

# From Chaos to Community

BUILDING A MAKERS JOURNEY IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION



# About Me

- ▶ Started at Durham in 2018 as a Mature Student.
  - ▶ Graduated in 2023 – BSc Human Health & Illness.
  - ▶ Started working with Power Platform in 2021.
  - ▶ Recruited as Full-Time Staff in 2023.
- 
- ▶ Lego
  - ▶ Funko Pops
  - ▶ F1



# Higher Education



# Digital transformation challenges in Universities



**Legacy Systems**



**Funding Constraints**



**Data Silos**



**Digital Skills Gap**



**Resistance to Change**



**Complexity of Implementation**





# The Elephant In The Room

- Higher Education is in challenging times.
  - Tuition Fees
  - International Students
  - Research Funding
- Staffing Costs
  - Most universities needing to cut costs
  - VSS



# Durham University



# Durham University



**6000+ Staff**  
**(Academic &  
Professional Services)**



**20,000+ Students**



**100+ Departments**

- 40+ Professional Services
- 4 Faculties
- 27 Academic
- Research Institutes & Independent Bodies
- 17 Colleges





# The Platform at Durham in 2023

- ▶ 6000+ Apps and Flows.
- ▶ Over 600 unique users.
- ▶ 1 environment.
- ▶ No resources.





# Durham's Strategy

Started 2025, last stage 2029

MASS and SIMPLES

Ownership, Responsibility, Support

Makers Maturity

Single Point of Failure

Full process inc. Deployment & ALM



# Buy In

- ▶ 22 Clusters (Environments)
- ▶ 30+ Meetings with Senior Management and Teams
- ▶ Commitment to Makers
  - ▶ Learning, Engagement, Support (two-way)
- ▶ Dedicated Makers



# Building Makers



# Objectives

---

Consistency

---

Rounded  
Knowledge

---

Access

---

Community





# Issue with most content?

- ▶ Assumptions
- ▶ Naming Conventions
- ▶ Best Practices
- ▶ Documentation
- ▶ Local Processes
- ▶ Local Ways of Working



# What do you do when you build?

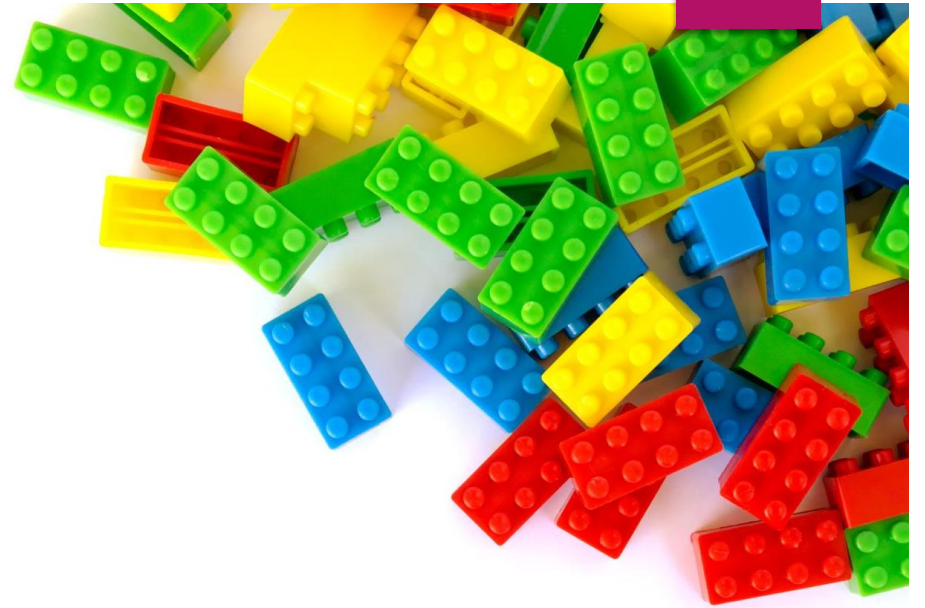
Defined Process

Data model

Solution

Environmental  
Variables

Build



# Makers Journey

- ▶ Maturity scale
- ▶ Structured Pathway
- ▶ Standardisation
- ▶ Asynchronous/In-Person
- ▶ In house resources
- ▶ Community Resources



# Makers Journey

- ▶ 0-50 • Basic Knowledge and Understanding
- ▶ 50-100 • Introduction to Power Automate
- ▶ 100-150 • Power Apps
- ▶ 150-200 • Solutions and Documentation
- ▶ 200-250 • Error Handling and Support / Web grounded agents
- ▶ 250-300 • Accessibility and Efficiency / SharePoint Agents
- ▶ 300-350 • Dataverse
- ▶ 350-400 • Custom Connectors / Copilot Agents
- ▶ 400-450 • Mentoring and Training
- ▶ 450-475 • Reviewer
- ▶ 475-500 • Master Power Platform Jedi





# Power Apps in a Day

## ▶ NOT JUST POWER APPS

### ▶ Morning

- ▶ Processes
- ▶ Continuous Improvement
- ▶ Change Management
- ▶ Data Modelling
- ▶ SharePoint Security
- ▶ Solutions and Environmental Variables

