QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE GAME INDUSTRY

REPORT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY 2009

COMMISSIONED BY THE INTERNATIONAL GAME DEVELOPERS' ASSOCIATION

Analysed and Written October, 2012 by:

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[1] Both authors have contributed equally to this report and their names appear in alphabetical order.

Casey O'Donnell and Judy L. Tyrer for their support.

And, of course, a very big thank-you to all the developers and other video game industry employees who participated in this survey.

ABOUT THE IGDA

The International Game Developers Association is a non-profit membership organization that advocates globally on issues related to digital game creation. The IGDA's mission is to strengthen the international game development community and effect change to benefit that community. For more information on the IGDA, please visit www.igda.org or e-mail info@igda.org.

ABOUT THE QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE

The IGDA Quality of Life Committee's mission is to make the game development experience smoother and more pleasant for everyone involved, therefore extending developers' careers and helping companies make better games in easier fashion.

We are always looking for volunteers willing to help out in our ongoing efforts. To learn more about the committee, visit the IGDA web site at http://www.igda.org/qol or write the Quality of Life Committee at QOL@IGDA.ORG.

BACKGROUND

In 2004, the Quality of Life (QoL) committee of the International Game Developers Association (IGDA) surveyed video game developers regarding issues of quality of life. This was a cutting edge and clear-sighted initiative coming ahead of the big EA spouse affair. The IGDA soon after released its QoL White paper and this is still profusely quoted as a reference in the genre and industry.

Since 2004, the issues bundled under the umbrella term 'quality of life' remain a concern for many video game developers, their studios, their families, and their communities. Other cases of questionable workplace practices have followed in the footsteps of EA Spouse (Rockstar Spouse, Team Bondi, 38 Studios Spouse) and prominent e-zines like Gamasutra have featured articles such as Paul Hyman's, "Quality of Life? Does Anyone Still Give a Damn?" and "Unionization Now?" So, it seems there is still work to be done.

The mission of the IGDA Quality of Life Committee is to "make the game development experience smoother and more pleasant for everyone involved, therefore extending developers' careers and helping companies make better games in easier fashion" (IGDA, 2004). Thus it was a very relevant and welcome gesture to repeat the initiative of surveying video game developers to compare the state of the industry against the 2004 benchmark data.

The launching of the 2009 IGDA Quality of Life Survey 2009 (QoL 09) prompted 3362 people who work, have worked, or are looking for work in the video game industry to share their opinions on the conditions in the industry. This is an impressive raw figure; however, it is important to note that it represents a small segment of the total global video game development workforce who could have responded. For example, reported figures place the number of people working in the game industry in Canada at approximately 16 000 and the United States at approximately 32 000 (Entertainment Software Association of Canada, 2011), which make the respective response rates for developers in these countries 1.6% and 4%. Therefore, we would echo the statement made in the report to the 2004 QoL survey:

> While this survey is not scientific, in the sense that the respondents were self-selected instead of being randomly chosen from among the entire population of IGDA members or game developers, the number of responses was so high (994) that we believe the results to be significant (IGDA, 2004:15).

In this case the sample is over three times as large as that in 2004 and provides a very rich source of data about people who work in the video game industry. However, this is not a random sample, nor was the survey equally accessible to all possible people in the

international video game industry. The survey was only administered in English and was primarily advertised online by the IGDA. Respondents have self-selected to answer the survey; therefore this data could either over-emphasize or under-emphasize certain perspectives depending on the motivation of individuals to respond. Though the sample represents 61 countries, the survey is biased toward IGDA members, and English-speaking, North American respondents.

The survey data pertains to four sub-populations. Out of the total 3362 respondents, 2153 (64%) were currently employed in full-time or part-time positions, 486 (14.5%) were contractors, freelancers or self-employed, 213 (6.3%) were formerly employed in the industry, and 510 (15.2%) were looking for their first job in the industry. The survey was designed to ask general questions to all respondents and specific questions to each sub-population. For example, all survey respondents were asked to provide demographic information, but those looking for work were not asked questions about Quality of Work and Work/Life Balance since they had had no experiences on which to base their answers. For this reason, the total number of respondents varies from question to question. The number of respondents for a particular question may also vary because respondents could skip questions and/or provide invalid responses. Invalid responses were removed from the dataset and coded as missing.

The report is structured to roughly follow the order of questions in the survey instrument (included as Appendix 2). In some cases questions are reordered or grouped to provide thematic discussions. Where applicable reference is made to the 2004 QoL survey which acts as an industry benchmark. As we note throughout, it was often difficult to make direct comparisons across the 2004 and 2009 survey data because the questions were asked differently or some questions were removed or added altogether.

To set the context, the report begins with a detailed section on the demographics of survey respondents (additional data on nationality and ethnicity are presented in Appendix 1). It then details the data on employment status, perceptions of quality of work and work-life balance, and closes with a set of questions on unionization that are unique to this 2009 survey.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

A Typical Snapshot

The data presented in this report conform to the commonly held image of a video game developer. A typical video game developer is a white male in his early thirties who might have a partner, but probably does not have kids. He is most likely working in a studio on a full-time or part-time basis that employs over 100 people. He is most likely working for a publisher/publisher-owned studio or, secondarily, an independent studio. He loves video games and considers his work to be a large part of his life. He has concerns about his hours of work and the compensation he receives for overtime or crunch. He faces challenges associated with burn-out and work-life balance. These issues impede his long-term career in the industry.

Survey Representation

This survey represents respondents from four main groupings, though not all were asked every question. The main groupings are: employed full-time or part-time; freelance/independent contractor; people looking for their first job in the industry; and people who formerly worked in the industry.

Within these populations the survey represents respondents from across the occupational sub-sets of game development: executives and senior managers; team leads and project managers; programmers; designers; visual and audio artists; quality assurance; and non-core roles such as human resources, marketing, public relations.

It is felt that team leads/project managers are over-represented at 24% of the sample.

The Basic Demographic Breakdown

- 86% male
- 82% white
- Average age of 31 is lower than the median working population in industrialized countries (i.e., Canada = 39.9; US = 42.1)
- 23% have children
- 53.8% of current employees work at a studio with 100+ employees
- 36% work for publishers/publisher-owned companies; 28% work for independent studios

Identified Challenges for the Industry

Experience levels remain low and turnover remains high. This has a number of negative implications for the maturation of the industry. To name a few, it is a challenge to

organizational learning, knowledge management, and managerial capacity. It represents real time and money costs in terms of recruitment and selection, orientation and training. It can impact the project schedules and the performance of groups and teams as they must reorganize and renegotiate effective group norms. It has implications for employee perceptions of career development and effective training and mentoring by senior colleagues.

- The average number of years at a current job is 3.38
- Only 20% of current employees have been working in the industry for more than 10 years
- Only 22% of those in management roles have been working in the industry for more than 10 years
- One-third of the sample feels there is ample room for growth at their company and one-third is happy and doesn't want to move from their position. The final third feels stuck, burned out, or is just putting in time

Crunch remains a reality for many developers, though there may be some reduction in extreme work hours as compared to the 2004 QoL data. Normative practices reinforce long working hours; developers work more hours than are officially expected of them 'on the books.' Crunch time is a polarizing issue across studios. Almost 40% of the sample report crunching rarely and 6.2% never crunch. The majority of the sample (54.7%) crunches often and typically this is part of the regular schedule.

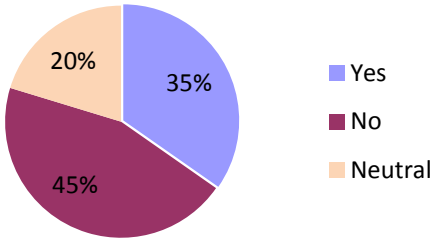
- Non-crunch: Average hours expected to work = 40.4; average hours actually worked = 43.2
- Crunch: Average hours expected to work = 55; average hours actually worked = 57.6
- On average developers crunch 10 weeks per year and for 5 weeks in a row
- 33.8% report an ad hoc project management system or do not know what system is used; 48.4% use Agile/SCRUM

Uncompensated overtime is common and a source of dissatisfaction. Almost 60% of the sample does not feel that the compensation is equitable for the amount of crunch.

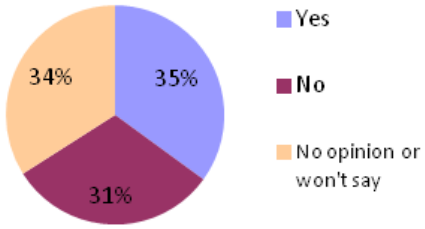
- Half think their basic pay is fair, but 49% do not feel that bonuses compensate for the extra work required
- 43.2% do not receive any form of compensation for crunch time
- Only 9.1% receive formal compensation in the form of wages for overtime

Important and Controversial Questions

The necessity of crunch is an open debate in the industry. The following chart shows the response to the question, "Is crunch necessary?"



The topic of unionization is also polarizing. This chart shows the results for the question, "If a union vote were held today, how would you vote?"



Over one-third of respondents (34.2%) said they would welcome a union organizing drive and 24.3% said they would actively oppose an organizing drive. The remainder didn't know how they would react or preferred not to say. Unsurprisingly, over half felt that management would oppose a union drive and 15.5% of that group felt management would oppose the union with threats and harassment.

Overall Conclusions

On aggregated scales measuring quality of work and work/life balance this sample scored just above the mid-point of a 1-5 point scale where five equals high/good. The mean for quality of work was 3.22 and the mean for work/life balance was 3.08. The individual questions for each scale can be found under the survey headings of Quality of Work and Work/Life Balance in Appendix 2.

Factors pulling down the quality of work score were related to poor and arbitrary compensation and a sense of overwork. Factors driving positive quality of work were:

- a sense of pride in the games made
- a sense that the work was fun
- a sense of creative freedom and the room to make mistakes
- a sense of mastery over assigned tasks, that the quality of work mattered, and that the work was appreciated and recognized

The individual factors pulling down the work/life balance score are germane to many workers and workplaces. They include being too tired after work to do things they would like to do, feeling emotionally drained from attempts to balance work and home life, and that work

takes priority over family. One issue that might be more central to the difficulty in balancing work and life is that the majority of respondents said their work and hobbies were inter-related and that they tend to socialize with people with whom they work. This inhibits the ability of video game developers to fully take a cognitive and emotional break from their work.

Overall, the video game industry continues to face challenges with the labour process of making games. Many employees in this industry get considerable intrinsic satisfaction from their work, but this carrot is not sufficient to develop and maintain a happy and productive workforce in a sustainable, mature industry.

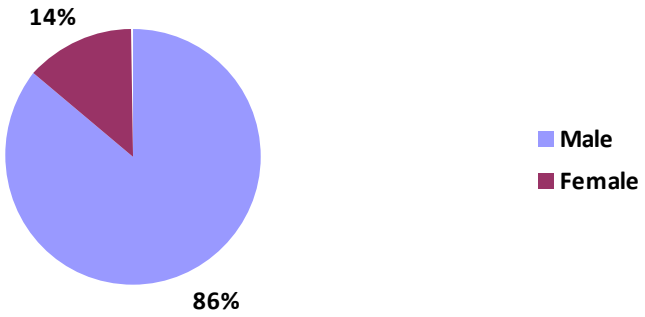
WHO ARE THE RESPONDENTS? - DEMOGRAPHICS

Still a male population

The respondents to the survey mirror other industry data and confirm the common assumption that the video game workforce is still mostly male.

Graph 1

Gender distribution of the respondents



The QoL 04 survey had a 92.9% male sample and only 7.1% of respondents were women (IGDA, 2004:15). This data could therefore be interpreted as an improvement in women's access to the videogame developing trades; however, this conclusion would need to be made with caution as it is simply possible that more women chose to answer this survey than in 2004.

That said, additional analysis seems to confirm that women are entering the trade. Correlation analysis showed a significant relationship between gender and years in the industry and also race/ethnicity and years in industry such that women and people of non-white racial groups report fewer years in the industry. Similar relationships existed between both gender and race/ethnicity and the age variable. These significant relationships indicate that the industry has been traditionally dominated by white men; women and visible minorities tend to be relative newcomers to the industry and are most represented in the younger cohorts.

A young population

It is still a young population. The 2454 respondents to this question are 31.22 years old on average. As could be expected this mean is pulled down somewhat by the sub-population of those looking for a first job. The mean age for that group is 26.25 as opposed to 31.8 for

those currently employed full- or part-time, 34.7 for freelancers, and 33 for those formerly employed in the industry. These figures are lower than the median working-age population (defined as age 15-64) in Canada and the United States, which are roughly 39.9 and 42.1, respectively (Statistics Canada, 2009; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011).

Table 1

Distribution by employment group (%) for working-age population (15-64)

Age	Looking for 1st job	Employed FT/PT	Freelance	Left industry	Total
15-19	7	0.1	0.3	-	1.3
20-24	44	11.5	11.1	16.6	17.6
25-29	27	31.7	22.1	30.2	29.7
30-34	10	26.6	24.6	18.7	22.9
35-64	12	30.1	41.9	34.5	28.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Age comparisons are difficult to the QoL 04 report as limited information was reported. If only the working sub-populations (employed or freelance) are included for the 2009 survey, the data are similar. In 2004, 33.8% of respondents were between 25 and 29 and only 18.4% were over 35 (IGDA, 2004:15). In this sample, 30.2% of those currently employed and freelance were between 25 and 29 and 31.9% were over 35. This could represent some maturation and reduced churn in the industry. However, the differences are not great and they may be insignificant or an artefact of the current sample.

A population free of family responsibilities

As the QoL 09 survey focused on balancing work and private life, and the allocation of time between work and leisure, respondents were asked about their marital status and family responsibilities.

Of the 2480 who responded to this question, 41.6% were single and 58.4% were ‘coupled’ in some form of domestic relationship.

With respect to dependent children, the 2004 data reported that 76.9% of respondents (and 82.9% of female respondents) had no kids (IGDA, 2004:15). The 2009 data show a similar result. Overall, 72.5% of respondents had no children. This may be closely linked to the young age of the population.

Along gender lines, 71.5% of men and 79.2% of women had no children. Though the figure for childless women is lower in 2009 than 2004, this data may still signal that a higher number of women than men are forgoing children to work in this industry.

Two percent of the sample respondents are single parents of teenage or younger children and would therefore experience a considerable domestic burden. This number rises to 2.9% if parents of adult children are included due largely to the higher percentage (4.69%) of single women with adult children in the sample. However, given that adult children would tend to be living on their own, the burden for these single parents is less.

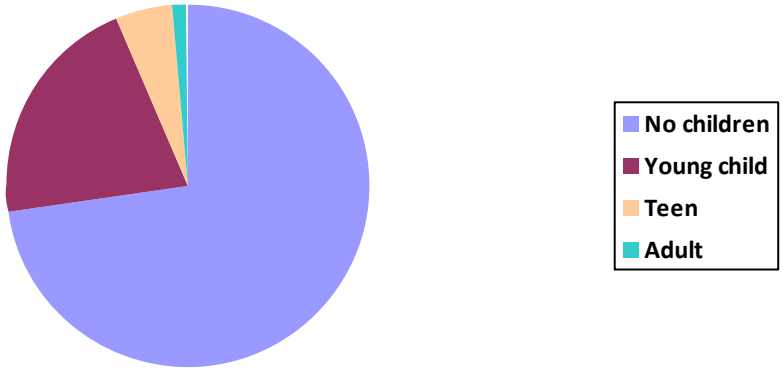
Table 2

Dependent children

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
No children	1798	72.5
Young children	525	21.2
Teenage children	120	4.8
Adult children	37	1.5
Total	2480	100

Graph 2

Dependent children



WHO ARE THE RESPONDENTS? - EMPLOYMENT

A majority of salaried employees

The whole population of respondents are distributed according to the employment status categories presented below in Table 3. A majority (two thirds) of the respondents are currently employed in a studio as salaried workers on a full-time or part-time basis. Others are either looking for a first job in the industry (15.2%), contractors, freelance or self-employed (14.5%), or have left the industry (6.3%).

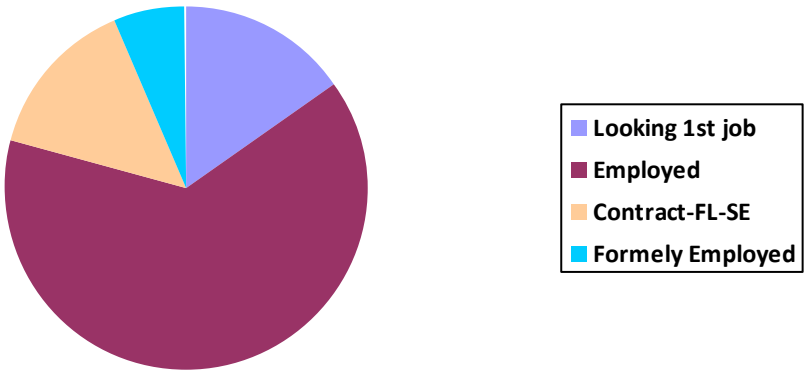
Table 3

Employment Status (formal)

	Respondents	%
Looking for first job	510	15.2 %
Currently employed (Full time/Part Time)	2153	64 %
Contractor/freelance/self-employed	486	14.5 %
Formerly employed in industry	213	6.3 %
Total (valid answers)	3362	100 %

Graph 3

Employment Status



Various disciplines

The survey invited all people who work in the video game industry to respond. The final sample therefore consists of people who work or formerly worked in a range of occupational sub-groups within game development. The largest disciplines among the respondents were programming, art and those who work as project managers, team leads or producers.

Table 4

Main discipline as a developer

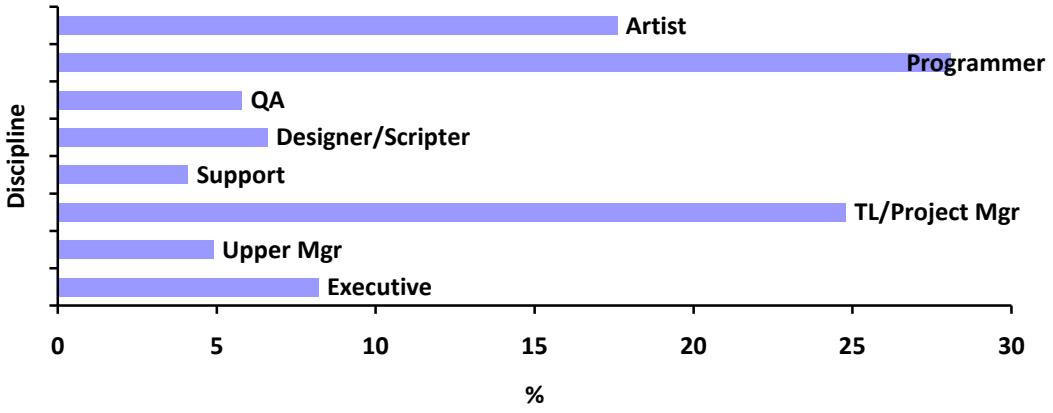
	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Executive/Investor	179	8.2
Upper Level Manager	107	4.9
Team Lead/Project Manager	542	24.8
Support (personnel, marketing, customer)	89	4.1
Designer/Scripter[a]	144	6.6
Quality Assurance	127	5.8
Programmer	616	28.1
Artist[b]	385	17.6
Total	2189	100

[a] *This group includes 64 writers who make up 2.9% of the sample*

[b] *This group includes 29 audio artists and 356 visual artists who make up 1.3% and 16.3% of the sample, respectively*

Graph 4

Main discipline as a developer (short list)



Any sample can be biased by many factors, and self-selection is one of them. Quality of life at work can be more of a concern with age, experience and job role. The distribution of this sample may not represent a typical breakdown of the industry as a whole, nor a typical breakdown of any part of the industry, be it big studios or small, indie workshops.

