

LONDON: WORLD-CLASS CENTRE FOR COMPUTER GAMES

London's games success is built on entrepreneurial talent, strong financial and professional support and an early-adopter market hungry for novelty.

A combination of technical, artistic and game-play talent has made London pre-eminent in an industry that must reinvent itself with every character, every storyline and every game. With its multi-cultural talent pool, London provides companies with the skilled multi-lingual staff they need to customise games for European and global markets.

The world's best games companies 'play' in London.

- With sales of \$3 billion in 2006, the UK is Europe's biggest games software market.
- The UK games console market is the largest in Europe, bigger than France and Germany combined.
- The UK is the world's third-largest

developer of games after the US and Japan, and there are approximately 150 development studios operating in the UK.

- Leading UK-developed games include: the Grand Theft Auto series, The Getaway, Who Wants to be a Millionaire and Harry Potter.
- Hungry early-adopters, a deep talent pool and a sophisticated distribution network make the UK an effective platform for bringing new games to market.

The London cluster

- London is the centre for the European games industry including:
 - Indigenous development studios and publishers such as Airplay, PlayerX, Eidos, Sci, M4, Kuju and Gameplay.
 - The European headquarters of many of the world's leading publishers such as: Sony Computer Entertainment, Acclaim, Sega and Konami.
 - The UK headquarters of

Vivendi, Infogames and Ubi Soft.

- London's cluster has developed a strong network of firms offering the development, packaging, manufacture, distribution, marketing and funding of computer and video games.
- Online gaming has massive potential, there are 7.1 million broadband connections in the UK and the total is growing by 40,000 a week. London has the best coverage (100%) and some of the lowest prices in Europe.
- London has one of the world's highest penetrations of digital interactive television (iTV). Games are amongst the most popular service, the UK is the largest market in the world forecast to reach \$546 million in 2006 e.g. Sky Gamestar has over 1.5 million monthly users.
- Currently 15.5 million homes receive digital TV. By 2008 it is forecast that 82% of households will receive digital TV.
- London's digital players include: Virgin Media, Sky Digital, Carlton Communications and YooMedia.
- London's digital content (publishing,

information, entertainment) companies include Bloomberg, Reuters, Disney, News International, Pearson, AOL Time Warner and CBS Viacom.

Talent pool

- The UK computer games industry employs more than 260,000 people across development, publishing, distribution, retail, marketing, manufacturing and legal services.
- London's development talent is highly regarded throughout the industry for its combination of technical, artistic and game play skills.
- Computer games (leisure software) in London employs 63,000 – over 20% of the UK total. Major areas of concentration are in central and west London.
- Over 54% of the UK electronic games workforce is based in London and the South East. 6,000 people work in development in the UK, the majority in the London area, compared to just 2,600 in France and 580 in Germany.
- Development and animation courses are taught at the Royal College of Art's School of Communications Animation, the London Animation School at the London Institute, and Escape Studios'

School of Visual Effects, Europe's first dedicated school of digital animation.

- London is an ideal location for customising products to European markets – there are 32 communities of over 10,000 people born outside the UK and more than 300 languages spoken.

Business support

- London has Europe's largest financial and professional services cluster, including many companies offering dedicated software expertise, e.g. Livingstone Guarantee, Osborne Clark, Beeson Gregory and START! Games.
- London offers access to funding via the largest financial services and venture capital industry in Europe, which has a strong track record of software investment. London-based venture capital firms with expertise in the software and computer services market include: ACT Venture Capital, Advent Venture Partners, Apex Partners, Bridgepoint, Candover Investments, Cinven, Electra Partners Europe, Gresham, Innvotec, London Seed Capital, London Ventures, Montagu Private Equity, NewMedia SPARK, Permira Advisers, and Warburg Pincus.

- London is home to the Entertainment and Leisure Software Publishers' Association (ELSPA), which provides a specific and collective identity for the British computer and video games industry. ELSPA works to protect, promote and provide for the interests of all its members, as well as addressing issues that affect the industry as a whole. (www.elspa.com)

London property

- From state-of-the-art serviced offices and large-footprint warehouses to campus-style business parks, smaller central workshops and incubator spaces, London has the right property choice, at the right price, to suit all aspects of the computer games industry – development, retail, marketing or distribution.

Connectivity and access to markets

- London delivers tremendous access to Europe's consumers. 126 million people live within one day by road freight of London and, as Europe's principal business centre, offers unrestricted access to over 456 million consumers in the European Union. This puts London at the centre of the largest trading bloc in the world.
- London's five international airports support international travel to over 530

destinations worldwide which, coupled with some of the cheapest flights in Europe, make it a natural home for a global business to build, grow and succeed.

- London is one of the best-wired global cities and is ranked as the best city in Europe for the 'quality of its telecoms'. It offers the greatest concentration of telecoms services and network operators in the UK, including BT, Cable & Wireless, Colt, Energis and WorldCom.

Regulatory environment

- Common regulatory requirements for products across Europe mean that goods can be traded freely. The Department of Trade & Industry's Standards and Technical Regulations Directorate (STRD) works to negotiate technical regulations at European level and implement them into UK law. Products that comply carry the familiar CE marking, and cover a vast range of items including computer games. STRD offers a comprehensive range of guidance material on the EU Directives and corresponding UK Regulations. (www.dti.gov.uk/strd)
- The UK has some of the most stringent legal protection of intellectual property products in the world. Patents, Design, Copyright and

Trademarks can all be protected by applying to the Patent Office, either through a patent agent or on your own behalf.

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