# Research - Beyond Boardgames

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# Introduction

This document is composed by several products I've worked on for this project, Beyond Boardgames. It explored several aspects of integrating the modernity of technology and traditionality of boardgames to enhance gameplay, accessibility and user experience. Following the Double Diamond Method, we explored the market, checked out competitors, and talked to stakeholders (Petra and Maikel) to understand what our clients want. Additionally, I put together a SWOT Analysis, an Advisory Report, Ethical Considerations and used Scrum to stay organized and manage our progress as a team. This report sums up the key insights and recommendations for making our board game more modern and accessible while keeping it fun and engaging.

# Double Diamond Method

## 1. DISCOVER (Research Phase)

❖ **Market Research**

- Utilize Statista, IBISWorld, and Newzoo to analyse trends in board games and technological integration.

- Identify market segmentation: age groups, spending habits, preferred game mechanics.

- Research existing board games that incorporate technology (e.g., Chronicles of Crime, Unlock! Mansions of Madness).

❖ **Competitor Analysis**

- Analyse successful board games that combine traditional and digital elements.

- Identify common pain points and desires in the market.

❖ **Interviews**

- Conduct structured interviews:

    o Board game enthusiasts (hardcore and casual players).

    o Stakeholders (Petra and Maikel).

*Triangulation was applied by cross-referencing insights from all three methods to ensure a balanced perspective on market trends and user needs.*

### Results

We found that people in our target audience, majority Gen Z, really like the idea of combining a traditional boardgame and technology, especially if its quick and smooth and doesn't complicate things too much. They want something interactive but not app dependent.

### Analysis & Conclusion

The key is to find a healthy balance between modernity and tradition. Users value a lot the physical and social experience of a boardgame, and technology should be there to support and not overshadow. We concluded that for the digital elements we add, it needs to be in a way that feels natural and easy.

## 2. DEFINE (Synthesizing Data)

- ❖ **Empathy Maps**

  - Categorize user insights based on:

    - o Thinks

    - o Feels

    - o Does

    - o Frustrations

- ❖ **Personas**

  - How users engage with board games:

    - o Discovery

    - o Purchase Decision

    - o Playing Experience

    - o Post-Play Engagement



THINKS
- "Will this take forever to set up?"
- "Is this going to be worth the effort to learn?"
- "Tech is cool, but I don't want to depend on it."

FEELS
- Excited to try new games that stand out
- Embarrassed asking for rule explanations again
- Curious about how technology can make gameplay more fun

USER EMPATHY MAP

DOES
- Skims rulebooks or watches a quick how-to video instead
- Gets distracted if setup or rounds drag too long
- Leans on one person in the group to explain the rules

FRUSTRATIONS
- Tech features that break the immersion or feel unnecessary
- Feeling left out if others understand the game faster
- Games that look cool but end up being clunky or slow

### Results

The persona and empathy map I created shows that users love simple and easy things to understand while still having a sense of accomplishment

### Analysis & Conclusion

Players want connection, they enjoy games that are not too difficult to explain to others and can be done in little time, and the interaction with the game feels rewarding. This helped us define a clearer direction for our game. Technology features added should be supportive and not make the game harder. It needs to be engaging in a social matter and rewarding.



Alex, 22

Profile:
Alex is a university student who loves playing strategy board games with friends and family. He enjoys games that mix traditional and digital elements for a unique experience.

Goals
- Wants to play games that combine traditional gameplay with modern technology
- Enjoys games with high replay value
- Prefers intuitive games easy to learn
- Seeks games that can be played in person or online

"I love the classic feel of board games, but I'm always looking for something fresh."

Frustrations
- Dislikes board games with too many components
- Finds poor use of technology in games disruptive
- Annoyed by clunky apps or frequent updates

Tech Usage
- Frequently uses smartphone and tablet for game-related apps
- Comfortable with QR codes, NFCs, and apps that enhance gameplay
- Uses digital tools to track progress or interact with game elements

## 3. DEVELOP (Ideation Phase)

- Brainstorm solutions based on audience insights.

- Prototype different game ideas.

### Results

We brainstormed a bunch of ideas and ended up choosing a concept using updatable databases and nfcs to make the game dynamic and changeable in the future.

### Analysis & Conclusion

We wanted a game to play anywhere, no internet connection needed. We concluded an idea that combines tech and tradition in a natural way.

- Low-fidelity prototypes (paper sketches, digital wireframes).

- Conduct playtesting sessions with target audience.

