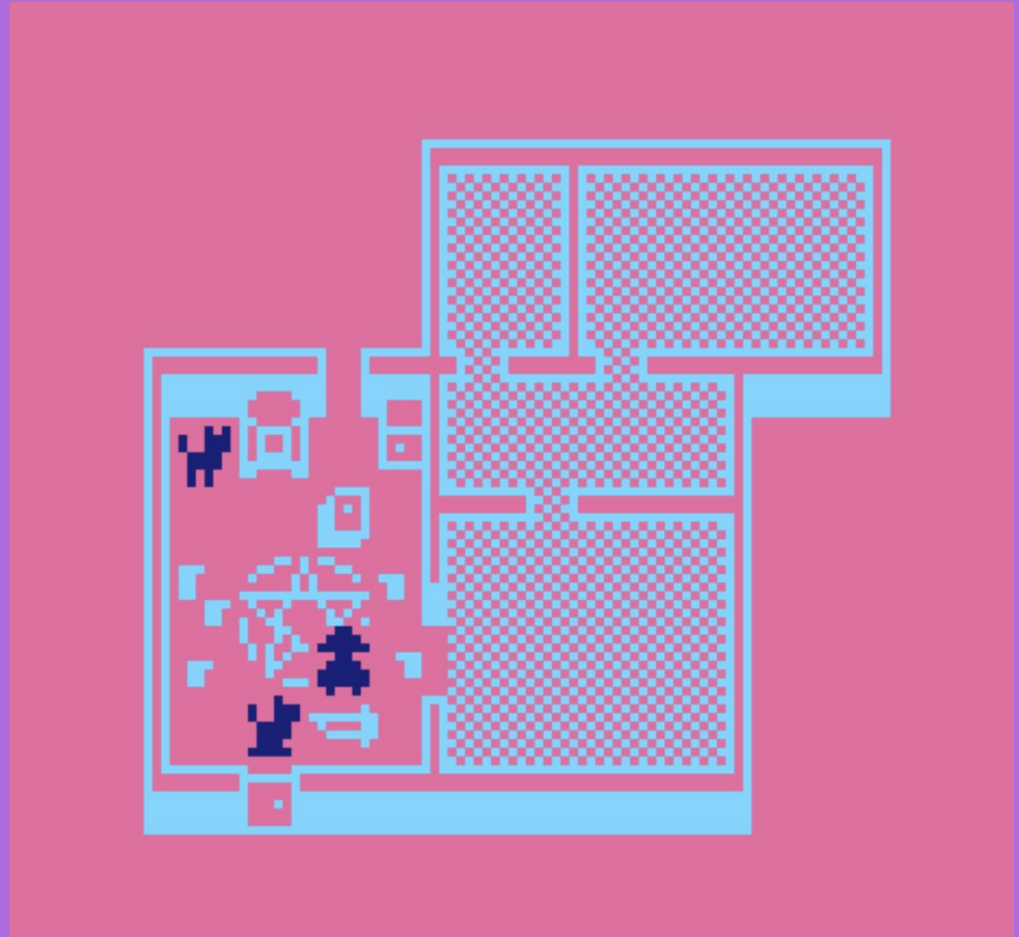# Choosing the Right Tools:

- What game-making tool works best for your concept?
- How do restrictions/limitations encourage creativity?

7 Things I mistake for my cat, Anna Anthropy

Review: what is meaningful interactivity?

- Does interactivity mean more choice/agency?
- What other tools are there to make these kinds of games (and/or adapt them)?

From *Rules of Play*, Salen and Zimmerman:

1.

Meaningful play in a game emerges from the relationship between player action and system outcome; it is the process by which a player takes action within the designed system of a game and the system responds to the action. The *meaning* of an action in a game resides in the relationship between action and outcome.

2.

Meaningful play occurs when the relationships between actions and outcomes in a game are both *discernable* and *integrated* into the larger context of the game. Creating meaningful play is the goal of successful game design.

ONE BUTTON GAME ASSIGNMENT --OR-- TWO COLOR GAME ASSIGNMENT (Due: 11.02.23) 🔗

Creating a game with restrictions is not only a design challenge meant to think about what constitutes meaningful interactivity (see: Saten & Zimmerman), but also forces a game developer to consider disability and gaming.