For instance, in Quebec, where half the Canadian game development workforce resides, occupational sub-sets have been reported to break down as follows:

- 32% in programming
- 24% in quality control (i.e., testers, quality assurance technicians, support services)
- 23% in artistic production (i.e., 3D artists, illustrators, 3D animators, interface designers)
- 10% in game design (i.e., scriptwriters, game designers, level designers)
- 10% in production management (production managers, producers, project managers, creative directors, artistic directors, technical directors) (Dumais, 2009, p. 4)

From such a standpoint, this sample is over-representing team leads/project managers and under-representing quality testers, artists, designers and scripters.

Respondents who are looking for their first job in the industry were also asked what kind of job or trade they wanted. This profile roughly matches the 'real world' percentages. Some inflation of each category must be allowed because typically these entry-level employees would not have access to team lead or producer roles. The aspiration to become a game designer seems to be the most out of sync as 27% would like to occupy that role, but only 6.6% of the working population in this sample are doing that job. This could indicate a need for an industry awareness campaign for those who aspire to work in video games.

Table 5

What kind of job are you looking for? (trade)

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Programming	153	32.7
Art	86	18.4
Design	125	26.7
Writing	32	6.8
Audio	17	3.6
Production	27	5.8
Community management	1	-
Quality assurance	13	2.8
Support (legal, HR, accounting, clerical)	6	1.3
Business management	8	1.7
Total	468	100

Still a maturing group of respondents

In the QoL 04 survey, 74.4% of respondents had been in the industry for 8 years or less, with 2-5 years being the most common response (IGDA, 2004:15). We can approximate a comparison with the 2009 data:

- The vast majority (80%) of the respondents had been in the industry for 10 years or less and the most common response was 1-3 years. However, 5-10 years was a close second.
- Slightly less than half the sample had more than five years of experience.
- The mean number of years at the current job for those employed full-time or part-time was 3.38 (standard deviation = 3.5).

These numbers corroborate past and popular reports that the industry is still growing and maturing. As the industry expanded over the past twenty years the workforce ballooned at the bottom or entry-level while experienced developers have been in scarcer supply.

Industry slowdowns such as those experienced in recent years, or industry contractions would serve to even out this distribution if the number of studios, projects and employees becomes more stable over time.

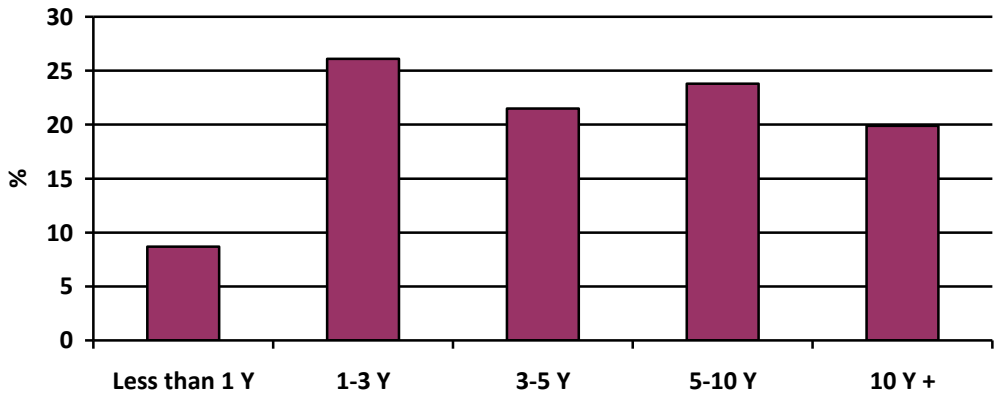
Table 6

Years of experience in industry

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
< 1 year	233	8.7
1-3 years	699	26.1
3-5 years	574	21.5
5-10 years	636	23.8
> 10 years	533	19.9
Total	2675	100

Graph 5

Years of experience in industry



Though the question was not asked in this round of the survey, it is important to recall the finding from 2004 which reported that 34.3% of the sample expected to leave the industry within 5 years and 51.2% within 10 years. As the authors of that report stated, "such a high turnover rate is nothing short of catastrophic, and it goes a long way towards explaining our difficulty in ensuring that our projects run smoothly." (IGDA, 2004, 17)

If we analyse the data for occupational role by years of experience, only 22% of the people

holding senior positions in this sample (executives, upper managers and producers) have more than 10 years of experience. This may reflect a slight improvement from 2004 where "only 3.4% of respondents said their coworkers averaged 10 or more years of game development experience, and only 9.8% of respondents said their *leads* averaged that much" (IGDA, 2004, 27, emphasis in the original). Still, it remains a worrying figure.

Table 7

Occupational role by years of experience

	% < 1 year	% 1-3 years	% 3-5 years	% 5-10 years	% more than 10 years	% Total
Executive/Investor	0.7	1.6	1.3	2	2.5	8.1
Upper Level Mgr	0.5	0.8	1.1	1.2	1.2	4.8
Team Lead/Project Mgr	1.8	6.2	5.5	6.3	4.5	24.3
Support	0.6	1.1	1	0.6	0.7	4
Designer/Scripter	1	1.8	1.6	1.2	1.2	6.8
Quality Assurance	0.4	2	1.3	1.2	0.8	5.7
Programmer	2.3	7.6	6	6.7	5.9	28.5
Artist	1.5	5.3	3.6	4.4	3	17.8
	8.8	26.4	21.4	23.6	19.8	100

Employed developers working in big studios

Not surprisingly, half of the respondents employed on a full-time or part-time basis are hired in big studios (100+ employees).

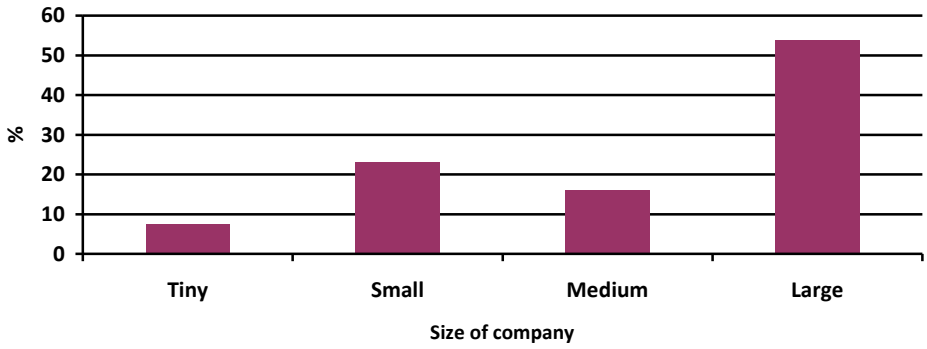
Table 8

Size of your current employer (number of employees)

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Tiny (<10)	148	7.3
Small (10-49)	469	23
Medium (50-99)	326	16
Large (100+)	1097	53.8
Total	2040	100

Graph 6

Size of your current employer (number of employees)



In addition to different sizes of organizations, people who work in game development are distributed among different types of working environments. Not surprisingly, publishers or publisher-owned studios employ the largest percentage of the workforce (35.9%) as they tend to be overly represented among the large organizations above. Independent studios tend to be smaller, but more numerous and therefore employ the next largest segment of the workforce (28.1%). It is important to note that the self-employed or freelance population is of a significant size in this industry. These individuals could work for a range of companies on a project to project basis or even smaller deliverables such as particular segments of a game.

Table 9

Company type of the employed respondents

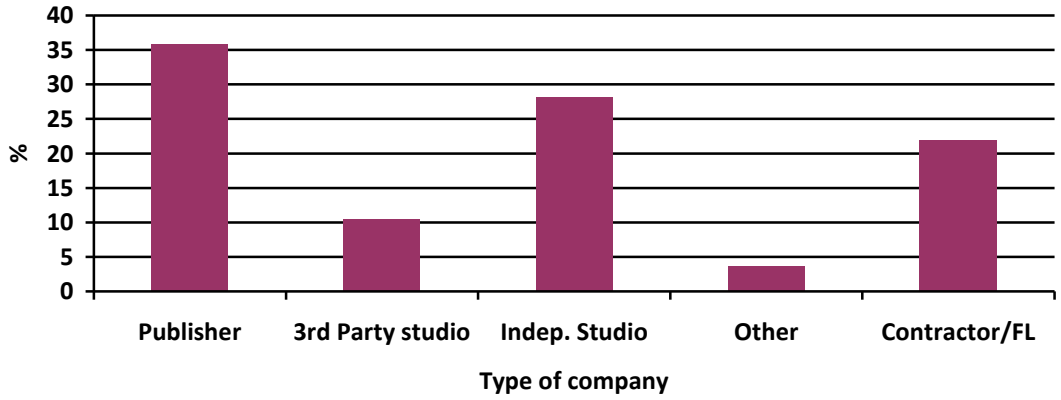
	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Publisher/Publisher-owned studios	906	35.9
Third Party Studio[2]	265	10.5
Independent Studios	709	28.1
Other (middleware developers, outsourcing)	92	3.6
Independent contractors/Freelancers	554[a]	21.9
Total	2526	100

[a] *This number is slightly higher than the 486 freelancers reported earlier because it includes individual freelancers and also 68 respondents who previously identified as "currently employed full- or part-time" indicated their company's business as an "independent contractor" as opposed to a third party studio or one of the other options.*

[2] The 1st, 2nd and 3rd party label refers to the relationship between the studio developing a game to a publisher/console manufacturer. A first-party developer is part of a company that manufactures a particular console/platform and designs games using it. A second-party developer develops games solely for a particular publisher and is usually owned by it as a subsidiary. They are known as publisher-owned studios or in-house development studios. A third-party studio is independent from a publisher or manufacturer and takes contracts from various publishers and works across platforms/consoles to make particular games. Independent studios are not related to any publisher/console manufacturer, work on their own projects and manage the distribution of their game.

Graph 7

Company type



Given this data regarding the percentage of video game developers working in large studios and in publisher-owned studios, it is important to again consider self-selection biases and the representativeness of the sample overall or to a particular context. Referring once again to previously published data on the Canadian province of Quebec, 30% of all studios are 'large' hiring more than 100 employees. These large studios account for 90% of the workforce in the sector. Another 30% are micro studios hiring less than 10 employees (Beauchamp, 2010).

Freelancers not always that free...

Among those who responded to the survey, freelancers or the self-employed are a slightly older population and seem to be quite experienced in terms of the variety and number of work assignments. Nearly two-thirds (63.4%) of freelancers reported working in industries other than the game industry and they have worked on an average of 16.4 game development projects. However, this could be less of an indication of extensive experience and more of a representation of the size and scope of the projects that freelancers are commissioned to complete. Table 10 shows that for the majority of freelancers, their current project is among the smallest we can find in the field.

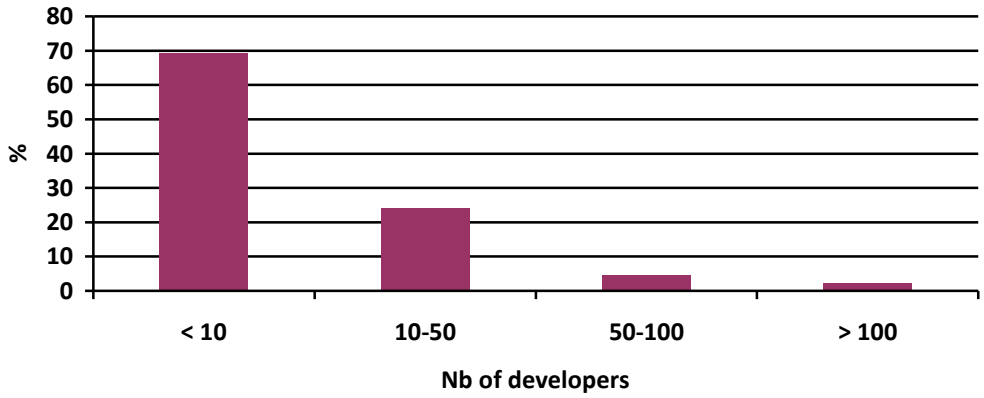
Table 10

Size of my current project as a freelancer

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
<10 developers	301	69.2 %
10-50 developers	105	24.1 %
50-100 developers	20	4.6 %
>100 developers	9	2.1 %
Total	435	100 %

Graph 8

Size of my current project as a freelancer



It is a popular assumption that experienced game developers splinter from larger studios to start an independent shop or engage in freelance work. However, 59.6% of this sample of freelancers reported that they would prefer full-time employee status. Therefore, freelancing or self-employment is not always a long-term choice. That said, 51.4% of the full-or part-time salaried employees in the sample have also considered freelancing. Overall, these numbers highlight the relative porosity and churn of the industry where workers seem able or are forced to engage with the industry in a variety of employment relationships.

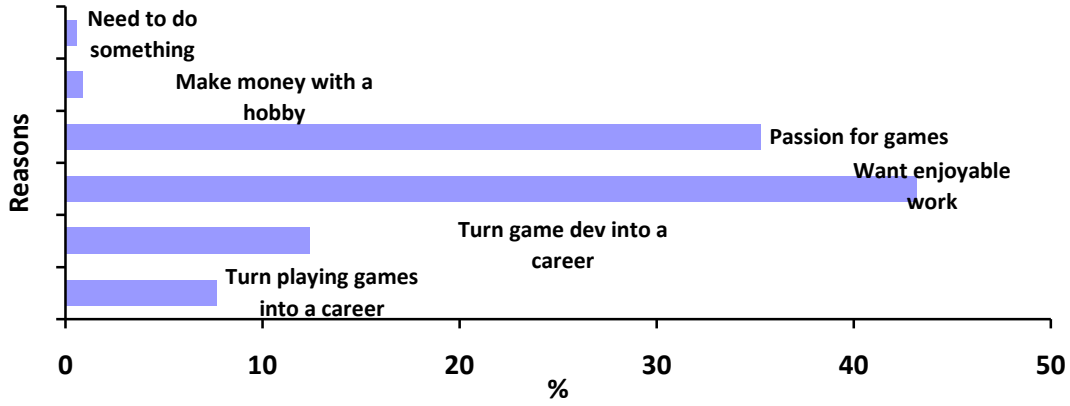
A group of would-be developers looking for passion at work

Among those who wish to be part of the industry, it is important to understand some of the motivation to work in game development. The data show that the image of a hip, fun, and free culture where you can get paid to do what you love best -- even to play -- seems to be

very enduring. Respondents who speak of doing what they enjoy and pursuing their passion for games represent more than three quarters (78.5%) of the would-be developers. Very few consider this occupation lightly as a fall-back career or 'just a job'. Rather, would-be developers are already highly inducted into the gaming milieu.

Graph 9

Which of these best describes why are you looking for work in the industry?



Would-be developers were also asked for what kind of employer they would like to work. The resulting distribution of responses generally matches that of the employed developers presented above (Table 9). Slightly more wish to work for independent studios. This might represent the increased cachet that indie studios and their games have among hard-core fans.

Significantly fewer consider the freelance route as an option (10.3% as compared to the actual employment figure of 21.9%). This is likely due to the youth and inexperience of the population in question and their understanding of the industry structure. It is unlikely in the industry to get your start as a freelancer without first building your portfolio and reputation.

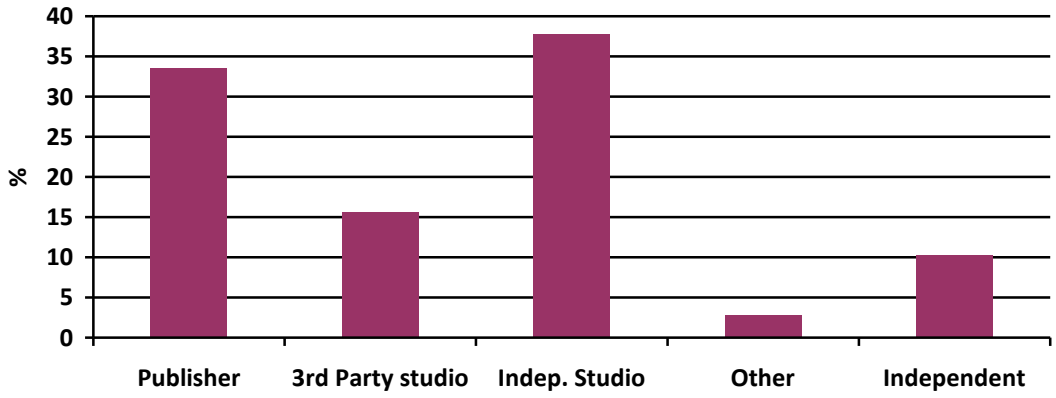
Table 11

What kind of company do you want to work for?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Publisher/Publisher-owned studio	157	33.5
Third Party Studio	73	15.6
Independent Studio	177	37.8
Other (middleware developer, outsourcing)	13	2.8
Independent Contractor/Freelance	48	10.3
Total	468	100

Graph 10

What kind of company do you want to work for?



A work environment that you don't leave light-heartedly

Those who left the industry do not seem to be reluctant to come back, as 80.7% of them would like to do so. Given this high rate of 'reluctant leavers' it is important to understand the factors that pushed or pulled them out of the industry. As shown in Table 12 below, the primary reason for leaving the industry seems to be getting fired; no one explicitly reported leaving due to poor quality of life. However, just as many former developers reported leaving for issues of work hours (40.6%) as for having been fired. This includes those who explicitly felt burn-out (15%), those who found better hours with better pay (17.8), and those who found just better hours (7.8). These are direct indicators of developers leaving in search of

improved quality of life.

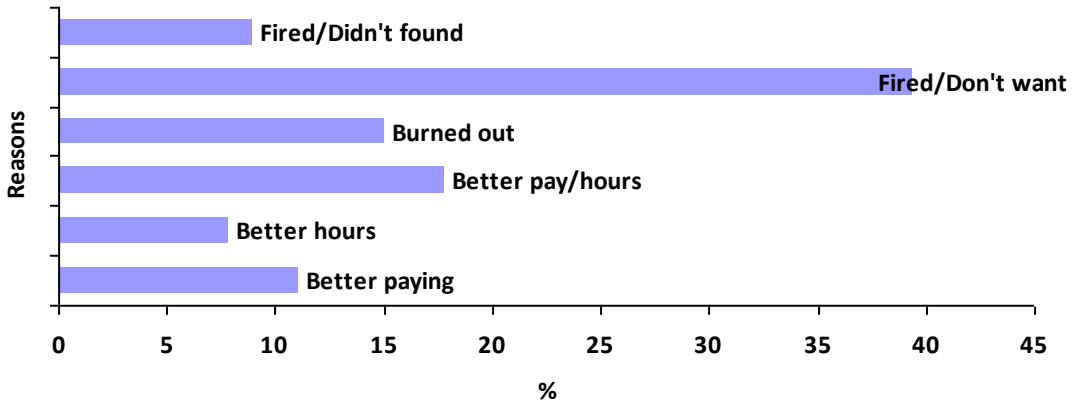
Table 12

What best describes your reasons for leaving the industry?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
I found a better paying job	20	11.1
I found a job with better hours	14	7.8
I found a better paying job with better hours	32	17.8
I burned out	27	15
I got fired and didn't want to find another job in the industry	71	39.4
I got fired and haven't found another job in the industry	16	8.9
I retired	-	-
I became disabled	-	-
I wanted a better quality of life and could not find it in the industry	-	-
Total	180	100

Graph 11

What best describes your reasons for leaving the industry?



A highly committed (but somewhat cynical) group of studio employees

Both salaried employees and freelancers were asked about their relationship with their current employment. Or, in symbolic terms, what is the importance of their work or what role is work playing in their lives?

Half of the respondents are very committed to their work, which they report as a *large part* of their life (54.2%). A further 10.6% state that their career in game development *is* their life. This portrait is true to the prevalent image we have of these workers. That said, a quarter of the respondents (26.5%) aim at keeping a balance between work and the rest of their life, and a tenth have other career ambitions or take it as just a job.

