



# THE NEWSGAME DESIGN TOOLKIT

MAS.700 Future of News & Participatory Media

Stephen Suen | ssuen@mit.edu | @s2t3phen



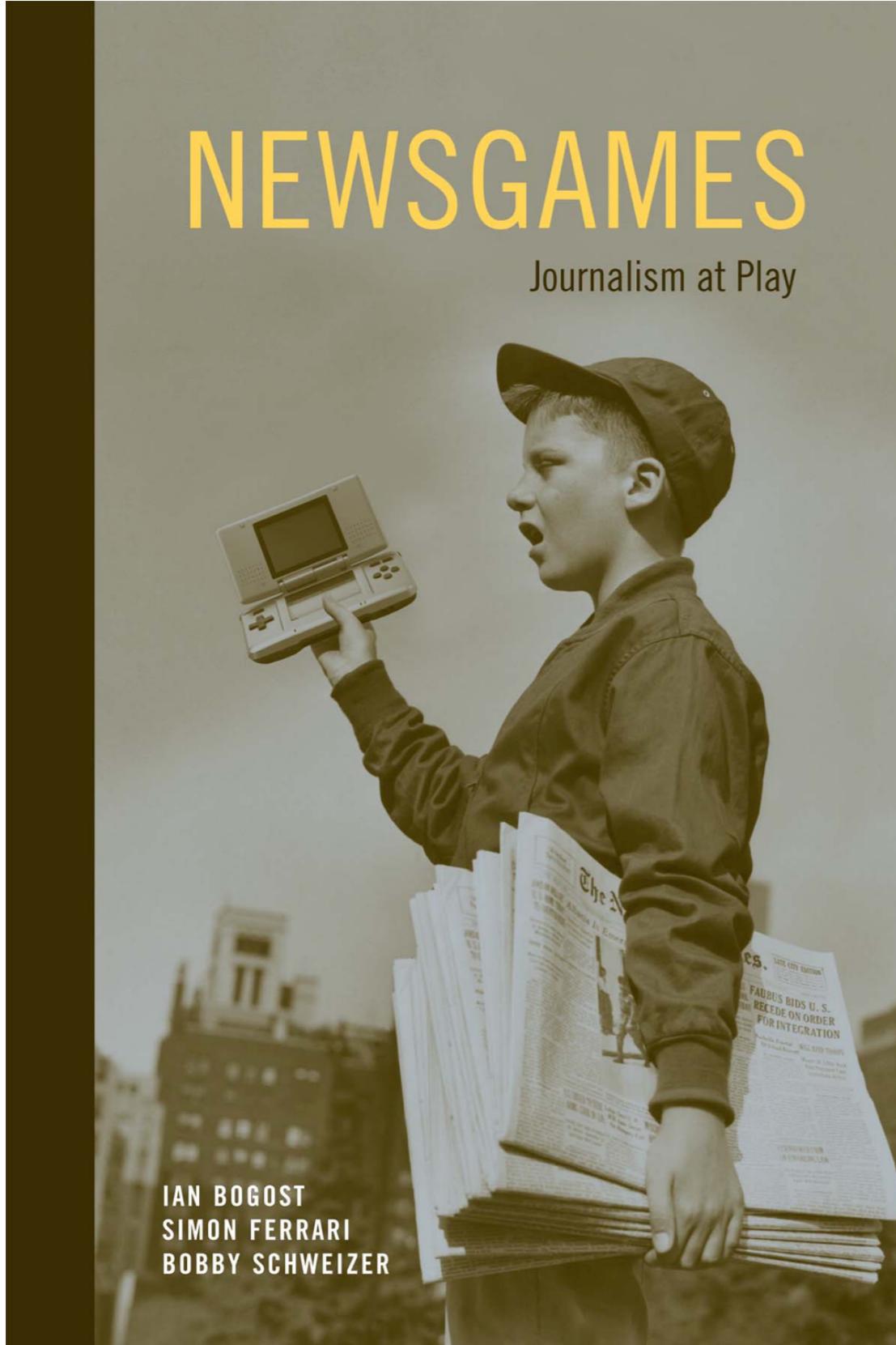
NEWSGAMES



May 6th-7th 2014 in Cologne, Germany



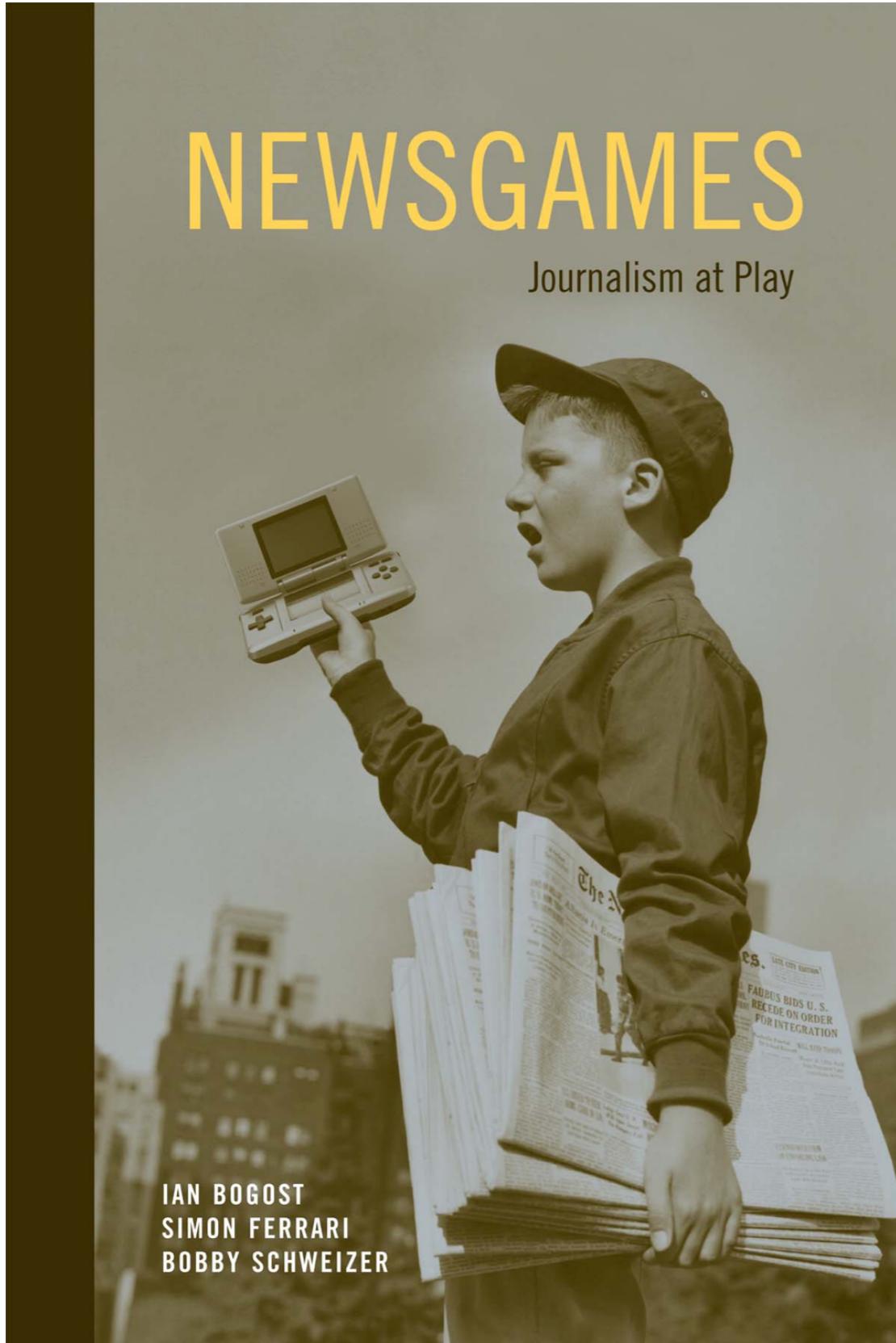
# NEWSGAMES



“Videogames can do good journalism, both as an independent medium for news and as a supplement to traditional... coverage.



NEWSGAMES



A **typology of news games:**  
current event games  
infographic games  
documentary games  
puzzle games  
literacy games  
community games



# NEWSGAMES

Leak video of Islamic terror group Boko Haram leader threatening to sell girls in the marketplace?

Get Hilary Clinton to Tweet support?

Ask Beyonce to Tweet support?

Arrange global news conference for Nigerian president to update on huge military operation?

