

COMP08035 Computer Games Design

Week 01 Lecture - Introduction to the Module

COMP08035 Computer Games Design

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- Delivers module at Hamilton campus



Schedule

- 5 hours per week class time*
- 12 teaching/assessment weeks in total
- Submit Game Design Document week 12
- Pitching takes place weeks 11/12
- Submit final documentation week 12



* It's up to you how much additional time you put in

COMP08035 Computer Games Design - Teaching and Assessment Schedule

Week No	Lecture Topic	Team Tasks
1	Introduction to the module.	Form teams. Notify your Lecturer of team membership. Discuss the tasks involved in the module, and what needs to be done for the assessments. Agree on who will be doing what within the project. Discuss and record a plan of what needs to happen when to complete the module successfully. Set up your individual personal blogs and make the initial entries.
2	Game design concepts and tools of the trade	Set up a cloud space for the team to store and share files and to work collaboratively. Brainstorm and discuss game ideas. Record your thoughts in some form, including ideas that you discard. Why did you discard them? Agree on the best game idea for your team. What makes it the best idea? Make personal blog entries recording your progress.
3	The game setting and characters.	Nail down one single design idea that everyone agrees with. Document it. Record progress in your personal blogs.
4	Storytelling and narrative	Run through a presentation of your game idea with your Lecturer to make sure you're on the right track. Record progress in your personal blogs.
5	Gameplay	Allocate individual tasks and completion targets to team members. Work on researching and writing your Game Design Document/Pitch. Record progress in your personal blogs.
6	Cognitive flow and creating the user experience	Work on researching and writing your Game Design Document/Pitch. Record progress in your personal blogs.
7	Design documents and pitches	Work on researching and writing your Game Design Document/Pitch. Record progress in your personal blogs.
8	Fun in games design	Work on researching and writing your Game Design Document/Pitch. Record progress in your personal blogs.
9	Game balancing	Work on researching and writing your Game Design Document/Pitch. Book a time slot for your team pitch. Record progress in your personal blogs.
10		Work on researching and writing your Game Design Document/Pitch. Record progress in your personal blogs.
11		Deliver your Pitch this week or next week. Finalise your Game Design Document. Record progress in your personal blogs.
12	Deadline	Final week. Deliver your Pitch if not done last week. Make the final entry in your personal blogs. Submit your Game Design Document, Peer Review forms and pdf version of personal blogs via Moodle.

***One of the most difficult tasks
people can perform, however
much others may despise it, is
the invention of a good game...***

(C G Jung 1936)



Jung, C. G. (1936) The Concept of the Collective Unconscious. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Collected Works 9. Par 91.



What Is Game Design?

- Game Design is not the same as Game Development
- Game Design is not Game Programming
- Game Design is not Game Art
- A poorly-designed game is a poor game, no matter how well it was developed
- Art, Science or Craft? – Differing views among game designers

Design vs Develop



The skill of game design is, so to speak, invisible. It looks as if anyone should be able to do it. After all, it's just a matter of writing a simple story, knocking up a design document or two, and telling the programmers what you want, right? No. That's about as realistic as expecting that anyone who can use a hammer and a saw should be able to produce a violin.
(Rollings & Adams 2003 p6)

What's The Module About



- Thinking about games like a game designer rather than a game player or a programmer
- Learning from some of the vast amount of research and writing that has been done on game design
- Practising some of the techniques that are used in industry

Reading And Other Research

- You are responsible for your own learning;
- You will have access to the resources you need, but only you can decide how much time and effort is required for your success;
- What you get from the module is in direct proportion to what you give to the module.



Module Assessment

Both individual and team-based assessment in three parts, each worth one third of the overall mark for the module:

1. a detailed game design document;
2. a pitch to potential financial backers of the game development project; and
3. a personal blog of work done, issues met, problems solved, etc.



Examples



Examples of game design documents and pitches are on Moodle. More extensive information on game design documents can be found in some of the textbooks in the Recommended Reading list, particularly Rollings & Adams 2003.

