GDC March 20-24, 2023 San Francisco, CA

Finding Inspiration & Planning Luck: Story of a Solo Dev-Dad of Color

Adam Kareem
Creator & Lead Developer
Protodroid DeLTA

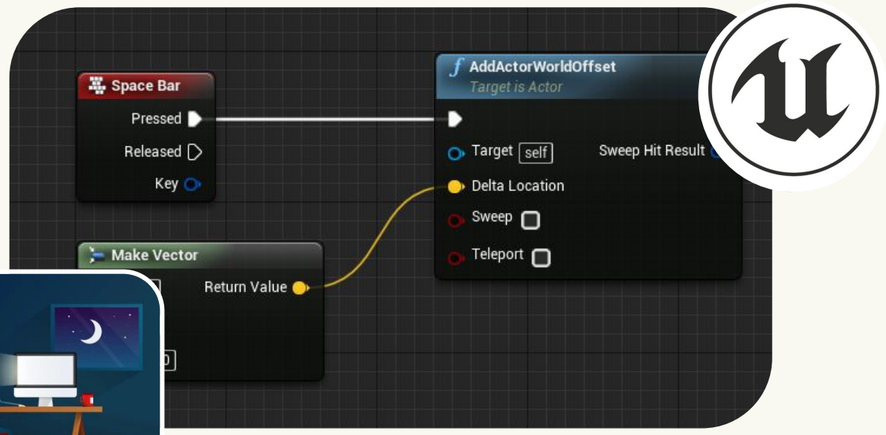
#GDC23

Hi! I'm Adam Kareem

Wife & Kids!

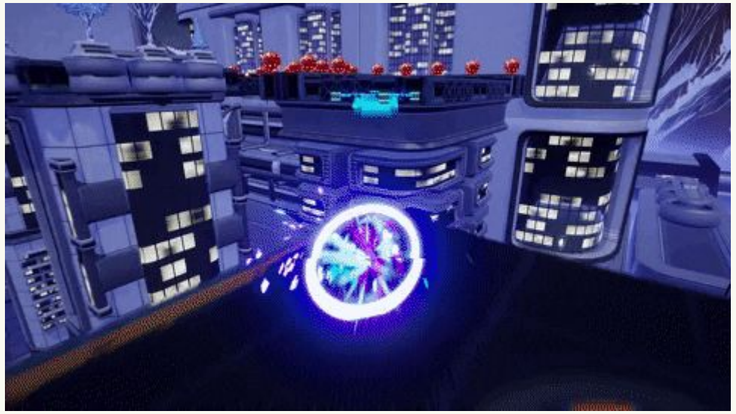
Megaman X rocks!

Engineer by day...



Game Dev by night...

And this is my game - Protodroid DeLTA

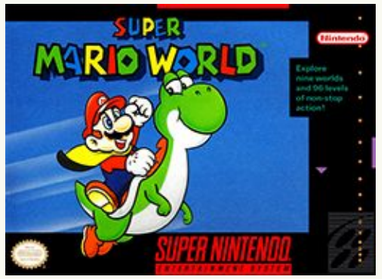


Finding Inspiration

Reimagine

2D

3D



2D

3D

??

Differentiate

2D

TOTAL: 24

11 games

7 games

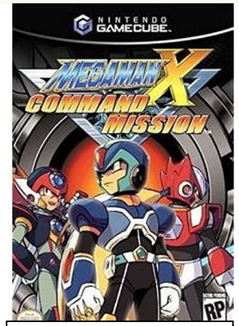
6 games

3D

TOTAL: 4

2 games

1 game



1 game

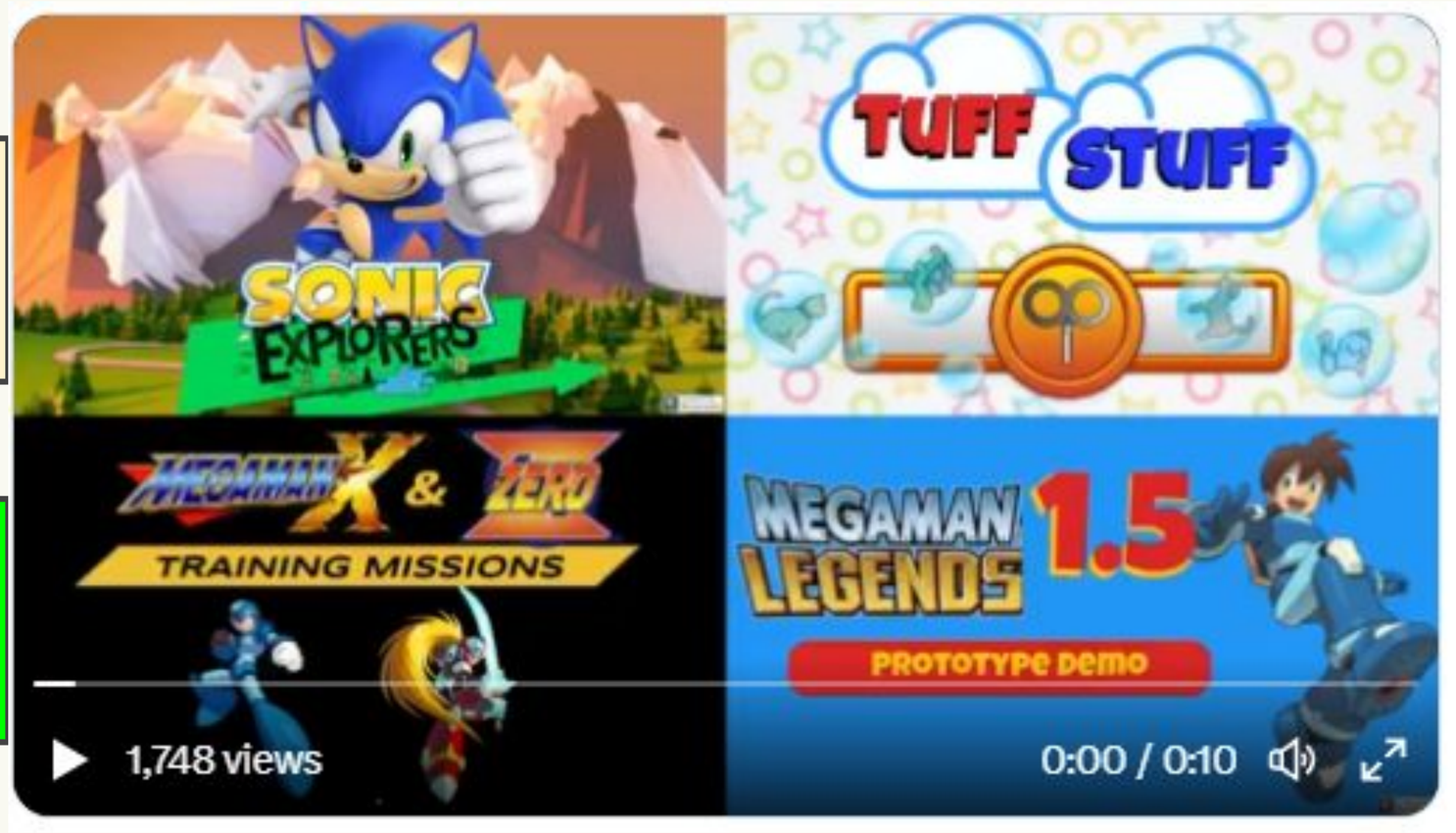
SONIC
EXPLORERS
TUFF STUFF
MEGAMAN X & ZERO
TRAINING MISSIONS
MEGAMAN LEGENDS 1.5
PROTOTYPE DEMO

