

# G54GAM Games

Categorising Games

Dramatic Elements of Game Design

# Dramatic Elements of Game Play

- Challenge
  - What keeps a player keep playing
  - Learning new skills, inability to do something
  - Constant reward
  - Control over own destiny
- Play
  - The experience of the game is an end in itself
  - Exploration, competing, being creative
- Premise
  - Why you are playing
- Narrative
  - Character development
  - The unfolding storyline

# Question

- What was a game you played recently that was *challenging*?
- What were the *challenges*?

# Challenges (Ernest Adams)

- Pure Challenges
  - Abstract game play archetypes, not found in the wild but form the basis of most actual challenges
- Applied Challenges
  - Combining one or more pure challenges in a given situation
  - Often *hybridized* combinations of pure challenges
- A good game presents a range of challenges
  - Different challenges appeal to different players
    - Best time
    - Found everything
    - Highest score
  - Increasingly present multiple challenges
    - Multiple challenges = multiple strategies to achieve same goal
      - Stealth vs action
- Genres suggest certain challenges, but not set in stone.

# Half-Life (1998)



# Half-Life (1998)



# Challenges

- Explicit Challenge
  - Specifically designed by the game designer
    - More immediate, intense, perceptible
  - Exact timing required to dodge the piranha plant
- Implicit Challenge
  - Emergent feature of the game design
  - Not specifically designed
  - Figure out the most efficient way to spend money in an RPG/RTS

