Mintegral

Programmatic | AI | Interactive

From WEST To EAST

Top publishers share their experience of launching mobile games in China



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Executive Summary

Mintegral has interviewed 14 mobile game developers and publishers from a range of backgrounds who have published in China to hear directly from them what it is like releasing games into the world's biggest market.

These individuals – drawn from Miniclip, Tamalaki, Rumpus Animation, Perchang, Jagex, Mattel/NetEase, IFightBears, Lucky Kat Studios, Tower Studios, YoDo1, Splendy Games, Digital Legends, Animoca Brands and JoyPac – responded to five questions about the market in a series of interviews.

As a result of the interviews, we have concluded the following key insights about the Chinese market.

Why do Western developers release their games in China?

Most developers released into the Chinese market because of its size, both in terms of consumers and revenue. However, developers also released into the market out of curiosity, because of publishing deals paid by Chinese partners and because the App Store "tickbox" approach reduces friction.

What are the biggest logistical challenges for entering the Chinese market?

The biggest barriers to releasing into China are logistical ones. The principal challenges are the Chinese regulatory environment (especially since the 2018 release freeze), the fragmented nature of the domestic mobile gaming market outside of the App Store, and the technical challenge of integrating relevant SDKs to tie into Chinese stores, social media platforms and advertising partners.

How can international developers distribute their mobile games in China?

There are two principal routes into the Chinese market for developers outside of it. The first is a low level localisation effort, checking a box on the App Store and "setting and forgetting" it as part of an untargeted global release strategy. The second route is to travel further into the Android landscape with the help of a domestic partner, who seeks to solve challenges on behalf of developers.

How should companies localise mobile games for the local markets?

There are three main pillars for successfully localising a game into the Chinese market. The first is adapting game mechanics and in game design to cater to Chinese consumer tastes. The second is changing the art style, stories and characters in the world to suit Chinese cultural tastes. And the third is adapting monetisation design to reflect the differing behaviours of Chinese consumers (principally a focus on lower cost IAPs, inserting mobile adverts and using subscription routes).

Is it worth publishing in China?

Releasing in China is a mixed bag in terms of delivering success. Surprisingly, small developers who adopt the "set and forget" iOS route consistently see a strong return on investment in China (with the caveat that this can make it hard to scale it further).

Outside of the confines of the App Store, returns are harder to achieve – with the complicated nature of the Chinese mobile gaming market ecosystem and particular market tastes leading to varying levels of success.

Overall conclusion

Achieving success in China's mobile market outside of the safe harbour of the App Store is almost impossible to achieve without a local partner (or partners). Developers and publishers wishing to succeed in the market must find domestic support to overcome legal, logistical and cultural challenges, or risk missing out on the benefits of releasing in the biggest mobile gaming market in the world.

Methodology

The qualitative element of this report draws upon interviews with 14 different developers conducted in person, on Skype and via email.

The aim was to speak to a wide range of developers and publishers from different backgrounds, countries and business sizes.

This was to provide both the largest range of experiences possible, but also to give a fairer representation of what the industry thinks about releasing mobile games in China – rather than a handful operating at the cutting edge of the process.

In practice, this meant that we interviewed representatives from companies that included:

Leading free to play publishers with a reputation for global success.

Publishers specialising in releasing games into the Chinese market.

Small to mid-size free to play companies looking to expand their operations into the Chinese market.

Independent development teams releasing premium games into China, usually through the App Store.

And to level the playing field, we aimed to ask each individual the same five questions: why they wanted to release into China, how they did it, what changes they made to prepare for it, whether it was a success and for a specific tip for other developers.

While these questions may seem relatively simple, the purpose of keeping these questions open and similar was to provide as much room for the individual to interpret the question.

In doing so, we believe that we were able to identify the key reasons why developers aim for China, how they released into the market and whether – ultimately – they felt the effort they went to was worth it in the end.

Money, Money, Money – why developers release in China

The reason why China is such a popular market for developers to try to break into is a simple one: money.

In August 2018, Newzoo claimed that 615.9m consumers across the country support a cross platform digital game spend of $37.9bn – with mobile generating $23bn of that figure.

