

# Strangled by a tape measure

**Adam Russell / @gardenerofeden**

Co-founder, wallFour



**GDC EDUCATION**  
SUMMIT

**GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
MARCH 5-9, 2012  
EXPO DATES: MARCH 7-9

**2012**





# 1 / 3 : when we just did stuff

**Adam Russell / @gardenerofeden**  
Co-founder, wallFour

## BSc (Hons) Computer Games Programming

Developed in association with **Microsoft X**



*"The BSc (Hons) Computer Games Programming degree at Derby provides the essential skill set we would be looking for in graduate games programmers new to the industry, rather than shying away from the more technically challenging aspects in favour of the currently trendier ones."*

Peter Johnson, Venom Games

## BA (Hons) Computer Games Modelling and Animation

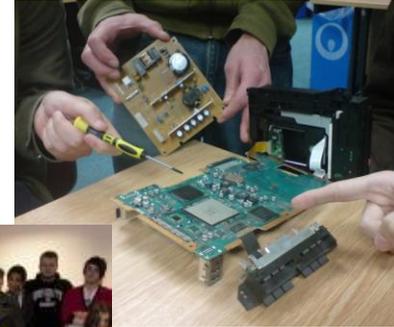
**advanced modelling & animation techniques**  
**creative drawing & character design**  
**real-time rendering**



**Leap into the next generation of games**

*"It's a fantastic idea for a course. The industry needs to recruit more people with an artistic speciality..."*

