= Mother 3 fan translation =

The Mother 3 fan translation is a complete English @-@ language localization of the 2006 Japanese video game Mother 3 by members of the EarthBound fan community led by Clyde " Tomato " Mandelin . The original game was released in Japan after a decade of development hell . When fan interest in an English localization went unanswered , the EarthBound fansite Starmen.net announced their own fan translation in November 2006 .

The dozen fans who worked on the project had been vetted by Mandelin and had prior localization experience . Thousands of hours were put into the project between hacking the game data and translating the 1 @,@ 000 pages of scripted dialogue . They built their own tools for the work . The final version was released in October 2008 and issued as a patch . The patch was downloaded over 100 @,@ 000 times in its first week . A fan @-@ made , full @-@ color , 200 @-@ page , professional @-@ quality player 's guide was released alongside the translation . The Verge cited the effort as proof of the fan base 's dedication .

= = Fan community = =

After a decade of " delays , downgrades , and cancellations " , Mother 3 ? the Game Boy Advance sequel to 1995 Super NES video game EarthBound ? was released in April 2006 for Japanese audiences . The American EarthBound fan community , in support of the series , had rallied support via events and petitions for the release . One such petition used custom petition software and hand @-@ checked name verification , and the 819 pages of 31 @,@ 000 signatures were sent to Nintendo 's Japanese and American offices with fan art . Despite receiving the backing of the wider gaming community , Nintendo did not respond . In turn , the new release became a " rallying point " for the community . 1UP.com wrote that " no other game in the history of time garnered such a rabid demand for translation " .

The fan community did not expect an official English localization when Mother 3 was released in April 2006 . Four months later , they received news that Nintendo was not interested , and in November , received confirmation in an interview with Nintendo of America 's " Treehouse " localization group . Within days , the fan translation was announced at EarthBound community site Starmen.net. Reid Young , a co @-@ founder of the site , said that a fan translation " was as much about the fans as it was about the game " .

= = Development = =

The Mother 3 fan translation project was announced in November 2006 . Led by Clyde " Tomato " Mandelin , a professional game translator whose previous work includes games such as Kingdom Hearts II and anime such as Dragon Ball , a group of around a dozen individuals translated the game from Japanese to English in a process that took two years and thousands of work @-@ hours . Those who worked on the localization were largely already known for their contributions to other fan translations , and Tomato 's own experience in the fan translation community helped the project get the necessary resources . Tomato worked on the project as " a second full @-@ time job " in addition to his full @-@ time job as a translator . Young , who did public relations for the project and had little involvement in the process , estimated Tomato to have put over 1 @,@ 000 hours into the project , Jeffman to have nearly 1 @,@ 000 , and even the smallest contributors to have put between 50 and 100 hours into the project , though no one tracked hours . The team chose to not alter the game aside for adding a new intro screen , which meant not adding their names to the credits . The localization included two elements : hacking the game data (ROM) and translating the scripted dialogue .

The ROM hacking entailed assembly @-@ level changes to the game code . Young equated the process to teaching someone another language by slowly altering their DNA bit by bit , through trial and error . Some of the technical changes included " variable width fonts " , graphics hacks , and custom software . The game was coded in such a way that there was not enough system memory

available to display the requisite onscreen text . Since Japanese characters all occupy the same amount of space (monospaced) , the team had to custom @-@ code the new English characters to fit properly . Tomato said that " no text display routine wound up untouched " , such that the fixes for variable width fonts were useless until the team manually made room for the characters . Graphics hacks included the new intro screen and images imported from the English EarthBound , so as to preserve continuity of features . For example , an octopus statue pun from Mother 2 was converted to a pencil statue in the EarthBound English localization and was changed accordingly in the Mother 3 localization . The team also built custom software to aid in the translation , such as a cross @-@ assembler and tools for handling the script and patching . Members of the hacking team included Tomato , Jeffman , byuu , and sblur , among others .

About 1 @,@ 000 pages of text were translated . They estimated the theoretical freelance cost of the translation at $ 30 @,@ 000 . Young described Tomato as a perfectionist , and said that he kept the translation team small so as not to bog down progress , though he did request group input for aspects such as pun translation , where more input was seen to be helpful . Some decisions made during translation included the choice to translate a character named Yokuba (similar to the Japanese word for " greed ") to Fassad (similar to the English word " facade ") , and the choice to convert mice characters who used a Japanese dialect to use a thick cockney English dialect .

The team reported that " the highest levels " of Nintendo of America knew about their project , though they did not intervene . Young said that their localization team transparently stated that they would curb the project if the company were to make an announcement about the future of the game . Though the team acknowledged that the legality of the localization was unclear , Young said that it would not be reasonable to call the fan translation " impetuous or unfair " . The team added that they were against software piracy . They directed others to import the game from Japan (or otherwise purchase official merchandise when the game began to go out @-@ of @-@ print) , with the ultimate aim to help the franchise . Tomato received encouragement from a Square Enix employee who anticipated the translation . At the end of the project , the team felt that the fan translation would lead to more protection against fan translations rather than more encouragement , so as to maximize the underserved audience . Tomato said that he was unable to appreciate his work since it was so familiar to him , with every original and translated line memorized . He expected that would change in five years . The project left Tomato with a greater respect for the craft of writing .

= = Release = =

The localization patch was finished in October 2008 . Though Tomato predicted the game to have " a couple dozen thousand downloads total " , it was downloaded over 100 @,@ 000 times in its first week , not including downloads from other locations . The patch requires a ROM file of the game to be used . Along with the translation , the team announced the Mother 3 Handbook , an English player 's guide for the game that had been in development since June 2008 . Wired reported the full @-@ color , 200 @-@ page player 's guide to be akin to a professional strategy guide , with quality " on par with ... Prima Games and BradyGames " . Tomato released an updated version in 2009 . As of 2010 , the patch was undergoing translation into languages including French , Italian , and Spanish .

= = Reception = =

Frank Caron of Ars Technica wrote that the " massive undertaking ... stands as a massive success " and that the fan translation realized the dreams of many gamers including his own . He added that " one cannot even begin to fathom " why Nintendo would not release their own English localization . Kotaku 's Mike Fahey wrote that he felt that the translators were wrong to suggest purchasing official merchandise where players were unable to find an import copy . The Verge cited the two @-@ year fan translation of Mother 3 as proof of the fan base 's dedication .