GAMES AND MESSAGES

HOW TO TELL PEOPLE THINGS THROUGH GAME DESIGN

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- THIS IS ONLY A **SHORT** PRESENTATION, SO YOU ONLY GET THE FUN **HIGHLIGHTS**
  - JUST AS **WELL**, AS THERE'S **ZERO** ACADEMIC RIGOUR TO ANY OF THIS...
- I'M GOING TO TALK ABOUT HOW TO USE **GAMES** TO IMPART **MESSAGES**
- TYPICAL USES:
  - Education
  - **Marketing**
  - ART

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- THIS IS THE JAPANESE SYMBOL FOR **BULLET**

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WHY DO IT?

- EDUCATION/MARKETING/ART IS **BORING**

- GAMES ARE **FUN**!

- WHY NOT **COMBINE** THE TWO AND GET **FUN** EDUCATION/MARKETING/ART?

- BECAUSE YOU **ACTUALLY** GET **BORING GAMES**

- THIS IS BECAUSE PEOPLE WHO KNOW **LOTS** ABOUT EDUCATION/MARKETING/ART KNOW **NOTHING** ABOUT GAME DESIGN

- GAME DESIGNERS KNOW **MORE** THAN THIS
  - **NEXT** TO NOTHING
  - STILL BETTER THAN NOTHING!

- **IN-YOUR-FACE** MESSAGES **SPOIL** GAMES
  - CALCULATE 13*13 TO OPEN THE SAFE
- REASON: THEY HAVE NO **GAMEPLAY** ELEMENT
- **RESKINNING** GAME TOKENS SPOILS GAMES
  - FOR THIS, I'LL NEED A CAN OF COCA-COLA FROM THE COCA-COLA VENDING MACHINE
- REASON: THEY BREAK **IMMERSION**
  - EXCEPTION: IF THEY FIT THE FICTION, THEY **CAN** WORK AS A REGULAR BRAND, BUT **ONLY** IF THE FICTION IS NOT **ABOUT** THE BRAND

- MAKE YOUR MESSAGE **INDIRECT**

- PEOPLE **WON'T** PICK UP THE MESSAGE WHEN YOU **FORCE** IT DOWN THEIR **THROATS**
  - EXCEPT PERHAPS TO **REBEL** AGAINST IT

- THEY **WILL** PICK IT UP WHEN IT HELPS THEM **INCIDENTALLY** TO PLAY THE GAME

- **TWO** WAYS TO DO THIS:
  - PICK UP **FACTS** AS **SHORT-CUTS**
  - PICK UP **EMOTIONS** AS **SUBTEXT**

- "DELIVER THIS PACKAGE TO **VIENNA**"
  - SEARCH THE MAP AND CLICK ON VIENNA
  - YOU **DON'T CARE** WHERE VIENNA IS, YOU JUST WANT TO COMPLETE THE **SPY MISSION** THAT WILL OPEN UP WHEN YOU **GET** THERE
  - IF YOU'RE SENT TO VIENNA ENOUGH TIMES, YOU WON'T SEARCH THE MAP FOR IT – YOU'LL **KNOW** WHERE IT IS

- YOU LEARN BECAUSE IT'S **USEFUL**, **NOT** BECAUSE OF THE MERE **REPETITION**
  - OTHERWISE, **I'D** KNOW THE JAPANESE SYMBOL FOR "BULLET"...

- "GO BACK IN TIME AND TELL YOUR **YOUNGER** SELF WHAT TO DO"

  - RETURN TO A KEY MOMENT IN YOUR CHARACTER'S CHILDHOOD AND **CHANGE** A **DECISION**

  - RETURN TO THE PRESENT AND SEE THE **EFFECTS** OF THIS CHANGED DECISION AS THEY RIPPLED FORWARD

  - GO BACK CHANGING **OTHER** DECISIONS UNTIL YOU **RIGHT** SOME **WRONG** IN THE PRESENT

- THIS IS A GAME ABOUT **WISTFULNESS**

  - IF YOU WANT PEOPLE TO REGARD YOUR **PRODUCT** WISTFULLY, CREATE A WISTFUL **GAME**

  - **DO NOT** MENTION YOUR PRODUCT DURING PLAY!

- GAMES ARE **LOUSY** AT GETTING SOME TYPES OF MESSAGE ACROSS

- HOWEVER, THEY **EXCEL** AT OTHER KINDS OF MESSAGE

- GAME DESIGN IS **NOT EASY**
  - LIKE WRITING A NOVEL: "HOW HARD CAN IT BE?"
    - **NOT HARD** AT ALL, UNLESS YOU WANT A **GOOD** NOVEL

- MOST **GAME DESIGNERS** CAN'T DO GAME DESIGN VERY **WELL** AT ALL

- BUT THEY **CAN** DO IT BETTER THAN **YOU**