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Quest Online Fires President, Hires Derek Smart

by Eric Caoili

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March 15, 2010

Alganon developer and publisher Quest Online has fired president and founder Dave Allen for insubordination, replacing the executive with industry veteran Derek Smart (*Battlecruiser 3000AD*) as the company prepares to re-launch its MMORPG.



Quest Online put out a statement last week notifying the press of Allen's "departure", to which Smart remarked on the game community's forums, "Dave Allen didn't 'depart'. I fired* him back in February for insubordination [sic] and for acting against the best interests of the company, the LLC investors (who I represent), the game, and the team."

"Shortly after, the investors of the LLC unanimously voted him off the LLC," he clarified. "Leaving his previous partner and co-founder (Greg Wexler, one of the most cheerful and straight up guys you'll ever meet in your lifetime) and myself to run the company."

advertisement

Smart added that former director of Development Jason Blood and director of Design Hue Henry, are also no longer at the company. He commented, "I have no personal relationships with any of these three and the decisions surrounding these events were pure business. Nothing more. Nothing less."

Quest Online's majority investors brought the *Battlecruiser 3000AD* developer in late December after *Alganon's* launch to help Allen and his team with the game's development. According to the new president, Allen was unmanageable and demoted to COO, then eventually fired after "one last thing", which Smart didn't disclose.

This revelation of Allen's firing comes just a week after Quest Online announced that *Alganon* is switching from a subscription-based model to a subscription-free setup, in which consumers must first buy the software but can play for free afterward (presumably with microtransactions for virtual items/boons/services).

The publisher plans to relaunch the game on April 8th with user interface changes designed to separate *Alganon* from *World of Warcraft*. "This whole 'WoW look-a-like' rubbish," is gone, says Smart. "I've essentially asked them to throw it all out and for the artists to come up with the game's own unique look and feel for for both the web UI as well as the game UI itself."

Alganon's team is also focused on fixing game bugs and making game tweaks while disabling/removing other features that were added to the game. Smart says that while he isn't certain if the MMORPG will recover from issues associated with its December launch -- which he believes "should never have happened" -- his team will give it their best shot to fix the game.

"If you know anything about my industry career in gaming, then you already know that I value the people who keep me doing this," says Smart. "So if you stick with this game, I will take it as far as I can and with everything at my disposal. Having a stellar team makes it that much easier because at the end of the day, a game is bigger than any one person."

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Comments

Derek Smart

15 Mar 2010 at 5:35 pm PST | edit



I just wanted to add that my missive on the community board was directed at the community and was designed to stave off any sort of "Artifact Entertainment" vibe that I'm sure would be forthcoming given the circumstances.

It was nothing personal nor was it designed to embarrass anyone. As my opening statement indicated, it was designed to a) cut off any such speculative vibe at the pass b) send a clear message about what it is I was going to do - and how I planned on doing it.

The fact is that in our industry, the less you say, the more people will fill in the blanks for you - and I personally know all too well how that goes.

People get fired all the time and it doesn't make the news (unless of course you're Activision), so this shouldn't be any different. I wanted to stress the "fired" aspect because, as a contractor (not an employee), I didn't want any sort of wanton speculation as to how or why David exited and how I came to replace him when it could have been anyone else.

I wasn't out looking for a job (I have one, thank you very much) and so what I'm doing is

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basically one big "all expenses paid" favor to a group of people (investors) I consider to be friends who had no idea what they were getting into almost four years ago.

The fact of the matter is that it wasn't even supposed to be this way. It just happened. It wasn't planned. It wasn't scripted. There were no back room discussions. We had to do it in order to save the game and company from any further damage.

Tip: If you take money from investors, at the very least, TELL THEM what you're doing with their money and the asset they've burned millions on. Going behind their back, lying to them - because they don't know any better and have NO experience in our biz - is only going to get you ousted and fired when someone decides to start ASKING the tough questions like, oh, I dunno, where'd four years and our money go and where's the darn game?

Tim Johnston

16 Mar 2010 at 4:22 am PST



What is the commonly understood and accepted definition of insubordination? Its obviously been in the spotlight recently and Im curious.

Derek Smart

16 Mar 2010 at 4:56 am PST | edit



<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/insubordination>

Harry S

16 Mar 2010 at 8:00 am PST



Smart choice.

Steffen Itterheim

16 Mar 2010 at 8:17 am PST



For what it's worth, i appreciate the honesty and openness, even if it may seem rude or unfair to some to pillory the guy who got fired. Some people get fired because they are incompetent idiots. Other people get fired because corporate needed someone to blame. However i'd much rather read more blunt statements like Derek's than the usual: "Our XXO has left to pursue other options and we wish him well.". You know, corporate bullshit. And i'm sick of that.

Robert Gill

16 Mar 2010 at 8:35 am PST



@Derek--- Nice that you were open with your statements. It's well appreciated in a time where game companies keep peers and other gamers in the dark most of the time.

Shay Pierce

16 Mar 2010 at 8:40 am PST



Man I love the games industry so much.

Todd Kinsley

16 Mar 2010 at 8:57 am PST



"Insubordination" does seem to be the current in vogue word to describe why someone was fired (without actually stating any facts). At least in this specific instance there are a few more known details. The original meaning of the word has been watered down, and it is now used as more of a generic "corporate speak" term to describe any disagreement between a person and his/her superiors.

Jay Simmons

16 Mar 2010 at 9:15 am PST



I'm curious to hear the other side of the story. Did the publisher have different expectations concerning the production? From what I know about the game from previous articles is that it was always touted as being a WOW clone (which I agree, there are far too many of). Were the investors not aware of this or were they looking to cash in on the WOW trend? A follow up article on the history of the production would be great.

Ed Macauley

16 Mar 2010 at 9:41 am PST



@Shay

Amen.

Derek is right though, this isn't news.

Robert Allen

16 Mar 2010 at 10:19 am PST



With all the talk of insubordination recently, I'm flashing back to McHales Navy...

Tim Johnston

16 Mar 2010 at 11:05 am PST



So insubordination in the context of the recent happenings at Infinity Ward and the situation here specifically mean that employees disobey or ignore specifically mandated actions? Meaning basically they didnt do what they were told? Based on your comments Derek it sounds more like clear cut negligence. So, to recap here.....

F@\$king up a job because you didnt do the right things = negligence

Telling the boss to F&k off when he challenges you on said negligence = insubordination?

Derek Smart

16 Mar 2010 at 12:54 pm PST | edit



OK, let me address this here (since this is where the query originated) instead of in the emails and IM I've received.

Dave Allen was never an employee of Quest Online, LLC.

The company has absolutely no employees. The entire team (24 and counting) are work-for-hire contractors.

So Dave Allen was a "managing" member of the LLC as well as president of the company and so had oversight of the company's daily operations. He was first fired - by me on Feb 22nd - then unanimously voted off as managing member of the LLC on Mar 1st.

Both of the above actions are the equivalent of piling your stuff into a box and being escorted out of the building.

With that, and as per the contract and standard work-for-hire contracts, the company doesn't need any reason to terminate a contractor. None whatsoever.

Just setting the record straight and cutting off any sort of speculation.

Derek Smart

16 Mar 2010 at 2:29 pm PST | edit



Well, again, it is not my intent to embarrass anyone and I'd be doing my industry tenure injustice if I were to elaborate any further on the actual events that led to this or where we are atm. All I can talk about is what is already public knowledge.

I'm already a magnet for controversy and I don't particularly want to take the focus off the task at hand to put it on "Derek Smart" because that would be unfair and distracting. Apart from the fact that many will try to make this "A Derek Smart thing" because that's as much fun as poking a bear with a cattle prod and running into your mother-in-law's bedroom.

I used the term insubordination within the actual definition of the word; so there should be no misinterpretation of same.

It wasn't just one thing that led to this because at the end of the day, the investors - who own the company - had their own reasons as well, and completely separate from mine.

What happened is a text book example of what not to do and just how so very much can go wrong in the hands of very inexperienced people. There is a massive Gamasutra blog entry about it in my near future, once the dust settles.

In between dealing with the investors, getting the team on track, dealing with the police, the FBI (!), the banks, the attorneys (no less than three law firms to be exact) etc over this farce - I've got my hands full.

And since all three (David, Jason, Hue) primaries have "departed" the company, this is the sort of thing we have to deal with :

http://www.linkedin.com/profile?viewProfile=&key=221535&goback=.hom&trk=NUS_PREC-recomdee#recommendations

"While working under David at QOL, I often talked about "working at QOL speed." A number of our green employees at QOL did not understand what I meant. It isn't until they spend time at other companies (or remained at QOL after David's exit) that they understood what that means: under David's guidance, QOL ran so quickly, efficiently, and effortlessly, that working elsewhere feels like slow-motion. David's ability to assemble a quality team and the culture of mutual respect he created meant that a good idea was never passed by. His passion for quality and willingness to "get his hands dirty" made sure that problems were solved quickly without wasting time on finger-pointing or CYA activities. Under David's guidance the QOL team was not only able to "do the impossible" with ease, we learned how to bring that same passion, efficiency, and "QOL speed" on to our future endeavors. Many future successes will arise from the skills we gained under David's leadership and guidance." Hue Henry, Director of Design, Quest Online

Pay close attention to the third line. Heck, that guy Hue departed on Feb 23rd, the day after David. Yet by March 10th, he already claims to know how the company is being run. Notwithstanding the fact that they left a right **mess** in their wake.

Jason (#2) and Hue (#3) were the two others, including David who started this co and ran it straight into the ground. So now they're scratching each other's backs on LinkedIn while taking pot-shots at us - the very people left to clean up their mess. Any one of you in this industry who hires either one of these will get what you pay for. Just don't bother asking *anyone* at QOL for a reference.

The entire industry is full of stuff like this due to how the talent is recycled. These people go on to repeat the same mistakes over and over and over, yet when things come to a head, it is the companies that get all the blame.

Not a single one of these three had any meaningful experience developing games, let alone *shipping* a game - any game for that matter - yet, they blew through four years and millions on the most difficult genre to develop for: an MMO; while building a game with a near direct 1:1 relationship to a billion dollar behemoth. Somewhere along the line, all three figured that was the smart thing to do.

Then they go and release it prematurely (incomplete, buggy etc) and in Q4 no less. With *zero* marketing - while telling everyone (myself and investors included) that the game was ready. Less than a month of my involvement and what they had done - and continued to do - became clear. The rest is history.

What's even more sad is the fact that the game, on its own merits, is unique, fun (even though its not even my kind of game) and didn't even need to stand in the shadows of the behemoth in the room. Yet, they wouldn't listen. Not even when the guys with the money brought someone in to help them along.

Again, I'm not going to delve into any in-depth details but the fact of the matter is that I'm helping friends stabilize their company, keep costs in check, support the stellar team already in place (I only had to make one new hire thus far) and get the game done. What they do with the company and game after I'm done and have handed it over, is entirely up to them. I've led many a team, funded (single-handedly) many a project, finished and shipped many a [niche] game that nobody even expected would even make money. So my goal is to help them get the game done. Whether or not it succeeds is not up to me, my job is to get the game done and out there so that it can live or die on its own merits. At the very least, the hard working team would have finished their game without being subjected to all the rubbish that has gone on these past years.

And for the record, you all can wait for the "other side" of the story. Keep waiting because my guess is that given the events that took place, my guess is that the last thing whoever wants to put up such a story wants is for me to put up an official statement accounting of how they brought this company to the brink through sheer incompetence, negligence, mismanagement, insubordination and fraud.

Anyway, if anyone wants to help me help them, you know where to find me.

@ Robert

I loved that movie!! In fact, it is one of very few that I still have on VHS, since I can't find the DVD. Tom Arnold was hilarious. Lets bring the beer; leave the weapons behind.

Matthew Henry

16 Mar 2010 at 6:46 pm PST



Wow. Being publicly attacked for recommending someone on linked in wasn't how I wanted to get on Gamasutra, but as long as I'm here, "Hi mom!"

The other side of the story:

- * Complete tools for MMO creation
- ** Easily expandable to other games.
- ** Tools work well enough that we were entering aprox. 30 quests per designer per week (including mobs, all items, dialogs, and adjustments to the world).
- ** Tools highly expandable to allow for rapid changes and updates to the game.
- * The massive amount of content for a complete MMO
- ** 1600+ quests
- ** 7600+ items
- ** 1400+ Vendors/trainers/cosmetic NPCs
- ** 1140+ Unique monster types (with their stats balanced across player progresion.)
- ** And is fun - even to someone who says "its not even my kind of game."
- * A unique IP.
- * A Social networking site - MyAlganon.com
- ** Allows for players, guilds, and other groups to form. There are a number of social groups on that site that are in different guilds in game - but still talk, plan, and play together because of this higher-order social grouping.
- * A user-friendly information repository (The Library - aka "The Wowhead clone") that allows players to access game information on the web, as well as in game.
- * Complete client and server technology
- * A complete billing system that allowed us to launch despite not having a publisher
- * All of the additional costs of starting a studio (recruiting and retaining talent, coordinating work, determining workflow and pipeline patterns.)

I'll let Derek tell the "insane" amounts of money this cost and "brought this company to the brink" while we completed a game in "the most difficult genre to develop for."

I'm very sorry if this next comment makes things rough on Alganon's players. They are the one's we built the game for, so I've avoided statements like this in the past, but: Yes. The game Alganon failed. It failed because despite being fun and all original work, it appeared and played too similar to World of Warcraft. I failed because I did not realize that was a "deal breaker" for so many people.

Alganon's failure is not due to any mismanagement, insubordination or fraud - it's due to the honest mistake that I thought players would enjoy a "fun MMO with an original story, new encounters, and a community focus" despite the similarities to WoW. I should have spent MORE of the investors' money fighting the similarities.

Like Derek said, this is my first published title - I made a lot of mistakes and I learned a lot about the importance of hiding similarities - a topic that I was naive about before.

I'm sure QOL is not alone in putting in hard work on a game only to see it fail, but I don't see how trying to turn a game's failure into a personal attack, while completely ignoring and attacking the massive amount of work done for such a small budget, is going to do anything except make things worse.

