

Sumo Group

Media Pack

Version 2.0

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Overview of the Sumo Group

Celebrating over two decades of industry excellence, Sumo Group is an award-winning business producing highly innovative games for the most prestigious publishers in the world with an increasing number of titles based on original concepts developed in-house. It is one of the UK's largest providers of end-to-end creative development and co-development services to the global video games and entertainment industries, employing over 1500 people in 19 studios in the UK, Europe, Canada and India.

Sumo Digital, the cornerstone of the Group, was founded in 2003 by Carl Cavers, Paul Porter, Darren Mills and James North-Hearn. It quickly established itself as a reliable and collaborative development partner for premier games publishers around the world, developing award-winning titles for every gaming platform. Sumo Group was established in December 2017 when it listed on the London Stock Exchange's growth market, AIM.

Today the Group is owned by Tencent, one of the world's largest video games businesses and has three operating divisions delivering multi-platform game development, design and game publishing.



Sumo Digital is the Group's primary business, it is one of the UK's largest independent developers of AAA-rated video games providing turnkey and co-development solutions to a global blue-chip client base from studios in Sheffield, Newcastle, Nottingham, Leamington Spa and Warrington, plus Pune and Bangalore in India.

BAFTA award-winning **The Chinese Room** in Brighton, **Red Kite Games** in Leeds, **Lab42** in Leamington Spa, **PixelAnt Games** in Wroclaw, Poland and Czech Republic and **Timbre Games** based in Vancouver, Canada also fall under the Sumo Digital umbrella along with the award-winning design studio **Atomhawk**, who have bases in the UK and Canada.

Secret Mode is a video games publisher, focused on delivering fresh and new gaming experiences to players and building expansive and fulfilling communities around those games. It publishes titles developed within Sumo Group and also by independent developers.

Auroch Digital is a Bristol-based videogame developer and publisher with a focus on original IP creation.

Midoki is a Leamington Spa-based studio focused on creating ground-breaking, social games with rich experiences on mobile and strengthens our capability in original, free-to-play and games-as-service development in that space.

Quick Facts

Corporate history

2003:

Carl Cavers, James North-Hearn, Paul Porter, and Darren Mills founded **Sumo Digital**, based in Sheffield.



2007:

A second studio is opened in Pune, India – **Sumo Videogames Pvt.**



2014:

Carl, Paul, Darren and Chris Stockwell led a management buyout.

2016:

Sumo's second UK studio, **Sumo Nottingham**, is founded.

2017:

Sumo Digital acquires **Atomhawk**, a premium digital art and design agency in Newcastle, and **Sumo Group plc** is formed and joins the AIM LSE in December.

**2018:**

The CCP Newcastle Studio responsible for Valkyrie VR becomes part of Sumo Digital as **Sumo Newcastle**; Brighton-based studio and BAFTA award winning **The Chinese Room** is acquired and joins Sumo Digital in August; **Atomhawk** opens the doors of a second studio in Vancouver, Canada.

2019:

In January, Leeds based **Red Kite Games** is acquired and joins Sumo, mobile game and games as a service development studio **Sumo Leamington** opens in April, tech-focused **Sumo Warrington** opens in October.

2020:

Sumo Academy, a talent development programme, is launched, designed to create new pathways into the industry; **Lab42** is acquired in May and welcomed to Sumo Group.

2021:

PixelAnt Games, based in Wroclaw, Poland, joins Sumo Digital expanding the Group's international presence; **Secret Mode** is launched as a publishing division for own-IP and independent developers; the Group expands with **Timbre Games** in Vancouver, British Columbia, and **Auroch Digital**, a Bristol-based videogame developer and publisher with a focus on original IP creation; Sumo Digital opens a new studio **Sumo Bangalore**.

2022:

In January the Group is acquired by Tencent, one of the world's largest video games businesses. Working with Tencent enables Sumo Group to accelerate its business strategy, presenting opportunities to fast-track its Own-IP ambitions, attract and retain even more talented people, boost its positioning as the go-to partner for turnkey and co-development projects and support further growth by acquisition.

