

Faust Li Forever

(written on April 2nd, 2014)

Hello, my name is Johnson Lin. While being an indie, I run [an indie dev community](#) in Taiwan with friends, also serves as a working staff of [a local IGDA chapter](#). We organize game jams, too.

It's already 2 months since Global Game Jam 2014. After the encouragement Susan and Gorm gave me during GGJ Roundtable at GDC14, I've decided that I'll write an article about our dearest friend, Faust Li, in English, so that friends abroad can learn more about what happened to us during GGJ14.



This was our organizing team. (Photo taken in Microsoft Taiwan, which is our main sponsor in all the GGJ14 sites in Taiwan)

You'll probably notice that the leftmost guy, Faust Li, was photoshopped into the image. I could only do this to make the picture complete, and the reason why needed a bit more explanation.

So, we had 4 sites this time in Taiwan, and the total count of jammers had grown to around 120. Which is really great, considering we only started organizing regular game jams since 2012, and GGJ14 was our 2nd GGJ. Let me tell you how we got started.

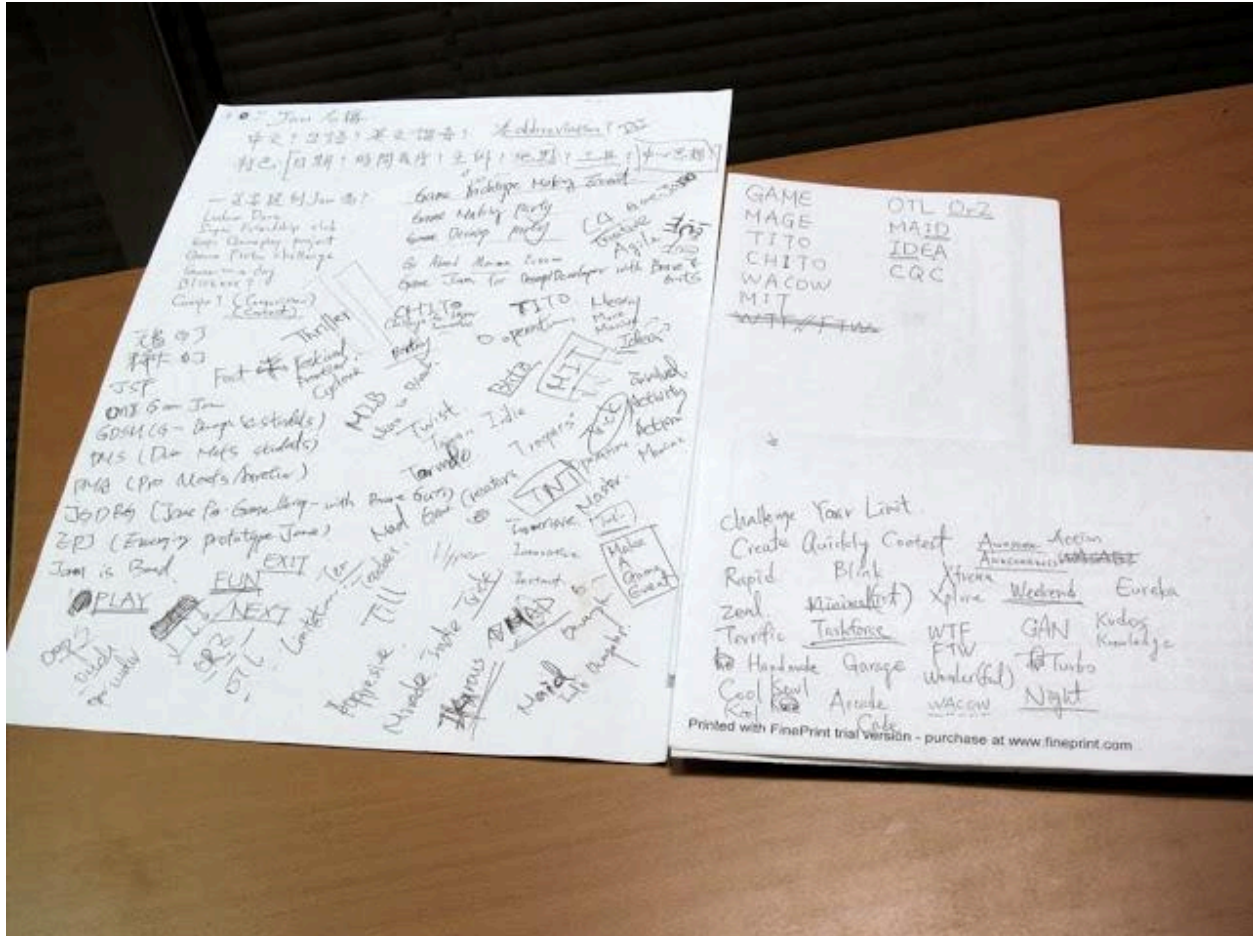
The 4 sites weren't all executed by us alone. There were friends in other communities in different cities, and we were just loosely connected, like sharing the same tool sponsors or having video chats showing off games during the jam. And my home site that we had in Taipei City was also called "MIT Game Jam #3" by ourselves.



