Microsoft owned Rare is a major player in the £4.2bn UK gaming market. With a 30 year pedigree, the company’s most recent game development is Sea of Thieves, published by Microsoft Studios for Microsoft Windows and Xbox One, and set for release this year.

With a custom built headquarters in the Leicestershire countryside, the organisation turned to Reflex when an upgrade to their audio visual facilities was needed. With a huge reliance on 4K technology, this creative environment was an exciting challenge to work on.

The Requirements

As a highly creative gaming organisation, there are many different areas of expertise within the Microsoft Studio. On the one hand is the creative team, developers, testing staff, artists and designers, all needing technology that supports the artistic process. Then there is a team with the skills needed to run a business. AV technology is absolutely crucial to Rare. As part of a product’s development, their work demands a variety of testing platforms, to fully experience games in the same way as their customers do. For example the Arts Review Room, which is a testing room, has three different display screens; a large format high resolution 4k screen, a standard domestic screen and a monitor. Games in development are tested and played on each. Test gamers are invited to give their reactions to games during the creation process, and their responses are recorded in test booths.

The boardroom is used for normal corporate meetings and group discussions, with internal staff and external clients and as such needed state of the art facilities befitting a professional and creative organisation.

The Solution

The Boardroom was the starting point of the project. Here Reflex installed Crestron control, an HD Diamond camera, an 84” LG LED display, with three smaller LG repeater screens around the edge of the room and, most importantly, surround sound.

One wall in the boardroom is made of glass, leading to an outside terrace. This meant careful consideration had to be given to lighting, with programmable shutters, operated and controlled through the control panel.

The War Room is a large auditorium, seating up to 80 people and is a multi-use space, hosting events, social occasions and meetings. In the front of the auditorium, a TeamMate desk was installed along with surround sound audio, Crestron control, Crestron Digital Media switching and distribution, and Revolab microphones.
Other areas of the brief included:-

**The Directors’ Office** is where Reflex installed Crestron control, an LG 58” display on a custom rise and fall mount, in bespoke wooden credenza made by Turning Leaf.

**The Sky Room, Sub Hub and Conkers meeting rooms**, have 84” LG displays, Crestron control, and surround sound audio

**The Boombox - Live Ops room** has a 2x2 videowall created with Samsung UD460-P LED displays, along with Crestron control systems. This room is used to show and test the 4K Xbox on an 86” LG 4K display.

Throughout, it was critical that 4K systems were installed to support the new 4K Xbox, and so allow Rare to replicate the experience of the viewer.

The whole installation comprised of 13 rooms, all of which can be booked via a Crestron Room Booking system in the reception area. Also in this area a Reception Seating Booth with 32” screens and Creston AirMedia. The booth offers staff and visitors the ability to use their laptop to hot desk, or hold 4 person or less informal meetings.

Work with Rare is ongoing with plans in the pipeline to align all technology around the launch of the Xbox Project Scorpio, a true 4K console. This includes a stunning new video wall in the reception area.

Throughout the project, Reflex had to work with local builders, electricians and Rare’s IT team. It was key that the needs of the different skill sets within Rare were given consideration.

**The Results**

According to David Sanderberg – Head of Facilities Management at Rare

“The Reflex team was the saviour of our boardroom. Feeling let down by a previous supplier, we called Reflex in, and they listened and understood our requirements. As a result we now have the facilities we need to foster our creative teams and to encourage collaboration on projects. Both the game development and commercial sides of the business have the tools they need to be effective. Reflex were a great partner to work with, they installed the solutions in a very tight timescale, and despite a few cable run challenges to overcome, delivered on time and on budget.”