* What is videogame and interactive media?
* Wait, what’s a game? What makes a game?
* “An activity taken part in for amusement” OED 4th ED
* “An experience created by rules” – Anna Anthropy
* “an activity which is essentially: free (voluntary) separate, uncertain, unproductive, governed by rules, make-belief” – Roger Caillous
* “all games share four defining traits: a goal, rules, a feedback system, and voluntary participation” – Jane Mcgonigal
* <http://libguides.uvic.ca/gaming>

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Space War! – first video game, out of MIT on the ptp1.

The first popular games (1960-1975)

* + Amusement business, came out of Chicago, controlled by the mob for a long time
  + Machine prone to breakage
* Computer Space and Galaxy Game
  + Arcade machines,
* Atari, 1972
  + Pong
    - Taking $200 a week, where a coin-op was about $50
    - Much clearer gameplay than Computer Space, satisfying sound when you hit the ball.
  + Atari grew with laid-back management style. Casual dress, different from existing engineering world, “utopian meritocracy”
  + Atari later tried to expand to Japan, no one was interested in playing “western” games
  + 1975: Pong sells 150K to home market. Plug it into your television. First console?
* Microprocessors and Home consoles
  + Apple II: color, Woz designed to play games like Breakout.
  + Infocom: Zork I and other adventure games
  + Sierra: Also did adventure games, had graphics to go along with games. Lasted longer than Infocom.
  + Flight simulators, still popular today.
  + Tabletop Wargames, 1981
    - Laid out tabletop, with a war theater
    - Rules intense and very specific
    - Chris Crawford, “Fog of War” concept invented
  + Roleplaying Game
    - Ultima
* First Consoles
  + Magnavox Odyssey, 1972, first console.
    - Different games by putting different screens on top of the TV
    - Atari Video Computer System, 1977
      * Missed Christmas window due to manufacturing delays, wasn’t promoted well.
  + Most consoles only did mediocre.
  + Space Invaders, heavily influenced by Gunfight
    - Took Japan by storm, ran Japan out of 100 yen coins
    - Released in States in 1978 by Valley Midway,
      * Revenue 478m in 1978, 1.7b in 1979, mainly due to Space Invaders.
  + Atari 2600 bundled Space Invaders, thus most well known today.
* Started with Space Invaders, 1982 US video game revenue 5.3m/year
  + “Arcade locations were like Starbucks back then – literally everywhere” – Scott Miller
* “The media, in particular, was amazed by players who could actually beat the games. It was the perception of “man versus machine” that made many news stories so intriguing to the public.” – Walter Day
* **Vector graphics**
  + Vectorbeam developed by Larry Rosenthal in mid-70’s
  + Atari turned Rosenthal down
  + Space War sold 10k cabinets through Cinematronics.
  + Tim Skelly develops Tailgunner and warrior, popular at the time
  + Vector graphics produced resolutions of 1064x728 rather than raster, which was 320x240
  + Vector graphics allows for quick and smooth 3d rotations, whereas raster graphics does not.
    - Today, endures in SVG format
  + Atari releases Lunar Lander in 1979, Astroids in 1797
    - Astroids is Atari’s single biggest hit, second most popular game in 1979, after Space Invaders.
* **Colour Graphics**
  + First major color graphics is Galaxian by Namco, a modest improvement on Space Invaders
  + Atari releases Missile Command and Tempest to compete shortly after.
* Defender by Eugene Jarvis
  + a “sperm game” (something testosterone driven, terrified and exhilarated in equal measure)
  + high-energy and punishing difficulty
  + 60K units sold, bringing in 2500 quarters per week
  + Had 5 buttons, used reverse and thrust to add the “drift” effect on the camera, to give players context
* Pac-man
  + Very opposite of Defender
  + Developed by Toru Iwatani
  + Wanted to make a game that women – and thus couples – would enjoy.
  + Became one of the best-selling games, and the best-known characters of all time.
  + Used Kawaii imagery (think Hello Kitty) to draw in people.
  + Random coin-op machines popped up in the US because of the popularity of Pac-man. “Defender was popular. Pac-man was out of the stratosphere.”