LAUNCH FINAL TACTIC

NIGERIA

SEARCH

ENGAGE MEDIA

6 WEEKS LEFT

SUCCESS CHANCE

A typology of news games:

current event games

infographic games

documentary games

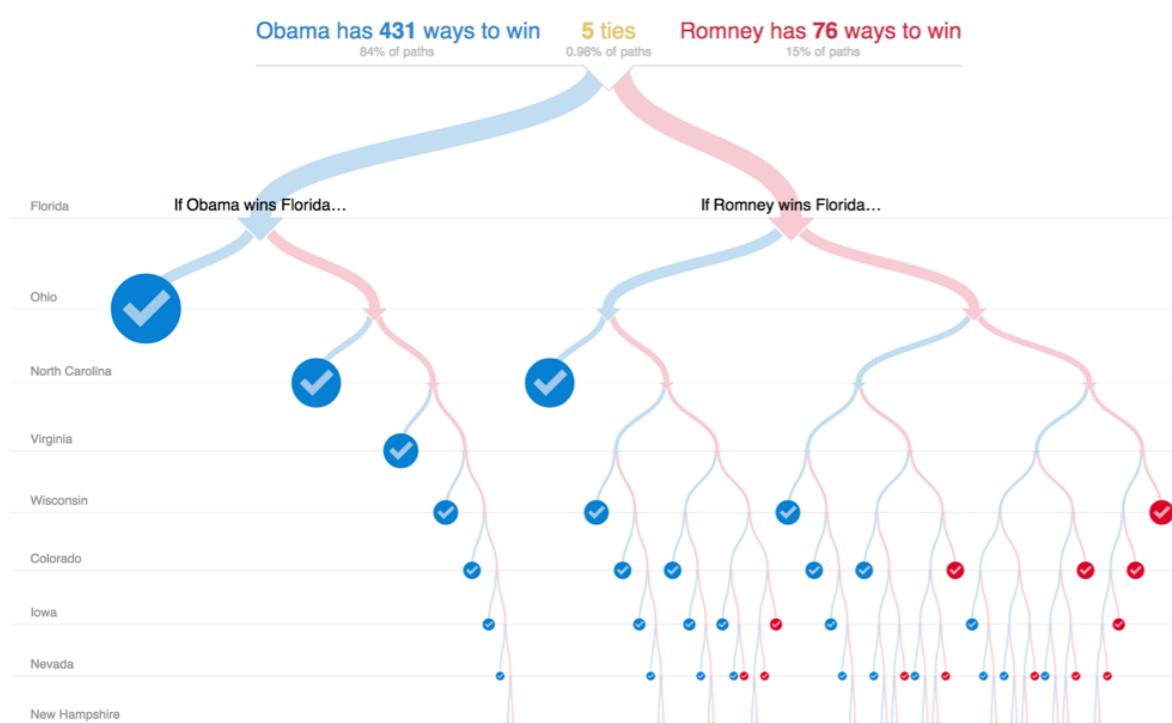
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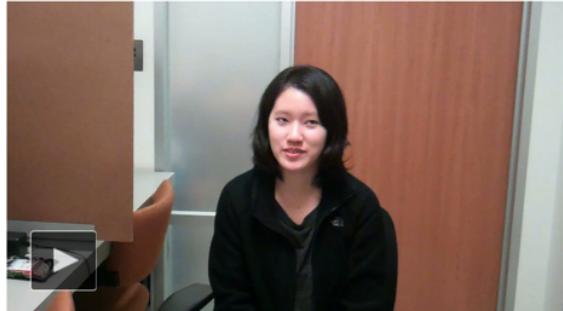
# NEWSGAMES

SCIENCE | QUIZ

SHARE

## Can You Spot the Liar?

Poker players might call it the “tell” — it’s the idea that your body language tells your questioners if the words you’re saying are actually true or false. These subjects in a University of Chicago study on body language and lying were asked several general questions — and then told off camera to lie or tell the truth when answering. Can you tell truth from falsehood? [\(Related Article\)](#) MARCH 23, 2014



