Privacy Notice – University of York – Research Using Public Data on Steam, Reddit, and specialised public forums

This privacy notice is provided to the public to detail the ways in which personal data gathered from users is processed by the University of York, including how it is gathered, used, stored and shared, with regard to the study “Cultural Harmonies: Sound Design Localisation in Role-playing games (RPGs)”.

Who is responsible for the data?

For the purposes of this privacy notice, the University of York is a Data Controller, as defined in the General Data Protection Regulations (EU) 2016/679 (the ‘GDPR’) and the U.K. Data Protection Act 2018 (together the ‘Data Protection Laws’). The University of York (‘York’) is registered with the Information Commissioner’s Office and its entry can be found here. Registration number: Z4855807. We have an appointed Data Protection Officer who can be contacted as follows: Data Protection Officer, University of York, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD, UK. dataprotection@york.ac.uk

What is the purpose of this research?

This research forms part of a doctoral project at the University of York. Its purpose is to investigate sound localisation in Chinese AAA games that have been localised for the English-speaking market. The study seeks to identify the sonic characteristics of these games and to examine how players perceive and evaluate localised audio elements, including voice acting, music and sound effects. The research uses case study analysis and analysis of publicly accessible English-language online comments to better understand the role of sound in localisation quality and player experience. We will be examining the following data sources:

- Posts and comments publicly visible in online communities such as Steam and Reddit subreddits and forums.

For any questions regarding this research, please contact the researcher via email: jxd517@york.ac.uk

What data do we have?

All data collected for this research that is not formally published material will consist of paraphrased content derived from publicly accessible English-language online comments posted on platforms such as Steam and Reddit, and, where relevant, other publicly accessible game localisation forums. No direct quotations, usernames, profile links, or other identifiable information relating to individual commenters will be collected or retained in the working dataset.

Where formally published materials are used, such as published articles, official game materials, industry reports, or other public sources, these will be cited and referenced p

The data collected may include collated views, observations, evaluations, and opinions relating to the following topics and other closely related topics:

- the voice acting, music, environmental sound, and sound effects of selected Chinese AAA games localised for the English-speaking market;
- players' evaluations of the quality of localised audio elements;
- players' views on how sound localisation affects immersion, authenticity, emotional engagement, and overall game experience;
- players' perceptions of whether localised audio reflects, preserves, or adapts cultural characteristics;
- broader views on the role of sound in game localisation and cross-cultural player reception.

Ultimately, the research examines how sound localisation is represented in selected games and how players perceive and evaluate these audio elements in the context of the English-speaking market.

Where does the researcher get data from?

Data collected for this part of the study will be sourced from publicly accessible English-language online content relating to selected Chinese AAA games localised for the English-speaking market. This will include user comments posted on open and non-restricted platforms, that is, content hosted in spaces that do not require application, invitation, or approved membership in order to view.

This will include publicly visible comments on platforms such as Steam and Reddit, and, where relevant, comments on other publicly accessible game localisation forums. In addition, the study will include the researcher's own analytical notes on the selected games and, where appropriate, formally published materials such as articles, industry reports, and official game-related sources.

What is our legal basis for processing your data?

Under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the University must identify a lawful basis for processing personal data.

For publicly accessible online comments used in this study, the lawful basis for processing is Article 6(1)(e) UK GDPR: processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest. This research is being conducted as part of a doctoral project at the University of York.

For online comments collected from platforms such as Steam and Reddit, the research will not retain usernames, profile links, contact details, or other unnecessary direct identifiers in the working dataset. Any material used in outputs will be anonymised, paraphrased, shortened, or otherwise presented in a way that reduces the risk of identification.

No data will be intentionally collected that fall within the UK GDPR definition of special category data. The study focuses on players' views and evaluations of game sound localisation, including voice acting, music and sound effects. If any potentially sensitive material appears incidentally in publicly accessible comments, it will not form part of the analytical focus and will be handled cautiously in line with data minimisation principles.

How will we use your data?

Data collected for this research will be gathered in a properly minimised and anonymised manner and then entered into a spreadsheet or document for qualitative analysis. For publicly accessible online comments from platforms such as Steam and Reddit, and, where relevant, other public game localisation forums, no usernames, profile links, contact details, or other unnecessary identifying information will be retained in the working dataset. Any illustrative extracts used in the research will be paraphrased, shortened, anonymised, or otherwise presented in a way that reduces the risk of identification.

Where formally published materials are used, such as academic publications, industry reports, journalistic articles, official game materials, or other published sources, these will be recorded and cited . If such material is referred to directly in the final thesis or related outputs, it will be referenced in the same way as any other academic or journalistic source.

Will we share your data with third parties?

No raw research data will be shared with external third parties. Access to the working dataset will be limited to the researcher and, where necessary, authorised University of York personnel involved in academic supervision, examination, or research governance. This may include the researcher's supervisors and relevant examining or oversight staff.

How will we keep your data secure?

The University of York has appropriate technical and organisational measures in place to protect personal data. All data collected for this research will be stored on University-approved secure storage systems, including University Google Drive or other approved University data storage facilities.

This research is conducted with a privacy by design approach. Publicly accessible online comments included in the working dataset will be handled in a way that minimises identifiability, including the avoidance of unnecessary identifiers and the use of anonymisation, paraphrasing, shortening, or aggregation where appropriate.

Data will not be stored unnecessarily on unapproved personal devices, removable storage devices, or in printed form. Access to electronic files will be protected through University account security measures, including password protection and, where available, two-factor authentication.

Will we transfer your data internationally?

The research data will be stored using University-approved systems. Because the University of York uses Google services, including cloud storage, it is possible that data may be stored on servers located outside the UK. Further information about the University's use of Google services is available on the University of York website.

Will we identify you in any research outputs?

For publicly accessible online comments gathered from Steam, Reddit, and, where relevant, other public game localisation forums, individuals will not be identified in research outputs. Usernames, profile links, and other direct identifiers will not be included. Any illustrative material will be anonymised, paraphrased, shortened, or otherwise presented in a way that reduces the risk of re-identification.

Where formally published materials are used, such as published articles, reports, or official sources, authors and publication details will be cited .

How long will we keep your data?

Research data will be kept , in accordance with University of York requirements. Data will be stored securely on University-approved systems during this period. Any data that are no longer required will be securely deleted at the end of the relevant retention period.

What rights do you have in relation to your data?

Under UK data protection law, individuals have rights in relation to their personal data, including rights of access, rectification, erasure, restriction, objection, and, in some circumstances, portability. Please note that not all rights apply in the same way where data are processed solely for research purposes.

If you have any questions about this research or how data are being used, you may contact the researcher, the researcher's supervisors, or the University of York Data Protection Officer.

Right to complain

If you are unhappy with the way in which your personal data have been handled by the University of York, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office. Information about how to raise a concern is available on the ICO website. Any updates to this privacy notice will be published on this webpage.