Though the exact questions again differ, the report on the QoL 04 survey stated:

> …contrary to expectations, more people said that games were only one of many career options for them (34%) than said games were their only choice (32%). As the industry grows, the proportion of "non-fanatics" among game developers is likely to increase.

Based on the current data on why people join the industry and how developers feel about their work, this projection may still be true, but the evolution may unveil slowly.

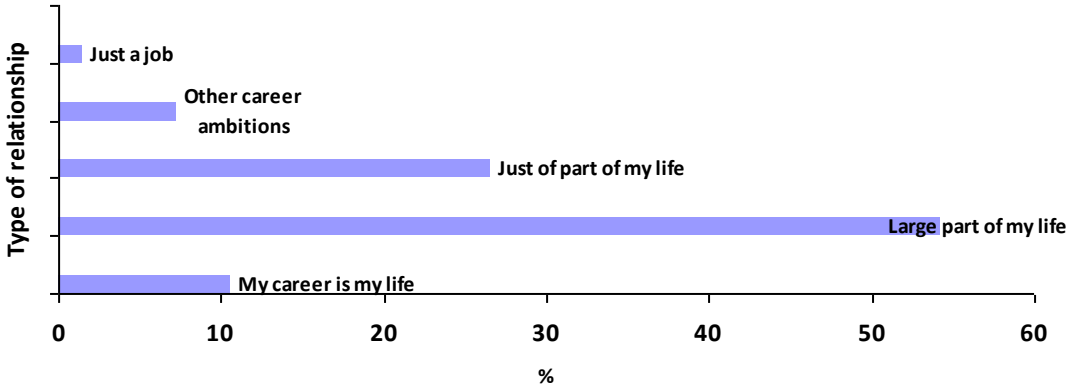
Table 13

Relation to work

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
This is my career and my career is my life	254	10.6 %
This is my career, and it is a large part of my life	1303	54.2 %
This is my career, but it is just one part of my life	638	26.5 %
This is my day job, I have other career ambitions	175	7.3 %
This is just a job	35	1.5 %
Total	2405	100 %

Graph 12

Relation to work



Salaried employees were also asked how they felt toward their current job. Most of them reported good development prospects and happiness in their jobs (56.5% if we combine the two first categories).

But still, if we combine the remaining categories, 43.5% of them are not happy, either because they feel they do not have any development opportunity or are burned out, insecure about their work future, unhappy in the industry as a whole, and/or wishing to start up a new studio of their own.

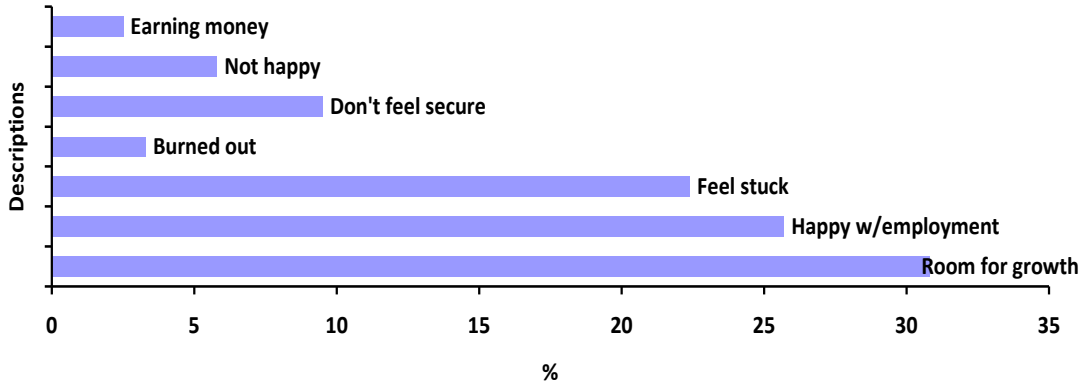
Table 14

What best describes your current employment?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
I feel there is ample room for growth at my company	604	30.8
I'm happy with what I'm doing and don't see a need to move	504	25.7
I feel stuck and will have to change companies for my career to grow	439	22.4
I'm burned out so I'm just putting in the hours here	65	3.3
I'm happy here, but I don't feel secure in my job	187	9.5
I'm not happy with my company, but don't think other companies are much better	114	5.8
I'm just earning money so I can start my own company	49	2.5
Total	1962	100

Graph 13

What best describes your current employment?



QUALITY OF WORK

The survey questions presented in the following sections pertain to hours of work, quality of work and balancing work and private life. They were asked of salaried employees, freelance developers and those who have left the industry. Whenever this is not the case, it is specified.

Long hours of work among the employed and those who left the industry

Employed developers and those who left the industry reveal a portrait of reasonable hours of work on average, but long hours as a possibility.

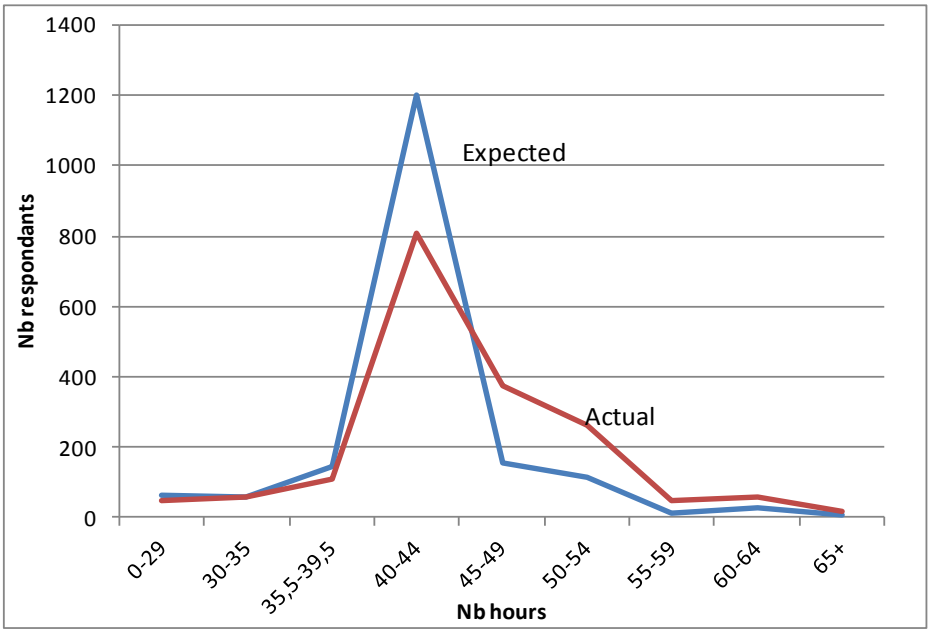
Table 15

How many hours per week

	Respondents	Min-Max	Mean
On average, how many hours per week are you expected to work when not in crunch time?	1779	0-112	40.4
On average, how many hours per week do you work when not in crunch time?	1782	1-112	43.2
On average, how many hours per week are you expected to work when in crunch time?	1649	1-120	55
On average, how many hours per week do you work when in crunch time?	1691	1-120	57.6
On average, how many weeks per year do you crunch?	1749	0-52	10
On average, how many weeks in a row do you crunch?	1755	0-52	5

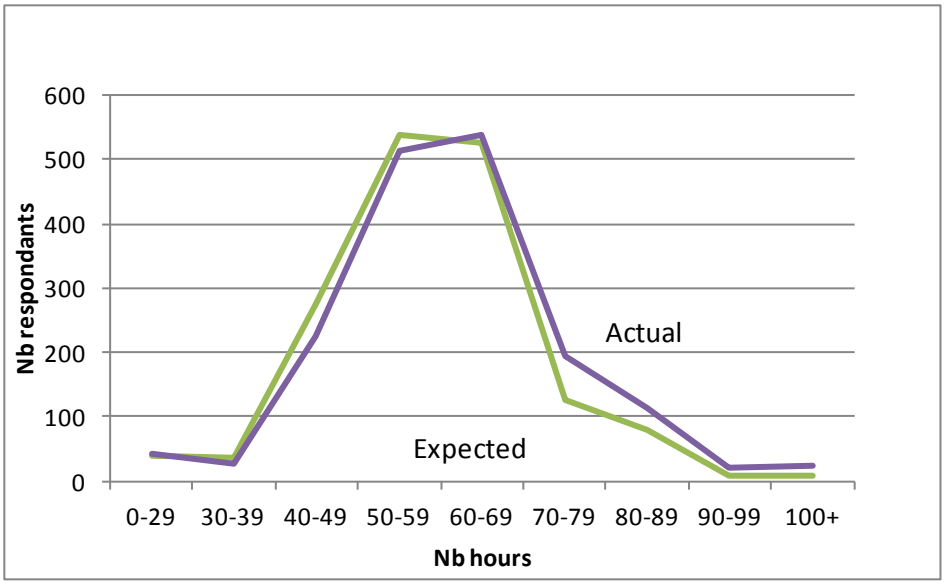
Graph 14

How many hours per week – No crunch



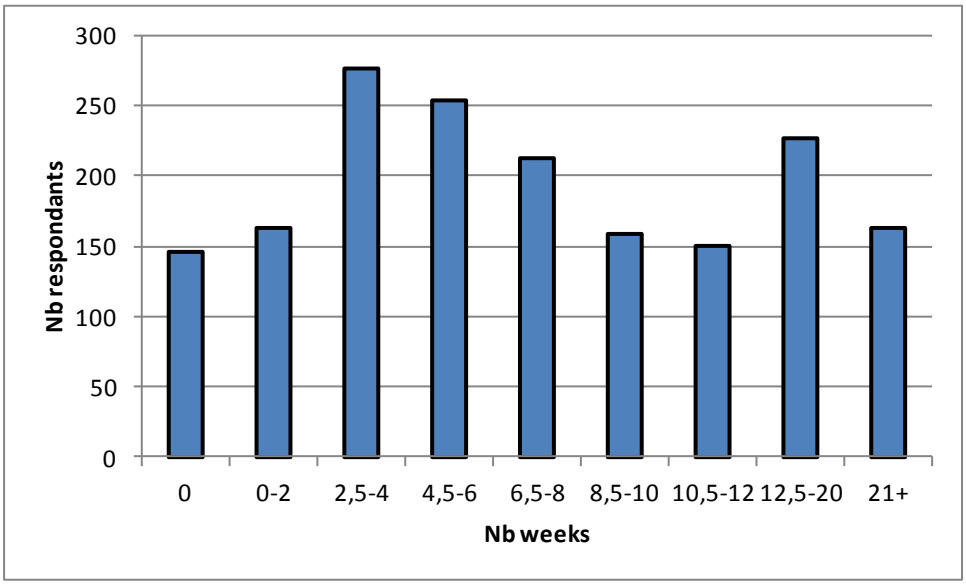
Graph 15

How many hours per week – With crunch



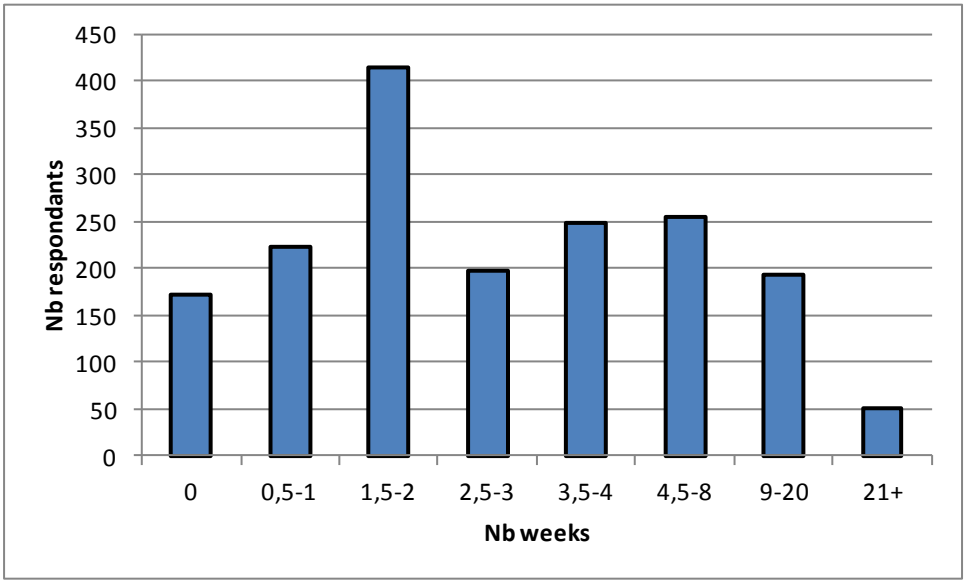
Graph 16

Weeks per year – With crunch



Graph 17

Weeks per year –Crunch in a row



There are a number of interesting findings in this data that deserve more attention. The first is the **difference between the hours of work that are 'expected' and the hours that developers actually work**. In both regular and crunch times we see that developers are working more hours than those that are expected by the employer. This expectation could be codified by a written employment contract, by the local labor laws, or by verbal understanding; regardless, developers are exceeding these formal expectations in all cases. "On the books", only 19.5% of the sample feels that their employer *expects* more than 40

hours a week during non-crunch; this drops to 10.2% for more than 45 hours a week. However, half of the developers in this sample are *actually working* more than 40 hours per week and one-quarter are working more than 45. This is an important discrepancy in an industry known for delinquency in paying earned overtime and for a work ethic driven by studio norms or peer pressure.

A comparison of these numbers with the data from the 2004 survey (below) seems to indicate that the hours of work in a regular week have seen an overall reduction in the five interceding years. In 2004, “Almost three developers out of five report working 46 hours or more in a typical week (38.1% say 46-55 hours, 19.7% say over 55)” (IGDA, 2004: 18). This is opposed to one-quarter in 2009.

Table 16

How many hours per week (comparison 2004-2009)

		2004	2009
On average, how many hours per week do you work when not in crunch time?	< 35 hours	4.8 %	3.8 %
	35-45 hours	36.2 %	71.8 %
	46-55 hours	38.9 %	20.1 %
	> 55 hours	20.1 %	4.3 %
	Total	100 %	100 %
On average, how many hours per week do you work when in crunch time?	< 35 hours	2 %	3 %
	35-45 hours	4.3 %	11.7 %
	46-55 hours	12.5 %	21.1 %
	55-65 hours	31.4 %	38.4 %
	65-80 hours	36.4 %	22.8 %
	> 80 hours	13.4 %	3 %
	Total	100 %	100 %
On average, how many weeks in a row do you crunch?	None	2.4 %	9.8 %
	< 1 week	11.8 %	0.2 %
	1-2 weeks	29.2 %	36 %
	2-4 weeks	23.2 %	25.5 %
	1-2 months	14.5 %	14.5 %
	> 2 months	18.9 %	14 %
	Total	100 %	100 %

However it is important to note that some respondents to the 2004 survey could have interpreted a 'typical week' as including some crunch time. In the game industry in 2004, "Crunch time is omnipresent, whether before every milestone (57.2%), during beta stage testing (20.7%) or on at least a monthly basis (16.7%). Only 2.4% of respondents report that their company never has any crunch at all." (IGDA, 2004:18)

As expected, the 2009 numbers for hours of work during crunch are much higher than non-crunch. But they are roughly similar if not slightly lower at the extremes than the numbers

reported in 2004. (IGDA, 2004: 18)

Overall, in the 2009 sample, 96% of respondents were working over 40 hours a week while in crunch. Roughly one third is working between 55 and 65 hours a week and two-thirds of the sample is working 55 hours or more during crunch time. Again, the actual hours worked in crunch are higher than the hours that developers report as being 'expected' in crunch, though the difference is not as great as for non-crunch hours.

The duration of crunch periods seems to have polarized somewhat with decreases at the low end and increases at the high end. In 2004, "crunches of all durations were reported, with the most frequent being 1-2 weeks (29%) and 2-4 weeks (23%). Over 18% of respondents reported having experienced crunches of two months or more" in a row (IGDA, 2004:18).

In 2009, these crunch weeks tend to be contiguous. Though the most common response was two weeks in a row, almost half of the sample experienced crunch of more than three weeks in a row and one-quarter crunched for more than five weeks in a row.

As a whole, in 2009, 42.6% of the sample is crunching more than 6 weeks per year, and 30.5% more than 8 weeks (below). Nearly one-fifth of the sample is crunching for more than 10 weeks per year.

Table 17

Weeks per Year of Crunch Time

	Respondents	%
None	146	8.4
0.2-2	163	9.3
2.5-4	277	15.9
4.5-6	254	14.5
6.5-8	212	12.1
8.5-10	158	9
10.5-12	150	8.6
12.5-20	226	12.9

Holidays among the salaried employees

Salaried employees were surveyed about the management of vacation time at their studios. The picture we can conjure is one of a work environment where the majority of workers are

unlikely to be denied a vacation and are unlikely to have to cancel a vacation that they have already scheduled, but are also unlikely to take the full vacation to which they are entitled. Almost three-quarters of the population can roll their vacation over from one year to the next, but this feature loses significance if the vacation time is regularly left unused.

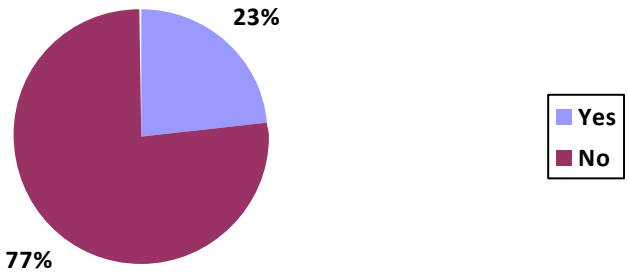
Table 18

How much vacation time are you provided per year? (weeks)

	Paid - Allowed	Unpaid - Allowed	Taken
Mean	3.3	1.28	2.81
Min/Max	0-8	0-52	0-8
Respondents	1572	861	1576

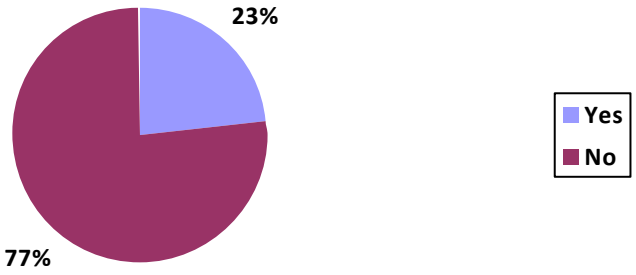
Graph 18

Have you ever been denied a vacation?



Graph 19

Have you ever been asked to cancel a vacation you'd already scheduled?



Compensation: level and mode

Compensation is a sensitive issue in the world of video game developers and it is hotly debated in a community that is very active in the social web. The picture revealed by the data collected is a complex one.

Half of the respondents are generally satisfied with their pay; if we aggregate those who strongly agree and agree to the assertion, we get 51.3% of the respondents to this question. A fifth is neutral while 27.9% are not satisfied with their pay.

The "neutral" answer can have many different meanings, but these questions would need additional detail from a subsequent survey precisely measure satisfaction regarding various dimensions of compensation (i.e., regular hours versus crunch time, occupations, projects, employers)

However, additional regression analysis on the data does indicate that upper management, team leads and quality assurance employees are more likely to agree that their pay is fair than programmers, artists, designers and those who work in business support roles. People who work in 3rd party studios and indies are more likely to agree that their pay is fair than those who work directly for publishers. People who work in small companies (10-49 employees) seem more likely to feel the pay is fair than those in large companies. There was no difference in the pattern of responses for those who work in large companies as compared to medium or tiny companies.