Loved
Not good at

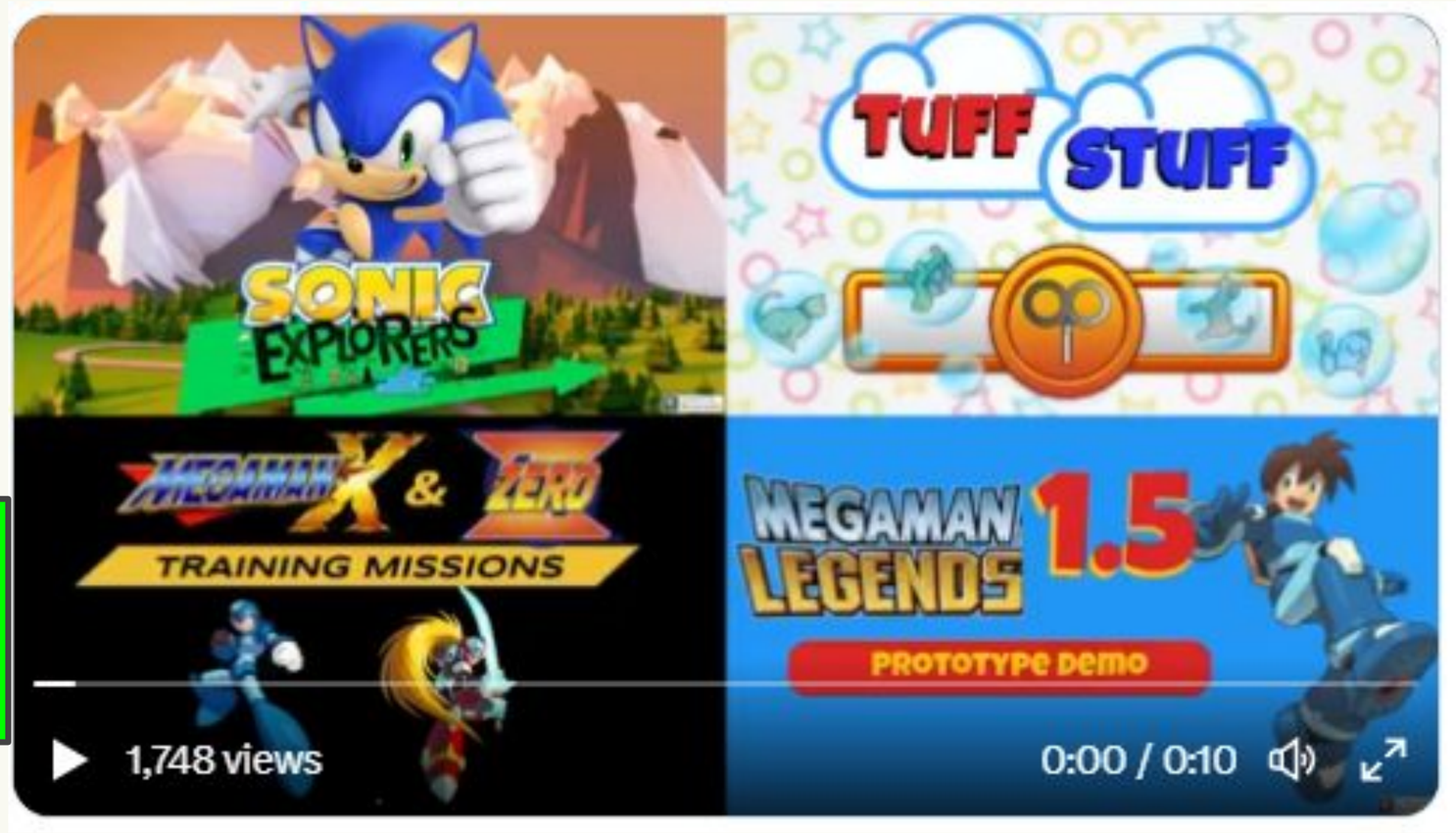
Liked
Good at this!

Loved
Good at this!

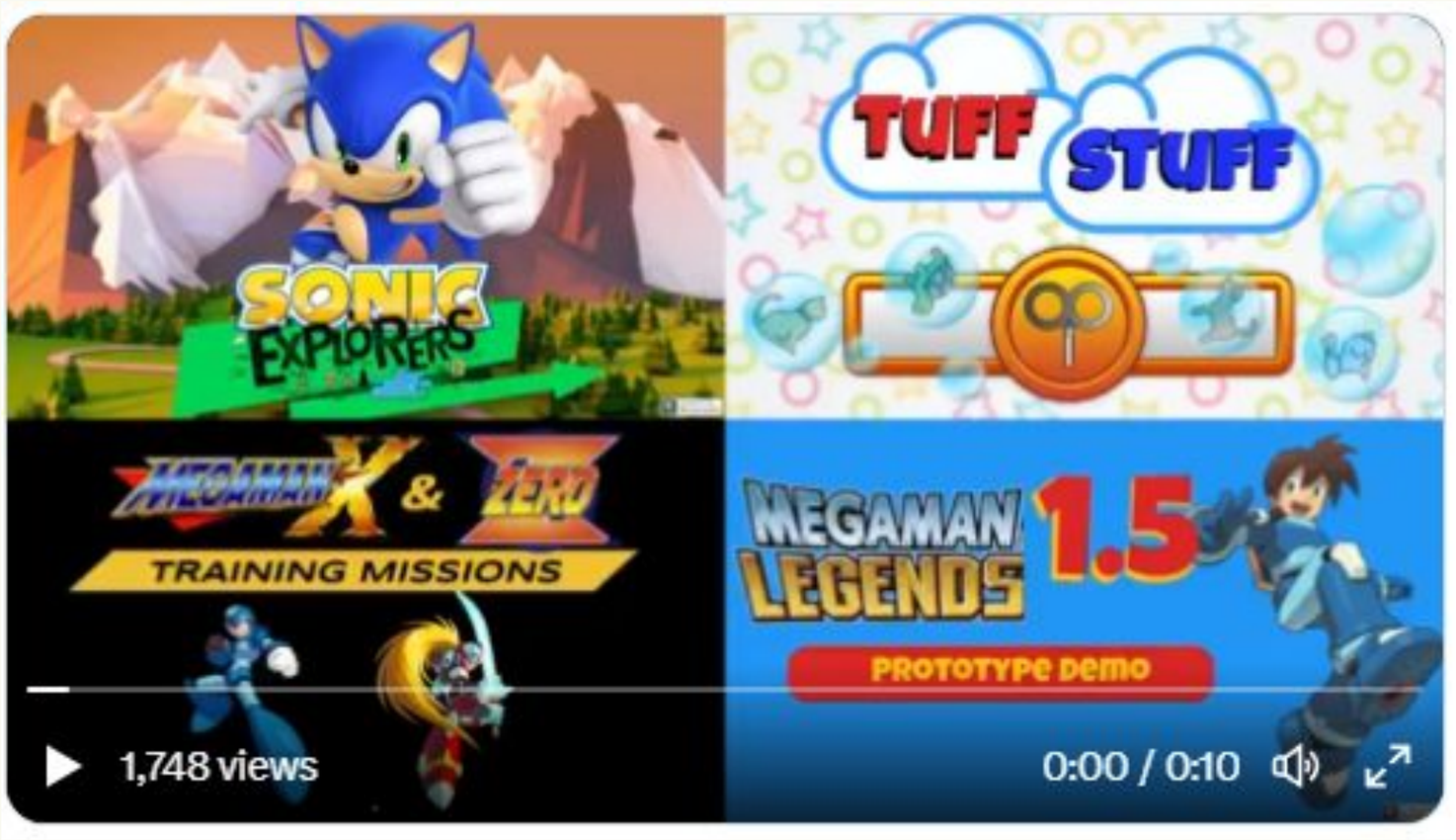
Liked
Not good at



Loved
Good at this!



Find a match between what you love and what you're good at


SONIC EXPLORERS
TUFF STUFF
MEGAMAN X & ZERO
TRAINING MISSIONS
MEGAMAN LEGENDS 1.5
PROTOTYPE DEMO
1,748 views
0:00 / 0:10

SEGA

CAPCOM®

Finding Inspiration

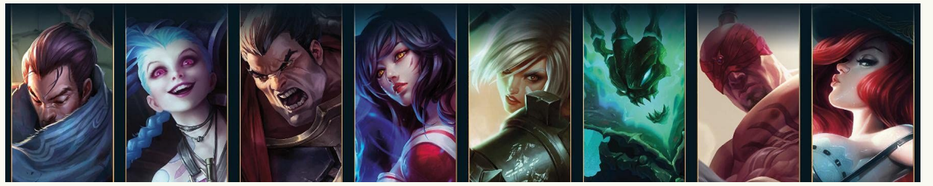
A (broken) link between worlds

A (broken) link between worlds

A (broken) link between worlds

The world we see...

The worlds we create...



A (broken) link between worlds

The world we see...

Population, female (% of total population) in World was reported at 49.72 % in 2021, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources.

The worlds we create...