@Derek:

Be proud of the valuable technology and hard working team you now have in your hands. Be

proud of their hard work. Be proud of their talent. Despite the game's failure, everyone who worked at QOL worked extremely hard, utilized their amazing level of talents, and they have every right to be proud of that. They have the right to get and give a positive recommendation without being attacked for it.

I look forward to seeing what you do with the technology that QOL has developed. You mentioned in my last meeting there that you came to QOL to partner and use some of our tech on your own projects, but were asked to consult as well. Later in that same meeting, you mentioned that you have your own MMO projects, and you've already spent more than twice Alganon's budget on each of them. I am excited to see what comes of that combination. I know that Alganon with twice the budget could have been something great, so I've got my hopes up that your games will be as well.

The only thing I enjoy more than playing a great game, and that's watching others enjoy a great game that I had a hand in making. It's a bit selfish, but I hope that the games you make with the technology and team you get from QOL can give me the chance to do both of those. I'll be one of the first in line to pick them up when they are complete.

- Matthew "Hue" Henry

Robert Gill

16 Mar 2010 at 8:35 pm PST



Geez cue "Duel Of Fates".

Derek Smart

17 Mar 2010 at 6:21 am PST | edit



Hue,

OK, I'll bite.

First, this is just an example of burying your head in the sand.

"Wow. Being publicly attacked for recommending someone on linked in wasn't how I wanted to get on Gamasutra, but as long as I'm here, "Hi mom!""

No, a) you were not attacked b) my comment had nothing to do with what you said above. Since you are clearly trying to deflect the premise and reason why I posted that, here, let me highlight it for you with some asterisks.

"While working under David at QOL, I often talked about "working at QOL speed." A number of our green employees at QOL did not understand what I meant. It isn't until they spend time at other companies (**or remained at QOL after David's exit**) that they understood what that means: under David's guidance, QOL ran so quickly, efficiently, and effortlessly, that working elsewhere feels like slow-motion. David's ability to assemble a quality team and the culture of mutual respect he created meant that a good idea was never passed by. His passion for quality and willingness to "get his hands dirty" made sure that problems were solved quickly without wasting time on finger-pointing or CYA activities. Under David's guidance the QOL team was not only able to "do the impossible" with ease, we learned how to bring that same passion, efficiency, and "QOL speed" on to our future endeavors. Many future successes will arise from the skills we gained under David's leadership and guidance."

I fired David on Feb 22nd.

You quit on Feb 23rd because with David gone, you had other opportunities you felt now was the time to pursue.

I fired Jason Blood on Mar 3rd.

Your pot shot about how things are run is just that, a cheap shot that has no merit. Which is why I posted my missive. This amidst the fact that I actually paid you for work done even after your buddy raided the accounts and refused to pay anyone at the company.

Even so, this has nothing to do with recommendations. HR managers are not idiots - especially in our industry. So the three of you can tool around with each other all day long, but my guess is that given how competitive the industry has become and how it is now focused (now more than ever) on hiring based on experience in *shipping* games, you guys will most likely never - ever - work in this industry again.

Admitting mistakes is one thing, ignoring them while not TAKING RESPONSIBILITY and yet pointing the finger is another thing entirely. While I don't hold you personally responsible for the mishaps related to the company, the fact of the matter is that consistently LYING to investors in order to get money, is a sure fire way to lose it all. And this tends to happen a lot which is why the due diligence phase of any funding is so critical to investors; and is yet another reason why it is hard for game companies to get VC funding.

The three of you, as long time friends, started this and screwed it all up in more ways than one. Meanwhile, there are lots of talented folks out in the industry who can't find work or money, while you three just blow through someone else's money with impunity. In David's case, for the second time in a row.

When the company was about to close in November David came to *me* to go back and talk to the investors to give you the money to continue. Amidst our talks of QOL hosting my games in a partnership venture, that was the first time I even knew that the company was having problems. If it wasn't for me, *you* would have been out of a job since then.

Then he tried to sell the company to me because the investors were adamant about putting any money into it seeing that the game wasn't getting done. Yes, I have all the emails. I didn't bite because I had no idea what it was I would be buying and because I still wasn't convinced that QOL - with an unfinished game - even had a "network" to speak of.

Then, you, David and Jason LIED to me flat out by telling me that the game was ready to launch on Dec 1st if you had the money.

I went back to the investors with that information, got you a ton of money and breathing room.

What happened? You guys got the money, the game wasn't ready and it ended up being a disaster when launched on Dec 1st. In the end after I was brought in, we ended up tagging it a "soft launch" in order to soften the blow of that disaster you guys created.

Then less than a month later, David was demoted. Yet, you guys KEPT ADDING STUFF TO THE GAME INSTEAD OF FINISHING IT. I was asked to take over - in a contract that David signed with the investors to make it happen.

Behind my back and against my authority, instead of FINISHING and FIXING the game, you guys kept ADDING to it. As I type this, the team are still working their way through UNFINISHED stuff that YOU left behind.

Then you three continued with the Status Quo - again lying that the game would be ready on Mar 1st.

And those are not the only two instances. Over the past two years, everytime you guys burned through investor money (on God knows what), David has gone back to the investors telling them the game was going to be done THIS time, give us more money. He gets the money, then continues with the same schtick. As I said in my lengthy report to the investors, this whole thing has all the makings of a long con.

Then in the midst of all this, David tried to sell and/or license the game assets (I'm not even going to bother naming names at this point) behind the backs of investors, myself and the co-founder. It was that very last act that caused him to be fired and all three of you to be gone by the time the dust settled.

The day we found out - quite by accident - that Truegames had a team down in Chandler evaluating the game that David - even though he was told weeks before NOT TO DO IT - was trying to sign to them for pennies on the dollar (a fire sale designed to cut the investors out and leave them hanging) - was the day I sent Jeff Luhan (who clearly had no idea what he was stepping into) a strongly worded email notifying him that David had no authority to act in that capacity on behalf of QOL and that we had NO interest in giving the game to them. He called his team back immediately. We fired David. An emergency session of the investors was then called.

And that is just one of many examples of the sort of mess that you guys put this company through.

The company has 14 investors. There is a reason why the vote to REMOVE Dave was ****unanimous**** is quite clear.

Even after the Dec 1st debacle, you three continued the same practices in claiming that the game would once again be ready for Mar 1st as per the additional funding you got.

By early Feb I knew that it wasn't going to be and that David was doing it again in order to get the additional funding that was forthcoming.

And the game being officially released on Mar 1st when it clearly wasn't ready, would have killed the game outright. So on the investors approval, I fired him and put a stop to that immediately.

I fired David on Feb 22nd.

I had a dev meeting with the entire team and the co-founder a few days later. The result? Nope, the game wasn't going to be ready on Mar 1st either and it was all lies once again. So I terminated those plans and asked the team to tell me ***exactly*** how much time they needed. Convinced, I told them they could have the time and whatever else they needed to get it done.

Then I went and got the funding commitment from the investors to do it. These are the same investors who were ready to shut the company down and close it back on Nov 2009. The same investors who wouldn't give Dave Allen a single dime if his life depended on it. The same investors who - on my say so - continued funding the game from Dec 2009 and going forward for as long as I was involved and working to get the game (their rather expensive investment) ****finished****.

So this goes beyond the mistakes made with the ****game****. It has to do with fraud, embezzlement and mismanagement and everything else in between. I stand by those words and any one of you three is more than welcome to sue me for saying it. I'll be waiting.

There are police and FBI complaints filed by the investors, there is a lawsuit in the works etc. Go ahead, tell me you didn't know anything about that. Nor the fact that not only was he siphoning money in order to overpay himself and his buddies, but also had an inexperienced family member - with ***zero*** industry qualifications - on the team ***and*** being paid higher than any other person ***with*** industry experience and qualifications. I fired that person as well as you well know.

All company bills (as you know since 3000AD paid you ***your*** last payment) thus far have been made out of an escrow account to which the investors put money to keep the company operating because they weren't putting any money into an a/c that David and you lot had access to. As a result of the disaster you guys left behind, myself and the QOL co-founder (who has his own company to run and never planned for this) have ended up ***running*** QOL in order to keep the investors assets secure and the company running.

During all this, while he was complaining about not having enough money to operate, he was negotiating a buy out of his remaining shares in a ploy to abandon the team (who worked hard to make this game) and the company. We have all the emails and letters he was passing around the investors in order to get a golden parachute OUT of the company and AHEAD of the Mar 1st disaster he knew was going to come. I put a stop to that when I told the investors not to give him a dime and that the QOL team needed the money a lot more than Dave Allen did. Of course they listened to me.

For the record, David didn't write a ***single*** line of game code for Alganon. I have access to all the SVN logs.

This is the guy who was going to fire the ***only*** lead server developer on the team as well as

others who were *critical* to the game. In the end, I didn't fire anyone (apart from David, Jason and the family member who didn't have any business being at the company to begin with). In fact, I raised the payments of some key members to match industry standards, hired an additional QA person, designated new team lead etc.

He was apparently setting me up for failure. By getting his golden parachute and trimming the core team before "retiring" from the company before the Mar 1 disaster hit, I would be left with a skeleton crew to finish a game that, for all intent and purposes, wasn't finished. That all backfired because he severely underestimated me and the fact that I've done this for so long, I can see right through my eyelids. Blindfolded. In the dark.

You three were making money that was well above the industry norm, while blowing away investor money, paying the folks who actually BUILT THIS THING pittance and having *nothing* to show for it. But I've changed all that and adjusted payments to match the talent; something you guys could never do. Instead of running the company and treating people with respect, you three kept running it like it was your mom's bake shop; and yet you wondered why today, the team is saying things like "...we feel like we're finally going somewhere instead of being led around by the nose".

Apart from the fact that Jason Blood - his other buddy - was fired because he went back and gave David access credentials to backend systems which caused David to come back in and lock everyone out of the company's assets. A major security breach that caused me to send IT personnel out to the Vegas data center to secure the servers and change all the credentials in the past few days. Jason is lucky that QOL hasn't decided to file a criminal complaint or take legal action. Yet.

And don't even tell me about technology. There is ***NO TECHNOLOGY***.

Alganon is a game that like every other game, if it dies, EVERYTHING dies with it. This is not Unreal tech or similar. What you guys built you built was with a single game in mind. Its not like you can use it to develop any other game. Heck, half the stuff in this "technology" is licensed middleware.

You're a designer - with *near zero* experience. I'm a snr. developer who has actually developed engines (lots of them) and shipped games (lots of them). So unlike you [in-experienced] three, you can't fool me - and that was David's first mistake once I got involved in all this and at the request of the investors who own the company.

He flat out lied to me when we were talking about COLLABORATING in order to bring my games to a NETWORK because I didn't want to build my own. He said you guys had tech that you clearly DID NOT HAVE. I was to bring the games, QOL was to provide the backend (billing, servers etc) tech. Not unlike going to networks like Playgrid, Truegames, SOE, Acclaim, K2, NHN etc - parties I've spoken to in the past about the *exact* same thing in order to see what my best option.

To the extent that I even told him that I was looking to license *proven* tech (PMP from www.pixelminegames.com) to do what we needed and that I would just put up my own servers.

There are thousands of MMO games out there that "plug in" to a network at no upfront costs to the developer. THAT was what I was looking for. Thats what he told me you guys had. He lied about that too.

So please, since you were not privy to those discussions and emails like myself, the investors, the team, the co-founder etc, don't talk about things you clearly know nothing about.

And spare me the ego trip by telling me that I have access to "technologies" and whatnot. This is barely a *game* that I'm trying to save and in turn keep the HARD WORKING folks who built it, in their jobs for as long as I can and it has NOTHING to do with my games because if QOL dies, there is no network (which is what we're now looking to build) and no game.

So go ahead, take pot shots, the facts don't lie and more you three try to twist this, the more of it I will reveal in order to show a clear picture and pattern of conduct as to how you guys brought a company and millions in someone else's money to the brink of disaster.

Tell you what, I'm just going to write a Post Mortem blog about it from start to finish since thats the industry norm. I'm not interested in airing dirty laundry or making problems for you three if I don't have to. But when the investors filed a police complaint (in Chandler, AZ) it became public knowledge. When you three started scratching each other's backs on LinkedIn and elsewhere, taking potshots at the folks you leave behind to clean up your mess etc, you drew a line in the sand. The mistake you're all making is that you clearly forget just *who* it is you're dealing with.

The disaster that Dave brought to Artifact Entertainment over Horizons is *exactly* the same mistakes he made and brought to Quest Online. Only this time, the investors have people with the ability to take the bull by the horns. Something that Artifact didn't have. If I didn't think the team in place could pull this off, I would have recommended that QOL be shut down instead of the investors pouring more money into it and with no end in sight.

For the record, I am *not* proud to be making these posts but there isn't anything here that isn't already public knowledge either in legal briefs, police filings or elsewhere. I am not going to let David destroy yet another company by leaving a cloud of doubt, speculation and conjecture in his wake.

No matter how many Google threads/posts anyone reads about me, there isn't a single post about me that has to do with how I run my company or my team. The reason for that is because I value the talented people who work for me as well as our industry proper. I came from nowhere and the people who gave me a chance to get where I am - no matter how little their involvement - are the ones who move this industry forward. Thats why I actually *have* games out there.

Yes, I'm a hardball but hey, its not like I'm standing up on a GDC stage hurling expletives about how unhappy I am, how the industry sucks etc. But if I did that, it probably would make more news headlines than anything else simply because it ends up being another "Oh look, it's Derek Smart" thing. No, I just bury my head down and develop the games that pay my bills. Everything else is just noise.

So yeah, go ahead and make it about Derek Smart; I could do with the added exposure so I can cut down on marketing costs.

