



The Censorship of video games in China



Introduction:

In recent years China has become a major consumer in the video game industry, however due to China's strict rules and regulations video game publishers have to be extra careful when deciding what is appropriate for China's political climate and cultural background. As such this has created an interesting dynamic between China and foreign video game publishers, which has led us to discuss the following topics within this presentation: Processes to get video games approved in china and restrictions, History and addiction of video games in China, The Chinese influence on the video game market.

Processes to get
video games
approved in
China and
restrictions.



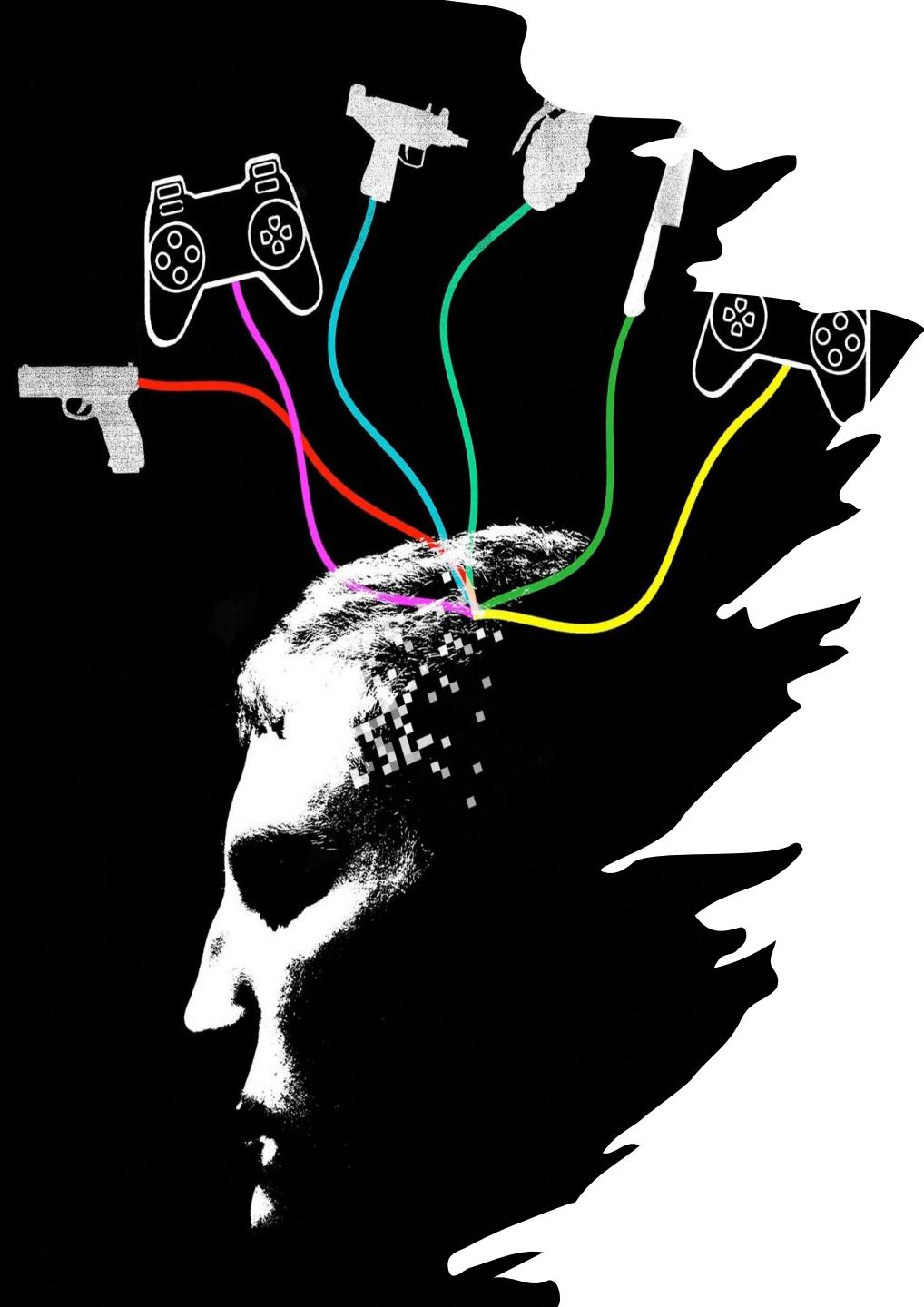
There are core issues that video game publishers must take into consideration when beginning to localise their video game, such core issues include cultural adaptation, age rating and legality of content. However, rules, regulations and preferences change from country to country.