  + Ghost behavior: Chase, Scatter, and Fright. Chase and scatter alternates. Difficulty increases as “chase” increases in frequency and “scatter” decreases
    - Blinky (red) goes for Pac-man’s current location, increases speed by 5%.
    - Pinky (pink) targets 4 tiles ahead of Pac-man,
      * Bug: Pac-man looks up, pinky targets both 4 spaces up and left.
    - Inky (blue) targets double the vector drawn from Inky’s position to two tiles in front of Pac-man
    - Clyde (orange) further than 8 tiles from Pac-man: blinky. Closer than 8 tiles: scatter.
  + Atari/Namco 1978 licensing deal gave Atari exclusive console rights to Pac-Man.
  + Sold 12m units, plus many more Atari 2600’s
  + Pulled into commanding lead ahead of Intellivision (lead competitor at the time.)
* Activision
  + Rebellion at Atari:
    - Four developers making 30K a year when they were netting Atari 60M a year in revenue
  + Split from Atari to become the first third-party developers.
  + Atari attempted to Sue, but left license wide-open, the courts sided with Activision.
  + Many other companies followed suit, undercut the revenue of Atari.
* **What could possibly go wrong?**
* Warner spent 75m advertising Atari in 1982
  + More than both Coca-cola and McD combined in that year on their respective brands
  + Atari sales were 5X of film and music within Warner
  + 70% of all warner profits came from Atari
* **The Bubble Bursts**
  + Atari earning call 7 Dec 1982
  + Slashed fourth quarter earnings from 50% gain to 10-15% gain, despite ET
  + Warner shares fall 30%.
  + Why?
* Economics
  + US coming out of bad recession, unemployment at 10%
  + Bad debt on arcade machines with the rapid growth of the industry
  + VCR released 1982, 500K sold in first quarter in 1982, 1m in 1984. Became the de-facto piece of in-home entertainment
    - Much more user-friendly system for less technically-astute folks
* Quality
  + Challenge/difficulty spiking due to gowing player proficiency
  + Shovel-ware diluted pool of quality games
    - Johnson & Johnson tooth protectors
    - Chase the Chuckwagon (terrible)
    - Custer’s Revenge
  + Atari 5200 release was too little too late
    - Waited too long on release
    - Repackaged Atari 400, a home computer
* Competition
  + Colecovision packaged with Donkey Kong, first game designed by Shiguru Miyamoto
  + Home computers became less expensive, (2x cost of console) and had lots more software.
  + “Every possible game had been invented and all creativity was exhausted.” – Eugene Jarvis, developer of Defender
* Fallout
  + 1983 was a terrible year for VG’s
  + Dragon’s lair the single bright spot
  + Consoles peaked at 3,200m in 1983, and were at 100m in 1986.
  + Atari never recovered.
* ----- Not on midterm -----
* Promogames
  + Advergames mentioned earlier:
    - J&J Tooth protectors
    - Chase the Chuckwagon
    - Meant to advertise a brand
  + Promogames include Burger King, Sneak King games
    - Reached a disaffected audience, cynical towards advertising
* **Empathy in Games**
* ET gameplay emphasizes the weakness of ET
  + Difficult to read terrain
  + Levitation only permits the possibility of being hunted
  + The film was about alienation, not about aliens.
* “Hush” and “Darfur is Dying” are more contemporary “serious game” examples.
* Hiroshi Yamauchi
  + President of Nintendo 1949-2002, started at 20
  + Nintendo was a hanafuda playing card company
    - Huge contract with Walt Disney in 1959, made hanafuda cards featuring Disney characters on it.
    - Checked out US Playing Card Co. in Cincinnati
  + Yamauchi wanted to make Nintendo a global company
  + Began experimenting with toys after discovering limitations in the Playing card industry
* Gunpei Yokoi
  + Chief engineer at Nintendo
  + Invented the Ultra C Hand, Nintendo’s first toy.