We started "[MIT Game Jam #1](#)" in April, 2012, which was the first game jam organized by us. "MIT" stood for "Make It Today!", meaning something like "Start making your game" or "Join the game jam now" or "Finish the game today", those kinds of things.

Of course, the first obvious pun in it was "Made-in-Taiwan", while we also wanted people to confuse us with game jams held by [MIT Game Lab](#) *evil smile* -- well, please forgive us if anyone really DID get confused!

(Let me also emphasize that we weren't the first group of people doing game jams in Taiwan. [Asia Universities in Taiwan had the first open-to-the-public game jam during GGJ11.](#))



Faust, Kun-Wei and I originally came up with the name, and a whole bunch of other names, in a discussion while we were eating at some local MOS burger. And it finally got coined after we asked one of our indie dev friend Jheng Wei Ciao ([@MonkeyPotion](#)) for opinion. Naming is HARD, you know.

And we finally got into the 3rd year of MIT Game Jam, with Global Game Jam 2014.

Faust Li, the person who was supposed to be around to watch his deeds flourish, had passed away in an accident in the night of January 20, 2014, which was just 4 days before GGJ14. He "logged out" forever.

During our final preparation week of GGJ14, I was reading docs about GGJ in my Google Drive folder, including the opening presentation slides, item checklists, and all other kinds of docs. There wasn't a single spot that I couldn't help but notice how Faust helped us put all these materials together. We weren't sure how we could've done it without him.

When I was editing the slides, I could even still recognize which lines were written by Faust over these times. I could only try to just block the thoughts and focus on the pre-jam preparations at hand.

How Faust really helped us to get started

I couldn't say that I knew Faust very well. He was just one person in the community, after all. I had no prior coworking experiences with him, and in fact, he was already in the industry for several years when my other friends and I started running the community. But Faust meant a lot to us in the collaborations we had afterwards.

It was our 3rd community meetup, right after Tokyo Game Show 2011. The topic was about what we saw at [Sense of Wonder Night](#) back then, and some developers who also attended SOWN showed up for the discussion, and Faust was among them. "A really talkative one" was our first impression of him.



I've lost track about how he became sort of our core member. But at some point we started discussing the possibility of game jams in Taiwan, and I said to him that the question had been floating around in my mind for quite some time. We've already known that one university in

Taiwan participated in GGJ11, but that was the only occurrence. Few local resources were available to us, and we knew really no one of game jam experiences.

I had asked a few experienced devs in the industry about the jams (just want to remind you here, the Taiwanese game industry was more than 20 years old), and the responses were more-or-less all the same. "It seems pretty difficult", "What about the differences in dev tools?", "What if there's a rookie that can do nothing?", "Who's going to lead?", "Who's got time to attend the jams?", Blah blah blah.

I had prior experiences in other kinds of workshops in Taiwan, so I knew it should be doable somehow. Just that attending some similar workshops was one thing, but to be responsible for holding a game jam was totally in another league for us at the time.

Time goes by. On Feb. 1, 2012, Faust said he was notified by his Japanese dev friend that they were going to have a "Social Game Jam" during Feb. 11~12. And he was considering travelling to Japan to just observe the whole thing.

And just one day later, Faust told me that he booked the flight!



The preparation of our first game jam was soon underway. Most of our procedures, documentations, checklists for every game jam we did, were produced during that time period. Just a little additions and modifications along the way afterwards.

If it hadn't been Faust's impulse-based travel plan to Japan, we probably wouldn't have held a single game jam to this date. Also, many thanks to the Japanese dev community who organized Social Game Jam.

Connections from Japan, and the forming of IGDA Taiwan

While we are at MIT Game Jam #1, Faust also told us about the [2nd Fukushima Game Jam in Aug. 2012](#). So together we came up with a plan: MIT Game Jam #1 was to familiarize us with holding jams, and start to build up a track record about game jams in Taiwan. Then join the 2nd FGJ as an overseas satellite site, finally get the momentum going towards GGJ 2013.

