

# **Culturalization Services for Global Content Development: An Overview**

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# Executive Summary

- Culturalization is the process of adapting content to better fit the expectations of a local culture. While localization (translation) makes content legible, culturalization strives to make content culturally relevant and meaningful.
- **The goal of culturalization:** Maximize the global reach of your content and, as a result, the potential revenue from target markets.
- Geogrify applies its geopolitical and cultural expertise to navigate locale-specific expectations and requirements so that content is locally compliant.
- Geogrify offers a unique, niche form of advisory and strategic support to content developers, publishers, marketing and legal personnel.
- Geogrify is based on Kate Edwards' thought leadership, subject-matter expertise, and 30 years of experience in managing geopolitical and cultural risks in many corporate environments, including Amazon, Microsoft, Google, and Facebook.

# Why Culturalization?

- **Primary Goal:** Maximize the global reach of your content by proactive geopolitical and cultural risk analysis. We protect your company's image and revenue stream while allowing your customers to enjoy your products and services without any content-related disruption.
- **Additional Goals:**
  - Meet local expectations and/or legal requirements for geopolitical and cultural depictions.
  - Build global consumer loyalty and trust in your content through being locally-relevant and accurate.
  - Avoid external knee-jerk reactions by local stakeholders (governments, etc.)

# Types of Culturalization

- **Reactive Culturalization:** Identifying and removing elements that will reduce or nullify viability; this is typically the most requested service.
- **Proactive Culturalization:** Identifying and adding elements that will enhance local feeling and applicability. For some locales, this involves locale-specific tailoring when necessary for distribution.

# Geogrify's Culturalization Philosophy

Geogrify's proven approach to culturalization can best be summarized as follows:

**We strive to make the most *minimal* changes to the *least* amount of content.**

We respect your creative vision and passion for your content. As creative partners, our job is to ensure that your creative vision can be enjoyed by as many consumers across as many cultures as possible. We discover and advise, but you retain the responsibility to revise your content - or not.

# Geopolitical Inoculation and Insurance

The ROI of *reactive culturalization* is often less tangible, due to its primary goal of yielding *zero* sensitive issues. It is useful to think of such culturalization in the following ways:

- **Inoculation:** Culturalization introduces measures to prevent *known* issues. This is not about being “politically correct;” it’s about maximizing the global reach of the content by modifying issues known to be potentially volatile.
- **Insurance:** For *unknown* issues, culturalization is about performing due diligence to develop content with a defensible intent. If an issue does result, a rational defense to support the decision-making will be clearly documented.

# What Content is Potentially at Risk?

Content which incubates cultural issues is just about *anything* a consumer will see, hear or read:

- **Scenarios:** Historical events, figures
- **Character Design:** Appearance and back story, emulation of real people, races, etc.
- **Environment Design:** Use of real-world locales and landmarks, or mimicry of such locales.
- **Cultural Derivatives/Allegories:** Religious, ethnic, cultural themes derived from “real world” cultures.
- **Text:** UI elements, country/region lists, geographic names, comments in lines of code, user documentation & manuals
- **Images:** Maps, flags, icons, symbols, photos, cinematics
- **Audio:** Voice, music, lyrics, sound effects
- **Packaging (if applicable):** Box art, box text, packaging inserts
- **Branding and marketing:** Brand names, Advertising campaigns (including in-game ads), promotional items
- **Messaging:** Press interviews, executive speeches, corporate events

# The Review Process

The culturalization review process typically involves the following aspects:

1. **Content Audit:** An initial pass during the pre-production phase to assess potential levels of risk exposure and advise on the global viability.
2. **Content Review:** A more in-depth review during core production of all or part of a product's content to identify and resolve specific issues.
3. **Review Reports:** For every distinct grouping of content, a Culturalization Review Report is issued which details the issues found and proactive recommendations to resolve the potential problem.
4. **Severity Rating:** A severity rating is assigned to every specific issue found to help provide a high-level risk assessment.

Severity	Description
1	A high risk, ship-stopper issue. A piece of content that is guaranteed to yield negative responses in a particular market if released without revisions.
2	A moderate risk or potential high risk issue. A piece of content that <i>might</i> yield negative responses in a particular market if the context and/or discoverability of the content enable a degree of sensitivity.
3	A benign risk issue, if any. A piece of content is flagged for its geocultural implications, but for which there is no risk of negative responses and/or the defensibility of the content is high.



# Why Outsource Culturalization Services?

Most companies do not maintain the internal subject-matter expertise necessary to perform culturalization tasks. Outsourcing to Geogrify provides the following advantages:

- Geogrify can compliment/augment existing review processes by filling the crucial expertise gap and removes the need to maintain unique subject-matter expertise as a competency within your company.
- Geogrify has greater flexibility to scale to meet demand if necessary, something not easily achieved with internal headcount constraints.
- Geogrify has greater neutrality to access external resources, have open dialogues with governments and industry, and in turn provide an objective content assessment.

