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Faction: Elves

GAT 210A—Spring 2014

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Lab Report 1

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Lab Report

**Written Rules**

Objective

The objective of the game is to be the first player to discard all their cards.

Setup

To start playing a dealer is chosen to shuffle the cards and deal out 7 cards face down to each player. The remaining cards in the deck are placed face-down in the slotted section of the card tray as the draw pile. To begin playing, the dealer next draws the top card from the draw pile and places it in the discard pile slot of the card tray. The turn begins as if the dealer has just played the card, with the turn passing to the player on the dealer's left. This player then takes any action that is played from the starting card and proceeds to play as normal.

Rules

This game is played much like a twisted version of *Uno*. On a player's turn they must play a card face-up previously played card on top of the discard pile or draw a card from the draw pile until they get a card that is legal to play. A card that is legal to play follows one or more of the following:

* Matches the previously played card's color
* Matches the previously played card's number
* Matches the previously played card's type
* Is a "WILD" card

It is only necessary for the card to match one of the four conditions above to be legal to play. For example, a yellow number 6 card can be played upon a red number 6 card because the number matches. If the previously played card does not have a number then only the card's type or color can be matched or a "WILD" card can be played. For example, if a blue "Draw One You Varmits" card is played then only a blue card, another "Draw One You Varmits" of any color, or a "WILD" card may be played.

Victory

Once a player has discarded all their cards the game is over and they have won.

## Special Cards:

**"WILD"** - The person who plays this card may choose which color the "WILD" card will play as before the next person's turn.

**"Draw One You Varmits"** - All players, except the person who played the card, must draw one card from the draw pile in turn order before it is the next person's turn.

**"Wild & Wooly"** - The person who plays this card may select any player to draw three cards from the draw pile and also choose what color "Wild & Wooly" card will play as before the next person's turn.

**"Which Way"** - The person who plays this card may choose whether the turn order will continue clockwise or change it to counter-clockwise.

**"Give Someone Two Cards from Your Hand"** - The person who plays this card must give two cards face-down to another player before the next person's turn.

**"Exchange Your Hand with Anyone"** - The person who plays this card may exchange hands face-down with another player. Before looking at their new hand, the player must also declare what color the "Exchange Your Hand with Anyone" will play as before the next person's turn.

**"Joker"** - The player who plays this card must have 3 or fewer cards in their hand prior to playing this card. Once played, all players count up the point total of the cards in their hand. The player with the least amount of points wins the round and does not count their points towards the round's total points for each player. If the player does not want to use this card for this function, it may simply act as a "WILD" card and follows the "WILD" card's rules.

**"What Me Worry, You Worry"** - This card may be used to counter a "Draw One You Varmits", "Wild & Wooly", "Give Someone Two Cards From Your Hand", or "Exchange Your Hand with Anyone". For example, if the player would have had to draw 3 cards, they may instead play their "What Me Worry, You Worry" card and make the other player draw the cards instead. In the case of the "Exchange Your Hand with Anyone" card, it simply allows the player to not have to exchange their hand. After the card is played, or if the player does not want to use this card for this function, it acts as a "WILD" card and follows the "WILD" card's rules.

**Playtesters**

Classmates from the GAT210 section A participated as first-time players for the rules that are written in the previous section of this lab report. There were four students who played the game:

**Name: Email:**

* Glen Aro [g.aro@digipen.edu](mailto:g.aro@digipen.edu)
* Christopher Christensen [c.christensen@digipen.edu](mailto:c.christensen@digipen.edu)
* Preston Lowery [p.lowery@digipen.edu](mailto:p.lowery@digipen.edu)
* Aubrey Rushe [a.rushe@digipen.edu](mailto:a.rushe@digipen.edu)

**Playtesting Results**

Playtesting began with the four students, Glen, Christopher, Preston, and Aubrey reading over the two copies of the written rules for the game. Although the classroom was loud with the sounds of other students playing and discussing other games, for the most part the playtesters for my game focused diligently on reading the rules out loud to each other. Reading the rules out loud to each other allowed the playtesters who did not have copies of the rules to understand the game that they would be testing. In future labs it is probably a better idea to bring enough copies of the rules for all the players that will be playing the game so that every playtester can reference the rules before and during the game.