Megaman (franchise)

- 30+ titles
- 100+ characters
- 90% male protagonists
- 0 darker skinned characters

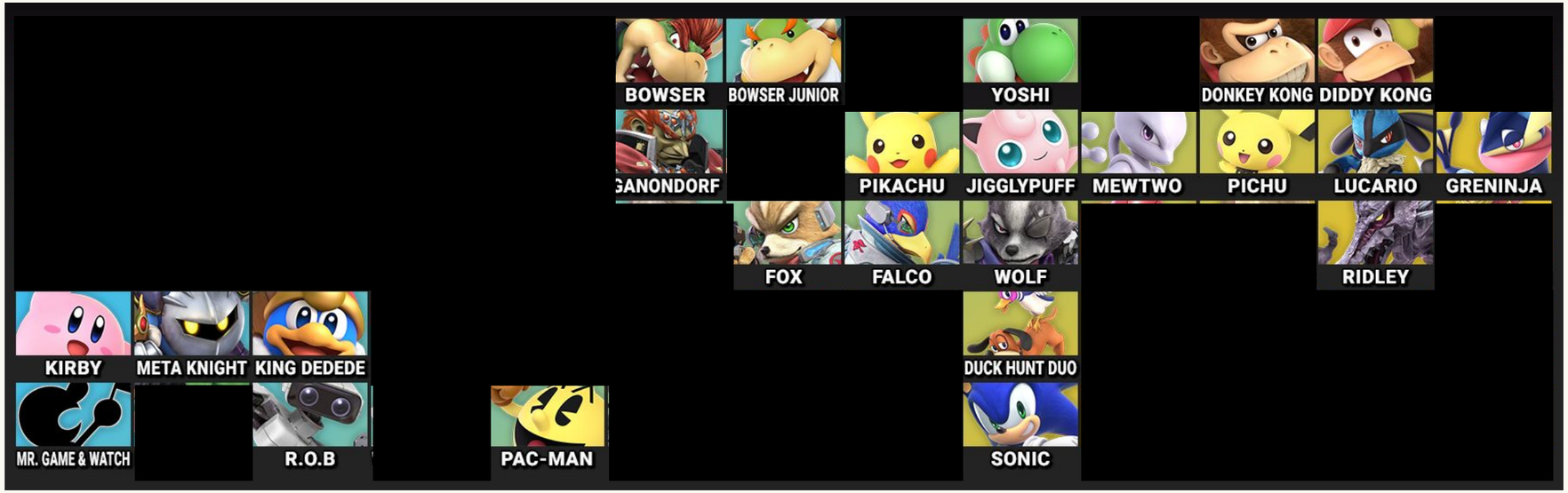
Addressing a need

A well-known character select screen

- A celebration of icons through gaming's 30+ year history

Current Count: 64

Addressing a need



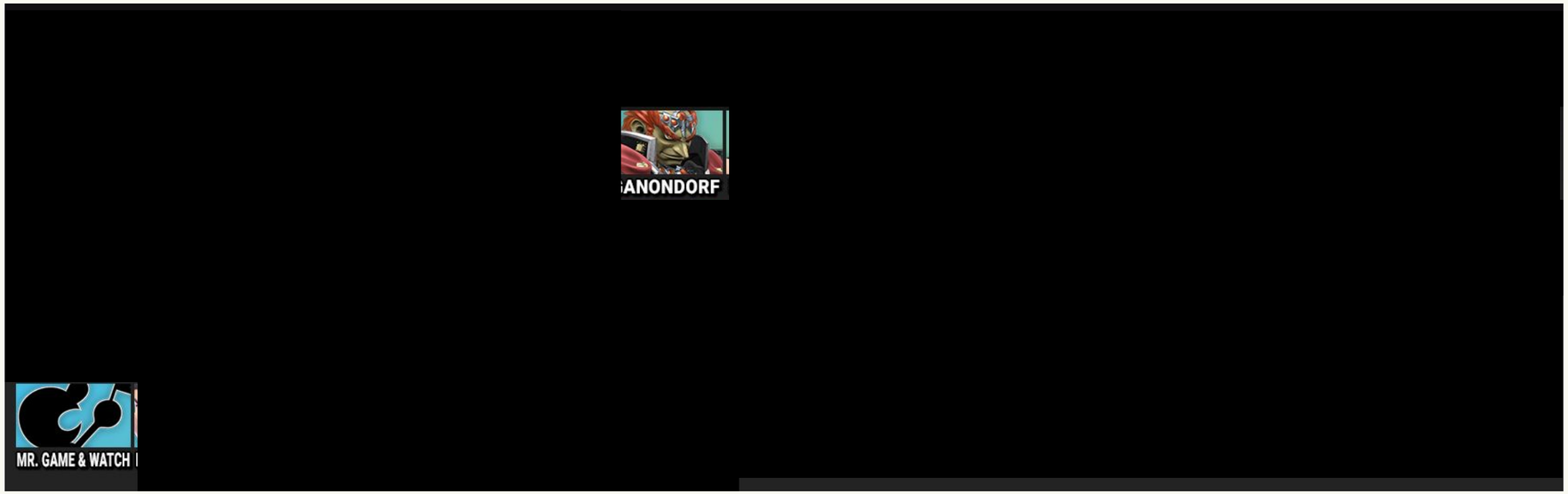
- **Removing characters without dark skin: -40**

Current Count:

~~64~~

24

Addressing a need



- Removing characters without dark skin: -40
- Removing non-human characters: -22

Current Count:

~~64~~

~~24~~

2

Addressing a need

From:
64

To:
2

Addressing a need

From:
64

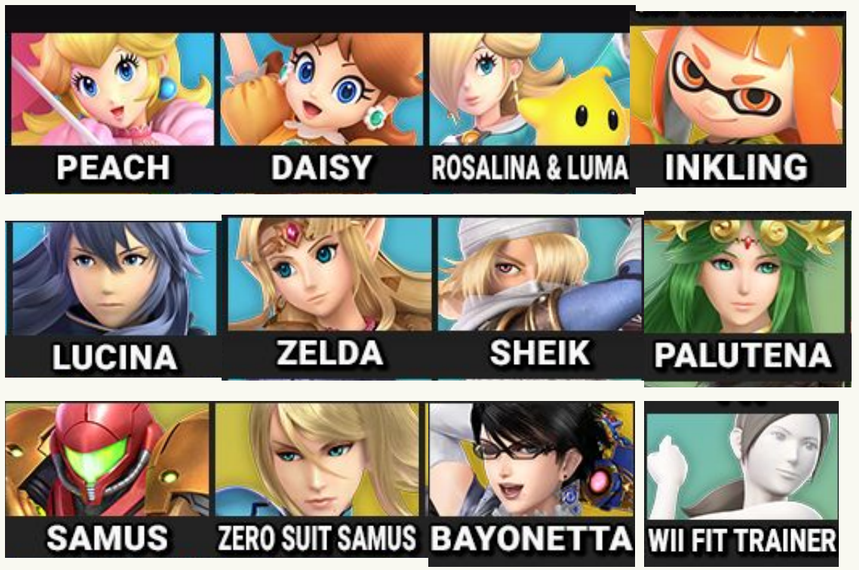
To:
2

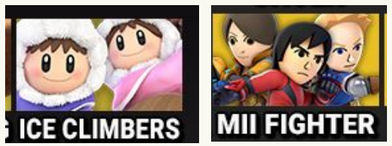
Bad guy!

Addressing a need

From:
64

To:
12

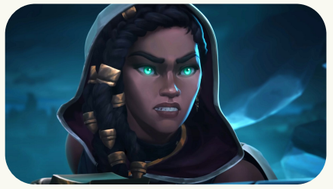


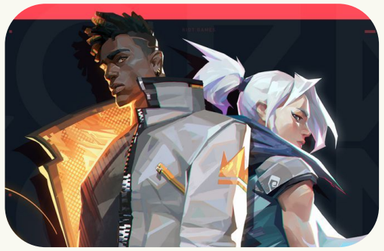


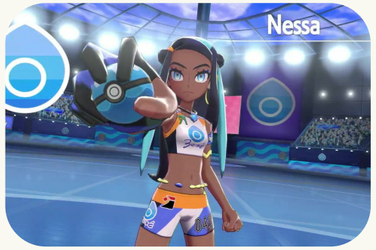
Addressing a need

Creating space for people who seldom see themselves in gaming

For the times, they are a-changin' (Bob Dylan)





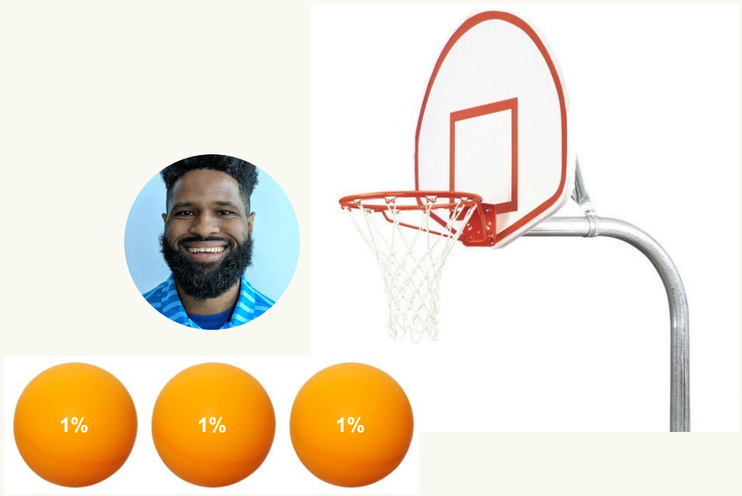


Creating space for people who seldom see themselves in gaming

Planning Luck

Luck as a numbers game

The more shots you take, the higher your chances that 1 goes in!
Let's quantify it!