Importantly, this knowledge has permeated its way through the industry. For those at the top of the sector, its importance has long been acknowledged.

Cassia Curran, Jagex's head of business development and former NetEase employee, expressed China's appeal succinctly:

> *"It's one of the biggest mobile games market out there, the biggest mobile game market out there. Of course it's very attractive for the expected audience and [for businesses to] potentially make much more revenues."*

However, the importance of the Chinese market is also widely acknowledged by independent developers too.

Ben Murch, CEO of Perchang, said that the company decided to localise its game into China "because it's a really big market."

Similarly, Seb Burnett of Rumpus Animation, the creators of Bertram Fiddle, identified China as a market that would help them sell an independently developed game as effectively as possible.

Furthermore, the size of China's market – and the funds that flow with it – has organically flushed

domestic publishers with cash. This has made it easier for companies based there to entice Western developers into the domestic market by enabling them to finish releases (on the condition that the Chinese version takes greater precedence).

Jon Hare, founder of Tower Studios, has adopted a China first strategy with his forthcoming release Sociable Soccer for this reason. As he told us during the interview process, the company signed with Chinese publisher Crazy Sports:

> *"Because they're the first people to offer us decent money...we just signed a deal for Asia on mobile because we could get a reasonable deal."*

This shows how the impact of money within the market is influencing developers to release in the territory.

However, while the size of the China market is undisputed, its value to Western companies remains uncertain due to the difficulty in entering it. This means that discovering the value of the market is one of the supplementary reasons why companies attempt to release in the territory.

Martine Spaans, the founder of publisher Tamalaki and spin off company FGL, highlighted this in her interview. When asked why China, she said the following.

> *"Curiosity mostly. Everyone keeps saying that it's such a big market, so full of opportunities, we should really be there."*

This is an important point for the industry to consider. With many developers and publishers still experimenting with releasing in China, it's important for companies to have as positive an experience as possible to encourage deeper activity within the market.

A tough nut to crack – the logistical challenges of releasing into China

China is regarded as a hard market to break into. In the words of **Cassia Curran**, it is "f***ing hard" to get a game successfully released in the market. There are three main reasons why that's the case.

The first is regulatory difficulties. China's unusual political environment forces developers and publishers to comply with state censorship legislation to get games listed. This means that games – theoretically – require vetting by the government prior to release, which creates a bureaucratic headache for companies entering the territory.

At a basic level, **Ethan Collins**, head of marketing of YoDo1, outlines what these regulatory challenges mean for them as a publisher.

> *"We have to get the developer's game to have the approval from the Chinese government to be launched in China on the various distribution platforms, the Android channels or the PC publishing channels that are out there."*

And **Tom van Dam**, who works for NetEase on their Mattel163 venture, illustrated in one interview what this has meant in practice – especially since the lengthy game release freeze of 2018.

> *"Games that were licenced over two years ago, some of them are yet to reach the market now. There are some that are in the massive queue of games that are yet to be approved. I think our number is certainly over 5,000 games in the queue. They've only recently restarted that process."*

So regulatory challenges are one of the major challenges when it comes to getting into China's Android market. But the second major factor behind China being a difficult market to enter is a logistical one: the fragmentation of the Android landscape.

While the App Store works similarly to the way it does in the West, AppInChina estimates that the fragmented Chinese Android store landscape currently supports the best part of 400 stores.

And while only a handful of those stores have critical mass – such as Tencent's, Baidu and Oppo's stores – deploying across these stores requires a lot of work.

On a surface level, fragmentation increases the workload for the app store marketing team. **Ethan Collins**, head of marketing for Chinese publisher YoDo1, outlined the potential challenges that this fragmentation causes to developers.

If you're publishing in the west you're only focusing on Google Play and iOS and there's two platforms with their own sets of metadata. Multiply that by 80 to 200 and it just becomes a hassle in and of itself to get that all done."

On top of that though, there's a less talked about problem with the Android market: the technical aspect.

To deploy across multiple stores requires changes to the source code. And as **Allison Bilas**, COO of JoyPac says, that's potentially a lot of work.

"On the Android side there are many, many Android stores that are relevant for developers to get to. So literally just releasing your game and distributing it requires looking at all of those different stores, integrating the different SDKs for those stores that are around monetisation and the social side and sharing. That's the very technical side of getting your game out the door over there that becomes very complicated."