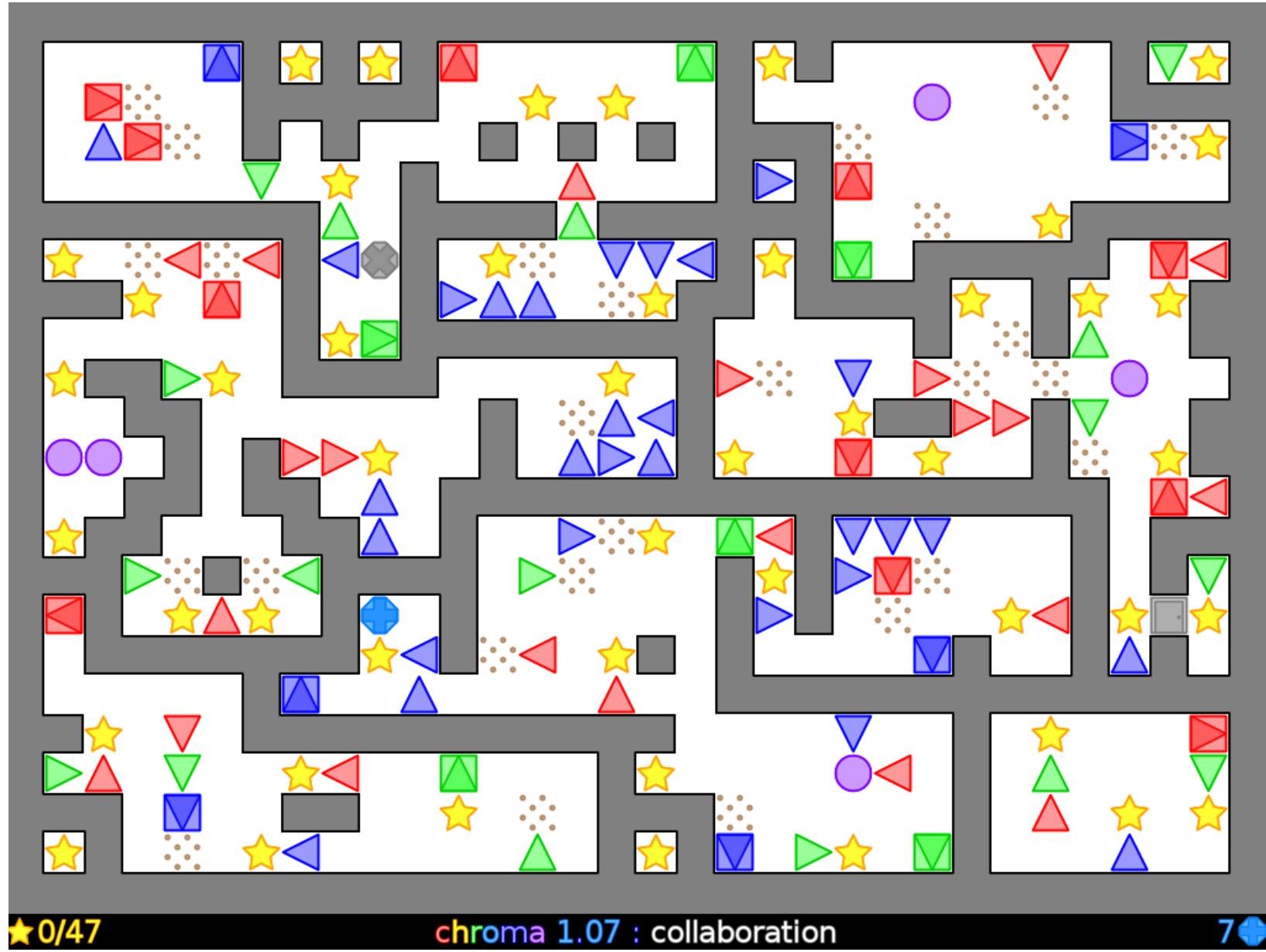


# Alien Isolation (2014)

- What are the challenges?
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_detailpage&v=AiB5pW3aggE#t=100](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=AiB5pW3aggE#t=100)

# Logic and Inference Challenges

- Require the player to assimilate information, use that information to decide best course of action
- Perfect information
  - The player knows the complete state of play at all times
  - E.g. can see the whole chess board
  - Possible to produce a perfect strategy
- Imperfect information
  - Logic is not sufficient
  - Infer or guess based on extrapolation of existing facts
