Virtual Reality Games, Applications, and Localization Challenges

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Introduction

• VR has diverse applications in many fields
  • Tourism
  • Healthcare training
  • Manufacturing
  • Education
  • Games

• Exists in many cultures, including Canada and Japan
Outline

• Problem
• Justification
• Background
• Goal
• Case studies
• Takeaways/conclusion
Problem

• Costly to localize content made for a specific culture
• Research in countries such as Japan remains locked behind the language barrier
Localization

• Many things to localize
  • References to popular culture
  • Menus
  • In-game items such as posters and signs
  • Especially in VR, gestures
  • Controls
  • Text
    • Ą, ć, ę, ł, Ń, ó, ś, ż
    • Gender problems

(Ryszard Chojnowski, 2016)
Justification

• People import non-localized games (usually Japanese) rather than buy localized versions with revisions, name changes, etc
• Wasted resources
• High localization costs sometimes forces companies to not release titles abroad at all
• Lack of content and interconnectivity between cultures
Background: What are others doing about this problem?

• Lack of context is usually the main problem
  • Providing context for translation is the most important thing for accurate localization
• For Gender:
  • Translate in both (or all) forms
  • Add software tags so the game knows which version to use
  • When no other options exist, adjust text to avoid gender problems

(Ryszard Chojnowski, 2016)
Research Question

Is there a way we can reduce costs, and produce enjoyable products and applications that have good usability and can be used internationally by people from many unique cultures?
Goal

- Review popular methods used today
- Analyze them and see if the trend is the right way to go
- Find this solution
Case study

• Idea is to localize during game development, not after
• Nintendo flies in localization experts every 2 months to suggest changes to work
  • Helps streamline content (Japanese content not drastically different than localized content)
  • Reduces cost from localizers having to re-make entire parts of the game
Issues

• Issues exist with this method
  • Accusations of culturalization
  • Accusations of censorship
  • Players want to play “exotic” games
Things to learn from these approaches

• Good things
  • Adding tools in the game’s code to make things easier for localizers

• Things to consider
  • Decide whether to localize or translate
  • Be aware of different norms in different cultures
  • Current trends seem to be continuing
Conclusions and observations

• Two markets of international players
  • 1. Like to play localized games tailored to their culture
  • 2. Want strictly translated games so they can understand what’s going on, but otherwise actually experience the content as it was meant to be experience

• Costly to produce content suitable for both of these international markets

• Conduct more market analysis to assess player sentiment towards localized vs translated vs original material
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Questions?