- Because of mobility challenges, some gamers find it difficult to master the crazy button-mashing of some AAA games (that is, the big game companies that make some of the most popular games). A one-button game would be far more accessible to this kind of gamer.

- Consider the challenges of the blind or visually impaired: a game that could be read using text-to-speech software can be deeply involving (for example, some of the gamers in the documentary Get Lamp professed a deep love for early text adventures).

- Visually impaired but still-sighted gamers might be able to see games that use high contrast in light and dark. Pixel games that use black and white are more accessible than games that employ more "realistic" graphics.

(For more on designing for gamers with disabilities: https://playabilityinitiative.com/).

Your assignment is to construct either a ONE BUTTON GAME, or a TWO COLOR GAME.

ONE BUTTON GAME ASSIGNMENT --OR-- TWO COLOR GAME ASSIGNMENT (Due: 11.02.23) 🔗

ONE BUTTON GAME: 🔗

Consider how to integrate the action of clicking or depressing a button (a mouse or trackpad touch, a key, spacebar, etc.) might be narratively or strategically embedded in game play. Consider the examples in the "One Button Game" chapter handout, or the examples below.

TWO COLOR GAME: 🔗

Consider how to limit your palette to two contrasting colors while integrating the restricted palette with a narrative/game mechanic.

   1. Use one of the following tools:

Bitsy (https://bitsy.org/) Pulp (https://play.date/pulp/) Pico-8 (https://www.lexaloffle.com/pico-8.php) Twine (https://twinery.org/)

   2. Keep it simple!

A game with a very simple premise, no matter how short, could be very gratifying. Don't feel the need to create a sprawling narrative with multiple characters and scenes!

ONE BUTTON GAME ASSIGNMENT --OR-- TWO COLOR GAME ASSIGNMENT (Due: 11.02.23) 🔗

Tips:

For a one-button game: consider the smallest gesture—a wave, tapping your foot, sneezing, smiling, breathing—and how these might constitute a mini-game.

For a two-color game: consider circumstances where you would be limited to light and dark vision (perhaps in the dark, underwater). Consider the use of patterns, silhouettes, and well-timed movement.

NOTE:

If you have an idea for a "one button game" that uses a different game-making software, or is essentially analog (NOT a video game), I'd like to hear it! Let me know what you're thinking (tfunk4@uic.edu)!

Examples:

- https://pippinbarr.com/lets-play-ancient-greek-punishment/
- https://itch.io/jam/one-button-to-rule-all-jam/entries
- https://itch.io/jam/2-colors-game-jam/entries

ONE BUTTON GAME ASSIGNMENT --OR-- TWO COLOR GAME ASSIGNMENT (Due: 11.02.23) 🔗

Additional tip:

- Convert a classic arcade game into a one-button game by "automating" (eliminating) interactions that are customarily under control of the player. For example, *Space Invaders* uses two sets of controls: one to move the player's laser cannon back and forth, and another to fire at descending aliens. It can be changed into a one-button game by making the cannon move back and forth on an automatic schedule.
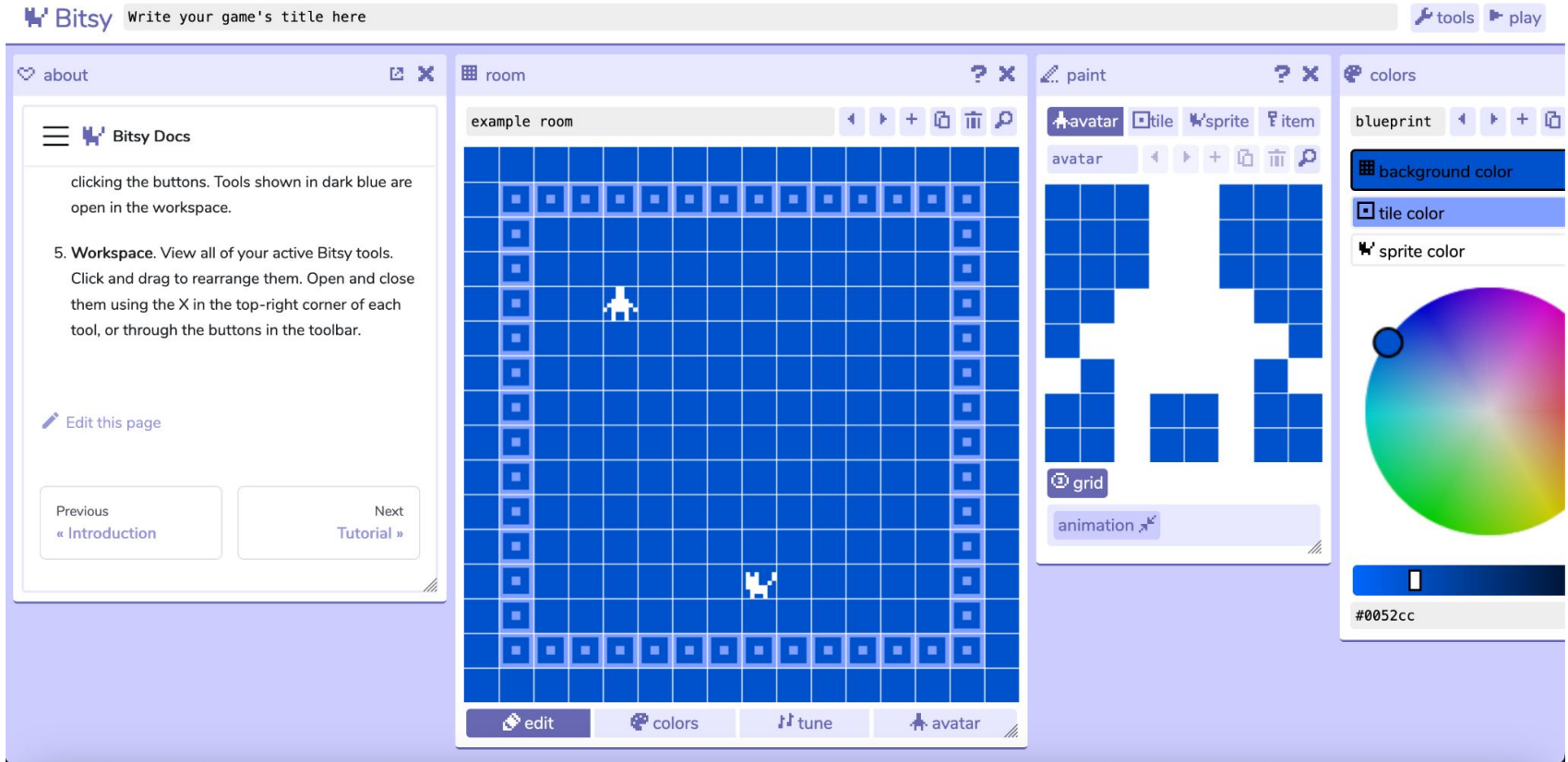
Some game dev tools for beginners:

- Pico8 https://www.lexaloffle.com/pico-8.php
- Bitsy https://make.bitsy.org/
- Pulp https://play.date/pulp/
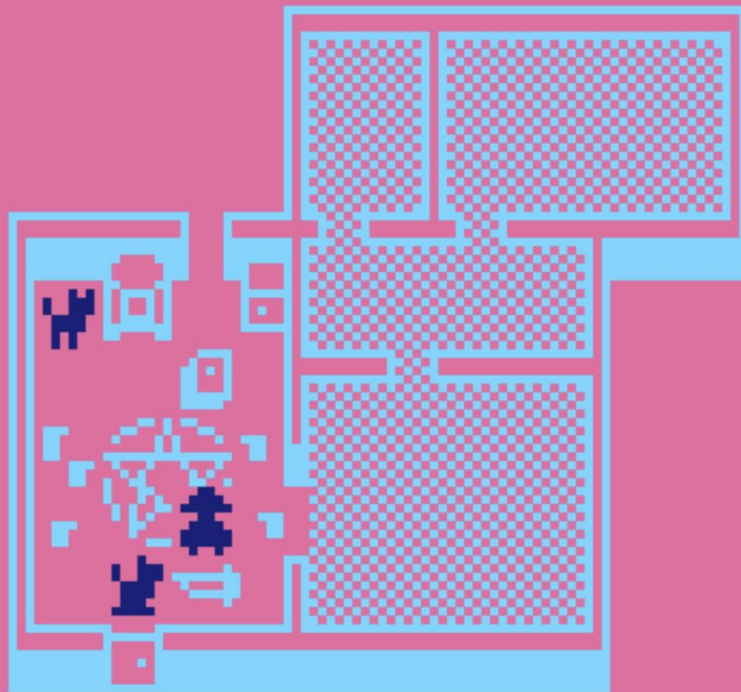- Twine https://twinery.org/
- Unity/Unreal