- Gather feedback, iterate, and refine game mechanics based on user experience.

*Results*

We tested our prototypes ourselves first to define strategies, rules game play in general. We later gathered insights from users

*Analysis & Conclusion*

Most of the confusion that users had came from unclear rules and not enough visual guidance. We proceeded to update the rulebook and create visual cues within the design of the boardgame to make the users experience better.

# SWOT Analysis

I created a visual SWOT to analyse strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats when combining technology and boardgames.
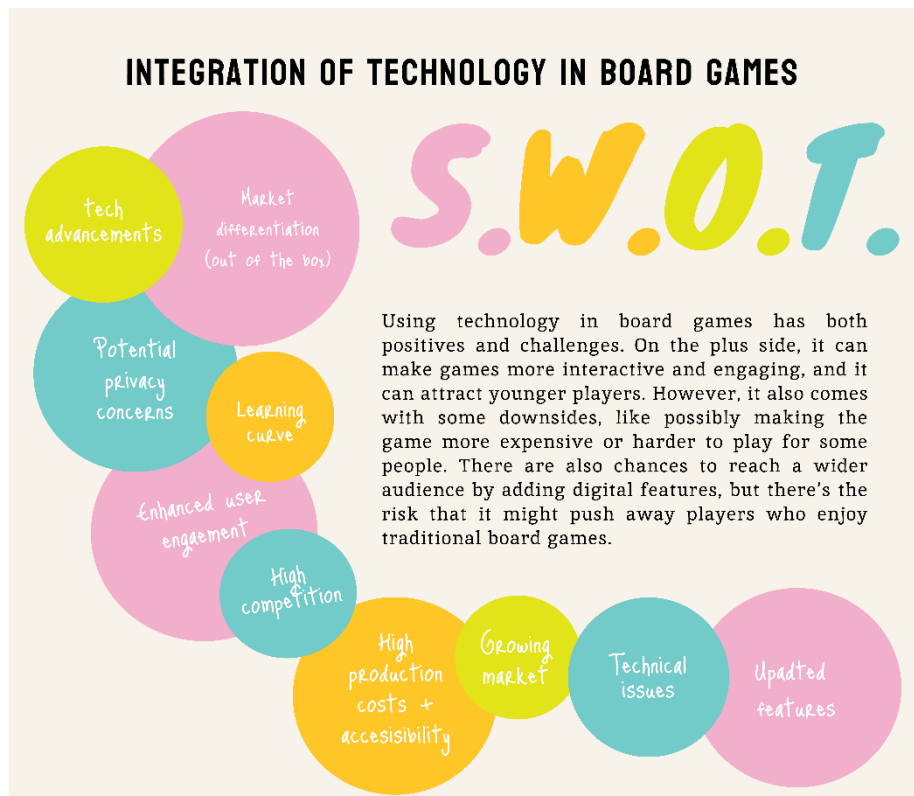


# Advisory Report

Every day, technology becomes more of our daily lives, so it only makes sense to integrate it in the creation of our Boardgame. This report looks at the benefits and challenges of adding tech features to board games and gives some advice on how to approach it.

1. *Find the Right Balance:* We need to find a way to incorporate tech in a way that enhances the game without losing the essence of a traditional board game.

2. *Prioritize Simplicity:* Keep the technology simple and easy to use, making sure the game remains fun for everyone even though our target audience is specifically Gen-Z.

3. *Use Feedback to Improve:* Collect feedback from stakeholders, teachers and our colleagues to see how players are interacting with the game and make improvements based on their experiences.

# Conclusions

Technology can bring a lot of new possibilities to board games, but it's important to approach it carefully. By focusing on simplicity and user experience, game designers can create an engaging and modern game that still feels familiar to board game fans.

# SCRUM

Because this project includes a lot of research and iterations, SCRUM provides a structured way for our team to manage tasks and keep track of feedback to adjust our ideas. By breaking our workload in sprints, we ensure continuous progress.

- o *Plan Sprints (every 1-2 Weeks)*
- o *Weekly Stand-ups (15 min): Quick updates on progress, roadblocks, and next steps.*
- o *Sprint Planning: Define what will be worked on in the upcoming week.*
- o *Retrospective: Reflect on what worked well and what needs improvement.*
- o *Track Progress (Teams)*
  - o *To Do*
  - o *In Progress*
  - o *Completed work*
- o *At the end of each Sprint, present results, test the product, and gather feedback.*