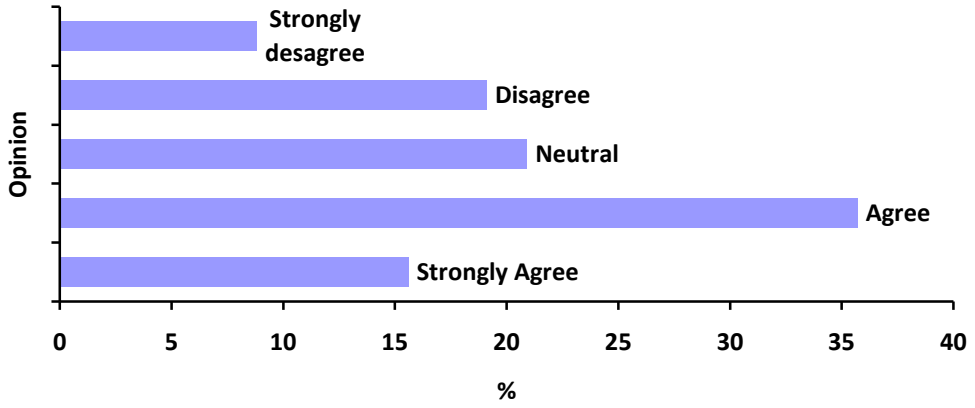
Table 19

I am paid fairly for the number of hours that I work

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	366	15.6
Agree	835	35.7
Neutral	488	20.9
Disagree	446	19.1
Strongly disagree	205	8.8
Total	2340	100

Graph 20

I am paid fairly for the number of hours I work



The issue of bonuses is an important one regarding compensation in the videogame industry. Respondents were asked whether bonuses fairly compensated the work hours that are required. This reveals a very different picture than the 'pay' question above. Here, half of the respondents are generally dissatisfied with the bonus system; less than 20% feel that bonuses are equitable given the work hours required. It is interesting to note, as with the above question, that a relatively large portion of the sample seem on the fence.

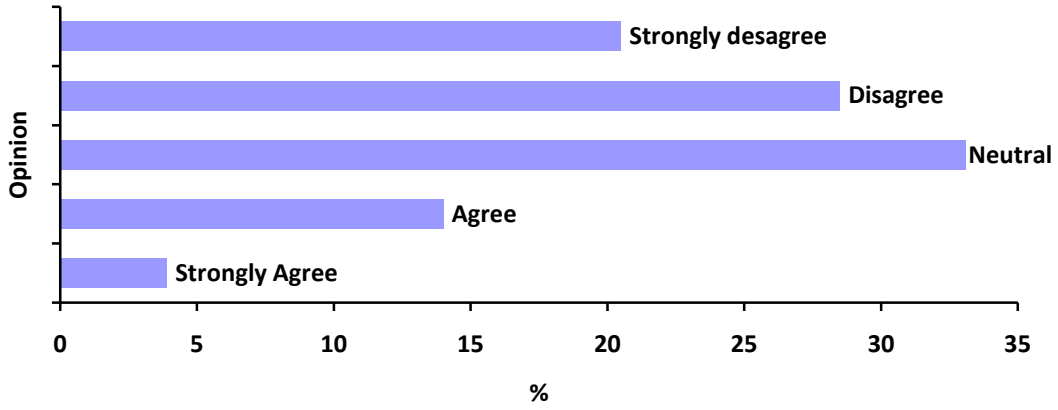
Table 20

Bonuses compensate for the extra work hours that are required

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	91	3.9
Agree	325	14
Neutral	771	33.1
Disagree	663	28.5
Strongly disagree	478	20.5
Total	2328	100

Graph 21

Bonuses do compensate for the extra work hours that are required



Directly linked to the former question is the estimation that one is sharing in the profit of the studio and the success of a game. About the same proportion feel they share in the profits (39%) as those who do not (38%). Again, a large percentage has reported a neutral response which could again be linked to ad hoc or arbitrary systems of calculating and allocating 'performance pay'.

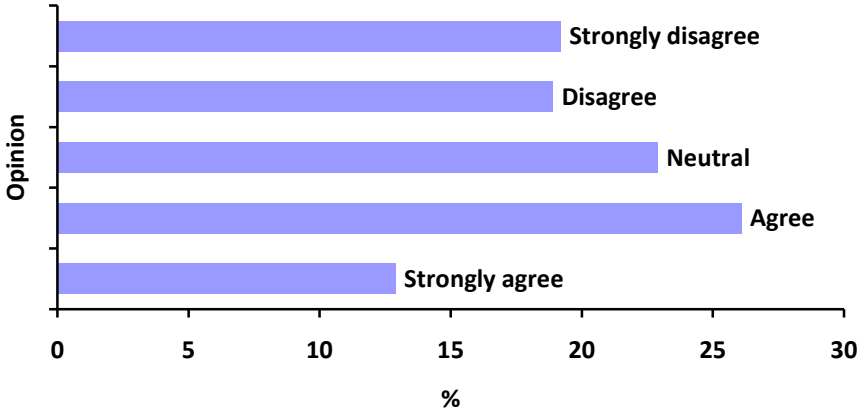
Table 21

I share in the profitability of the company

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	301	12.9
Agree	609	26.1
Neutral	535	22.9
Disagree	442	18.9
Strongly disagree	448	19.2
Total	2335	100

Graph 22

I share in the profitability of the company



Management of crunch time

The issue of overtime or 'crunch time' in the videogame industry is the object of ongoing debate. *Crunch time* is a common term in the industry for periods when everyone is expected to work long hours with little time off in a full scale effort to meet a specific deadline. Salaried employees, freelancers and developers who left the industry were asked a variety of questions about crunch time in addition to the hours spent in crunch discussed above.

Respondents were asked to choose a scenario that best represented the philosophy that their company or work environment has on crunch. In keeping with the answers regarding

hours of work, a large group of respondents (39.1%) are not regularly asked to work overtime and do not experience crunch as a usual practice. About six percent never crunch at all. However, **more than half (54.7%) crunch often and typically as part of a regular schedule**.

This means that crunch times are planned in advance as part of the overall development schedule. Of this population, the majority feel crunch represents a failure in scheduling and should not be part of a planned schedule. Due perhaps to the wording of the survey, 7.3% seem to retain a sense of machismo around crunch – "What others call crunch, we call daily work schedules."

Some of the distribution in the 'no crunch' or 'rare crunch' categories can be attributed to the freelance/self-employed respondents in the sample; they post higher percentages in these two categories than salaried employees (57.1% as opposed to 45.2%). This therefore skews the data somewhat toward a picture of less crunch time. That said, freelancers and the self-employed work within deadlines and often as temporary members of a full-time project team that is housed within a studio. And they show distributions across each of the crunch categories.

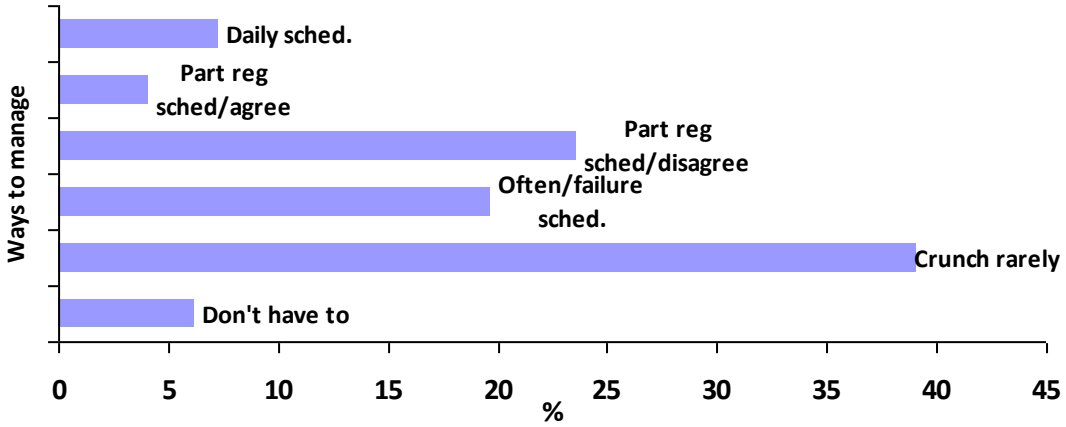
Table 22

How does your company manage crunch time?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
We don't have in crunch time, our schedules allow us to get things done without it	129	6.2
Very rarely in extraordinary circumstances we have to crunch, but we do everything we can to avoid it	816	39.1
We crunch often, but we view it as a failure in scheduling	411	19.7
Crunch is part of our regular schedule and I don't agree that it should be	493	23.6
Crunch is a part of our regular schedule and I think it's great	86	4.1
What others call crunch, we call daily work schedules	153	7.3
Total	2088	100

Graph 23

How does your company manage crunch time?



Failure in scheduling? An *agile* population of developers

The data from this survey provide little additional insight on the challenge of scheduling except to indicate the project management packages and paradigms that are in use in various studios. In the following table, answers can outnumber respondents because respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer as applicable.

Table 23

What best describes the development process at your company (check all that apply)

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Ad hoc or non-existent	639	19
Waterfall	443	20.7
Agile/SCRUM	1043	48.4
Carnegie Mellon University's Team Software Process / Personal Software Process (CMU TSP/PSP)	18	0.8
Don't know	318	14.8
Other (please specify)	85	3.9
Total	2153	100

On the whole, we can picture the 2009 generation of developers as the *Agile* generation. However, what is perhaps most informative in light of the challenges with crunch time is the **number of developers who report ad hoc or non-existent project management regimes (19%) or those who do not know the system that is used to organize and schedule their work (14.8%).**

Is pizza a perk? Compensation during crunch

Respondents were asked whether there is extra compensation for crunch. It is worth noticing that only 9.1% receive formal compensation in wages for overtime (4.3% in IGDA, 2004:19), and we do not know if this compensation is based on the regular wage rate or the premium rate for overtime hours under the various laws in force. A very important group of **43.2% of respondents do not receive any form of compensation for crunch time** (46.85 in IGDA, 2004:19). For the other groups, it is difficult to estimate the level of compensation. Is time off or perks proportional to crunch time? How often are bonuses afforded? These are questions that need more follow-up in subsequent surveys.

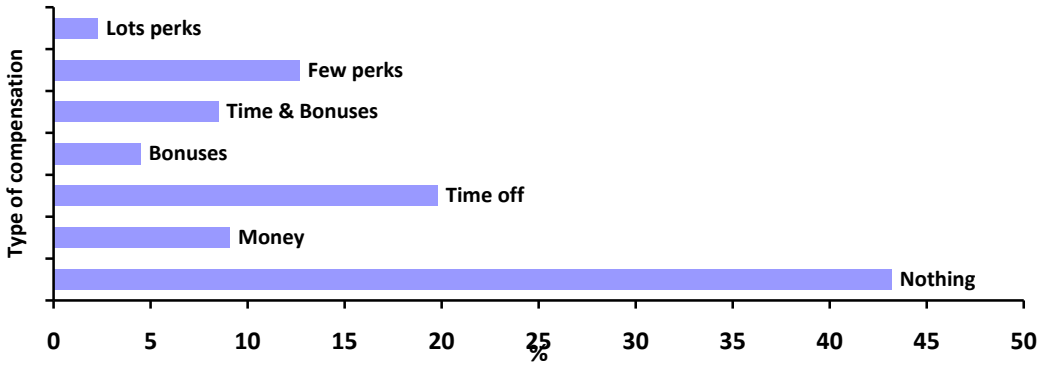
Table 24

Do you receive extra compensation for crunch?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
No	901	43.2
We get paid overtime	191	9.1
We get time off	413	19.8
We get bonuses	94	4.5
We get time off and bonuses	177	8.5
We get a few perks during crunch	265	12.7
We get LOTS of extra perks during crunch	47	2.3
Total	2088	100

Graph 24

Do you receive extra compensation for crunch?



As alluded to above, due to the diversity of the work environments, the outcomes of the final products and the individual developers themselves, it is difficult to place a value judgement on a raw tally of compensation for crunch. For example, even the definition of "perks" has various meanings and levels, from dinner on crunch nights to tickets for movies.

Therefore, respondents were asked whether they feel the compensation is equitable for the amount of crunch provided to their studio. An important proportion of **57.9% do not consider that the compensation for crunch is fair, while almost 40% are satisfied**.

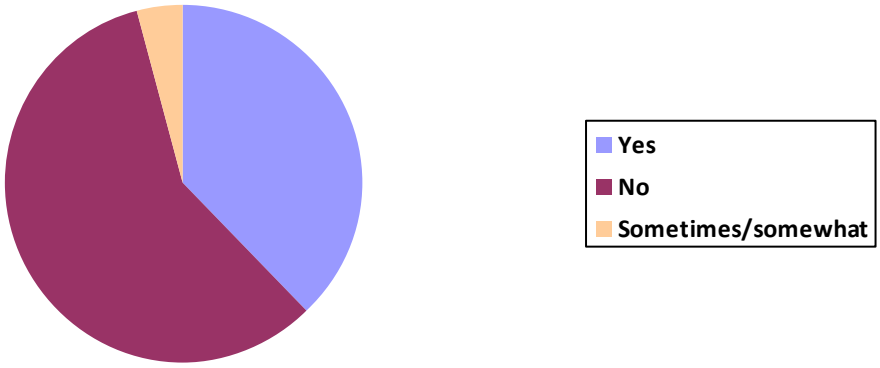
Table 25

Do you feel the compensation is equitable for the amount of crunch?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Yes	724	37.9
No	1104	57.9
Sometimes/somewhat	80	4.2
Total	1908	100

Graph 25

Do you feel the compensation is equitable for the amount of crunch?



Freelancer compensation

Freelancers were asked separately about their compensation. A third of this group is paid by the hour (33.4%), a third is paid by the deliverable regardless of the time involved, and a final third is paid by a combination of these two modes.

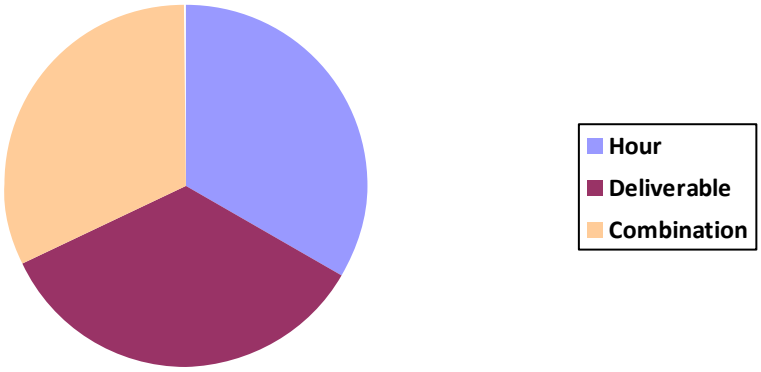
Table 26

How are you paid for your work?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
By the hour	99	33.4
By deliverable	102	34.5
Combination	95	32.1
Total	296	100

Graph 26

How are you paid for your work?



As a complement to the former question, freelancers were also asked specifically if they can get extra pay for crunch, when relevant. A very large population of 80% do not get any compensation for working extra hours, though the notion of regular/extra hours is left to interpretation in a situation devoid of any work contract.

Is crunch necessary?

All respondents including those looking for their first job were asked a critical question in the trade. Is crunch a necessary practice? The results were mixed. **While 34.7% agree or strongly agree that crunch is a necessary part of game development, 45% disagree or strongly disagree**. It is difficult to track any changes in this sentiment from the 2004 survey as the data collected is very different. The 2004 QoL survey had richer content regarding project management in the videogame industry and the factors that influence the need to crunch: inadequate staffing, work organisation problems, schedule planning, formal client's orders' change control policies (IGDA, 2004:18-20).

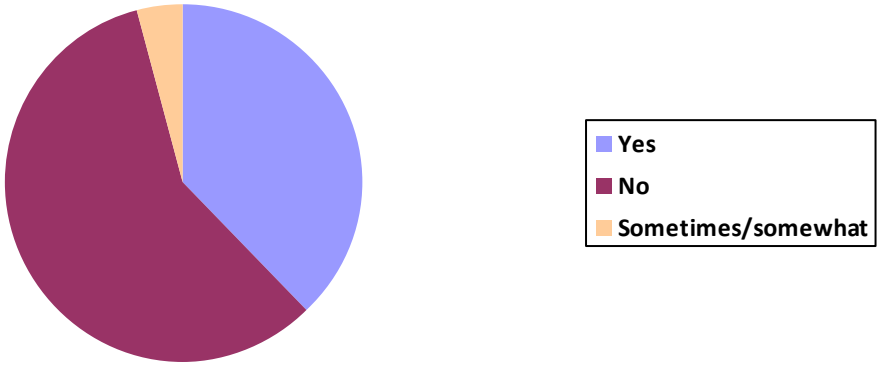
Table 27

Crunch is a necessary part of game development

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	208	8.2
Agree	675	26.5
Neutral	518	20.3
Disagree	645	25.3
Strongly disagree	502	19.7
Total	2548	100

Graph 25

Do you feel the compensation is equitable for the amount of crunch?



A majority of respondents (57.2%) felt that the quality of their work is at least as important in the assessment process as the time that they put in. But that leaves over 40% who sensed some importance in logging the hours. In a similar vein, half of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the sense that their work is appreciated and is recognized. One quarter remained neutral and 26.6% felt that their work was not appreciated and often went unrecognized.

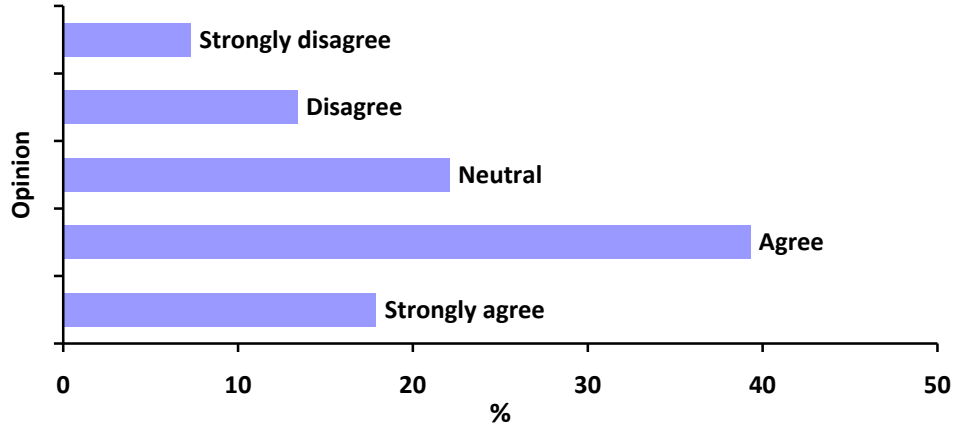
Table 28

I am not judged more by the hours I put in than by the quality of my work

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	417	17.9
Agree	915	39.3
Neutral	515	22.1
Disagree	312	13.4
Strongly disagree	171	7.3
Total	2330	100

Graph 28

I am not judged more by the hours I put in than by the quality of my work



Trusting the industry's health

How do video game developers feel about the industry's health and stability, and about the associated stability of their studios? Respondents were asked if they worry that their job won't be here next month.

Half of the respondents (53.6%) do feel confident about their studio's vitality, while 20.3% do not have any opinion on that matter. Just over a quarter are worried that their job might disappear. These sentiments are likely not misguided given the churn in the industry, the

risks associated with developing a game, the economic recession, and industry-wide refocusing and restructuring toward casual and mobile games and digital distribution.