  + Invented the Game and Watch, Game Boy, and Virtual Boy
    - Game and Watch started with a bored businessman playing with a pocket calculator on a business trip
  + “Lateral thinking of withered technology”
* Shigeru Miyamoto
  + Still Chief Creative Director at Nintendo
  + Hired by Yamauchi in 1977 as an apprentice in the planning dept
  + Designed a number of toys before Donkey Kong
  + Possibly one of the first and most successful “designers”
* Nintendo Early History
  + Yamauchi takes control at 1949, at age 29
  + Color TV Game 6 released in 1977 at the height of Pong excitement in Japan
  + Game & Watch (Gunpei Yokoi) released in 1980
  + Planned cartridge-based home console launch in 1982-1983, just as the industry was collapsing in the US
* Game and Watch
  + Ball was the first title in 1980
  + Released 60 titles over 1980-1991
  + D-pad first appearance in 1982 with Donkey Kong
  + Paved way for Game Boy and Nintendo’s continued dominance of the handheld market
* Famicom
  + Released July 1983 in Japan
  + Sold 500k units by September 1983
  + Was so popular that Nintendo couldn't keep up with demand for games
  + Created licensing scheme for developers and publishers
    - Licensing was very strict, carts were manufactured exclusively by Nintendo.
    - Publishers had to pay upfront for manufacturing of carts, and thus the risks of publishing a game
    - Nintendo reserved veto rights for games and limited third-party companies to 5 titles a year.
    - Strict licensing scheme prevented shovelware problem that Atari had.
  + 17 licensed from Famicom developed by 1985
* Birth of the Japanese RPG
  + Henk Rogers, American ex-pat, avid D&D player
  + Developed and launched The Black Onyx in 1984, for home computers. A typical American RPG
  + Initial launch was a complete failure
    - Distributer purchased too few games, and thus had too few games to sell
    - People did not understand the game as D&D did not make its way across the pacific yet
  + Subsequently sold 10k copies per month after hand-holding magazine editors through the opening gameplay.
    - The magazine Reviews that came out were overwhelmingly positive, and turned the title around.
* Dragon Quest
  + Dragon Quest, designed by Yuri Horii, released in 1986
  + Reinforces the Nihonjinron theory.
  + Colourful, kawaii-inspired art, text inspired by haiku
  + Controls and systems slimmed down for Famicom
  + 2m copies sold
* Final Fantasy
  + FF designed by Hironobu Sakaguchi, releasedin 1987
  + Last ditch effort, thus “final” fantasy
  + Much darker than Dragon Quest
  + Spawn one of the best-known and enduring JRPG franchises.
* The Legend of Zelda
  + Released by Nintendo, 1986
  + Wanted to make a game that let others experience what he experienced on JRPGs as a kid.
  + Phantasy Star, Sega 1987
  + Mother, Nintendo 1989
  + Dragon Quest III, 1988, sold 1m on launch day
    - Caused publishers to no longer release games on school days, there were 382 arrests for truancy and many more cases of shoplifting
  + Much more of an action RPG than a traditional JRPG. Miyamoto thought that JRPGs were too dark.
* CES 1984
  + Nintendo introduced the Advanced Video System to CES, nobody wanted to touch it.
  + Amiga was the clear winner that year
  + Amiga was originally built as a gaming machine, and was redesigned after the crash
    - Later acquired by Commodore
  + AVS hardward acknowledged as powerful, but no one wanted to buy it.
* CES 1985
  + Redesigned AVS into the NES
  + Adopted Japanese licensing scheme
  + Developed two gimmicks – the light gun and ROB
  + CES and focus groups were still unmoved
  + Nintendo recognized that, despite the crash, kids and people were still playing games, and thus there is still a market
  + Nintendo of America was ready to give up, Yamauchi bankrolled $50m for NoA to break into one city. They chose New York.
* Christmas 1985
  + NoA Team focused exclusively on bringing NES to market
  + Christmas Eve 1985 had NES for sale in 500NY stores, mostly on a money-back guarantee for retailers.
  + 90k sold
* Super Mario Bros.
