

Motivations of Game Jam Organizers

Case of Finnish Game Jam Community

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we examine the motivations and experiences of game jam organizers in Finland. For the purpose of the study, 13 game jam organizers were interviewed in 2018 - 2019. We found that motivations for organizing game jams are diverse but interlinked and can be roughly divided into six categories: Community Building, Community Driven, Education, Passion for Organizing, Supporting Creative Culture and Work Driven. Further, we noted that many organizers end up in their position through happenstance rather than actively looking for the role.

CCS CONCEPTS

- Applied computing → Computer games

KEYWORDS

Game design, game jam organizers, game jams, games, volunteering, motivation, intermediaries

INTRODUCTION

Game jams have become a regular part of game development cultures around the world. The biggest single event impacting the current state has been Global Game Jam (GGJ), which was founded in 2009 as a collaboration between Danish and American game scholars. In 2009, GGJ gathered 1650 participants from 53 countries, while in 2019 the numbers are exponential: 47 008 jammers in 113 countries, in 860 different locations [11].

Global Game Jam is not the only game jam that bring game makers together and enable meaningful experiences. As an online equivalent of GGJ, Ludum Dare (LD) has been attracting participants to create games since 2002 as a game development

competition, and as a jam since 2010 [17]. Even though these two jams are big and well known among the game jam communities, the current culture of game jamming includes wide variety of events run by individuals, institutions and companies. The time constraint of game jams varies from 1h to a month (or more) and they are organized in various ways and for different reasons [15].

GGJ and other game jams have been important part of the Finnish game development communities since 2010. First GGJ was run in Finland in 2010 with three different locations in three cities: Kajaani, Tampere and Helsinki. The growth of the participation of GGJ in Finland has been following the growth of GGJ in general: in 2019, there were almost 1000 participants jamming in 26 different locations in Finland [19], which is ten times more than in 2010.

The organizers of Finnish GGJ sites have been game scholars, game developers and game educators; some have done the site organizing as part of their jobs, some as individuals passionate on the development of game creator communities. From the active collaboration between the Finnish GGJ organizers, a non-profit organization, Finnish Game Jam (FGJ) was born in 2013. The non-profit was a result of active collaboration between 2010 and 2013: the GGJ site organizers in Finland were sharing resources and regularly meeting online for facilitating organizing practices.

As a result, FGJ as an organization has been responsible for coordinating the GGJ events in Finland since its founding year. FGJ acts as a back force for regional GGJ organizer in Finland, and all GGJ sites share a common brand of FGJ. The national organization is used to strengthen the local community and supporting events, for example by acquiring national sponsors to fund t-shirts, stickers and other offerings and support for the events. On top of this, FGJ also organizes a wide variety of game jams and other events annually in Finland including such titles as Quantum Game Jam, ASM Game Jam, Pocket Jam, Jam Jam Festival, Finnish Game Jam Awards and various one-off jams with different agenda and collaborators [6].

FGJ is not the only organization supporting game making cultures in Finland. Finnish game development community is quite active and there are several organizations fostering the communities. For

instance, there are 12 International Game Developers Association (IGDA) hubs around Finland; the oldest of them is in Helsinki, and it was registered as a non-profit independent organization already in 2003 [12]. Many game jam organizers in Finland are also part of the IGDA community, and it is typical that in smaller cities the mediators of the community are only handful of people, often only one active lead working on various roles for the community and intermediaries.

In this article, we are interested in what motivates the Finnish game jam organizers to volunteer in organizing work and what kind of experiences they have had with their personal journeys. These experiences are then reflected through previous literature on game jams and volunteer motivations.

PREVIOUS LITERATURE

As an evolving area of academic interest, game jams have been commented on, researched from different angles and used as a platform for varying studies (e.g. [7, 8]).

There exists a body of literature touching jammer motivations for participating in game jams [e.g. 20, 21, 23]. For example, Preston et al. [20] found out that the majority of game jammers participate because they want to advance their skills, network in their field and to understand the game development process better. Further, they argue that attending game jams have a correlation for academic performance of the jammers, although the direction of the correlation is unclear. Learning is both a motivation for participating in game jams [20] and the outcome of the jams [18], and in general, game jams are noted to have several benefits for learning [1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 14].