Lying

Not lying



Lying

Not lying



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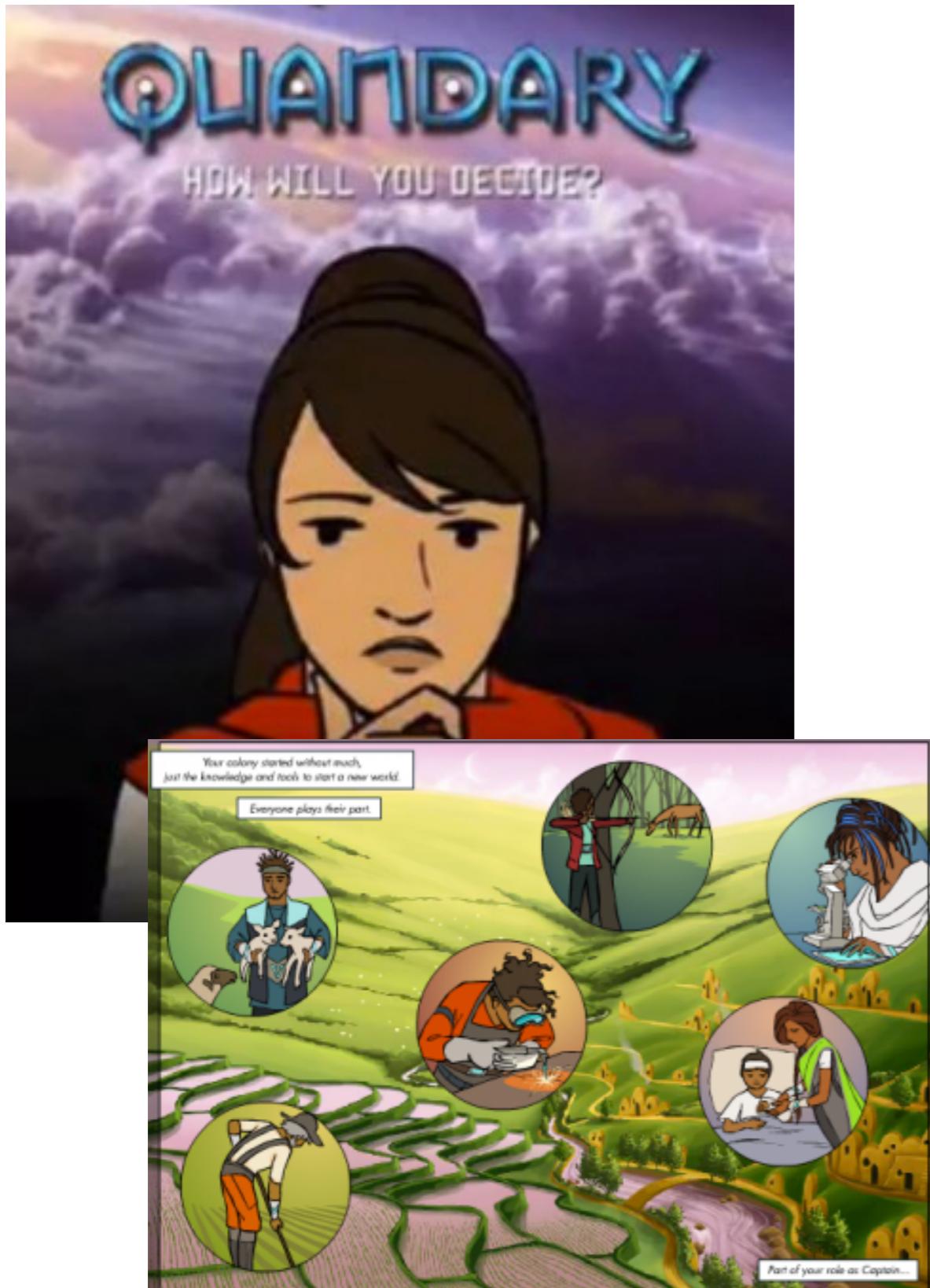
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