

# Big Interview: The computer gamer taking on big hardware giants with his designer tech

A computer gamer who came up with a novel piece of player hardware while recovering from a horror bike crash says he can't keep up with demand.

Steven McKerrow said next year he wants to attract up to £1 million of equity investment for his business which makes bespoke gaming mice that "look better, feel better and play better" than the [established tech](#).

He said he has improved on the mass manufactured mice which he said already offer a far better playing experience and quicker response times for adrenalin-fuelled computer gamers than hand held control pads.

His Leicestershire-based company Mouseskins customises existing mice – which cost around £150 – with new skins made with more tactile materials and with cooler designs, giving them added grip and even the ability to wick away sweat. They sell for £450.

Steven, an avid cyclist from [Shepshed near Loughborough](#), came up with the idea while recovering from a horrific bike crash in Leicester city centre back in 2016 which left him with a dislocated shoulder and internal injuries.

He said: "I was a really ambitious, driven individual, but in 2016 I was casually hit by a van.

"I couldn't really do much and as I recovered I really got in touch with my gaming. I'd played before but never at this level – and trust me I'm still not a professional – then one day I was staring at the computer mouse and it needed

replacing and I didn't want to pay for a new one.

"They're a little bit boring. They're all the same and we spend so much time playing games these days with amazing graphics and evolving worlds – I thought why can't we bring some of that into reality?"

"The other problem with mice technology is it doesn't last. I wondered what could I do to make that better?"

"So I began working on Mouseskins, looking at the market and adding details, looking at the automotive industry and Formula 1 and racing cars and my bikes and saw that it could get a bit crazy."

"So that's where I started to introduce design, to make it stand out, be a bit more personal and give you that extra 10 per cent improvement in performance over everyone else. I could do that."

Mouseskins founder Steven McKerrow

“And I thought of typical gamers at home who don’t have £1,000 to spend on some fancy kit, and wanted to just get in at the ground level and be competitive.

“I started with my own designs but quickly got to feel that you need to reach out and network to other artists like Brock Hofer, who’s a legend, and Vishal Joshi who is one of the best living artists in Leicester. This created a whole new swathe of technology, design, feel and look to go along with the performance.”

The business launched last November and has been helped by the Princes Trust and Sir Thomas White Charity, Steven has also been looking at developing related products such as jerseys, headsets, graphics cards and other limited collections.

Mouseskins has already partnered with brands such as sim-racing team Alpine Esports, creating a mouse for this year’s 24hr Le Mans Virtual with ex-F1 driver Fernando Alonso. It is building relations with other e-gaming companies.

He said: “As the costs mounted I tried to talk to investors but they said as a start-up it might not work and they wanted 50 per cent of the business to get involved.

“So when the Sir Thomas White Charity said they could give me a £10,000 interest free loan, to repay back over 10 years it was amazing.

“That £10,000 gave us the immediate confidence to go to world leading teams and tell everyone we had the best stuff.

“It’s growing massively. I’m now ready to seek investment of between £500,000 and £1 million and am planning to work with South Park next year. It took six months to negotiate with them and it was the biggest investment we’ve done but it is huge for us and means we will be an official partner of Paramount.”

He said Mouseskins now has four people working for it and a workshop in Kettering and has made 300 units so far with 150 on order.

Steven said: "Next year I want to improve our manufacturing so that we can increase capacity fivefold.

"There have been companies asking us to make 200 units a week."

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