



## How we work

Previously, we have self-funded the development of each game through to pre-Alpha stage, at which point we have tried to secure additional funding, either via publishers or Kickstarter (**Best Buds vs Bad Guys**).

Our average development time has been between 12-18 months. We also tend to work on multiple projects concurrently.

Most recently we have begun a development phase of shorter, smaller-scope projects, cutting down development time down to a maximum of 6-months for each title, for all SKUs. The plan is more games out in the wild, build up a catalogue, and hopefully average out a better revenue stream across all titles – included bundling and sales.

These smaller scope, pickup and play games focus on challenging arcade gameplay, cool visual style and leader board chasing. We branded this range as '**Super Arcade**'. So far, we have released **Vektor Wars** on this basis, with **Gates of Hell** as a planned follow-up.

## Development Income & Costs

**Super Life of Pixel** and **PLATAGO** were released via publishers, and we received development advances on each. These advances helped to cover running costs for the studio up until Q2, 2019.

We also earn royalties on some of our older titles (WiiU and PSVita), although this has now dropped to a minimal amount, a couple of hundred per month.

Our most successful title is **Life of Pixel** – which has over 40,000 lifetime sales.

Most recently, **Vektor Wars** (Switch), released in July. Sales have been low, 350 sales since launch.



## Current monthly costs:

Accountant fees:	£250
Rent & Insurance:	£250
Internet/Hosting:	£130
Electricity/Gas:	£100
Misc:	£100
Adobe:	£42
Bank fees:	£40
Game Textures:	£19
Microsoft:	£8
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£939</b>

## Development Process & Times

### Team Size

Primary coding on all current and new games is handled by Richard (RHW), in Unity, for the lead platform, which is PC.

Steve (SH) handles the console versions and optimizations, plus technical testing and TRC/Lotcheck compliance. He also creates various frameworks which are common across all projects. These include:

- Achievements/Trophies
- Leaderboards
- Spawn Manager system
- Game Save system

In addition to Richard & Steve, we work with freelance artists/musicians as and when we need them.



## The Process

The typical development process for each game is as follows:

1. RHW comes up with a concept and begins prototyping the visual style
2. Once the visual style is set, programming begins – usually re-using existing game types we have already created in Unity, which include:
  - Top-down 2D/3D (can also be isometric)
  - Side-scrolling platform/shooting
  - 3D FPS (we have two systems currently, one very retro, the other with a slightly more modern feel)
3. RHW continues to create the level artwork and begins putting the actual levels together – level geometry/tile-maps, object and enemy placement and so on. Freelance art is commissioned at this point
4. Sound effects are added, and music is sourced
5. New gameplay mechanisms, game specific routines and enemy AI are created

We try to get things to a point where it plays well; the core mechanics are all in-place – where it feels like a game. At this point, RHW starts additional levels/sub-games and hooks up the other systems such as Achievements and Leaderboards.

Once this is done, the project is passed over to SH to handle console builds, and, if required, optimization. SH also tests the game; a thorough technical test, plus gameplay testing and feedback.



## Current Limitations

One of our key strengths as a studio is a proven track record of creating and completing games, often with very minimal budgets. In an ideal world, we would love to expand our resources so we could fully realise the vision we have for our games.

Personally speaking, I love creating games. I love the whole process; from the initial research and prototyping phase, through to making the various ideas a reality, adding little touches and cool ideas, putting it all together and trying to make it all as good as I can.

Continual restriction on resources limits what we can achieve. The result is that we make good games, but not quite great games, and unless you are very lucky, a game needs to be great to really stand out.

It also means that certain elements take longer than I would like, such as graphics and level design. These are typically the bulk of project time, and I create most of them myself, which has several drawbacks:

**Quality** – I am good at some things, less good at others, and I know I can find others out there who can produce far better-quality graphics than I can alone. When I do commission art, I usually have to request the minimum amount of animation and number of enemy designs. Reviewers and game players notice this instinctively they notice the quality dips, the sometimes overly generic art and lack of animation.

**Limiting Factors** – often our games are good fun to play, but lack that something to make them stand-out. Throughout development, there are so many ideas for cool visual & gameplay elements – bosses, new enemies, set-piece background art, cut-scenes and story artwork – that we don't do because we can't afford to commission artwork.

**Level Design** – I also handle the level design for every game we do; 2D and 3D. This way of working is probably the single most limiting factor, as you are getting ideas from just one person, and when you play the game, it shows. Most games are the product of a combination of ideas, usually from a range of different people with different tastes and experiences. Without that combination of thoughts and suggestions, a game can lack that special something to make it stand out.