However, there is little to none existing literature on the motivations of game jam organizers. Although organizing a game jam will fall to some extent under the same motivations as participating them (often the organizers do take part in jamming), setting-up an event requires more work and commitment than jamming in one. As such, the underlying motivations for organizing the event might be different for participating in one.

In her paper on design values of game jam organizers, Kultima [15] lists respondents' main reasons for organizing Global Game Jam 2018 in Finland. "Promoting the community or some other issues" was the main reason (9 responses), while "organizing as a part of the work" or "passion towards game jams" were almost as important (8 responses both). The motivational aspects of game jam organizing are touched only superficially, as the focus of the study was on game design values. However, the study shows that there is variation between the underlying reasons for someone to embark on a volunteering journey.

Although game design values can also help in understanding the organizer motivations, game jams are never just about developing games. Facilitating the social atmosphere and putting up the site requires other kind of skills apart from game development. Game

jams are organized for various purposes and the overlaying motivation for organizing them are sometimes evident. Fowler et al. [9] have divided game jams into six categories by their organizing philosophies: Regional affiliation, Setting, Technology, Career Advancement, Social / charitable topics and Challenge. The categorization hints about the possible underlying motivations for organizing the jams. For example, regional affiliation can be seen supporting local game jam community, while unusual setting, like train or bus, hints that the organizers wish to offer spectacular experiences for the jammers, while also collecting social capital on the larger game jam scene. However, we cannot tell much about the personal motivations of the organizers through this approach.

Game jam organizers are most often volunteers, who organize jams for their local communities like schools, game development companies or societies e.g. IGDA chapters. Game jam communities, like GGJ or FGJ, do not normally pay for the organizers to set-up a site. Although organizers might do this as part of their work responsibilities (as game educators, co-work staff, or for instance HR people of game companies), thus effectively being paid for organizing, there is often non-paid volunteers helping on the sites. Even if game jams were organized as a work task, organizing is primarily volunteering. Indeed, it has been noted, that volunteering is hard to define as volunteers are a heterogeneous group with varying motivations, working in numerous different kinds organizations [4]. Employers might support volunteering, but as events like GGJ are non-profit, even if companies do partake in them, organizing mostly resembles volunteering instead of paid work.

Although altruism is an important motivation in volunteering, there are more egoistic motivations as well, such as collecting social capital or to advance one's career. Employers also support, and sometimes require, volunteering, which suggests motivations are not always altruistic. [4] In their review of volunteering literature, Bussell and Forbes [4] present 10 elements in understanding volunteering motivations: Volunteering process, Corporate volunteering, Altruism, Community benefits, Benefiting voluntary organization, Family benefits, Affiliation needs, Skills development, Gain prestige and Religious beliefs. However, the motivations for volunteering are diverse, and despite a large body of research (cf. [4, 16]) there is little consensus on the volunteer motivations

METHOD AND DATA

Thirteen Finnish game jam organizers were interviewed on their motivations for organizing game jams, and the practical issues concerning the jam organizing. Interviews were conducted in the period of October 2018 and February 2019. Participants were active organizers or assistant organizers of game jam events around Finland, and all of them had either current or previous experience as a main organizer of Global Game Jam event(s). The age of the organizers varied between 25 and 39 years, with a median 34. Eleven interviews were conducted in Finnish, which is the native language of the interviewees, while two interviews were conducted

in English. The gender of the interviewees was not inquired but based on the names there was 5 female and 6 male organizers.

Interviewees were contacted via their contact information in the GGJ 2018 site announcement on the FGJ website [5], or via personal network of the first author. In here, it is good to note, that the two authors have been active members of the Finnish Game Jam community by helping in or in charge of organizing various game jam events in Finland for several years. Insider research has its benefits, such as shared language with the informants, trust towards the researcher and possibility to achieve deeper understanding of the phenomenon, but the researcher should be careful with the risk of bias the situation might cause [13]. This was taken into consideration in the study.

