


Wolfson Microelectronics

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Wolfson Microelectronics plc



<u>Former type</u>	Public limited company
<u>Traded as</u>	LSE: WLF Semiconductor ,
Industry	Digital signal processing , Mixed-signal integrated circuits
Fate	Acquired
Founded	Edinburgh (1984)
Defunct	28 April 2014
Headquarters	Edinburgh, Scotland , United Kingdom
Key people	Mike Hickey (CEO) Andy Brannan (CCO) David Milne (Co-founder) Jim Reid (Co-founder)
Number of employees	430+
Website	cirrus.com

Wolfson Microelectronics plc was a [microelectronics](#) and [fabless semiconductor](#) company headquartered in [Edinburgh](#), Scotland. It specialised in [signal processing](#) and [mixed-signal chips](#) for the [consumer electronics](#) market and had engineering and sales offices throughout [Asia-Pacific](#), [Europe](#) and the [United States](#). In 2014 it was acquired by [Cirrus Logic](#) for £291 million.



Contents

- [1 History](#)
- [2 Products](#)
- [3 IEEE/RSE James Clerk Maxwell Medal](#)
- [4 References](#)
- [5 External links](#)

History

Started in 1984 by David Milne and Jim Reid. Within a year the company had 20 employees and a deal with [Fujitsu](#).^[1] Wolfson grew and floated on the [London Stock Exchange](#) in 2003 and be listed in the [FTSE 250](#). Both Milne and Reid had connections with the [University of Edinburgh](#); Reid attained a [First Class Honours](#) degree in [EEE](#), and Milne directed the Wolfson Microelectronics Institute at [King's Buildings](#) from 1973 to 1985.^[2] In February, 2007, when Milne chose to step down, he was replaced in his [CEO](#) role by Dave Shrigley, previously [Vice-President](#) at [Intel Corporation](#). His departure was one of a number of executive changes in late 2006, as Financial Director George Elliott also stood down.

In 2006, Milne was declared Entrepreneur of the Year by the [CBI](#), and Wolfson named Company of the Year.^[3] In November 2006 David Shrigley became the CEO of Wolfson, his first appointment at this level: he had previously worked for [Intel](#) in the [Asia-Pacific](#) region, and held directorships elsewhere.^[4]

In September 2008, Mike Hickey joined Wolfson as Chief Executive Officer Designate and became Chief Executive Officer on 1 January 2009. Mr Hickey joined Wolfson from [Motorola Inc](#), where he had held various senior positions in Motorola's mobile device business.^[5] In July 2009, Andy Brannan joined Wolfson as Chief Commercial Officer. Mr Brannan previously held the position of VP of [Nokia's](#) SOSCO business, and prior to that spent eight years as Executive VP of Sales & Customer Operations at [Symbian Ltd](#).^[6]

[Cirrus Logic](#) acquired the Wolfson for 235p per share in April 2014, valuing the company at £291 million.

Products

Wolfson products have found applications within the [digital audio player](#) market, such as in Microsoft's [Zune](#) product line, including the [Zune 30](#), [Zune 80](#), and [Zune HD](#), Cowon's line of mp3 and PMP players, as well as providing the [codec](#) functionality for much of [Apple Inc.](#)'s [iPod](#) series (with the exception of the [iPod shuffle](#)^[7] and [iPod classic](#)^[8]) and [Sony's](#) [PSP](#).^[9] Wolfson chips have also found place in the [Microsoft Xbox](#) game console, [Logitech Squeezebox Duet](#)^[10] and the [PalmOne Treo smartphone](#), with the Apple connection continuing with the earlier versions of the [iPhone](#)^[11] and [iPod touch](#).^{[8][12]}

Wolfson audio products can also be found in most Tegra 2 SoC devices and some devices like the [Samsung Wave S8500](#) and [Samsung i9000 Galaxy S](#) smartphones,^[13] as well as a number of [LG](#) phones including the LG-LB4400 music phone and the Android-powered LG Optimus GT540 smartphone.^[14]

In April 2010, Wolfson signed a licence agreement with [Tensilica](#) to create a low power, high definition (HD) sound platform.^[15]

Wolfson's chipsets were known for delivering high quality sound that matched or surpassed the offerings of well-established manufacturers like Cirrus Logic. After replacing Wolfson's chip with a chip from Cirrus Logic there was a minor decline in Apple's iPod sound quality when connected with high end audio gear, despite the improved board design.^{[16][17]}

Wolfson Microelectronics also produced the Audio Cards for Raspberry PI Model B Rev 2 named *Wolfson Audio Card*.^{[18][19]} After Wolfson Microelectronics was purchased by Cirrus Logic the Audio Card for Raspberry PI Model B+ was renamed *Cirrus Logic Audio Card*.^[20]

IEEE/RSE James Clerk Maxwell Medal

Main article: [IEEE Maxwell Award](#)

With initial funding from Wolfson, an award called the IEEE/RSE James Clerk Maxwell Medal was established in 2006 by the [IEEE](#) and [Royal Society of Edinburgh](#). This award recognizes work with "exceptional impact on the development of [electronics](#) and [electrical engineering](#) or related fields".^{[21][22][23]}