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OpenCritic Hits Metacritic Over "Translation Exclusivity"

New Metacritic Policy Hinders OpenCritic International Growth at Expense of New Publications

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tl;dr - We believe that Metacritic has implemented a policy for new, non-English publications that requires translated quotes be exclusive to Metacritic. In doing so, Metacritic forces additional development and localization costs on publications. We believe this is an anti-industry policy that deliberately attempts to hinder OpenCritic's international expansion.

STANFORD, CALIFORNIA - FEBRUARY 17th, 2017 - Yet another signal indicating that Metacritic is feeling threatened. After sourcing reviews from OpenCritic, it now seems that Metacritic is engaging in what we believe to be a questionable business practice: **translation exclusivity.**

This last December, OpenCritic opened up to international publications and removed the English-only requirement. Already, over a dozen non-English publications and contributors have joined. One key condition that both Metacritic and OpenCritic share is that publications must provide a quote from their review translated into English. To be clear, it is the publication that does the translation, not the aggregator.

As a response to our expansion to more languages, it seems Metacritic has created a new rule for publications looking to join: **translations given to Metacritic are exclusive to Metacritic.**

On one hand, we're excited: the timing would indicate that Metacritic is feeling a bit uneasy with our recent progress. However, we strongly believe translation exclusivity is anti-industry and want to raise awareness about its implications.

Asking for English quotations is already a significant demand. Many of these publications, especially up-and-coming ones, operate at a loss while trying to expand their reach. This requirement effectively mandates that these publications pay engineers to alter their CMS in order to support their aggregation. The results are these special pages which have traditionally been open to the public and are what Metacritic and OpenCritic scrape to aggregate non-English quotes and reviews.

Insisting that these translations and this technology be exclusive to Metacritic is a clear abuse of industry power. We believe it's a deliberate attempt to slow OpenCritic's progress by requiring publications to maintain two sets of translated quotations: one for Metacritic, and one for the public. We think it's wrong to force these extra development and localization costs onto publications.

Being listed on Metacritic comes with significant brand visibility and SEO benefits. It also creates a sense of legitimacy among game publishers. With such a dominant position in games media, we are inclined to ask "Who does this policy help other than Metacritic?"

We believe that a translated snippet written by the publication and put into a CMS created by the publication should be owned by the publication. And publications should be allowed to freely promote these translation listing pages in order to broaden their audience and solidify their domain authority.

About OpenCritic: OpenCritic.com is a review aggregator founded by four friends who wanted to use their web development skills to improve the gaming industry for everyone: gamers, critics, and developers alike. Founded in 2015, OpenCritic aims to celebrate games and humanize the industry while advocating for transparency. To date, over 40,000 reviews are available on OpenCritic from over 200 publications and contributors.

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