localization of Final Fantasy 23 will be considered successful if:

- **Release:** The localized version releases on the expected release date of July 25th, 2025.
- **Quality:** The localization releases with no major errors or potential cultural issues.
- **Reception:** There is positive reception to this localization, and it increases the sales of Final Fantasy 23.
- **Budget:** The localization of Final Fantasy 23 stays within the expected budget of \$500,000.

Conclusion:

The localization of Final Fantasy 23 for English-speaking audiences will be a great investment for Square Enix, and is expected to generate a profit, even if this project does not go as well as expected. The audience for this game will also grow the franchise's presence, and has the potential for even more profits in the future.

Why Waterfall?

This project will be using the Waterfall methodology. The reason for this is due to what the project entails. As a result of it being a localization, the requirements of this project are very clear, something very much inclined to the Waterfall methodology. When it comes to the design phase, that would be rough translations, prototype assets as well as temporary voice lines that will eventually guide the official voice actors direction first. Then it would be the official localizations, assets, and voices which lead into implementation, which is putting all of that into the game. Verification is then making sure there are no bugs, mistranslations, etc. And then finally, maintenance, fixing those potential issues.

As it can clearly be seen, this project works very well with Waterfall's linear way of working. There is some slight overlap within the phases (for example, assets and the localization can be worked on at the same time, but that's all in the design phase) but there's will be no 100% perfect methodology for a project, this is just the best fit, and it fits quite well.

Work Breakdown Structure

This is a more detailed look into what the work for each group of people will look like for this project. This may be subject to change at the discretion of the project sponsor, but is currently accurate as of November 8th, 2024.

Project Management

- 1. Project Planning
 - 1.1 Project Kickoff Meeting
 - 1.2 Detailed Schedule Creation
- 2. Budget Management
 - 2.1 Budget Allocation
 - 2.2 Budget Review Meetings
- 3. Risk Management
 - 3.1 Risk Assessment
 - 3.2 Risk Mitigation

Translation and Localization

- 1. Game Text Translation
 - 1.1 Main Story
 - 1.2 Side Quests
 - 1.3 UI/UX
 - 1.4 Items
 - 1.5 Other Misc. Text
- 2. Game Text Localization
 - 2.1 Cultural References
 - 2.2 Jokes
 - 2.3 Themes
 - 2.4 Symbolic Content
- 3. Review
 - 3.1 Review By Peers And Experts
 - 3.2 Corrections/Changes

Dubbing

- 1. Casting
 - 1.1 Casting Of Main Leads
 - 1.2 Casting Of Side Characters
 - 1.3 Casting Of Extras
- 2. Recording Sessions
 - 2.1 Scheduling
 - 2.2 Recording With Main Cast
 - 2.3 Recording With Side/Extra Voice Actors
 - 2.4 Extra Recording Sessions
- 3. Post Production
 - 3.1 Editing
 - 3.2 Audio Mixing
 - 3.3 Integration Into Game

Asset Redesign

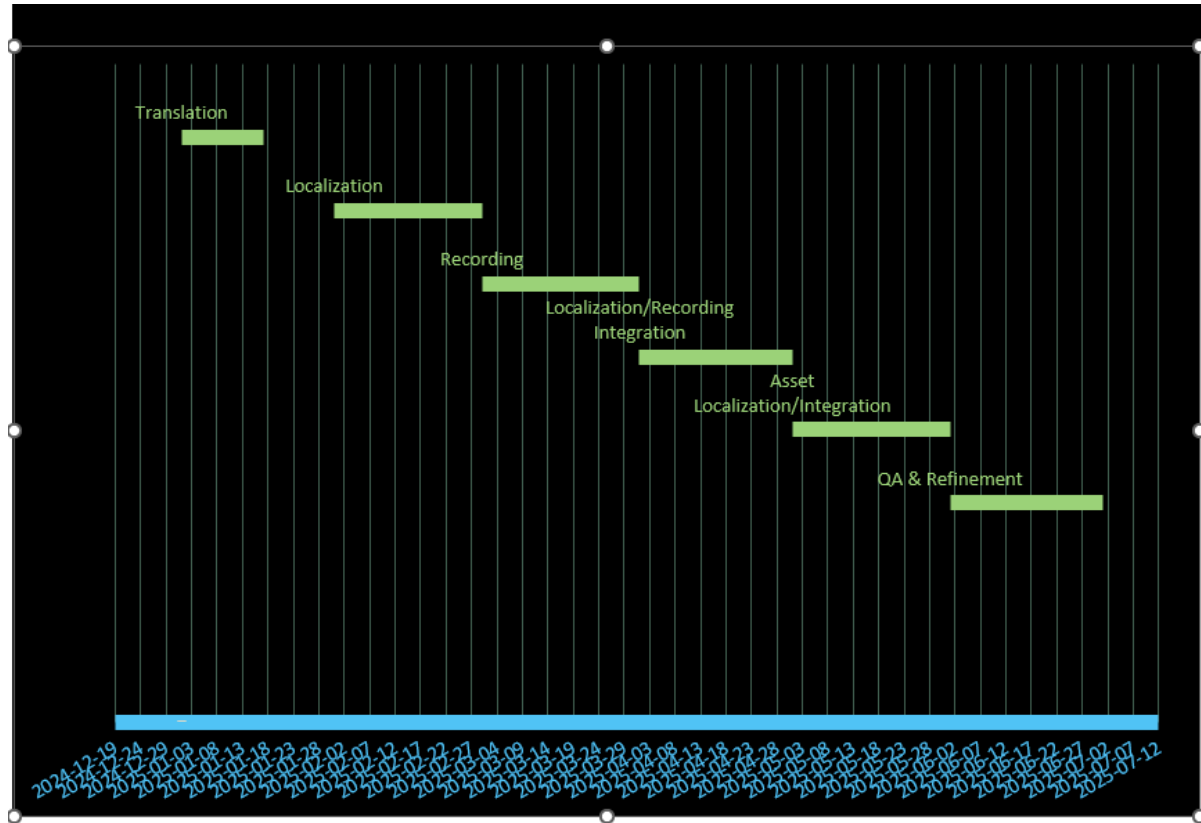
- 1. Asset Redesign
 - 1.1 Redesigning Of Preexisting Assets
 - 1.2 Creation Of New Assets
- 2. Review & Implementation
 - 2.1 Review Of Assets
 - 2.2 Refinement Of Assets
 - 2.3 Implementation Of Assets Into Game

Quality Assurance And Testing

- 1. Player Gathering & Setup
 - 1.1 Renting Of Space For Players
 - 1.2 Gathering Of English-speaking Players
 - 1.3 Gathering Of Bilingual Players
- 2. Testing
 - 2.1 Script Read Through
 - 2.2 Playtesting
- 3. Feedback
 - 3.1 Collection Of Feedback
 - 3.2 Implementation Of Feedback

Appendix

Appendix A:



Note: Localization starts right after Translation as per the project milestones, it just does not show very well in this chart.