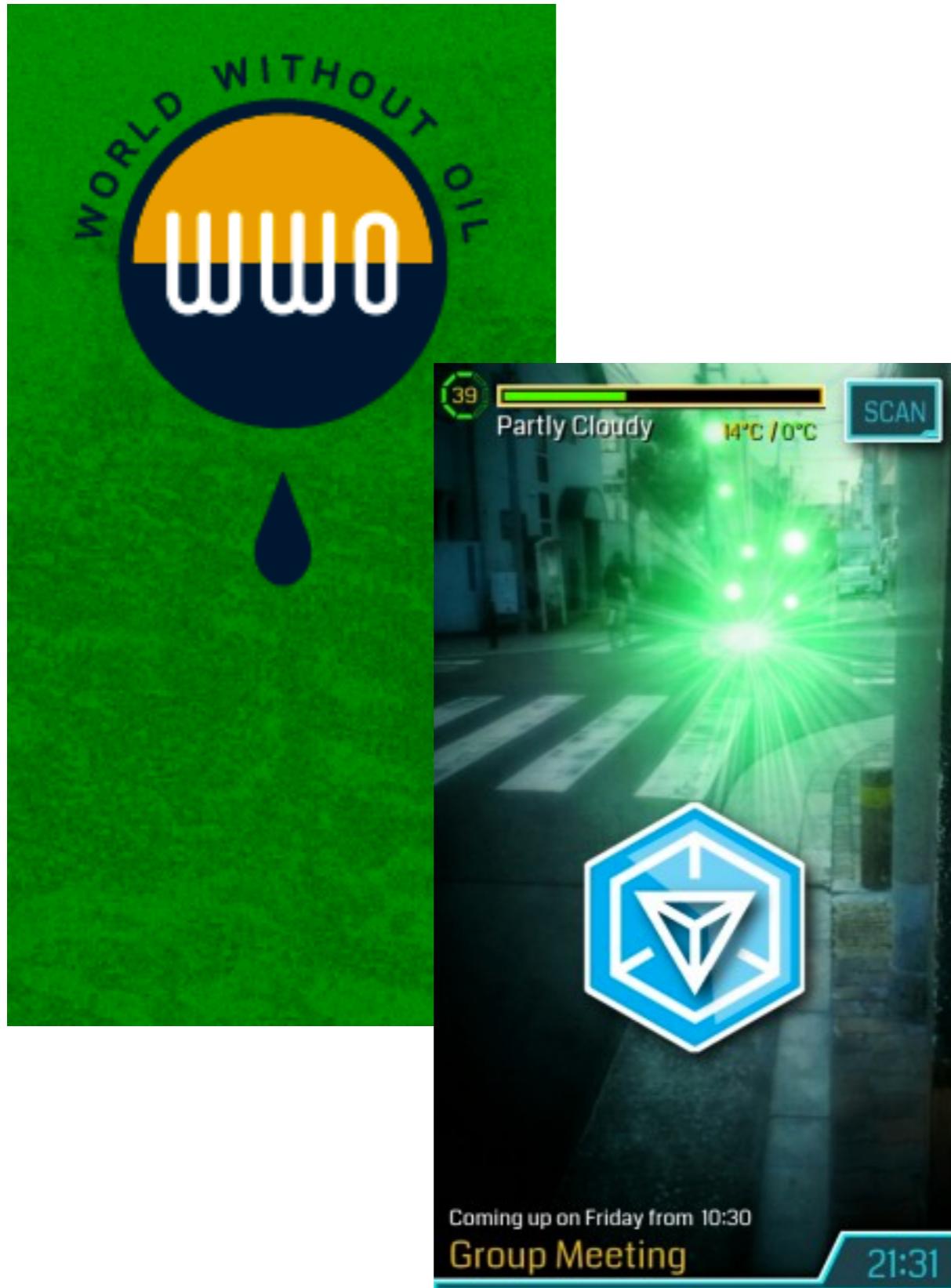
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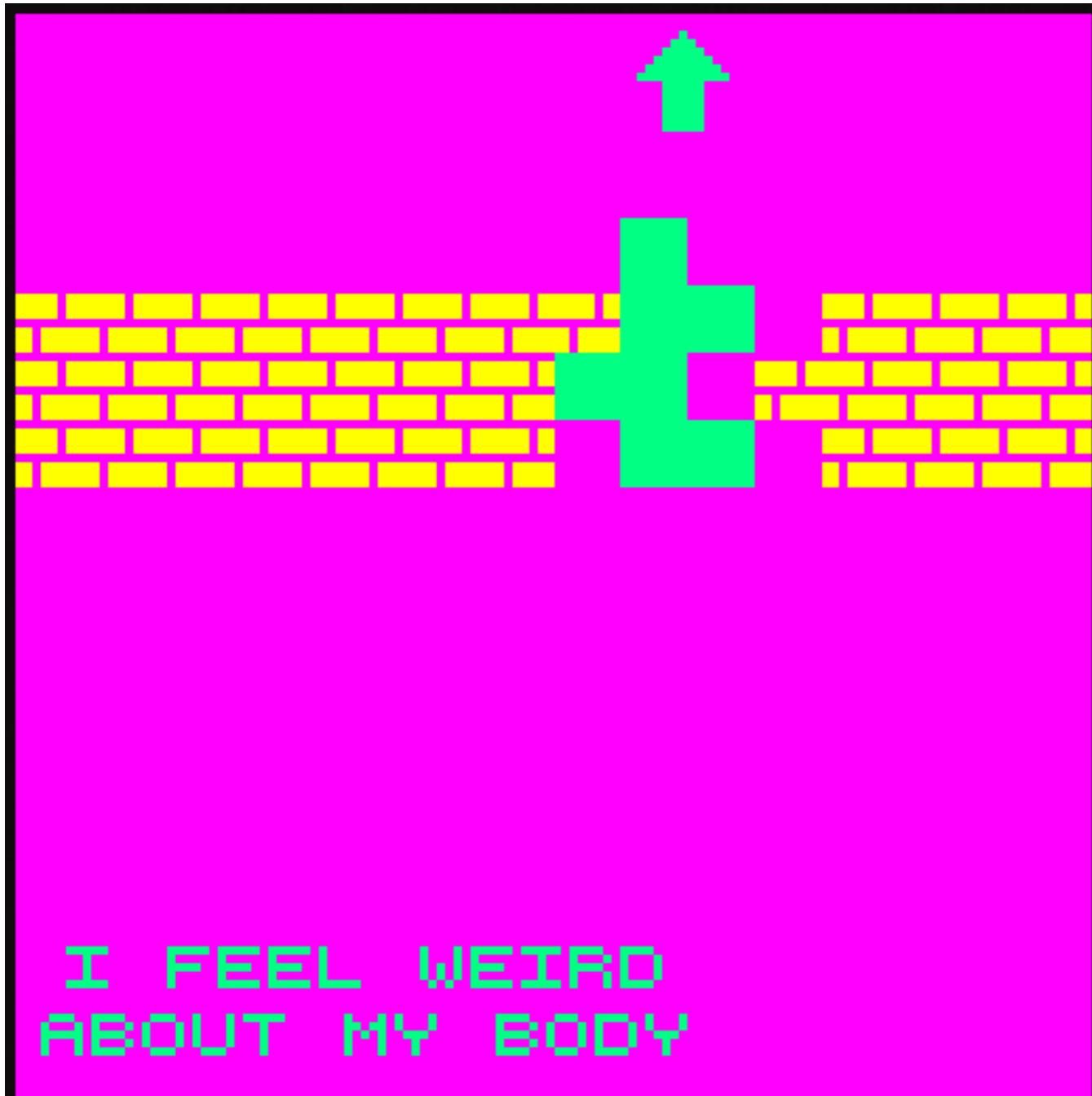
## THE POWER OF GAMES