My track record speaks for itself and so cheap shots, lies, detractors posting their usual character assassination rubbish are as meaningless and inconsequential as the price of rice in China. For as long as they've been doing it and the fact that I'm still here making games, they seemingly don't get it. Stare into the abyss and it stares right back. Out here on the net anyone can post anything they like and in the end it costs you significant amounts of money for the equivalent of the legal system just giving libel offenders a slap on the wrist. But hey, with the likes of Bill Gates, George Bush and everyone in between, I'm honored to be in good company. So go ahead, post away, attack me all you want. I welcome it because I need to keep my Google ranking up there and I'm just a few thousand items short of beating Bill. So keep them coming.

ps: In comparison, these guys actually shipped a billion dollar game

<http://www.gamerlaw.co.uk/2010/03/more-thoughts-on-activisioninfinity.html>

@anon posters

Nice try.

Jay Simmons

17 Mar 2010 at 8:54 am PST



Unfortunately this seems to be the norm with start ups in the game industry. A small group manages to secure funding from a publisher/VC and promises things they can't possibly deliver. Rather than hiring experienced industry vets and listening to their input they hire recent graduates, interns and hobbyists that won't challenge them and will work on the cheap. Even though these people may be talented if you don't have experienced people leading your team the project is doomed to failure (especially with this generation of games). I never heard of Derek Smart until this article and I don't know any of the people involved with this project but I know from having worked at both start ups and big game factories that when a project fails the top decision makers are usually to blame. It usually stems from the a for mentioned group awarding themselves titles they are not qualified for. Really Really liking games doesn't qualify you to be a Lead Game Designer. Just because your the best artist of the group and you really like to draw and having a working knowledge of maya or max does not qualify you as an Art Director. These are not honorary titles that you can 'grow' into as the project progresses, you either have the skills and experience for the position or you don't. I know of a start up company that was started by one such small group of game dev hopefuls with little experience but a desire to establish a credible team. The "Lead Programmer" had no game development experience but was an accomplished programmer and a former encryption expert in the old Soviet Union. Rather than do the obvious and award himself a title that he admittedly had no experience in he proposed that they start interviewing for the Lead Programming position with one requirement that they would only hire a person that he could learn from. This became the hiring strategy for all areas of the project. The team shelled out the money, hired the best people they could find and accepted modest salaries for themselves. The project and company was successful and eventually got acquired by a larger company making everyone involved quite wealthy. Again, I don't know the people involved but the story sounds all too familiar.

Josef Shindler

17 Mar 2010 at 2:08 pm PST



In my time working with David, Hue and Jason at QOL I found them all to be very competent managers and outstanding people. They all excelled at their positions and performed very admirably. I can attest that all three did their jobs to the utmost of their abilities and performed their duties in an ethical and moral fashion from the two years I worked with them.

I left the company on my own accord to pursue other interests in light of the business decisions being made at Quest Online. As someone who has worked on Algonon for so long aside David, Hue and Jason I wish for them to have future success in their work.

Jason Blood

17 Mar 2010 at 2:34 pm PST



I just want to state a few things for the record...

I have worked as a software engineer for over 16 years and been programming for over 26 years now. I have worked in a number of different industries. While it is true that Algonon was my first commercial game, it's not because I lacked the ability of talent, but because I didn't really want to deal with the business of the game industry. Resumes do not dictate what you are capable of. They provide potential employers with a view of what you have done as a means of trying to decide if you will be capable of if hired. The fact that I was able to create a commercial MMO speaks to my abilities, so at this point my past isn't nearly as important as actually looking at what I did accomplish. Yes Algonon is not profitable. But it is not for technical reasons (which is what I was responsible for), but rather the design (most specifically the similarities to WoW). In fact the fact that I was able to create a full scale commercial MMO that technically worked and played very well within the scope of it's design, and has been live since Dec 1st, despite it being my first commercial game, speaks more to my abilities than my past entries on my resume.

As I mentioned, I enter the game industry because of David Allen. I had known him for about 6 years before starting on Algonon, and I went against my previous feelings about working in the game industry because I trusted David to be fair and ethical. I second Hue Henry's statement that David worked hard and together we accomplished quite a bit over the last 4 years. In fact that we were able to create a full MMO system (client, server, tools, etc) for about 15% of the typical cost that most companies spend to do the same speaks to what David was able to accomplish. Where he was at fault was failing to monetize Algonon (which he has already said), but he was able to lead the company to create top notch tools and technology. Hue and the other members of the team all worked very hard and were happy working under Dave, as evidenced by the nearly 100% retention of employees.

I have already secured a new job, so I'm not making this statement to try and promote myself. I'm making this statement because I feel it important to stand and state that Hue Henry and David Allen are both people I respect and know to be honest individuals and that we were able to create top notch tools and technology at QOL while working under David Allen.

Derek Smart

17 Mar 2010 at 2:41 pm PST | edit



Jason, stop making it about me. Just answer the guy's question. Did you or did you not - through sheer incompetence and blatant misrepresentation - blow through millions of investor dollars with many missed dates?

Simply question.

At least Hue was man enough to admit the mistakes that were made. You on the other hand are doing exactly what you and David have done since day one and why the product was a mess.

You've never - ever - put a game together. Ever. Yet, with *zero* game development experience, you were "Director Of Development" and pulling in a salary that wasn't even anywhere in line with your **junior** level experience.

<http://bit.ly/bN23IN>

Heck, I have team members flat out calling you a hack and having seen your working code and the mess you left behind, I have very little to disagree with. In fact, the entire networking layer (ACE!?!? who the frack uses ACE for a real-time game??!) - the staple of an MMO game - that you've been hacking for God knows how long, is going to be ripped out and tossed at some point because it is just a mess and the #1 cause of player angst in terms of gameplay sustainance. You can't play an MMO game if you can't connect, stay connected etc.

And just so you know, we had already decided to fire you right off the bat. You just made it happen quicker when you - against Greg and my instructions - gave David credentials and caused us problems. The plan all along was to fire you after the April launch. So don't kid yourself. There is a reason why your termination notice said:

- 1.Insubordination. Ignoring directives from President & LLC Manager.
- 2.Breach of security protocols.
- 3.Lack of industry experience in the performance of a project of this scope.

You didn't want to work for me, but when it came down to it, you were the one who came back to me asking to pay you when David - after having raided the bank accounts - refused to even pay you and Hue. So yeah, rail on me all you want, I could care less.

Your "quitting" reminds me of a Rodney Dangerfield joke. "Yeah, I quit. To tell you how well I was doing when I quit, I was the only one who knew I quit"

I HIGHLY recommend that we just stop now before someone really gets hurt. You guys starting to take pot shots at the team and management in place is just going to get you more aggravation because unlike most, I'm not going to sit back and take it.

Alganon is not your "baby". It never was. It belongs to a group of investors who put every single dime into it and you guys NEVER produced any sort of ROI and have NOTHING to show for it. Whats more upsetting is that in this economy and with so many good folks out of work, guys like you get to pull off something like this AND get away with it.

Eternal Noob

17 Mar 2010 at 3:06 pm PST



Um, wasn't this game suppose to be done October 31st? And then December 1st? And then March 1th? If no one got fired and you kept 100% of the staff, you don't have a sugar daddy. One that's willing to share until the funds run out. Sounds like, the funds ran out. Then the first people to leave were the ones who didn't want to be held accountable for what wasn't done.

I can see it now, "What, I'm going to be held accountable for not finishing on time. Well screw that I quit"

Derek Smart

17 Mar 2010 at 3:11 pm PST | edit



Yep, those were the dates alright. And each time, money was needed, given, then the game didn't happen. Which is why the investors said it was the LAST one. Guess what happened?

Thats right, they got more money, "shipped" it on Dec 1st and ended up creating the disaster I inherited.

Then he was going to do it AGAIN on Mar 1st.

And that rubbish about 100% staff retention is rubbish. There were staff cuts made going as far back as Nov and people fired over the course of the game's development. There are many ex-QOL people today who will read that and go, huh?

Jason Blood

17 Mar 2010 at 3:15 pm PST



To set the record strait, I am the only programmer who knew David before they were hired. We were a tight group, but it was because of the mutual respect and high level of maturity among the employees, not because we were all buddies.

Also, again to set the record strait, I did not leave QOL because I didn't want to be held accountable or try and fix Alganon (we were in the process of doing just that). I quit because I refused to work for Derek Smart. In his eyes, Derek may have fired me, but it came to that point because I couldn't see myself working for him (just like most of all of the other people who have quit since David left).

Derek Smart

17 Mar 2010 at 3:21 pm PST | edit



I've pretty much said all I want to say about the events and will just leave it as-is because the more stuff I post the more it will just end up hurting people.

My job is to help the guys FINISH the game. Something David simply couldn't do, despite ending up taking 3x as long and 5x as much money as he originally pitched the investors.

The fact that you all burned through millions of dollars, have ZERO to show for it, while not taking any responsibility (apart from parts of Hue's missive) and lying to the investors speaks for itself.

This has NOTHING to do with running a team and I can't imagine anyone saying that this is what this is about. You can be the best team manager in the world but nobody will give a toss if you DON'T PRODUCE ANYTHING. The industry is full of people who can run teams either effectively or right into the ground. At the end of the day, it all boils down to what you produce. Nothing more. Nothing less.

The Alganon forums are full of people who disagree with EVERYTHING you THINK you accomplished. Not to mention the investors who kept feeding this hole.

And employee retention (I've seen the data) is irrelevant; especially when you consider that if you hire your friends, you're not likely to fire them and thus nobody gets to be accountable for CONSISTENTLY MISSING DEADLINES.

Everything else is just noise.

So have at it.

Travis Parker

17 Mar 2010 at 3:53 pm PST



"The comedy gold—it goes on forever—and—oh my God—it's full of stars!"

So much awesome for what should have started, and ended, with "So and so moved on to explore other options. We wish them luck." It's rapidly becoming some sort of black hole of unprofessional insanity from which no resume can escape.

I am agog.

Matthew Henry

17 Mar 2010 at 5:09 pm PST



Unfortunately, putting the hornet's nest back on the tree doesn't help anyone, so I'm also going to say my peace and walk away.

I anxiously await the day when the actual numbers for those "millions" are revealed. It will be the icing on the cake. (Maybe F13 will start a third thread! I've gotten a lot of joy from reading their forums over the years. It makes me feel a little better to think we are, in some sick way, giving some of that joy back.)

I would love to see what the "big boys" like EA or Sony or NCSOFT or Activision thinks about the technological assets QOL created (see my previous post - and ask Derek for a tour of the Alganon Editor - the video online doesn't do it justice) for how little was spent.

There is a lot of power in those tools and that engine, but with a small staff and a tiny budget, we never got the chance to bring her up to top speed. We got her cruising - more than enough to get everyone from A to B and justify a finished product - but we never got the chance to open her up and show off all that she can do.

I don't know if Derek is interested in admitting the true value of that technology here, but if the "big guys" are interested in the untapped potential in those tools and engine (far beyond the single game Alganon) you should contact the other manager of QOL (Greg Wexler) and see if you can take the tools out for a spin.

You'll be far more impressed seeing it first hand than you will reading these posts. There is a great deal of value in that technology - a great deal of potential ROI for the investors - and there's still a chance everyone can come out ahead. I hope it gets put to good use, and I wish nothing but the best for everyone.

Derek Smart

17 Mar 2010 at 5:45 pm PST | edit



Hue,

You guys never shipped a game. Period. End of story.

When David took the money (yes, in the millions - I have all the financials, remember) from the investors, he didn't tell them he was building them tech. He told them he was building a GAME.

Nobody cares about the tech because it is 100% UNUSABLE outside of Alganon. Plus editors aren't tech. Give me a break.

This has nothing to do with the tech but more to do with the fact that you guys NEVER FINISHED THE GAME.

The company wasn't relying on the tech to bring in money. It was relying on THE GAME to bring in money.

This whole notion of, so we failed at making a game, lets license out the engine is the same crap that has seen MANY companies go under. Unless you're in the business of engine licensing, it is a whole different ball game than developing a game. QOL is not in the tech licensing business.

There is no tech to license. If anyone wants tech, I'm sure that any CTO worth his paycheck would be looking at something like Hero Engine, BigWorld etc which are designed as tech engines for MMOs and not tied closely to a single game.

As a snr developer, I can flat out say that thinking of taking the Alganon "tech" to make another game is suicidal at best. Apart from the fact that it would cost you less to just license something than to go in and rip out all the "Alganon bits" in order to extract anything worth using.

EXPERIENCED developers don't go out and re-invent the wheel. They license middleware.

But I don't expect any of you to actually know any of this because if you had any experience in

GAME DEVELOPMENT it would be obvious that you're not going to be licensing out tech that is patently useless outside of the game that it was developed for. What were you guys going to do, go into the source code and doing a global S&R op to replace all occurrences of "Algonon Editor" with "Awesome I33t QOL Editor", build it and call it a day? Yah, I'm sure Jason would probably do just that.

Again, this has nothing to do with tech, but all to do with Algonon and the company.

If I didn't think the game was worth saving and the team worth helping, I wouldn't be here.

Apart from the fact that, as I stated earlier, I never asked for this; I just got thrust into it when the investors got fedup and it became clear that David was basically misrepresenting the game and lying to the investors in order to keep getting money.

Plus, I did the best that I could to exercise restraint in making all this public. I wouldn't be typing any of this if you and your buddies hadn't started taking potshots at the team and management you leave behind as well as not taking ANY responsibilities for this mishap. Other companies have shut down and gone with the wind during the best of times and for less.

In five months, come back and see how it's done, m'kay? The team is going to FINISH the game and we're going to help them do just that. And best thing is, they don't have to go lying to investors to get the money to do it.

When investors send out a "vote of no confidence" - as they did in the case - you know you have FAILED. No matter how you slice or dice it.

Nicholas Hillier

17 Mar 2010 at 8:18 pm PST



Well after all that, I can't wait to play the game!