Gravin Rummery, Core Design

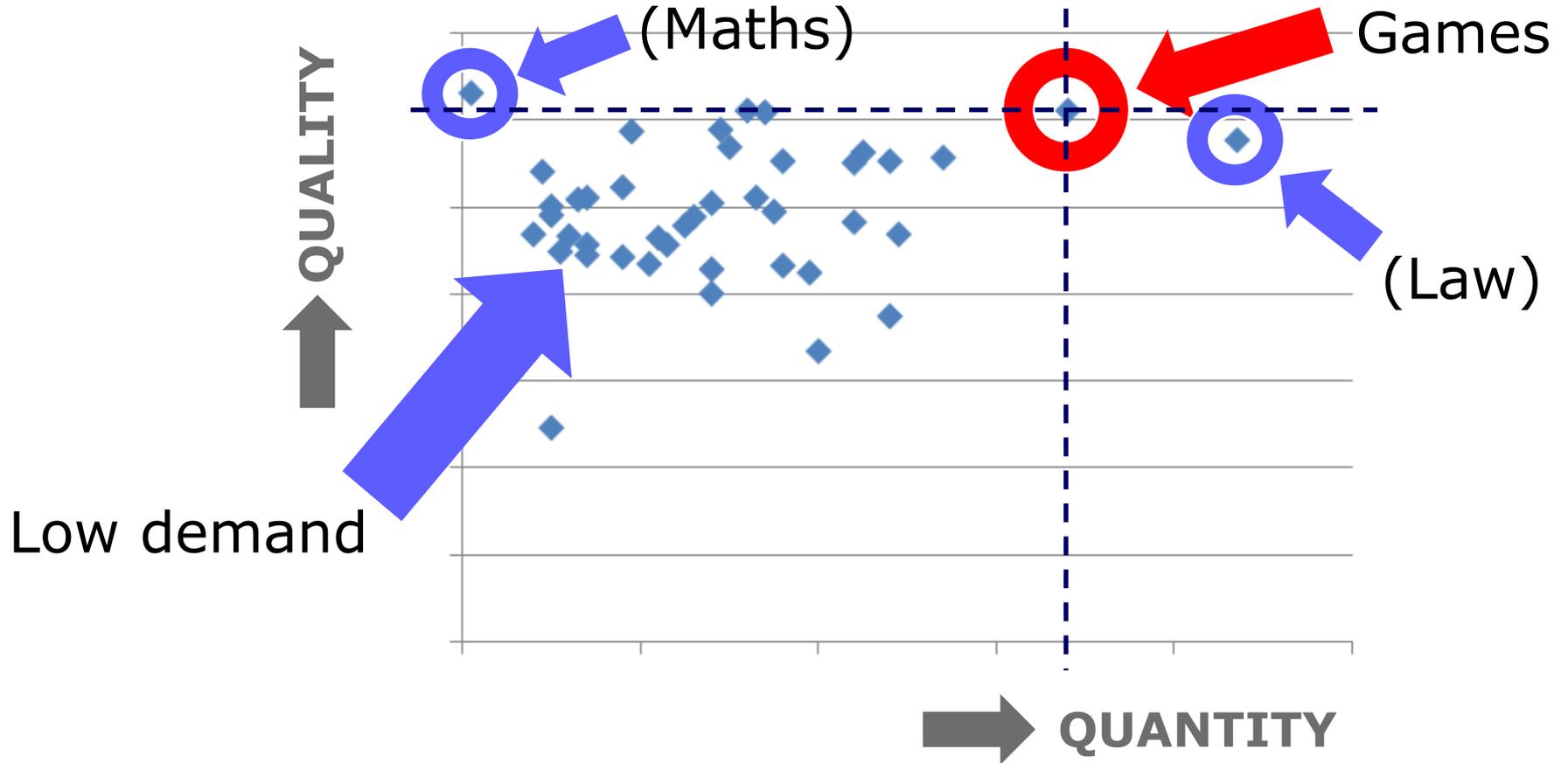




**develop**  
INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE AWARDS







# 2 / 3 : big brother arrives

**Adam Russell / @gardenerofeden**  
Co-founder, wallFour

# Target culture

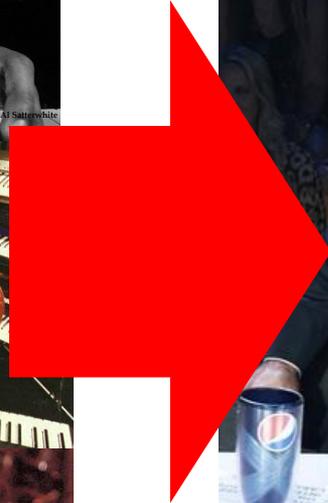
- Students as consumers
  - Choice / Transparency
  - 'Standards'
  - 'Value for money'
- League table rankings
- Management by measurement