*procedural rhetoric:*  
“games simulate  
how things work by  
constructing  
models people can  
interact with.”





## THE POWER OF GAMES



*personal games:* “games tell stories that communicate the values of their creators in a unique way: not just through their explicit content but through the logic of their design, and the systems they choose to model.”



# THE POWER OF GAMES



**Sisi Wei, NICAR '13**  
Fun  
Replayability  
Context



## TOWARDS A NEWSGAME METHODOLOGY

“

a system in which players engage in an  
artificial conflict, defined by rules,  
that results in a quantifiable outcome



# TOWARDS A NEWSGAME METHODOLOGY

conflict + rules = quantifiable outcome



# TOWARDS A NEWSGAME METHODOLOGY

conflict + rules = quantifiable outcome

**SYSTEMS**

<http://www.playsweatshop.com>



## TOWARDS A NEWSGAME METHODOLOGY

conflict + rules = quantifiable outcome

### SYSTEMS

<http://www.playsweatshop.com>

### EMPATHY

<http://www.richardhofmeier.com/cartlife>



## TOWARDS A NEWSGAME METHODOLOGY

conflict + rules = quantifiable outcome

### SYSTEMS

<http://www.playsweatshop.com>

### EMPATHY

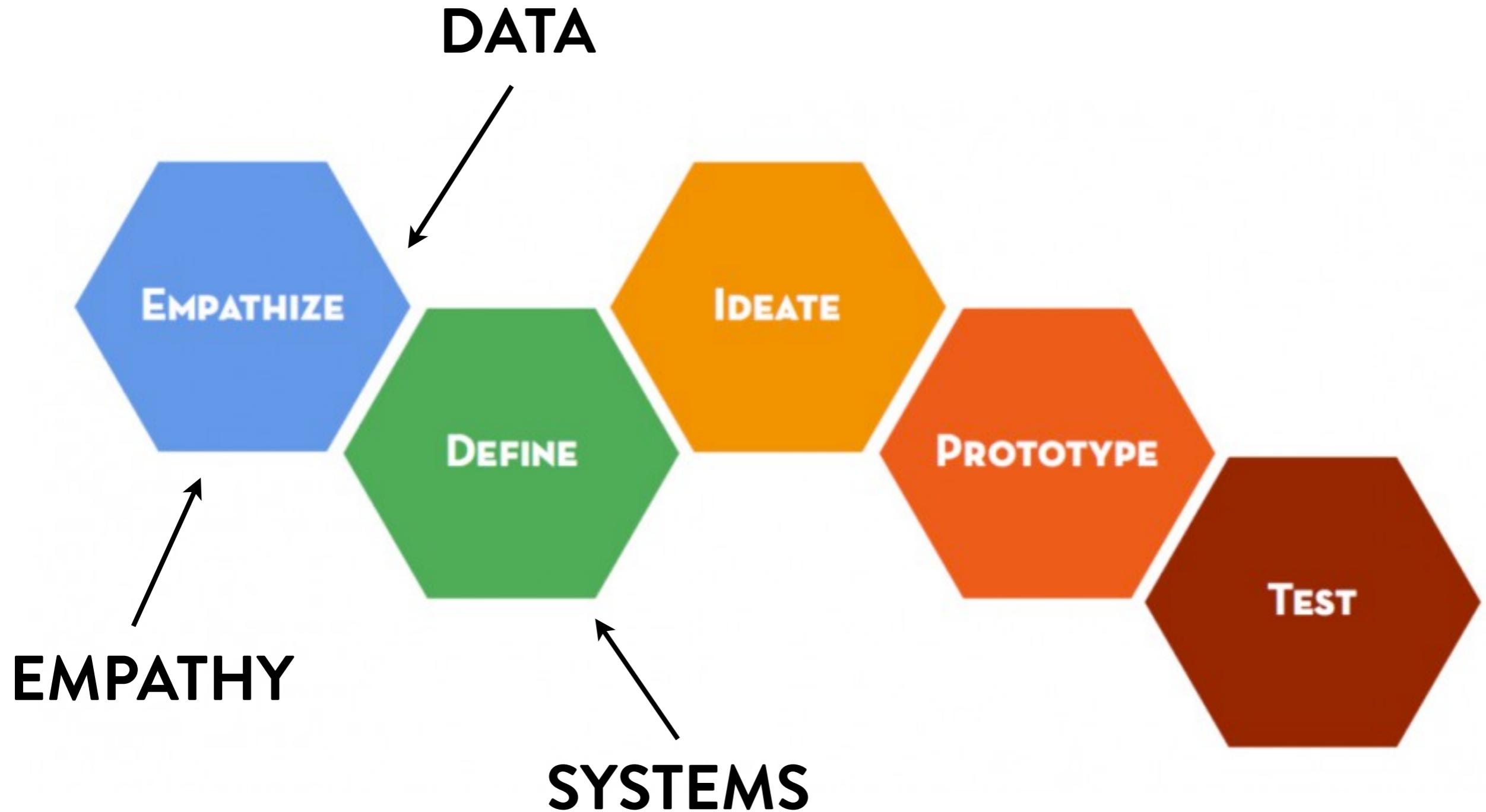
<http://www.richardhofmeier.com/cartlife>