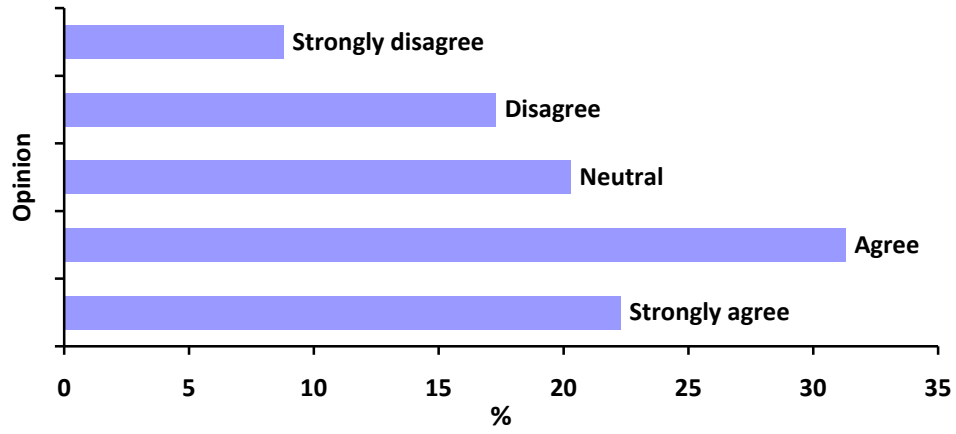
Table 29

I feel confident that my job will be here next month

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	520	22.3
Agree	728	31.3
Neutral	472	20.3
Disagree	404	17.3
Strongly disagree	205	8.8

Graph 29

I feel confident that my job will be here next month



In a similar vein and also related to the data on crunch, project management, and the experience levels of managers and leads, respondents were asked if they trusted the competence of management. A quarter professed being neutral, or preferred not to say while **42% do trust their management and an important 31.5% do not**.

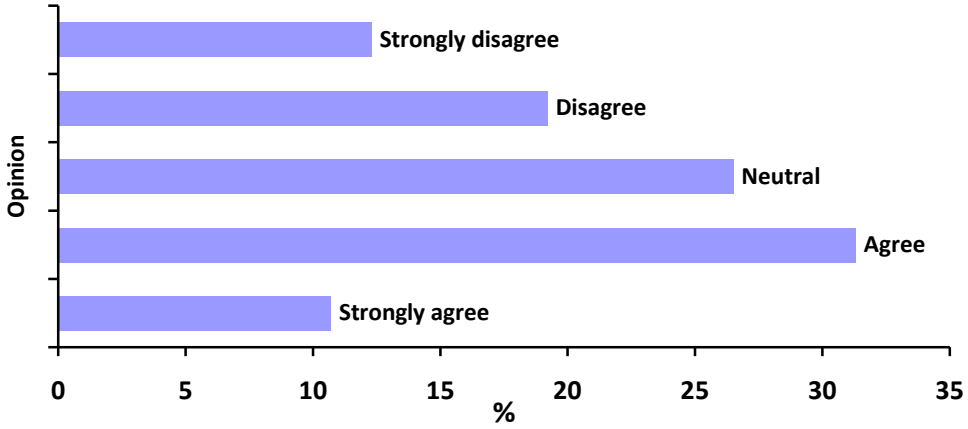
Table 30

I trust in the competence of management

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	250	10.7
Agree	728	31.3
Neutral	618	26.5
Disagree	447	19.2
Strongly disagree	286	12.3
Total	2329	100

Graph 30

I trust in the competence of management



An industry asking too much of its employees?

Respondents were asked whether their sacrifices are worth it to have the job they hold. A quarter of them seemed to consider the sacrifices worthwhile (25.5%), while nearly a third (30.8%) remained neutral of that issue. An important 43.8% consider the sacrifices not to be worth it.

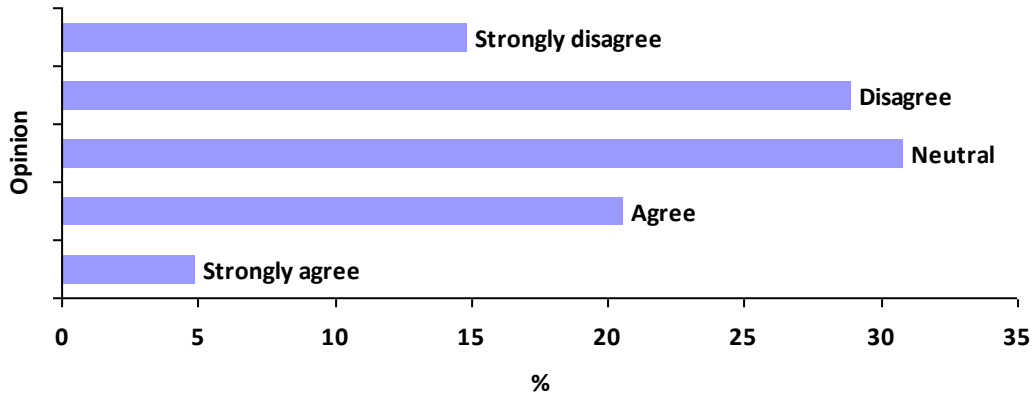
Table 31

Any sacrifices I make for my job are worth it just to work here

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	113	4.9
Agree	480	20.6
Neutral	716	30.8
Disagree	672	28.9
Strongly disagree	346	14.9
Total	2327	100

Graph 31

Any sacrifices I make for my job are worth it just to work here



A sector wherein you can get promoted

Respondents were asked about their opportunities for growth and promotion. A proportion of 45.5% agreed that they have opportunities for promotion or change of job responsibilities in the studio where they work. But still, a quarter of them stay neutral on that topic, while 28.7% do not consider having such possibilities.

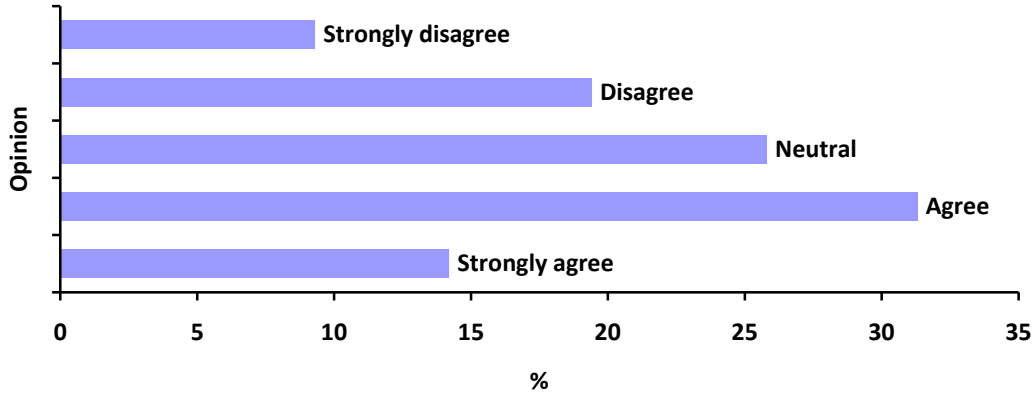
Table 32

I have opportunities for promotion or change of job responsibilities here

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	331	14.2
Agree	729	31.3
Neutral	600	25.8
Disagree	453	19.4
Strongly disagree	217	9.3
Total	2330	100

Graph 32

I have opportunities for promotion or change of job responsibilities here



A sector that allows creators to be creative

A very important stake in a creative industry is whether the workers have creative freedom in their projects.

For the most part, gone are the days of 'jack of all trades' game developers. Job autonomy and creative freedom may be more limited among some groups than others. These facets seem represented in the data. More than half of this sample (57.7%) considered they had creative freedom, while nearly a quarter (23.5%) remained neutral. A small proportion (18.9%) did not feel that they have creative freedom.

Additional regression analysis on the data showed that team leads and those working in business support report more creative freedom than programmers. There was no difference in the feeling toward creative freedom among programmers and the other occupational groups (including upper managers and executives). The people who work at indie studios and in tiny studios are most likely to report creative freedom than those in other studios. Having creative freedom also seems to increase with experience as those with more years in the industry and in their current job were more likely to agree to having creative freedom.

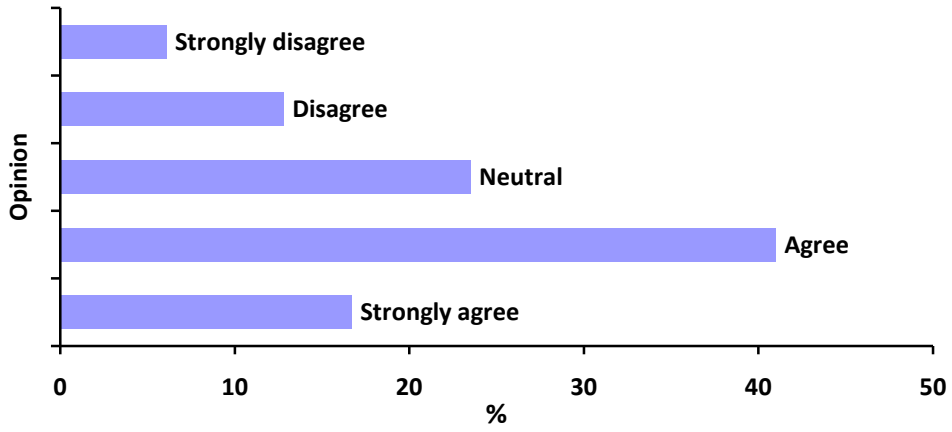
Table 33

I have creative freedom in my work

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	388	16.7
Agree	954	41
Neutral	547	23.5
Disagree	297	12.8
Strongly disagree	141	6.1
Total	2327	100

Graph 33

I have creative freedom in my work



A corollary to creative freedom is engagement in the decisions surrounding the work process. The gatekeeper of this engagement from 'rank and file' developers is the manager

or team lead. Employee input is also important in the post mortems that seem to be common practice in the industry. To this end, respondents were asked whether management seeks their input and acts on it. Half of the respondents agree or strongly agree that their input is sought and acted upon (49.5%).

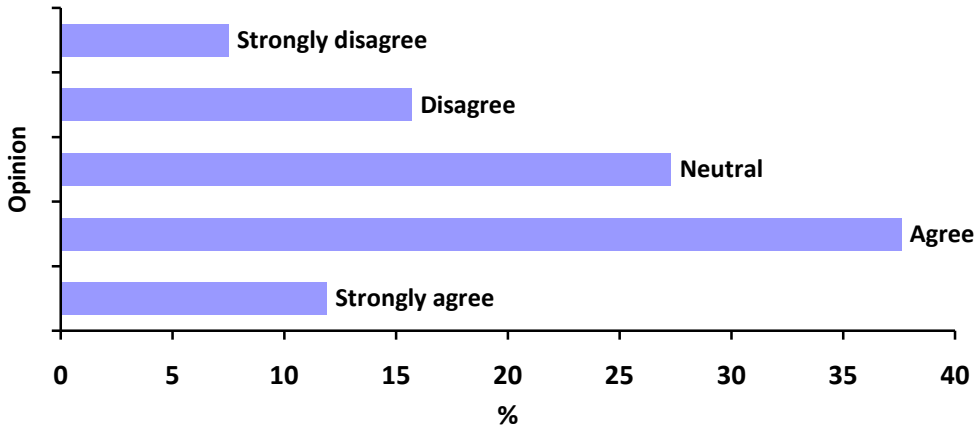
Table 34

Management seeks my input and acts on it

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	278	11.9
Agree	877	37.6
Neutral	636	27.3
Disagree	365	15.7
Strongly disagree	175	7.5
Total	2331	100

Graph 34

Management seeks my input and acts on it



It is well known that the video game industry and game developers themselves sometimes face hostile messages from the media and the public regarding video games. In the face of this, nearly two thirds (62.1%) of the respondents feel proud of the outcomes of their work, while nearly a quarter (23.5%) remains neutral on that issue. A small 14.4% do not share this pride.

Examining this question for each type of organization shows a similar pattern of response with some differences. More freelancers/self-employed reported pride in the games they make (72.6%) than other groups. The lowest number of respondents who are proud of the games they make are found in 3rd party studios and 'other' studios such as middleware (52.6% and 50%, respectively).

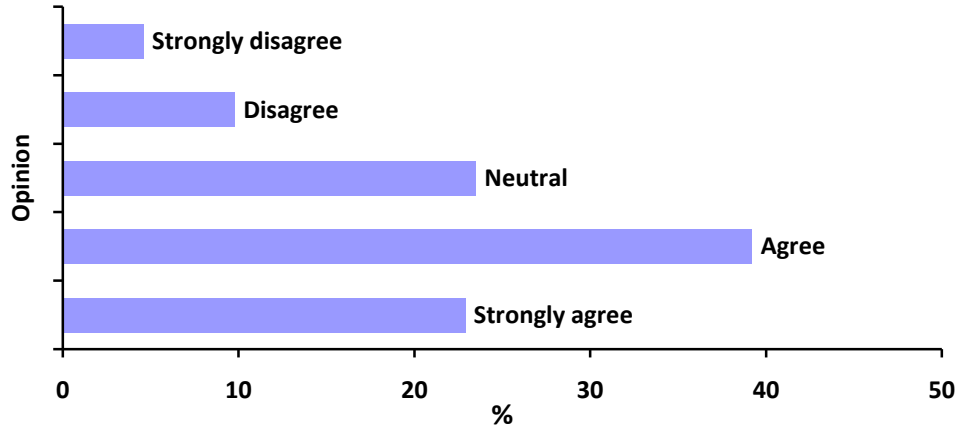
Table 35

I'm really proud of the games I make

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	533	22.9
Agree	912	39.2
Neutral	548	23.5
Disagree	228	9.8
Strongly disagree	107	4.6
Total	2328	100

Graph 35

I'm really proud of the games I make



Respondents were asked if they enjoyed their work as fun. In general, they strongly substantiate such a statement: 70.4% of them agree or strongly agree, while 22.2% remain neutral. A small 7.4% do not agree on that point of view.

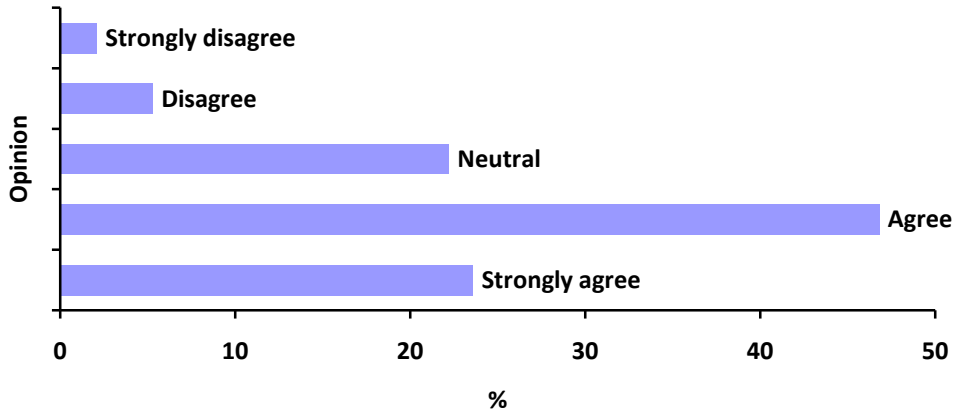
Table 36

My work is a lot of fun

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	551	23.6
Agree	1093	46.8
Neutral	518	22.2
Disagree	124	5.3
Strongly disagree	49	2.1
Total	2335	100

Graph 36

My work is a lot of fun



Another very important component of a creative and innovative industry is the holistic or big picture sense of the work or the project. It is difficult to innovate or be creative in one's own sphere without an understanding of what is possible in interdependent spheres. Respondents were thus asked whether they know what is going on outside their immediate work area.

Here, the population shows an important polarization, as 39.2% agree or strongly agree with the statement, 38.3% disagree or strongly disagree and a quarter (22.5%) remain neutral. This is an important finding for managers, leads and individual workers in the video game industry because it signals that a lot of people are working in silos or cones of silence. They

are not appreciating the scope of the project, have limited sense of how their work contributes, and are likely not engaging in sufficient dialogue across disciplinary boundaries.

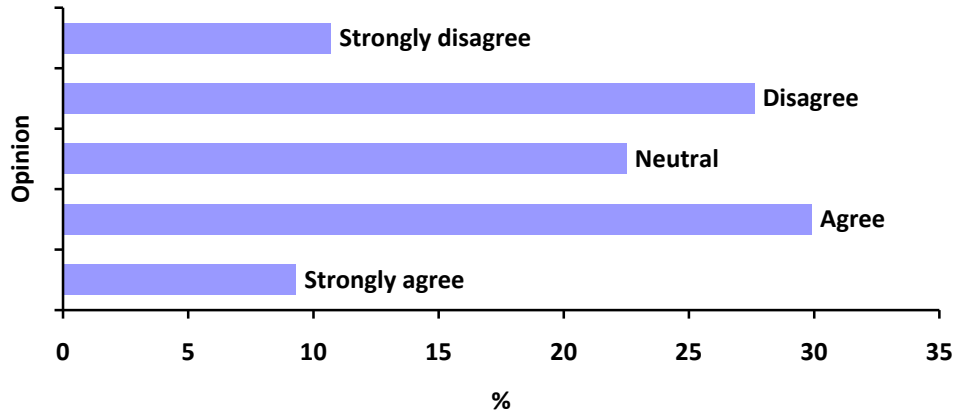
Table 37

I feel that I know what is going on outside my immediate work area

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	217	9.3
Agree	695	29.9
Neutral	524	22.5
Disagree	643	27.6
Strongly disagree	249	10.7
Total	2328	100

Graph 37

I feel that I know what is going on outside my immediate work area



Factors of burnout

The QoL 04 report devoted a significant amount of space to discussion of burnout and it remains an important risk factor in industries that make it difficult to achieve and balance work and life commitments. **The risk of burnout remains high** given the data presented earlier regarding the average age and experience level of developers, and the data on

crunch. The 2009 survey asked some more specific questions related to the individual factors that contribute to feelings of burnout or poor quality of work/life.

Survey respondents were asked about their ability to complete their tasks before they are pulled away to work on new or additional tasks. The data are split. Just over one-third (34.8%) feel that they are never able to finish a task before being pulled away to work on something else, while 38.4% do feel they are able to achieve task completion. About a quarter of the sample remained neutral; likely indicating a mix of experiences where sometimes they can complete tasks without demanding pressures and other times they are pulled in multiple directions.

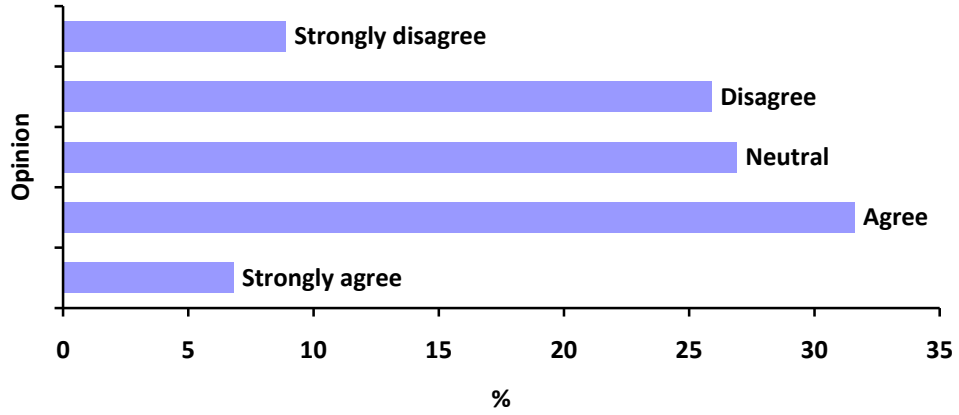
Table 38

I always finish one thing before I'm pulled away to work on something else

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	157	6.8
Agree	735	31.6
Neutral	625	26.9
Disagree	601	25.9
Strongly disagree	206	8.9
Total	2324	100

Graph 38

I always finish one thing before I'm pulled away to work on something else



Closely linked to the demands of multi-tasking is the feeling that one can have more work to do than time to do it. In this question, respondents show a clearer dissatisfaction with the time they're allowed to complete their work. **Over half (57.5%) feel that they do not have enough time to do the work they are assigned** and only 16.6% feel that they do have enough time.

