



From Chaos to Community

BUILDING A MAKERS JOURNEY IN HIGHER
EDUCATION



Durham
University



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

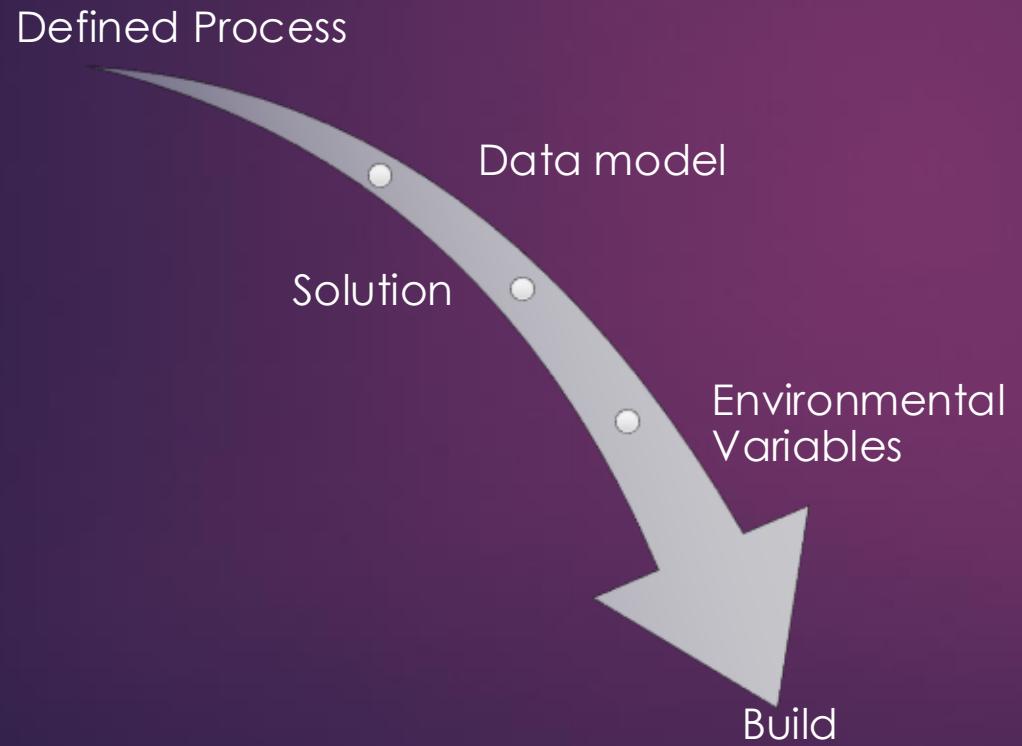


Issue with most content?

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



What do you do when you build?