### DATA

<https://projects.propublica.org/graphics/heartsaver>

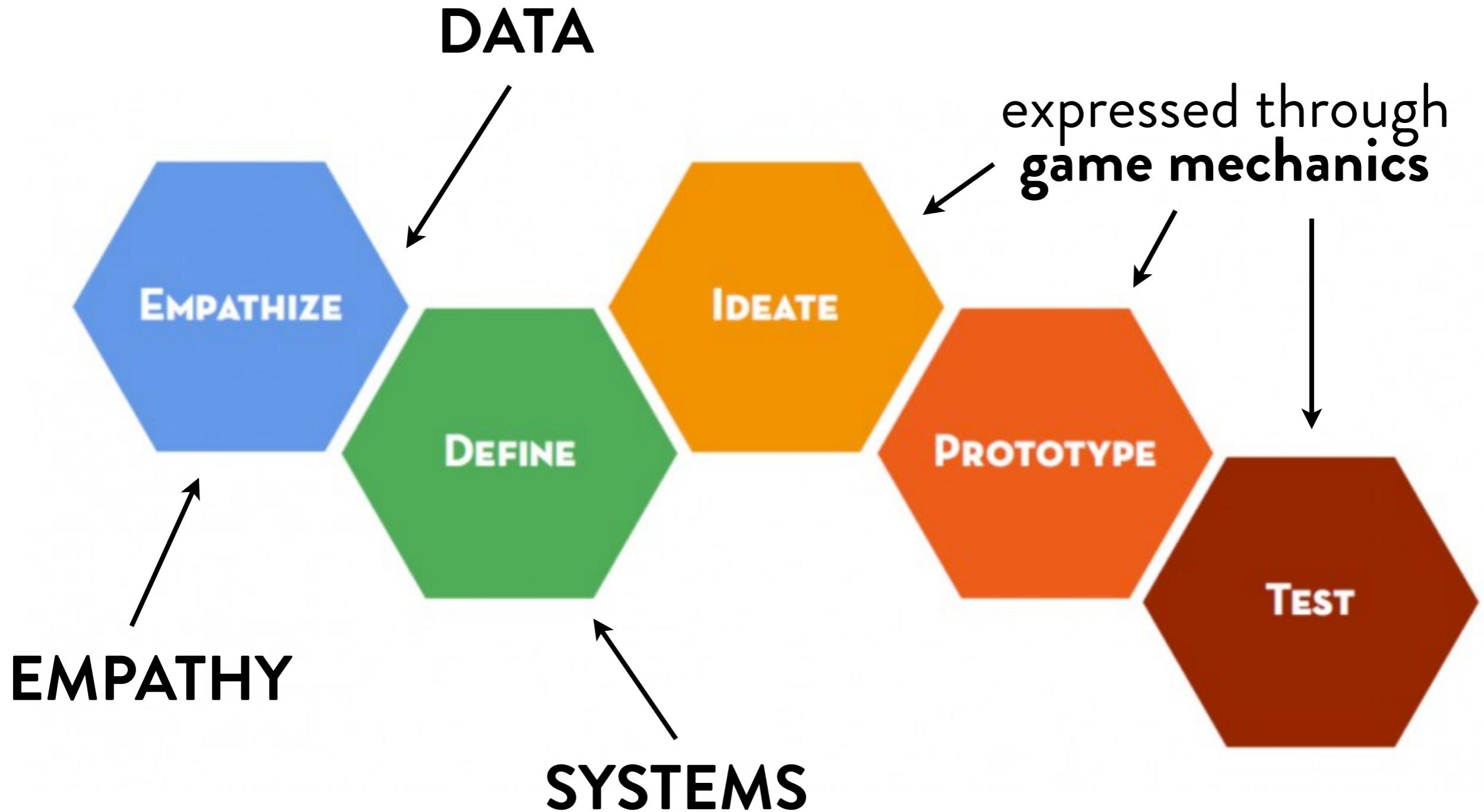


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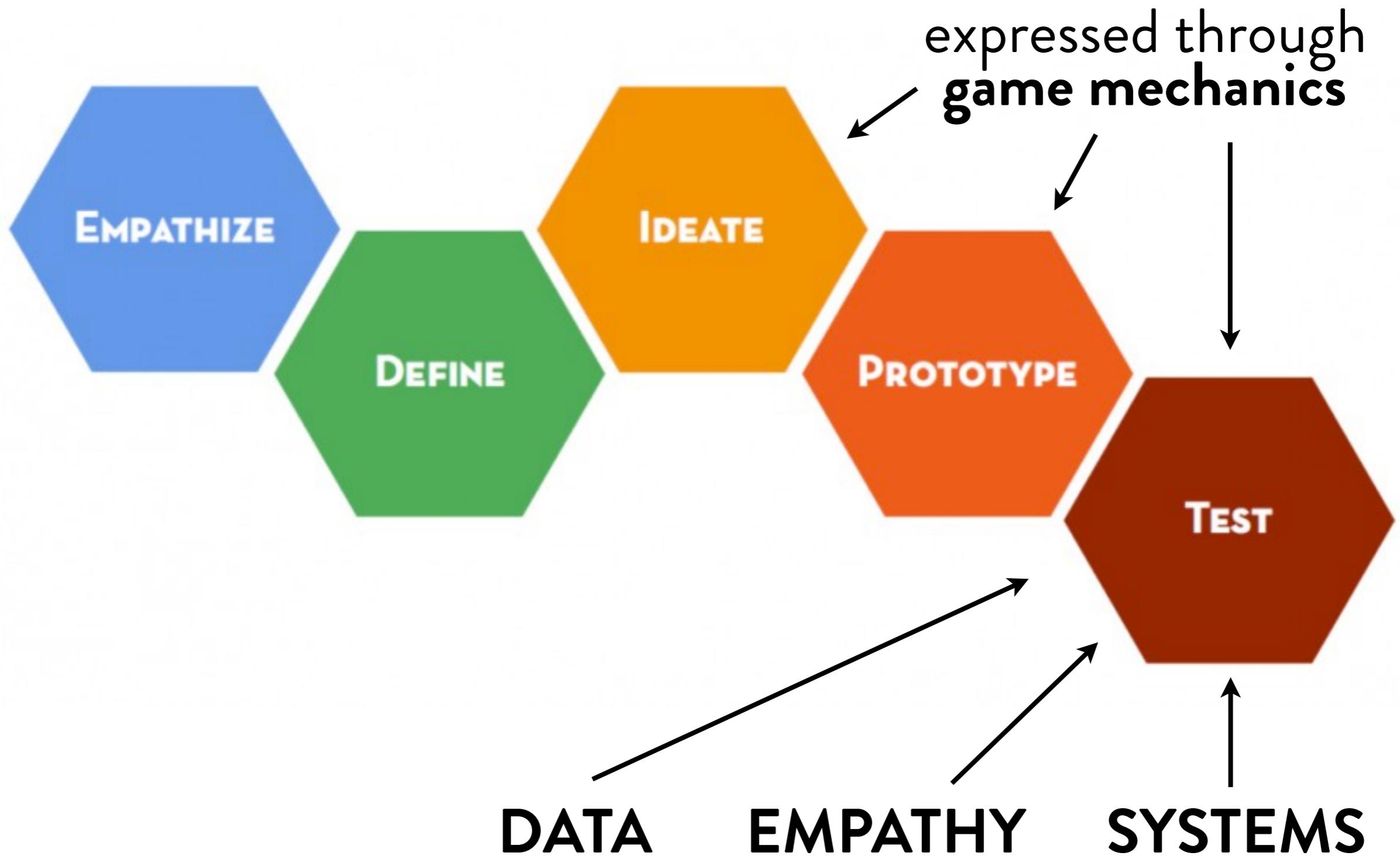


## TOWARDS A NEWSGAME METHODOLOGY





# TOWARDS A NEWSGAME METHODOLOGY





## TOWARDS A NEWSGAME METHODOLOGY

Games are not a way to “trick” people into consuming content, learning, engaging with serious issues, etc.

