
UX: Gamestorming

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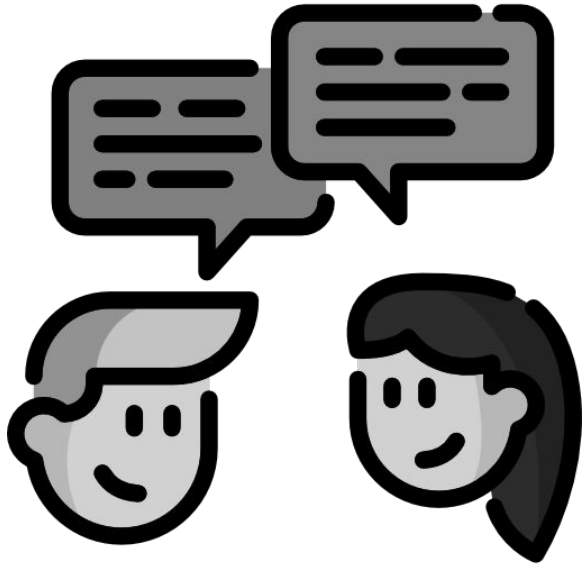
What are we going to talk about today?



Setting The Stage

- Since the invention of the computer chip, we have been moving from an **industrial** to a **post-industrial** economy, where the nature of work is changing.

- In an industrial society, workers are expected to fit standardized job descriptions and perform their duties according to clear policies, procedures, and prescriptions.

- **Knowledge work is fundamentally different**: workers are expected not so much to perform standard roles but to generate creative, innovative results that surprise and delight customers and colleagues.

- They are expected not only to perform a function but to design new and better products and services, and even to **provide dramatic, breakthrough results**.

Setting The Stage

- **Creativity** has long been seen as a “black box.” As IT folks, we typically don’t try to understand this process. We fully expect that when designers and other creative people go into a room with a goal, they will come out with more or less creative discoveries and results.

- It’s easy to leave creativity to these 'creative types’. The fact is that in a complex, dynamic, competitive knowledge economy, it’s no longer acceptable to take this position. If you are a knowledge worker, **you must become, to some degree, creative**.

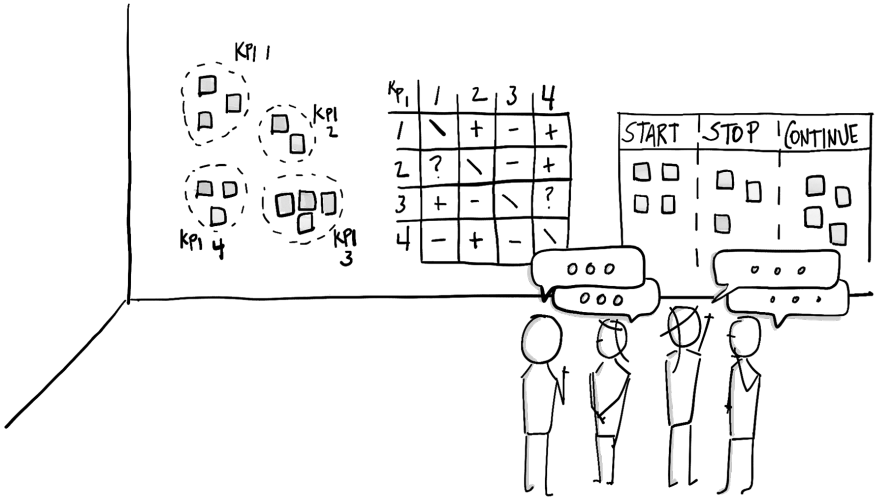
- The fact is that **successful people** tend to employ **simple creative strategies and practices** which allows them to explore new ideas, perform experiments and test hypotheses, **to generate new and surprising insights and results**.

What is Gamestorming?

Gamestorming is exploration of business challenges through the application of gaming (games).