The interviewees had organized game jams in 11 different cities or regions in Finland. Two had organized separate Global Game Jam sites in the same city in different years, and two had acted as the local site organizers with main responsibility towards GGJ organization in the same city in consecutive manner. Twelve interviewees had previously acted as a responsible Site Organizer for GGJ sites, while one was preparing to do so in 2019. The interviewees were chosen on the basis that they had experience acting as the responsible organizer, although many had been helping in various jams while not in charge of the site.

The background of the interviewees varied, although leaned towards education. Six of them were educators working in higher education, one of these being a researcher with a little bit of educational experience and another one doubling as a game developer. Three interviewees were students in higher education during the time they started organizing game jams and were later working as game developers. Two interviewees were working in the game development field and one in a field related to game development. Altogether, the data conveys diverse set of organizers and (GGJ) jam locations around the country, allowing the comparison of local organizing cultures around Finland.

The interviews were semi-structured thematic interviews, and the themes were formulated by analyzing a set of 26 guidelines for game jam organizers. The guidelines took various forms, e.g. blog posts, research papers, booklets or forum posts. The main categories of the interview were: preparations needed before a game jam, activities conducted during the jam, jam participants, security issues, social interaction during jams, activities conducted past jam, problems encountered in organizing and what the interviewee considered missing in Finnish game jam scene. Each interview took more or less one hour, and transcriptions of each interview were produced for analysis purposes.

The analysis process was a form of thematic analysis [3] influenced by qualitative content analysis [22]. First, the transcriptions were read through and the body of data was sliced into smaller chunks. This structure was formulated using two interviews from the data sets. The initial sub-codes were then created on these two

interviews. At this point, the coding scheme was reviewed by other researcher, and adjustment were made based on the feedback. Main categories were then applied to the full body of data. From this point onward, the process was iterative one, following the basic line of creating sub-codes under the main categories. The sub-codes were further iterated during the process. In the end, several categories emerged out of the data. For the purposes of this study, only those relating to the organizer motivations and the way they entered in organizing were utilized.

RESULTS

In this section, we will open the results of thematic analysis of thirteen interviews. For the sake of this study, only relevant parts of the comprehensive data set were used. As the reasons for starting to organize game jams is inherently tied to the motivations, we will first go through various motivations for organizing, after which we will open up how organizers entered organizing game jams.

Motivations for Organizing Game Jams

Although several interviewees had organized smaller game jams during the years, most of the time they were talking about organizing annual GGJ events. This is the biggest event of the year in Finland, and in many cases, other game jams were mentioned being smaller jams which were organized only for the local community. Interestingly, GGJ was often the first jam for the organizer, especially for those who started organizing several years ago when the jams were less popular.

Different motivations for organizing can be divided into six categories: Community building, Community Driven, Education, Passion for Organizing, Supporting Creative Culture and Work Driven. These categories are overlapping, and a single organizer can have views expressed on several categories for organizing game jams. The numbers in parentheses after each sub-header indicate the number of interviews the motivation was prevalent. It must be considered, however, that for example an educator might have mentioned the work as the initial motivation instead of education.

Community Building (8/13)

One of the main drivers for the interviewees to engage in game jam organizing was to build and support the local game development community. This was also one of the main reasons for starting to organize game jams in the area: the game development (and jam) community might have been non-existent at the time, or the organizer wished to develop the local ecosystem further through organizing jams.

“It is more about the community building: to get folks activated, showing up on the spot and to talk with other people, so they don’t need to just sit alone in their closets. In effect it’s the community I organize jams for.” (I12)

This type of reasoning shows altruistic motivations for organizing game jams. The organizer wants to offer something for the local community and is willing to spend their time for doing so.

Interviewees also mainly spoke of getting into the game development community, not into the game jam community, as the reason for starting jam organizing. This is understandable, as in many cases, there was not game jam community to speak of at the time when they started organizing game jams:

“If you want to build the game activities in the area, for example drawing in more professional expertise, I see somehow game jams as the lowest level participatory experience to game making” (I3)

Here the organizer sees game jams as a grass-root level activity that could be utilized in building the professional community. Interestingly, the same interviewee, when asked what was missing from the jam scene, brought out the lack of game companies in the local community:

“It happens to be so, that companies are already in on those big cities, but for example here [---], here there isn't that many game companies, so they don't show in our jam thing much at all.” (I3).