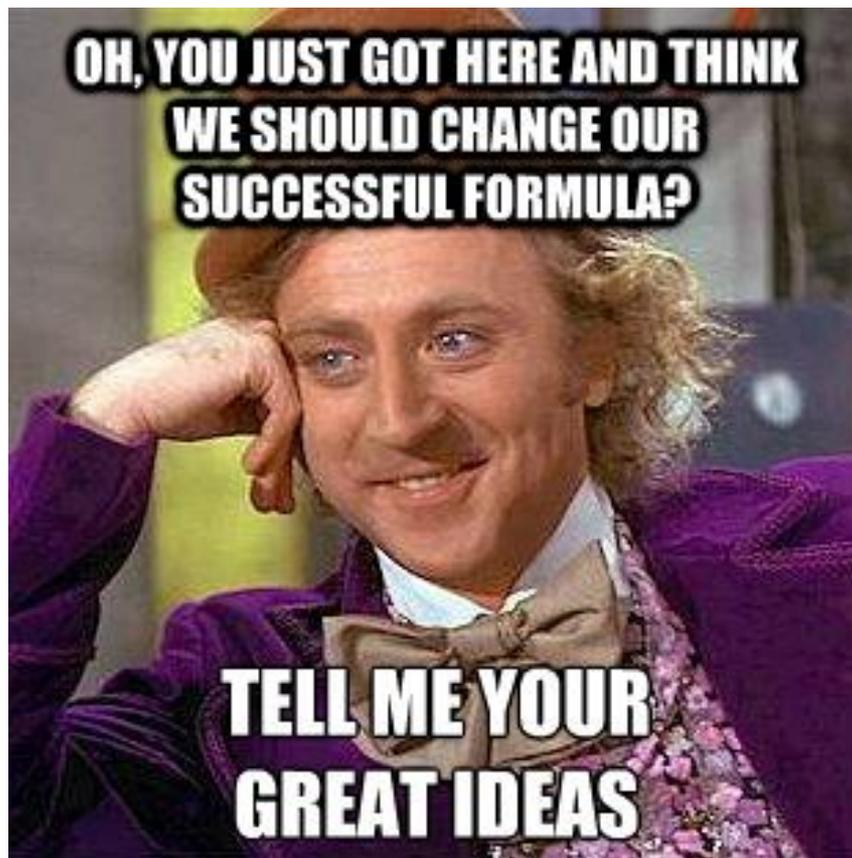
# The new regime

- New 22-target appraisal...
- Improve retention
- Raise results profile
- Produce 'research' for REF
- (Cut student contact time)

# Revised school strategy

- “Extensive consultation”
- Increased % PG / decreased UG
- More international students
- More ‘unified’ UG curriculum
- Destruction of subject areas





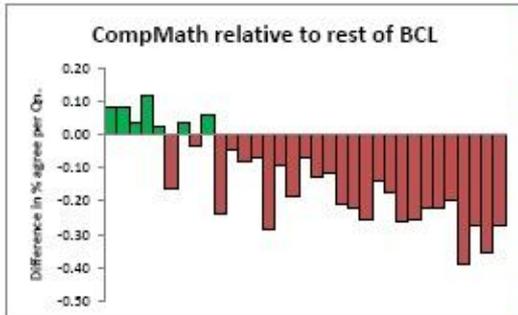
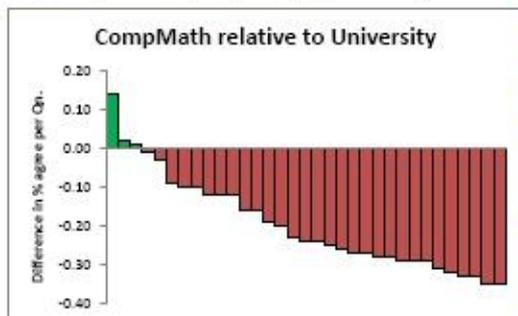
**OH, YOU JUST GOT HERE AND THINK  
WE SHOULD CHANGE OUR  
SUCCESSFUL FORMULA?**

**TELL ME YOUR  
GREAT IDEAS**

Staff engagement results within School of Computing + Maths

SURVEY RESPONDENTS			
Group	Responses	Rate	Pop
Uni			
BCL			
CompMath			
BCL w/o CM			

(derived data)



Qn. Summary of question	% Agreement			
	Uni	BCL	3CL w/o C	CompMath
29 Frequent team meetings	Green	Green	Green	Green
15 Have required resources	Green	Green	Green	Green
32 Well informed about Faculty	Green	Green	Green	Green
6 Accurate DPR evaluation	Green	Green	Green	Green
14 Appropriate reward balance	Green	Green	Green	Green
24 Proud to work at Derby	Green	Green	Green	Green
3 Reasonable structure of day	Green	Green	Green	Green
22 Personal values similar to Uni	Green	Green	Green	Green
13 Recognition for good job	Green	Green	Green	Green
16 Personal accomplishment	Green	Green	Green	Green
26 Meaningful role discussions	Green	Green	Green	Green
2 Reasonable pace of day	Green	Green	Green	Green
4 Understand local objectives	Green	Green	Green	Green
7 Satisfied with physical env	Green	Green	Green	Green
8 Received training needed	Green	Green	Green	Green
9 Senior mgmt are in touch	Green	Green	Green	Green
12 Paid fairly looking externally	Green	Green	Green	Green
31 Have info needed for job	Green	Green	Green	Green
11 Paid fairly looking internally	Green	Green	Green	Green
30 Opportunities to air views	Green	Green	Green	Green
18 Uni has honesty and integrity	Green	Green	Green	Green
23 Understand path to promotion	Green	Green	Green	Green
17 Clear rationale for promotion	Green	Green	Green	Green
27 Action will result from this	Green	Green	Green	Green
19 Know skills I need for success	Green	Green	Green	Green
21 Good promotion opportunities	Green	Green	Green	Green
25 Decisions consider staff w-b	Green	Green	Green	Green
20 Uni values visible locally	Green	Green	Green	Green
1 Clear rationale for changes	Green	Green	Green	Green
10 Chance to use my skills	Green	Green	Green	Green
33 Well informed about team	Green	Green	Green	Green
5 Informed about Uni priorities	Green	Green	Green	Green
28 General communication	Green	Green	Green	Green