In June a second **PixelAnt Games** studio opened based in the Czech Republic.

2023:

Sumo Digital celebrated its 20th anniversary in June with '**SumoFest**' a special festival event exclusively for Sumo staff, which is held after the business's flagship two-day learning and development event **SDC23**.



In September, Sumo Digital announces that Leamington Spa-based mobile game dev studio **Midoki** has joined its family of studios.



Snapshot of notable games



2023

Sumo Nottingham and publisher Gun Interactive launch The Texas Chain Saw Massacre on PlayStation, Xbox, and PC.



2022

Publisher studio Secret Mode and developer studio The Chinese Room announced its multi-award-winning 'Little Orpheus' would be coming to PC, PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo Switch in March



2021

Sumo Digital launches Hood: Outlaws & Legends on PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X|S, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, and PC. Developed by teams in Newcastle and Pune and published by Focus Home Interactive



2020

Sumo Digital's second own-IP game, 'Spyder', is released exclusively for Apple Arcade, Atomhawk works with publisher 2K to create concept art and motion graphics for 'XCOM: Chimera Squad', released in April, Sumo Sheffield releases 'Sackboy: A Big Adventure' as a launch title for the PlayStation 5 and PlayStation 4



2019

Atomhawk creates concept art for NetherRealm Studios 'Mortal Kombat 11', released in April; 'Team Sonic Racing', developed for SEGA, is released, and Atomhawk works with Microsoft on announcement for AR experience 'Minecraft Earth'



2018

Working with Microsoft Studio's Playground Games, Sumo Digital completes work on 'Forza Horizon 4', released in September, Sumo Digital works once again with partners IO Interactive on 'Hitman 2', released in November

2017

Sumo Digital's first own-IP puzzle platformer game, 'Snake Pass', developed from an internal Game Jam competition, is released

2016

Sumo Digital works with partners IO Interactive on 'Hitman'

2014

Platform-adventure 'LittleBigPlanet 3', developed for Sony, is released in November

2012

Sumo Digital develops 'Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed' for SEGA

2004

Sumo Digital develops the classic arcade-inspired 'Outrun 2' for Xbox

Environmental, Social and Governance

At the heart of our business

Environmental commitments

Sumo Group is dedicated to growing a sustainable business that provides security to its people while delivering a first-class experience to its partners and players.

The Group is focused on reducing its carbon emissions and has set clear and achievable targets to help us achieve our goal of carbon net zero by 2025. Our targets can be found on our website [here](#)

Social commitments

As a people business, the social element of ESG is vitally important to Sumo. The success of its people is the success of its company. Sumo focus on supporting its employees, nurturing their talent and provide a healthy, friendly, enriching, creative and safe environment for them to work. Sumo also look for opportunities for meaningful causes that matter to its employees, clients and partners.

Charity Support in 2023:

Our charitable and community initiatives provide support for meaningful causes that matter to our employees, clients and partners.



Supports children and their families suffering from neuroblastoma



Helps raise vital funds for disadvantaged and disabled children and young people



Provides bespoke control setups and resources for people with physical challenges across the globe to play video games and feel included

Sumo Digital Academy

Opening pathways to a career in games:

We're committed to raising awareness of the games industry as a viable career choice for those currently in education or looking for a change in their career.

The [Sumo Digital Academy](#) is a talent development programme creating new pathways into the games industry, opening the door to graduates looking to make their first career move, those skilled in different industries and those seeking a career change. The Sumo Digital Academy is the first in the UK games industry to be recognised by the government and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

Our diversity internship consists of 8 weeks of C++ training, portfolio development and programmer role and responsibilities and we work with the Ahead Partnership, an initiative that sees young people connect with employers for practical, hands-on work experience.



Governance at Sumo Group

We aim to facilitate effective, entrepreneurial, and sensible governance of the business, to deliver long-term success. Our targets around governance can be found [here](#)

Inclusion and Belonging

Our partnerships:

Sumo is committed to working towards meaningful and enduring diversity across the industry, and to raising awareness of games development as a viable career choice. By partnering with initiatives and projects that share and align with our values we can help make an impactful and measurable difference in this area.

