

# Game Design as Gameplay

Masterstudium:  
Medieninformatik

Clemens Mautner Markhof

Technische Universität Wien  
Institut für Gestaltungs- und Wirkungsforschung  
Arbeitsbereich: Human Computer Interaction  
Betreuer: Ao.Univ.Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr.techn. Peter Purgathofer

## NEW GAME DESIGN CHALLENGES

The recent success of video games that focus on creating content, rules and new solutions instead of just playing-through them reveal that the current research on game design and theory needs to be adapted. The mechanics behind these games are yet unknown territory. In our thesis we identify and analyse game features, mechanics and dynamics that transform the process of creating the content and rules of a game into a series of player's challenges.

### What is the state of the art?

We studied game literature about mechanics, dynamics and meta games.

### How important are social interactions?

We analysed the influence of social interaction features on games, mechanics and dynamics.

### Which games feature game design as gameplay elements?

We played and reviewed games from the past and present to analyse which game design parts player can change, influence and replace.

STATE OF THE ART

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

GAMES

"Game design is the process of creating the content and rules of a game"  
Brathwaite & Schreiber

"Gameplay is a one or more casually linked series of challenges in a simulated environment."  
Rollings

# GAME DESIGN AS GAMEPLAY

Transforming the process of creating content and rules of a game into a series of player's challenges

## THREE CATEGORIES

**Integration:** defines games that use game design as gameplay elements as part of their actual play. Consequently most if not all players use them.

**Extension:** describes games that offer the user the possibility to extend the core gameplay with more of the same in-game. The related game design as gameplay elements aren't required to finish the game or even be used by the player. It's an extra and appeals only to some users. Usually these options are touched after you have gained experience with the main game.

**Modification:** game design as gameplay parts are applied outside of the regular game and are not part of the actual game. Often you also need third party applications and additional knowledge to use them. There is no in-game guidance. Consequently only a minor part will ever make use of this option.

## CREATIVITY AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Social interaction is sharing, comparing and discussing any in-game experience with other users.

The more time you spend creating an experience, the more important are social interactions to keep you engaged.

## CREATE & ACHIEVE DYNAMICS

What we experience by playing game design as gameplay games is more than just exploring the world and building new levels. It's about exploring the boundaries of the game, use it in unexpected ways, create incredible complex levels, and thinking about the most impossible drawings and solutions. It's about creating and achieving something. You create something with the provided tools and achieve not only mastery and victory, but new solutions, new items, new rules, new stories, and much more.

## USER ACTIONS

**Create New Content:** you can add for example new levels, new items by combining existing in-game items, or create new missions.

**Create New Solutions:** you can create new approaches for in-game challenges. You have a huge degree of freedom. The path is the goal.

**Create New Stories:** modify the mission story or change the game's theme. This user action is often used along modifications.

**Create New Games:** with the right tools you can create your own games within or outside the game. You can make use of all the possibilities the in-game engine offers you. Sometimes you can even create games of another genre than the base game.

## MECHANICS OF CREATION

**Add Content:** draw or write new forms and objects and add them to the level.

**Open Solutions:** there is not a predefined solution. Player have the tools to create the right solution. Hardcoded solutions are replaced by feature vectors you have to simulate with your creations.

**Stack Together:** in-game objects can be stacked together to build new creations or reach the mission goal. It's the same mechanic Lego made so popular. Also actions and behaviours can be combined to create for example new attack patterns for boss fights.