3 attempts = 2.9% chance of success

Luck as a numbers game

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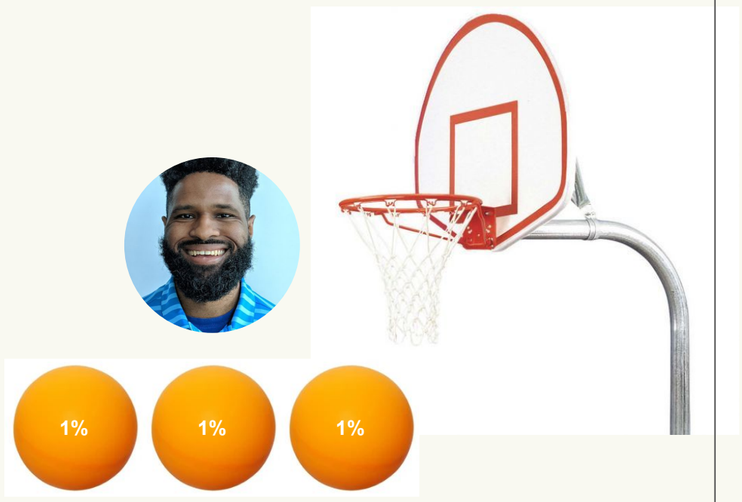
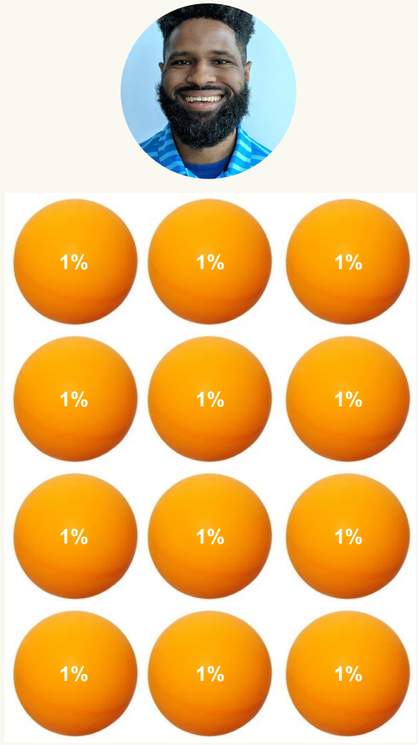


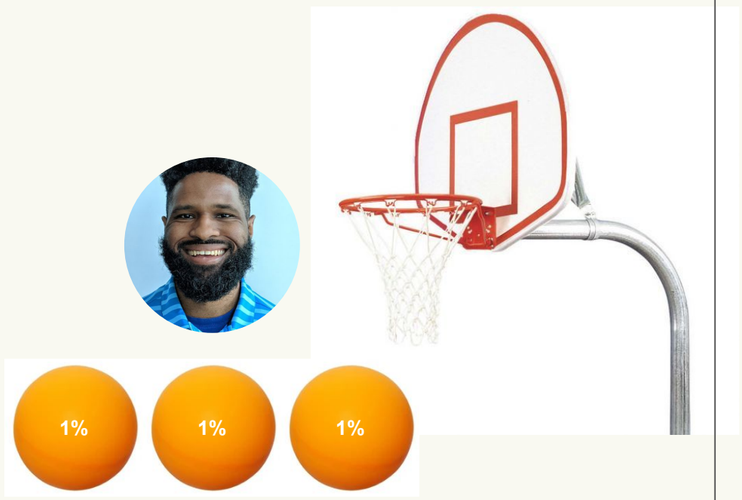
3 attempts = **2.9%** chance of success



12 attempts = **11.4%** chance of success

Luck in “theory”

The more shots you take, the higher your chances that 1 goes in!
Let’s quantify it!



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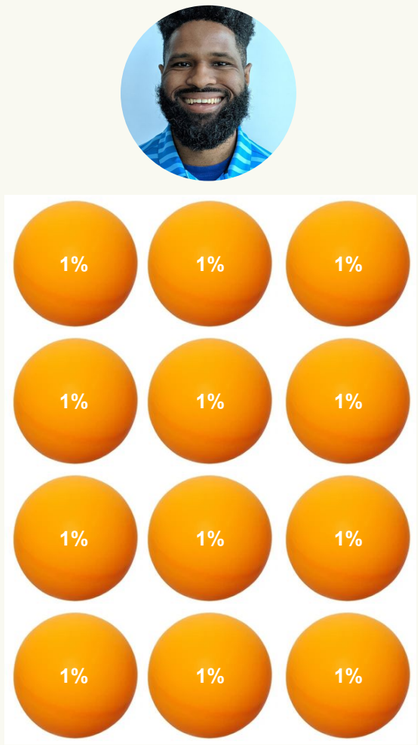

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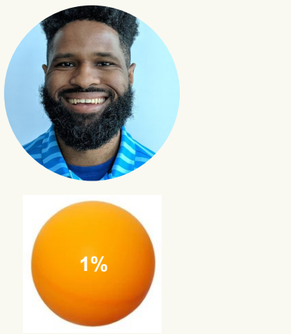


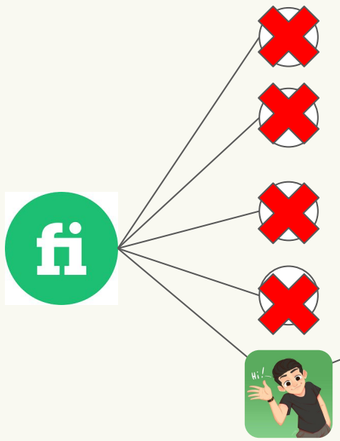
x100

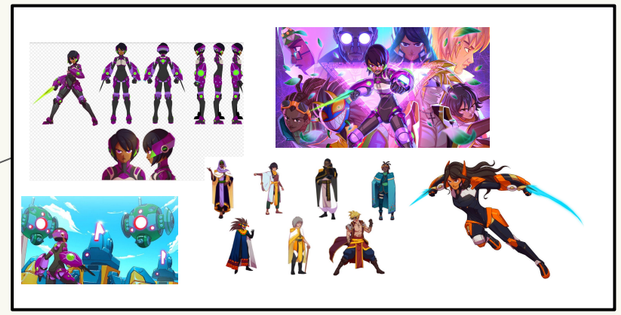
100 attempts = **63.4%** chance of success

Think of “luck” as actions you take to increase your a probability of success

Luck in “practice”

30+ artists tried
~ 2 hours a day for 2 months browsing talent
Dozens of listings (this landed Deftjuzz!)

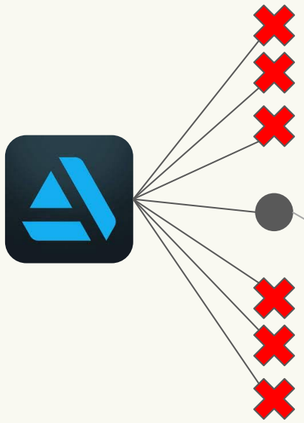




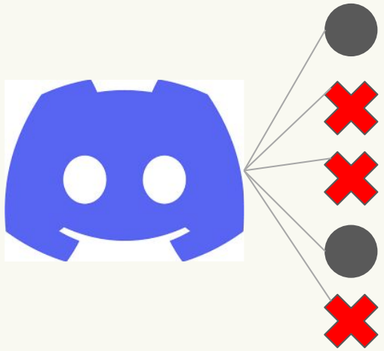
4 job listings, 5000 views, 300+ applicants

~ 1 hours a day for 3+ months browsing portfolios

20+ “cold calls” (this landed the Env. Artist!)



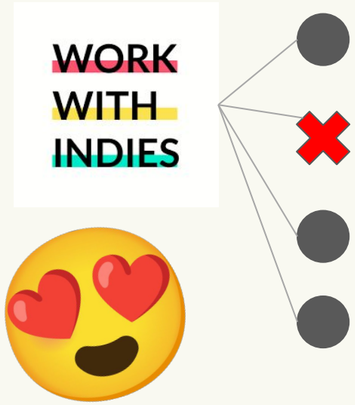
This artist alone created over 40% of the game’s 3D art!



Browsing “Unreal Slackers” listings 2x week (to see them all)

Got some hits!

- Early Programmers
- Early Level Designer

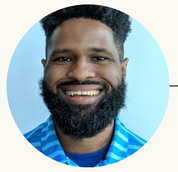


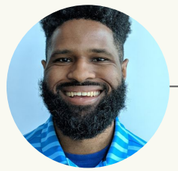
Fewer listings, more strong responses!

