### Duncan Baxter

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Your Locale : Melbourne, Australia

**Background & Passion in IT :**

Computers have always fascinated me. My first experience with them was in my first year at High School, joining the Computer Club, and learning to program (in BASIC) the SWT PC6800 that the parent-teacher association had just donated.

A few years’ later, I bought a Commodore Vic-20, then a C64 and taught myself 6502/6510 Assembly language.

In the meantime, I’d graduated from the University of Adelaide with degrees in Law and Economics (Commerce), and relocated to Melbourne to take up a position in the tax division of global consulting firm, Arthur Andersen. I spent two years on secondment to their office in Bangkok, Thailand – noteworthy for many reasons, but especially because my apartment was directly across the road from Panthip Plaza, a rabbit-warren of tiny specialty computer shops.

During this time, I bought several x86 PCs, starting with an old 80286 that Arthur Andersen had replaced in a fleet upgrade, and progressing on up to the Pentium series. I taught myself x86 Assembly language and C. Most of my programming projects involved computer graphics – such as writing my own drivers to rotate, clip and display shaded objects in 3 dimensions. Easy enough today, but back then we had to code the 3D transforms ourselves!

I stopped programming shortly after my eldest daughter was born: there simply were not enough hours in the day, for a young family, career **and** a hobby.

Skip forward a few years, and my psychologist suggested that my recovery from depression might be aided by re-training in another discipline. My longstanding interest in Information Technology made the RMIT course an obvious choice, and so I’ve enrolled through Open Universities Australia.

**What are you good at / What you’re interested in ?**

I seem to have a talent for programming, though it’s fair to note that I spent a long time practicing. It would be surprising if I learned nothing from all that experience!

I have also been a gamer for most of my life, starting with board games and “pen and paper” games (eg. *Dungeons and Dragons*), then adding computer games as they became available. It seems to be a common theme among game designers: that they play all kinds of games, not just those from the genre in which they work.

I’m particularly interested in using my programming skills to recreate some of the old board-games in a new form, that uses the computer to “smooth out” rough spots in the rules. Not only could this give those old games a new life, but some may be more playable and/or fun in their new form.

**What are your weak-points in the context of the project ?**

If I’m honest, I will struggle most, with not being “in charge”. When I look back over the years, I was made a partner at Deloitte in 1996. I then worked in senior leadership roles there, followed by Blakes (now Ashurst), for a decade and a half, until the collapse of my marriage/depression forced me into a long-term (sadly, ultimately permanent) leave of absence.

Here is one example of my work (I’m sure you could find others online):[[1]](#footnote-1)



So, it’s easy enough for me to say, “Evert Visser is the leader of our team: and I support him” (which, of course, I do). But when things go astray, I must … really, must, resist the urge to step in and “fix them”.

I’ve already screwed this up, when some members of the team pulled out in advance of the Census date. Evert responded quickly to the issue, alerting ABM, and the rest of the team. What I should have done, is to quietly recommend that he also look at the “singletons” who were posting for teams. What I did instead, was to review the list and start the invitation process myself.

I apologise, Evert: that was wrong of me, and it converted a great opportunity for you to practice one of the key aspects of leadership (team member recruitment), into a very unworthy erosion of your authority. I promise it won’t happen again.

**What role do you see yourself mainly playing in the team ?**

I have already played a significant role in relation to the generation of ideas for our game, and expect that I will continue to be heavily involved in game design as we move forward.

I would also like to believe that, despite my faults as a mentor (refer above for details), I could supplement Clark’s advice to Evert.

However, I think I’ll be most effective working with Michael and Kira to get the coding done. I’ve been developing the basic framework for the game, and some of the supporting classes (eg. graphics and sound), so that others can write self-contained blocks of code for inclusion in the project.

1. <https://www.lawyersweekly.com.au/news/1224-blakes-takes-tax-partners-from-deloitte-e-amp-y> (last accessed at 12:45 am on 19 March 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)