  + Released March 1986
  + Remains one of the top selling games of all time, around 40m sold
  + Packaged with NES system
  + Number 1 selling toy of 1987 despite tight production control
    - Nintendo didn’t want price-slashing that happens with excess supply
  + Single-handedly revitalized console industry
* Licensing and Controls
  + Developers rush to sign-up, despite strict rules
  + Established zero-bug tolerance
  + Adopted a set of rules similar to Hays Code and the Comics Code of Hollywood
    - Bans sex, drug use, positive portrayal of criminals, etc.
    - Caught on to what destroyed Atari and did not make the same mistake
* Continued Success
  + By 1989, 23% of all toys sold in the US were a Nintendo Product
  + NP had a circulation of 5m
  + NP also had a helpline, where you could call in for help on games.
* Early Criticism
  + Eugene Provenzp Jr., prof of education at Univ of Miami

Video Kids, criticized portrayal of gender and violence in 47 top-selling NES games, publishing in Oct 1991

* + Accused Nintendo of promoting aggression, and sexist and racist stereotypes
* Europe
  + Difficult road for Nintendo due to greatest interest in home computers
    - Home consoles never big in Europe, people preferred home computers much more.
  + Licensing model scared off many European developers
  + Sega provided stiffer competition in Europe than in NA
  + Game Genie developed by Codemasters
    - Cheating service, 5b sold. Subscription service also for new codebook every 3-4 months
    - Nintendo took legal action against Galoob, Game Genie stopped selling in the States, but not in Canada.
  + Rare, established by Chris and Tim Stamper
    - Game studio, did GoldenEye
    - Reverse engineered the Nintendo and took full advantage of hardware
    - Eventually acquired by Nintendo
* Super Mario Bros. 3
  + Released Feb 1990
  + The Wizard, released late 1989
    - Feature-length movie that featured Nintendo
  + 17m copies worldwide, grossed $500m
  + Design comeback for Miyamoto and

Bishojo games

* + Koei released Night Life in 1982, a computerized sex guide. Hugely successful
  + Spawned the bishojo genre “pretty girl”
  + Defined by content rather than gameplay
    - Yaoi – boy’s love
    - Yuri – girl’s love
    - Bara – men’s love
    - Ren’ai – dating sims
    - Eroge – sexually explicit
    - Life sims
* Controversy
  + 177 released in 1986, goal was to rape teenage girls. Condemed by the National Diet (Japan’s Parliament)
    - Reference to Section 177 of criminal code
    - Ethics Organization of Computer Software formed
    - Similar to ESRB
  + Otaku Murder in 1989 – serial killer targeting 407 yo girls
  + Equality Now launched in 2009, campaign against RapeLay. t
  + Bishojo has influenced other Japanese developers – Dead or Alive Xtreme Volleyball
* ---Midterm cutoff
* Titillation
  + Japan’s comfort level with media depictions of sexual acts is very different from the west
  + Western development it’s more common to find innuendo or short sex scenes – some more pornographic than others
    - GTA3 San Andreas – “Hot Coffee” mod
    - Lara Croft nudity mod
    - Mass Effect/Dragon Age
  + Leisure Suit Larry is one of the few sex-related games to reach any level of popularity or renown
* Will Wright
  + Born 20 Jan 1960
  + Raised in Atlanta and baton Rouge
  + Obsessed with model making and robots
  + Interested in artificial intelligence and simulation due to interest in writing simulations for home-brew robots
  + Very interested in internal models of players that they form when playing his games.
* Raid on Bungeling Bay
  + Released on C64 in 1984
  + Goal was to use advanced features on C64 not available on Apple II
  + Rampart piracy on C64 – only 20-30k sold, but played widely
  + One of the first games licensed to Nintendo, sold about 1m units in Japan
* World-Building
  + Wright began playing around with Raid on Bungeling Bay level editor and found that it was fun just to build cities
  + At first, just a toy, soon became more elaborate as Wright researched urban planning.
  + Discovered Jay Forrester, first person to simulate a city on a computer
  + Combined Forrester’s ideas with living system of Conway’s Game of Life to bring world-building tool to life
* Conway’s Game of Life
  + Created by mathematician John Conway in 1970
  + Complexity from simple rules
    - User set initial state
    - Live cells with 2 or 3 neighbors survive
    - Live cells with fewer than 2 neighbors die, as do those with 4 or more neighbors
    - “dead” cells with 3 live neighbors come back to life.