Finally, the need to localise a game to suit Chinese tastes and habits can put a significant load on developers. While we'll return to look at the specifics of this in the next section, games releasing into China need to – at minimum – localise for the language, culturalise art styles and even adapt monetisation design to cater to local market tastes.

Distribution - set and forget vs partnering up

But how exactly did developers seeking to enter the market deal with these challenges? Out of the developers we spoke to, there were two main ways of dealing with these challenges.

The first way to do this was to avoid the problem as much as possible. In practical terms, this means focusing on the App Store in China only, localising the game as much as possible and then "setting and forgetting it" onto the store.

Xavier Carrillo, CEO of Digital Legends, espoused this position in an interview. By only publishing on iOS, Carrillo's market for his game – The Respawnables – was much smaller. But with that narrow approach came a relatively friction free release on the App Store in China.

> *"Publishing is easy on iOS because it's the Apple process. Of course what you have to do is to localise your game into China. Once you've done that the process was pretty straightforward."*

This was reflected further by two other developers. **Simon Sparks**, previously of Splendy Games, released his title into China because it was part of his "global release strategy" on iOS with All4Games. And Herdje Zhou of Lucky Kat studios said:

> *"When we do our global launch China is just part of the global launch and on iOS it's just easier to launch."*

Yes, it's a surprisingly simplistic approach to releasing into the market. But with developers aware of China's potential and looking for ways in, the fact that iOS devices accounts for roughly 7% of handsets in the

market (and that Apple runs the same distribution in the territory as it does elsewhere) makes it enticing.

This shows that titles with simpler mechanics or clearly defined limits (e.g. a small multi-hour indie game experience) can bridge into China easily and effectively through iOS.

But for those seeking to deal with the problems in the Android market head on, working with a partner - the second major route to market in China - is the only way to go.

For many companies, this immediately presents a major challenge. For one thing, and building on Curran's earlier comments, it can be hard to find a partner that suits your game because the market has different tastes.

> *"The major difficulties would be finding a publisher that is a good fit. It's really hard to find a Chinese publisher because your game probably is not right for the Chinese market. When they realise they can't make any profits off it you'll get turned down by loads of different developers mostly."*

Furthermore, the requirement to make technical changes to the underlying code of a mobile game to release in China raises another problem: trust. Unfortunately, China does have a reputation for widespread IP infringement, game cloning and other unsavoury practices.

So in the words of **Saad Choudri**, Chief Commercial Officer, total faith between partners is essential for success.

If you can't trust that partner 100 percent, if you're worried about that partner looking at your code, redeveloping your game or something like that, then you shouldn't even be looking at China. If you are comfortable enough, you should be sharing source code and you should be giving that over to your partner. If you cannot trust them to give source code, then don't bother doing it."

As a result, finding the right partner to extend a release into China can be hard.

But if developers and publishers take their time, it is possible to find a partner who is able to take a game forward.

Martine Spaans of Tamalaki Publishing emphasised that they did not choose to release their game Home Makeover into the territory until they met a publisher who 'got' the experience they'd offer.

At first we tried to find a local partner and they all said, "Oh hidden object games? No they don't work here. We don't want to partner with you." Until this smaller company from Shenzhen reached out to us said, 'We're a specialist in hidden object games. Yes it's true that there is a small market but in China a small market is still quite big in absolute numbers.' So yeah, they were the perfect partner for us."

Furthermore, the right partner will also help a developer to relatively easily overcome regulatory, logistical and technical release challenges.

Tom van Dam was able to outline clearly where the benefits of working with a partner can help a developer through his experiences of working on behalf of NetEase.

"For NetEase you could almost say it's an easy task compared to most [to publish in China] because the infrastructure is there. We have a massive amount of internal development - up to about a hundred games a year. And then of course we work with all the Android channels. We generate a ton of revenue for them so we have very, very good relationships there...Having those relationships in place, being intimately familiar with the rules and regulations that are in the market. It's really just a standard process for us that we have to follow and it's pretty stable."

And while there is an element of NetEase attempting to demonstrate its suitability as a potential publishing partner, the core point stands: a plugged in partner will help you circumvent many of the challenges in the area.

