Mike Gorbunov
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Game Localization Expert

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Localization

Language

This page is also available in Russian. | Эта страница доступна на русском языке.

Personal Profile

Yet Another Localizer

Hi there!

My name is Mikhail, that's an East Slavic equivalent for Michael. Feel free to call me Mike or Misha (yeah, Misha is strictly a male name in Russia, it also means 'bear').

I've been in love with video games since 1994 when I got a(n) NES for my ninth birthday. I also love computers and translation.

I combined all my loves in the early 2000s, and I've been in localization since then.

I started in translation and adaptation of text games in local IRC networks in 2003, then switched to software and ended up doing amateur localization of huge titles like SWAT 4 and Septerra Core at the end of the 2000s.

Most of my colleagues tell me I'm a pro in game localization. I don't know if that's true, but I know that I still love games and translation.

I like building localization teams, bargaining on rates, setting up translation software, tuning work processes and solving issues.

Should you need a helping hand in setting up your game localization, feel free to consult me.

Work Experience
2011 - Present

Head of Localization
December 2017 - Present

Social Quantum Ltd

- Administering linguistic QA projects including creating, planning, and executing test plans and owning bug management;
- Creating and maintaining project plans, schedules and budgets; tracking performance progress against plans;
- Developing profound understanding of assigned games and attaining expertise in localization project management;
- Establishing and managing optimum relationships with industry colleagues by visiting respective sites frequently;
- Evaluating tools and technologies to enable department's strategic goals;
- Heading and directing department initiatives consisting of translation quality, vendor strategy, process improvements and tool improvements;
- Identifying imperative path issues and merging teams of people to solve same;
- Managing and overseeing localization projects lasting from a couple of hours to years;
- Managing every feature of product localization finances involving forecasting and budget analysis;
- Managing multiple, high complexity and technical marketing supporting commercialization for parallel launch with aggressive deadlines and multiple deliverables;
- Overseeing all project plan components, including risk, quality, communication, etc.;
- Partnering with Engineering, Product, Marketing, and Design to coordinate localization of new product/feature launches, marketing releases, and new language launches;
- Reporting project status for upper management;
- Selecting and directing project team members including project managers, engineers, translators and publishers etc;
- Sharing best practices and evangelizing localization efforts.

Localization Project Manager

August 2014 - November 2017

Social Quantum Ltd

- Analyzing game scope and content from localization perspective and, together with the development teams, setting the linguistic guidelines of the projects;
- Continually expanding knowledge and education in localization trends and news;
- Defining the localization format, tools, process and communication flow;
- Developing project plans and workflows, managing time, budget, resources and quality control;
- Facilitating communication of localization requirements, sharing insights, resolving any issues;
- Identifying and solving localization issues or disagreements, whether system or product, identifying causes and performing corrective/preventative action;
- Managing localization projects from beginning to end;
- Managing team's compliance with standards, practices and policies;
- Managing vendor relationships by answering linguistic queries, providing training, and general troubleshooting;
- Monitoring and measuring project team members' work;
- Participating in trainings, webinars and demos of different technologies/applications related to localization and internationalization;
- Providing project specific education and coaching to Localization Tester staff;
- Social and mobile games localization to 12 languages with tens of millions of players;
- Working closely with a team of over 30 language specialists, also with the localization engineers, product managers and developers, other departments and external vendors.

Localization Specialist

June 2013 - July 2014

Social Quantum Ltd

- Continually expanding knowledge and education in localization trends and news;
- Creating/gathering game specific documentation to ease the translation processes of the games;
- Entering any linguistic related bugs, flaws and issues into the database in a clear and concise manner, providing solutions to any issues where required;
- Facilitating communication of localization requirements, sharing insights, resolving any issues;
- Identifying and addressing gaps in content localization processes to ensure high-quality output against process efficiency;
- Identifying and solving localization issues or disagreements, whether system or product, identifying causes and performing corrective/preventative action;
- Managing translated terminologies and style guides for designated language for digital content;
- Managing vendor relationships by answering linguistic queries, providing training, and general troubleshooting;
- Participating in trainings, webinars and demos of different technologies/applications related to localization and internationalization;
- Proactively completing assigned tasks accurately and thoroughly, and within a specified time-frame in order to detect (and subsequently report on a daily basis) localization bugs, software flaws and/or design issues;
- Tracking metrics and schedules, monitoring the workload of language specialists;
- Working closely with a team of over 20 language specialists, also with the localization engineers, product managers and developers, other departments and external vendors;
- Working with external localization vendors and monitoring their progress;

- Working with the quality control team and external partners to test content quality and integration.

Game Designer and Narrative Writer
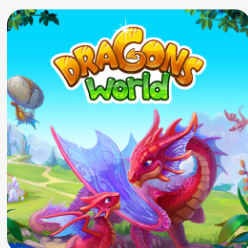December 2011 - May 2013

Social Quantum Ltd

- Adding new game content to game design documents;
- Assisting in writing all text including UI in games (menus, descriptions, etc.);
- Calculating balance of game content;
- Creating and maintaining design documentation, including feature specification and implementation guidelines;
- Creating titles and descriptions for game items and actions;
- Designing and describing simple game mechanics;
- Developing and implementing positive changes to the games based on feedback from QA, consumer insights, senior staff members, and others;
- Establishing initial mock-ups and scribbles for the graphics team;
- Generating content for the Marketing and Customer Support teams including social media scheduling/posting;
- Generating game scripts and storyboards;
- Performing competitor analysis;
- Performing effectively under pressure and meeting deadlines to ensure the game is completed on time;
- Working closely with team members to meet the needs of a project;
- Working directly with artists, programmers and other designers to contribute to the vision of the game;
- Working with game designers to author characters' dialogues that support game design goals.