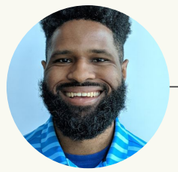
~4 listings, and many hires!

- 4 Level Designers
- 3 Enviro Artists
- 2 Script Editors

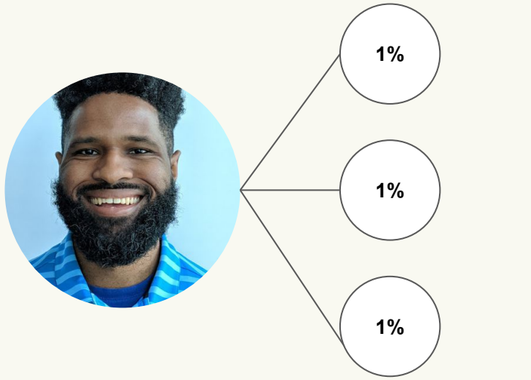
Networking in “theory”





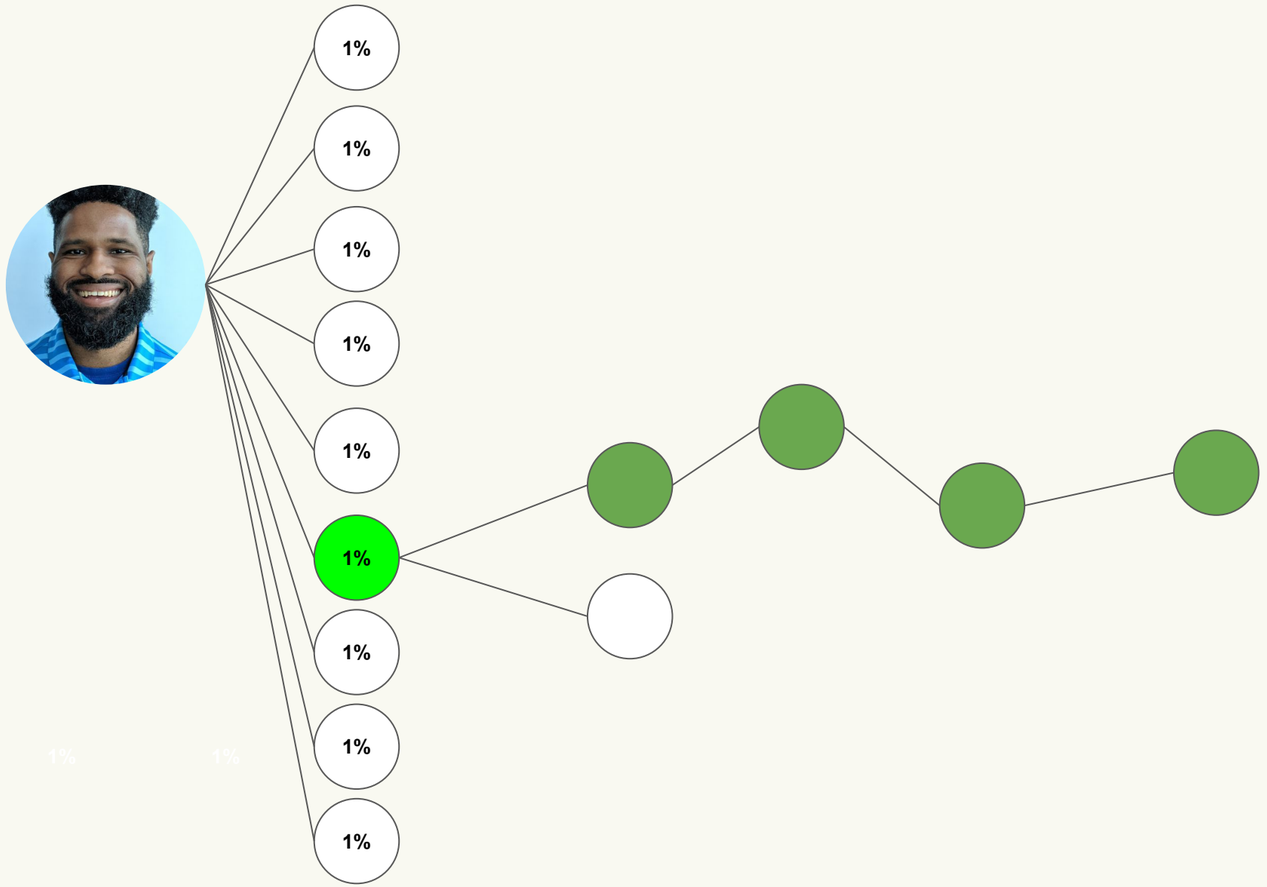


Networking in “practice”



3 attempts = 2.9% chance of success

VS.



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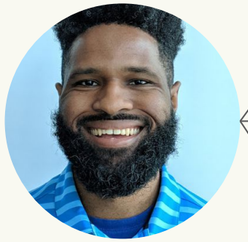


1% 1% 1%

3 attempts = 2.9% chance of success

VS.

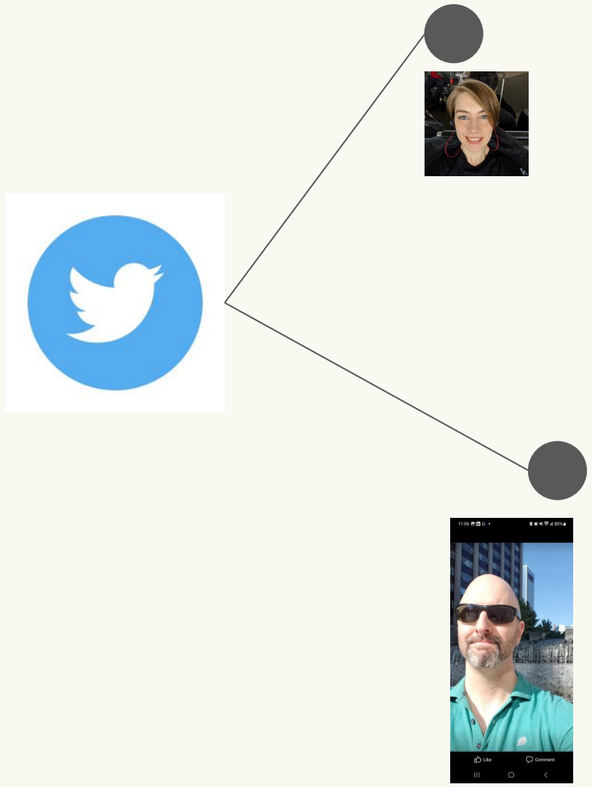
1% 1% 1% 1% 1% 1% 1% 1% 1%

100 attempts = 63.4% chance of success

It only takes “1”

Think of “luck” as actions you take to increase your a probability of success

Networking in “practice”



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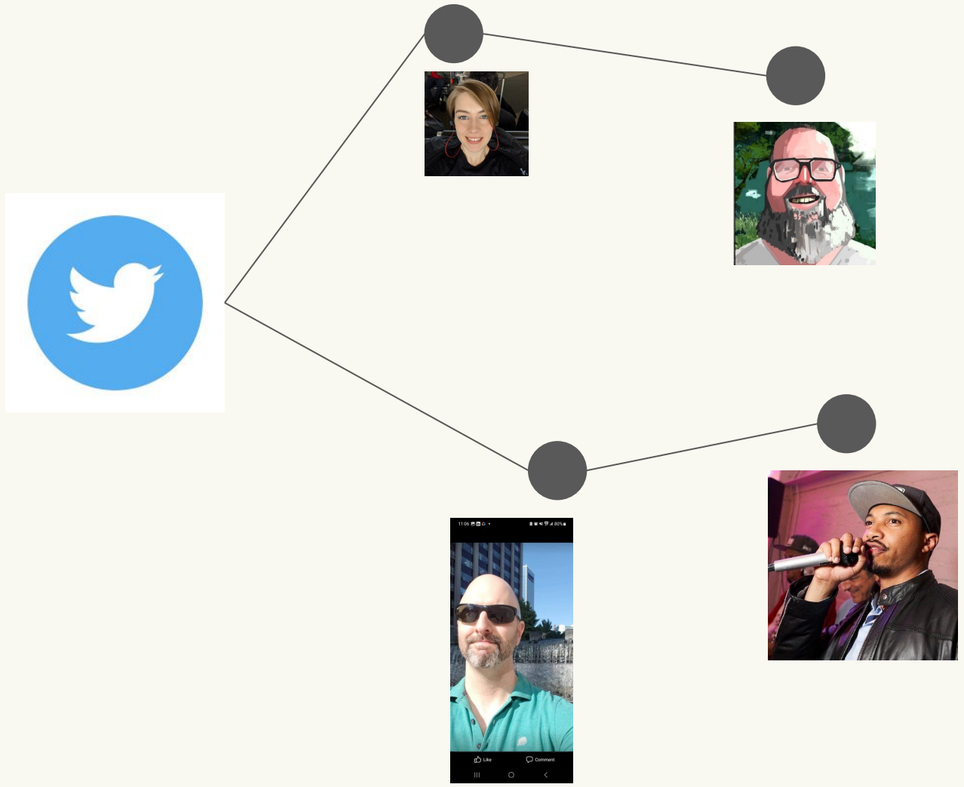