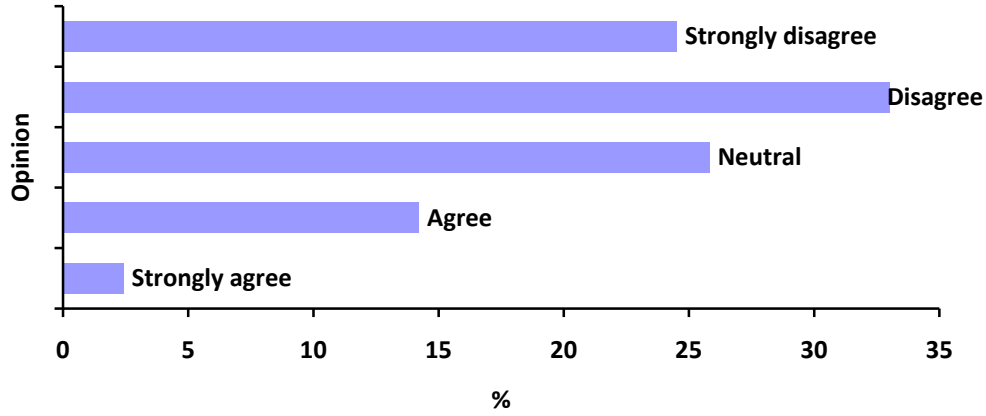
Table 39

I have enough time to do my work

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	57	2.4
Agree	332	14.2
Neutral	602	25.8
Disagree	769	33
Strongly disagree	570	24.5
Total	2330	100

Graph 39

I have time enough to do my work



A third factor that is related to the ability to successfully complete one's work in a timely way is the sense of mastery over the task. In this matter, we find that the majority of developers (67.8%) feel skilled and competent to complete the tasks they're assigned. That said 20% of

the respondents to this question remained neutral.

Given the high rate of neutral answers throughout this survey, it is unclear if these responses are entirely valid. It could be that respondents chose the option of least resistance in order to proceed more quickly through the survey, or as a skipping mechanism. On the other hand, if we are to take these values as truth, 1 in 5 developers is at least sometimes feeling out of their depth when assigned tasks.

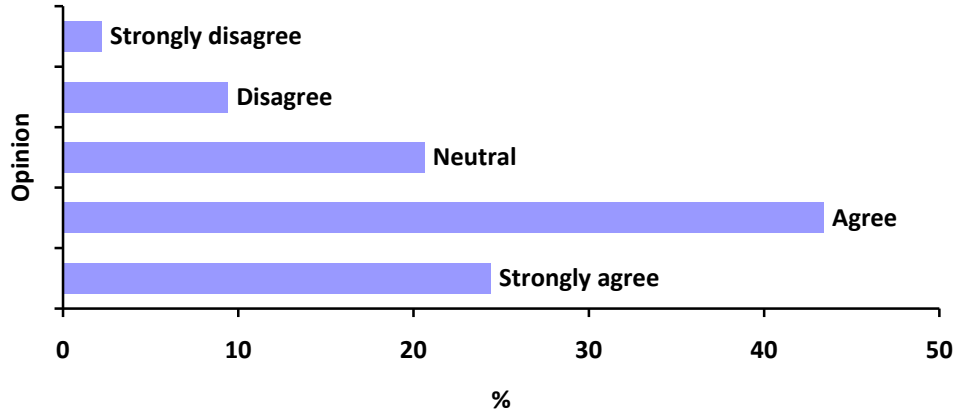
Table 40

I am often assigned work I feel qualified to complete

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	567	24.4
Agree	1010	43.4
Neutral	480	20.6
Disagree	219	9.4
Strongly disagree	51	2.2
Total	2327	100

Graph 40

I am often assigned work I feel qualified to complete



Respondents were asked whether they can afford to make mistakes in their work environment. Slightly more than half of the respondents (53.3%) feel that there is room for mistakes at their job, while a quarter (26.4%) remain neutral on that issue and 20% feel that

there is no room to make mistakes. It is interesting to note that there is a significant correlation between these last two questions. The sense of being unqualified to complete a task is related to the sense that there is no room for mistakes on the job. This reinforces the sense of a vulnerable 20% of the respondents.

Additional regression analysis on the question of making mistakes highlights a few differences in the sample as a whole. Upper managers and team leads are more likely to say that there is no room for mistakes than programmers and the other occupational classifications. The tendency to feel there is no room for mistakes increases with years of experience in the industry (this then is likely conflated with positions in management).There were no significant differences across studio size, but those who work in middleware or outsourcing studios were more likely to report no room for error than other company types.

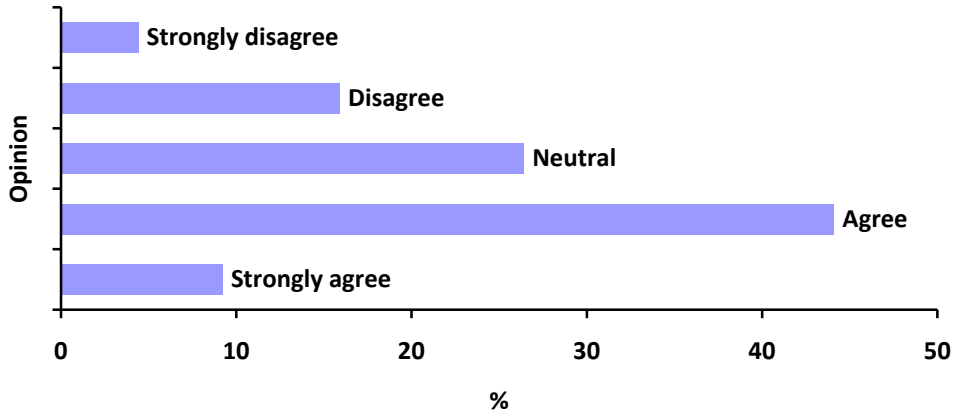
Table 41

There is room for mistakes at my job

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	214	9.2
Agree	1024	44.1
Neutral	612	26.4
Disagree	370	15.9
Strongly disagree	102	4.4
Total	2322	100

Graph 41

There is room for mistakes at my job



In addition to the above questions, respondents were explicitly asked about the burden of balancing their work and home responsibilities. Though slightly over 40% seem to be coping, over one-third (36.5%) felt that the attempt to balance the competing demands of work and life left them feeling emotionally drained and a significant population remained neutral. Considering that the vast majority of this sample does not have children and few would yet be dealing with ailing parents, this is a high figure among such a young population.

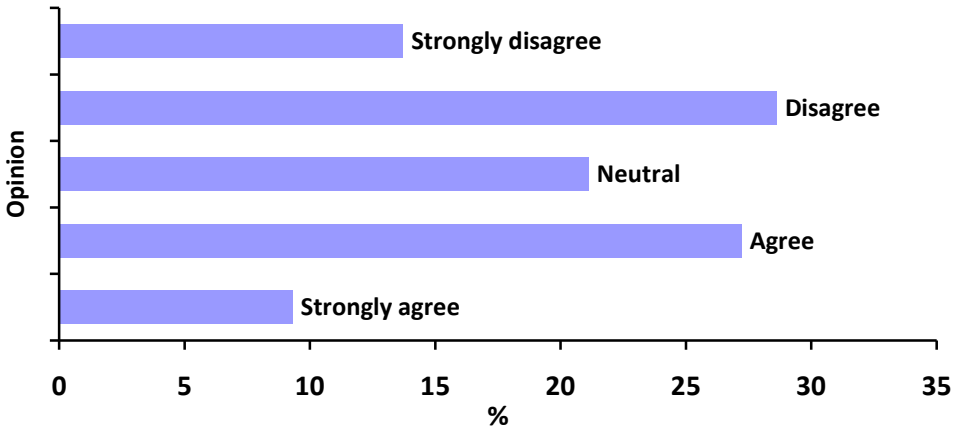
Table 42

The tension of trying to balance my work and home life leave me feeling emotionally drained

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	194	9.3
Agree	567	27.2
Neutral	440	21.1
Disagree	597	28.6
Strongly disagree	286	13.7
Total	2084	100

Graph 42

The tension of trying to balance my work and home life leave me feeling emotionally drained



BALANCING WORK AND PRIVATE LIFE

In addition to examining the quality of the work and working environment, the 2009 Quality of Life survey asked respondents a set of 24 questions relating to work-life balance. As above, those seeking their first job were excluded from these questions.

Passion for work

Respondents were asked whether they enjoyed work more than leisure time. A majority of the population seems to enjoy both, as 54% disagree with such a statement. It's worth noticing, though, that a third is neutral towards such a statement and that 12.7% agree.

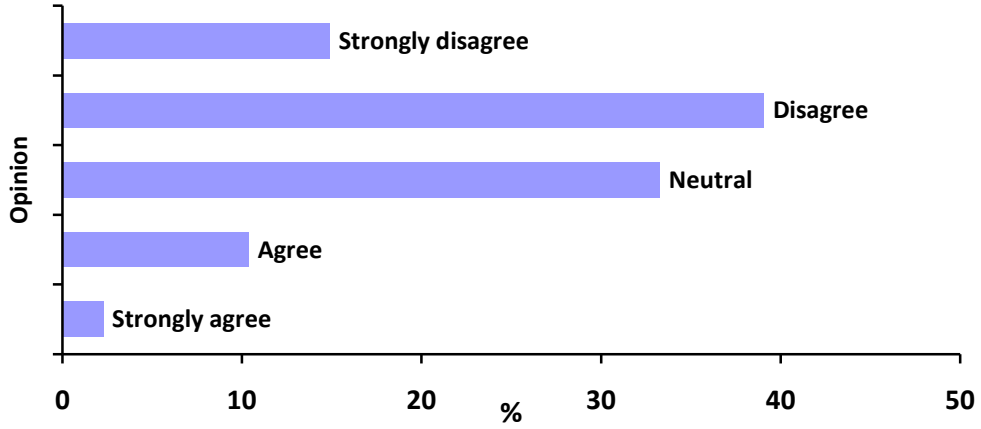
Table 43

I enjoy work more than leisure time

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	48	2.3
Agree	220	10.4
Neutral	705	33.3
Disagree	828	39.1
Strongly disagree	316	14.9
Total	2117	100

Graph 43

I enjoy work more than leisure time



Respondents were asked whether they have to force themselves to go to work. Consistent with the former question, 66.4% of them disagree, while a smaller proportion than usual stay neutral (18.5%) on that issue. A small 15.1% feel like forcing themselves into going to work.

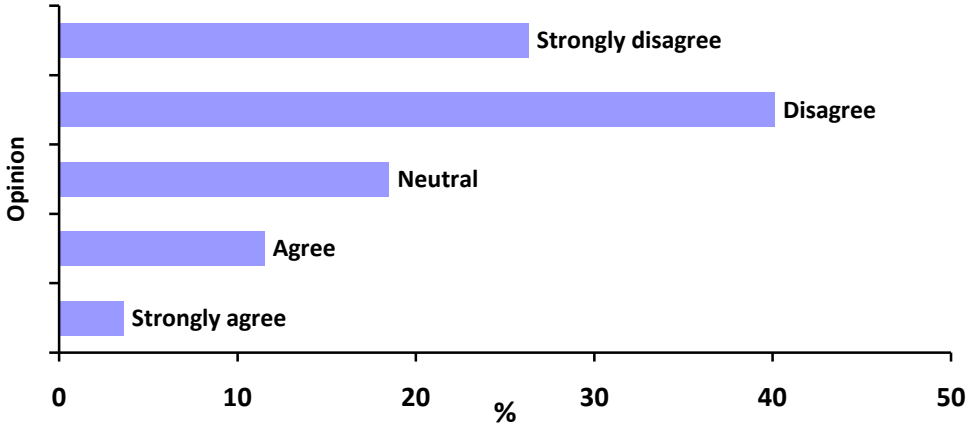
Table 44

Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	76	3.6
Agree	246	11.5
Neutral	394	18.5
Disagree	854	40.1
Strongly disagree	561	26.3
Total	2131	100

Graph 44

Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work



Respondents were also asked about a long-held representation of game developers - that people love games so much they turn their hobby into a job. Some of this has already been evidenced in the listed reasons for would-be developers to enter the industry and the relationship that current developers have with their work. The popular representation seems to hold at least partly true, as 61.4% of the respondents agree or strongly agree, while a smaller than usual 19.6% remain neutral on that issue.

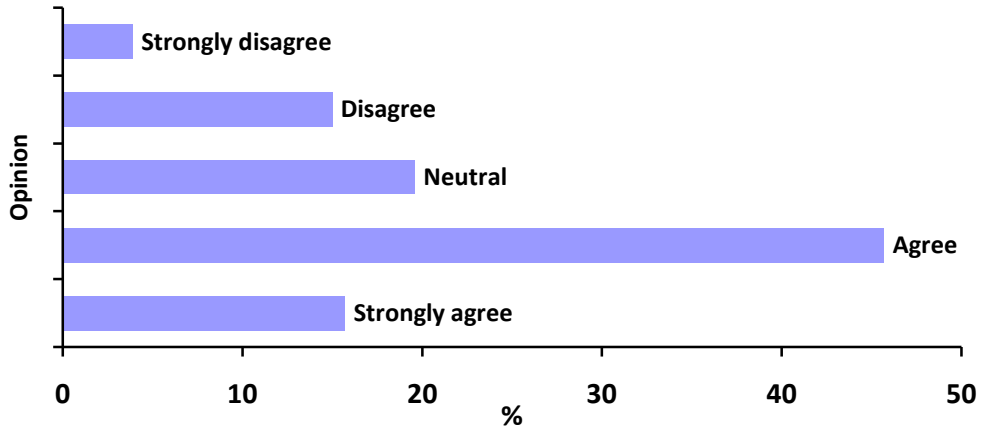
Table 45

My interests and hobbies are work-related

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	335	15.7
Agree	972	45.7
Neutral	417	19.6
Disagree	320	15
Strongly disagree	84	3.9
Total	2128	100

Graph 45

My interests and hobbies are work-related



In keeping with the former question, respondents were asked whether they tend to socialize with the people they work with; a majority of them do, as 56.8% agree or strongly agree to this statement.

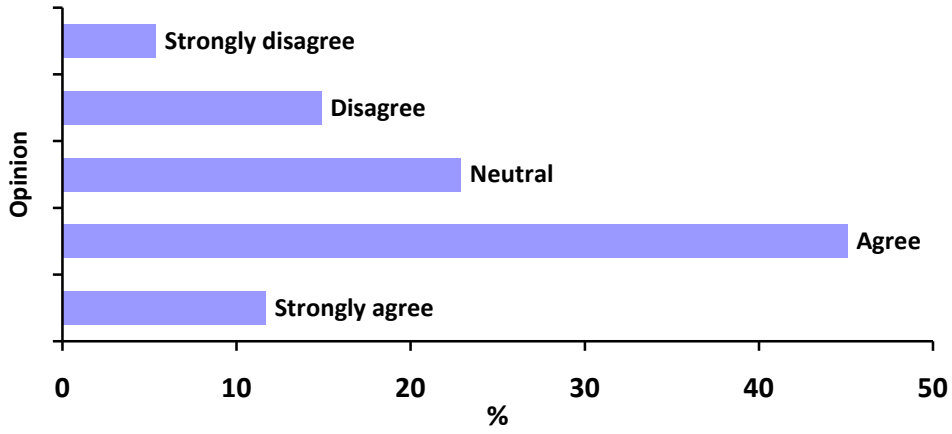
Table 46

I tend to socialize with the people I work with

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	248	11.7
Agree	957	45.1
Neutral	486	22.9
Disagree	316	14.9
Strongly disagree	115	5.4
Total	2122	100

Graph 46

I tend to socialize with the people I work with



Respondents were asked whether they would work overtime even if the schedule didn't demand it. For 46.2% of the respondents it could be said that they work long hours willingly, while a quarter (23.3%) remain neutral on that issue. A lesser part of 30.5% would not work overtime if the schedule did not demand it.

This willingly worked overtime variable is not correlated with sex (that is to say that women and men show no difference on that matter), but it is correlated with years in the industry. Less experienced developers are more likely to agree to this statement than more experienced developers.

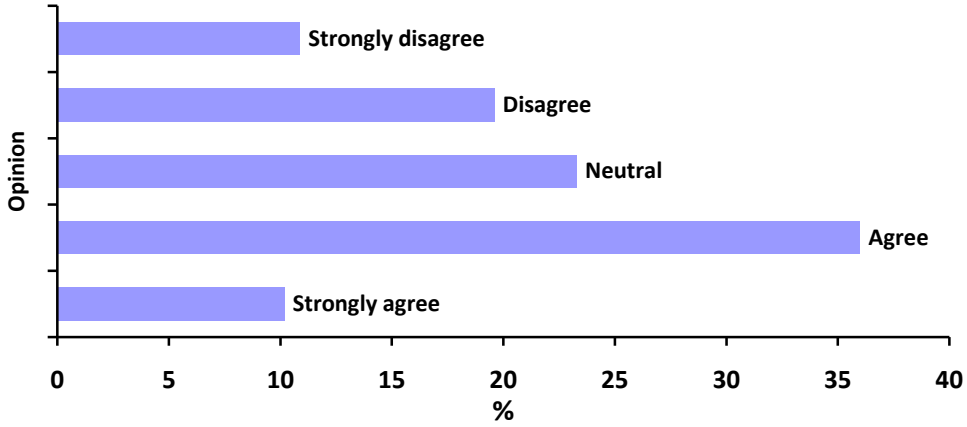
Table 47

I'd work overtime even if the schedule didn't demand it

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	237	10.2
Agree	840	36
Neutral	543	23.3
Disagree	456	19.6
Strongly disagree	255	10.9
Total	2331	100

Graph 47

I'd work overtime even if the schedule didn't demand it



Does work spillover on leisure time?

A key question in examining work-life balance is the impact of work on home or social life. The following Table 48 showcases the results for six questions addressing this topic. Overall, game developers face challenges with respect to work-life balance; however it may be less than expected. More than half are too tired after work to do the things they would like to do. One-quarter are preoccupied at home and 30% are irritable, but the majority are not. Over one-third (36.3%) feel that work interferes with their ability to spend time with their family and a quarter have a hard time dragging themselves away from their work to go

home. Only 9.3% feel that their family is pulling them away from work that they want to do.

It is not possible to say exactly whether these figures are better or worse than for other industries and occupations. As the IGDA report noted in 2004, it is not fair or accurate to say that the video game industry has cornered the market on long hours or stressful working conditions. Workers and their families across the board seem to be reporting increased levels of stress due to the challenges of balancing their work and non-work commitments and priorities. However, these data highlight specific identifiable challenges within the video game industry to which there could be a concerted response.

Table 48

Perceptions of work-life balance - 1

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
After work I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do	272 12.8%	829 39%	413 19.4%	495 23.3%	115 5.4%	2124
My family complains that I am preoccupied with work whenever I am home	93 4.8%	393 20.2%	417 21.4%	698 35.8%	349 17.9%	1950
Because work is so demanding I am often irritable at home	132 6.3%	497 23.8%	442 21.2%	672 32.2%	342 16.4%	2085
My job interferes with my ability to spend time with my family	171 8.9%	528 27.4%	494 25.6%	545 28.3%	188 9.8%	1926
I feel that my family is always pulling me away from work I want to do	30 1.5%	152 7.8%	385 19.7%	901 46.1%	485 24.8%	1953
I have a hard time dragging myself away from work and going home	69 3.3%	433 20.6%	548 26.1%	729 34.7%	320 15.2%	2099

In some respects, a worried group

A number of additional questions help to build the profile of work-life balance. Respondents were asked whether they felt comfortable taking time away from work to be with their family. While 26.5% agree or strongly agree, 47.2% disagree or strongly disagree.

Mirroring the former question, respondents were asked whether they felt perfectly comfortable taking time away from their family to be at work. More respondents do feel comfortable taking time away from their family (43.8%) than not (34.7%).

Respondents were asked if they worry whether they should work less and spend more time with their children. Much more respondents agree or strongly agree (43.4%) than disagree (29.3%), which reveals an important concern, at least among parents, regarding working time.