Together these comments give the impression, that there is a wish that organizing game jams, they can carry their share of the load in building the local game development ecosystem. In some regions that was the initial motivation for the interviewee to start organizing game jams. This interviewee was not mentioning education as the motivation per se, although, as the organizer did work in the field of education this might be the underlying motivation here as well.

Another element of community building present in the data is networking. Although networking might have also been a personal incentive for the interviewee to get into the game industry or to advance their career, it was also an important element in bringing like-minded people together:

“And then also this kind of networking element, that we could engage other game hobbyists in addition to the students, allowing us to shuffle the deck by bringing in professionals and also from other schools people who are interested in games, and so on” (I8).

Although there exist several game related communities even in the same region, there might be little interaction between them. Game jams as a networking event can bring these communities in contact and potentially help developing the local game ecosystem.

Community Driven (11/13)

In some situations, community is not as much a goal as it is a driver and an inspiration for the organizer. Being part of the community can motivate to start organizing game jams, or there might be social pressure involved. The community does not have to be a jam community, it can be an educational organization, game development community, work related community etc. Indeed, often the seeds for organizing game jams in certain area are sowed in other communities:

“There is such a gang, who were bit more interested in making games than just sitting in lectures and such. Just hanging out in the space. From that group, the one who was least bad at organizing was me.” (I5).

In this, there might have been peer pressure to organize jams. The interviewee above is speaking about the year 2010 when the Finnish game jam community was taking its initial steps, so there was not that many organizers around in any case. There is also personal motivation to learn game development, as is often the case with jammers as well.

As game jams have gotten more popular, there have been interest in various professional communities to organize jams of their own. This is also reflected in the data:

“What is your motivation for organizing game jams?”

“Probably being some kind of a fool, but I have been an active gamer, let's put it this way. I don't even know how to make games myself, I have mainly played a lot and as such I was pretty much the only one in the (company) who had any understanding on the world of games, and that's how I ended up there” (I4)

In this answer, there is also present the supposition, that it requires certain kind of personality to take up the role of an organizer. Something that is emphasized by the point that the organizer had no previous experience on game development. Interest in gaming and the pressure from the professional community were the main motivators for becoming an organizer.

In some cases, already established jam communities are looking for new organizers as for various reasons the previous one has given up organizing or wishes to do so. In these cases, the social pressure might be driving force to get into organizing - the final push - even if there was some initial interest in organizing to start with. Someone from the community might ask the person to take the role:

“It actually wasn't my idea. I was asked to do it, would I do it, since there was no one else from the (city) at that point to do it who was willing at least” (I1)

This might further act as an entry point for the organizer into the game jam community, as they engage with other organizers via network like Finnish Game Jam. The game jam community, or game jam organizer community, then replaces the initial community as a motivator to keep into organizing.

“It started bit through a forced obligation back in 2015, as I was asked to organize Global Game Jam, and I was like oh well, I will do it. [---] And then, through a good community it became such a mousetrap, let's say, such an inspiration about doing it, that hey, this is nice, I could keep on doing this!” (I2)

In this answer, the positive experience in participating in the community gives organizer the motivation for keep on doing it in the future as well.

Education (4/13)

Most of the Finnish game jams, like game jams in general, are closely related to education. Game jams are organized in educational institutions, jammers are often students and jams are used growingly for educational purposes. Considering this, it is not

surprising that education is one motivation for organizing game jams. However, it is important to note that not all of the organizers who worked as a teacher or were otherwise engaged with educational organization, mentioned education as their primary motivation for organizing.

Education was mentioned as a motivation especially in the areas, where there is a gap in games education. It was seen as a grass-roots level introduction to game making. The underlying thought seemed to be, that by introducing game jams in the area, it might work as a way to promote game making in the local educational institutions as well:

“(As) we don’t have game development education in the area, we wanted to some way start advancing the idea that it is needed as well, and game jams were a very good way to start introduce people into making games” (I4)

In this location, the game jams were also more focused on education than in some other places. While some organizers described having lightweight approach to organizing, by offering a venue for jammers without many extra activities, in this site there was also tradition to organize peer-learning workshops during the jams to support the lacking game education:

“Okay, so you always have these educational sessions?”