As a result of the rise of globalisation, China has become one of the most important and influential video game markets in the world. To enter the Chinese market, localisation teams often have to make cultural adjustments to video games in order to meet the high expectations and strict rules and regulations of China.

Video games are usually subject to stricter censorship than other forms of media, this is possibly due in part to the inherent interactive nature of video games and the fact that children often have access to video games not suitable for their age category. In China, there is no rating system for video games, which consequently means that all video games are potentially accessible to users of all ages. This leads to the heavy censorship of content in video games.





The Interim Provisions on the Administration of Internet Culture, issued in 2011 by the Ministry of Culture include a number of contents to be forbidden:

- 1) those opposing the basic principles established in the constitution
- 2) those endangering the unification, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state
- 3) those divulging secrets of the state, harming national security or impairing the honour and interests of the state
- 4) those inciting the enmity, discrimination of nationalities, jeopardizing the unity among the various ethnic groups, or violating the customs and habits of minority nationalities
- 5) those spreading cults or superstitions
- 6) those disturbing social order and destroying social stability
- 7) those inciting pornography, gambling, violence or instigating a crime
- 8) those insulting or libeling others, violating the lawful rights and interests of others
- 9) those endangering social moralities or fine national cultural traditions
- 10) other contents prohibited by laws and administrative regulations or by the state

Many video games have been banned in China due to the interim provisions on the administration of internet culture, especially when it comes to the censorship of pornography, violence, gambling, political issues, and misinterpretation of historical facts.

While some of the elements stated in the document are quite clear, others like "fine national cultural traditions" are more subjective which makes trying to publish a video game in china much harder than in other countries.





Because of these loosely defined rules and regulations, China can ban games for seemingly no reason at all and without fair warning. However, China is a major opportunity for video game developers and passing up the opportunity of publishing in China would mean missing out big financially.

According to O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013: 224), developers and publishers usually have two options when faced with the problem of censorship: "a) to withdraw a game and not release it in that particular country, or b) to edit the objectionable content or remove it from the game".

VIDEO GAME ADDICTION?



History &
Addiction of
Video Games
in China



Japans influence in the Chinese game market

- There was economic turmoil in China in the 1980s due to the loss of their leader Mao Zedong.
- The country was very technologically far behind the western world.
- Japan began to attempt to bring in games in the mid 80s due to a large video games market crash in America.
- Japan were met with many barriers when trying to sell to the Chinese market.
- The Chinese government had imposed massive 130% import tariffs making the games extremely expensive, second was a large amount of piracy, and black-market sales are games and consoles due to the lack of them before, these markets ignored copyright laws and made it impossible for a healthy game market to grow. (Liao, 2016).

Introduction of Console Ban

- After the influx of Video-Games, Arcade games and more to the Chinese market the Government began to deem it an addiction.
- During the 90s the Government and even many of their people began to describe video-games as “Digital Heroin”.(Liao 2016).
- Along with this in 2000 China introduced a console ban that wouldn't be officially lifted until 2015.



Addiction laws introduced

- System brought into effect in 2005 by Ministry of Culture that affected players awards and experience points in-game after a certain amount of hours of game time.
- This anti-addiction system, after three hours cuts into the rewards players can earn in-game, like experience points or equipment acquired by their character. After 5 hours, the system will issue warnings to the player that they have been playing too long along with giving damage to the character and cutting experience points that can be earned to a measly zero. (Dickie, 2005).
- In 2007 this saw minors daily usage cut to 3 hours or less daily.



