Discipline

Game design

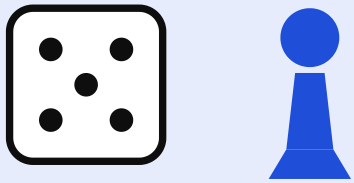
Designs the rules, goals and challenges of a game, board or digital, so that playing it produces the intended experience.

In Spanish

Diseño de juegos

Origin

Salen and Zimmerman (2003); Hunicke, LeBlanc and Zubek (2004)



What it deals with

A game designer controls only the rules; the experience appears when someone plays. That is why you design by playing and testing again and again.

Principles

Rules

They say what can be done and what you want to achieve.

Play

From the rules comes what people do when they play, which isn't always what was planned.

Experience

What you design, in the end, is how playing feels.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Make a playable prototype, even a paper one, from day one.

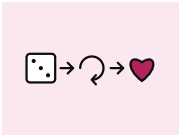
✗ Avoid

Judging a game by its written rules without watching it played.

👁 Don't fall for it

Watch people play without explaining anything: what isn't understood on its own needs redesigning.

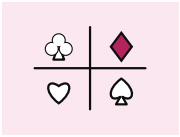
Models and concepts



Model

MDA: mechanics, dynamics and aesthetics

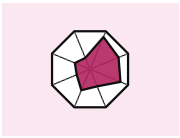
Designers start from the rules; players start from what they feel. In between, what happens in play.



Model

Bartle's player types

Four ways to enjoy a game world: achieving goals, exploring, socializing or imposing on others.



Model

Octalysis

Eight drives that explain why something hooks us, and whether it leaves a good or bad aftertaste.



Concept

Gamification

Using game design elements in something that isn't a game.

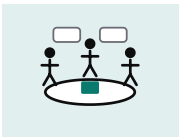
Methods and tools



Approach

User-centered design

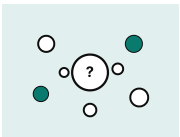
Designing systems around the tasks and abilities of the people who use them, testing early and often.



Method

Focus group

A moderated conversation with a small group to learn their opinions and how they influence each other.



Method

Brainstorming

Generating many ideas as a group without judging them until the end.



Method

Prototyping

Building quick, incomplete versions of an idea to test it before developing it.



Method

Usability testing

Watching real people attempt tasks with the product to find out where they get stuck.

Connections

Builds on

- Cognitive psychology
- Flow
- Self-determination theory

Related to

- Experience design
- Interaction design
- Behavioral design
- Design for children

Authors and works

2003	**Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman**	Brought together the foundations of the discipline by looking at games as rules, as play and as culture.
2004	**Robin Hunicke, Marc LeBlanc and Robert Zubek**	Proposed the MDA framework (mechanics, dynamics and aesthetics) to connect what is designed with what is experienced when playing.

Sources

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- Salen, K., & Zimmerman, E. (2003). Rules of play: Game design fundamentals. MIT Press.
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- Pagulayan, R. J., Keeker, K., Wixon, D., Romero, R. L., & Fuller, T. (2003). User-centered design in games. In J. A. Jacko & A. Sears (Eds.), The human-computer interaction handbook (pp. 883–906). Lawrence Erlbaum. View source (https://cdgr.ucsb.edu/node/773)

Secondary sources

- Fullerton, T. (2008). Game design workshop: A playcentric approach to creating innovative games (2nd ed.). Morgan Kaufmann. View source (https://booksite.elsevier.com/samplechapters/9780240809748/Sample_Chapters/01~Front_Matter.pdf)

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