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Former VK Chief Takes Over Russian Gaming Studio Behind World of Tanks

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Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

The former head of Russian tech giant VK has assumed leadership of gaming studio Lesta, best known for operating titles such as World of Tanks and World of Warships, he told the RBC news website.

Boris Dobrodeev, 34, is the son of Oleg Dobrodeev, head of the state-owned media conglomerate VGTRK.

He now heads IT Technologies, the firm that formally took over Lesta in mid-July following a transfer of management rights from the federal state property agency Rosimushchestvo.

The company, registered on July 1, oversees Lesta's primary operations, including its development arm Lesta, its Moscow-based branch Lesta Games Moscow and publishing division Lesta Games Agency.

Industry insiders had long identified Dobrodeev as the leading candidate to take control of the

studio, which became a key player in the domestic gaming sector after taking over the Russian operations of Belarus-founded Wargaming in 2022.

In an interview with RBC published Wednesday, Dobrodeev said the company's near-term priorities include team expansion, community engagement and a roadmap of updates tied to World of Tanks' upcoming 15th anniversary in August.

He announced a new update titled "U-Turn," which he said would mark the beginning of a broader shift aimed at improving gameplay and responsiveness to player feedback.

"I've been playing for many years, and the product plans that I see from the team align with the core demands of our audience," he said.

Lesta was formerly a subsidiary of Wargaming, the international studio founded by Belarusian entrepreneur Viktor Kisly.

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Wargaming exited the Russian and Belarusian markets, transferring its local assets to Lesta Games.

Wargaming has since committed a portion of its in-game sales to humanitarian aid for Ukraine. In response, Lesta publicly distanced itself from the company, asserting that its projects were apolitical and uninvolved in such initiatives.

In June, Moscow's Tagansky District Court escalated state intervention in the gaming sector by labeling Kisly and Lesta's then-owner Malik Khatazhaev as members of an extremist organization, citing Wargaming's support for Ukraine.

The court ordered the confiscation of 100% of Lesta Games' shares into state ownership, paving the way for Dobrodeev's appointment.

Dobrodeev rose to prominence in Russia's tech industry in 2014 when he became CEO of VKontakte following the departure of its founder Pavel Durov.

He later led Mail.ru Group, now known as VK, until stepping down in 2021 after Gazprom-Media became a major shareholder.

Dobrodeev subsequently led USM Telecom, part of billionaire Alisher Usmanov's business empire, before leaving in 2022 to pursue independent ventures.

With his new post at Lesta, Dobrodeev re-enters the public tech sphere at a time when the Kremlin is deepening its control over digital media and online entertainment, including the fast-growing video game sector.

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