

Tabletop Game Design



UDLS: April 17th, 2015
Neil Newman





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BGG STORE

VivaJava: The Coffee Game: The Dice Game - \$10.00

- The Hotness**
- Games|People|Company
 - Welcome to the Dungeon
 - Beyond Baker Street
 - Five Tribes
 - Dead of Winter: A Crossroads Game
 - Star Wars: Imperial

Trains (2012)

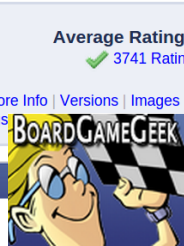
Average Rating: 7.39/10
 ✓ 3741 Ratings 923 Comments Graph

Board Game Rank: **218**
 Strategy Game Rank: **135**

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Zeppelin Attack! Rabolic Promo Packet \$5.00

- The Hotness**
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Snakes and Ladders (-200)

Average Rating: 2.78/10
 ✓ 2086 Ratings 831 Comments Graph

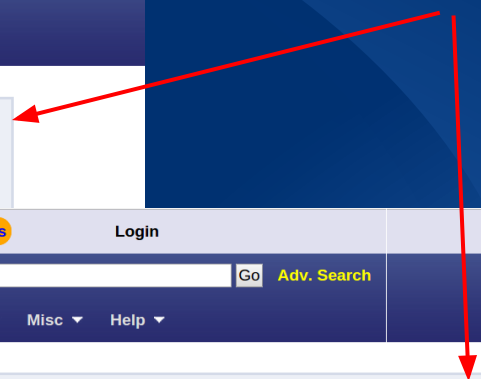
Board Game Rank: **10771**
 Children's Games Rank: **579**

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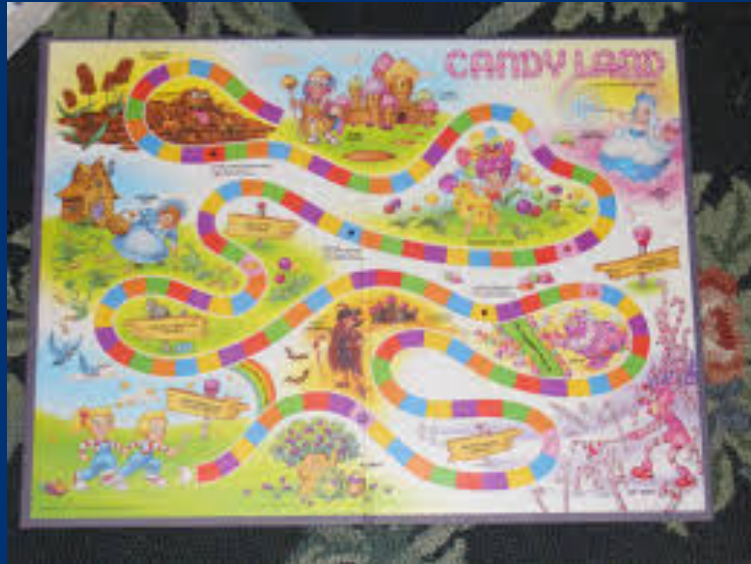
Information

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Designer	(Uncredited)	Fans: 13 Become a Fan Corrections Customize View Subscribe RSS Feed Record a Play Like 19 people like this. Be the first of your friends.
Artist	(Uncredited) Lauren Child Lucy Cousins Wolf Gerlach Show More »	
Publisher	(Public Domain) Abel Klingner Adolf Johnsons förlag Berliner Spielkarten Show More »	
Year Published	-200	



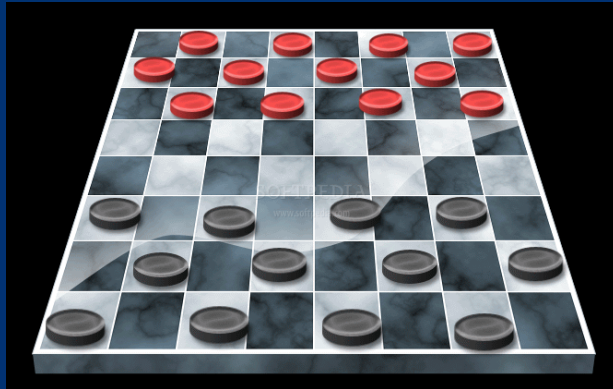
Zero Player Games



100	99	98	97	96	95	94	93	92	91
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
80	79	78	77	76	75	74	73	72	71
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Solved Games

- Tic tac toe
- The same is true of more complicated games:
Connect 4, Checkers



Analysis Paralysis

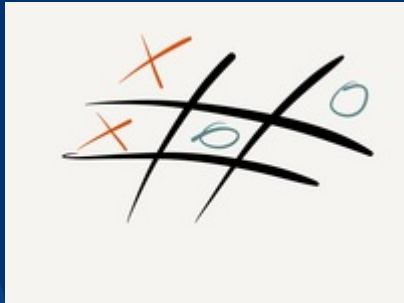
- AP describes a player that takes too long to decide on a move
- As a designer, you can:
 - Limit number of choices
 - Inject some randomness to make calculations too complicated
 - Enforced time limits, or reward fast play
 - Make it possible to think about your turn during other players turns
- As an annoyed player, you can:
 - hum the Jeopardy theme

