

NCSOFT

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nywide, at offices in San Mateo; Bellevue, Wash.; Austin, Texas; the U.K.; and Aliso Viejo, where 250 work.

NCSOFT Corp. has an employment base of about 3,000, including some 2,300 based at its headquarters in Seoul. It's traded on the KRX Korean Exchange and posted revenue of about \$715 million last year and net income of nearly \$194 million.

Strategic Shift

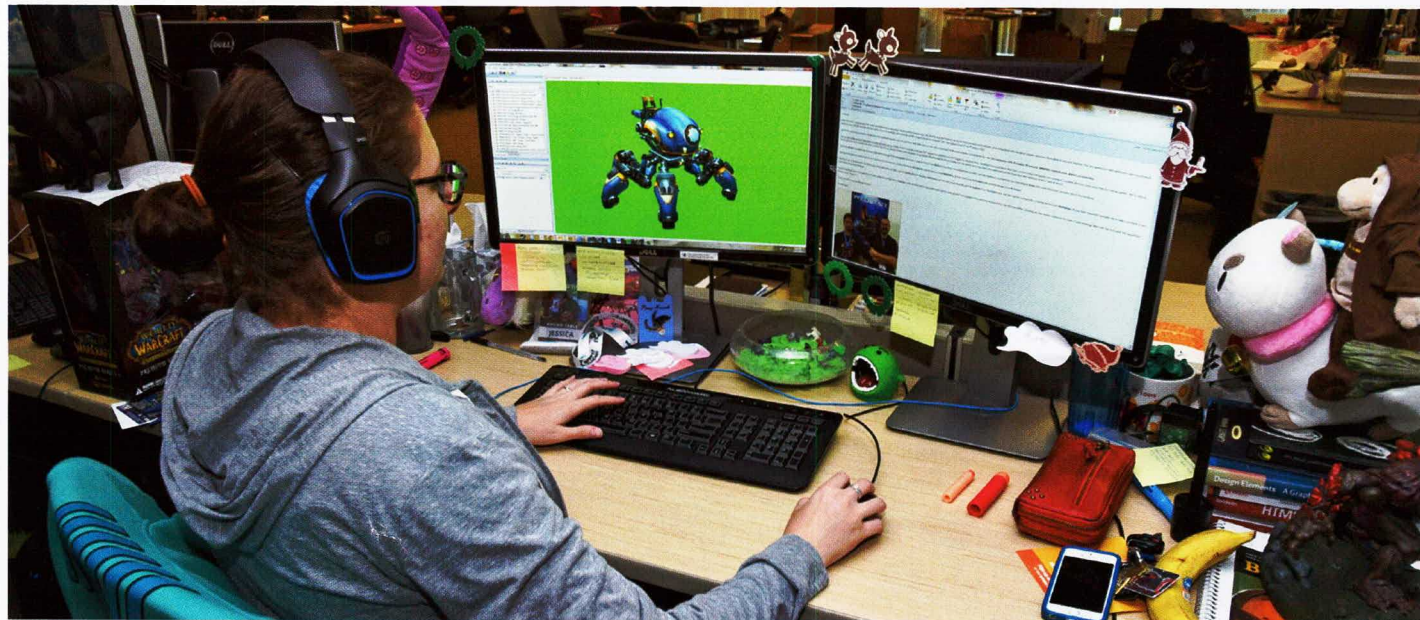
The U.S. unit, founded in 2000, generates less than a quarter of the company's total revenue, a percentage that could swing in the coming years as the company markets its most popular game, "WildStar," in North America and Europe and shifts the pricing model from a monthly subscription of \$15 to free-to-play. The company also is ditching the \$20-to-\$100 price to buy the game. Revenue comes from in-game merchandise sales.

"The West is a very large strategic initiative for our Korean headquarters" due to growth potential, Burns told the Business Journal in mid-June in a private meeting room during the Electronic Entertainment Expo video game convention in downtown Los Angeles. "They definitely want to see that revenue split grow significantly from the West, which is what we're working on."

Some early indicators are pointing in the right direction.

NCSOFT West has attracted "hundreds of thousands" of players who have signed up to beta test "WildStar," which was developed by Carbine Studios. The game developer was established in 2005.

The sci-fi massively multiplayer



"WildStar": graphic designer Jessica Burg reviews images from popular game

online game allows friends and strangers to meet up on adventures and challenges on fictional planet Nexus. It had one of the biggest industry launches a year ago and will have several new features in the updated free version.

"We think there's great ways for us to monetize this game and bring more players into the game," said NCSOFT's senior vice president of human resources, **Chauncey Gam-mage**, who's overseeing the U.S. buildout plan and heads Carbine Studios. "We're really looking to increase the population of the game into the millions."

Blizzard Entertainment Inc.'s World of Warcraft is the most played massively multiplayer online role-playing game, also known as MMORPGs, with 5.6 million subscribers through the June quarter.

The "WildStar" relaunch in the first quar-

ter will usher in the first of several initiatives under way at NCSOFT, which plans to bring popular franchises "Aion" and "Blade & Soul" to the North American and European markets. Those titles, along with its "Lineage 1" and "Lineage 2," are among the most lucrative games in the genre of

MMORPGs.

It will also shift its games from PCs to consoles and other platforms, and develop new titles for mobile devices.

"That's what's really at the core of our new strategy," Burns said. "We're on an acceleration path as a company in the West." ■

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CORRECTION

The name of **Zayo Group LLC** was misspelled in an Aug. 17 story about the county's largest telecommunications companies.

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