Qn. Summary of question

Qn. Summary of question	CompMath relative		
	Uni	BCL	BCL w/o C
29 Frequent team meetings	Green	Green	Green
15 Have required resources	Green	Green	Green
32 Well informed about Faculty	Green	Green	Green
6 Accurate DPR evaluation	Green	Green	Green
14 Appropriate reward balance	Green	Green	Green
24 Proud to work at Derby	Green	Green	Green
3 Reasonable structure of day	Green	Green	Green
22 Personal values similar to Uni	Green	Green	Green
13 Recognition for good job	Green	Green	Green
16 Personal accomplishment	Green	Green	Green
26 Meaningful role discussions	Green	Green	Green
2 Reasonable pace of day	Green	Green	Green
4 Understand local objectives	Green	Green	Green
7 Satisfied with physical env	Green	Green	Green
8 Received training needed	Green	Green	Green
9 Senior mgmt are in touch	Green	Green	Green
12 Paid fairly looking externally	Green	Green	Green
31 Have info needed for job	Green	Green	Green
11 Paid fairly looking internally	Green	Green	Green
30 Opportunities to air views	Green	Green	Green
18 Uni has honesty and integrity	Green	Green	Green
23 Understand path to promotion	Green	Green	Green
17 Clear rationale for promotion	Green	Green	Green
27 Action will result from this	Green	Green	Green
19 Know skills I need for success	Green	Green	Green
21 Good promotion opportunities	Green	Green	Green
25 Decisions consider staff w-b	Green	Green	Green
20 Uni values visible locally	Green	Green	Green
1 Clear rationale for changes	Green	Green	Green
10 Chance to use my skills	Green	Green	Green
33 Well informed about team	Green	Green	Green
5 Informed about Uni priorities	Green	Green	Green
28 General communication	Green	Green	Green

# Endgame

- GDC acceptance, funding denied
- Paid for the travel personally
- Disciplinary on return ('unprofessional')
- Failed to pin anything, buried the report
- 'Below expectations' appraisal at year end

# 3 / 3 : resisting the target society

**Adam Russell / @gardenerofeden**  
Co-founder, wallFour





# Treating students like adults

- No more spoon-feeding
- Demanding their best
- Meaningful grading
- Open-ended coursework
- Taking responsibility

# Beyond expectations

- Glowing external examiner report
- 'Save CGP' campaign
- Letter to VC from graduates
- Personal messages of thanks
- National radio coverage

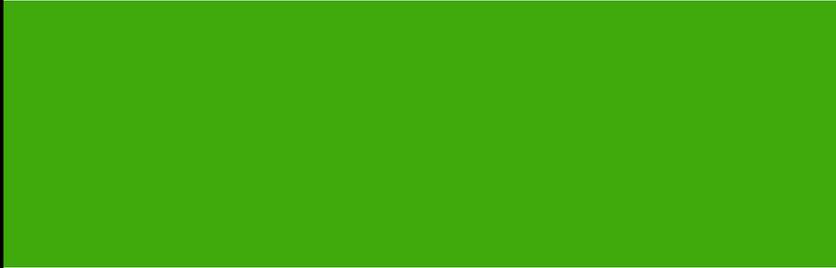
# Management response to crisis



GDC 2011

Deny **\$3,000** spend

(2 x games staff as speakers)



GDC 2012

Approve **\$30,000** spend

(3 x students + chaperone)







©Al Satterwhite