Katie Postma

17 Mar 2010 at 9:38 pm PST



I have read the entire thread from a neutral p.o.v. and I must say... David, Jason and Hue seem reasonable and calm. Derek seems ranty and shouty. Plus I'm not sure what Derek does all day except read and write comments in threads like this. I would agree Derek, you did show "restraint in making all this public" in the original article. But you followed it up with a defensive comment on your own story, and created a very nasty, public display of contempt. If I were you, the next hire I'd make would be a solid PR person who didn't let you out to protest too much, any more. It's embarrassing.

Steffen Itterheim

18 Mar 2010 at 2:24 pm PST



So, i wanted to see the editor and watched the movie: http://wpc.145f.edgecastcdn.net/00145F/media/wmv/720p/Algonon_Video5_720p.wmv

I'm mildly impressed. I've worked on huge RPGs before and one part in me is saying, i wish we would have had such a cleanly designed, organized tool that is "all-inclusive". However, it doesn't say anything about the workflow, usability and stability. Other than Dave saying it doesn't crash too often while the editor shows a useful tip: "Make sure you frequently save your changes!". Irony? Perhaps. But more likely just normal for in-house game development tools built along with the game, they do crash - rather often. Unless they're middleware.

Speaking of which, Derek says about the tech: "What you guys built you built was with a single game in mind. Its not like you can use it to develop any other game. Heck, half the stuff in this "technology" is licensed middleware."

And later goes on to say "EXPERIENCED developers don't go out and re-invent the wheel. They license middleware."

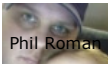
Ups. ;)

I also wonder, when QOL started in 2006, what MMO middleware existed back then? Derek mentions Hero Engine and Big World. I'm pretty certain the first wasn't an option back then, if it was at all available for licensing. Don't know about the other. I'm just saying you need to consider the time when it's still reasonable to license the tech and consider what was available back then.

I'm focusing on the tech part. I'm a techie. At least that part i can judge from a neutral PoV. The rest i just read with interest.

Mathew Zauher

18 Mar 2010 at 8:31 pm PST



Not sure what else really can be said here other then this:



Derek, you aren't helping your investors here. You aren't helping them clear the air with the players and giving them a way to help you as you go in the right direction. If you are hack here arguing with the people I am sure QOL would like to just soon forget. I used to be the same way, I went on the offensive instead of letting things just die the natural cause, I would get in peoples faces and prove them wrong with my debate. Only one problem, the debate isn't going to make either side look great. You either have 3 criminals or 3 people who weren't qualified for the job, and a board of investors too irresponsible to hire someone to look into them.

Derek Smart



As for you other three, your day will come. Simple as that, if its as bad as Derek says good edit luck ever finding a job in the industry again. More so now that its hitting the web like wildfire. Whatever post exists.

If Derek is lying about what happened and lying about you 3, then why are you here arguing with him? Think that makes it look any better? You either have a lawsuit or you don't. If you don't it means everything he said is true and if that is the case - See ya, hope the door don't hit ya on the way out of the limelight. You have been here too long already.

Derek Smart

19 Mar 2010 at 7:00 am PST | edit



The first interview is out

<http://www.zam.com/story.html?story=21889&storypage=1>

Scott Wood

19 Mar 2010 at 8:52 am PST



RE: Prof. Derek Notsosmart Ph.Dumb.

I don't much care for Derek the person much either. I do however respect Derek the Developer a lot. You are confusing the two and should do us all a favor and walk out the door. You are nothing more than a troll looking for attention and trying your best to draw that attention away from its current target of 3 people whom I'm sure will need to rethink careers.

To Derek I say: Kudos to you for giving them a 1/2 broadside. They deserve it 100% IMO and they should consider themselves lucky you've held back.

Scott Wood

19 Mar 2010 at 9:14 am PST



Prof. Derek--oh please, you're calling me Derek when you hide behind an anon name? Nice try, now go look for work since you're out of a job now.

As for metacritic scores--Do you REALLY think a niche game would score very well? Most reviewers fall far outside the target market and wouldn't give it a fair shake and I've seen FAR too many games get high marks for nothing more than the developers name/studio.

Derek Smart

19 Mar 2010 at 10:41 am PST | edit



Just ignore him.

I for one love the Metacritic references* because thinking about the contents of my bank account, it makes me laugh. Uncontrollably. Especially when you consider that I've single-handedly funded, developed and SHIPPED a total of fourteen games.

In fact, Metacritic doesn't use many sites and if they did, the picture would be different. I was having the same conversation with an industry contact of mine in that when we tallied up the scores for my All Aspect Warfare game and compared to the others on Metacritic, they scored higher and more than even some triple-A games (and for which the studies no longer even exist).

Only a complete idiot would take a look at scores and use them as the basis for any sort of argument as to the merits of a game - any game.

* That's Dave Allen's favorite jab and one of the reasons we think its him. In fact, I have verbatim excerpts from emails he has been passing around and which end up making their way to me.

I'm so hoping he sues me. I simply can't wait to shove all the emails and paperwork under a judge's nose. If nothing else, it will be because of him that everything currently hidden all winds up in the public domain and thus end up 100% supporting what I've been saying. I have nothing to fear.

I kid you not, what you've ready is only about 10% of this fiasco.

Hassa Asperga

19 Mar 2010 at 11:04 am PST



Like many others, I've been following this thread for the last few days now, debating as to whether or not I wanted to add my two cents in. As things seem to be heating up on here, and the inconsistencies continue to rise, I feel that it may be worthwhile to provide another perspective on recent events.

Although I will not directly share who I am for reasons that I'm sure will become clear as you read further down my post, I'm fairly sure that individuals on both sides of the issue will have a pretty good idea. If they don't, then perhaps it's best for now.

So far in this thread, we have heard from Derek, as well as a number of former QOL team members, but has anyone asked themselves why we really have not heard from any of the other remaining QOL team members? The basic answer to that is fear.

There has been a lot of name calling going on, a lot of arguments about what is, what isn't, what could be, what is something's value, what is something worth, what was shipped, what wasn't, etc. I'm not really here to get into that, I'm here to get into any of that. I'll leave that for those higher than me to fight over and work out. What I can do is offer a comparison of how things were and how they are now.

First, let me take a step back. I've been involved with QOL a few years now. I did not know David before joining QOL, nor did I know Derek before he took over QOL. My purpose for getting involved with the company was to help be a part of and create something great. When I was approached by David to become a member of the team, I did my research, and I liked what I saw about Alganon's potential. I was also somewhat impressed, yet skeptical of the work and team environment that David was pushing. I have been involved with a few development houses in the past, and the no drama, no hassle, close team environment that David spoke of seemed almost too good to be true. But sure enough, as I started to get involved, and got an opportunity to work with the other team members first hand, that is exactly what existed.

In many development establishments out there, people are there mostly for the pay check. Especially with smaller companies like this, many will see it as a stepping block, or a place to increase their own personal interests. What David had managed to put together was something different, it was a team of individuals that not only were truly interested in being

there, but who also were active MMO game players, had a good idea of what bad elements had existed with previous MMO's, and who wanted to make something better. All of these elements created an environment which, under David's leadership, where people wanted to work as hard as possible to accomplish the impossible.

In most companies, management would have to beg people to work later at night, or to work on weekends, etc. but very seldom do I recall David having to ask people to spend more time working, it was something we did on our own because of the excitement we felt for what we were creating. In fact, I remember a few times when people had to be asked to stop working so much because they have been getting so many hours in. (BTW: We were paid on a monthly salary, and not hourly, so it didn't matter how many hours we got in (as long as we got the minimum hours in), but still people continued to work longer and harder regardless.) Sure, we may have had one or two people that really didn't fit, and tried to cause issues, but they usually didn't last long... those that didn't fit were usually gone within a month, and those that did fit usually stayed.

Regardless of what you say about the company, the game, the market, the industry, or anything else, in my opinion we had one of the best teams that could exist, we accomplished things much faster with the resources we had to work with, and had a lot higher dedication to our final target all thanks in-part to the leadership, vision, and day-to-day involvement of David. Although one could argue that the real reason was because of the team itself, and that David really had little to do with it, I don't believe that argument can hold much weight. I believe that this has become most apparent in the unfortunate series of events that have unfolded over the last month which have lead to Derek arriving, and David leaving.

No matter what you want to say about anything else, one thing that I believe any past or present team member will agree with is the stark contrast between daily operations and overall team feelings between when David was at the helm vs. when Derek has been here. From my perspective, the difference is literally like night and day.

Where as David had a strong sense of direction and understand of what was going on, and would often take a hands on approach in the day to day operations of the team, and made sure that everyone understood where we were at and where we were going, Derek has basically left day to day operations up to the team leads, and although he will often get opinions and offer his feedback on important hot issue items, and he tries his hardest at what he has to work with, it's often clear that he has very little understanding of MMO's. Where as people would almost always know where they were at and going, and could easily find out if they were not clear, with Derek, that is no longer as clear. He would give us large directives, saying things like 'Make X happen', but the specifics would be much harder to come by, and because of the issue I'll be mentioning next, most people fear making a choice.

Where as David had built his team on trust and understanding, at least over the last month, Derek seems to be heading in the direction of fear and intimidation. Many managers will say 'you can come to me with anything and nothing bad will happen to you', but action often proves most of those wrong. This was not the case with David, as he proved many times that even if our opinions differed from his own opinion, we could still discuss that with him, and we would not have to fear being treated less for it. From day 1, Derek had made it clear that he controlled our pay checks, and that the only opinion was his opinion. Those that did not agree with him, or felt differently than him, would risk loosing their pay checks. He then drove this point home by making an example out of the first team member that made a statement that seemed to support David, by informing him and the rest of the team that he would not be getting paid. After that, although you could feel the tension in the team, no one else was willing to speak out in favor of David again. When you are supporting a family, and live paycheck to paycheck, the threat of removing that paycheck can be a very strong motivator.

I'm sure I could go on with a number of other examples, but at this point I think I've been able to make the points that I wanted to make. Say what you will about what does or does not exist, or what could or could not happen, but no matter what is said I don't think anything can be said about what David had accomplished from a leadership position, and what he had brought out in all of us. Even though we worked hard for him and for what he was trying to accomplish, it was only because of that leadership and the fact that he was right next to us the entire time, working just as hard and long, if not harder than we were. After spending over 4 years putting his heart and soul into the game, I certainly don't feel that David got what he deserved as a result of that, which was basically to have everything he worked for stolen out from under him. I hope that's something that most, if not all of the rest of you can at least agree with, and if not now, perhaps over the coming weeks as even more information starts to come to light in regard to what really has been going on.

Derek Smart

19 Mar 2010 at 11:21 am PST | edit



Hi Hue!! (as someone on our Skype channel pointed out, this post is too eloquent to be David or Jason)

Too bad with all that, there is no frigging game.

It is going to take a LOT more than anon posts to deny the fact that David FAILED the game, FAILED the team, FAILED the company and FAILED the investors.

Thats why he was FIRED.

Thats why I'm here.

Thats why the team are working to FINISH the game.

And I can 100% guarantee that you are

- a) not part of the team left behind
- b) you don't speak for the team left behind

Good baiting though. I even fell for it and posted the company Skype chat we're discussing this in, but removed it.

Brian Hughes

19 Mar 2010 at 11:47 am PST



"Hassa Asperga", you want comment from the team left behind? Here's mine: you couldn't be more wrong about David and Derek and development here at QOL before and after the change.

Victor Pellen

19 Mar 2010 at 12:35 pm PST



I know absolutely nothing about Alganon beyond that, from the trailers, it looks like your bog-standard diku-based WoW-class MMO, and that Derek Smart is working on it.

I know absolutely nothing about Derek Smart beyond his words here and the fact that a lot of people seem sceptical about everything he says.

Somebody mentioned that nobody is in here openly supporting Derek, but by that token, nobody is actually denying his claims either (beyond vague references to lying about having a PHD and his games sucking, the first of which makes me curious but the second of which is largely irrelevant). I've not seen anybody here say "You're wrong", simply "I disagree with your opinion". People seem to speak about him running his mouth as if it's a very taboo thing, yet in spite of that, he seems to have a job.

Maybe the problem isn't one man running his mouth, maybe it's that nobody else does.

For the matter at hand.. I can believe that management was incompetent. I can also believe that people dislike Derek Smart. I can believe that previous management resulted in a lot of potential tools. I can also believe that those tools have little to no value outside of their own project. I believe that somebody kept asking for money, promising results, spending that money, and not getting results. I also believe that kind of thing happens a lot in this industry, enough that I'm hard pushed to blame it on management alone.

In the end, all I can ask is to play the game. Though based on what little of the game I know, it'd probably bore me to tears anyway.

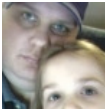
Derek, your story sounds believable to me, but then I know very little about the inner workings of the industry, and even less of your personal reputation. However, even if you are a compulsive liar as some say, I can still admire that you speak so loudly about the profession you're employed in.

I hope one day I'll be able to attract as much ire as you.

I mean that sincerely.

Mathew Zauher

19 Mar 2010 at 12:49 pm PST



Hey Derek:

in response to this: "It is always so simple and easy to perch on a lofty tree and throw down advice, missives and the odd tirade. The fact is that down here - where reality is based - guys like me don't just type up stuff on the web without knowing what the [legal] ramifications are. Unlike these three, I'm not some inexperienced buffoon who doesn't know what he's doing.

If you think that I'd just type up stuff like this with impunity because I can and because there is no legal recourse or FACTUAL basis, then you don't know ANYTHING about me."

No, of course not. I never once implied or said you would. I just was giving some feedback about how this has now spread to massively.com, mmorpg.com, and other various mmo blogs and the backlash from the customers basically laughing at the fact that you guys are arguing on the internet like a couple of 12 year old's.

I did however suggest to David that if he felt he had a lawsuit he and his 2 buddies should file it.. because when it gets thrown out of court (or they go to jail depending on how deep the rabbit hole goes) then maybe, just maybe their 15 minutes of fame in the industry will be up.

Either way I wish you the best. My time in this thread wasn't meant to rile you up anymore big guy. I just figured you wanted industry feedback because you posted it on an industry based forum so I gave it. My bad.

Anyways good luck with this fiasco. I know first hand going into a situation to "fix it" can suck when you are the one asked to pick up others dirty work and have to wade through it.

