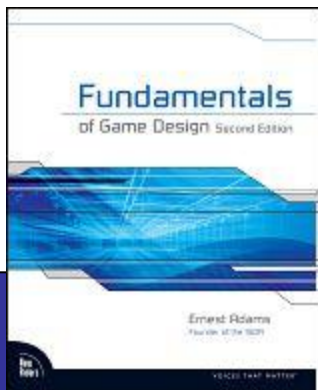


# Fundamentals of Game Design, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

by Ernest Adams



*Chapter 5: Creative and Expressive Play*

# Creative and Expressive Play

- *Gameplay* can mean all the “game play” or the “main” play of the game
  - Challenges, etc.
  - That (challenges, etc.) is NOT the topic of this Chapter
- Today: What is, and how do you include in your game, the following forms of *creative and expressive play*?
  - Self-Defining Play
  - Constrained Creative Play
  - Unconstrained Creative Play
  - Storytelling Play

# Self-Defining Play

## ■ What is it?

- Lets the player project his *personality* into the game world by means other than gameplay choices

## ■ Methods

- Avatar selection – examples?
- Avatar customization – examples?
- Avatar construction – examples?

# Self-Defining Play

- Set the *attributes* of the game
  - Functional attributes
  - Cosmetic (aka aesthetic) attributes

# Functional Attributes

- *Functional* attributes affect gameplay
  - *Characterization* attributes
    - Define fundamental aspects and *change slowly* or not at all
  - *Status* attributes
    - Give the current status of the character and may *change frequently*
- When players assign values to characterization attributes, they define themselves in a creative way
  - How might hard-core players often choose?
  - How might casual players often choose?

Important: If choices here affect the player's chance of winning, you must make the effects reasonably clear at this point.

# Functional Attributes (Cont.)

- Allowing players to set *all* functional attribute values may introduce bugs; instead
  - Give players a fixed or random number of points to assign among all attributes
    - Should the choices be from a uniform distribution? No! Why not?
  - Include a set of default or recommended settings for new players who want to get started quickly
  - Allow players to earn the right to set their character's functional attributes any way they like
    - What is another way to “earn” the right?

# Cosmetic Attributes

- *Cosmetic* attributes do not affect gameplay
- Cosmetic attributes make a game more fun at a low implementation cost
- Typical cosmetic attributes:
  - Headgear, clothing, shoes, and jewelry
  - Hair color, eye color, skin color
  - Body type or size
  - Paint color, decals, insignia on vehicles
- Should gender be a *functional* or *cosmetic* attribute?
  - Adams says *cosmetic* – let players set strength, dexterity, etc. independently

# Creative Play

- What is creative play?
  - Clearest example: building things
- Allow players to save and reload creations!
  - And what else?
  - Answer: screenshots, print, share on web, ...
- Computerized creative play can be categorized as
  - Constrained creative play
  - Freeform creative play



# Constrained Creative Play

- What is *Constrained Creative Play*?
  - Answer: A player can create only within artificial constraints imposed by the rules
- What kinds of artificial constraints can you impose?
  - Play can be limited by the economy
    - And reward accomplishments through the economy
  - Can require that the created items meet specific physical requirements
  - Can require that the created items meet specific aesthetic requirements. How?
    - Fixed rules you set (e.g. no stripes and polka-dots)
    - Online votes (what are the downsides of this?)
    - Trends that players can research within the game. How?
      - Gossip at a party, read auto-generated fashion magazines, break into competitor's meetings, ...

# Freeform Creative Play

- Provides unlimited time and resources
- Traditionally known as *sandbox* mode
- *Usually offers fewer rewards or no rewards*
- Examples?

# Storytelling Play

- Provide features that allow players to create and share stories
  - NOT the story in the game. This is stories that PLAYERS create as they play the game.
- How can you enable this?
  - Hardest: let the player make movies
  - Screenshots with captions
  - Storyboard of screenshots
  - Log of player's actions, which she can annotate
  - ...

# Game Modifications

- For utmost creative freedom, allow players to modify the game itself (***mods***)
- Pros
  - Popular with core gamers
  - Extends the lifespan of a game
- Cons
  - You have no control over the mod
  - Allowing players to create mods can put the reputation of your game at risk
- Simpler than a full game mod is ... [next slides]

# Level Editors

- Allow players to construct new levels for a game
  - Players may be able to construct a new landscape, place challenges in it, and write a script for the game engine to run
- Tools must be included with the game

# Bots

- Artificially intelligent opponent that the player can program
- Players create tougher opponents than the original game included

# Summary

- You should now understand
  - How players express themselves through their avatars
  - How to provide creative play
  - How to provide storytelling play
  - Why players create mods
    - And level editors and bots