**Theme It:** recreate popular movies, games, or stories. Usually this is realized by providing paint and texture tools.

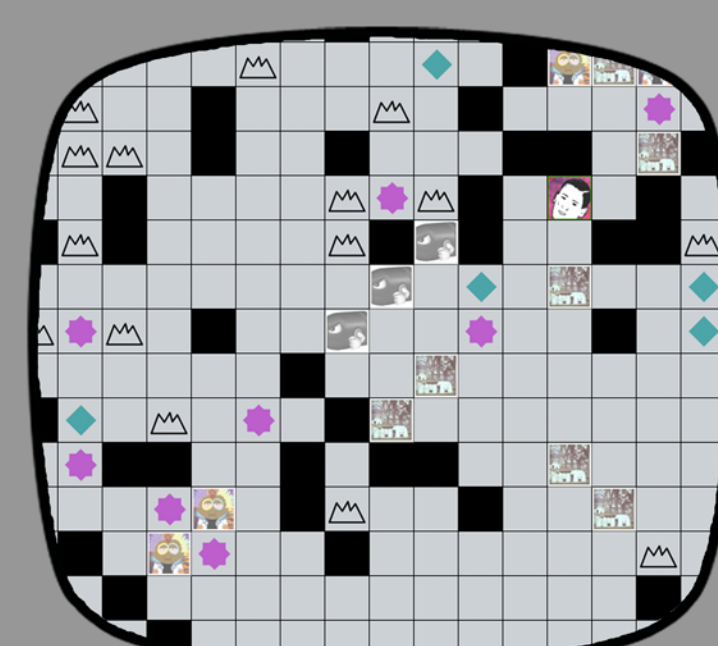
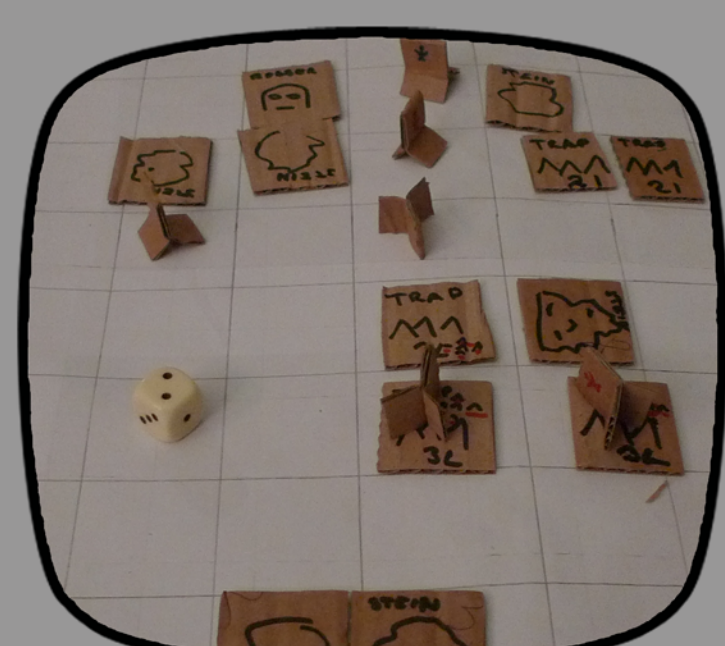
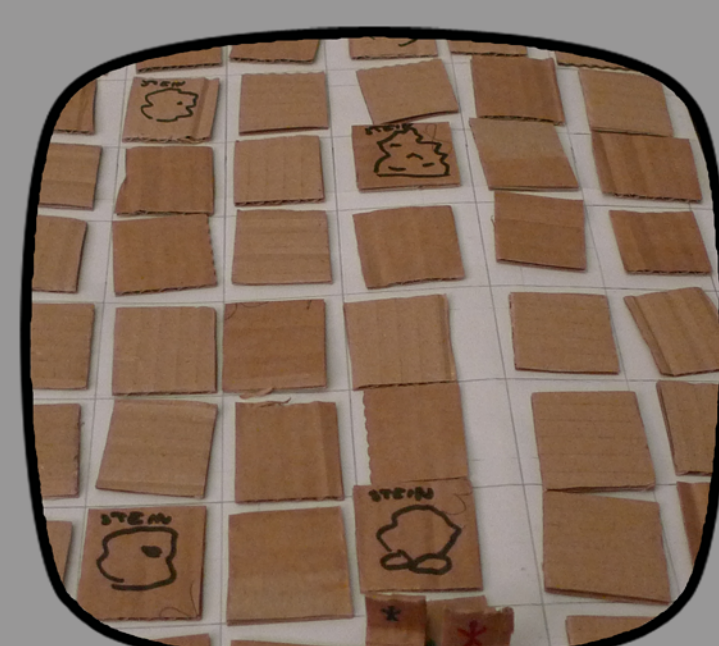
THREE CATEGORIES

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

USER ACTIONS

CREATE & ACHIEVE

MECHANICS OF CREATION



EXPLORATIVE PROTOTYPES

1 - 5 PLAYERS