Derek Smart

19 Mar 2010 at 1:08 pm PST | edit



Well, that is the best write-up to date

<http://www.mmorpg.com/gamelist.cfm/game/388/feature/4107/Alganon-Copying-WoW-Flovers-for-Alganon.html>

@ Mathew Zauher

Our industry culture allows us to behave as is commonly expected of us. We're not diplomats or politicians - and even they don't have higher standards. But yes, I understand now what you were getting at.

The simply fact is this:

"Game developers are just human beings who happen to make games for a living. If you want to hold us up to higher standards of conduct, then go ahead...but don't be surprised if we don't uphold them."

Jim Rogers

19 Mar 2010 at 1:39 pm PST



@Derek

I do not think that you have necessarily done anything wrong professionally in this situation.

However, I don't have all of the details, and neither does anyone else except for you and the other involved parties.

I will say this, I personally purchased a copy of Battlecruiser 3000AD a long time ago, and, was very excited about the featurelist, and even read your little bio from the instruction manual there, and thought to myself "wow, this game is going to be incredible."

That being said, the metacritic score for the title is an accurate representation of the quality of the title. It was a bold undertaking with many interesting systems and possibilities, but the game fell flat on presentation and what we'll call overall entertainment value.

I play a lot of games, maybe even too many, but Battlecruiser 3000AD is one I remember as being one that I had the highest hopes for (and back then, I didn't really have money to waste on bad video games).

I chose to say this because you brazenly referenced the size of your own bank account in attempting to justify the quality of the game. Just because something earns money doesn't mean it's good. Even the worst of movies generally turn a profit, and, well published video games are no different.

I am glad you have met with success, though I believe it may have gone to your head. I think your skill lies in publishing video games at a profit far before it lies in publishing "good" video games. There's a distinct difference.

Sadly, the kind of posts you make here make it difficult to determine whether you really deserve your fortune... whereas if you'd have just not replied or kept it a bit more professional, people would have probably all presumed that you were in fact deserving of your wealth. Seems like you come from the stock of people who believes that having wealth is deserving it.

Try keeping business matters between yourself and business partners, and let them recommend one another on linkedin. It's no longer your affair. My real hope for you is that you will one day prove to us all that you DO deserve your wealth by creating a version of Battlecruiser that DOES live up to what it was aiming for. You sincerely had some awesome design in mind there.

I also applaud your direct honesty (it's rare), but seeing the other side of the story makes it seem questionable at the roots. You probably wish you hadn't gotten involved in this discussion.

Sorry for any burns, just calling it how I see it in a manner very similar to what you've done, but hey, you can take that, right? Ya dished it out, anyway.

Derek Smart

19 Mar 2010 at 2:14 pm PST | edit



@ Jim

Dude, Battlecruiser 3000AD was in 1996.

Take Two (Ryan Brant, ex- Take Two CEO and the one responsible for that mishap, went on to be a convicted felon) released it without my permission in order to make Christmas - sparking a public fiasco not unlike this one.

I got back the IP.

I patched it.

Released for FREE. Where to this DAY it continues to be one of the most downloaded titles on the net, along with several of my other games. e.g.

<http://www.fileplanet.com/section.aspx?s=49748&v=0>

I've gone on to do a total of fourteen games since then.

And it's now, what? 2010? And you're riding me over it? Dude, you SERIOUSLY need to let go because that sentiment simply can't be healthy. Plus I'm quite sure there's medication for that.

As to the rest of your missive? Whatever man, whatever.

Scott Wood

19 Mar 2010 at 2:19 pm PST



Some people never let go and will hound it till the day they die. Like that one time in grade 3 Amy stole my cheese and crackers. Payback...one day I'll get the &*^#...

Seriously though, I think people are confusing the business with personal. You may not like Derek as a person, but you must admit he's lasted a lot longer than most in the game industry. You should look up his posts on distribution and how the developer usually ends up taking it up the back end when it comes to being paid. He's shed a lot of light on dark corners of the industry and I respect him for that.

Derek Smart

19 Mar 2010 at 2:42 pm PST | edit



@ Scott

Indeed.

I've lasted this long for four simple reasons.

1. I don't take crap from anyone.
2. I don't take money from ANYONE to do a game.

3. I develop the games that myself and the 10 people who buy them WANT me to develop and PLAY, not what someone else thinks I should be developing. That's why my games are in a niche. Gamers today would have to actually *look* up the word in a dictionary to find out what it actually means.

4. I don't take crap from anyone.

Yes, some years are tougher than others but I'd rather be making games for the 10 people who keep buying them (when I only need 8 to make a profit) than try to aim for 15. Which is pretty much what most do and end up failing time and time again. Which is why, since 1996 to 2010, there have been more dead bodies in the game landscape than I've had hot dinners.

This too shall pass; but until then, by all means, you guys keep talking about Alganon. Thanks much.

Derek Smart

19 Mar 2010 at 5:19 pm PST | edit



Alrighty then: <http://bit.ly/a0HEAo>

Nick Tester

19 Mar 2010 at 5:22 pm PST



I stumbled across this gold mine about one hour ago. Thank you all so very much. This thread is hilariously unprofessional. (I have emailed/text friends and colleges to spread the joy)

Being completely and utterly neutral to anything and everything in this thread (never heard of people mentioned or the games mentioned) I do think everyone should just move on.... "No body's right if everyone is wrong" (goes something like that lol)

One thing I did feel possessed to share. I believe its very wrong to make personal comments about Derek Smart. It appears not a single person in this thread knows Derek on a personal level. The only valid comments would be the ones directed towards the professional Derek Smart we know as a consumer, fan, employee or peer.

This is were I got my most entertainment out of the thread..... As I was reading the post and starting to piece together the characters of the people involved I actually found myself wanting to inflict pain upon Derek Smart. (LOL sorry dude you really do come off as an ass) I was actually getting angry while laughing. My blood was filled with a desire to physically beat the arrogance, ignorance and cockiness that Derek you have clearly displayed here. Than my maturity kicked in and I began to ask myself why in the world do I feel this way about this person I have never met, let alone knew existed 60 minutes ago. Thats when I realized I hate the way this guy comes off because I possess the same qualities. In my life I have become a successful "business" man over the years. One thing that I truly believe has given me an advantage in my years is understanding that "business is business" and those that take it personally are weak :(

Everyone involved should stop posting now to save great shame! Give this one to us swiss folk to play with.

Jim Rogers

19 Mar 2010 at 5:33 pm PST



I wasn't riding you about Battlecruiser 3000, particularly, I was simply responding to your disgustingly haughty comment about your wallet.

"I for one love the Metacritic references* because thinking about the contents of my bank account, it makes me laugh. Uncontrollably." You've essentially just said you laugh it up at the fact that you sold people a bunch of games that most people do not enjoy.

Seriously? Also, you can deride metacritic all you want, but it's actually fairly accurate. As an avid game consumer, I started using it in about 2007 and I've found that when I stray down into games rated 60 and below, I start getting what I pay for... though sometimes I do think there is industry bias, as I currently play a couple of games whose competitors are doing better on metacritic, but the competition in that case is more highly publicized but inferior quality.

This doesn't make up for 40 points of metacritic score. Just like a person or group of people can get rich by selling medicines and snake oils that don't work or barely accomplish the job, someone can release 14 games that are barely average and also become rich, if he has done it correctly.

Also, Doc, my opinion of your previous title is not unhealthy... it's an opinion. I also don't particularly enjoy Final Fantasy games, but I can see the inherent quality in those titles that is lacking from the choice offerings of yours that I have sampled.

Before you jump to reply, however, note that I don't actually know all of the titles for which Mr. Smart is responsible, and I am not claiming that each of his titles is subpar, merely I am implying that some of them are quite subpar.

Also, you put your name all over Battlecruiser 3000 AD and I see you here dismissing it as something some other guy released for Christmas and that's why it sucked? I'm not "holding onto it"... I don't really care or have any more investment, but, didn't you JUST tell people to own up to their mistakes and take responsibility a few posts ago? I learned your name from that game back in 1996. I shouldn't have learned your name from it if it wasn't your responsibility to see a quality product come to market. I will try your freely downloadable game as soon as I have time. It is very gracious of you to give something away that you've doubtlessly spent a great amount of time on. I wish your attitude here matched that sentiment.

In your reply to Scott, I like your numbered points. I wish more developers followed the

mantra of #3... (I am more tired of WOW and WOW clones than any of you, especially after Mythic's last offering, I promise) however, don't presume that your games being stuck in a niche can be wholly attributed to your development theory. Again, I'm not hating on anyone, just thought this comments section could use a little input from an unbiased observer to keep it fair.

Joshua McNeese

19 Mar 2010 at 6:42 pm PST



Derek,

I, too, was one of those poor souls who had such high hopes for BC3000 back in the day. These high hopes were largely due to you, as you were the largest author of the hype that surrounded it. I specifically created a Gamasutra account just so I could relay this thought:

If I had known, all those years ago, that the money I paid *you* when I purchased BC3000 would, 14 years later, cause you to chuckle at the size of your bank account and help you put forth the highly hypocritical standpoint that somehow the size of your bank account indicates your skill or experience as developer... I would have not purchased the game, solely to have not participated in whatever it is that makes you view the world in the way that you do.

I was explaining some of this to my wife, and part of that explanation was the statement: "the length of someone's resume or the number of projects they have participated in is no metric for measuring a person's success or skill." As a hiring manager for several development teams I have met developers that think in exactly this way, and have either not hired or fired them all.

The fact of the matter is that you are an arrogant man with a severely skewed worldview. I am ashamed that I helped you in whatever endeavors that ever brought you to this point in your life, where you feel justified in slamming ex-employees/peers for whatever reason, in public forum, whatever the "proof" or "facts". It is highly unprofessional and speaks of a need for people to view you as "right" or "good", when evidently you are neither.

Joshua McNeese

Bob Henry

19 Mar 2010 at 7:23 pm PST



Question Derek, you made the following statement. "The fact that you all burned through millions of dollars, have ZERO to show for it, while not taking any responsibility (apart from parts of Hue's missive) and lying to the investors speaks for itself."

You repeated the thought multiple times. The question is what can you possibly mean? There is a game called Alganon. I understand that it is currently playable although apparently unfinished. You stated that it should be finished in a few months. You can't possibly imagine that a whole MMO game could be completed in just a few months. So you can't mean that there is no almost finished game. Perhaps you meant that the three fired people were so busy lying, embezzling, and defrauding that they weren't able to contribute? Please explain. Thanks

Derek Smart

19 Mar 2010 at 7:29 pm PST | edit



Personal attacks? By inconsequential anon nobodies on the Internet? Yep, honey I'm home.

Now that I'm doing interviews and which will be more clear and precise, I see no reason to continue this farce. So everything I posted before have already started to appear in interviews (see links below and others to come) in a more concise manner.

<http://www.zam.com/story.html?story=21889&storypage=1>

Michael Malandra

19 Mar 2010 at 7:37 pm PST



To everyone:

Please stop feeding this troll. Let this board die already, he clearly has no class and does not deserve the respect of your replies.

Bob Henry

19 Mar 2010 at 9:37 pm PST



It looks like someone noticed Derek's posts and made him take them down. Derek was it lawyers or your boss? Most likely your boss's lawyer?

Dawn Cartwright

19 Mar 2010 at 9:54 pm PST



What a narcissistic wanker.

Jerane Alleyne

20 Mar 2010 at 5:24 am PST



Anyone for an Obama Beer Summit?



What is sad is that as a developer myself I know all too well what Smart is saying. It happens so frequently in our industry that the more people know about it the more it will probably stop.

People have turned this entire thread into a personal attack on Smart while he hasn't done any of that and has basically stuck to his guns. In such a sue happy country and with his industry exposure I don't for one minute think that any of this would be posted without him knowing what the legal ramifications are.

Those who simply don't like him are taking the opportunity to lash out in a thread that has nothing to do with anything other than to set the record straight.

Everyone forgets the Dave Allen debacle over Horizons, but I had first hand knowledge of it. And the internet is full of the story. Here are a few. There is a clear pattern here.

<http://brokentoy.org/2001/06/09/trouble-on-the-horizon-author-lum-the-mad/>

<http://webz.us/hz/htm/wrh.htm>

From Scott Jennings

=====

James Jones, Artifact's co-founder, engineered a coup to remove David Allen from his own company (Artifact) and replaced him with David Bowman. Depending on whom you believe, Horizons was then driven into the ground by Bowman's team's lack of vision and ability to produce a game, or Horizons was doomed from the start by Allen's team's inability to create anything even remotely approaching what was in Allen's design documents. Regardless of whom you believe, Horizons was essentially developed from start to finish in less than 2 years, because nothing that was created prior to Allen's ouster was able to be used.

Tulga Games was a holding company created after Artifact went bankrupt in the aftermath of Horizon's release.

Very little of this has survived in documentation on the Internet since it happened in the 1999-2002 time frame and almost all the gaming sites that covered the more gossipy bits are dead now.

=====

What we have here is "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" notion that is just stupid. Thus far nobody has in any way shape or form has disputed anything that he has said. He has made some clear points which anybody in the industry can easily relate to because it happens every day but is usually kept behind the scenes.

I have met Derek Smart personally at various industry events. He is one of the nicest guys that you will ever meet. Even so when you see some of things he posts and then you spend time with him you come away asking yourself whether it is the same person or is it that he actually says what he says because that's his shock value schtick. Generally people who are brutally honest come off as being egotistical and arrogant. And in all cases you either like someone or you don't. Sadly it is usually the vocal minority who end up making the most noise because a mob mentality is the staple of any internet discourse. Everyone wants to be kewl or to pick on the guy that their friends are picking on. School bully mentality.

There is another forum that us developers visit and where this topic is being discussed. I will post some choice comments from there. If you are in the industry then you should recognize some of the writers.

=====

Word.

I've known Derek for a long time now, and he really is a nice guy. He's just unable to ignore baiting from assholes. Which makes the Internet a bad place for him to be.