Localisation – adapting to Chinese culture and habits

Once developers have overcome the logistical and technical challenges of distribution though, the final major challenge emerges in its stead: adapting the game to suit the tastes and behaviour of Chinese consumers.

Before we go into the way that many games change their designs, it's worth highlighting one genre that doesn't need to adapt much to the Chinese market: hyper-casual.

However, this rule applies only to those with tightly defined mechanics and play times. For games with distinct art styles, reams of text or detailed lore, changes will have to be made to suit the tastes of Chinese players.

And while it may not seem as a significant challenge as Chinese regulatory challenges, **Robby Yung**, CEO of Animoca Brands, which has published hundreds of games into the Chinese market, says otherwise.

"Forget regulation. The changes over the last year don't make China much harder to publish in because it was already really hard in the first place! [Publishing in China] is similar to publishing in any market that requires a lot of localisation."

But what are the precise challenges within the localisation process that developers can find hard to overcome? Aside from the usual challenges of effective translation, three major challenges stand out in the Chinese market.

The first is that Chinese players have different expectations when it comes to the design of their games. As well as favouring specific game mechanics

and genres – such as MMORPGs, MOBAs and hyper - casual games – Chinese customers also have different expectations in areas like user experience and user interface design.

Martine Spaans experienced this with Tamalaki. Upon finding a partner to put Home Makeover into the market, Spaans was given a welter of design changes to make.

"They [our partner] had a full recommendation document of where the buttons should be, and what we should change in the shop, and how the UI should be changed a bit, how the ramp up of the difficulty should be different."

This was echoed by **Herdje Zhou** of Lucky Kat studios. He spotted a key problem with one of his titles in China in terms of its retention and changed the design of it to help it function more effectively.

"We are actually currently looking into it because in our last game we released, Kaiju Rush, we see a lower retention in the Chinese market for example. We are now experimenting to see if we can hold the hands of our Chinese users a bit longer so a more extensive tutorial than the western market to see if that has had any effect at all."

Chinese players expect their games to function in a different way to other titles, whether it's through a greater use of idle mechanics, deeper instructions on how to play or a refreshed user experience.

Additionally – and the second major challenge for localising a game – Chinese consumers also expect games to appeal with Chinese relevant art, character and story design.

In a sense, this is best seen through the lens of Honor of Kings. Tencent's chart topping mobile MOBA is a compelling title, but it's also steeped in Chinese history – with characters based on everything from historic Chinese military figures to Confucius.

And while it is reasonable to say that developers releasing into the market may not need to go quite so far to appeal to Chinese consumers, tweaks to creative, characters and art can have a positive impact on local players.

Allison Bilas highlighted an example of how this works with a game that they published into the market in early 2019 called Fluffy Fall in the West.

"It was launched in October 2018 and it had success in Western markets and when we met with What Games at PocketGamer in Helsinki, we knew we could take this game into China and have some success if we just changed it slightly. We added new fluffy characters to it, we changed the name, we did the culturalisation side. We localised some of the content to the New Year celebration which just happened as well. All of the things were basically tailoring it slightly for the market."

Other developers also made artistic or cultural changes to their games too. **Jon Hare** at Tower Studios secured the license for Chinese Super League players for Sociable Soccer through his publisher, allowing the game to feature leading players.

And **Ben Murch** from Perchang had an interesting experience with the Chinese App Store team, which bore out the need to adapt art styles to succeed in the West."

> *"We got an email from the Chinese App Store team telling us that they were going to feature Warhammer Quest. We put together feature art for it, but they helped us localise it by telling us to go for a hand drawn feel rather than our usual design style in the store assets."*

So mobile games released into the Chinese market need to adapt their visual style to the market as well as their user experience. But there's one final – and difficult – change developers need to make to their games: adapting its monetisation approach.

Research from GameAnalytics released in the summer of 2018 indicated that Chinese players are 20% less likely to convert compared to the rest of the world and that their average transaction is less than the rest of the world. But it also showed two interesting differences that explain why China is such an attractive market.

First, the average player who does spend spends more often than global consumers. This means that Chinese consumers will spend little and often, giving developers a strong platform to build on as their spend grows in the market.