Gamestorming will help organizations to:

- Overcome **conflict** and increase **engagement** with team-oriented games
- Improve **collaboration** and **communication** with visual-thinking techniques
- Generate better **ideas, insights, strategies** and more of them – **faster** than ever before
- Produce **better products and services** for your end-users



Overall, gamestorming can **encourage a shift in how work is done**—from a **process centric** model that's about predictability and consistency to a **game-centric** model that recognizes the **complexity and unpredictability** of a digital world.

What is a Game?

There is no absolute singular definition for a ‘game’; however, all games share these similar characteristics:

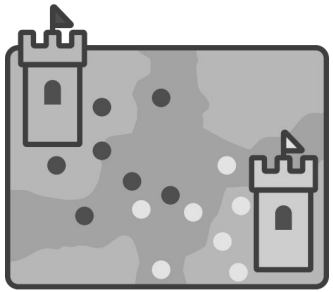
- **Game space**: To enter into a game is to enter another kind of space where the rules of ordinary life are temporarily suspended and replaced with the rules of the game. In effect, a game creates an alternative world, a model world. To enter a game space, the players must agree to abide by the rules of that space, and they must enter willingly.

- **Boundaries**: A game has boundaries in time and space. There is a time when a game begins—when the players enter the game space—and a time when they leave the game space, ending the game.

- **Rules for interaction**: Within the game space, players agree to abide by rules that define the way the game world operates. The game rules define the constraints of the game space.

- **Artifacts**: Most games employ physical artifacts; objects that hold information about the game, either intrinsically or by virtue of their position. Artifacts can be used to track progress and to maintain a picture of the game’s current state.

- **Goal**: Players must have a way to know when the game is over; an end state that they are all striving to attain, that is understood and agreed to by all players.



The Stages of a Game

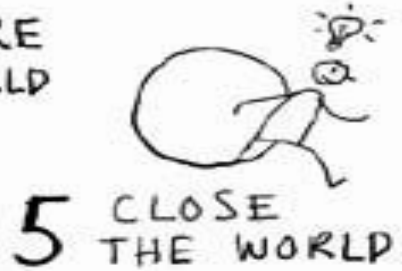
Every game is a world which evolves in stages: **imagine the world, create the world, open the world, explore the world, and close the world**. Here's how it works:

Before the game can begin you must imagine a possible world; a temporary space, within which players can explore any set of ideas or possibilities.

A game world is formed by giving it boundaries, rules, and artifacts. Boundaries are the spatial and temporal boundaries of the world; its beginning and end, and its edges. Rules are the laws that govern the world; artifacts are the things that populate the world.

A game world can only be entered by agreement among the players. To agree, they must understand the game's boundaries, rules, artifacts; what they represent, how they operate, and so on.

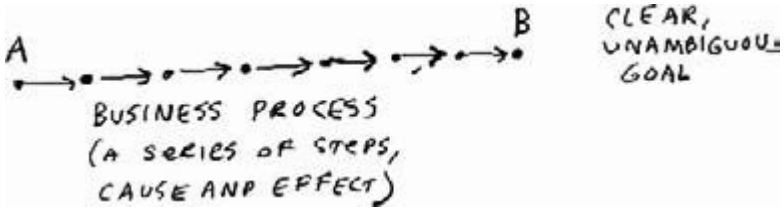
Goals are the animating force that drives exploration; they provide a necessary tension between the initial condition of the world and some desired state. Once players have entered the world they try to realize their goals within the constraints of the game world's system.



A game is finished when the game's goals have been met. Goals are markers to ceremonially close the game space. The true point of the game is the play itself, the exploration of an imaginary space, and the insights that come from that exploration.

The Game of Business

Business, like many other human activities, is built around goals. **Goals** are a way teams move from **point A to point B**; from where we are to where we want to be. A goal sets up a **tension** between a current state **A—an initial condition**—and a targeted **future state B**—the goal. In between A and B is something we can call the **challenge space**; the ground we need to cover in order to get there.