If he'd just hire a successful user interface designer to work on his games and promise not to second-guess the UI guy's decisions, he'd probably be respected around these parts as an ambitious indie developer. The scope of his games is really impressive, and there are aspects of them that are seriously cool. The problem is, most of the coolness is hidden behind an inscrutable UI that I think seems natural and intuitive to Derek, but not the rest of us.*

* Based on the BC games. I still need to check out his latest titles, which I do have access to... Man, I wish I had the free time now I had in my 20s.

===== - Denny Atkin

=====

That matches everything I've ever heard about him. I'm still sad I didn't make it to the QT3 gathering at the E3 he and I both attended. (Didn't realize it was going on, at the time.) I still feel bad about the fact that I used to join in with Huffman from time to time on Usenet, when I was younger - Derek's "if the game doesn't work you're an idiot and fuck you" attitude really rubbed me the wrong way on his forum, understandably. I've heard he's a great guy to hang out with in person and away from the internet, though, and I personally bear the guy no ill will at all.

===== - Quatoria

=====

Derek at least used to live very close to someone I worked with. During a visit, I noticed him and had an embarassingly juvenile gut instinct that I'm still not sure I should have decided against, but such is life.

He has always come off to me as a genius 12-year old, which is both a good and a bad thing. In his current position, I think it's more one than the other but I'll leave you guys to debate which that is.

Oh, and for whatever it's worth the guy has (or at least had) more money than I'll ever see in my lifetime. Thankfully, that's not how I define the value in my accomplishments and the life I've led. Best wishes to his game, even if only so that the people who paid money for it don't feel ripped off.

===== - Dan Theman

=====

I met Derek once, too. I actually traveled to his home and spent the day with him for a story in CGW back in the day. (The quote on his Wikipedia entry is from the story I wrote.) He was incredibly nice and gregarious the entire time. His understanding of his own persona, and his complicity in it, was complete. He can't help himself, and knows that about himself too. Clearly his own worst enemy, on the Internet anyway, but in "real life" I walked away from that interview totally liking the guy. I still do.

===== - Jeff Green (the guy who did this http://www.3000ad.com/press/ds_interview_cgw0401.jpg)

=====

I worked with Derek for the DreamCatcher release of Battlecruiser and the initial release of Universal Combat. I agree with Denny's comments up-thread -- Derek Smart is a good man. To those who have earned his trust, he's actually a really nice guy and a good friend.

I admire his legacy and his tenacity. He's certainly gone overboard on many an occasion -- and I think he'd be the first to admit it -- but I believe he's mellowed over the past few years and he's managed to avoid a lot of the flamewars (which have been entertaining to say the least). He will, unfortunately, never live down his historic histrionics, which will follow him to the end of his days. I'd wager, however, that he'll still be making games up to those end-days.

I knew nothing of this Alganon prior to today, but I'll check it out now. I wish Derek nothing but the best.

===== - Brian Gladman

=====

Everyone is entitled to their view...

I've not played Dereks games, but I've chatted to him a few times by email over the years. He seems like a good guy to me.

===== - Cliff Harris (positech games)

=====

Well, as I said before, he's great ... until you disagree with him. Then it's over.

===== - Warren Marshall

=====

Hey, credit to Derek. He's a likable guy in person, quite charming, and his monomaniacal pursuit of whatever white whale he's pursuing is always interesting.

And yes, he's taken over the captaincy of a sinking ship. Maybe he can inspire the deckhands to bail faster....

===== - Mark Asher

There are similar postings all over the net. Heck, I'm following Curt Schilling on Tweeter and just started following Derek Smart yesterday and they Tweeted back and forth.

What these anon people are doing is trying to take the focus away from the disaster that Dave Allen again left in his wake and put it on Derek Smart. I would put money on it being David and the departed as well as those who have stalked him as far back as 1996, have websites designed to ridicule and discredit him etc. This is the society that we live in unfortunately. Everyone knows that he will simply not back away from a fight but what I see in this thread at least are posts which he directs at the issue while ignoring flamebait.

I am 99.99% certain that investors who would put millions into a game or company won't just hire someone without first vetting him doing the research etc etc. So to think that with all the people in the industry that they could have hired they picked him for shits and giggles is just stupid thinking. You put in Derek Smart's name on Google or any search engine and you'll be reading everything well into retirement age. Obviously the guy is talented and business savvy enough to do what he is doing. I remember the Brad McQuaid and similar industry fallouts and they were just as vehement but this one takes the cake.

Yes this is another sad episode in the industry but that is just how things are. Because Derek Smart is involved I for one am glad to see that he has not towed the corporate line by masking what seems to be yet another Dave Allen cluster%^&@* in PR speak. If this goes the legal route I cannot imagine how anyone could possibly defend against anything in the fact of facts. As any lawyer will tell you truth is the absolute defense against any defamation or libel incident.

Wow look at that wall of text, but anyone I think I have made my point. Anyway I wish them luck with the game maybe his industry staying power and ability to actually finish and ship games will translate over to Alganon. After all if I were an investor that is what I would look at before hiring someone.

And while we are on the subject of execs and what happens behind the scenes, this is what happens when you get sued. Everything comes out. Go ahead and read some of those emails between Google and Youtube that just surfaced yesterday.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-most-damning-information-viacom-dug-up-on-google-and-youtube-2010-3>

Derek Smart

20 Mar 2010 at 1:17 pm PST | edit



New interview is up. More questions answered.

<http://www.mmorgate.com/2010/03/alganon-derek-smart-exclusive-interview.html>

Bob Henry

20 Mar 2010 at 2:27 pm PST



Nice interview on mmorgate. Thanks for posting the link. After reading that interview and logging on and actually playing Alganon for myself. It seems to me that Alganon in its current state is actually a fun game and has the potential of being very addicting. I haven't gotten past the level 10 point mentioned in the interview but, it looks like it could very well be a winner game.

Derek, I still would like to know what was meant by your many assertions above that "ZERO"

has been accomplished by the people that you fired. Why did you try to delete your own posts? I suspect that you might be in deep trouble about posts here? I'm also curious why David Allen hasn't made a peep. Your earlier indications were that you expected him to make a big public spectacle. It seems to me that these three fellows could have a great defamation case against you for the things that you've been saying publicly about them. Of course I'm not a lawyer but I can't help but think that maybe real consequences are finally catching up with the self-described "eccentric and vocal personality" known as Derek Smart? [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derek_Smart] Your attempts to delete your own posts, David Allen's unexpected public silence, you seemingly changing your tone to be far more conciliatory, perhaps you're running scared? Is more happening in the background that hasn't been made public?

Derek Smart

20 Mar 2010 at 3:33 pm PST | edit



Actually, the reason I deleted some of the posts (which I later restored) was because I wanted to refer back to the interviews due to their more clear structure. Of course, it could look as I were in "trouble" (what is this, a playground?) for removing them because some people either lack reading comprehension skills or are just plain idiots. So rather than even bother arguing the point, I decided to just restore them but still post the links to the interviews (three so far and several more to come) as I have been doing.

And here are two smaller articles:

<http://www.mmorpg.com/gamelist.cfm/game/388/view/news/read/16501/Alganon-Derek-Smart-vs-exAlganon-Employees.html>

<http://www.mmorpg.com/gamelist.cfm/game/388/feature/4107/Alganon-Copying-WoW-Flovers-for-Alganon.html>

You don't know anything about the law, let alone defamation, so just stop already.

I'm a big boy who can take care of himself. This is not my first go round and it certainly won't be my last.

David Allen is here; except that he's posting anon (several personas in fact - and since yours is a new account as well, you could very well be him) as his posting style is clearly unmistakable. ANYONE who knows him will quickly point out that his ego is just too big for him to just sit back and read all this without saying something. And in any lawsuit, that's the first thing that will get subpoenaed.

He has also been calling people (e.g. Jeff Martin one of several people who quit a few months back because of David) trying to get them to vouch for his character.

What he doesn't know is that we're compiling all this stuff and we already have enough (from people he has worked with, done business with, screwed over etc). I have never been received so many emails and IMs from people I never even knew.

Like I said, I hope that he sues instead of sending stupid letters (which I just laugh at) demanding money that he doesn't deserve. There is so much stuff that I am holding back from making public and unless and until he sues, I'm not posting them. What is thus far known - as I've said - is only about 10% of what he has done to this company and the resulting blowback. Apart from the liability he faces if QOL or the LLC members decide to sue him. With the mountains of paperwork and emails, him shipping the game incomplete on Dec 1st is the strongest case for that thus far and so nothing is off the table.

Dave Allen simply has no clue who he's dealing with. He wants to liken himself to some notorious net stalker who puts up a web page full of libelous stuff and which is just not worth the legal (I spent enough on that, Free Speech and all that crap) hassles or validation. Yet, instead of looking at my business track record of actually suing (mostly publishers) and following through with it, he thinks that he is going to get away with this crap or that I would post something on the net that isn't true and thus leave myself open to a defamation or libel suit. Then again, for as long as I've been paying those insurance premiums, I guess its time for them to kick in. My guess is that his piggy bank - assuming he has one and not the money he got from the company - won't make it past the first hearing.

As I said, let him sue, the attorneys will thank him for it. Me? I'll just laugh at the audacity and arrogance.

Bob Henry

20 Mar 2010 at 4:08 pm PST



Very interesting response, I was guessing that you were in hot water with your boss for making the company vulnerable to a lawsuit. Your response seems to make it clear that you're really afraid of David Allen or maybe I should more accurately say David Allen's lawyer. Here's what has lead me to that conclusion. Your quotes.

"And in any lawsuit, that's the first thing that will get subpoenaed."

"What he doesn't know is that we're compiling all this stuff"

"He has also been calling people"

*****most telling quote*****
*** "Like I said, I hope that he sues instead of sending stupid letters (which I just laugh at)"
*****I guess that means he sent you a letter*****

"he thinks that he is going to get away with this crap"

"for as long as I've been paying those insurance premiums, I guess its time for them to kick in."

"My guess is that his piggy bank - assuming he has one and not the money he took from the company - won't make it past the first hearing."

"As I said, let him sue, the attorneys will thank him for it."

Very interesting indeed. So it would appear that you let it slip that you got a letter from David Allen. Was that from David or his lawyer? With this statement, "My guess is that his piggy

bank - assuming he has one and not the money he took from the company - won't make it past the first hearing" are you reiterating the accusation that David embezzled money from the company? My understanding of defamation is that you must have clear proof that it is true or it's defamation. If that is the case then why was he fired for insubordination instead of embezzlement? If you had proof of embezzlement then he would have been fired for that wouldn't he rather than insubordination?

Derek, your statements about embezzlement/insubordination/fraud and defamation don't add up to me.

Avguste Antonov

20 Mar 2010 at 10:41 pm PST



Greetings to everyone

I would like to first express my pleasure and honor in being on this site and in the presence of many of the industry leaders. I look forward to discussions about this great industry.

Before I comment on Alganon, Mr Smart and the current discussion, please allow me to write that I am not in any way, shape or form a member of the gaming industry, although I did work for about 6 month for Acclaim Games Inc as moderator and volunteer game master for the game 2Moons.

In real life, I am a concert pianist and anyone interested may check my official website at <http://avgusteantonov.com>

Now onto Alganon and the current situation.
I am writing this as a gamer.

I discovered Alganon when it was first announced and I was at first looking forward to the game because of its social network, ability to grow even if not online and so forth. I tried the game and originally I didnt like it all. As a matter of fact, I was one of the beta guys and I couldnt even log in. So as a result, I removed the client and moved on., although I still checked forums.

That is until the announcement made by QOL and Mr Smart. After reading the forums letter of Mr Smart, I re-downloaded the game to give it another try and to be honest, I didnt notice any major changes. But that is for the Alganon forums.

Obviously I have never met or heard of either Mr Smart, either Mr Allen, however as a gamer, I would like to make a few comments concerning the recent events at Alganon and this thread. As a gamer and as a person, I believe in honesty and I believe in a straight forward explanation.

I believe that for a game to succeed, the game needs to have a AAA customer service, a AAA community managers/moderators. and especially and most importantly a AAA communication between the devs and the gaming community. The best example of this to me are the guys from CCP. In my personal experience, the CCP guys are the best at what they do.

I hope I dont offend anyone, but developers have to understand and keep in mind that we gamers are the ones that decide whether a game lives or dies. There is a phrase "the customer is always right"

The point of the above is simple. In my experience, until Mr Smart took over at Alganon, there wasnt much in the way of communication between QOL and the community. Personally, nothing against Mr Allen, however as a gamer, and loving the direct approach and liking his posts, I am currently happy about Mr Smart being in control of Alganon.

I just hope the same type of communication is done on a daily basis and the game improves and becomes what was advertised to be.

Now with this said, also as a player, although I find all those threads and posts about the QOL situation entertaining, I also strongly believe it is time to move on.

Everyone needs to move on and let the QOL team and Mr Smart do their job. Whether you like Mr Smart or not, whether you were fired by him or not, at the end of the day, it is us, the gamers that will make or break the game. At the end of the day, what will matter is the result.

Personally I cant wait for the official launch and hopefully try the game again.I hope by then the whole WOW look will have disappeared and the game will be more interesting.

By the way, Mr Smart, if I may write a strong suggestion is to have a 30 days or 60 days free trial at launch for all players.

Personally I just tried the game again for 7 days and I find that 7 days is not enough to make up my mind whether to buy the game or not. Especially given all the issues and changes. I cannot speak for other players, but I am sure many are in the same position.

Thank you

Avguste Antonov
<http://avgusteantonov.com>

Derek Smart

21 Mar 2010 at 3:33 am PST | edit



@ Bob Henry

Hi Dave. Bye Dave. Clueless as always. 'nuff said.

@ Avguste

Thanks for your post. Everything is taken into consideration and I even created a thread specifically for gamers to post how they would like to see the game move forward.

http://www.alganon.com/forums/index.php?/topic/4654-alganon-redux/page__gopid__40229&#entry40229

As for the trial, we have several things planned for that, and increasing the trial period one of those things.

