# Trade unions are changing gamedev. Employee topics will be at the centre of focus at Digital Dragons Conference 2024.

**Waves of layoffs are sweeping through game companies globally. The industry is not remaining indifferent and is addressing topics such as employee rights, trade unions, and transparent recruitment conditions more and more. These issues are gaining prominence in the agendas of industry conferences, including Digital Dragons Conference 2024.**

Working in gamedev, which serves to develop artistic and technical talents, is a dream for many people. An enthusiasm full of passion drives the work, but it can also be used to justify mandatory overtime, unfavorable employment terms, and broadly defined bullying if the rules of cooperation are not properly codified and respected.

## 2024 – the year of layoffs in gamedev

Also troublesome are the mass layoffs that have recently affected gamedev employees around the world. For example - Riot Games has fired more than 500 staff, Unity, developers of the popular engine, has cut 25% of its workforce and CI Games has cut around 10%.

In response to the downsizing, there has been an increasing talk of an employee perspective represented by trade unions. In Poland, for example, Polish Gamedev Workers Union, which was established as part of the All-Poland Trade Union „Inicjatywa Pracownicza”, has become active. The aim of the organisation is to ensure job security, fair treatment and transparency of working conditions.

It is time to disenchant labour movements from their association only with heavy industry or the baggage of the 1990s. The needs that trade unions can meet are many: raising standards of compliance with labour laws in the industry, being able to participate in shaping internal company policy, taking into account the experience and expertise of employees when planning transformations and restructuring. Or, looking at the role of trade unions in the UK or Scandinavia, exchanging know-how, building an industry knowledge and experience base or a safety net in case of redundancies. The community aspect of trade unions is also valuable - they create a platform through which each of us can do our bit to change our environment for the better, working together with people who have similar goals and experiences.

Artur Ganszyniec, designer, member of Polish Gamedev Workers Union

Currently, the association is active in CD PROJEKT RED, 11 bit studios, Flying Wild Hog and Product Madness Poland. However, practically any game developer can join the organisation, regardless of the type of employment - so not only people with a contract of employment, but also with a B2B contract, contract of mandate or contract for specific work. The only restriction is the exclusion of employers and their representatives to avoid conflicts of interest. Education is also an important part of union activity, as many creatives are not aware of their rights.

## Digital Dragons Conference 2024 – the place to find out about current trends

The formation of trade unions in gamedev is already an ongoing trend. Game Workers Unite has been active since 2018, and organisations that were previously active in other industries - for example the Communication Workers of America - also represent gamedev specialists.

For executives and HR departments, it is therefore important to understand the terms of the partnership. Digital Dragons Conference 2024 will feature several lectures related to the described topics. Tolly Kulczycki from Polish Gamedev Workers Union will talk about the need for union activity. Other activists from the organisation, Paula Mackiewicz-Armstrong and Artur Ganszyniec, will present the results of research on working conditions in Polish gamedev. Meanwhile, Ljubica Garic and Monika Michalak from 8Bit will lead a panel discussion with experts from the Polish industry on pay transparency.

## Legal aspects of gamedev at Digital Dragons Conference 2024

The topic of employment law is just one of many aspects that should be of interest to lawyers working with gamedev. That is why Digital Dragons Conference 2024 will see the debut of the Legal Summit powered by Rymarz Zdort Maruta. Speakers will include top industry lawyers and in-house lawyers from Poland and, among others, the UK, the US and Italy. Participants will learn how legal and business issues in the gamedev sector look from different, sometimes very distant, perspectives.

This will be one of three themed summits that will amplify the programme of this year's Digital Dragons Conference - in addition to it, there will also be Game Design Summit powered by Anshar Studios & Fool's Theory and Games Marketing Summit.

## Stars at Digital Dragons Conference 2024

Digital Dragons Conference 2024 is one of the elements of the comprehensive Digital Dragons ecosystem that Krakow Technology Park has created for the gamedev industry. [The organiser has already announced the first stars of the event, such as Borislav Slavov, author of the music for the blockbuster *Baldurs's Gate 3*, Jason Hickey, Art Director and producer with *Marvel's Spider-Man* series in his portfolio, and the duo from EA DICE - Nika J. Bender and Kevin Moore - who will talk about the live-service development of *Battlefield 2042*.](https://media.kpt.krakow.pl/287474-tickets-for-digital-dragons-conference-2024-are-now-on-sale-the-organisers-have-announced-the-names-of-the-first-speakers)

The comprehensive Digital Dragons ecosystem also includes incubation and acceleration programmes for indie game developers, as well as educational series, including Digital Dragons Academy for university students. [Tickets for Digital Dragons Conference 2024 at an attractive Early Bird price (25% off) can only be purchased until the end of March.](https://tickets.digitaldragons.pl/?utm_source=press_release&utm_medium=mail&utm_campaign=ddc2024&utm_id=conference)