Pressure on Western Developers

- Due to these laws tracking gamers play time there was pressure on developers outside of China to implement these changes in their game to enter the Chinese market.
- The sheer size of the Chinese market is too much for some companies to lose out on.
- Large companies like Blizzard, Riot Games and Epic Games have reportedly hired Chinese counterparts to implement these changes especially due to the tightening of the law in 2019.



Tightening of laws in 2019

- These changes will warn younger players of their playtime after three hours on weekends and doesn't allow players to play between the hours of 9p.m. And 8a.m. on weekdays. (Cutchin, 2019).
- Minors gameplay is capped at 90 minutes daily Monday to Friday and are not allowed to play between 9p.m. and 8a.m.
- On weekends they are allowed three hours up until 10p.m.



Tightening of Laws 2019

- The tightening of laws in 2019 also brought with it restrictions on micro transactions in all games.
- The spending limit like the time restrictions also goes by age and ranges between \$28 a month to \$57 a month depending on your age.
- All of these in game restrictions are tracked by the person being required to use their real name to sign up for the account.
- However due to children finding ways around this a new system is being brought into place to prevent this by the use of the persons actual government I.D. number.
- This all feeds massively into Chinas influence in the game industry.



Chinese Influence

On the Worldwide Gaming Market

E-sports: Blitzchung Controversy

- Blitzchung: Pro Hearthstone player
- In a post game interview: “Liberate Hong Kong. Revolution of our age.”
- Blizzards “rule” against his action: “Engaging in any act that, in Blizzard’s sole discretion, brings you into public disrepute, offends a portion or group of the public, or otherwise damages Blizzard image...”



Response:

Posted by u/[deleted] 1 year ago 7 4 16
48.6k Stepping down from the mod team

Discussion

After 4 years of being a moderator for the sub and an advocate for this game, I am leaving the moderation team as this is no longer a company I want to support or follow.

I appreciate the community and my time spent with y'all. Good luck, Blizzard.

1.2k Comments Share Save Hide Report

94%

Transdimensional CatSpider @TCatspider · Oct 9, 2019 Replying to @jasonschrerie

I'm more interested what @TimSweeneyEpic has to say. His company is 40% owned by Tencent after all.

Tim Sweeney @TimSweeneyEpic

Epic supports the rights of Fortnite players and creators to speak about politics and human rights.

Unlike Blizzard, Epic Games says it won't ban players for political spe... Woke Fortnite
@theverge.com

3:02 PM · Oct 9, 2019

4.3K 1.6K people are Tweeting about this



Wenqing Yan
@Yuumei_Art

Blizzard banned pro Hearthstone winner for supporting free Hong Kong and took away his prize money. It would be SUCH A SHAME if Mei became a symbol of Hong Kong democracy and got #Overwatch banned in China like Pooh did

#FreeHongKong #MeiWithHongKong
#MeiSupportsHongKong



3:59 PM · Oct 9, 2019

58.8K 26.6K people are Tweeting about this

E-Sports: Shanghai or Beijing

- "Chinese government to designate it as one of several 'national pillar industries'" in early 2000s.
- Beijing revealed a plan to become the "international capital of online games" by no later than 2025.
- "2015 Shanghai had already announced its plan to become "[the international capital of Esports](#)", with the local government unveiling plans to invest in fast broadband infrastructure, esports stadiums and even 'Esports industrial parks'"

