

Rules of Play Introduction

What the Book is About

- Game Design
- *not* Game Development

Context

- Communications
- Rhetoric
- Semiotics
- Game Studies



Many Lenses

- Many game-related concepts are murky and difficult to define precisely.
- This books provides schemas that you can apply to understand games in various ways.

Primary Schemas

- **Rules:** formal logic of what can/can't happen
- **Play:** human experience of the game
- **Culture:** larger context of the game/players

Why this Book?

- Facilitate critical discussion of games

Design

“Design is the successive application of constraints until only a unique product is left.”

– Donald Norman

The Design of Everyday Things

Iterative Design

- No game is perfect the first time.
- Have a playable mock-up no later than 20% into the design process.
- Agile software engineering.

Iterative Design

In 2008, Electronic Entertainment Design and Research Institute (EEDAR) President Geoffrey Zatkin told *Forbes Magazine* that:

- Only about 20% of games make it to market.
- Only about 20% of those make a profit.
- 60% of the budget is spent on redesigning.

Game Design

“Make a first draft as quickly as possible and keep making intelligent changes until it works.”

– Me

Where do you get ideas for intelligent changes?

Why this Book?

- Facilitate critical discussion of games
- Schemas provide new ways to get inspiration during the design process

The Design and Testing of *The Lord of the Rings* Board Game

- Novice designers often make the mistake of designing for or only testing with one group which does not represent their target demographic.
- It is often easier to focus on multiple problems at once.
- Games should not be fixed. Instead of adding fixes, add features which are, themselves, interesting mechanics.