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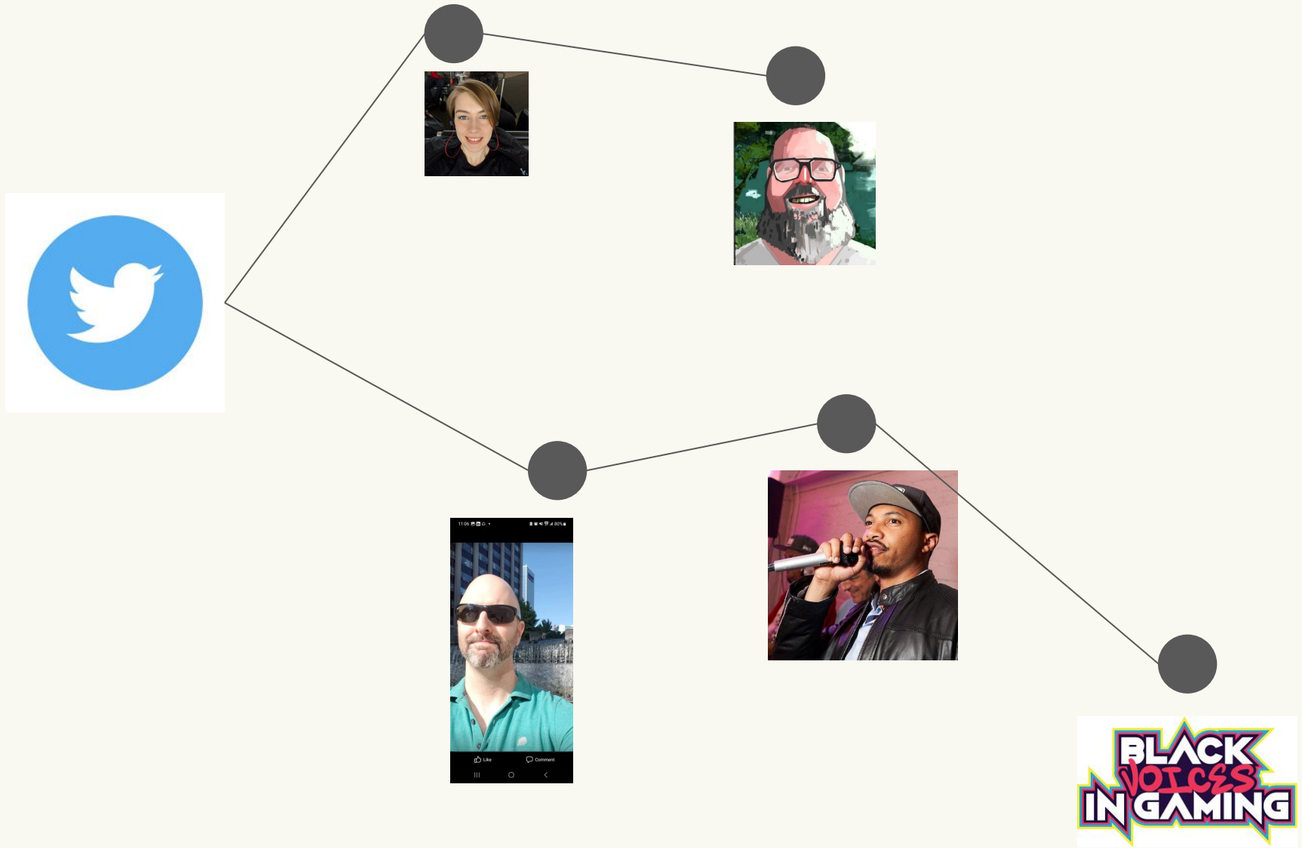

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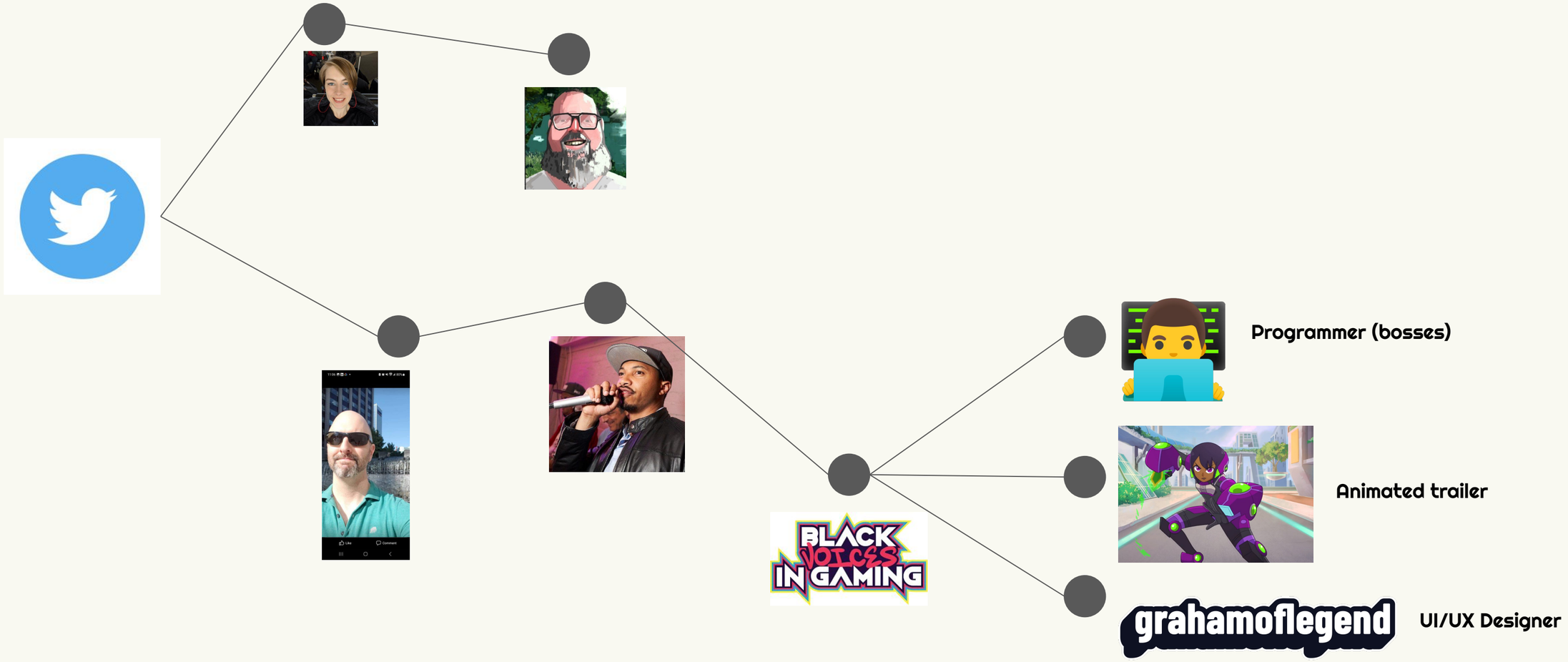

