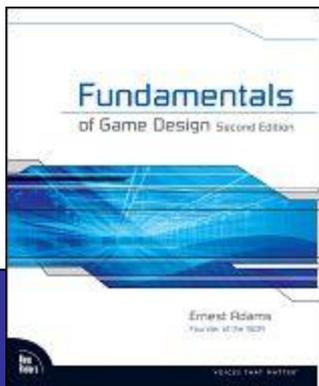

Fundamentals of Game Design, 2nd Edition

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