* Inspirations
  + Conway’s Life
  + Jay Forrester’s System dynamics
  + Montessori school
    - Inspire, rather than educate
    - Self-directed learning is powerful
  + MacPaint – tools and canvas with no limitations
* Is it Fun?
  + Wright thought Raid on Burgeling Bay level-editor/toy could be a game, but one that would only to specialists
  + A charicature of how a city works
  + No defined goals; Wright wanted it to be a toy
  + Formed Maxis with Jeff Braun
  + SimCity publiched by Broderbund in 1989 – five years after Wright first began experimenting with Raid’s editor
  + SimCity went against the grain of other games that were popular at the time. No one wanted to publish it.
* Yes!
  + Following Time magazine review in 1990, sales for SimCity soared
  + Appealed to many game fans who were not interested by NES, action/violence, or arcades
  + Sold better and better, year after year
  + Some claimed bias in the system – Wright claims this is the most valuable piece of SimCity as it fostered discussion about the inherent assumptions
* Legacy
  + Spawned a series of SimCity games on multiple platforms, each release increased complexity
  + Other sim-type games released, many were commercial failures
  + EA acquired Maxis in 1997, when it was in a creative slump
  + The Sims released 2000. Best selling computer games of all time, Revitalized Wright’s and Maxis’ reputation
  + Spore, released 2008, sold well, criticized for being too ambitions.
  + Wright left to form Stupid Fun Club, an entertainment “think tank” in 2009
  + SimCity MMO released 2013. Poor launch management, forced multiplayer, online only, and DRM hampered success. Despite this, the game sold over 2m copies.
* Spore
  + A toy based on Drake’s equation
  + Released in 2008 after over 7 years in development
  + Reviewed well, but criticized for lack of gameplay depth
  + Admired by some scientists for encouraging players to think about evolutions, etc, but much of the “science” was incorrect and possibly misleading
* Peter Molyneux (molinew)
  + Born may 5 1959 in Guildford, England
  + Wanted to become a successful businessman
  + First entered industry with The entrepreneur, a business sim in 1980
  + Many early ventured ended in failure
* Bullfrog
  + Through a case of mistaken identity, Molyneux’s company Taurus ended up with free Amigas shipped from Commodore.
  + Decided to move to video game development and changed company name to Bullfrog
  + First original game was Fusion, published by EA in 1988
  + Sold poorly, but advance from EA was sufficenet to fund Bullfrog’s next project
* Populous
  + Started out as an isometric pictograph developed by programmer Glenn Corpes
    - Isometric pictograph gives illusion of depth despite being a 2D game.
  + Molyneux tried adding people with pathfinding, as he was not a programmer, he failed miserably
  + Decided instead to allow player to pick the people up with mouse cursor
  + Released by EA in 1989
* Success!
  + Populous reviewed extremely well in game mags,
  + Surpassed all expectations and was a multi-million seller across the world
  + Hugely popular in Japan
  + Molyneux was suddenly a well-known and respected game designer, credited with creating the “God game” genre.
* Legacy
  + A small number of Populous sequels developed over the 90s
  + Molyneux became a VP and consultant to EA in 1994. EA purchased Bullfrog in 1995
  + Molyneux left EA to form Lionhead in 1996, which developed Black and White and Fable serie
  + Lionhead acquired by EA in 2006
  + Molyneux left Lionhead in 2012 with 21 other former employees to form 22Cans
  + Currently working on the god game Godus, billed as a spiritual successor to Populous, currently available on Steam early access as a beta release
* Sid Meyer
  + Born Feb 24, 1954 in Sarnia, Ontario
  + Founded MicroProse in 1982, built a name developing military-themed simulations
  + Interest in history lead Meier to develop Pirates! In 1987
    - Open world pirate sim
  + After discovering SimCity and Populous, Meier decided to develop a game about a civilization’s journey through history
  + “A game is a series of interesting choices”
* Civilization
  + Turn-based strategy game
  + Bring a small tribe from nothing to a great world power, and beyond
  + Had a narrative quality, more so than SimCity and Populous
    - Looking at the game from a historical prospective
  + Mechanics – especially tech trees – were a significant influence in many subsequent games
* Legacy
  + Eight further Civ games, plus numerious expansions, as well as board and card games.