And second, the highest spending Chinese players spend more than the highest spenders in the rest of the world. This shows that at the top end of China's market that there is money flushing around for businesses to tap into.

This is why developers need to change their monetisation approaches to make the most of China. In an

interesting development, our interviewees from Mattel/NetEase, YoDo1 and JoyPac all mentioned that they helped partners adapt their monetisation approaches for the market.

But what were those all important changes that they recommended? **Tom van Dam** at Mattel emphasised the importance of developing a live operations team to serve the Chinese market; **Allison Bilas** at JoyPac highlighted that the "willingness to watch ads" is different to the global norm; **Ethan Collins** at YoDo1 spoke about how the company uses bundles and subscription models (the latter a norm of China's highly popular MMORPGs) to monetise.

In short, releasing in China requires a lot of changes. But those shifts could allow a game to resonate successfully with users who spend regularly and increasingly highly – opening up a route to long-term success in the market.

Is it worth releasing your game in China?

The key question asked to all interviewees was whether it was worth releasing in China. The answer to that question, as with any such question, is 'it depends'. Ethan Collins summarised the overall state of the market neatly.

"I think a lot of it depends on the game and the game mechanics itself. There are some projects that just simply won't vibe as well with Chinese users and gamers as they do their western counterparts. It's really about finding the right games, with the right mechanics, and the right art styles, that can really resonate and if you have some of the basics there it's all about your optimising them for a specific Chinese audience."

However, amongst the interviewees for this project, there were a couple of interesting findings about whether China was worth it that divided between the two preferred release strategies.

Surprisingly, and importantly, the "set and forget" approach on iOS provided consistently strong returns for developers.

Despite the overall simplicity of the approach, developers releasing localised games solely onto iOS in China reported the following positive responses:

» **Ben Murch** at Perchang said that China was the second biggest market for Warhammer Quest.

» **Seb Burnett** of Rumpus Animation said that the Chinese market was slightly smaller for Bertram Fiddle, but that it was the company's third largest iOS market.

» **Herdje Zhou** reported that China accounted for over 50% of Lucky Kat's overall revenues on the App Store.

This is a vital conclusion for developers and publishers to pay attention to. While China is rightfully seen as a challenging market to enter, even a relatively basic release strategy for an iOS game into the market appears to have a strong chance of delivering a reasonable return for companies.

This establishes the concept that the App Store can be seen as a safe bridgehead into the territory for smaller businesses. While it's reasonable to say that many of the developers listed run (or ran) relatively small businesses, China appears to be a viable market for companies focused on iOS releases.

For Android releases, however, the story is a bit different. Once developers have set themselves adrift from the relative safety of the App Store, the complicated and fragmented nature of the Chinese ecosystem led to differing opinions on its viability.

Responses on the quality of performance within the wider market ranged much more widely than on iOS:

» **Nicoll Hunt**, then an independent developer releasing a free to play game called MAXIMUM CAR into the Chinese market with the help of iDreamSky (now at Space Ape), reported that releasing into the market was "certainly a profitable endeavour, and more than recouped the time and effort spent preparing it for launch."

» **Martine Spaans** said that Tamalaki "learned a lot" but implied that the experience did not deliver the financial returns that the company expected it to.

» **Saad Choudri** described Miniclip's release of 8 Ball Pool in China as "an interesting endeavour, but overall the opportunity didn't pay off in the way that we wanted it to."

So, how can we explain the discrepancies? While it's hard to draw too many conclusions from a small sample size, a consistent theme to emerge from the conversations with developers who took to Android was managing expectations.

While none of the developers went in believing that success would be easily achieved in China, the size of the market and the implied riches that lie within can lead developers into believing they will do much better there than expected.

This is partly down to the way the Chinese market is dominated by big players. Tencent and NetEase's dominance over the domestic ecosystem has helped grow the size of the market significantly, but it means that most international publishers will struggle to get traction if they are not under the wing of one of the giants.

But as **Ethan Collins** mentioned, it's clear that any combination of the wrong game, the wrong release strategy, the wrong mechanics and the wrong marketing approach can sink even the biggest of publishers.