Important concerns regarding working time are revealed for developers as a whole through two additional questions. Respondents were asked whether they needed more time for themselves. More respondents agreed (61.3%) than disagreed (16%). When asked whether they needed more time to be with friends, more than half agreed or strongly agreed (53.6%), while only 18.3% did not.

Table 49

Perceptions of work-life balance - 2

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I feel perfectly comfortable taking time away from work to be with family and friends	85 4.2%	452 22.3%	532 26.3%	693 34.35%	261 12.9%	2023
I feel perfectly comfortable taking time away from my family to be at work	215 10.2%	705 33.6%	451 21.5%	561 26.7%	168 8%	2100
I worry whether I should work less and spend more time with my children	145 13.5%	321 29.9%	294 27.4%	220 20.5%	94 8.8%	1074
I need more time for myself	409 19.2%	895 42.1%	483 22.7%	293 13.8%	46 2.2%	2126
I need more time to be with my friends	313 14.8%	822 38.8%	594 28.1%	333 15.7%	55 2.6%	2117

Does leisure time spillover on work?

Some questions mirror former ones asked about work spillover to see if the reverse could be at stake in the life of videogame developers. Respondents were asked whether they were often too tired at work because of all the things they had to do at home. A majority of respondents (65.3%) are not, and a small 14.2% agreed or strongly agreed.

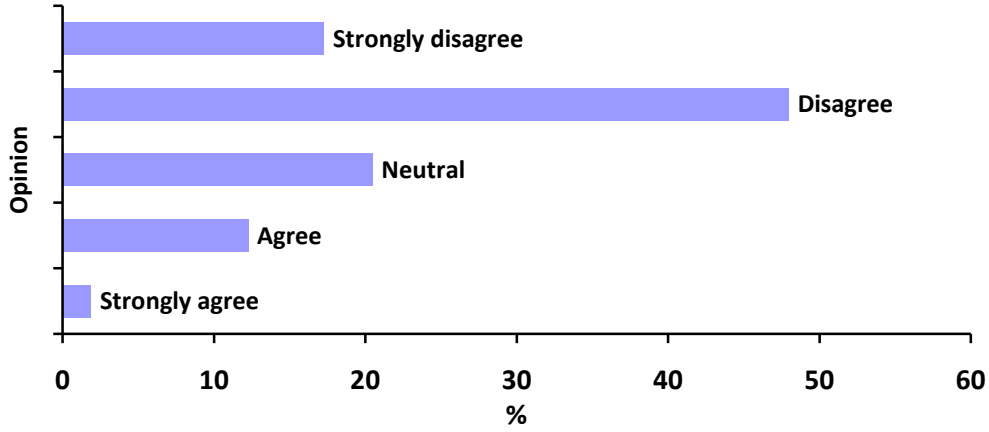
Table 50

I'm often too tired at work because of all the things I have to do at home

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	40	1.9
Agree	256	12.3
Neutral	428	20.5
Disagree	1003	48
Strongly disagree	362	17.3
Total	2089	100

Graph 48

I'm often too tired at work because of all the things I have to do at home



Respondents were asked whether their supervisor complained that they spend too much time on their personal life at work. This seems not to be at stake, as a strong majority of 84.3% respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

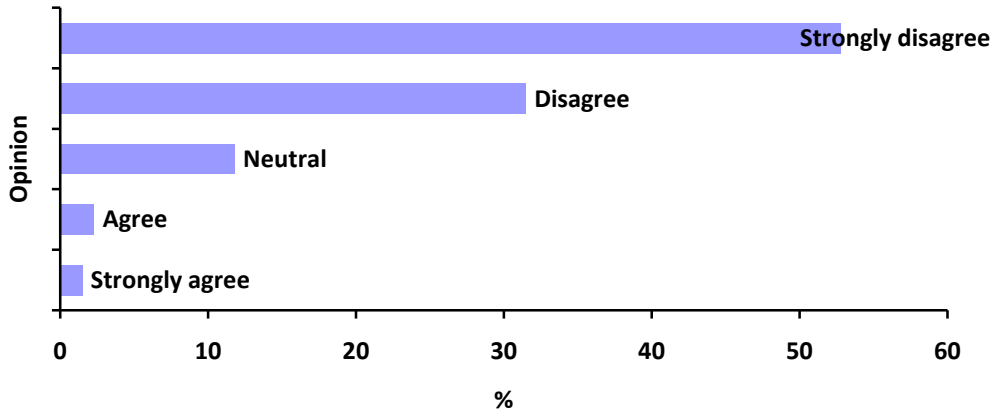
Table 51

My supervisor complains that I spend too much time on my personal life at work

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	29	1.5
Agree	45	2.3
Neutral	227	11.8
Disagree	605	31.5
Strongly disagree	1015	52.8
Total	1921	100

Graph 49

My supervisor complains that I spend too much time on my personal life at work



Respondents were asked whether their family fully supports their career and accepts how much time it takes. A majority of 66% among the respondents are fully supported in that matter. The questions' wording is quite different from the QoL 04 survey, but families seem to better support the careers of videogame developers in 2009. An assertion like "You work too much and don't spend enough time with me and the children" was supported by 61.5% of respondents in 2004 (IGDA, 2004:18). Though recall above that almost half do worry that they should be spending more time with their children and less at work.

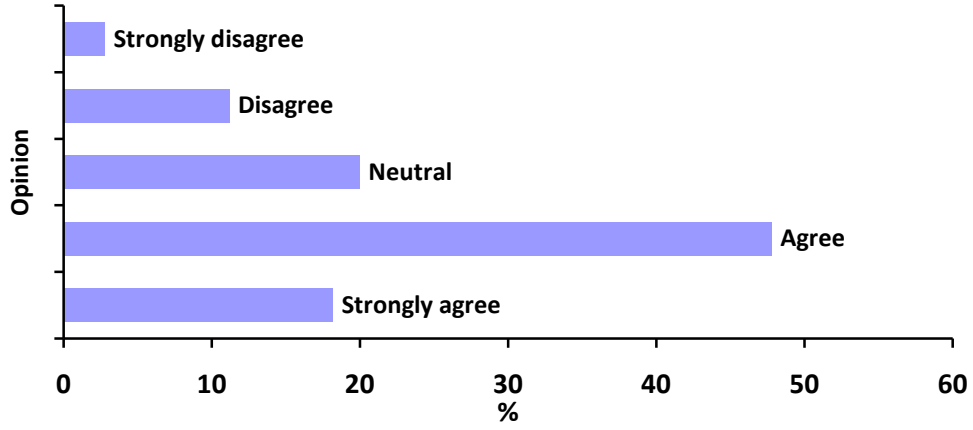
Table 52

My family fully supports my career and accepts how much time it takes

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	369	18.2
Agree	968	47.8
Neutral	406	20
Disagree	226	11.2
Strongly disagree	57	2.8
Total	2026	100

Graph 50

My family fully supports my career and accepts how much time it takes



Respondents were asked whether they worried that the time they spend with their family could diminish their chances of promotion at work. Nearly one quarter of the respondents (21%) shared such a worry, while a majority of 60.1% did not.

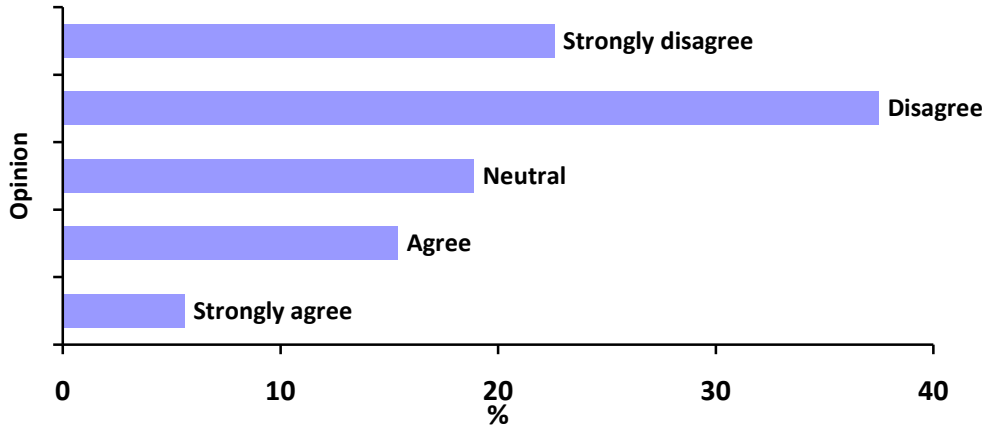
Table 53

I worry that the time I spend with my family is diminishing my chances of promotion at work

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	107	5.6
Agree	292	15.4
Neutral	359	18.9
Disagree	712	37.5
Strongly disagree	429	22.6
Total	1899	100

Graph 51

I worry that the time I spend with my family is diminishing my chances of promotion at work



Just out of time?

Two questions asked about time in a more global sense. First, respondents were asked whether they felt like they were getting behind in both spheres – home and work. Similarly they were asked if they had enough time in their day to accomplish everything that they needed to do. The data are similar; 42.3% do feel constantly behind in both spheres and 56% feel that they do not have enough time in their day.

Table 54

Perceptions of time

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I'm constantly behind at work and at home and never have enough time for either	228 10.7	672 31.6	485 22.8	601 28.3	139 6.5	2125
There is enough time in my day to accomplish everything I need to do	68 3.2	369 17.5	493 23.4	852 40.4	329 15.6	2111

A wonderful life after all?

As an omnibus question, respondents were asked whether they felt like they have the best of both worlds. Given the data presented above, this statement is too good to be true for 44.3% of the sample. Still, a considerable 25.6% agree or strongly agree!

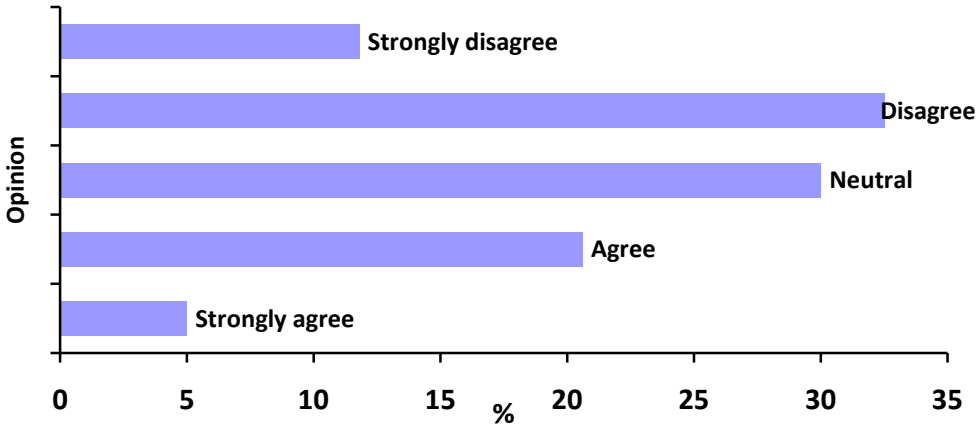
Table 55

I have the best of both worlds and feel my work/life balance is ideal

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Strongly agree	106	5
Agree	437	20.6
Neutral	636	30
Disagree	689	32.5
Strongly disagree	251	11.8
Total	2119	100

Graph 52

I have the best of both worlds and feel my work/life balance is ideal



To sum it up, Quality of Life Scales

The survey listed 20 questions under the heading Quality of Work and 24 questions under the heading Work/Life Balance, most of which were separately discussed in the sections above. Many of these questions were taken from established academic scales used to measure job satisfaction, job-related tension, work values, and work-life conflict (for a review of these scales see Fields, 2002).

To sum up the feeling of the respondents to this section regarding **quality of work**, a new variable was constructed. As necessary questions were reverse coded so that a score of 1 always reflected strong disagreement with a positively worded statement and a score of 5 always indicated strong agreement with a positively worded statement. These numbers were then summed for each of the 2253 respondents and averaged to achieve an omnibus quality of work score.

This final mean score was 3.22, barely above the mid-point of 3 on a scale where 1=very low quality of work and 5=very high quality of work.

A similar procedure was carried out for the **work/life balance** questions. On the scale 1=very poor work-life balance and 5=very good work-life balance, the final mean sore was 3.08.

LABOR ISSUES - UNIONISATION

Many controversial situations have shaken up the industry, particularly regarding long uncompensated hours of crunch time. Challenges around crediting standards, intellectual property, non-compete and non-disclosure agreements, and health and safety (i.e., stress, burnout, and musculoskeletal disorders) are also common.

Developers have faced and responded to these challenge with a mix of individual and collective means in both traditional and original ways. At the traditional, individual level, developers regularly 'vote with their feet' and leave studios or the industry when dissatisfied. Others use their employee voice to individually bargain better conditions for themselves, or to discuss issues with managers or human resource departments.

On the collective level, the IGDA itself exists to bring workers of the industry together to improve their prospects and shape the industry in a positive way. Developers have also come together to launch class action law suits in the USA and had some success in that regard. The following set of questions probes developer knowledge about labour legislation and their feelings toward collective action.

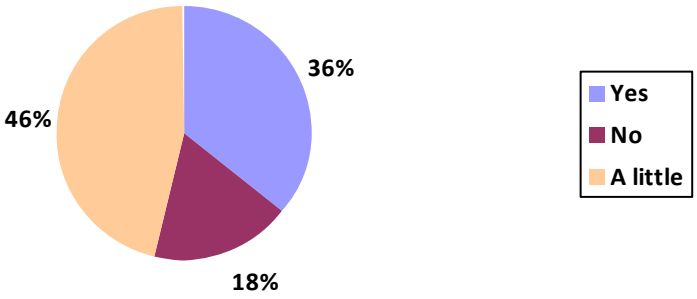
A poorly informed population

The video game industry is worldwide and developers are a nationally and internationally mobile workforce. For that reason, it is relevant to ask them whether they know the labor laws *where they live*.

Of the 2506 respondents who answered this question, a majority (64.2%) are poorly informed about labor laws in the country or region where they live.

Graph 53

Do you know the labor laws where you live?



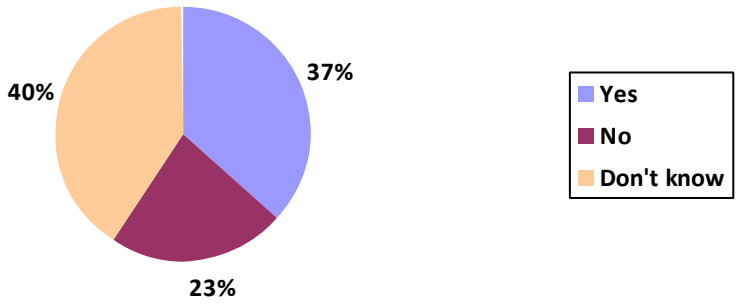
A poorly protected population

All respondents were asked whether they feel the labor laws where they live offer sufficient

protection should a grievance arise between an employer and employee. **A majority (63.4%) do not feel protected enough by the labor laws**, should an argument oppose them to their studio's management.

Graph 54

Do you feel the labor laws where you live offer sufficient protection should a grievance arise between an employer and employee?

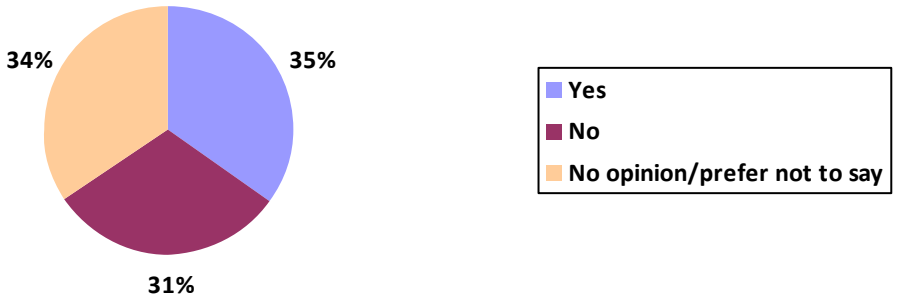


Unionising?

All respondents were asked about their support to a hypothetical unionization vote as a way to better their quality of life. The responses are divided in three thirds regarding this issue, with no clear dominant group. It is important to note the sample size and the skip rate here and in all the unionization questions. This question allowed respondents to choose no opinion/prefer not to say, and in this respect provided an easy way to avoid this controversial topic. Though 2506 did provide a valid response to the question, one-third of the sample chose this route.

Graph 55

Some developers believe the only way to improve the quality of life in the industry is to unionize. If a vote were held today, how would you vote?



Employed respondents were asked how they thought their colleagues would respond to a unionization vote as a way to better their quality of life. Just over one-quarter feel that their coworkers would vote against a union while about 20% felt their coworkers would be in favour of a union. This is interesting to contrast to the figures above; **workers in the video game industry seem to perceive more negativity toward unionization on behalf of their**

coworkers than actually exists.

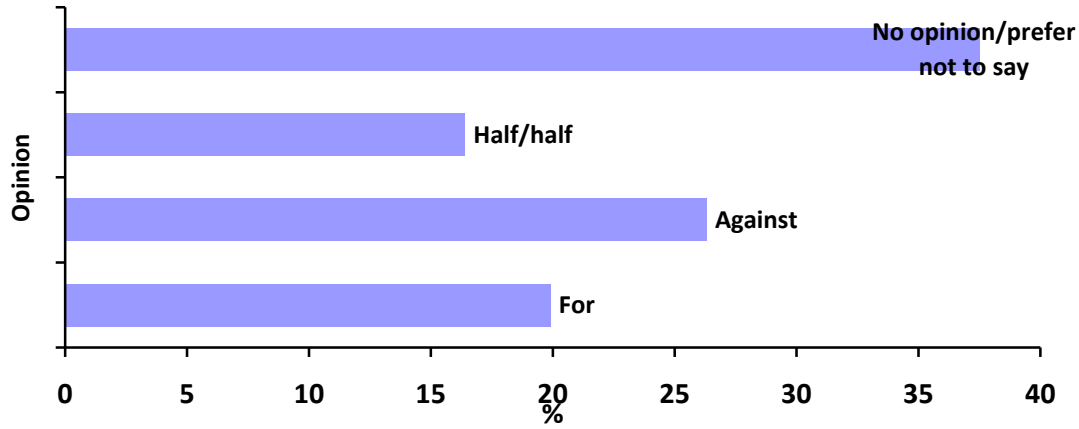
Table 56

How do you think the people at your company vote?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
For	319	19.9
Against	422	26.3
Half/half	264	16.4
No opinion/prefer not to say	602	37.5
Total	1607	100

Graph 56

How do you think the people at your company vote?



Employed respondents were also asked about their reaction to a hypothetical unionising initiative taking place in their studio. A bigger proportion would welcome the union (34.2%) than the group opposing (24.3%), but again, a very large group took no clear stand on this topic either because they don't care, or because they fear to say.

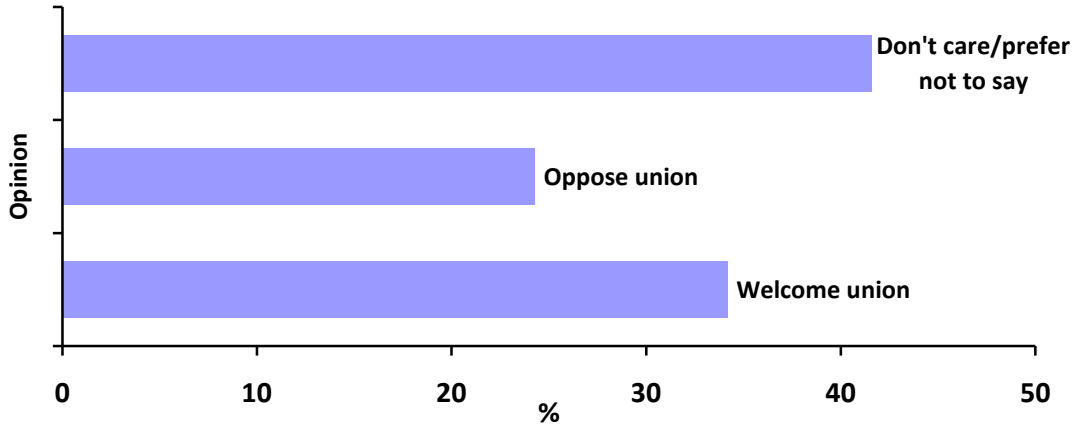
Table 57

If a group of employees tried to start a union at your company, how would you react?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Welcome the union	549	34.2
Oppose the union with information	390	24.3
Don't care/prefer not to say	668	41.6
Total	1607	100

Graph 57

If a group of employees tried to start a union at your company, how would you react?