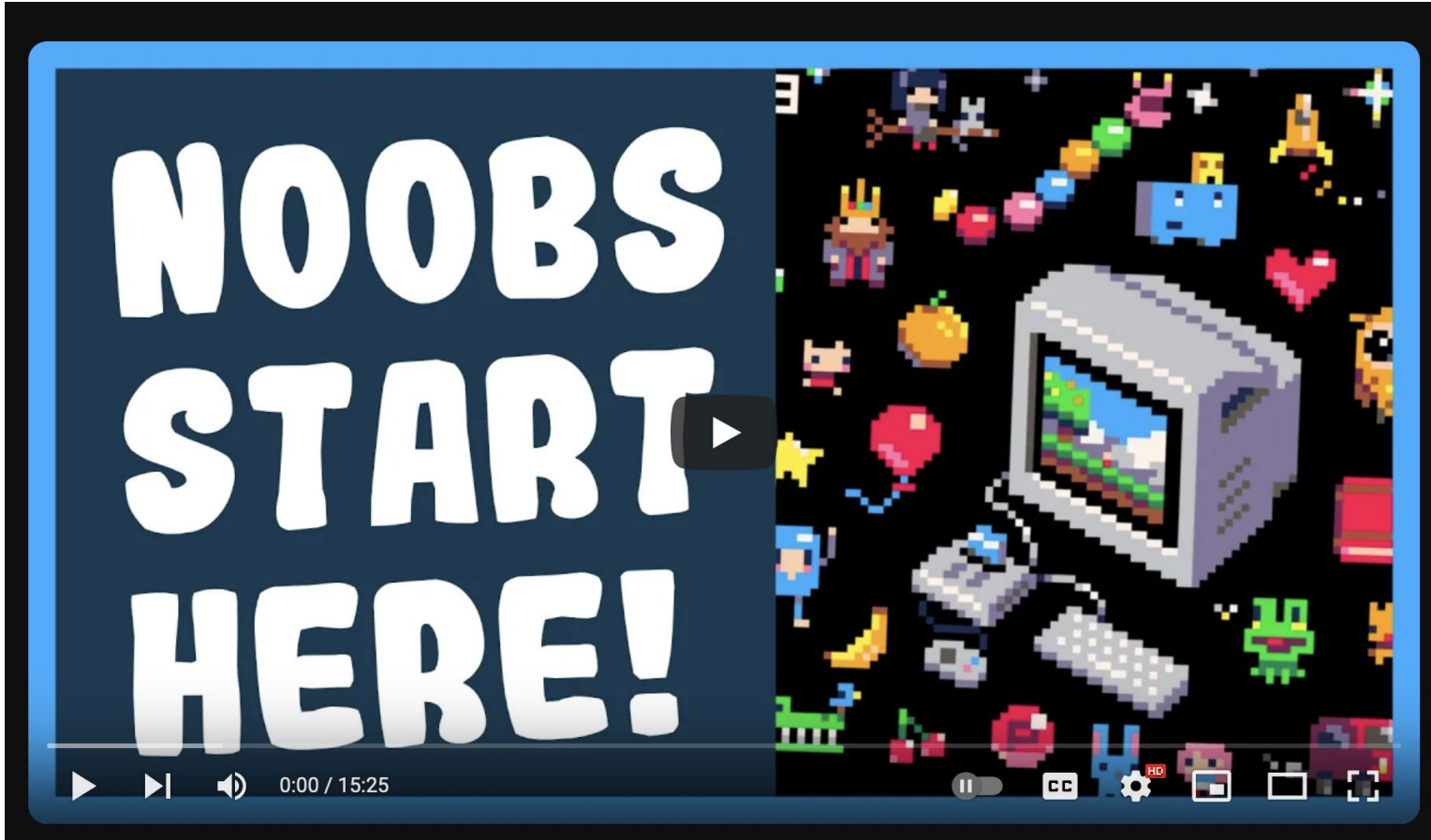What do each of these do well? What kinds of stories do each of these tell best?