But yah, I agree that it's time to move on.

James Lee

21 Mar 2010 at 8:53 am PST



From what I have read here, there are some undeniable truths.

- 1) David Allen never hit any of the launch deadlines. Maybe it was his own doing or someone else's, but at the end of the day, the person at the top is responsible for leadership and for making sure the company turns a profit by creating a finished product.
- 2) The game Alganon, in its current state, is not complete. There are connection issues which would kill any online game, a lack of quests past lvl 40, no end game content, unfulfilled promises etc.

In any company run by people with at least two brain cells to rub together, if someone can't hit their deadlines or do the work asked of them, they are replaced by someone who can. It's pretty simple.
David wasn't hacking it, so the LLC replaced him. Whether Derek can savage this game, only time will tell.

Everyone seems to be attacking Derek as a person, but that says nothing about his ability to run a profitable company. At the end of the day, that is what the investors are looking for right? Companies like QOL were made to make investors a ROI.

Alganon is not profitable at the moment. If Derek has to be a hardass to make it profitable, it's his choice. The LLC believes in Derek and his methods enough to let him try turn this around. Unless you are part of the LLC and have your own money at stake, your opinion probably means very little to Derek.

Avguste Antonov

21 Mar 2010 at 9:05 am PST



Mr Smart, for some reason, I am unable to post anything on that thread. My login name on there is avguste.

I completely agree with Mr Lee. From reading the small history, it seems like Mr Allen failed on all management fronts, especially deadlines and making money for the company.
A company wants and needs to make money to remain in business. If QOL believes Mr Smart is the person needed to turn things around, no one has anything to say about it. And again, I will repeat this one again. No matter what the business industry says, no matter what producers, investors and devs say, at the end of the day, we gamers make or break a game.

Bob Henry

21 Mar 2010 at 11:04 am PST



Mr. Smart, your response doesn't make sense to me. I'm not David (I assume you mean David Allen?) and even if I were, it seems totally valid to me (perhaps even more valid!) to question your unprofessional accusations on this board that these fellows committed crimes when they were fired for insubordination. That makes no sense. If you have proof that David Allen embezzled and committed fraud against the company then why was he not fired for that instead of insubordination? If all you have is a guess or hope and you don't have proof then it seems to me that you have defamed these fellows. Since you tried to delete your own posts with the defamation in them and you seemed to express personal concerns about lawsuits thinly veiled with bravado, it seems a good guess that you probably actually are guilty of libel. I don't know what is best from a legal point of view but, in a civilized and professional environment, such behavior can't be condoned. From a moral and ethical point of view, I think that you should probably retract your statements and apologize.

Bob Henry

21 Mar 2010 at 11:22 am PST



Dingus Anon, you make some strong accusations (except 3 & 4 which are opinions). It is only fair that I ask of you the same thing that I ask of Derek, not to make wild accusations unless you're willing to back them up.

Zate Berg

22 Mar 2010 at 7:26 am PST



I test MMO's. I've test quite a few. Some were great (Hi Lotro, Eq2, WAR), some sucked pretty bad (looking at you AoC and Aion) and some sucked REALLY bad. Hello Alganon under Allen.

Even for an indie game, it was bad. Who thought ripping off ideas from other games in leu of using your own creative talent was a good idea? All through testing, we poured batches of feedback, bug reports, pleas to change entire subsystems that were bad in the games you copied them from, and worse in your game... and we hear crickets. Yet more crap was shoveled into the bag.

in my experience, you know what determines if a game blows or not? Scope. Picking an achievable scope and doing that well. Alganon's scope was all over the place. No seriously defined goals. Lots of the basics of game play and game design were missing.

Love or Hate Mr Smart, he is giving Alganon scope. He's not there really to build an award winning game, he is there to set some goals that the team can achieve so that the investors feel good about what is going on. There is a lot to clean up. It will take a lot to turn this into a game people want to devote time too. Firstly stop cramming more crap in the bag. Flesh out the content you have, refine the game experience.

I'm pretty amused at the "anonymous" posters in this thread, grow some balls. You created some nice tools and used them to build a crap game. The game has much potential, but you squandered it.

Derek Smart

22 Mar 2010 at 9:12 am PST | edit



New interview is up

<http://www.massively.com/2010/03/22/massively-interviews-alganons-derek-smart/>

Paul Schwanz

22 Mar 2010 at 6:33 pm PST



This is absolute marketing genius! I'd never heard of Alganon before today.

Bob Henry

22 Mar 2010 at 9:57 pm PST



Look at Derek's most recent interview, <http://www.massively.com/2010/03/22/massively-interviews-alganons-derek-smart> . Derek spends an inordinate amount of effort bad mouthing and trying to tear down David Allen. Similar to his statements on this forum. Derek is supposed to be the President of the Alganon effort. Yet if you read that interview and this thread it would seem that he's the President of bragging and insulting others, Alganon appears to be secondary and simply a context to allow Derek to brag about himself and to insult others.

Derek, why can't you just discuss the game and plans for the game? If you continue to insist on talking about David Allen then I think that you should retract apparently false statements that you've made on this forum and apologize.

Scott Wood

23 Mar 2010 at 8:31 am PST



Prof.Derek Notsosmart Ph.Dumb....now you're looking even more pathetic. Shouldn't you be looking for a new job in some other field (good luck getting one in the gaming industry), instead of spending so much time trolling these forums?

Rather sad you've taken this to a personal level and can't differentiate between business and personal. I find it rather humorous you've taken this so personally and now are trying your hardest to gain support for your little crusade. Well..I doubt, other than the usual trolls, anyone actually pays much credence to you.

A little advice. Let go and move on. You'll give yourself an aneurysm.

Rich Kyanka

23 Mar 2010 at 8:59 am PST



Oh dear lord, Derek! You're back in the limelight again! This is awesome and brings back all kinds of wonderful memories. Thank you for continuing to exist and be Derek Smart, one of greatest heroes of SMARTY MAN GAEM DESIGNER "SURVIVOR".

Also thank you for continuing to be consistent with your promises of not posting:

"I've pretty much said all I want to say about the events and will just leave it as-is because the more stuff I post the more it will just end up hurting people."

"Now that I'm doing interviews and which will be more clear and precise, I see no reason to continue this farce."

...and then you continue to post! Your consistency of inconsistency is one of your most consistent traits. I can't wait to see what happens next in this ongoing internet drama!

Derek Smart

23 Mar 2010 at 9:01 am PST | edit



@ Scott

He appears to be the same guy posting in the Masively forum because he posted almost the exact same thing over there as well and to which I responded as per below.

Personal attacks are the staple of any troll because the idea is to deflect attention from the actual subject. Like Massively and other forums such as this, there are terms of service which guard against that. So, we've sent an email to the Gamasutra EIC.

===

Dude, I don't know what your problem is and why you insist on posting the things that you do. So now that you've been banned from Alganon forums, you're taking this vendetta on the road? Don't you have better things to do with your time and energy?

First of all, Dave Allen contacted me in late Nov 2009.

The price of the game client was already set at \$39.99, the subscriptions were there etc. In fact they were selling pre-orders at that price as well.

In late Nov we had the discussion with the investors. I gave them my recommendations as to what I have already stated in all three interviews that I have done. This recommendation was free and was done as a favor to Dave. Nobody had hired me at that point.

As part of my recommendation, the game launched on Dec 1st at the lower price but still had a subscription.

I was officially brought on board in late December. Then again in late January my involvement was expanded when I was made president.

Those are the facts and you can't twist them.

===

Scott Wood

23 Mar 2010 at 9:54 am PST



Someone's getting a trim.....

On a good note I would say about time!

Meredith Katz

23 Mar 2010 at 10:02 am PST



Wow, the comment count on this entry just dropped fast.

Derek Smart

23 Mar 2010 at 10:16 am PST | edit



Yeah, all the trolls have been wiped because they clearly violated the site's TOS.

Derek Smart

23 Mar 2010 at 10:58 am PST | edit



OK Dave, so you get your fake profile(s) deleted and then come back with a new name to ask the same silly questions about nonsense that you clearly dream up in order to cause nothing but hassles?

Right.

Don't move. Wait right there while I go dig up an answer for you. Don't move, OK?

Bob Henry

23 Mar 2010 at 11:46 am PST



I will try to summarize Jack's observation more simply.

There you go again Derek, dragging the focus into strange areas. (now it's paranoia, I thought that I was supposed to be David Allen?) Derek you are supposed to be the President of the Alganon effort. Yet most of your statements seem to indicate that you're the President of bragging and insulting others, Alganon appears to be secondary and simply a back drop that allows you to brag about yourself and to insult others. I suggest, Derek, that you just discuss the game and plans for the game? You are the one that keeps dragging things off topic and into unprofessional realms. It is really getting rather unbelievable in my opinion.

Rich Kyanka

23 Mar 2010 at 12:15 pm PST



"Yet most of your statements seem to indicate that you're the President of bragging and insulting others, Alganon appears to be secondary and simply a back drop that allows you to brag about yourself and to insult others."

Are you not familiar with Mr. / Dr. / Sir Derek Smart's history? This is simply who he is and what he does. It spans back to the days of newsgroups, and it will continue until the day he ascends to that giant, floating, Excel spreadsheet in the sky. And when that moment happens, scholars shall debate which held more importance to him: rumor mills or diploma mills.

Derek Smart

23 Mar 2010 at 12:20 pm PST | edit



@ Jack Johnson

You posted the *same* thing on Massively as Darzin and before as TWO separate troll aliases, all of which were deleted.

<http://www.massively.com/2010/03/22/massively-interviews-alganons-derek-smart/2#c26484603>

So not only are you and that other person using separate accounts, you're just talking amongst yourselves.

Apart from that, you're just stalking and harrassing me from forum to forum now, since you've already been banned from Alganon forums, had your posts deleted on Massively and here as well.

So at this point, "don't feed the trolls" comes to mind. But let me alert the Gamasutra admins again because this sort of behavior is just not tolerated on moderated forums.

mike slesinski

23 Mar 2010 at 1:51 pm PST



for the record (and plain and simple truths sake) he (mr. smart) is deleting TONS of posts from the alganon boards. even ones that are helpful and making suggestions to improve the game because they are giving off "negative vibe". so unless its glowing with positivity he just doesnt want to hear it.

in short, i now know why everyone hates this guy. his "the beatings will continue until morale improves" approach to fixing this game only serves to further doom the game.

i made an account here JUST to post this.

Tom Cadwell

23 Mar 2010 at 4:22 pm PST



Much respect for your legendary thread dueling skills Derek. I fear I don't have the time to fully absorb this thread, but I will say that I hope you guys can ship an awesome game both because that would be awesome, but also because additional threads like this will of course be spawned.

Anyhow, just out of curiosity, is this urban myth actually true:

"If one posts Derek Smart's name three times on a controversial thread about video games, he will appear."

Bob Henry

24 Mar 2010 at 9:53 am PST



Derek Smart, you post again. Again the post has little to do with Alganon and seems to have much more to do with belittling others and letting everyone know how powerful you are that you can demand the administrators to whip others into line. Why else did you post that? Don't you think the administrators would be more likely to listen to you after a private correspondence? It seems that you have to try to act out some silly drama. I suggest again that you only discuss what your job is supposed to be, that is making Alganon a success. If you can't do that then don't say anything at all. Your alleged "legendary thread dueling skills" appear to me to be nothing more than unprofessional silliness.

Tom Cadwell

24 Mar 2010 at 10:24 am PST



Well, Bob, I agree that personnel decisions are best not discussed on a public forum because good outcomes from it are hard to find...

But seriously, Derek is legendary for his prowess in scenarios such as these, and Derek was one of the earliest developer personalities to believe in direct frequent interaction with the community. Sometimes the delivery wasn't great, but I for one am a proponent of staying involved vs not.

ptrtool tool

24 Mar 2010 at 1:24 pm PST



Unfortunately Derek cannot have it both ways -if he stands by his statement that the previous developers left him with 'zero to show for it' - as he claims - then he needs to explain how he plans to develop a full MMO from scratch in 2 months? If there was 'zero' to show for it - what are the people playing now?

Bob Henry

24 Mar 2010 at 3:31 pm PST



Ptrtool, I've concluded that our friend Derek likes to exaggerate. He obviously exaggerates tremendously when belittling and insulting others even to the point of apparently committing defamation. I can only assume that he probably also exaggerates similarly when he's bragging about himself.

Tom Kammerer

25 Mar 2010 at 7:39 am PST



Is this doing the game industry any justice? People need to stop recreating the same problems based on the same root causes and fix the Root Problems.

Make games that are fun and not copies, take risks in something you truly can pour your heart into and stop basing your decisions off previous business models like the WoW clone. Making a WoW clone is not taking risk, its about appeasing old investors who would only invest on proven game designs. If the investor wont Invest in you and only you, the game already failed.

It does no good that a game developer is spending day and night writing these massive walls of text on every game industry news portal. MMORPG.com, Massively, Gamasutra, really?

I have a lot of respect for you since the situation you are in is extremely challenging, but if firing these 3 people was purely to save the game and only the game then you should have just left a blunt statement and went to save the game. These walls of text only show that there are other objectives besides making a fun and engaging game that gamers will love.

Honestly I am trying to grasp the amount of time you are spending writing these essays of forum responses, the editing and re-writing you are doing. How you are reading all of these responses and then writing a new multi-page paper response with additional editing. Not on this portal alone but every gamer's news portals. Those man hours need to be in Alganon.

ptrtool tool

25 Mar 2010 at 12:24 pm PST



By any reasonable estimation, Derek Smart has about 50,000 posts on usenet and public forums going back to CompuServe in 1994.

Figuring an average of maybe 5 minutes per post - well, you can see where this going. Thats *thousands* of man hours wasted on forum rants.

If this much effort went into his titles, he would perhaps do better than average scores of 45 or 50 for his games, which are mediocre at best, and generally inscrutable to all but a very very small base of fans (his forums are practically deserted).