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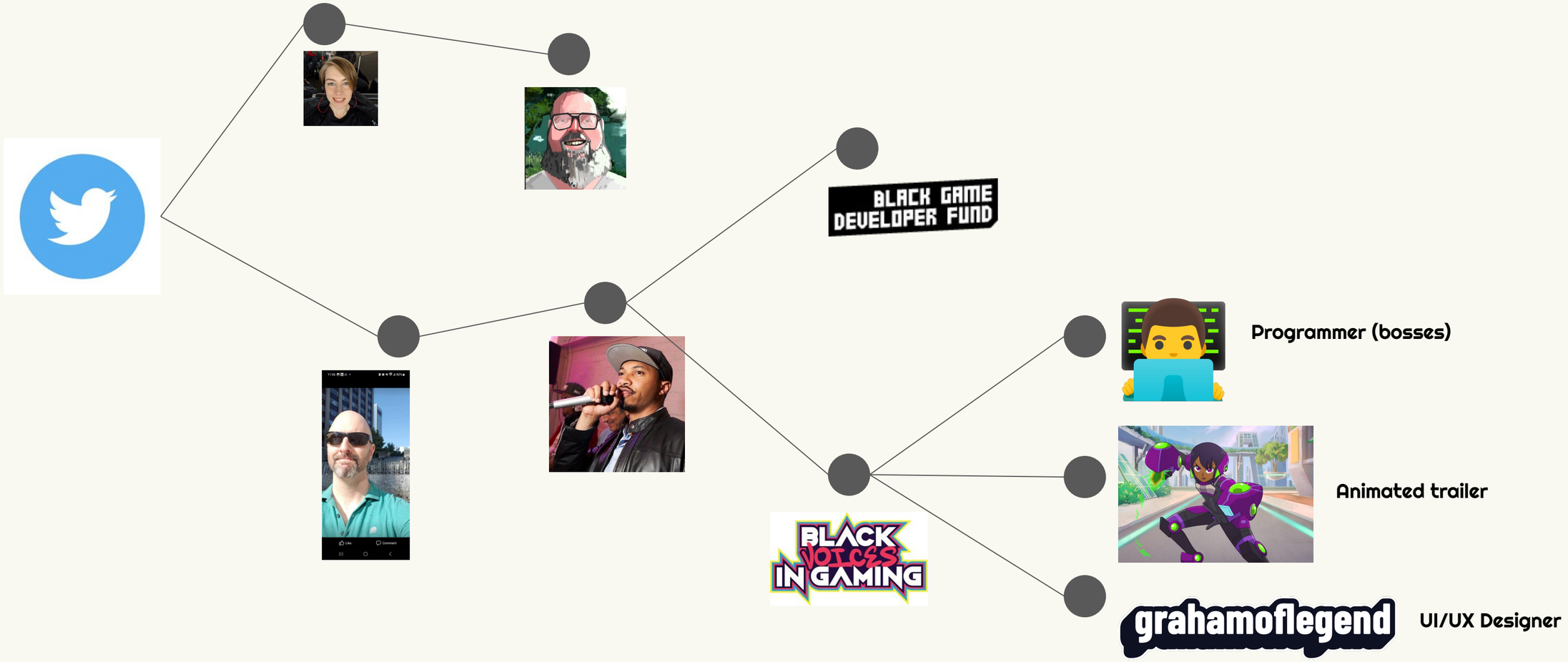

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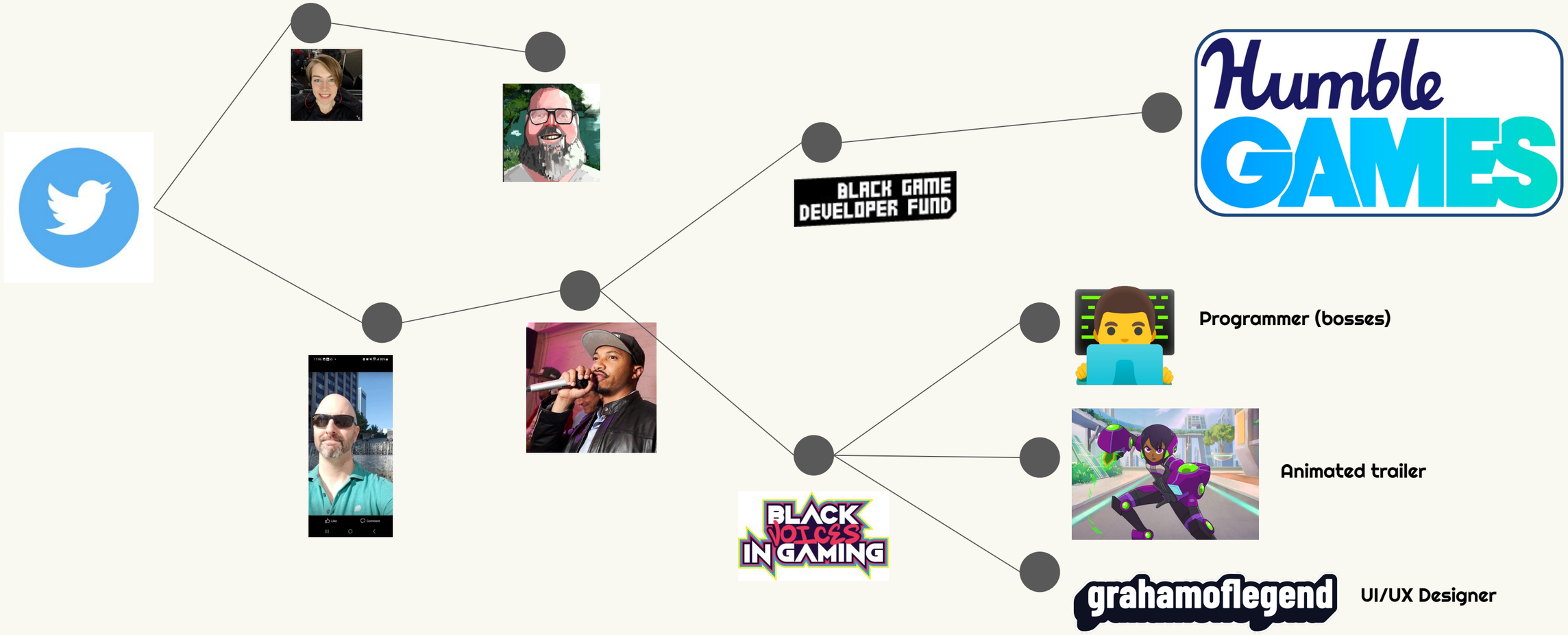

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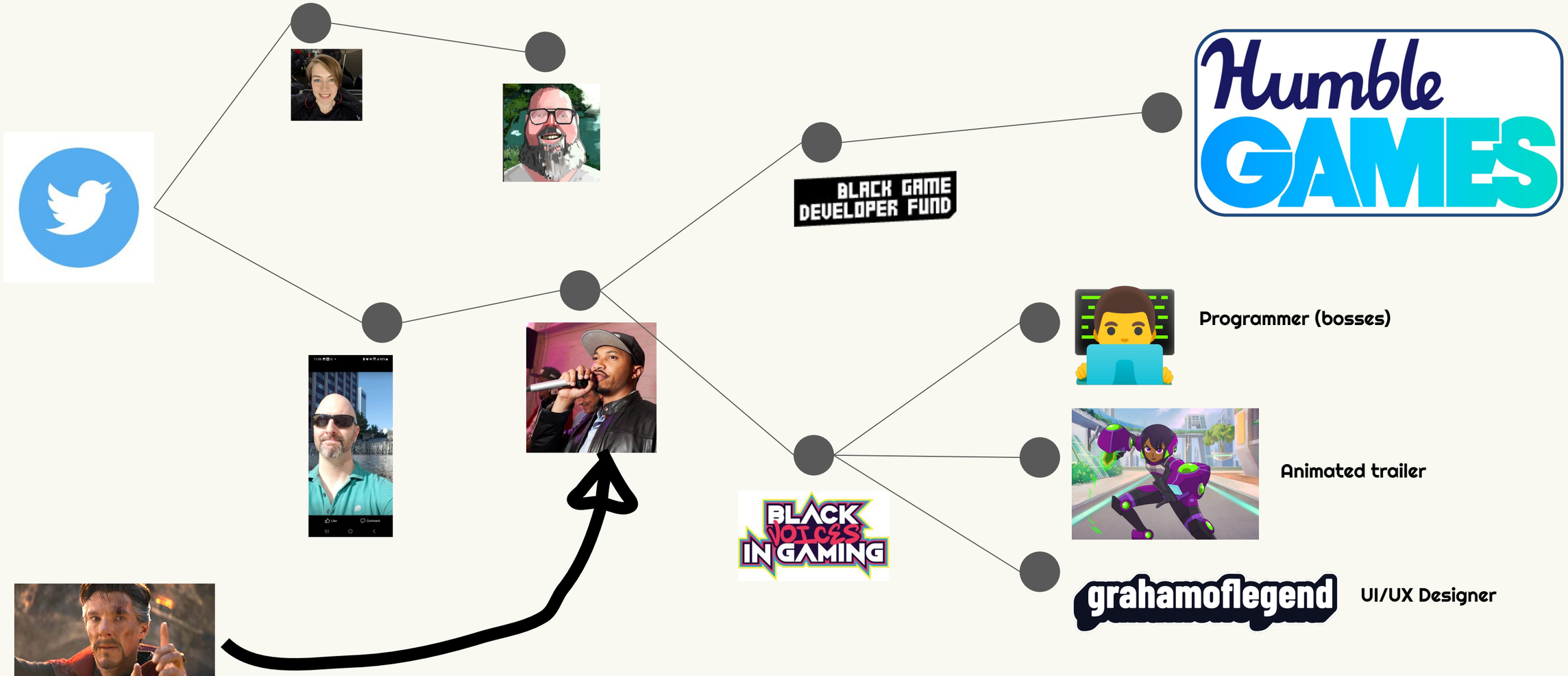
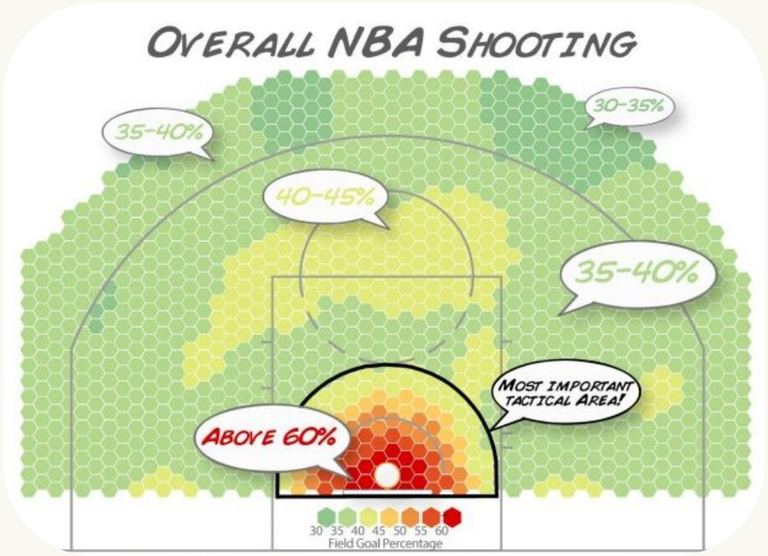


