

Top execs abandon consoles for social gaming

Chris Nuttall, *Financial Times Tech Blog*
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Anyone doubting that social gaming is the next big growth area for the video-game industry should note which way top executives in the industry are moving.

Electronic Arts has just announced that John Pleasants, its chief operating officer and president of global publishing, is leaving the company. His destination is the chief executive role at Playdom, the leading social game developer on MySpace.

This follows Monday's announcement that Simon Jeffery, former president and COO of Sega America, had joined ngmoco, the iPhone game publisher led by former EA executive Neil Young.

Mr. Jeffery will lead its Plus+ Publishing group, a new initiative designed to take advantage of the latest OS 3.0 software for the iPhone, which will boost social networking in games.

Mr. Pleasants, who had been at EA for just over a year in his key strategic role, said in a press release:

"I'm thrilled to join Playdom. Online gaming is the fastest-growing sector of the gaming industry, and social gaming, in particular, is transforming the way people play and experience games."

EA said John Schappert, who left the company in 2007 to head Microsoft's Game Studios and Xbox Live, would return in July to take up Mr Pleasants' role.