This means that companies stepping beyond the safety of the App Store must ensure their game meets Chinese consumers in the middle. Otherwise, it is much harder to deliver a return.

Conclusion

China's market size in terms of both players and revenue is an enticing proposition for mobile game developers. And for developers who are operating a small team with an iOS first strategy, it is possible to take a low cost "set and forget" approach and see a reasonable return on investment.

But for those wanting to make a real fist of fighting into the Chinese market, it is impossible to understate

the importance of finding the right partner.

Over half of the people interviewed for this project emphasised the importance of finding a local partner to help businesses both navigate the logistical nightmare of the territory and to make necessary quality of life changes to the game.

In particular, developers wishing to step into China's broader mobile landscape will need to find a partner (or partners) who can do the following:

Manage the technical, logistical and regulatory aspects of delivering a game through the Chinese android app stores (and to integrate with domestic social media networks, advertising partners, etc).

Advise or lead upon the creation/adaptation of game mechanics, user interface design and artistic direction to adapt the game for Chinese user tastes.

Adapt monetisation design to ensure that in app purchase costs, advertising placements and other mechanics fit the nature of either regular low spending consumers or China's thriving big spending ecosystem.

These conclusions, in a sense, should not come as much of a surprise. But their importance is worth stating all the same. Developers and publishers are right to see China as a potentially game changing market. But it is also right to view the riches on offer as elusive or illusory.

This is not to be pessimistic. Instead, it is to be pragmatic. The road to China is a hard one to follow. But if a developer or publisher is able to work with the right guide, then it is possible to find your own way to success within the biggest market in the world.

About Mintegral

Mintegral is one of the leading mobile advertising platforms in Asia. Driven by AI technology it provides user acquisition and monetization solutions to advertisers and mobile developers worldwide.

Mintegral brings together the Eastern and Western markets for mobile games and apps, simplifying the challenge of cross-regional mobile app marketing. Mintegral leverages rewarded video, native video, 3D video, playable ads and other interactive creatives to help improve engagement rates and drive higher ROI.

With unmatched expertise in launching and marketing apps in the APAC region, Mintegral is already helping thousands of app developers and publishers bridge the gap between the East and West.

Mintegral International Ltd is headquartered in Beijing, China, with offices in the US, Europe, India and Japan. Find out more at www.mintegral.com.

Contributor Profile



Tom van Dam

NetEase/Mattel163
Head of Publishing & Partnerships

With 10 years in China's game industry, Tom has an in-depth understanding of the East-West divide in the world of games. At NetEase he has been responsible to bring global blockbuster games ranging from Minecraft to Cookiejam to World of Tanks to the Chinese market. Now he's primarily focused on heading global publishing and partnerships at NetEase/Mattel joint-venture Mattel163, including the publishing of UNO!, one of Facebook's most popular and high-earning Instant Games.



Simon Sparks

Splendy
(now Polymotion)
Head of Talent

Simon is the head of talent at Polystream, a role he has been in since November 2018. Polystream enables games and 3D applications to be cost-effectively streamed with unrivalled reach and unprecedented scale. It recently received $12 million in investment led by Intel Capital.

Simon has a background in game development, and was CEO and co-founder of Splendy Games until the studio ceased operations due to lack of funds.



Jon Hare

Tower Studios
Founder

With 30 years of experience in the games industry Jon Hare is one of Europe's best known creative directors and game designers with over 10 international number one games to his name, including "Sensible World of Soccer" the most influential European developed game of all time according to Stanford University.

Jon co-founded and managed legendary 1980s and 90s development company Sensible Software, creating games such as Sensible Soccer, Cannon Fodder and Wizball to great critical acclaim and commercial success.

More recently he has held senior posts with two of the UK's biggest games developer/ publishers Codemasters and Jagex and worked with developers across Europe on numerous titles, both as a consultant and via his design and publishing company Tower Studios which has had numerous hit games including Speedball 2 Evolution and Sociable Soccer.

Jon is also a visiting Professor at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, a regular Chairman of juries for BAFTA Games awards and a frequent mentor for BAFTA, UKIE and NESTA, as well as being a regular speaker at Global Games industry events and universities around the World.