    - Force the player to hypothesize about the game world
    - A compelling mystery story or narrative
  - “Fog of war”



★ 0/47

chroma 1.07 : collaboration

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# Lateral-Thinking Challenges

- Draw on previous experience and knowledge and combine them in a new and unexpected way
- Intrinsic Knowledge
  - Knowledge is gained from the game world
- Extrinsic Knowledge
  - Knowledge gained outside the game world
  - Drawing on real life
  - Eg the player knows that wood floats, water puts out fire



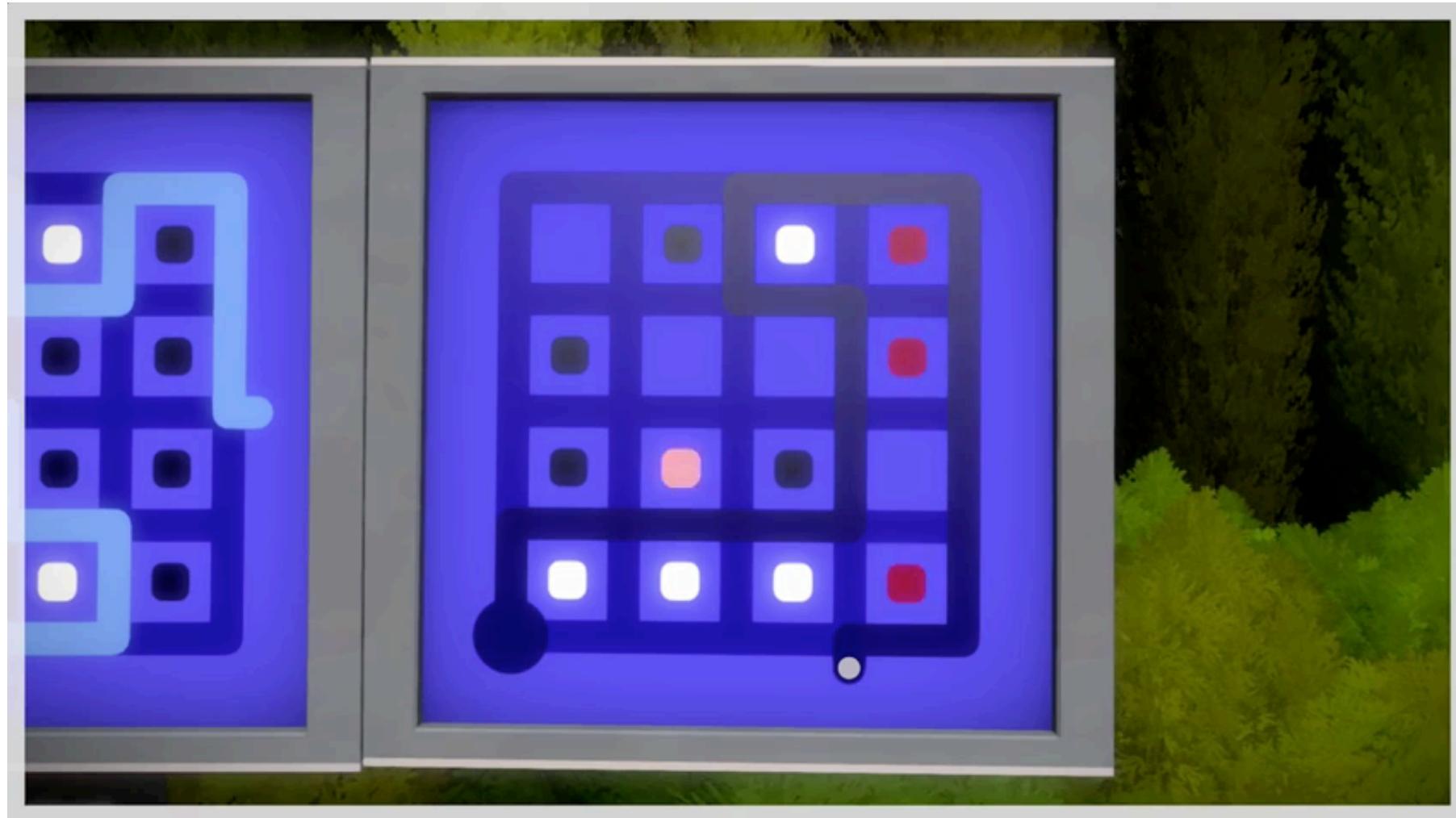
# Half-Life (1998)