We have longstanding collaborative partnerships with [Women in Games](#), Global activists for women in games and esports, the [Ahead Partnership](#), a school outreach programme helping overcome inequality, promote opportunity and deliver positive change within society, and [Mission Gender Equity \(30% Club\)](#), a global campaign led by Chairs and CEOs taking action to increase gender diversity at board and executive-committee levels.



[Code Coven](#) which provide marginalised developers with the skills and confidence needed to thrive in the games industry, the company continues to work in partnership towards a more diverse and inclusive industry.

Sumo is a gold sponsor of the industry mentor scheme [Limit Break](#).



PRISM – Sumo’s Inclusion and Belonging diversity focus group

Prism is Sumo’s internal grassroots initiative which gives our people the opportunity to make meaningful change at policy level. Prism currently houses five open

community streams – Ethnic Minorities, Women, LGBTQ+, Nationality, Culture and Faith, and Ability, Wellbeing and Families – and two closed channels for Ethnic Minorities and Marginalised Genders. These are guided by ‘Diversity Champions’, who collaborate with members of their community to host panels, attend events, run workshops and share resources.

You can read more about Prism [here](#)



Awards History

Credibility and industry recognition

2023

Sumo Group wins the Talent Development Star award at the **Develop:Star Awards**, while Atomhawk collects the Best Creative Provider award.

Sumo Digital wins Best Creative/Co-Development Partner at the **MCV/DEVELOP Awards**.

Sumo Group is included in the **Best Companies** 'Q1 UK's 100 Best Large Companies to Work For' list for 2023.

2022

Sumo Group wins Employer of the Year at industry **TIGA Awards**

Sumo Sheffield's Sackboy: A Big Adventure wins Game Category at **Children & Young People BAFTA award**.

Group is honoured with a **Queen's Award for Enterprise** in recognition of its excellence in International Trade

Wins award for Digital Learning at the 2022 **Learning Excellence Awards** in recognition of its learning and development platform, Dojo

The Group reached no.12 in the **Best Companies Q1: UK's 100 Best Large Companies To Work For** and no.4 in the **Technology sector**

Sumo Digital won Best Studio in the **Develop: Star Awards as part of its Develop: Brighton**

Red Kite, Lab42 and Timbre Games won **GI.Biz Best places to work**

2021

Sumo Sheffield's Sackboy: A Big Adventure gains two **BAFTAs** for Family Game and British Game

Sumo Digital and Atomhawk are awarded **TIGA Star Award's**

Sumo Digital won Best Studio in the **Develop: Star Awards as part of its Develop: Brighton**

2020

Red Kite Games won Best Small Business and Sumo Leamington won Diversity at the **GI.biz awards**

The Chinese Room's Little Orpheus won the **TIGA** Award for Best Casual Game and the Apple Arcade Community Award for Best Performance

Sumo Digital wins **MCV/DEVELOP's** External Development Partner of the Year award

2019

Sumo Digital is awarded **TIGA's** Best Independent Studio

2016

Sumo Digital is awarded **TIGA's** Best Large Independent Studio

2015

TIGA awards Sumo Digital the UK Heritage Award

'LittleBigPlanet 3' (developed by Sumo Sheffield) is awarded **DICE's** Best Family Game

Leadership at Sumo Group

Dedicated to prioritising Sumo people and their talent



Carl Cavers

Co founder & Chief Executive Officer

Co-founder of Sumo Digital in 2003, growing the business

before a trade sale to Foundation 9. Carl then led a management buy-out with Northedge Capital in 2014, followed by a secondary buy-out with Perwyn in 2016. This was followed by the flotation of Sumo Group plc on AIM in 2017. Carl received TIGA's coveted Most Outstanding Individual Award in 2015 and he holds an honorary doctorate from Sheffield Hallam University.



Paul Porter

Co founder & Chief Operating Officer

Paul has over 25 years' experience in developing video

games and co-founded Sumo Digital in 2003. He started his career as a self-taught programmer and released his first game in 1991. Prior to founding Sumo Digital, Paul was Studio Head for Infogrames Sheffield and Head of Core Technology at Gremlin Interactive. He was appointed Chief Operating Officer of Sumo Group plc in April 2019. Prior to this he was Managing Director of Sumo Digital.