Cassia Curran

Jagex
Head of Business Development

Cassia Curran is the head of business development at Jagex, leading the outreach to external studios as the company seeks investment and partnership opportunities. Cassia had been with Chinese publisher NetEase for five years before joining Jagex, home to the living world of Runescape.



Ethan Collins

Yodo1
Head of Global Marketing

Ethan is a head of global marketing for Yodo1 games to spearheaded global marketing efforts for titles including Rodeo Stampede, a game which has reached over 100 Million downloads worldwide. Ethan is an experienced business development & marketing manager with a track history of working in the video games industry.

Ethan also is the global operations director for KTplay and in-game community and live ops platform used across Yodo1's portfolio, as well as by companies like Flare Games, WB Games, Hutch, LBC studios and many more. KTplay provides developers a means to aggregate, interact with, and influence their top players in a community right inside their mobile game.



Martine Spaans

Tamalaki
Owner

Martine has been an avid gamer all her life. Naturally, she started her career in online gaming in 2006 and has since worked for Dutch developer Spil Games and gaming industry giant Ubisoft. Over the years, she has worked with more than 1000 developers and has taught herself a good understanding of gamers needs, becoming an expert in the field of game design for women.

In 2013, Martine started her own company, Tamalaki Publishing. Tamalaki works with game developers from around the world to bring the best casual games to mobile.



Xavier Carrillo-Costa

Digital Legends
CEO and Founder

Xavier Carrillo-Costa has over 15 years experience in the video games industry where he has served as CEO, executive producer and development director.

He has been leading Digital Legends to position the company as a leading developer for high quality AAA titles and big franchises for smartphones and connected TV's and as a reference in the creation of Free 2 Play games for midcore audience such as The Respawnables.

Xavier has studied telecommunications engineering at the Polytechnic University of Madrid. He is fluent in Spanish, French and English and has some knowledge in German and Mandarin.

Xavier is also one of the founders and vice president of DEV, Spanish Games Developers Association and of DEVICAT Catalan Games Developers Association and he is an adviser of Gamelab conference.



Allison Bilas

JoyPac Games
Chief Operating Officer

Allison oversees how JoyPac takes mobile games to millions of players in APAC. She has built and led high performing product and analytics teams at PopCap, Electronic Arts, GameAnalytics, and MovieStarPlanet.



Herdjie Zhou

Lucky Kat
Co-founder and Producer

Herdjie Zhou is the Co-Founder of Lucky Kat Studios, a Dutch mobile-first indie game studio. He mainly focuses on business and development and managed to get more than 2 millions installs with their first mobile title, Nom Cat, having no UA budget.



Nicoll Hunt

IFightBears (now Space Ape)
Client Developer

Nicoll has worked on everything from solo teams to 250 person teams, from games with zero budget to titles that cost over $110,000,000 (and destroyed a company in the process). As indie developer alter-ego I Fight Bears he created titles such as Fist of Awesome, Maximum Car and Brew Town. He's quite Scottish.



Seb Burnett

Rumpus Animation
Co-founder, Creative Director, Illustrator

Seb has worked as an illustrator and character designer with international publishers such as Puffin, Usborne, Dorling Kindersly and OUP. Since setting up Rumpus he has directed and designed music videos, short films and commercials with a deft humorous touch and meticulous attention to detail.

Seb is also the mastermind behind Bertram Fiddle, working as a writer, director and designer on the point and click adventure game.



Robby Yung

Animoca Brands
CEO

Robby Yung is the CEO of Animoca Brands, a Hong Kong-based mobile game developer and publisher listed in Australia. He was previously the co-founder and CFO of Redgate Media, co-founder and Chief Strategy Officer of One Media Group and prior to that founder and CEO of One Studio/OSMedia.

Robby began his career at Metro-media (AMEX: MMG) building wireless telecom networks in China and Indonesia.



Saad Choudri

Miniclip
Chief Commercial Officer

Saad joined Miniclip and the mobile games industry after many years in the console and PC world at Sega. He has developed Miniclip's mobile business as the head of the content review team and leading the negotiations on all publishing and licensing deals.

When not working Saad spends time designing and publishing board games, sits on the board of trustees of Wikemedia UK (Wikipedia) and is a qualified solicitor.

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