Key Projects

List of Games

All the games I have worked on in various roles at Social Quantum.

Total volume is over 1.7 million words of source text.
Games in development are not disclosed.

Work Experience
2004 - 2011

Corporate Website Administrator
September 2008 - November 2011

Ivanovo State University

- Converted entire site from .html to Joomla to allow better navigation and maintaining;
- Creating and presenting verbal and written technical information to a non-technical audience;
- Developing content strategy aligned with short-term and long-term education targets;
- Developing site content and graphics by coordinating with copywriters and graphic artists;
- Designing images, icons, banners, audio enhancements, etc;
- Developing site navigation by categorizing content;
- Ensuring compliance with law;
- Establishing locatability by registering with search engines;
- Gathering, analyzing, or documenting user feedback to locate or resolve sources of problems;
- Maintaining site appearance by developing and enforcing content and display standards; editing submissions;
- Planning site design by clarifying goals; designing functionality;
- Protecting site by designing and installing security precautions;
- Providing training or technical assistance in web site implementation or use;
- Updating job knowledge by participating in educational opportunities; reading professional publications; maintaining personal networks;
- Upgrading site by updating content and graphics; monitoring performance and results; identifying and evaluating improvement options; introducing new technology; maintaining links.

Higher Education Lecturer
January 2008 - June 2011

Ivanovo State University

- Assessing students' coursework;
- Carrying out administrative tasks related to the department, such as student admissions, induction programmes and involvement in committees and boards;
- Delivering lectures, seminars and tutorials;
- Designing, preparing and developing teaching materials;
- Developing and implementing new methods of teaching to reflect changes in research;
- Establishing collaborative links outside the university with industrial, commercial and public organisations;

- Representing the institution at professional conferences and seminars, and contributing to these as necessary;
- Setting and marking examinations;
- Supervising students' research activities;
- Supporting students through a pastoral/advisory role;
- Undertaking personal research projects and actively contributing to the institution's research profile;
- Writing up research and preparing it for publication.

Freelance Translator
February 2006 - August 2011

Self-employment

- Consulting with experts in specialist areas;
- Following various translation-quality standards to ensure legal and ethical obligations to the customer;
- Liaising with clients to discuss any unclear points;
- Professional translation for a variety of file types: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF, video subtitles;
- Proofreading and editing final translated versions;
- Providing quotations for translation services offered;
- Reading through original material and rewriting it in the target language, ensuring that the meaning of the source text is retained;
- Researching legal, technical and scientific phraseology to find the correct translation;
- Retaining and developing knowledge on specialist areas of translation;
- Using appropriate software for presentation and delivery;
- Using specialist dictionaries, thesauruses and reference books to find the closest equivalents for terminology and words used;
- Using translation memory software to ensure consistency of translation within documents and help efficiency.

Private English Tutor
October 2004 - December 2010

Self-employment

- Communicating closely with parents to follow up on each student's weekly progress;
- Conducting assessments to analyze students' capabilities and limitations;
- Developing teaching materials such as quizzes or handouts;
- Elevating the language proficiency level of students and preparing them for college entry;
- Encouraging students to read books, including classics and contemporary novels in a bid to help them understand different points of view;
- Helping students in understanding language concepts and their application;
- Preparing children for school tests;
- Preparing classroom materials and assisting with homework assignments;
- Providing feedback to students to make sure that they are aware of the areas that they need to work on;
- Providing feedback to students using positive reinforcement techniques to encourage, motivate, and build confidence;
- Providing students with the communicational skills and cross-cultural differences they need to know for more effective life abroad;
- Teaching children and adults to read, write and speak English.

Key Skills

List of my Abilities

- Ability to use macros or other task automations;

- Ability to work independently and meet deadlines under pressure;
- Advanced, in-depth knowledge of internationalization and localization;
- Appropriate translator selection;
- Budget management skills;
- Cabilities in project planning, resource and risk management;
- Experience working with software developers in an Agile/Scrum environment;
- Familiarity with CAT and Translation Management tools;
- Finding and selecting the resources best suited for a project;
- Interest in new technologies and new tools;
- Organizational and leadership skills;
- Presentation/communication skills;
- Problem-solving capabilities;
- Proficiency in word processing, project management, and communication tools;
- Quality and detail-oriented;
- Strong team player in a multi-language/multi-cultural environment;
- Verbal and written English communication skills.

Tech Skills

I'm Familiar with

- ABBYY Aligner
- ABBYY FineReader
- ABBYY Lingvo
- ABBYY PDF Transformer+
- ABBYY Screenshot Reader
- Asana
- Compare It!
- Confluence
- ContentQuo
- Crowdin
- CSS
- g11n
- Google Docs
- Google Sheets
- Grammarly
- HTML
- i18n
- Joomla
- L10n
- L12y
- LibreOffice
- Linguistic corpora
- Linguee
- memoQ
- Memsource
- Microsoft Office
- Multilizer
- Notepad++
- Paint.NET
- POEditor
- Redmine
- Resource Hacker
- Restorator
- Reverso Context
- SDL Passolo
- SDL Trados
- Sisulizer
- Smartcat
- t9n
- Verifika
- WinHex
- Wordpress

Education

Ivanovo State University
2008-2011

Postgraduate education

Doctoral degree in Philology: Speciality 10.02.04 - Germanic Languages

Ivanovo State University
2003-2008

Tertiary education

Philologist, Teacher of English

School 30 (Ivanovo)
1992-2003

Secondary education

School that provides profound courses in English language

CV in PDF

Printable version

You can download the printable version of my CV in PDF format by using this link.