

What Makes Games Bad ☹️

- No connection between actions and outcomes
- Poor gameplay
 - Buggy (collision detection)
 - Contrived
 - Repetitive
 - Slow
- Oppressive difficulty level
 - Weapons
 - Level design
 - Bad learning curve
- Poor controls
 - Complicated
 - Unintuitive
 - Unexplained
- Doesn't meet expectations
 - Based on familiar domain
 - Overhyped
- Level design
 - Large quantity, low quality
 - Inconsistency (physics, layout)
- Poor graphics
- Bad Games:
 - Unreal Tournament 2K4
 - Call of Duty: Black Ops
 - Street Fighter: The Movie: The Game
 - Spore
 - Yaris
 - Shaq Fu
 - Big Rigs
 - Dante's Inferno
 - Solar Winds
 - Battle Toads

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Ludology

- **Ludology** = the study of fun
- Specific to video games, looking at making games enjoyable, even addictive.
 - Video game addicts exhibit many of the same signs as people with gambling addiction.
- Ludology is difficult!
 - Hard quality to understand.
 - Once understood, hard principles to carry out.
 - Nobody ever tries to make a bad movie, or a bad game.



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Immersion

- **Realism**
 - Need aspects of both realism and “unrealism”
 - Unrealism: Living out a virtual world
 - Realism
 - Well-designed environment
 - Visuals & visual cues
 - Physics
 - Interactive/destructible
 - Consistency
 - Freedom
 - Customization (e.g. Sims)
- **Social Interaction**
 - Non-player character (NPC) design
 - Online players



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Immersion

- **Controls**
 - Realistic controls
 - Specialized devices (Wiimote)
 - Responsiveness
 - Sensitivity
 - Speed
 - Simplicity
 - Orthogonality
- **Audio cues**
 - Sound effects
 - Music
 - Background
 - Mood enhancers

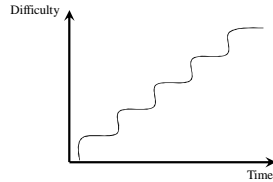


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Challenge

- **"Optimal Flow"**
 - Technique for increasing difficulty level
 - Helps player acquire skills
- **Difficulty elements**
 - Reflex skills
 - Opponents
 - "Boss" levels
 - Adaptive AI
 - Video game clichés
 - Jumper levels, protecting the weak, locked room, stealth, timed levels, etc.
- **Strategy**
 - Problem-solving
 - Using environment
 - Cooperation
- **Resource management**
 - Ammunition/items
 - Health
 - Money
 - Time



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Rewards

- **Items**
 - Loot/money
 - Weapons, items & upgrades
 - Unlockables & codes
- **Positive reinforcement**
 - Points/score
 - Achievements
 - Leveling up
 - Intrinsic motivation
 - Beating bosses
 - Social rewards
- **Content**
 - "Dings"
 - Musical fanfare
 - Cutscenes & animations
 - Advancing storyline



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Stimulation

- **Visual & auditory**
 - Graphics
 - Sound effects
 - Responsive environment
 - Non-trivial death
 - Visual markers, rituals
- **Physiological arousal**
 - Adrenaline
 - Capilano bridge study
 - Physical activity
 - DDR, Wiimote
 - Humour
 - Makes games "stickier"



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Marketing

- **Producer side**
 - Targeting demographics
- **Marketing side**
 - Determines target audience
 - Focus groups
 - Playtesting
 - Promotions
 - Appealing to loyal fans
 - Appealing to new audiences
- **Data point: GTA4 sales**
 - First week: \$500 million
 - First day: \$310 million



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