Two minutes into testing the players establish that the rules are a lot like the game *Uno* and begin sorting through the cards to get ready to play. In the written rules under the “Rules” section I had purposely written that the game is “much like a twisted version of *Uno*,” to help aid players understand the game if they knew a similar game like *Uno*. While this reference was useful to the players, I wonder now if the players would have made this connection without it being explicitly stated. While it worked with this game, in future games a reference may not always be possible, so I will avoid doing this in the future to avoid relying on this.

Three minutes into testing the playtesters shuffle and deal out the cards only to find two blank cards while sorting through the deck. This prompts a discussion between them over whether or not the blank cards are part of the game or not. This confusion lasts for over a minute as players pour back over the rules looking for a reference to blank cards. Some argue that the cards would not be in there if they were not meant to be used. The blank cards being left in the deck was a mistake on my part, but it is interesting to see how literal some of the playtesters are about the blank cards. I would have assumed that seeing blank cards in the deck would have automatically been seen as a mistake and not meant to be used. The fact that some playtesters are so adamant about their existence not being an accident and searching through the rules for answers is an example of how explicit rules should be in explaining everything, even blank cards which are not meant to be used.

Eventually the players decide not to play with the cards because they are so different than the rest of the cards and do not follow the matching rules laid out in the written rules. The game proceeds well, with players constantly referencing the written rules whenever doubts are raised about what is a legal move and what is not. The biggest doubt debated was about the “WILD” and “What Me Worry, You Worry” cards. The playtesters are not sure if it is okay to play a “WILD” card or a “What Me Worry, You Worry” card at any time or if it can only be played if they do not have a matching color or number card. Once again, this reinforces the fact that the rules should have explicitly stated that these cards can be played whenever a player wants to play it.

Six minutes into the game a playtester has an opportunity to win because they have only one card left in their hand. This is a crucial moment of the game that separates it from being *Uno* because other players can attack this player by making them draw cards or exchanging hands with this player instead of passively letting them win. Thankfully the players extend the length of the game by using a card that forces him to draw three cards. This is important to note because it means the players understand the purposes of the cards, employing strategy, and moreover, playing the game properly. At seven minutes the playtester Glen won the game and the test is over.

Playtesting revealed just how important it is for rules to cover everything the players need to know as clearly and concisely as possible. Assuming the players would view blank cards as not part of the game cannot be done because not everyone will think this way. Referencing a similar game helped the players quickly establish a good understanding of the concept of the game, but this is only possible if the players have played the game being referenced. Calling out vital parts of the information by bolding words in my rules would have really helped the playtesters easily scan over the rules when references needed to be made. Overall, the testing did have a few hiccups, but these provided a new understanding of just how precise one needs to be when writing down rules for any game.

**Written Rules Rewrite**

Objective

The objective of the game is to be the **first player to discard all their cards**.

Setup

Before playing, **remove any blank cards in the deck**, as these cards are not needed to play.

Next, choose a dealer to **shuffle and deal out 7 cards** face-down to each player. The remaining cards in the deck are placed face-down in the slotted section of the card tray as the draw pile.

To begin playing, the dealer draws the top card from the draw pile and places it in the discard pile slot of the card tray. The turn begins as if the dealer has just played the card, with the turn passing to the player on the dealer's left. This player then takes any action that is played from the starting card and proceeds to play as normal.

Rules

This game is played much like a twisted version of *Uno*.

On a player's turn they may play a card face-up on top of the previously played card in the discard pile or draw a card from the draw pile until they get a card that is legal to play. A card that is legal to play follows one or more of the following:

* Matches the previously played card's **color**
* Matches the previously played card's **number**
* Matches the previously played card's **type**
* Is a **"WILD"** card

It is **only necessary for the card to match one of the four conditions above** to be legal to play. For example, a yellow number 6 card can be played upon a red number 6 card because the number matches. If the previously played card does not have a number then only the card's type or color can be matched or a "WILD" card can be played. For example, if a blue "Draw One You Varmits" card is played then only a blue card, another "Draw One You Varmits" of any color, or a "WILD" card may be played.