It only takes “1”



Planning Luck Vol. II

“Luck” as taking shots you can hit

Nice game! We like it so much, how about an even BIGGER budget?

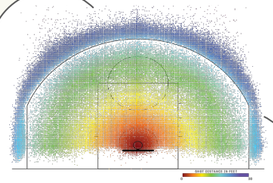
Humble GAMES

Bigger budget means...*bigger* game...

Go full-time?

Eek! Scope creep!? More game than I wanted...

Hmm, lemme think about it…



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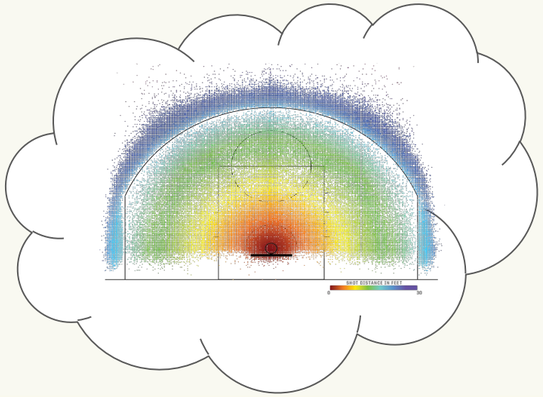
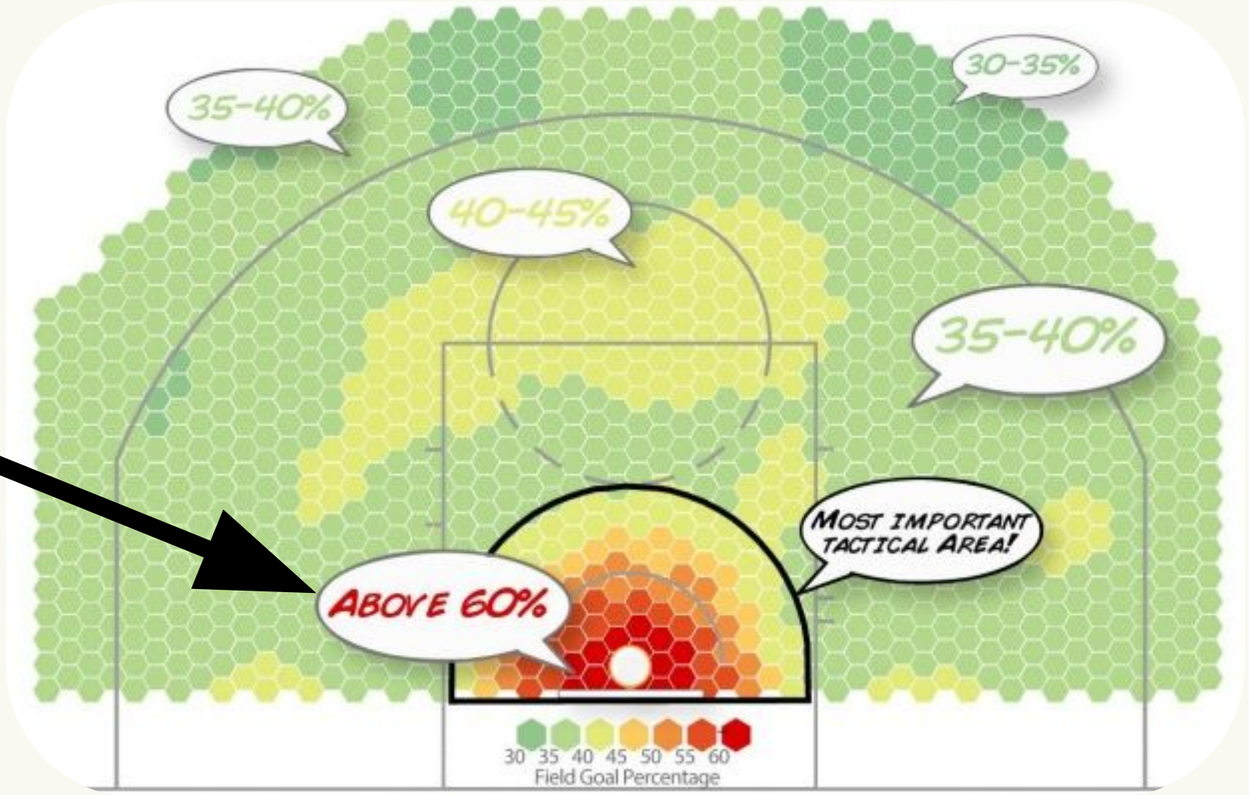


“Luck” as taking shots you can hit

That’s my zone right there!

Example player shot “heatmap”



Scope (¢ Funding) vs. Success Percentage

Keep the scope in check to up your chance of success

PROTODROID
DELTA
APRIL 27. 2023
humblegames.com/protodroiddelta
STEAM
PS4
XBOX ONE
NINTENDO SWITCH
Humble GAMES
BLACK GAME DEVELOPER FUND
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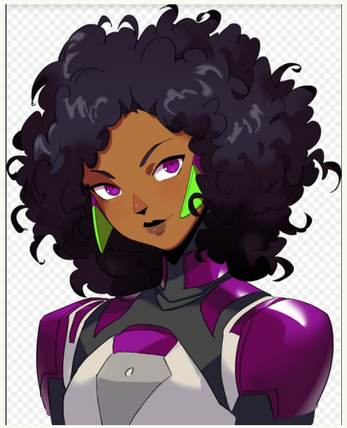
A GAME BY
ADAM KAREEM

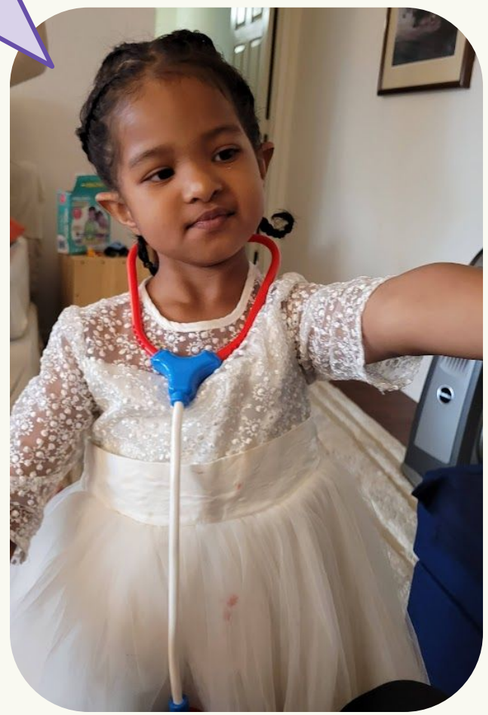
Finding Inspiration Vol. II

Be the change!

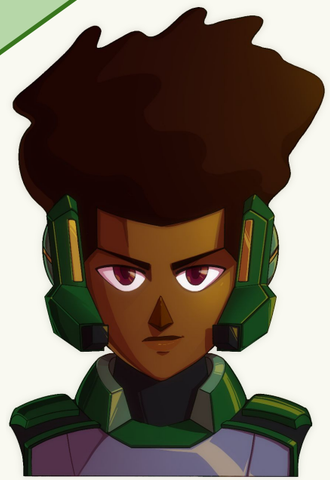


DeLTA

Dada, it's me!



I'm "VeGA" & she's "DeLTA!"



VeGA

THANK YOU FOR COMING TO MY TALK!