In **industrial work**, we want to manage work for **consistent, repeatable, predictable** results. Industrial goals are best when they are **specific and quantifiable**. In such cases, we want to ensure that our goals are as clear and unambiguous as possible

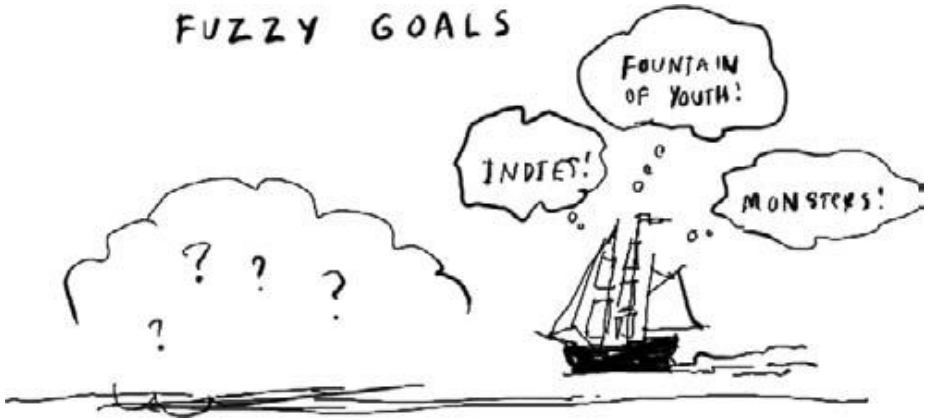
Fuzzy Goals

But **knowledge work** teams need to manage for **creativity**. We don't necessarily want predictability so much as **breakthrough ideas,** which are inherently unpredictable. Embarking on this kind of project is akin to a voyage of **discovery**: like Columbus, you may begin your journey by searching for a route to India, but you might find something else.

Like Columbus, in order to **move toward an uncertain future**, teams need to set a course. But how do you set a course when the destination is unknown? This is where it becomes necessary to imagine a world; a future world that is different from our own.

Gamestorming is an alternative to the traditional business process. In gamestorming, **goals are not always precise** (e.g. a new product or service), and so the way we approach the challenge space **cannot be designed in advance, nor can it be fully predicted**.

Gamestorming creates something different: **a framework for exploration, experimentation, and trial and error**. The path to the goal is not clear, and the goal may in fact change.



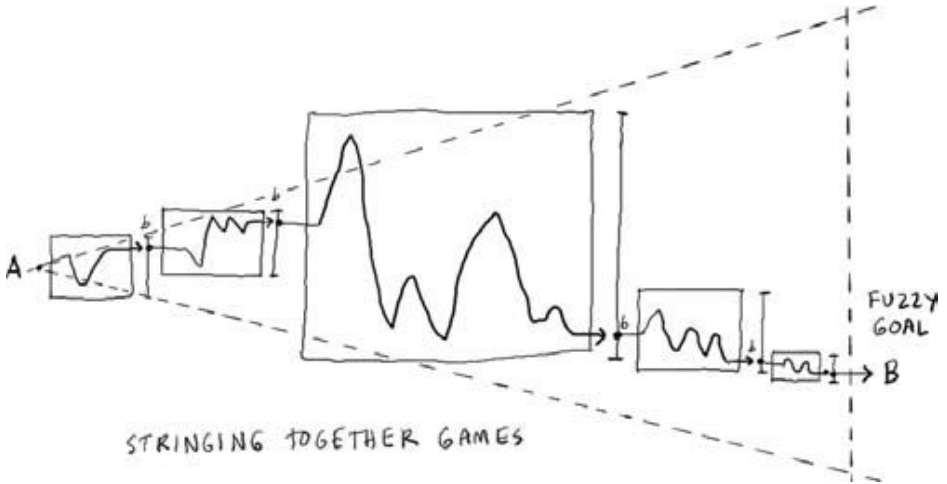
Fuzzy Goals - Continued

So while an organization may have a goal in mind for a product or service (point A to point B), they may not comprehend the **challenge space (the ground we need to cover to get to point B)**. Therefore it's very likely that your team's **goal will change** as you try out ideas and learn more about what works and what doesn't.