“Yes, if someone wants such, we have definitely organized one, because that is the way to build know-how, as we don’t have the education here. This helps in that matter.” (I4)

In places where there was existing game education, jams were seen as a way to support the formal education. Game jams were described entailing the full game development process in a condensed form. In addition, the media value game jams might have been also considered as a possibility to advertise the game education in the hosting organization:

“As we knew about this kind of opportunity, that jams have been organized elsewhere, we felt it is an event that supports the education, and also makes people more aware that we have game education here. [---] It is also bit of an image factor.” (I8)

In the above case the jam site was organized in a small location - a place that people might not even assume a formal game education track exists. The organizer in question also talked about the problems informing local media of the event and how there might be a need to put more effort into it to get more visibility.

Some organizers were not educators when they first started organizing game jams. However, they still had the educational motive for doing so, as they saw game jams as a tool for self-education:

“There is such a group, who were bit more interested in making games than just sitting in lectures and such.” (I5)

This interviewee considers game jams as an option for more theoretically oriented studies. It is a way for students who are eager

to get into game development to practice their skills in action. This is something that was mentioned also from the teacher’s perspective to be inspirational in organizing game jams:

“You see concretely how they learn while doing” (I3)

In general, for the interviewed educators game jams were a way to promote and support the game education, but also inspirational in a sense that you can see students actually learning in a very short timeframe.

Passion for Organizing (4/13)

Another motivation that is more related to the personality of the organizer, rather than practical benefits game jams can offer, is the passion for organizing events in general. This was especially present in cases where organizer was asked to take up the role instead of coming up with the idea themselves. In addition to supporting education or local community, organizers get personal satisfaction in organizing game jams.

“It wasn’t my idea but, when asked I really wanted to do it [---] I like organizing stuff in any case” (I1)

The fact that many of the organizers had been organizing game jams several years already also hints that they do get personal enjoyment out of the organizing. They might be organizing other kind of community events as well, for example through IGDA Finland. Although they might mention it being an accident they end up as organizers, it seems some people have a habit of organizing various kind of events:

“I always end up organizing stuff. Yet again, it is not just me. We are working together of course with a bunch of fellow local idiots who are doing this along, so basically people who share the passion to do something together and organize these things for others.” (I10)

Although the interviewee above mentions organizing being a group effort with likeminded people engaging it together, all having the passion for doing it, still the main organizer is often the same person.

Supporting Creative Culture (7/13)

A wish to promote creative culture and to offer an event where people can create games in a relaxed atmosphere trying out their limits was also one driver for game jam organizers. This category reflects the values of the organizers, as they consider creative events something that are worth supporting. Organizing game jams allows them to act concretely on their values.

A curiosity of what kind of outcomes jammers manage to create with the given constraints seemed to be one key element in this. In addition, the creativity in itself was considered a positive thing, something that is worth supporting. There seemed to be even some kind of sense of wonder how jammers manage to create interesting games in such a short time frame.

“You see very concretely how it is possible to come up with interesting things and different perspectives of the same given topic in 48 hours. [---] It is nice to organize

an event where participants are creative and innovative.”
(I3)

Organizers also seem to enjoy the creative do-it-yourself atmosphere of game jams. For some, this might be quite different what they are doing in their daily jobs. Although organizing jams, and jamming as well, can be tiring, it is refreshing in a sense that one can do something completely different for a weekend, even in the case that organizers might be working in the business side of games.

“It’s the atmosphere, there is such a spirit of happening. It differs a lot, to what I do at work. It feels stupid to say this, but it is more creative event where you can think out of the box and do such projects you could not do at work”
(I9)

In addition to jammers, the organizers need to be creative. As the basic elements of game jams often stay in place and have little variation, there is a need for creativity in order to keep one motivated for keep on organizing. Changing the way social exercises are organized and coming up with escapades during the jams keeps it refreshing for the organizers as well.