Peer Review

For the team-based activities a peer review mechanism will be used which allows each team member to assess the contribution of themselves and the other members of the team. This forms part of the marking for those activities.



Marking And Feedback



The lecturer will aim to mark and give feedback within a week of work being submitted. Early hand-in is not encouraged as the project takes time to develop and allow time to consider different strategies and approaches.

The work will be marked by Jim Scullion (Ayr and Paisley) or Gerry Creechan (Hamilton). Marking will be checked by another academic from the School of Computing. Results are also checked by an External Examiner from another university, and then finally approved by the Subject Panel. Only at that stage is the mark final, and you can check it on Banner.

What If I Don't Pass?

It's your responsibility to check your results on Banner, and to notify your lecturer if you require a resit.

You will be given a resit opportunity in July/August.



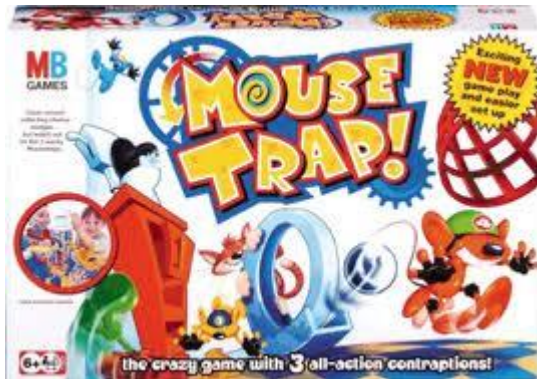
Student Engagement



- It's University policy that you attend every timetabled event for the module
- You can be withdrawn if you don't attend – detailed procedure on University website
- Make sure that you sign the attendance sheet at every class
- **If you know that you won't be able to attend a class, contact the School office by email (computing@uws.ac.uk) or phone (Paisley 0141 848 3330 Ayr/Hamilton 01698 894431) beforehand.**



What Is A Game?



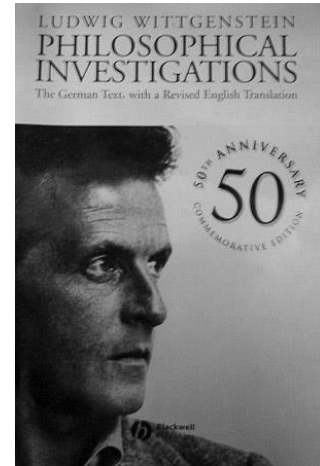


Wikipedia

- A game is structured playing, usually undertaken for enjoyment and sometimes used as an educational tool. Games are distinct from work, which is usually carried out for remuneration, and from art, which is more often an expression of aesthetic or ideological elements. However, the distinction is not clear-cut, and many games are also considered to be work (such as professional players of spectator sports/games) or art (such as jigsaw puzzles or games involving an artistic layout such as Mahjong, solitaire, or some video games).
- Key components of games are **goals, rules, challenge, and interaction**. Games generally involve mental or physical stimulation, and often both. Many games help develop practical skills, serve as a form of exercise, or otherwise perform an educational, simulational, or psychological role. According to Chris Crawford, the requirement for player interaction puts activities such as jigsaw puzzles and solitaire "games" into the category of puzzles rather than games.
- Attested as early as 2600 BC, games are a universal part of human experience and present in all cultures. The Royal Game of Ur, Senet, and Mancala are some of the oldest known games.

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Ludwig Wittgenstein was probably the first academic philosopher to address the definition of the word “game”. In his *Philosophical Investigations* (*Philosophische Untersuchungen*) (1953), **Wittgenstein demonstrated that the elements of games, such as play, rules, and competition, all fail to adequately define what games are.** Wittgenstein concluded that people apply the term game to a range of disparate human activities that bear to one another only what one might call family resemblances.