In gamestorming, games are not links in a chain, so much as **battles in a campaign**:

A **Fuzzy goal** is one that "motivates the general direction of the work, without blinding the team to opportunities along the journey." *Cambridge researcher Alan Blackwell*

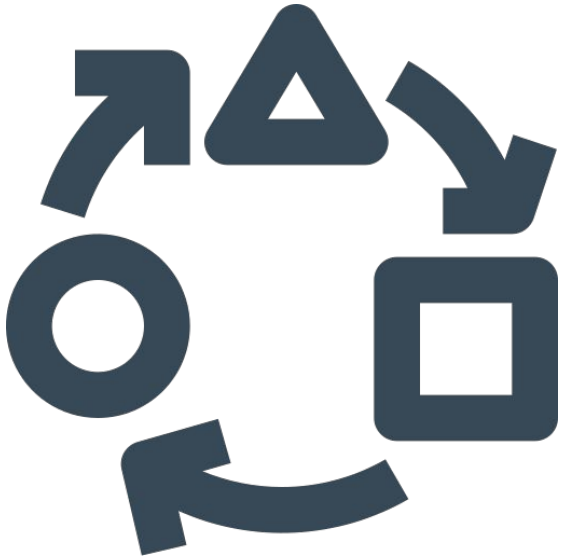
Fuzzy goals must give a team a **sense of direction and purpose** while leaving team members freedom to follow their intuition.



Core Gamestorming Skills

There are three core skills to Gamestorming:

- Asking Questions
- Creating Artifacts and Meaningful Spaces
- Employing Visual Language (Sketching)

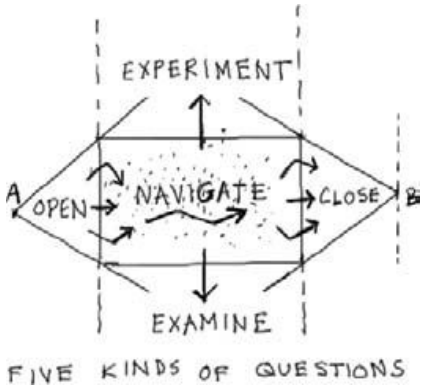


Gamestorming Skills: Asking Questions

Perhaps nothing is more important to exploration and discovery than the art of asking **good questions**. Questions are fire-starters: they **ignite people's passions and energy**; they create heat; and they illuminate things that were previously obscure.

When the path from A to B is clear, we can draw a straight line and be done with it. Whether that path is easy or difficult is beside the point. This is the business process answer, where we describe the path from A to B as a series of steps.

When the path from A to B is unclear, we have a different kind of challenge. If we ask the same question, "How do we get from here to there?" we need to face the fact that we don't know the answer.



There are five kinds of questions for finding your way in complex challenge spaces: **opening, navigating, examining, experimental, and closing**.

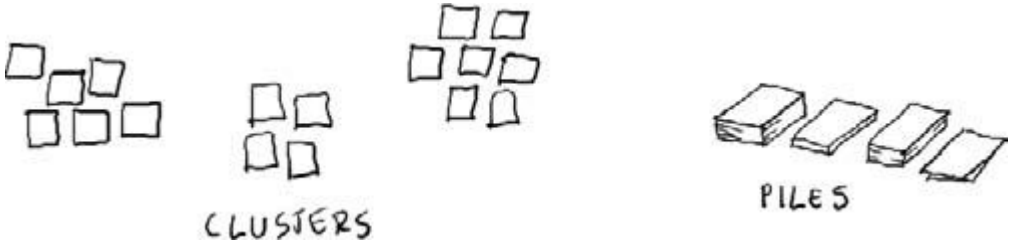
Gamestorming Skills: Creating Artifacts

Artifacts are some type of **physical medium such as sticky notes or index cards** which allow teams to break any complex topic into small, moveable pieces of knowledge (often called **knowledge atoms**).