Victory

Once a player has discarded all their cards the game is over and they have won.

## Special Cards:

**"WILD"** – This card may be played at any time and allows the player who plays this card to choose which color the "WILD" card will play as before the next player’s turn.

**"Draw One You Varmits"** - All players, except the person who played the card, must draw one card from the draw pile in turn order before it is the next person's turn.

**"Wild & Wooly"** - The person who plays this card may select any player to draw three cards from the draw pile and also choose what color "Wild & Wooly" card will play as before the next person's turn.

**"Which Way"** - The person who plays this card may choose whether the turn order will continue clockwise or change to counter-clockwise.

**"Give Someone Two Cards from Your Hand"** - The person who plays this card must give two cards face-down to another player before the next person's turn.

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**"Joker"** - The player who plays this card must have 3 or fewer cards in their hand prior to playing this card. Once played, all players count up the point total of the cards in their hand. The player with the least amount of points wins the round and does not count their points towards the round's total points for each player. If the player does not want to use this card for this function, it may simply act as a "WILD" card and follows the "WILD" card's rules.

**"What Me Worry, You Worry"** - This card may be used to **counter an attack from your opponent** *and/or* **be used as a** **“WILD”card**. This card counters a "Draw One You Varmits", "Wild & Wooly", "Give Someone Two Cards from Your Hand", or "Exchange Your Hand with Anyone". For example, if the player would have had to draw 3 cards, they may instead play their "What Me Worry, You Worry" card and make the other player draw the cards instead. In the case of the "Exchange Your Hand with Anyone" card, it simply allows the player to not have to exchange their hand. After the card is played, or if the player does not want to use this card for this function, it acts as a "WILD" card and follows the "WILD" card's rules.

**Observations**

As a playtester for some of the other player’s games during the lab there are a few good practices for rules that I either observed. Firstly, it cannot be stressed enough how important it is for the rules of a game to clearly explain the information that it is trying to convey to the player. It is not a good idea for rules to use gamer language or overly complex words to explain how to play the game. This is because not everyone will understand gamer language, especially if they do not play games often or are simply new to games. Using simple language helps to ensure that anyone can pick up the rules and, at the very least, understand the information that is presented on the page.

While using clear language is important, it is equally as vital to be as concise as possible in writing rules for games. There was one game that had 5 pages of dense paragraphs for the rules to the game. This treatment of the rules needlessly forces more effort on the players to understand the rules and may simply cause players to give up due to the amount of work involved in reading the rules. Breaking up information into clear, concise chunks of information, whenever possible, and limiting the length of the rules is the best solution to aiding players learn how to play your game with your written rules.

Characteristics of Games

**Exercise Questions**

**Exercise 3.1: Name some second order rules in backgammon.**

Examples of second order rules in backgammon are rules such as those that involve turn completion. For example, if a turn is considered completed when the player picks up their dice whether the moves in that turn are legal or not. The opposing player may either accept the illegal moves or require the player to undo their moves and make legal moves instead. Another good example of second order rules involving turn completion is the punishment for rolling dice before your opponent has completed their turn. In This example the player’s roll is void and must wait for the other player to complete their turn.

**Exercise 3.2: Name some second order rules in baseball.**

There are quite a lot of intricacies to the rules of baseball, which makes for quite a number of second order rules. For example, if a batter has two strikes and swings and misses for a third strike he is usually ruled as out, however the player can run for first base if the ball is not cleanly caught by the catcher. Another second order rule is that a runner can be awarded a base if the pitcher balks, or otherwise makes a move that is not a normal pitching motion while on the rubber of the pitching mound.

**Exercise 3.3: Does the average computer game have more or fewer first-order rules than the average non-computer game? Why?**

It is difficult to save if the average computer game has fewer first-order rules than the average non-computer game because the medium of the game does not necessarily dictate the rules of the game. For example the card game Solitaire is a common or average card game that exists both as a computer game and as a non-computer game. Both versions of the game should have the same first-order rules, despite one being on a computer and one using traditional playing cards.