Andy Stewart

Chief Financial Officer

Andy has held a number of senior finance positions in the

technology and telecommunications sectors, including FTSE listed businesses such as Experian and BT and also three years as the Financial Controller at Plusnet. He started his career at PwC, qualifying as a chartered accountant in 2008. The majority of his nine years at PwC was spent in its M&A Advisory practice, delivering complex financial due diligence projects to an array of different clients and sectors. His time at PwC also included two years in its Madrid office, working on pan-European and global deals.



Darren Mills

Co-founder & Director of Excellence & Integration

Darren has 25 years' experience in developing video games, including co-founding Sumo Digital in 2003. Darren Started his career in the TV industry and moved over to the games Industry in 1995 starting at Gremlin in Sheffield in the Art department and rising to Studio Art Director for Infogrames Sheffield House. After co-founding Sumo in 2003 Darren took on the Art Director role for the studio and founded the Pune Studio in India in 2007.

He was appointed Studio Director of the Sheffield Studio in January 2016 and began the role of Director of Excellence & Integration in February 2020



Karen McLoughlin

Group Director of HR

Karen began her career in the video games industry in 1996 at Gremlin Interactive, where she gained extensive experience in a gaming and software development environment. In 2005, as Sumo Digital was expanding, Karen joined as Office Manager in Sheffield.

In 2011, she was promoted to HR Manager for Sumo Digital, moving into her current role of Group Director of HR in January 2018. Karen is a CIPD qualified HR professional.



Dean Trotman

Commercial Director

Dean began his Games Industry career fresh from University, joining Codemasters Software as Acquisitions Manager in 1997.

This was followed by 14 years as Commercial Director at SEGA Europe, responsible for introducing multiple new partnerships, projects, licences, and content as well as the best-practice porting of high- profile Japanese IP. Dean Runs Sumo Groups Business Development and Publishing Divisions



Gary Dunn

Managing Director – Sumo Digital

After a 12 year career in Telecommunications, Gary joined the games industry in 2002, becoming Executive Producer for the Colin McRae Rally Franchise, being promoted to the Codemasters board after only three months, Gary was responsible for all internal and external development. Gary joined SEGA in 2005, and led the integration of both Creative Assembly and Sports Interactive into the company, notably growing the former from 60 to 300 staff. Gary returned to Codemasters in 2013, running the development for the company once more, including the F1 and DIRT Franchises. Gary ran his own Consulting practice for three years before joining Sumo.



Steve Shreeves

Group Director of IT

Following his first role programming Computer Numerical Controlled manufacturing equipment, Steve served in the Royal Air Force for 12 years as an Electronics Technician working on everything from airfield radars to satellite communications.

After leaving the RAF he joined Premier Farnell as a network engineer and, over 18 years there, progressed to Global Head of IT Operations, leading a team of approximately 100 IT staff across the world.



Christina Haralambous

Group Director of Communications and Marketing

Christina is responsible for Sumo Group's global marketing and communications strategy. As the Group's foremost marketer, Christina sets the marketing strategies to guide the communications and brand building programmes for Sumo Businesses to ensure we are positioned as the leading turn-key games development company and the employer of choice for aspiring Talent. Prior to joining Sumo, Christina built her career over the last 15 years in a variety of roles and industries, managing MarComms for global top-tier media and advertising agencies and high growth technology firms.



Tim Repa-Davis

General Counsel and Company Secretary

Tim joins Sumo as the group's General Counsel and Company Secretary from Sheridans' celebrated video games team where he was a partner. Having advised game developers and publishers all the way from indie to AAA there are few lawyers who have the level and breadth of experience in the video games sector that Tim has. Prior to joining Sumo, Tim also worked closely with the team on the set up of Secret Mode and has worked with various studios in the group including Auroch Digital and Red Kite in his previous role. Tim is a thought leader for legal issues in the games industry and, in particular, games publishing having spoken on the subject at GDC in 2021 and 2022.

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