Affinity Toward Unionism among Videogame Developers

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53 Videogame developers

- All have a post-secondary or Junior college degree, half have a University degree
- Average age 31.5
- Ubisoft (28)
- A2M (Artificial Mind & Movement) (15)
- EA (Electronic Arts) (3)
- Gameloft (3)
- Indies or micro-studio (4)
### Sample (following) Earnings bracket

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College</th>
<th>University</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average working income - respondents</strong></td>
<td>54,5 k $</td>
<td>64,5 k $</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Average working income – general population aged 25-34</strong></td>
<td>30 k $</td>
<td>43 k $</td>
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Plan

- Problems and risks at work
- Recourses they currently use
- Reluctant views on unionizing
- Sympathetic views on the same topic...
- A sketch of theoretical interpretation
Problems and risks developers face

- Unlimited and unpaid overtime (UUO)
- Discretionary rules in
  - establishing wage levels,
  - appointing to projects,
  - attributing credits, intellectual property and funds for updating knowledge
- Lack of job security and arbitrary hiring and firing decision process
- Non disclosure and non competition agreements that may end up in legal proceedings
Overtime – Crunch time

- Unlimited (no guidelines for leads)
- Unpaid: no regular wages, even less increased rate
- May be partially compensated:
  - Bonus
  - Compensation time
Arbitrarily managed

- Level of compensation is discretionary
- When?
- *Crunch time – Over time – Little extra Effort*
- Never imposed – willingly offered...
- Necessary? Depending on your *lead*
Means of action

- **Individual means**
  - Mobility
  - *Easter Eggs* dropping
  - Discussing with the relevant manager
  - Complaining to Quebec’s Labour standards commission or ask a lawyer
  - Taking a stand in the general meeting

- **Collective means**
  - Latent threat of going public in the social web (or doing it!)
  - *Gamewatch* website
  - IGDA
Reluctance to unionizing

- Meritocracy
- Constant dialogue, impact and autonomy at work
- Comfort, satisfaction
- Fear of losing the conditions of a creative and flexible environment
- Bad reputation of unions
- Mobility: such an easy solution
Those who wish for unionisation

- The unique power of unions when big matters come
- Working conditions, including wages and overtime, are established in an arbitrary manner
- The vain recourse to laws, HR people or general meetings for the most serious problems
Sketch of conclusion

- Alienation => Domination ?
- *Injunction of autonomy*
- Ordering outcomes instead of procedures
- *Iron triangle* (budget, deadline, quality) = utmost risk for shareholders
- Transfer of risk on developers