  + The best-known and most influential in the 4X game genre.
  + Firaxis games founded by Meier in 1996, developed most Civ games
    - Firaxis acquired by Take-Two Interactive in 2005
* Open-ended Play
  + Together, SimCity, Populous, and Civ help define the new genre of open=ended play
  + Most popular games to that time had been very action-orientated
  + Heavily influenced a new generation of designers
  + Bought the concept of design-auteur to the fore
* SEGA
  + Roots traced back to Service Games, founded in Honolulu in 1940
  + Eventually moved company to Tokyo in 1951
  + Developed coin-op jukeboxes, games and slot machines and imported to military bases in Japan
  + Merged with Rosen Enterprises (chain of over 200 arcades) in 1965. New name derived from **SE**rvice **GA**mes.
  + Sega sold to Viacom to 1969. Went public as a wholly owned subsidiary in 1972.
* Early Success
  + Sega had success in the early coin-op market
    - Frogger (Konami)
    - Star Trek
    - Zaxxon
  + SubRoc3d – first true 3D game – released just prior to crash in 1982
  + Sega Master System found success in UK, Australia, NZ, Brazil, first home based console.
* Megadrive
  + Superior hardware compared to to NES
  + Met with apathy when launched in Japan in 1988
  + Launched in Na in 1989 as the Sega Genesis
  + Sega relied on a library of existing coin-op games to port to the Genesis
* Marketing
  + Sega decided to take more aggressive marketing stance in an effort to beat Nintendo
  + Tried to position Genesis as a console for teenage boys who had ‘graduated’ from Nintendo
* Character licenses
  + Sega decided t0 go for character licenses to give Genesis more marketing clout
  + 5 year deal with Joe Montana for $1.7m
  + hired Mediagenic (Activision) to develop it
  + Flagship Christmas game of 1989
  + Activition couldn’t deliver, and Sega was on the hook
* EA to the rescue
  + EA founder Trip Hawkins’ goal was to develop “authentic sports simulations.”
  + John Madden Football flopped on Apple II
  + EA agreed to use some existing assets to release a version of Joe Montana Football, for Sega
  + Released in Jan 1990
* John Madden Football
  + Sega deal allowed EA to reboot John Madden Football
  + Moved towards realistic arcade action, and away from simulation
  + Madden involved closely in design; one-on-one confrontations a central tenet
  + Seminal sports game released in 1990
    - Probably because they saved all the good stuff from Joe Montana to release
  + Biggest selling sports game franchise of all time, nearly 100m in lifetime sales
* Sonic the Hedgehog
  + Result of internal competition to develop a mascot to match Mario
  + Yugi Naka was dissatisfied by missing skill component in Super Mario Brothers
  + Speed over-riding theme of Sonic
  + Released in June 1991, ahead of Super NES launch
  + Rocketed Sega into lead ahead of Nintendo
* Post NES era
  + Many developers scared off by Nintendo’s license model went to Sega
  + Sega developed a strong brand and strong sports line
  + Super NES sold 4m consoles within one year of November 1990 launch
  + By 1992, Sega owned 55% of market, the rest was Nintendo.

The Battle for Exclusives

* + “Exclusives” became the determining factor in purchasing a new console.
  + Super NES:
    - The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past
    - Super Metroid
    - Super Mario World
    - Street Fighter II
  + Sega
    - Ecco the Dolphin
    - Gunstar Heroes
    - Mcdonald’s Global Gladiators
    - Earthworm Jim
* New 16-bit consoles meant more power, and thus more assets, and thus larger teams and bigger budgets.
* Branding
  + What is branding?
  + “Brands are build around values, aspirations, experiences, history, and ideas”
  + Bogost claims that brands can add “contemporary social values” to a game