“You should always be sensitive enough and be able to re-invent yourself. You should not stick on the same old, as there is the danger of growing bored of it. [---] Variation is always good in this.” (I13)

Creativity is seen motivating in itself, but it is also seen valuable to support events where game makers can use their creativity to let of steam in projects that for one reason or another cannot be conducted during the work life.

Work Driven (4/13)

Considering how many of the organizers are working in the game business or in education, it is not surprising that organizing game jams is also done as a part of the work. In some cases, the initial motivation to start organizing game jams comes from the work life as the organizer have been tasked to game jam organizing. The organizer can also introduce game jams as part of their work within their workplaces. Most distinct cases in this category are those where the organizer is paid salary for organizing game jams and other developer events.

“In my previous job, I ran local incubator for higher education, so we organized those in that context” (I13)

Even if organizing jams cannot be considered officially a work task of the employee, the employer of the organizer might be supportive towards the activity and allow using company or organization resources indirectly while putting up a game jam site, for example by organizing jams in addition to other work tasks. This is especially case in work environments that have more self-orienting cultures. Getting jammers into the company site can also be considered as a marketing act:

“Quite a lot of recruitment marketing gets done at the same time, as well as employer image building” (I11)

Most clearly, the benefits of game jams are seen in the game development business, internal game jams might be used to generate new ideas, or partaking into public jams is considered as recruitment possibility or a recreational event for the employees allowing working with weird game projects that would not be possible otherwise:

“This fun part, this get-together with fellow devs, and just jam around, to actually tackle certain challenge, let’s say like quantum physics for example. [---] And then of course there is the business side of it that basically you can create a commercial product out of something that comes out of the jam.” (I10)

Game jams also offer outsider organizations a possibility for keeping up with the latest trends in game culture and networking with game development scene. All of the interviewees who organized a jam site as part of the work also mentioned that they do have a personal interest towards game development as well. As such, organizing jams offers a possibility for them to combine work duties with personal interests:

“Of course, my employer obligates me, or it is part of my work tasks, but there is also personal interested behind it, to keep up to date” (I6)

The difference in this category and the Community Driven is that organizing game jams is actual part of the job and the interviewee has become as organizer by working in a certain place where there was an incentive to organize game jams.

Becoming an Organizer

The experiences of Finnish game jam organizers reflect the fact, that although there are several reasons for taking up the role of a game jam organizer, the interviewees have often ended up as an organizer through a happenstance rather than been actively planning to do so.

“The way you end up as the organizer of the jams is pretty much an accident, to my opinion.” (I5)

One of the main reasons for this was that there was no one else in the region who was willing to take the role, although there was interest to participate on game jams. This was especially the case when there had been game jams organized in the area previously, and a local jamming community had been formed.

“People just want it done; kind of just want to have it.”
(I1)

There seems to be different paths in becoming a game jam organizer present in the data. The first is through pioneering – those who felt that there was something missing in their local community or wanted to start building one in the first place. For these people the reasoning seemed to be that they had to do it, as no one else will:

“And at the time the game development bustle was in such early stages, that I thought that I have to do something for that” (I13)

The other way for entering the jam organizer role was to be part of a community and to be in a certain place at a certain time. The role of the local main organizer is inherited from the previous main figure of the local scene. This often involves helping in several events during the years. There seems to be different approaches to this, but local organizers can have quite holistic approach to organizing, although one person acts as the face for the local scene and takes the main responsibility to get everything done. As such new main organizers often have expertise on the local habits and peculiarities.

Then there were those cases where becoming organizer happened quite unexpectedly. The interviewee had not been active in the scene very long, if at all. However, they were in contact with the Finnish Game Jam community, through which they were asked to organize a game jam. It seems like the active members of the community put their faith on these people, although they did not have previous experience in organizing.

“I got acquainted with a few game business veterans of Finland and through that ended up hanging in the scene. It actually quite naturally led to organizing jams as well”
(I11)

The first way often took place in the early days of Finnish game jam community, while the latter approach is more common later, when there might already be second generation of organizers stepping in at some places.

Although some organizers had been active members of the game jam scene for a long time before taking up the torch of the Site Organizer, it seems that it is more about being a right kind of person, who have the passion for organizing. Sometimes the site main organizer does not have any prior experience in game jams or even game development.

