

Submission by Chris van der Kuyl CBE FRSE
Chairman and Co Founder of 4J Studios

4J Studios is an SME Independent Games developer based in Dundee and East Linton. Our company has had a working relationship with the games division of Microsoft for over fifteen years. We have developed several games for Microsoft directly including Perfect Dark, Banjo Kazooie and Banjo Tooie all for the Xbox 360. Microsoft were also responsible for introducing us to Mojang AB which ultimately led to us becoming the developer of Minecraft Console Editions on Xbox 360, PlayStation Vita, PlayStation 3, Xbox One, PlayStation 4, Nintendo WiiU and Nintendo Switch.

We have been in a fairly unique position of working as a partner with Microsoft and also as a partner of a company which was acquired by Microsoft during our tenure as the party responsible for the console development of Minecraft.

We had a period of transition from the ownership of Mojang AB from its original shareholders to the current position where it is wholly owned by Microsoft. During that period, which lasted several years, Microsoft has honoured every element of the agreements that they inherited and also extended our relationship significantly to cover new formats, like Nintendo Switch, as well as many other content enhancements.

During the phase of Microsoft ownership we have never been under any pressure to favour Microsoft owned formats, indeed we were actively encouraged by Microsoft to develop unique content such as the "Mario Mash Up" pack for Nintendo formats. Microsoft have also brought significant stability and rigour to our contractual and commercial relationships and have been both fair and professional in all our dealings with them.

The games industry is now the world's largest entertainment industry and, as such, it is inevitable that companies like Microsoft need to gain access to more content and talent to justify their continued investment into large scale hardware platforms such as Xbox.

We do not see the proposed acquisition of Activision Blizzard as anything other than a natural evolution of the industry and it does not give us any cause for concern for our own future opportunities.

Chris van der Kuyl CBE FRSE