Employed respondents were also asked about how they thought their studio's management would react to a unionising initiative. A majority of them (51.7%) felt the management would oppose the initiative. It is important to particularly highlight that **15.5% of the respondents felt that management opposition would be aggressive and take the form of threats and harassment**. A very small proportion of the respondents say their managers would welcome the union (6.5%) or would not care (11.3%). Again a large number of the respondents preferred not to voice their opinion on this question.

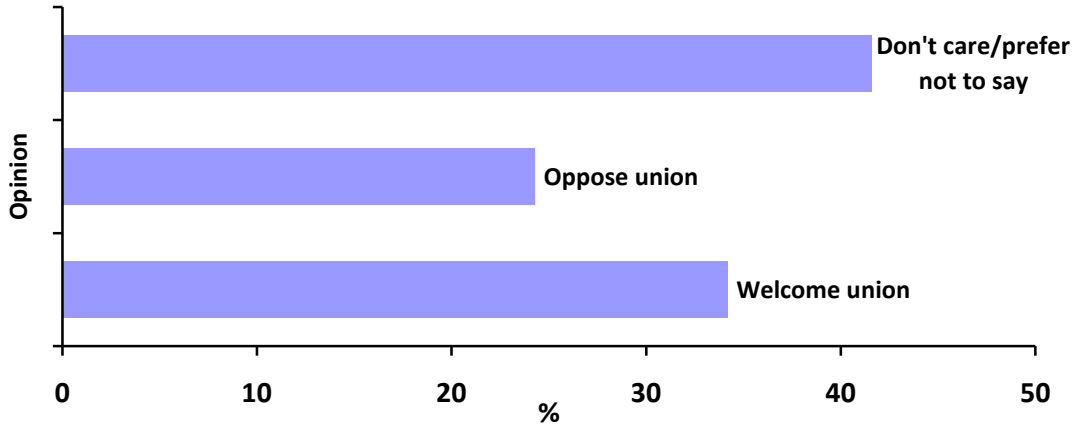
Table 58

If a group of employees tried to start a union at your company, how would management react?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Welcome the union	104	6.5
Oppose the union with information	581	36.2
Oppose the union by threats and harassment	249	15.5
Wouldn't care one way or another	182	11.3
Prefer not to say	491	30.6
Total	1607	100

Graph 58

If a group of employees tried to start a union at your company, how would management react?



Freelancers were also asked about their customers' employees' reaction to a unionising initiative taking place in their studio. That is, how would the regular employees of the company for which they freelance vote? On that issue, freelancers did not show a clear picture and a much greater percentage had no opinion or preferred not to say.

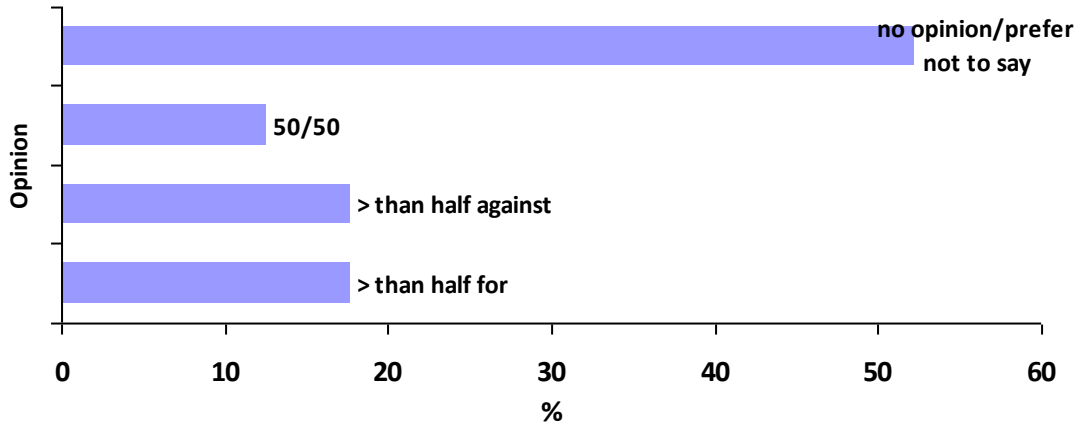
Table 59

How do you think the employees of your customers vote?

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
More than half would vote for	52	17.6
More than half would vote against	52	17.6
Half/half	37	12.5
No opinion/prefer not to say	154	52.2
Total	295	100

Graph 59

How do you think the employees of your customers vote?



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APPENDIX 1: RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHICS

Nationality

Respondents have various nationalities as shown below in a detailed portrait. That said, there is a clear overrepresentation of the white occidental population of developers in this sample.

Table 60

Nationality

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Algerian	1	-
American	1338	55.3
Argentinian	12	.5
Armenian	2	.1
Australian	55	2.3
Austrian	12	.5
Belgian	6	.2
Bolivian	1	-
Brazilian	21	.9
Bulgarian	3	.1
Canadian	271	11.2
Chilean	2	.1
Chinese	9	.4
Colombian	1	-
Costa Rican	2	.1
Croatian	1	-

Cuban	3	.1
Czech	3	.1
Danish	17	.7
Dominican	2	.1
Dual	21	.9
Dual with US	19	.8
Dutch	19	.8
Filipino	19	.8
Finnish	44	1.8
French	42	1.7
German	52	2.1
Ghinian	1	-
Greek	6	.2
Honduran	1	-
Hungarian	5	.2
Icelandic	3	.1
Indian	45	1.9
Indonesian	9	.4
Irish	10	.4
Israeli	5	.2
Italian	18	.7
Japanese	9	.4
Korean	12	.5
Malaysian	9	.4

Mexican	9	.4
Moroccan	1	-
Myanmar	1	-
New Zealander	4	.2
Norwegian	11	.5
Pakistani	4	.2
Peruvian	1	-
Polish	9	.4
Portuguese	5	.2
Romanian	3	.1
Russian	5	.2
Serbian	1	-
Singaporean	9	.4
Slovak	1	-
Slovenian	1	-
South African	5	.2
Spanish	38	1.6
Sri Lankan	1	-
Swedish	16	.7
Swiss	3	.1
Taiwanese	1	-
Thai	3	.1
Turkish	3	.1
UK	162	6.7

Ukrainian	4	.2
Venezuelan	4	.2
Vietnamese	2	.1
Zaire	1	-
Total	2419	100

Race/Ethnicity

The respondents in this sample have various ethnic origins as shown below. We have combined certain open-ended answers to shorten the list. Respondents from white origins bluntly dominate the scene (81.6%) whereas the remaining respondents (18.4%) are distributed throughout the remaining categories.

Table 61

Race/Ethnicity

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Arab or West Asian	10	.5
Black	33	1.5
East or South East Asian	146	6.8
Hispanic or Latino	77	3.6
Mixed – Other	32	1.5
Mixed - White and Asian	18	.8
Mixed - White and Black	5	.2
Mixed - White and Hispanic	9	.4
Native American	11	.5
Pacific Islander	4	.2
South Asian	45	2.1
Undisclosed Visible Minority	2	.1

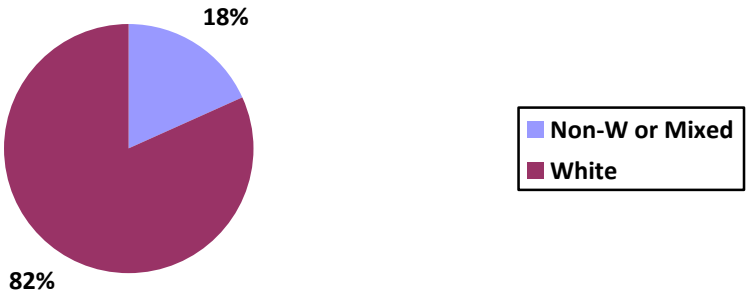
White	1740	81.6
Total	2132	100

Note: Open-ended comments from respondents were condensed to the above categories. The categories were chosen after consulting the classification scheme used in the US Census, the Canadian Census, the UK Census and the UN 'Geoscheme' (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm)

A graphic illustration is still more eloquent in that respect. A first graph shows the relative representation of the various ethnic origins.

Graph 59

White and non white respondents



Respondents are mainly working in North America and the United Kingdom; aggregated, these two groups form more than three quarters of the population surveyed (77.1%).

Table 62

Country of residence

	Respondents	% of respondents to this question
Algeria	1	-
Argentina	8	.3

Australia	62	2.6
Austria	9	.4
Belgium	9	.4
Bolivia	1	-
Brazil	20	.8
Bulgaria	2	.1
Canada	295	12.4
Chile	1	-
China	11	.5
Colombia	1	-
Croatia	1	-
Denmark	13	.5
Dominican	1	-
El Salvador	1	-
Europe	1	-
Finland	46	1.9
France	27	1.1
Germany	63	2.7
Ghana	2	.1
Greece	3	.1
Honduras	1	-
Hungary	3	.1
Iceland	6	.3
India	35	1.5

Indonesia	7	.3
Ireland	6	.3
Israel	6	.3
Italy	4	.2
Japan	15	.6
Korea	1	-
Malaysia	5	.2
Mexico	6	.3
Netherlands	20	.8
New Zealand	2	.1
Norway	13	.5
Pakistan	3	.1
Paraguay	1	-
Philippines	17	.7
Poland	7	.3
Portugal	4	.2
Romania	1	-
Russia	2	.1
Serbia	1	-
Singapore	14	.6
Slovenia	1	-
South Africa	5	.2
South Korea	9	.4
Spain	30	1.3

Sri Lanka	1	-
Sweden	15	.6
Switzerland	3	.1
Taiwan	2	.1
Thailand	4	.2
Turkey	1	-
UK	134	5.6
Ukraine	4	.2
USA	1404	59.1
Venezuela	2	.1
Vietnam	1	-
Zaire	1	-
Total	2375	100

APPENDIX 2: THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

QOL Survey 2009 – Questions

Thank you for taking the IGDA's 2009 Quality of Life Survey. Your answers will give us the data we need to better understand the state of the industry today, and help us formulate our plans for improving the quality of life of all game developers.

(If we ask for personal information such as e-mail addresses to verify people don't take the survey more than once just to skew the data, we should put in a disclaimer that no personal information will be kept or published.)

Demographics

Sex:
Age:
Nationality:
Ethnicity:
Location:

What is your current employment status in the game industry?

- looking for first job in the industry
- currently employed full or part-time
- contractor/ freelance/self-employed
- formerly employed in the industry

➢ branch with different questions for
  - all respondents
  - looking for first job
  - currently employed
  - freelancing
  - left the industry

Which of the following best describes you:

- single, no children(*)
- single with small children

- single with teenagers
- single with adult children
- coupled, no children(*)
- coupled with small children
- coupled with teenagers
- coupled with adult children

(*) people without children should not be asked the questions regarding children – these are designated with an *

Employment

Which statement best describes your relationship with your current employment:

- this is my career and my career is my life
- this is my career, and it is a large part of my life
- this is my career, but it is just one part of my life
- this is my day job, I have other career ambitions
- this is just a job

Do you have any desire to freelance? Yes/No

Which statement best describes your relationship with your work:

- this is my career and my career is my life
- this is my career, and it is a large part of my life
- this is my career, but it is just one part of my life
- this is my day job, I have other career ambitions
- this is just a job

Do you work in industries other than the games industry as well? Yes/No

Would you prefer to work as a full-time employee in the games industry? Yes/No

Which of these best describes why are you looking for work in the industry?

- Playing games is a hobby and I want to turn my hobby into a career
- Making games is a hobby and I want to turn my hobby into a career
- I'm an artist/programmer/writer and want to earn a living doing what I enjoy
- I'm passionate about games and want to share that passion by being in the industry
- I want to get paid to play games

- I want to make lots of money and there's a lot of money in games
- I have to do something

What kind of job are you looking for?

- programming
- art
- design
- writing
- audio
- production
- community management
- QA
- support (legal, HR, accounting, clerical)
- business management

What kind of company do you want to work for?

- publisher
- publisher owned studio
- third party studio
- independent studio
- middleware developer
- outsourcing
- independent contractor
- freelance

Do you want to get back into the industry? Yes/No

What most clearly describes your main discipline?

1 Executive
2 Investor
3 Upper Level Manager
4 Manager/Team Lead
5 Personnel Support (accounting, legal, HR, IT, secretary, assistant, office manager, etc.)
6 Marketing/Community Relations/Sales
7 Customer Support
8 Quality Assurance
9 Producer/Project Manager
10 Engineer/Programmer
11 Visual Artist (animator, modeler, texture, etc)
12 Audio Artist

13 Designer/Scripter
14 Writer

How many years have you worked in the industry?

How long did you work in the industry?

How many years have you worked at your current job?

How many projects have you worked on?

What size is your current company?

- < 10 employees
- 10 - 50 employees
- 50 - 100 employees
- 100 - 500 employees
- > 500 employees

What is the size of your current (or typical) project?

- < 10 developers
- 10 – 50 developers
- 5 0 – 100 developers
- > 100 developers

What is your company's business?

- publisher
- publisher owned studio
- 3rd party studio
- independent studio
- middleware developer
- outsourcing developer
- independent contractor

What best describes your current employment:

- I feel there is ample room for growth at my company
- I'm happy with what I'm doing and don't see a need to move
- I feel stuck and will have to change companies for my career to grow
- I'm burned out so I'm just putting in the hours here
- I'm happy here, but I don't feel secure in my job
- I'm not happy with my company, but don't think other companies are much better
- I'm just earning money so I can start my own company

What best describes the development process at your company (check all that apply):

- Ad hoc or non-existent
- Waterfall
- Agile/SCRUM
- CMU TSP/PSP[3]
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)

What best describes your reasons for leaving the industry:

- I found a better paying job
- I found a job with better hours
- I found a better paying job with better hours
- I burned out
- I got fired and didn't want to find another job in the industry
- I got fired and haven't found another job in the industry
- I retired
- I became disabled
- I wanted a better quality of life and could not find it in the industry

Quality of Work[4]

Indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements:

1. I am paid fairly for the number of hours I work.
2. Bonuses do not compensate for the extra work hours that are required.
3. I share in the profitability of the company.
4. I worry that my job won't be here next month.
5. Any sacrifices I make for my job are worth it just to work here.

[3] Carnegie Mellon University's Team Software Process/ Personal Software Process

[4] The wording of some of the questions in this section and the one that follows may not exactly match the wording as presented in the above report. In writing the report we took the liberty of reversing the wording of some questions so that the report was easier to read and flowed more smoothly. For example in Table 30: "I worry that my job won't be here next month" was reversed in the report to be "I feel confident that my job will be here next month". None of the response percentages were altered in these changes.

6. I have no opportunity for promotion or change of job responsibilities here.
7. I have creative freedom in my work.
8. I never finish one thing before I'm pulled away to work on something else.
9. I'm really proud of the games I make.
10. Management seeks my input and acts on it.
11. My work is under-appreciated and mostly goes unrecognized.
12. I am judged more by the hours I put in than by the quality of my work.
13. My work is a lot of fun.
14. I am inundated with off-color jokes at work.
15. There is no room for mistakes at my job.
16. I often feel that I do not know what is going on outside my immediate work area.
17. I trust in the competence of management.
18. I'd work overtime even if the schedule didn't demand it.
19. I have more work to do than time to do it.
20. I am often assigned work I don't feel qualified to complete.

Work/Life Balance

Indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements:

1. I enjoy work more than leisure time.
2. Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work.
3. After work I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do.

4. My family complains that I am preoccupied with work whenever I am at home.
5. Because my work is so demanding I am often irritable at home.
6. I feel that my family is always pulling me away from work I want to do.
7. I'm often too tired at work because of all the things I have to do at home.
8. My supervisor complains that I spend too much time on my personal life at work.
9. My job interferes with my ability to spend time with my family.
10. My interests and hobbies are work-related.
11. My family fully supports my career and accepts how much time it takes.
12. I feel that I'm constantly behind at work and at home and never have enough time for either.
13. I feel perfectly comfortable taking time away from work to be with my family and friends.
14. I have the best of both worlds and feel my work/life balance is ideal.
15. I worry whether I should work less and spend more time with my children.(*)
16. I worry that the time I spend with my family is diminishing my chances of promotion at work.
17. I need more time for myself.
18. I need more time to be with my friends.
19. I feel perfectly comfortable taking time away from my family to be at work.
20. There is enough time in my day to accomplish everything I need to do.
21. I am more organized because of all the demands on my time.
22. The tension of trying to balance my work and home life leave me feeling emotionally drained.

23. I have a hard time dragging myself away from my work and going home.

24. I tend to socialize with the people I work with.

Hours

Crunch time is a common term in the industry for periods when everyone is expected to work long hours with little time off in a full scale effort to meet a specific deadline.

How does your company manage crunch time?

- we don't have in crunch time, our schedules allow us to get things done without it
- very rarely in extraordinary circumstances we have to crunch, but we do everything we can to avoid it
- we crunch often, but we view it as a failure in scheduling
- crunch is part of our regular schedule and I don't agree that it should be
- crunch is a part of our regular schedule and I think it's great
- what others call crunch, we call daily work schedules

On average,

- how many hours per week are you expected to work when not in crunch time?
- how many hours per week do you work when not in crunch time?
- how many hours per week are you expected to work when in crunch time?
- how many hours per week do you work when in crunch time?
- how many weeks per year do you crunch?
- how many weeks in a row do you crunch?

How are you paid for your work?

- by the hour
- per deliverable
- a combination

Are you paid extra during crunch time?

On average,

- how many hours per week were you expected to work when not in crunch time?
- how many hours per week did you work when not in crunch time?
- how many hours per week were you expected to work when in crunch time?
- how many hours per week did you work when in crunch time?
- how many weeks per year did you crunch?

- how many weeks in a row did you crunch?

Do you receive extra compensation for crunch?

- No
- We get paid overtime
- We get time off
- We get bonuses
- We get time off and bonuses
- We get a few perks during crunch
- We get LOTS of extra perks during crunch

Do you feel the compensation is equitable for the amount of crunch?

Crunch is a necessary part of game development.

- strongly agree
- agree
- neutral
- disagree
- strongly disagree

How much paid vacation time are you provided per year?

How much unpaid vacation time are you allowed per year?

How much vacation time do you take per year?

Can you roll vacation over from one year to the next?

Have you ever been denied a vacation?

Have you ever been asked to cancel a vacation you'd already scheduled?

Labor Issues

Do you know the labor laws where you live? Yes/No/A little

Do you feel the labor laws where you live offer sufficient protection should a grievance arise between an employer and employee? Yes/No/Don't know

Some developers believe the only way to improve the quality of life in the industry is to unionize. If a vote were held today how would you vote?

- For
- Against
- No opinion/prefer not to say

How do you think the people at your company vote?

- More than half would vote for
- More than half would vote against
- 50/50
- No opinion/prefer not to say

How do you think the employees of your customers vote?

- More than half would vote for
- More than half would vote against
- 50/50
- No opinion/prefer not to say

If a group of employees tried to start a union at your company, how would you react?

- welcome the union
- oppose the union with information
- don't care/prefer not to say

If a group of employees tried to start a union at your company, how would management react?

- welcome the union
- oppose the union with information only
- oppose the union by threatening or harassing supporters
- wouldn't care one way or another
- prefer not to say