



**Highlights from the Conference Agenda by Sarah Hughes, Senior Digital Organiser.
Uni Global, Organising For The Win, Berlin, June 2022.**

A new survey of video games workers across 29 countries established what driving forces are behind employee dissatisfaction and the desire to form a union in the workplace. These results were interesting and reflect those from a similar survey Bectu ran in 2019. Low pay was cited as the biggest reason, which may surprise some who believe the industry to be well paid. However salaries in games are often lower than for equivalent roles in tech (software developers roles) or in the other creative industries like film and TV (art and production roles). Given the growth and success of the games industry this is very disappointing. Bectu has recently heard stories of workers who are being asked to work for free and only be paid once a game has been released.

<https://uniglobalunion.org/news/video-game-workers-crushed/> [links to survey]

Lau Nebel from Games Workers Alliance shared the story of Organising at Raven Software, a video games studio in the USA. Organising at Raven began in response to sexual harassment and misconduct claims but intensified in response to the studio cutting jobs for 12 quality assurance testers. However, the Raven software workers did not give up and in May 2022 the workers won their election giving them the right to form a union. Learn more: <https://uniglobalunion.org/news/raven-quality-workers-union/>

Cha Sang-Jun from Smilegate Union in Korea share the story of the s=Smilegate games union in Korea. This union as formed in Sep 2018 and has been negotiating to reduce the amount of unpaid overtime that workers are required to do, key issues at this workplace are working hours and bullying/harassment. The Smilegate union is not the only tech union in Korea, workers at Webzen, Nexon, and XL Games have also unionised in the last few years.

Learn more: <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2021/04/06/business/industry/IT-Games-Pangyo/20210406194900376.html>

Also from South Korea, conference hear from the Lee Ok-Hyoung General Secretary of the Korean Microsoft Union who have been fighting for better working conditions, over half of Microsoft Korea workforce work more than 52 hours per week, and a decent pay rise at the tech giant.

Learn more: <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/PYH20211124078600315>

At the conference workers from Google across different companies met together to discuss strategies for organising with Google worldwide. In the USA workers at Google are organised into the Alphabet Workers Union and have the vision of building a global Google Alliance.

Learn more: <https://alphabetworkersunion.org/people/our-union/>

Florentin Iancu, President of SITT (Sindicatul IT Timisoara @Sindicatulit) spoke about the successful organising in the IT sector in Romania, with more than 18 collective bargaining agreements across 11 large tech companies. Florentin explained that despite the lack of unions overall in tech, workers in this sector are just like all other workers, having problems, that can be solved by working collectively. <https://sitt.ro/>

Jack Poulson from the Tech Inquiry raised the issue of where workers can best make a difference when they have concerns about the ethics of their employer. Is it better to remain an employee and try to influence change from within or to leave and join forces with other organisations to raise awareness of such issues. Many tech workers choose to work in defence industry, and so the question is therefore perhaps one of transparency. When large tech companies are becoming involved in defence contracts but their employees are unaware of this (or were unaware when they joined the company).

Stefan Ullrich from the Berlin Institute of Technology (@TUBerlin) challenged conference to take on the challenge of sustainability in tech, stating 'there is no hacking on a dead planet'. He also talked about digital sustainability, in an age of online information who has the responsibility to ensure that important data is saved and maintained for future generations? Conference discussed how tech workers could use their leverage to press for a more sustainable industry – when will the first fair trade laptop appear on the market. Some unions are already part of movements such as the right to repair ... <https://repair.eu/>

Parminder Jeet Singh from IT for Change gave a summary of the state of organising amongst amongst IT workers in India. The majority of IT work in India is 'exported' e.g work which has been outsourced from UK or USA. UK absorbs 17% of India's IT exports whereas USA takes 80%. Like garment workers there is a role for the workers in UK to insist on fairer standards for outsourced workers and Parminder closed with a call for global solidarity with IT workers.