CMS.608 / CMS.864 Game Design
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Game Design

CMS.608/CMS.864

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About today

- Meaningful play (the *what*)

- Iterative game design (the *how*)

- Exercise in iterative game design

Everybody here is a game designer

- Change rules in board games.
- More money to start with in Monopoly.
- Card game variations.
- Change the playing field in soccer.
- Pretend to be somebody else.

What is game design?

- About the player experience. (The player should have the fun.)

- Challenging the player in a pleasurable way.

- Design a thing and design an experience.

- Paradoxes: Many experiences from the same fixed set of rules.

Two gods (according to Chris Crawford)

- **Storyteller:** Fly bird, fly. Blow wind, blow.

- **Designer of the laws of nature:** Birds *can* fly, wind *can* blow, gravity. (This is game design.)

OK, but what are you designing?

- Good game designs results in what?

Meaningful Play

- Salen & Zimmerman

- Meaningful play: When relation between **action** and **outcome** is **discernable** and **integrated**

Game design documents
Tim Ryan: *The Anatomy of a Design Document* **(1999)**

- Introduction (a few lines)
- Background (optional – other relevant information)
- Description (describe the game to the play as "you … experience, do etc…")
- Key features (what stands out)
- Genre
- Platforms
- Concept art (perhaps)
- !Target group

How to make games

- 1977 – ca. 1990: Just start coding
- 1990 – ca. 2002: Design document up front
- 2002 – present: Prototype and iterate

Mark Cerny's *Method*

Mark Cerny & Michael John: *Game Development Myth vs. Method* **(2002)**

Myths:

1. Scheduling is possible
2. Don't throw out good work
3. Milestones
4. Alpha = first playable
5. Killing a project is bad
6. The bigger the design document, the better
7. The consumer is king

Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see Cerny, Mark, and John, Michael. "Game Development Myth vs. Method." *Game Developer* 9 (June 2002): 32-36.

Iterative Game Design

Zimmerman: *Play as Research*

1. Come up with a basic **idea**.
2. Implement a prototype that demonstrates the idea.
3. Playtest it.
4. Revise.
5. Repeat

Iteration wins

A Very Short Development Cycle (20 mins). 4:15

1. Start with Rock Paper Scissors
2. Play it
3. Make changes
4. Repeat <u>at least 3 times</u>.

- What did you try? How did it work?

What did you try? How did it work?