

Lighting Fish Games designs and develops active motion video games for games consoles such as Microsoft Xbox 360, the Sony PlayStation 3 and Nintendo Wii.

We are capitalising on this console expertise as we develop new titles for mobile devices.

The global video gaming market reached almost £44.4bn in 2009 and is expected to grow to £56.9bn by 2014.

Console gaming makes up about 50 per cent of these figures. To get this into perspective, in terms of revenues the video games market dwarfs all other forms of entertainment including film, music and books.

Analysts have predicted the growth of console gaming will slow down as mobile and connected online gaming increase their market share.

Despite this prediction, the last nine months has seen a spurt of growth on consoles as Microsoft released its Kinect for Xbox 360 and Sony released the Move for PlayStation 3.

These are camera-based motion tracking devices and allow people to interact without cumbersome joypad-based controllers, using gestures and full-body actions.

When I was a teenager I was first attracted to arcade game machines such as *Space Invaders* and *Defender*. Shortly afterwards I started playing video games on the ZX Spectrum, Commodore 64 and Amstrad CPC.

They were a cool and exciting amalgamation of technology and art — the video games industry is still one of the only areas where these two areas collide. This was one of the main reasons why I started in the games industry in 1987.

From those early days until recently the typical controls for games were based on a joystick or joypad and some buttons.

Not a lot changed over those 30-odd years and the joystick or joypad control has always been one of the greatest barriers to widespread use of games.

Lightning Fish started life in June 2008 in a small office in Colin Sanders Innovation Centre in Banbury.

Along with co-founders Mike Montgomery and David Hunt, I had two main aims — to create games experiences for all the family and to exploit the new area of motion gaming gestures and body movements used to interact with the game.

The six people in the senior management team at Lightning Fish have more than 100 years experience and have developed in excess of 150 games, covering every area and selling tens of millions of units.

We create games we could play with our wives, girlfriends, children and parents. So that means no shooting or driving games and more of a focus on socially responsible formats that require active play.

In 2008 we were starting a new company just as the world banking system collapsed and plunged us into a global recession.

We needed to identify a growth niche and make our mark — quickly.

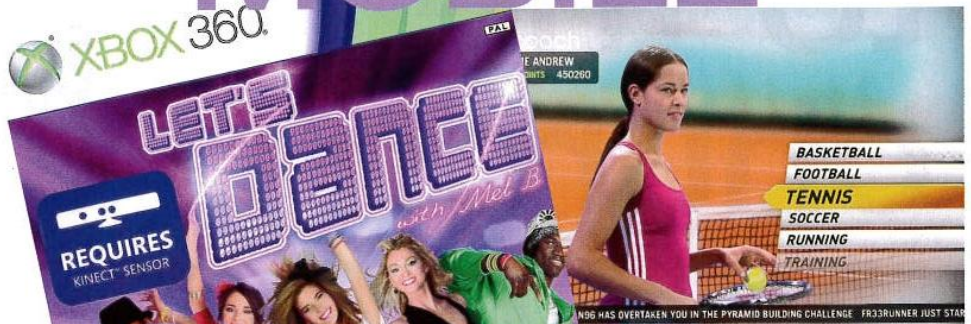
And with all this against us, we also needed to make some money. Motion gaming was a new area and Nintendo had just released the Wii, the first motion controlled console.

So we put together a concept for a Wii fitness game and we did a licensing deal with Fitness First, the largest health club in the world.

This became our first title, NewU Personal Trainer, and gave us the money and experience to grow the company.

In parallel, we were also researching webcam-based motion tracking with our partner,

Games go MOBILE



'We create games we could play with our wives, girlfriends, children and parents'



Simon Prytherch, chief executive of Banbury based Lightning Fish Games, reveals how the company has grown into one of the world's leading motion gaming studios

the Active Vision Lab at Oxford University.

Microsoft and Sony knew about this work, so when they started developing their new camera devices (Kinect for Xbox 360 and Move for PlayStation 3), we were the first independent developers to work with this new hardware.

We have since gone on to develop four motion-based console games for Wii, Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3.

We are currently developing an unannounced, high-profile dance game and a fitness game called miCoach with Adidas, featuring 15 sports stars with more to be added later. This will be released in January 2012.

Lightning Fish has come a long way in three years. We are now regarded as the leading

experts in motion tracking and have 60 staff at our office in Beaumont Road, Banbury and 30 more in Pune, India.

Self-funded until now, we are raising cash for the next stage of our development.

Our strengths lie with our motion software technology, our management team and our ability to work with major companies that trust a small, young company to create game experiences around their global brands.

We are now using these same strengths to develop new products for mobile devices and PC networks.

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■ This page is co-ordinated by Oxford Innovation, www.oxin.co.uk

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