Perhaps most average computer games feel like they have less first-order rules than the average non-computer game because the computer medium allows for a game designer to hold the players hand and teach the game through tutorials while the average non-computer game must rely on the player correctly playing the game through reading instructions alone. Either way, the medium of a game does not follow whether or not there are more or less first-order rules.

**Exercise 3.4: How often do the rules change in computer games? How often do they change in sports? Compare this to how often they change in board games or card games. Why the differences?**

The rules in computer games can change quite often, especially in the case of competitive Esports games. Using DoTA2 as an example, the game changes minor rules pertaining to heroes and the cost of items in an attempt to fix either exploits or otherwise preserve the original intention of how the game designers meant the game to be played. This is easy to do because the games are digital and connected to the internet, so changes to the game can be made in easily downloaded patches.

Sports rules, while not as frequently updated as computer games, do change every so often. Using football as an example, the addition of the coach’s challenge, touchdown reviews, and two-point conversion rules are just a few rules changes from the 1990s to today. Due to the sheer amount of people involved in organized sports, whether players, coaches, referees, and even fans, I imagine that changing the rules in sports is a lot harder, but not impossible to do if everyone agrees it is in the best interest of the game.

Computer games and sports have the luxury of being able to change their rules when changes need to be made, something that is not as easy to do in traditional board games and card games. I believe this is possible because of how mutable computer games and sports are compared to traditional board and card games. Traditional board games and card games usually involve the players buying components and rulebooks necessary to play the game. After the purchase, if the game designer makes a change to the game it is more difficult of them to implement this change.

If there is a change to the tangible aspects of the games, such as cards, then that means players must invest more money and purchase the new components. This can be difficult for players to accept and they can choose to ignore the changes. To contrast, if rules need to be changed in a computer game, the game can be easily accessed and patched online or a sport’s referees can simply be informed of the new rules and force it upon the players and fans. The ease of access to the game is a big difference between changing rules in traditional board games and card games compared to computer games and sports.

Tic-Tac-Toe

**Written Rules**

Players

2

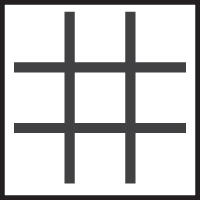
Components

* Paper
* Pencil

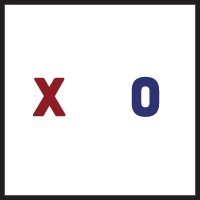
Objective

Be the first player to get three-in-a-row of their symbol (either X or O).

Setup



Playing Tic-Tac-Toe requires a 3 x 3 grid (similar to a pound sign or “#”) to be drawn on a piece of paper to set up the board.

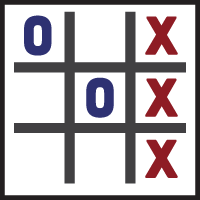
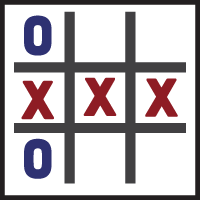
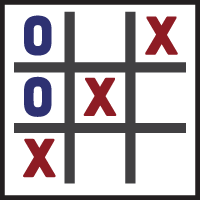


Lastly, both players need to agree upon who will play as “X” and who will play as “O”.

Play

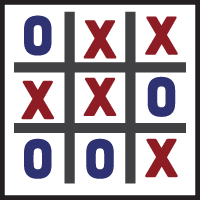
* The “X” player goes first.

* Players take alternating turns drawing their symbol on empty squares on the board until one of the following conditions are met:
* A player has a diagonal, horizontal, or vertical three-in-a-row
  + *Example:*



*A player has a diagonal, horizontal, or vertical three-in-a-row*

* There are no empty squares on the board
  + *Example:*



*No player has gotten three-in-a-row and there are no empty spaces left to play on*

* In the case of there being no empty squares left on the board, the game is a tie and a new Tic-Tac-Toe board is drawn for a new game to be played.

Victory

The first player to get three-in-a-row wins.