The jam community offered support for becoming an organizer, which has also been a factor in getting into the organizing work. The role of an organizer is not as established as in other hobbies.

“If I want to get into Scouts, and in there I want to be a group leader, there is an explicit model how it is done. As a game jam organizer, there is not such a model. [---] If you are a game jam enthusiast, there is a clear slot inside the hobby for being an organizer.” (I5)

DISCUSSION

Considering the motivations above, Finnish game jam organizers seem to be driven in creating communities or supporting learning and creativity. Although path in becoming a game jam organizer, and the reasons to keep on organizing, do vary, the common nominator is to drive the grass roots game development culture forward in Finland. Even for organizers employed in game industry organizing jams is more about the community than official work tasks of the employees. These results might also reflect the organizers' background in education or game development, although both developers and educators alike felt the community as an important motivation either as a starting point or as a goal. It

would be interesting to study organizers who have different kind of background in order to compare how this might affect their motivations.

Looking at the results, it seems people more often end up organizing game jams organically rather than with a clear decision or planning. Reasons for ending up as an organizer vary from place to place, but what is common is that the prominent organizer has some tentative interest in fostering local communities through game jamming. If nobody is organizing game jams, or the previous organizer gives up organizing for one reason or the other – it proposes an opportunity for the individuals to fill that void in the community. In any case, often the initial motivations are community related. Especially in the latter case, the existence and the support of the game jam community becomes important. There might exist will to organize game jams, but the community gives the organizer the final push for doing so.

The results of the paper align with observations made by Kultima [15] about the motivations for organizing game jam sites in Finland. This study supports the notion that building and participating in the Finnish game development and game jam communities is the major driver for the game jam organizers, although their backgrounds may vary. However, through interview study we have been able to recognize different nuances on the way it affects the motivations of game jam organizers. They have utilitarian motivations to build the community or to promote game development education in the area, but the personal preferences of the organizers also have an important role in becoming a game jam organizer.

The motivations also relate to the organizing philosophies of Fowler et al. [9], as regional affiliation is often tied to local communities, while organizing jams for the community or as a work task both can help in career advancement. Interviewees also noted the creativity as an important motivation, and this often includes trying out new technologies. Again, this study has been able to shed light on these motivations through personal experiences of organizers, and on the other hand shows, that the type of the jam does not always dictate the motivations.

The time when the interviews were conducted might have influenced the way interviewees were mostly focusing on talking about organizing GGJ. Although it is the main annual event for most organizers, some of them set-up several smaller events around the year. The aim of the interviews was also to learn about the process of organizing such smaller jams, and the interviewer did emphasize this to some interviewees if they were hesitant to talk about those.

It is also important to note that none of the interviewees were sole organizers in the jams, even if they had the main responsibility about the site. The division of responsibilities between the Site Organizer and assistant organizers varied depending on the location. Considering how important the community was as a

motivator, it is not a surprise that organizers want to gather a group of trustees around them to help putting up a site, as working together towards a common goal is already a good way to build the community. Although discussing this matter further is out of the scope of this study, we will focus on the issue in future studies.

To conclude, whether starting a new jam site in the region, or taking the torch from a previous organizer, it seems to be much of a happenstance of ending up as an organizer. Interestingly, it seems that organizing a game jam does not require much, if at all, game development experience. It is more about connecting people who are interested in game development.

It is hard to say that how much the community-driven nature of the Finnish game industry ecosystem is affecting to the results of this study. In the end, the members of the game jam organizers' community are also the members of the other game development communities in Finland. For deeper understanding of Finnish game jam cultures, it would be important that similar research would be done with the representatives of other countries to provide comparison and reflection of differences and similarities.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, we have examined the motivations of Finnish game jam organizers. The study was conducted as thematic interviews based on existing organizing guide materials found on various sources. Thirteen game jam organizers were interviewed in 2018 and 2019 and their views surfaced six motivational categories for game jam organizing: Community Building, Community Driven, Education, Passion for Organizing, Supporting Creative Culture and Work Driven.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study is funded by the Strategic Research Council which operates in connection with the Academy of Finland.

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