**Games are inherently valuable as a form of storytelling.  
Let's demystify them.**



Grand Theft Calculus



# THE PRODUCT

## Data Journalism Handbook 1.0 BETA

[Buy a copy](#)[Get Updates](#)[Feedback](#)

Google™ Custom Search



### Front Matter

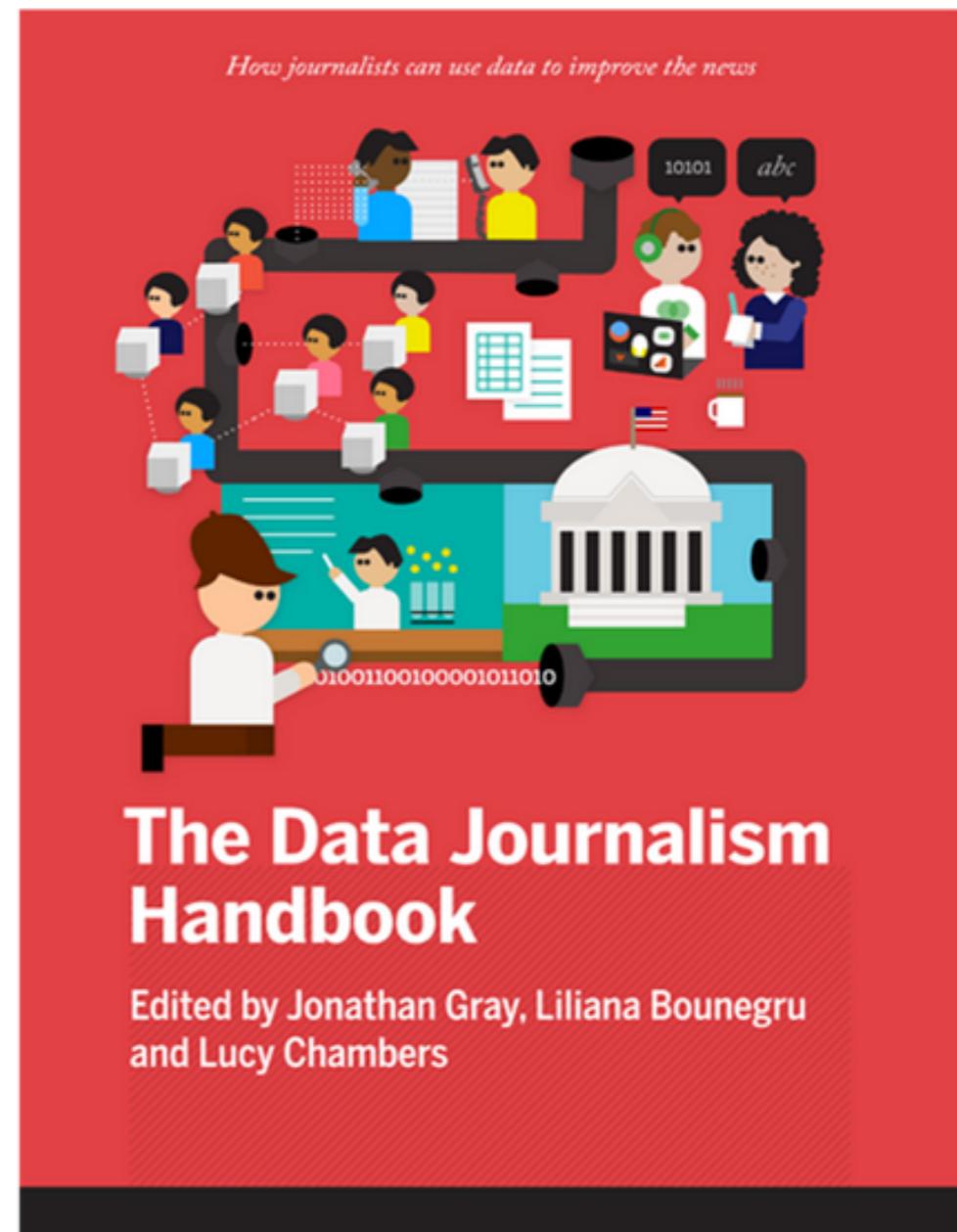
- For the Great Unnamed
- Contributor List
- What This Book Is (And What It Isn't)
- The Handbook At A Glance

### Introduction

- What Is Data Journalism?
- Why Journalists Should Use Data
- Why Is Data Journalism Important?
- Some Favorite Examples
- Data Journalism in Perspective

### In The Newsroom

- The ABC's Data Journalism Play
- Data Journalism at the BBC
- How the News Apps Team at Chicago Tribune Works





## THE PRODUCT

Practical, abstracted methodology to  
designing newsgames

Open-source contributions – hub to  
connect journalists and news nerds  
with game developers