Theme

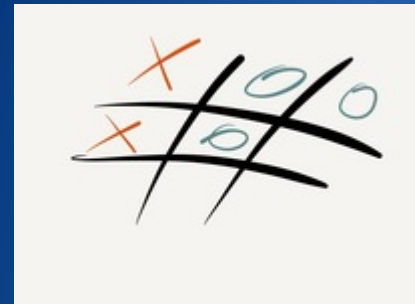
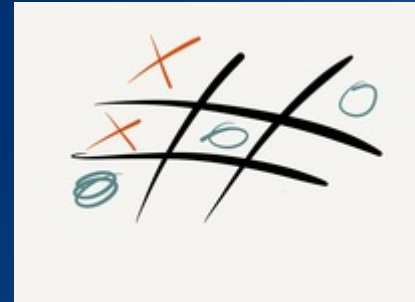
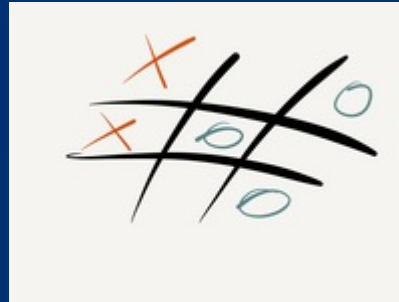
- Anecdotally, can have a large impact on getting people to actual play your game
- Games often have re-themes: 1, 2, 3
- Randomizer
- Abstract games make a point of having no theme



Co-op Games and Quarterbacks



?



- In theory: we all work together to win
- In practice: the best player plays the game

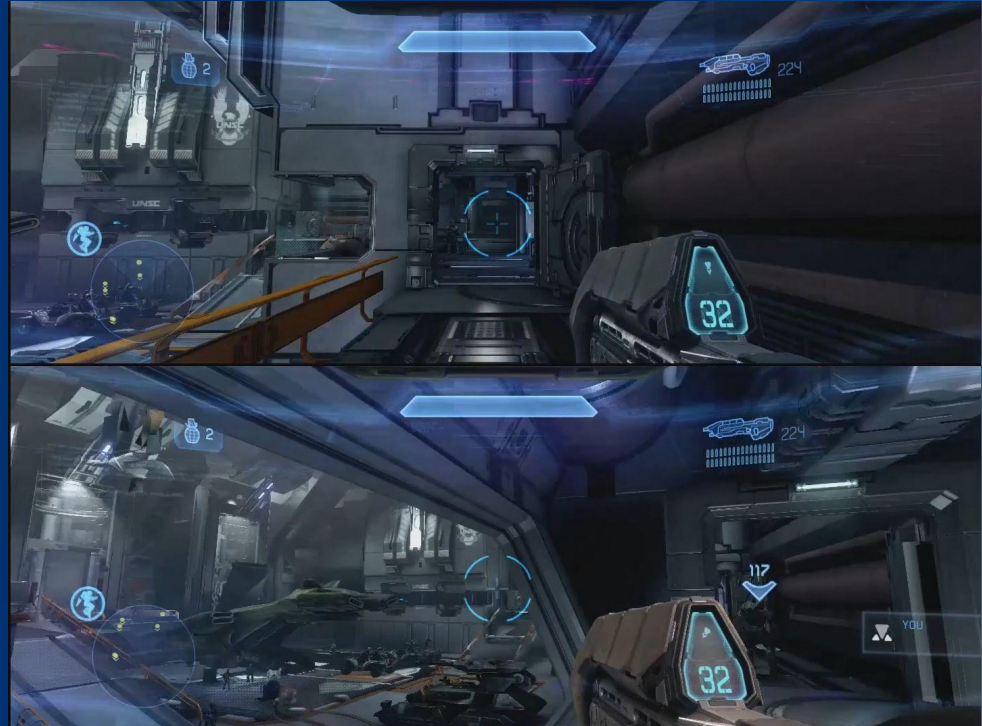
Traitor Mechanics

- You can't trust everyone, so you hide information
- You can't always assume advice is in your best interest
- Flaw: it's not exactly co-op



Real Time Games

- No time for a leader to micromanage everything



Multiplayer Solitaire

- Your actions have no / little impact on other players
- Everyone does their own thing. Eventually someone says "I win"
- Psychological compulsion to take bigger risks when losing
- Examples: Yahtzee, Trivial Pursuit



Player Elimination

- Certain variants of Mafia begins by killing a player, Risk can eliminate a player but be hours away from ending
- Games with player elimination should be short
- Alternative: Allow players to catch up and don't make it easy for the leader to increase their lead



Kingmaking

- If a player is kept in the game but can't win, they can arbitrarily decide the victor
- Kind of like Survivor (the TV show)



When Does It End?

- It's good to know roughly how long a game is going to take
- However, knowing exactly how long can sometimes lead to players trying to hyper-optimize the last few moves
- Can make the end point somewhat random



Keeping it fresh

- Dynamic boards
- Scenarios
- Player abilities





OPEN WHEN ALL 9
MINOR CITIES HAVE
BEEN FOUNDED.

OPEN THE FIRST TIME
A FACTION IS
ELIMINATED
FROM THE GAME.

OPEN WHEN ONE PERSON
GETS TO SIGN THE BOARD
FOR A SECOND TIME.



OPEN WHEN THE
WORLD CAPITAL MARK
IS ABOUT TO
GO ON THE BOARD.

RISK LEGACY

Thanks For Listening