Not only that Faust was very fluent in Japanese (in English as well), he also maintained a very good connection with dev friends in Japan. And we soon started to realize that all these efforts were not "just one more game jam" to us.

We held an Unity seminar right before FGJ, inviting one of Faust's friend, Masamitsu Ishikawa, to Taiwan to be the keynote.



(The right one being Mr. Ishikawa. Funny that he wore a t-shirt saying "Taiwanese", and Faust wore one saying "Tokyo University")

Also, we tried to organize video chats during the jam with sites in Japan. This was our first open collaboration with Japanese dev community, and we also learned about the very active and well-organized IGDA Japan.

There was an IGDA Taiwan before our time, roughly during 2001 ~ 2008. However the coordinator seemed to be an overseas developer that happened to be in Taiwan back then. Later he left Taiwan for some reason, but IGDA Taiwan chapter was no more because of the lack of a new coordinator. We could only learn this from search engine cache of some very old discussion on the old IGDA forum. And just like before our first game jam, we knew nothing about running an IGDA chapter.

After FGJ 2012, we learned much more information about how Japanese community ran their IGDA chapter, and we had various supports from them. During our trip to TGS 2012, we attended the organizers' party of FGJ, and I had vivid memory of how Kenji Ono, the current leader of IGDA Japan, jokingly said "Alright! I announce that IGDA Taiwan chapter is reborn right here, right now!"

While Faust and us were working on rebooting IGDA Taiwan, 2012 also marked the first ever "[Game App Developers Conference in Taipei](#)" (later renamed to "[Taipei Game Developers Forum](#)" in 2013), which focused on mobile and indie game development, by the end of the year. There were various speakers coming from Japan, like Reo Nagumo ([Yudo Inc.](#)), Takumi Naramura ([NIGORO](#)) and Agarie Ryo ([Nyamyam](#)).



(Our dear friend Agarie Ryo with Faust, during a Q&A session in the conference in 2012)

It was only made possible because Faust put a lot of efforts into communicating through his personal network and IGDA Japan channels after TGS 2012. And it kick-started the forming of new connections between Japan and Taiwan's indie communities.

If it hadn't been Faust, we wouldn't have a chance to build up these communications. The language barrier was actually not a major problem here. It's really about how he dedicated his networks and abilities, and became a catalyst for all the following opportunities and collaborations.

Just some time before we started preparing for GGJ14, we were still discussing about meeting up with all the friends again during [BitSummit 2014](#) in Kyoto, Japan (which also concluded not long ago).

Unfortunately, Faust wasn't able to be there in person.

Many ways to remember him, and they are all good

Finally, if you check the keynote video of [Global Game Jam 2013](#) and [2014](#), you'll also notice that Faust Li was also one of the localization volunteers. (I might add that we had a new volunteer from Taiwan in 2014, Caasi Huang. He also ran a site in Taichung City singlehandedly, and even though there were only 3 teams, one of their games, "[Dreamlens](#)", was really unique)

And you probably know Indie Game: The Movie. Faust Li was in the translation & proofreading team of the Traditional Chinese localization for the film.

As far as I know, Faust helped many dev friends in Taiwan in various ways. Sometimes it's about localization, sometimes it's about networking. He was really into community, and served as a very active IGDA chapter staff. In doing so, the game dev community in Taiwan benefits as a whole. And he did all these while he was working as a game designer professionally in the industry.

Proficient in communicating, helping newcomers, willing to share, smart, efficient. I didn't work very closely on any actual project with him, but since I knew Faust from 3 years ago, I really couldn't find anything bad about him. Though Jon Blow once said, "If you don't see a vulnerability in somebody, you're probably not relating to them on a very personal level", but that was actually how I remembered Faust Li anyway.

I vaguely remembered that Kun-Wei and I both asked him this question before,

"Why a veteran game developer, such as yourself, want to put so many efforts to help the community and us?"

Faust answered,

"Well, it's nothing. It just seemed to lack a busybody."

(Here's a [youtube video of him](#) during MIT Game Jam #1, speaking of afterthoughts of the jam. Roughly translated, he said it really was just an urge to do it, though we'd probably keep doing it, seeing the outcome was very good. He already showed some of the games to his Japanese friend during the jam, and they were surprised how good the quality was, given it's all first time jammers doing it.)