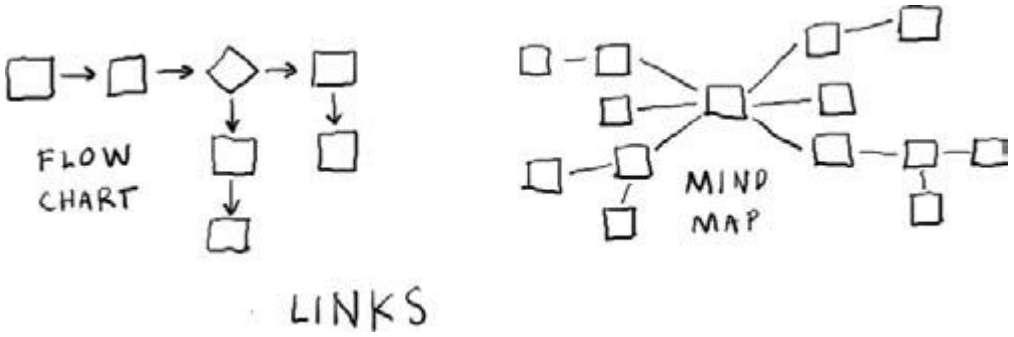
Teams can distribute these atoms into almost any physical space such as walls, desks, doors, and so on without creating total chaos or havoc.

Having these knowledge atoms allow teams to quickly and easily explore all kinds of **relationships between and among these atoms**.

Knowledge atoms created using sticky notes or index cards



Linking between these atoms

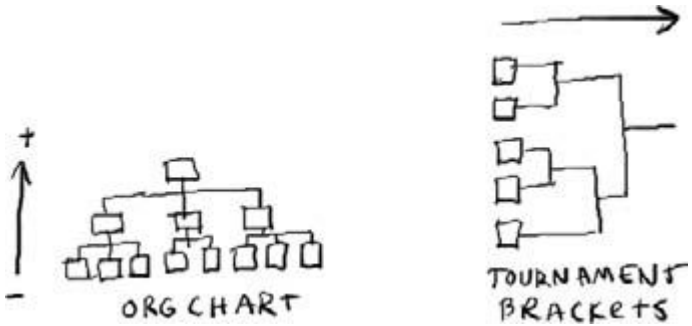


Gamestorming Skills: Meaningful Spaces

Teams can apply the concept of meaningful, organized spaces to knowledge atoms such as what you would find on a board game, a tennis court, or a golf course. Defining meaningful spaces allow the **position of knowledge atoms to have precise meaning that is dependent on their position**. A team defines these knowledge atoms spaces through the use of:

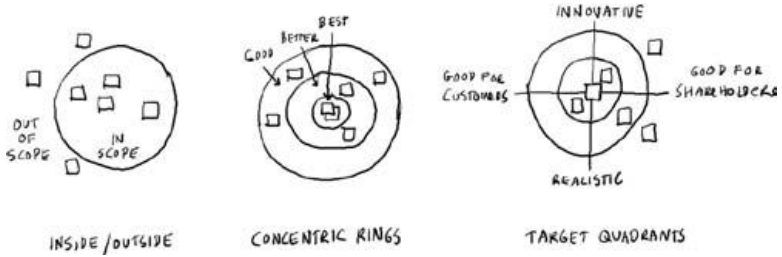
Borders

Axes

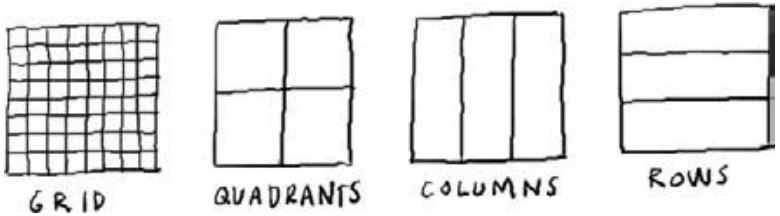


Gamestorming Skills: Meaningful Spaces

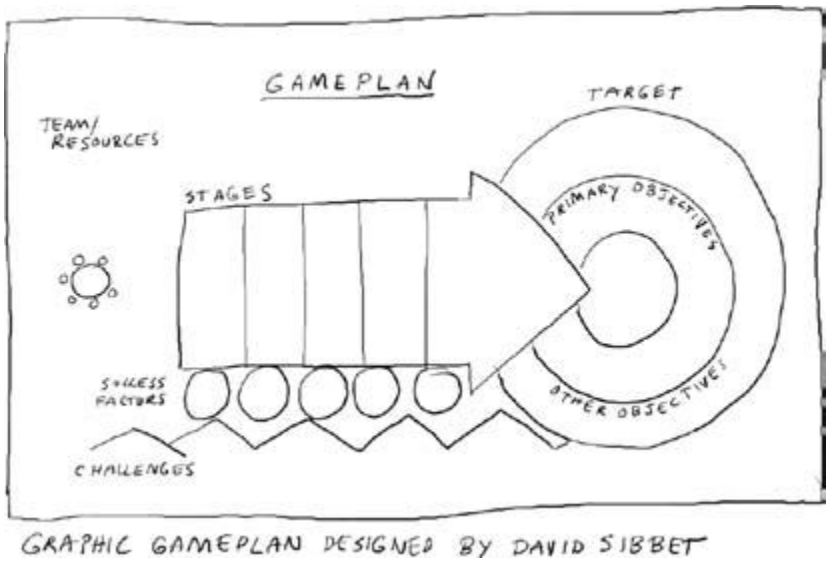
Circles and Targets



Grids



Landscapes and Maps



Gamestorming Skills: Meaningful Spaces

Metaphors (organize your knowledge atoms with other everyday objects)

Gamestorming Skills: Visual Language (Sketching)

In school we are taught that the fundamental things we need to learn to be successful are reading, writing, and arithmetic. In an industrial world, where every worker functioned as a standardized cog this made made sense.

But today's challenges aren't **standard**. Teams must often address unknowns, and ambiguous challenge spaces **where solutions are not clear or standard**.

There is another language that's equally powerful. It's called **visual language**, and it's the language teams can use to make ideas **visual and explicit**.

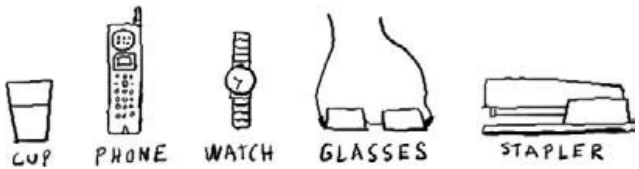
You don't need to be a designer to be able to visualize ideas. You just need the visual alphabet. It's made up of 12 shapes called **glyphs**. If you can draw these 12 shapes you can draw anything.

Linear

Closed Shapes

You can draw the alphabet with these 12 shapes:

Now if we try to draw some more difficult objects:



MIRO : Gamestorming Platform!

What Is It?

MIRO is an online collaborative whiteboard platform to bring teams together, anytime, anywhere.

MIRO empowers cross-functional discovery and brainstorming through an infinite canvas, robust set of widgets, prebuilt templates, and powerful platform capabilities.

In a nutshell, Miro presents an entire toolkit for **gamestorming**! Let's take a look at how MIRO enables the application of core gamestorming skills.

Fun Time. Core Gamestorming Game: Dot Voting

Object of Play

In any good brainstorming session, there will come a time when there are too many good ideas, too many concepts, and too many possibilities to proceed. When this time has come, dot voting is one of the **simplest ways to prioritize and converge upon an agreed solution**.