### ▶ Afternoon

- ▶ Power Apps build
- ▶ Event Booking and Management App





# Resources

## ▶ In-house

- ▶ SharePoint training
- ▶ Security training
- ▶ CM/CI resources
- ▶ Power Apps in a Day
- ▶ Power Automate Workshops

## ▶ Community

- ▶ YouTube
- ▶ Blogs
- ▶ Microsoft Learn



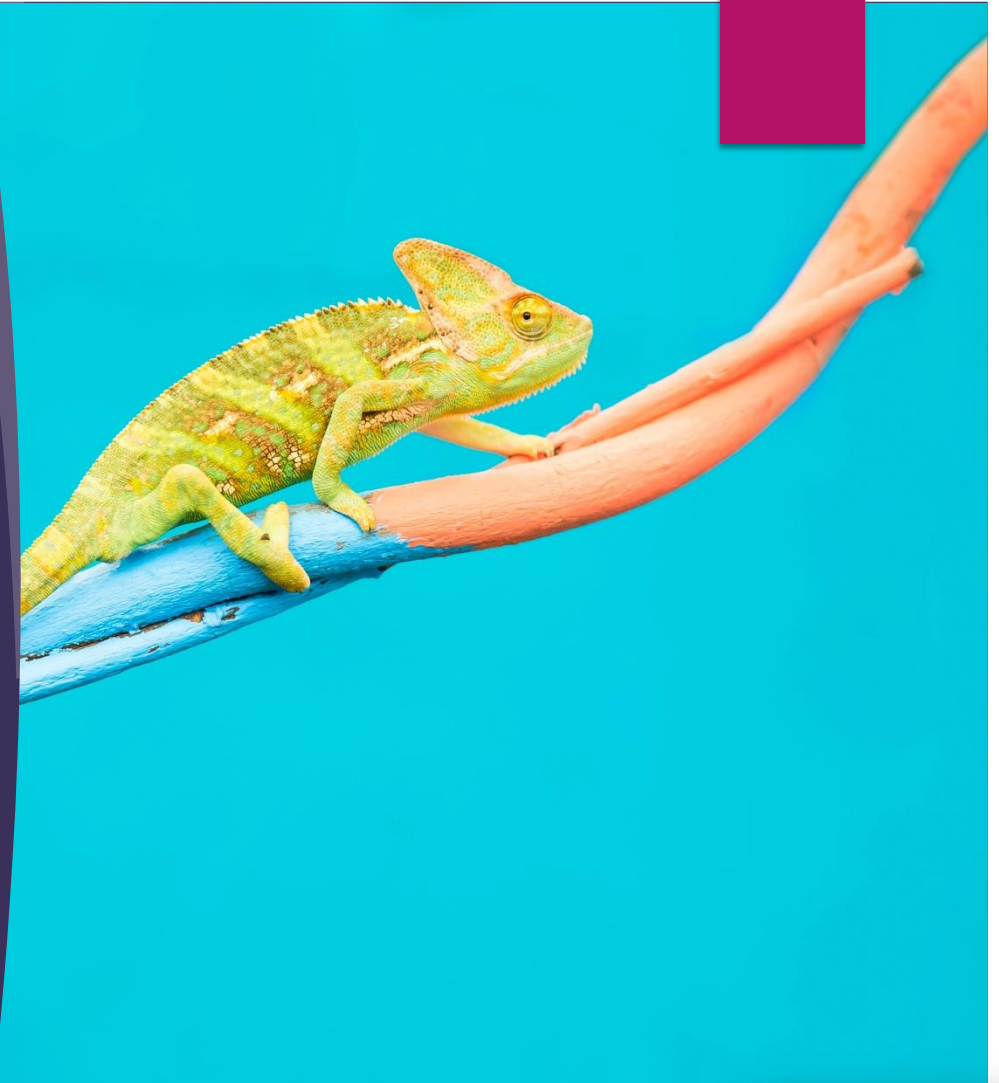
# Starting the Journey



# Best Laid Plans

## Needing to be Agile

- ▶ Original Makers Journey Roll Out
  - ▶ Start May/June 2025
- ▶ Power Apps In A Day for Dedicated Makers
  - ▶ April 2025
- ▶ Makers Journey
  - ▶ January/February 2027





# Pilot Group

- ▶ 10 identified active makers
- ▶ 6 months
- ▶ 7 sessions
  - ▶ 3 about Strategy & Makers
  - ▶ 2 brainstorming
  - ▶ 1 Power Apps in a day
  - ▶ 1 next steps



# The Community

- ▶ Now/just about to
  - ▶ Steering Group – Members from Pilot group
  - ▶ Community Calls
  - ▶ Workshops
  - ▶ Surgeries
- ▶ Future
  - ▶ Showcases
  - ▶ Hackathon
  - ▶ Collaborative Projects



# Results



# What are we seeing

- ▶ Engagement
  - ▶ Working with multiple department on solutions with there makers
  - ▶ Starting to see cross-collaboration
- ▶ Advance solutions leveraging more of the Microsoft ecosystem
- ▶ Makers engaging with continuous improvements
  - ▶ Thinking about the bigger picture





# Next Steps



# What is next?

- ▶ This is ever changing
- ▶ Personal Ambition
  - ▶ Higher Education focused community



Questions?