# Other Services

Beyond our renown culturalization expertise, Geogrify can provide the following additional services, depending on need:

- **Staff Training:** Training of key employees and advising management on the concept of cultural risk and methodologies to incorporate proactive thinking into the corporate “DNA.”
- **Reactive Issue Management:** Aid in the careful management of local market backlash events and proper messaging related to specific geopolitical and cultural issues.
- **Strategic Process/Policy Review:** How to better design the company’s content management processes to infuse cultural accountability measures, as well as track cultural issues across all forms of content.
- **Knowledge Resources:** Thoroughly researched and well-maintained resources/lists/articles for countries, regions, flags and similar geographic or cultural resources considered safe for local and global use.

# Learn More!

Curious about the details behind the culturalization process as applied to content development and world-building? Watch this lecture by Kate Edwards for more insights:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVGonAUUQ8c>

# Geogrify's Rates - 2020

Geogrify's rate schedule is often customized to a specific short- or long-term project in close consultation with the client. However, the basic rates are listed as follows (in US\$):

- **Initial one-time consultation to assess project requirements: *Free***
- **Ad hoc/Short-term Queries: Per hour (\$225) or Per day (\$1,600)**
- **Short-term Project: Per day (\$1,600) or Flat fee per project/event**
- **Long-term Project: Flat fee per project/event or a retainer model (negotiated on the basis of content requirements; retainer minimum \$3,000/month).**
  
- *All rates are negotiable based upon additional client project details and considering the potential for forging long-term client relationships.*
- *No project is too minor for consideration.*
- *Geogrify is open to commencing 'trial projects' with new clients, under some circumstances.*

# Contact Information

To inquire further about **Geogrify's** services or to schedule a complimentary initial consultation to learn more about how we can help with your project, please contact as follows:

- **Email:** [info@geogrify.com](mailto:info@geogrify.com)
- **Web:** [www.geogrify.com](http://www.geogrify.com)
- **Voice:** +1 206 8490103
- **Skype:** geogrify
- **Twitter:** @geogrify

# Appendix A: About Geogrify LLC

- Geogrify LLC is a niche consultancy initially launched in 2005 by its Principal Consultant Kate Edwards to provide strategic geopolitical and cultural consultation services (a.k.a. “culturalization”) to businesses in all sectors.
- Building on 30+ years of experience, Geogrify provides unique geopolitical and cultural subject-matter expertise in strategic content consultation for international aspirations across any business field and for any locale, with a specialty in games, cartography, entertainment and digital media.
- Geogrify’s Principal Consultant is a recognized pioneer and thought leader in this new form of applied geopolitics and content culturalization, leveraging skills from top-level corporate strategy to practical, hands-on content review.
- Beyond its consulting role, Geogrify is passionate about improving geographic and cultural literacy in the U.S. and beyond.

# Appendix B: About Kate Edwards

- **Kate Edwards is a unique hybrid of geographer, writer, consultant and a content strategist, coexisting with a passion for global cultures and interactive technologies.**
  - 30+ years' experience as a private-sector Geographer, Cartographer, Corporate Strategist, Consultant and Writer.
  - 27+ years' experience performing culturalization work on video games.
  - Executive Director of the International Game Developers Association (IGDA) from 2012 to 2017.
  - Executive Director of the Global Game Jam (GJ) from 2019 to present.
  - 13 years with Microsoft (1992-2005) as its Senior Geopolitical Strategist in the Geopolitical Strategy team, a unique position and team that Kate created. Responsible for architecting and enforcing the company's geopolitical and cultural content policies across all products/locales.
  - Architect of the "Geopolitical Quality Review" process for Microsoft Studios and directly responsible for the culturalization review of nearly all Microsoft's 1<sup>st</sup> party games on PC and Xbox platforms between 1995 and 2005 (and several since).
  - Consulted for Google 2007-2013 and created their Geopolitical Team.
  - Columnist with *MultiLingual Computing* since 2005 (column entitled "Off the Map") and author of many published articles and book chapters on content culturalization.
  - Founder and former Chair of the Localization Special Interest Group (SIG) of the Int'l Game Developers Assoc. (IGDA).
  - Keynote speaker and participant in many global conferences: E3, GDCs, Gamescom, Nordic Game, Reboot, et. al.
- **Awards/Recognition:**
  - Awarded Chartered Geographer status by the Royal Geographical Society (UK) in 2004.
  - Awarded the annual MVP award by the IGDA in 2011.
  - Named by Fortune magazine in 2013 as one of the "10 most powerful women" in the game industry.
  - Named by GamesIndustry.biz in 2014 as one of their six People of the Year in the game industry.
  - Recipient of numerous event-based advocacy awards, including IndieCade, Reboot Develop, GameRome, et. al.
  - Featured in the book *Women in Gaming: 100 Professionals of Play* (Nov. 2018)
  - Recipient of the Game Developers Conference (GDC) Ambassador Award (March 2020)



# Appendix C: Examples of Geogrify's Clients

