



**Microsoft**  
game studios



**From Italy  
to  
the video game industry  
in the UK**

Simona Tassinari  
Shared Technology Group  
Women in Games  
Conference



# My background

- Technical High School: Accountancy & Programming
- Computer Science at the University of Bologna
- Research Thesis in the US
- Business Software (Web Servers) in Italy
- Virtual Reality System for Medical Purposes in Holland
- Finally Ended Up at RARE in 2005
- Work in Shared Technology Group
- RARE Middleware in STG
- Support for Game Teams



# Women in Technology



- European Community: ETAN Report
- Stanford and MIT researches

## The Bad

- Perception of technology as a male field
- Women more likely to drop out of college
- Less interaction with teachers
- Self confidence continually decreases
- Lack of social networking: isolation
- Feeling that more effort is required
- Paid less at all levels in computer science

## The Good

- More and more girls are interested in technology
- Increasingly more girls play games
- Interest and research on the topic
- More visibility
  - Women in Games
  - Girl Geek Dinners
  - Girls! Make Your Mark
- Industry's involvement with Universities

# My Experience in Italy

- University in a Small City (Cesena)
  - Under 100.000 inhabitants
- Small Computer Science Faculty
  - average 100 Students per year
- Bologna (North-East of Italy)
- Joining CS (4 years):
  - 140 men
  - 15 women (10%)
- After a year:
  - 80 men
  - 14 women (15%)
- 4<sup>th</sup> year:
  - 30 men,
  - 10 women (5 with honours)



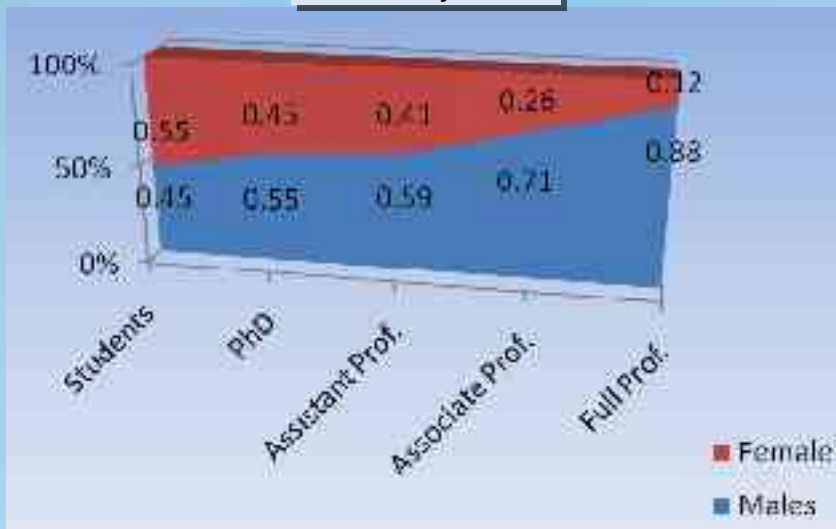


# What Was The Difference

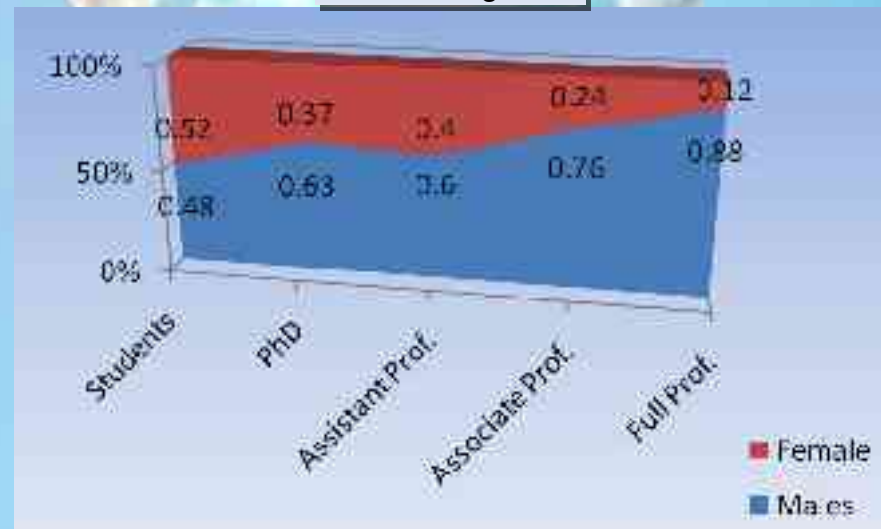
- Italian culture more sexist than UK
  - Everybody makes an effort in academic environment
- “Good” teachers: nurturing talent
  - Great Mentoring
- Bad: career at University not considered by women
  - 2 women proceed to PhD
  - 6 men proceed to PhD



Italy



United Kingdom



# My Experience at Rare

- About 10% women (including Art, HR, reception)
- Only 2 female software engineer (and ~80 male)
- Art is a bit better: ratio is 1/10
- In my team (~25 people), only 1 woman: ME
- Social life is good: and many colleagues have friendly girlfriends/wives
- Easy to make new friends
  
- My work and attitude is appreciated and rewarded
- Of course it's a bit harder to be part of a minority...
- ... But everybody knows my name! 😊



# Game Industry You Say? Interesting!

- Compared to Tech Industries:
  - Creative
  - Young
  - Challenging
  - Stimulating Environment
- Things are getting better!
  - Ensure equal opportunities
  - Advertise creative side
  - Inform and support talent
  - More visibility for women in technology



# Resources & Links

- Rare [www.rareware.com](http://www.rareware.com)
- Girl Geek <http://girlygeekdom.blogspot.com/>
- Girls! Make Your Mark  
[http://www.makeyourmark.org.uk/campaigns/womens\\_enterprise/girls\\_make\\_yo](http://www.makeyourmark.org.uk/campaigns/womens_enterprise/girls_make_yo)
- “AAAS Presidential Lecture: Voices from the Pipeline” Sheila E. Widnall  
<http://web.mit.edu/aeroastro/www/people/widnall/voices1.htm>
- “Educational Pipeline Issues for Women” Nancy G. Leveson  
<http://people.mills.edu/spertus/Gender/pipeline.html>
- “The Classroom Climate: A Chilly One for Women?” Roberta M. Hall, Bernice R. Sandler  
[http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content\\_storage\\_01/0000019b/80/](http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/)
- European Community : ETAN Report
  - <http://cordis.europa.eu/improving/women/home.htm>
  - [ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/improving/docs/g\\_wo\\_etan\\_en\\_200101.pdf](ftp://ftp.cordis.europa.eu/pub/improving/docs/g_wo_etan_en_200101.pdf)
  - <http://cordis.europa.eu/improving/women/documents.htm>
- IGDA: Game Developer Demographics Report  
<http://www.igda.org/diversity/report.php>