Roger Caillois

French sociologist Roger Caillois, in his book *Les jeux et les hommes* (Games and Men) (1957), defined a game as an activity that must have the following characteristics:

fun: the activity is chosen for its light-hearted character

separate: it is circumscribed in time and place

uncertain: the outcome of the activity is unforeseeable

non-productive: participation does not accomplish anything useful

governed by rules: the activity has rules that are different from everyday life

fictitious: it is accompanied by the awareness of a different reality

Chris Crawford



Computer game designer Chris Crawford (2003) attempted to define the term “game” using a series of dichotomies:

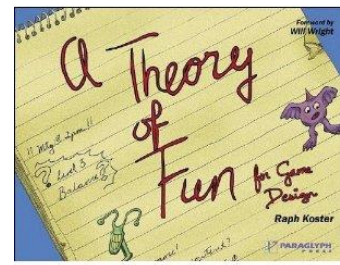
- Creative expression is art if made for its own beauty, and entertainment if made for money.
- A piece of entertainment is a plaything if it is interactive. Movies and books are cited as examples of non-interactive entertainment.
- If no goals are associated with a plaything, it is a toy. (Crawford notes that by his definition, (a) a toy can become a game element if the player makes up rules, and (b) The Sims and SimCity are toys, not games.) If it has goals, a plaything is a challenge.
- If a challenge has no "active agent against whom you compete," it is a puzzle; if there is one, it is a conflict. (Crawford admits that this is a subjective test. Video games with noticeably algorithmic artificial intelligence can be played as puzzles; these include the patterns used to evade ghosts in Pac-Man.)
- Finally, if the player can only outperform the opponent, but not attack them to interfere with their performance, the conflict is a competition. (Competitions include racing and figure skating.) However, if attacks are allowed, then the conflict qualifies as a game.

Crawford's definition may thus be rendered as: an interactive, goal-oriented activity, with active agents to play against, in which players (including active agents) can interfere with each other.

But...

Video games are art, and they deserve the exact same First Amendment protections as books, comics, plays and all the rest, the U.S. Supreme Court said in June 2011 in a ruling about the sale of violent video games in California.

Raph Koster



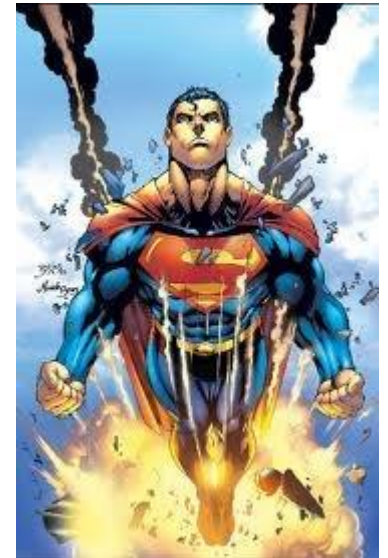
Games are puzzles to solve, just like everything else we encounter in life. They are on the same order as learning to drive a car, or picking up the mandolin, or learning your multiplication tables.

...The only real difference between games and reality is that the stakes are lower with games (Koster 2005 p34)

Koster, R., 2005. *A theory of fun for game design*, Scottsdale AZ: Paraglyph Press.

The Perfect Game Designer

- Imagination
- Technical Awareness
- Analytical Competence
- Mathematical Competence
- Aesthetic Competence
- General Knowledge
- Writing Skills
- Drawing Skills
- The Ability to Compromise



(Rollings & Adams 2003 pp18-27)

Reading And Research Activities

- Read through the Week 01 materials;
- Check the External Links;
- Look at the Recommended Reading list and start your reading around this topic – Koster 2005 is suggested as a start point; and
- Start putting together your own individual list of books, websites, articles etc that you find useful or interesting

Your Team



- Agree how and when you will meet/communicate
- Discuss the tasks involved in the module, and what needs to be done for the assessments
- Agree on who will be doing what within the project
- Discuss and record a plan of what needs to be done to complete successfully
- Set up your individual blogs and make the initial entries.

Today

- Nobody leaves until they are part of a team of no less than two but no more than four people
- Record who's in your team and give a note to your Lecturer
- Exchange contact information among team members