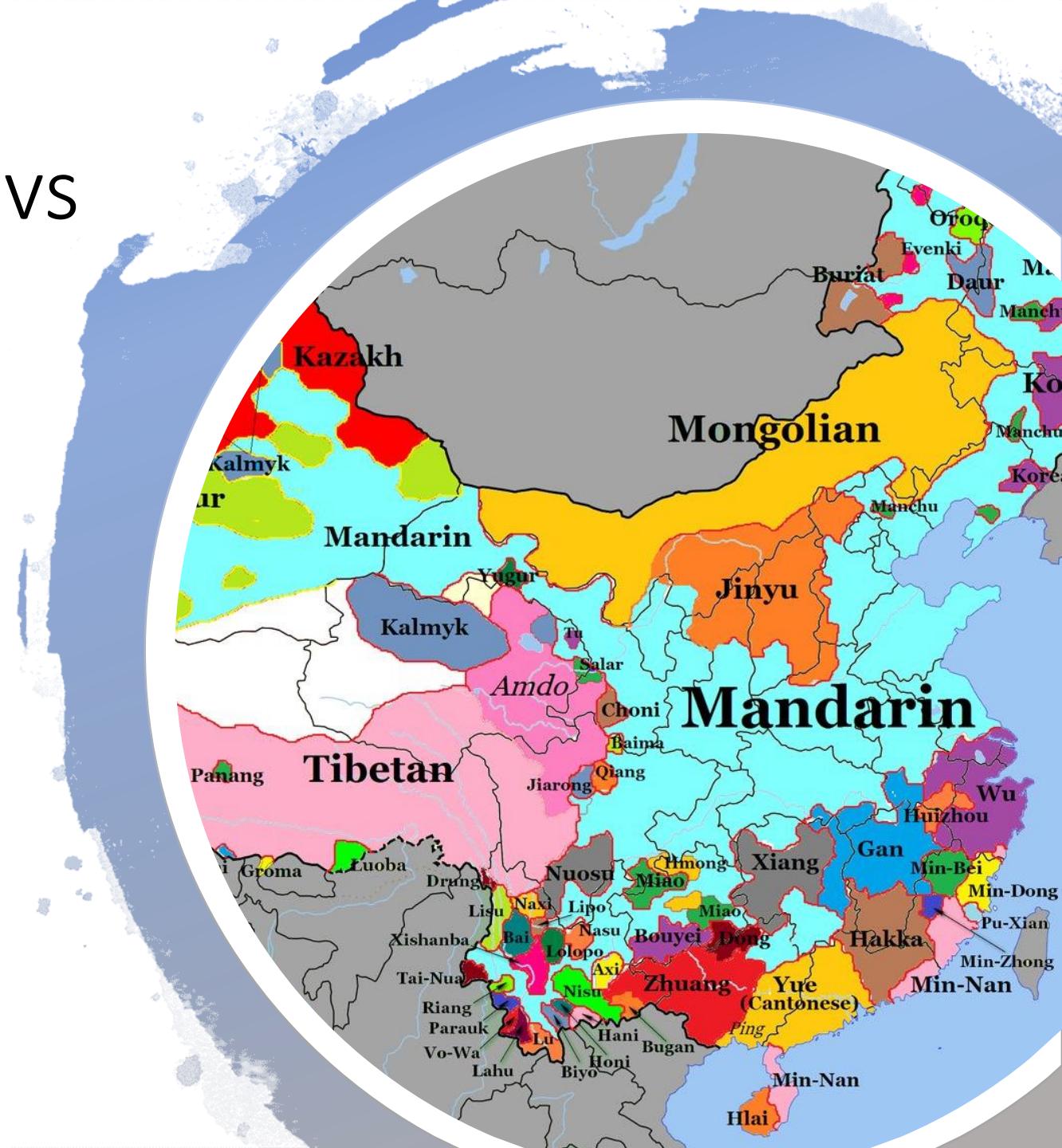


Cyber Recreation District

- Late 2000s, planned to be a Second Life type.
- 150m avatars, 7m online at one time.
- “China is converting a 100 sq km site (yes, that is a very big space) on the former nationalised steel mill site to house, among other things, virtual worlds able to support not millions or tens of millions but billions of avatars.”

Pokémon: Mandarin vs Cantonese

- Hong Kong speaks Cantonese, has different names for the game (Pet Little Elves)
- Whereas mainland China speaks Mandarin (Spirit Pokémon)
- Nintendo planned to make the new games in Mandarin only, for commercial simplicity





Conclusion

Much like in the biblical story the Tower of Babel, linguistic difficulties and cultural identities can mean the end of cooperation, and as such an end to peace. We must strive for understanding between nations, or our structures will crumble.

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