Bob Henry

25 Mar 2010 at 1:29 pm PST



ptrtool, I looked on the Alganon forum and it appears to be a reasonable number of people? I know that many have criticized the game but the little that I played it I thought it was fun. If I had more time, I could see myself getting addicted. :-)

Tom Kammerer, I'm intrigued by Derek Smart's behavior. Why is he not focusing on Alganon? I think that maybe he just enjoys all the drama and being the center of attention. So I guess that I should tell Mr. Smart "you're welcome" since I'll guess that he'd like to thank me for paying attention to the "Drama King" antics. :-)

Auguste Antonov

25 Mar 2010 at 9:52 pm PST



Personally I like the direct involvement.

On another note, Mr Smart, I still cant post at http://www.algonon.com/forums/index.php?/topic/4654-algonon-redux/page__gopid__40229&#amp;entry40229

It also be great to have a new longer tryout available immediately

k g

26 Mar 2010 at 3:02 am PST



I love how the game industry vets, on either side, have a track record of producing totally shit games.

Algonon appears to have literally done nothing different MMO wise, why expect people to play it? Most mmos already suffer from crippling subscriber drain (AoC, WAR, lol tabula rasa), you arent helping yourself trying to tap into these dried out markets.

Make a damn game with a proper indepth crafting system. Or one with a decent skill based fighting theme, give yourself a non static dynamic world. Its better than unmoving NPCs, golden quest icon grinding and auto tab targetting.

Derek Smart

26 Mar 2010 at 6:37 am PST | edit



@ Jack/Darzin

I had nothing to do with your banning and you know that. The thread you created (now deleted) was defamatory and violated their TOS. All we did was report it once we were alerted to its existence.

As if that wasn't bad enough, you continued with the same trend in the posts that you made.

Plus, you had a history there of creating such threads and posts. And since your new thread was reported, that being the last straw, it was deleted and you were banned again (since you were previously banned in 2009).

Why is this surprising? You've had threads and posts deleted all over the net (here on Gamma, Massively, mmo RPG etc), been banned etc. Now you want to cry about it? Why is it that you are singled out? Geez it certainly can't be due to your stellar behavior.

You have your own blog (<http://darzin.blogspot.com>), so why don't you take your craziness there and see how long it lasts once you violate *their* TOS? Oh, thats right, you can't risk it there. So instead you create all these aliases and then go run amok all over the net with your misplaced angst.

@ Avguste

I have no idea whats going on there since I don't have anything to do with the forums. I have however alerted the forum guys.

ptrtool tool

26 Mar 2010 at 7:08 am PST



@Bob - I was referring to his 3000AD forums, where his '14 games' forums are. Of course, those 14 games are really 3 titles iirc. The Battlecruiser series (bck3000, bck3 v2, bc3k gold, bc3k free bc3k millenium - to him, this is '5' games, when most people would say that its really 1, maybe 2. The equivalent would be saying that

Half Life, Half Life Gold, Half Life Game of the Year Edition, and Half Life Platinum are 4 separate games. Perhaps true in the narrowest sense of the word, but a clearly marginal statement.

Bob Henry

26 Mar 2010 at 10:59 am PST



Derek Smart, you post again. Again your post has little to nothing to do with Algonon. Your Drama King tactics are getting ridiculous. You are making yourself look like a troll, a schoolyard bully, a crybaby and everything else in between. Since you are apparently too dense to understand, I'm wondering why your boss allows such behavior? Are you the President of Algonon or are you the President of drama behavior?

Ptrtool, I looked at the bc300ad forums and you're correct. It looks like a ghost town. Sorry that I misunderstood. I'm surprised though, Derek loves drama so much I don't know why he can't generate more of his Drama King posts there and get all the attention that he needs! Why does he have to troll all over the internet? It can't be because he wants to advertise Algonon. He hardly talks about Algonon. And half the time he's talking about Algonon is him saying that it's horrible because he hasn't been working on it very long, instead those other three fellows used to work on it and created a horrible atrocious game that Derek is going to fix by April 8! Drama, drama, drama, drama

Scott Wood

26 Mar 2010 at 4:21 pm PST



Do these trolls scour the Internet looking to see where Derek Smart posted, then like flies to you know what gather to spew the same old hate over and over? It is, I will say, amusing to say the least, but come on people...move on with your life.

Derek Smart

27 Mar 2010 at 11:49 am PST | edit



@ Scott

Ignore him. This is the sort of person you're actually wasting your time on. Go ahead, go take a look.

<http://darzin.blogspot.com/>

And that was AFTER he had posted above that

===

Washing my hands of Derek, I will not try to compete in a game of censorship. You obviously find that free speech only applies to you. So Derek, you win!

===

Of course he's never - ever - heard of Google Alerts.

Bob Henry

27 Mar 2010 at 8:07 pm PST



Derek Smart, you post again. Again your post has nothing to do with Alganon. I've probably said more positive things about Alganon than you have. You can't even follow your own advice that is in your first sentence! Oh that's right you can't follow your own advice because that would pass up another opportunity for DRAMA. As Drama King extraordinaire I must say that your continued non-constructive posts makes one wonder how such an unfocused person could be a constructive professional in most any context. I wouldn't expect as much drama from a 13 year old girl suffering through her first crush. drama drama drama drama

Bob Henry

28 Mar 2010 at 9:37 am PST



My last post got me thinking about trying to do an objective analysis of this thread. Here it is. Note that this post was not included in the analysis, only the above posts.

Total.....mentions of Alganon in this thread...77 times in...112 posts, 0.7 times per post
Derek.....mentioned Alganon.....12 times in...29 posts, 0.4 times per post
Hue.....mentioned Alganon.....7 times in.....2 posts, 3.5 times per post
J Blood.....mentioned Alganon.....5 times in.....2 posts, 2.5 times per post
Bob H.....mentioned Alganon.....19 times in...12 posts, 1.6 times per post
All others.mentioned Alganon.....34 times in...67 posts, 0.5 times per post

Interesting, it seems that the objective numbers indicates that Derek indeed has other things on his mind besides Alganon. It would seem that Derek's focus on Alganon is almost half the average and well below Hue and Jason Blood's mentions of Alganon, who added together in only 4 posts mentioned Alganon as many times as Derek did in 29 posts.

Bob Henry

28 Mar 2010 at 10:16 am PST



Jack J. from my point of view your assessment of Derek's priorities seems to be supported by my attempt at an objective summary of this thread in my previous comment. In addition, what I've seen of Derek in this thread and the small amount of lurking that I did on the Alganon forums has lead me to the same general conclusions as you seemed to express above.

Bob Henry

29 Mar 2010 at 9:03 pm PST



Jack's last post got me wondering about this thread.

Derek.mentioned Alganon.12 times in.29 posts, 0.4 times per post
Derek.mentioned Dave 13 times and David 47 times which is 60 references to David Allen, 2.1 times per post. Mentioning David/Dave 60 times is exactly 5 times the number of times that Derek mentioned Alganon in this thread. Simply amazing, I guess there's more drama satisfaction for Derek in badmouthing others than doing his job of making Alganon a success, 5 times more satisfaction in this example! Simply amazing

Jack Johnson, please send me an email on my home email, bhuffma1@san.rr.com Thank you

Derek Smart

30 Mar 2010 at 4:08 pm PST | edit



@ Bob Henry a.k.a Bill Huffman

We were all wondering which of the aliases you were. Thanks for confirming it for us. ktnx. bye.

===

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Jack Johnson, please send me an email on my home email, bhuffma1@san.rr.com Thank you

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Bob Henry

30 Mar 2010 at 5:23 pm PST



Dear Mr. Smart, all you needed to do was ask!

BTW, Derek Smart, you post again. Again your post has nothing to do with Alganon. You have once again demonstrated that everything I said is true. You are far too focused on attacking others and figuring out who others might be. (I'm not David Allen like you kept saying.) In my opinion, you need to be focused on dealing with issues and the primary issue should be making Alganon a success. From your posts in this thread, it would seem that you're not focused on this most important task.

Scott Wood

31 Mar 2010 at 8:11 am PST



My god Bob and Jack you two are STILL trolling here? Move along son...move along. I bet you refresh this page every few mins don't ya? Come on...admit it...you do.....

Bob Henry

31 Mar 2010 at 2:55 pm PST



Dear Scott Wood, the crack about eating small children was uncalled for. Please don't read my posts if you don't like what I'm saying.

Dave Williams

8 Apr 2010 at 10:28 am PST



This is quite interesting. The cynic in me says Derek knows exactly what he is doing, and no publicity is bad publicity. Surely Alganon will get a lot of trial downloads just due to the controversy surrounding it.

I have to say I've been in the MMO industry for enough years to completely understand where Derek is coming from, although I can't claim to be a fan of any of the games he's made (haven't played them) nor do I have any knowledge of his specific expertise or competency. But that's neither here nor there.

The fact is there is a lot of bullshit in the MMO industry. The fact is, that a lot of people who so arrogantly drop they are an MMO games industry big-wig in casual conversation make their 6-figure paychecks by defrauding investors and seamlessly moving from failed project to failed project. Building up a paper tiger resume that certainly seems impressive to non-insiders and the otherwise gullible. And sometimes, the main investors are "in" on it and make their money either as a patent troll, or defrauding someone else such as local governments. In any event, that games make money attracts a lot of sharks who care nothing about making games, and everything about making money by any means necessary (even somewhat questionable means). In an industry as young as games (especially the MMO genre) it would be naive to not expect it to happen with the amounts of money that get involved.

And then of course there are those who may be great at making money, but don't know as much as they think they do about making games. Or make assumptions like the game industry is similar to any other industry in the world, which is not true at all. Or, that having played MMOs makes someone an expert in MMO design. When investors get involved with these guys, there's nothing particularly malicious but rather a case of the blind leading the blind. This is probably more insidious, because it's the unintentional con. When the house of cards come down, the usual outcomes occur since most managers of this sort are generally smart enough to cover their own ass and move on to the next project leaving someone else to hold the bag (usually the overworked and underpaid sub-leads, and the investors). However, being experienced at failure does not necessarily translate into knowledge of how to be successful. And so the cycle perpetuates itself.

I am not saying anything like this is the case with Alganon (I am a complete outsider with no knowledge of the situation) but merely that what I described is sadly not an uncommon thing. And this is something of a taboo conversation amongst developers - nobody really likes to talk about the seedy underside of their chosen industry. But it certainly exists, and is incredibly damaging to the MMO industry, because we are a high-risk industry built off private investment which ultimately comes down to a matter of trust.

So from one "fix it guy" to another, I wish you good luck. I honestly think it's in every MMO developer's and MMO gamer's best interest that the Dereks of the world succeed. Anything that improves the ratio of successful MMOs to unsuccessful MMOs will only be good for everybody's future endeavors.

Dave Johnson

8 Apr 2010 at 12:34 pm PST



David Allen has responded. The civil suit papers in David post lead me to believe that Derek knew what he was doing the whole time. Smart move on the part of David for keeping his opinion to himself. It would seem a number of the posts that Derek has made here, as well as in the interviews he has done, are doing more damage to his case than helping. We all knew Derek loves to run his mouth and get himself in trouble. Too bad the investors did not do their research into Derek before bringing him on board. They could have saved ALGANON and a lot of money. I fear for the future of ALGANON.

<http://www.requinix.com/?p=208>

Dave Johnson

12 Apr 2010 at 11:58 am PST



The guy in the following posts has really put a lot of thought into what is going on over at QOL. He takes the information that is out there, puts it all together into a nice set of stories that tell the story from an outsiders point of view. It would seem as though Derek has let his mouth run a bit too much and has been caught in a number of lies. As this guys stated in his articles, the investors need to make amends with David Allen and remove Derek ASAP. If they really do want Alganon to be a success, they need to remove Derek right now. I fear the damage has already been done. Would you go back to work for a group of investors that pretty much pushed you out of the company you created? We will have to wait and see what comes of this...

<http://darzin.blogspot.com/2010/04/oh-drama.html>
<http://darzin.blogspot.com/2010/04/symphony-of-lies.html>



Time for my two cents. For the record, I am simply a game player. I have no experience in the game development industry, nor do I have any personal experience with the people involved beyond familiarity with their respective games. I have, however, been playing games on many different platforms since the early 80's. This is simply my personal opinion and should be taken as such.

This is like the playground battles of several people who think they are more important than they really are. Simple as that. For Joe Public, this is simply fluff. Derek Smart had the vague name recognition that comes with having heard the name before but not being able to place it until 3000AD was mentioned. David Allen and company brought no such recognition until Alganon was mentioned, though I do remember Horizons. I'm just not familiar enough with the story as I wasn't impressed with Horizons either.

Battlecruiser 3000AD, et. al. was ambitious and a good game but did have some...peculiar design implementation. I am well aware of the efforts Derek has taken to patch the game and such and applaud him for his dedication for trying to bring it up to speed, but the earlier design implementation still hampers it. No worries, overall, I still enjoyed the game.

Alganon - Regardless of any way you want to slice it, the game sucked. It was a direct ripoff of WoW and how /ANYONE/ could think that was a good idea just shows their lack of any experience with anything game related.

People play WoW because it is polished and they already have resources sunk into it. Why would they invest in a new game that is exactly the same thing with some new elements? The only people you would 'woo' from WoW would be the ones who would hate your game for the exact same reason.

As far as what is going on with QQL, I would have to say that Dave Johnson is quite far offbase. Regardless of whether or not Derek is likable or not, he is not saying anything that is untrue. Investors gave money to the previous management team and they were unable to release the game in a timely manner and when it was released, it failed so hard that I would say it almost rivals Mourning's first release. Why would they then turn back to those same executive team that was responsible for that? That's like JP Morgan giving their money to Bernard Madoff. You already know what's going to happen.

Irregardless of the drama being played out here, it remains to be seen whether Alganon can be salvaged or not. Only time will tell whether it will and I am curious to see how it pans out. As Derek has said, the rest of this stuff is just fluff, good for entertaining reading, but beyond that has no real meaning.

Derek Smart

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