Number of Players

At least 3 participants; in larger groups, tallying votes will be more time-consuming

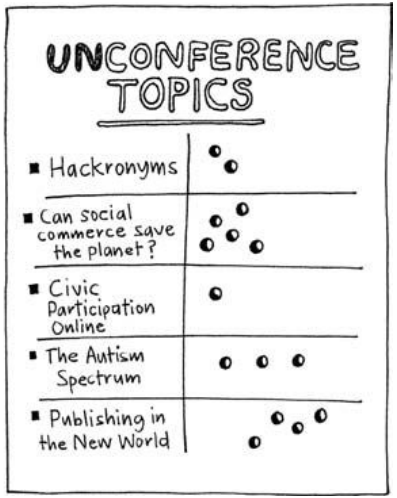
Duration of Play: Short

How To Play

First, the team needs a set of things to vote on!

Ask the team to cast their votes by placing a dot next to the items they feel the most strongly about.

Participants cast their votes all at once and can vote for a single item more than once.



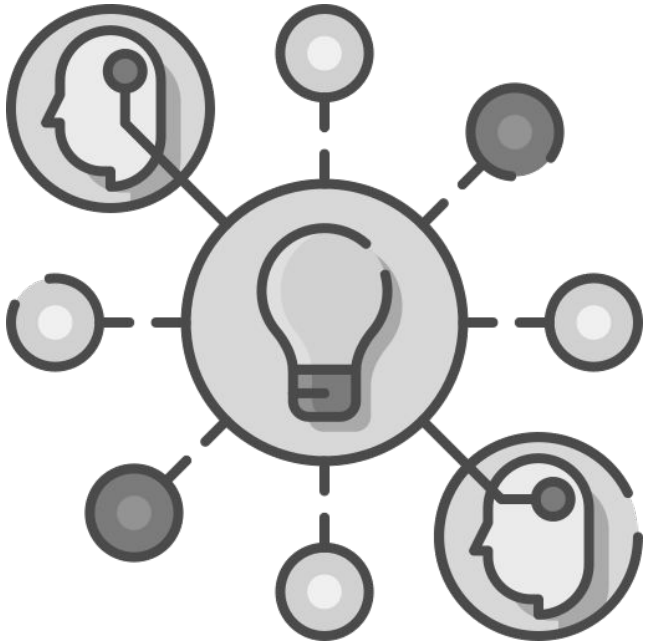
Let's Play!

https://dotstorming.com/b/5e69264edfb4a3f4043cde82

Gamestorming: Final Thoughts

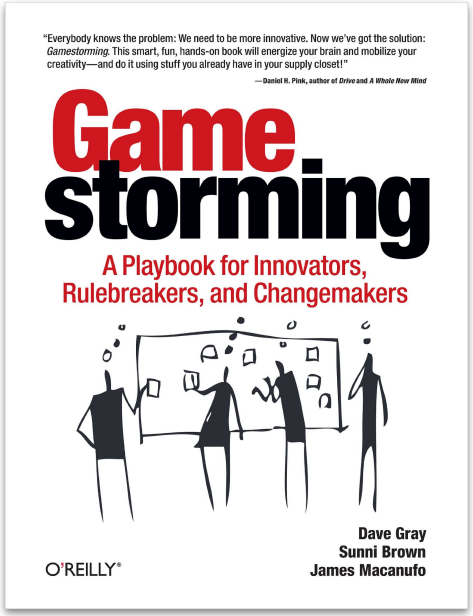
Through the application of **gamestorming** (game) techniques, teams can explore, ideate, test, and **validate your goals** into action faster, better, and more cost-effectively than any other **traditional process-oriented** methods.

I would recommend teams of all types utilize gamestorming when designing **government products and services**.



Gamestorming: Want to Learn More?

- Gamestorming.com
- Amazon.ca
- YouTube



Questions?

Thank You

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