# Memory, Intelligence and Knowledge Challenges

- Memory
  - Tax the player's memory of recent game events
  - Purely intrinsic, solely based on events in the context of the game
- Intelligence
  - Rely on how clever the player is
  - Given a sequence of shapes, predict the next shape in the sequence
    - C.f. IQ tests, but rarely seen in their pure form in games
- Knowledge
  - Intrinsic, much like lateral thinking/logic
  - Extrinsic, based on knowledge of the real-world eg Trivial Pursuit

# The Witness (2016)



# Pattern Recognition Challenges

- Solve a challenge by identifying and learning a repeating pattern
  - Failure might be expected
    - Learn the sequence by trial and (repeated) error
- Defeat the enemy
  - Learning its movement
  - Learning its pattern of firing bullets
- *Explicitly* designed by the designer
- *Implicitly* emerges as a design to the player

# Trap Adventure 2 (2017)



# Dark Souls (2011)



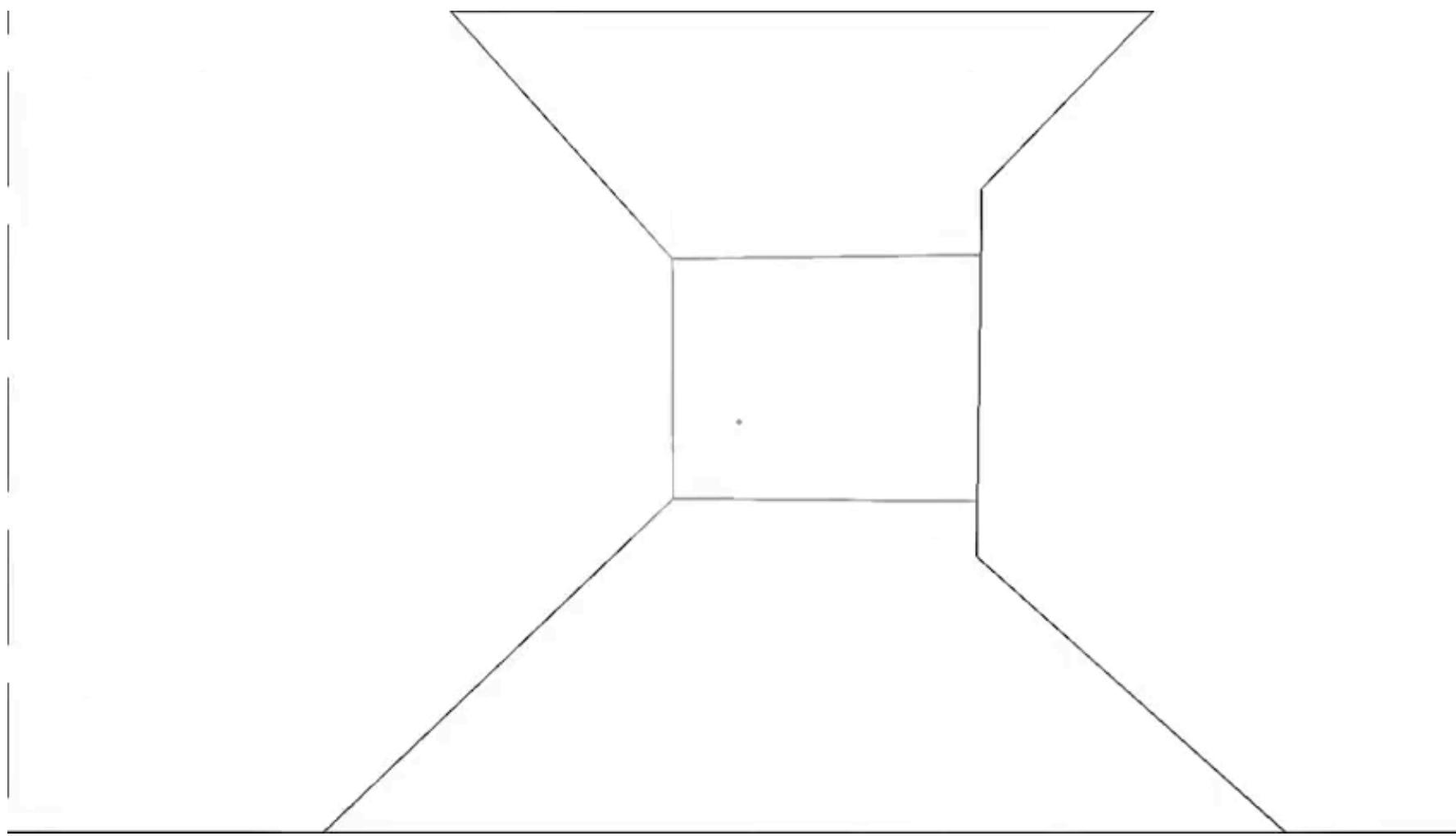
# Ikaruga (2001)



# Spatial Awareness Challenges

- Usually implicit
  - Necessarily need to understand the space to be able to explore, navigate
- Hybrid of a memory challenge and an inference challenge
  - The player is challenged to make sense of a 2d representation of a 3d world
  - Understand the situated role of the player's avatar
  - Immediate or long-term
    - Where am I going next, where have I just been
    - Learning the map
      - This is where important objects are
- Potentially aided by a map or overview display

# Antichamber (2013)



# Quake Live (2010)



# Coordination Challenges

- Test the player's ability to perform many simultaneous actions
  - Moving while aiming
- Coordinating inputs with onscreen action
  - Time a jump over a chasm while avoiding enemies
  - Steering
  - Not unrelated to pattern recognition challenges
- Learning sequences of controller inputs
  - Complex sequences inputs to trigger a *special move* as different from basic procedures
  - Trick jumping, strafe jumping, "surfing"



# “Twitchers” - Reflex and Reaction-Time Challenges

- Test the timing abilities of the player
  - Almost always combined with coordination challenges
- Usually important in action games
  - The speed at which the controls are operated maps directly to the speed at which the avatar reacts
- The faster a player can move and the better their reaction time, the greater the advantage in the game
  - “Gaming mouse”

# Quake Live (2010)



# Moral Challenges, Physical Challenges

- Moral Challenges
  - Draw upon players' real-world experiences to provide gameplay value, presenting some kind of dilemma
    - Universal, cultural, personal contexts
  - Explicit or implicit
    - May have significant gameplay implications
      - Multiple endings
      - ...or non
- Physical Challenges
  - Very uncommon outside of sports, dancing, rhythm
    - Dance Dance Revolution, Wii Sports
    - Implicit in extreme implementations of coordination, reflex challenges

# Spec Ops: The Line (2012)



# The Sims 4 (2014)



# Black and White 2 (2005)



# Applied Challenges

- The application of pure challenges to a particular game play situation or style
  - A combination of one or more pure challenges
- Remember **goals** and **objectives**?

# Reading

- MDA
  - [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MDA\\_framework](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MDA_framework)
- Game Design Workshop chapters 3, 4
- Game Design Patterns
  - <http://129.16.157.67:1337/mediawiki-1.22.0/index.php/Category:Patterns>
- Rollings and Adams ch 7