Bitsy Game Development tutorial
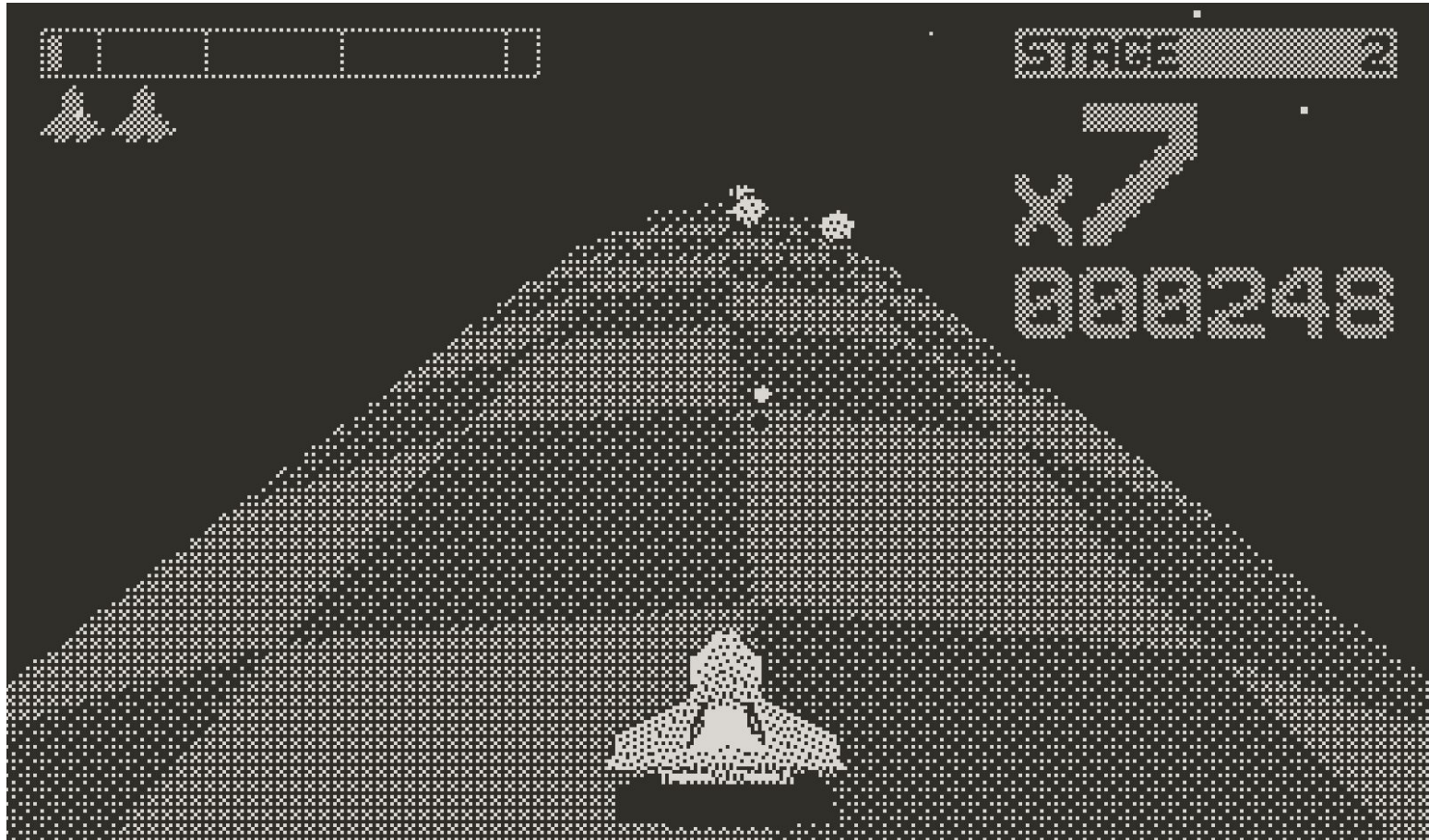
Pico-8 Game Development tutorial

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTMN5ItzzuA

Pulp Game Development tutorial