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



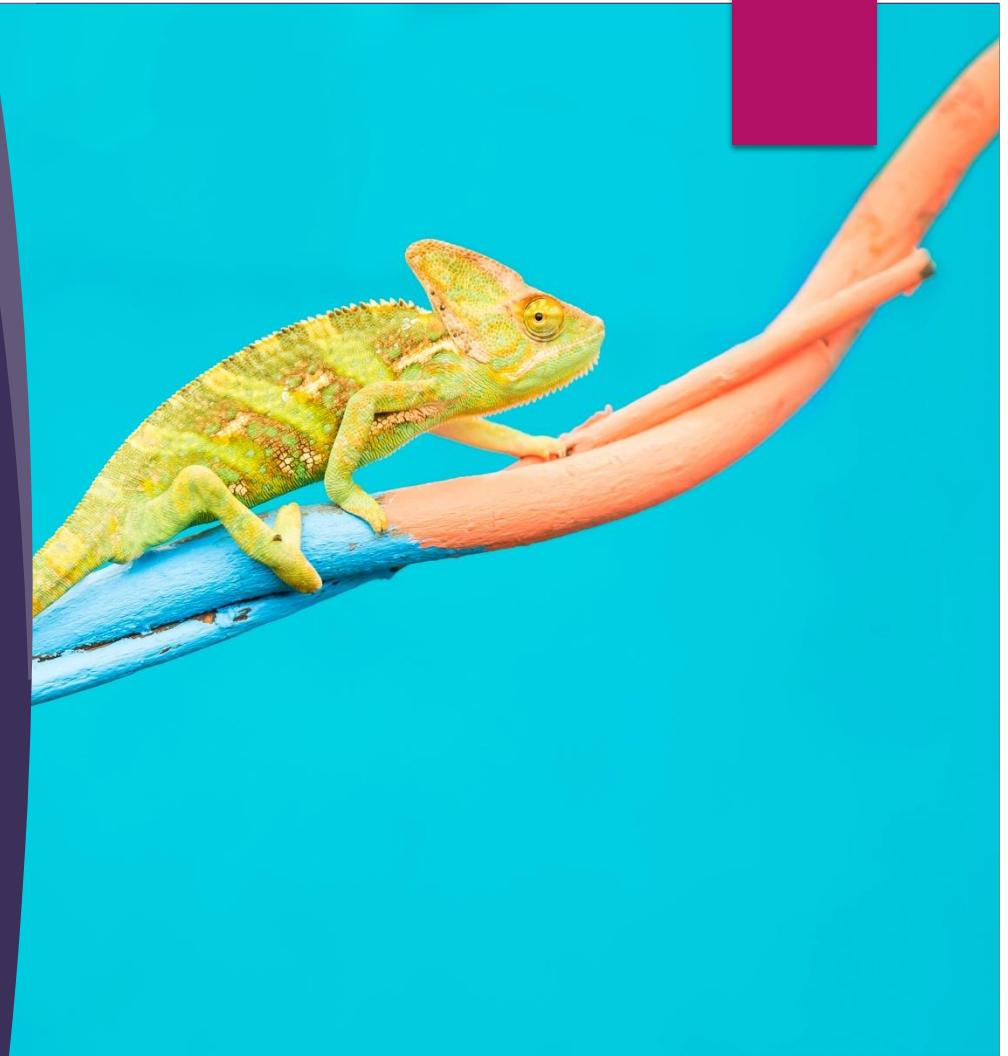
Starting the Journey



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

7

5

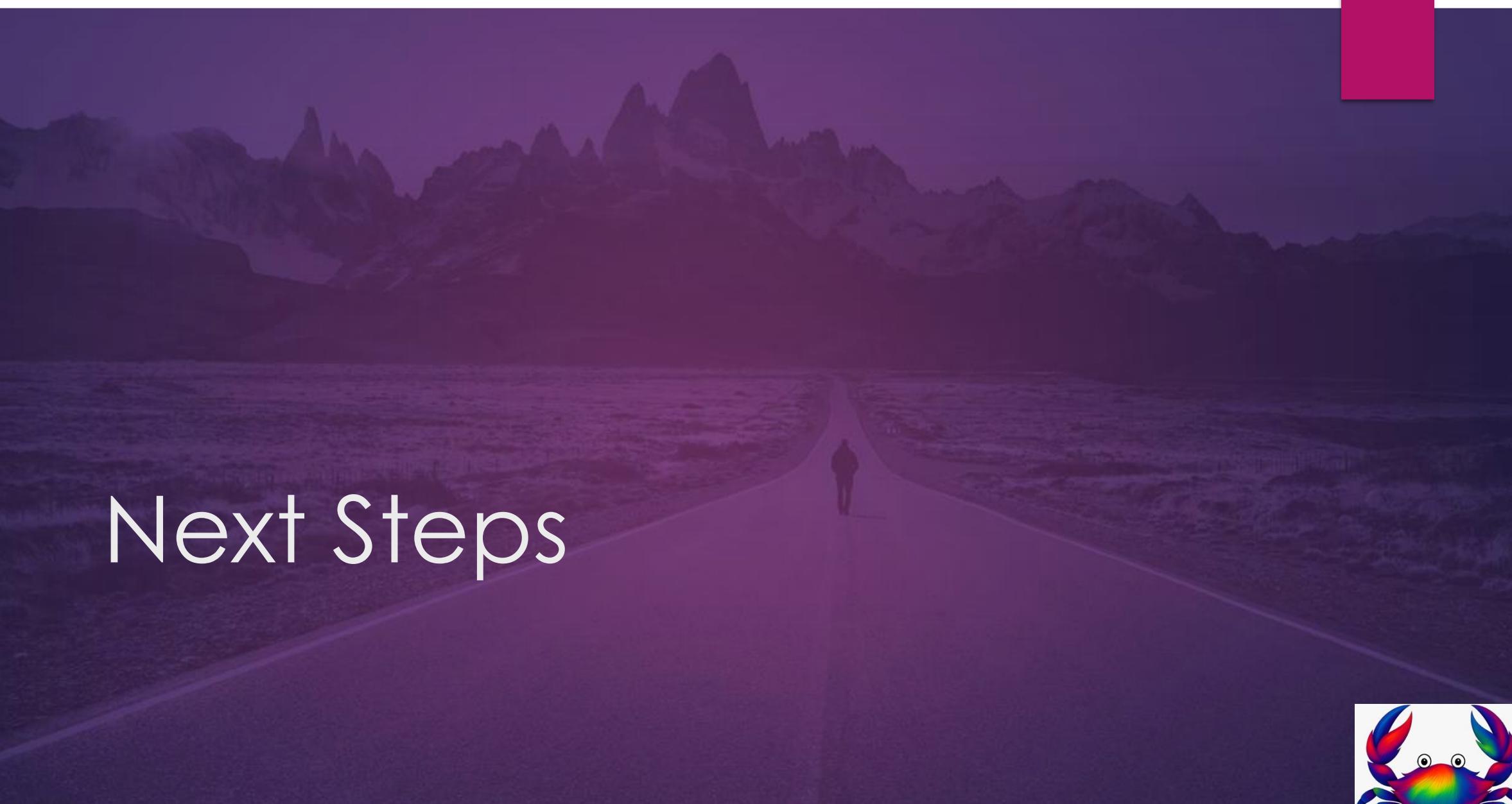
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What are we seeing

- ▶ 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?