Directory of case studies, interviews,  
and resources



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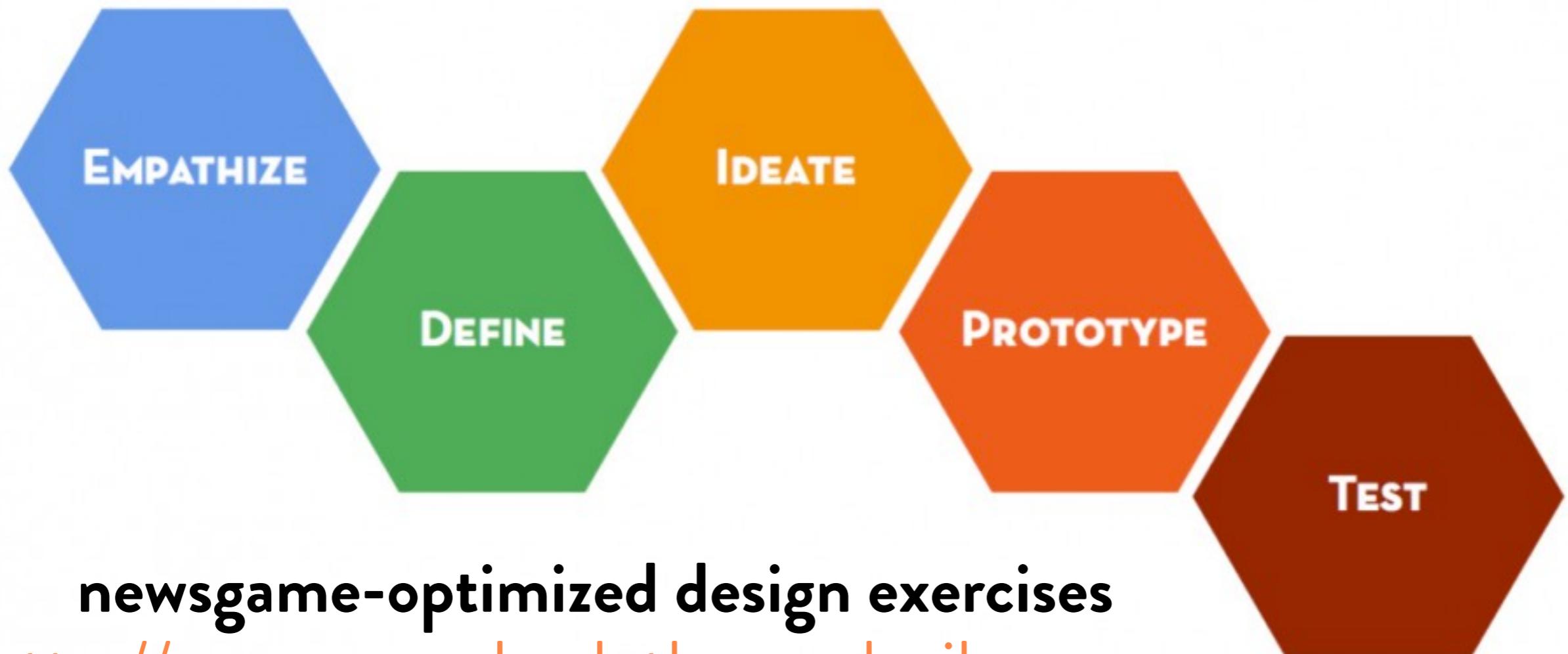
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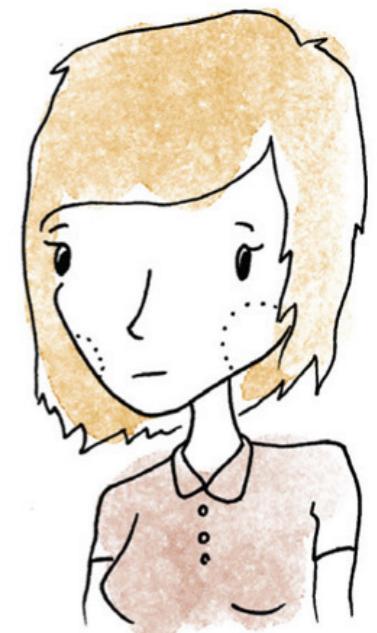


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**WEREWOLF**



**VILLAGER**

**mechanical metaphors**  
narrative frames, topics → gameplay mechanics



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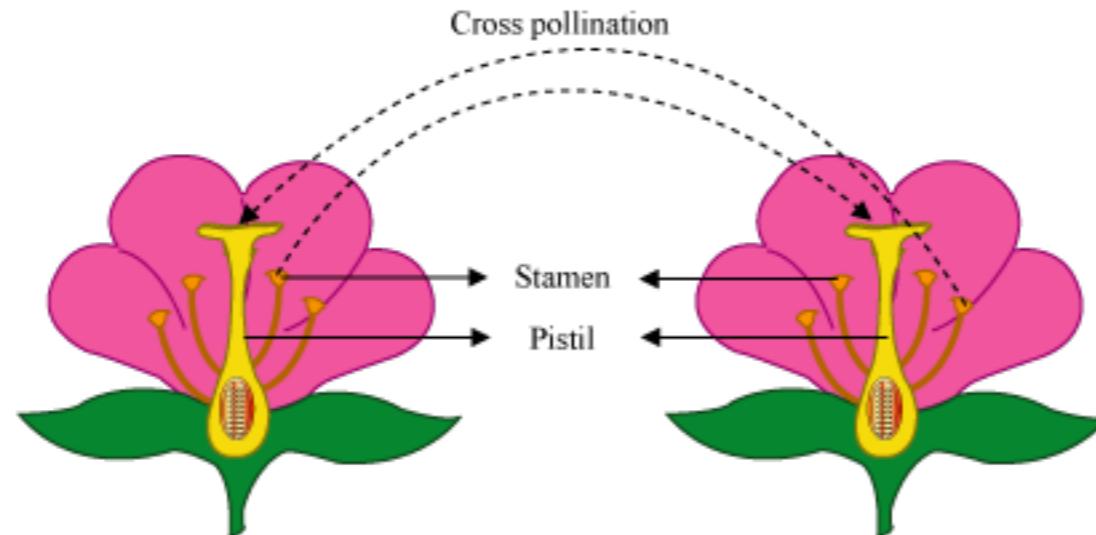
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## THE NEWSGAME DESIGN TOOLKIT

a game design methodology for the newsroom



### It's dangerous to go alone! Take this.

Welcome to **The Newsgame Design Toolkit**. This site was created in Spring 2014 as my final project for Ethan Zuckerman's [Future of News and Participatory Media](#) class at MIT. Here, I explore the concept and specific instances of the newsgame, and lay out a basic methodology for creating newsgames. By and large, this is a resource on game design, not game development, but feel free to check the Resources section for more technical assistance. Moreover, this is an opinionated guide that subscribes to a particular vision of the newsgame as well as certain design methodologies.

#### INTRODUCTION

[Defining Newsgames](#)  
[What's in a Game?](#)

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#### METHODOLOGY

[Coming soon...](#)

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#### CASE STUDIES

[Coming soon...](#)



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<http://newsgam.es>