

It's 'game on' as Tees firm lands biggest deal

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A FAST-GROWING computer games software company in Middlesbrough has struck a six-figure deal with one of the largest games developers in Europe.

3rd Dimension Creations Ltd, which has just moved into new premises at Royal Middlehaven House, will create what it described as "a totally unique" live arcade game for producer Blitz Games.

The company will develop the software, graphics and animation for the game, which will be available to play on the X-box 360 later this year.

Co-founders Sean Crooks and Dave Allanson said the deal represented the biggest contract so far for the firm and could push turnover to around £250,000 this year.

Mr Crooks said: "We are hopeful that this deal will help us to secure other large contracts as we seek to expand the business further."

Mr Allanson added: "At this stage we cannot reveal specific details about the game, but it will be a product that has never been done before."

Established three years ago with £3,000 of start-up funding from the sector champion DigitalCity, the company develops computer games software for consoles, PCs and hand-held devices.

Mr Crooks and Mr Allanson, from Middlesbrough and Acklam respectively, said they were committed to developing the company's presence in the Tees Valley and were not concerned by plans to create a rival digital hub in Sheffield.

Mr Crooks said: "There are a number of these hubs around the UK and far from being worried about them, we feel there may be some scope for collaboration on multi-agency projects."

According to Culture NorthEast, part of the regional development agency, the commercial creative industries are a growing economic powerhouse for the region. They involve 2,200 businesses, are worth £800m to the economy and employ 30,000 people. It is estimated that new media, games and interactive software companies alone generate £256m in turnover regionally, with 14% of the valuable new media, videogames and interactive software companies, like 3rd Dimension, each turning over in excess of £1m per annum.

Yesterday we reported another new media initiative with the creation of a £200,000 micro budget film studio aiming to produce four low-cost features a year. Established by Newcastle-based Ipso Facto Films with funding from Entrust and Molinaire studio in London, Moxie Makers will help get low budget films off the ground.

DigitalCity and its commercial arm, DigitalCity Business, marks the opening of its new Middlesbrough HQ next week with a reception for creative firms and supporters of the sector. It has been supported by the Institute of Digital Innovation at the University of Teesside, a major digital research and development [environment](#).

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