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BA COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

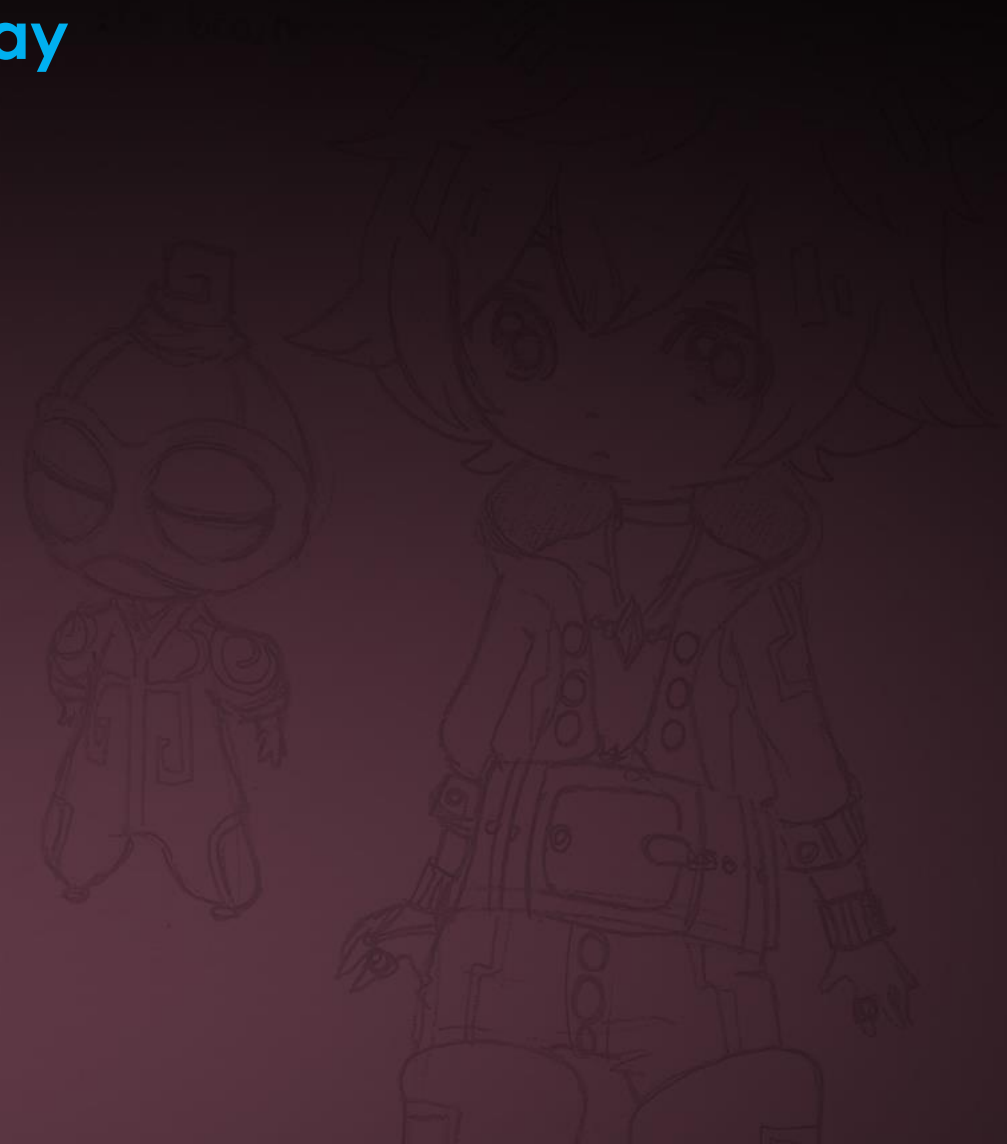
GAME THEORY & DESIGN

Adams & Rollings: Gameplay



Ernest Adams and Andrew Rollings: Gameplay

- Making Games Fun
- Finding the Fun Factor
- Game Examples – Steam Library





GAME THEORY & DESIGN

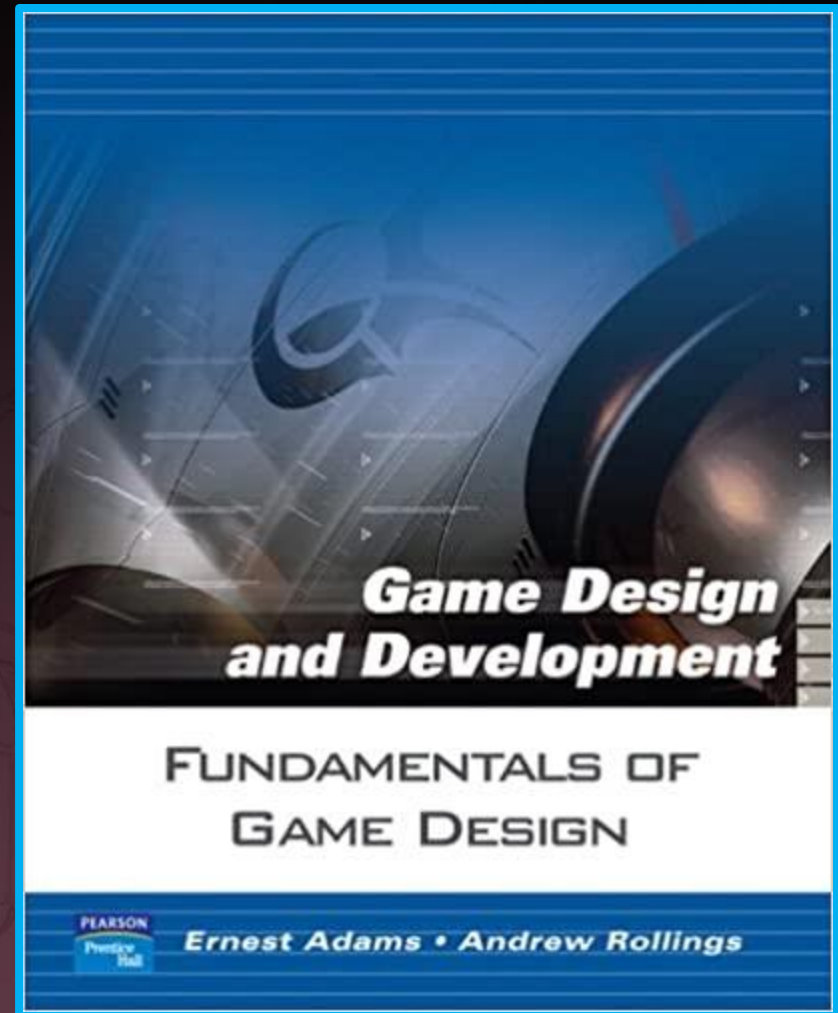
Adams and Rollings: Gameplay

Further reading:

Gameplay, Challenges and Stress

Ernest Adams & Andrew Rollings, Fundamentals of Game Design

(Available in **Y Fforwm Library**, SA1)





“We define Gameplay as consisting of the *challenges* and *actions* that a game offers; challenges for the player to overcome and actions that let them overcome them.”

(Adams & Rollings 2007: 277)



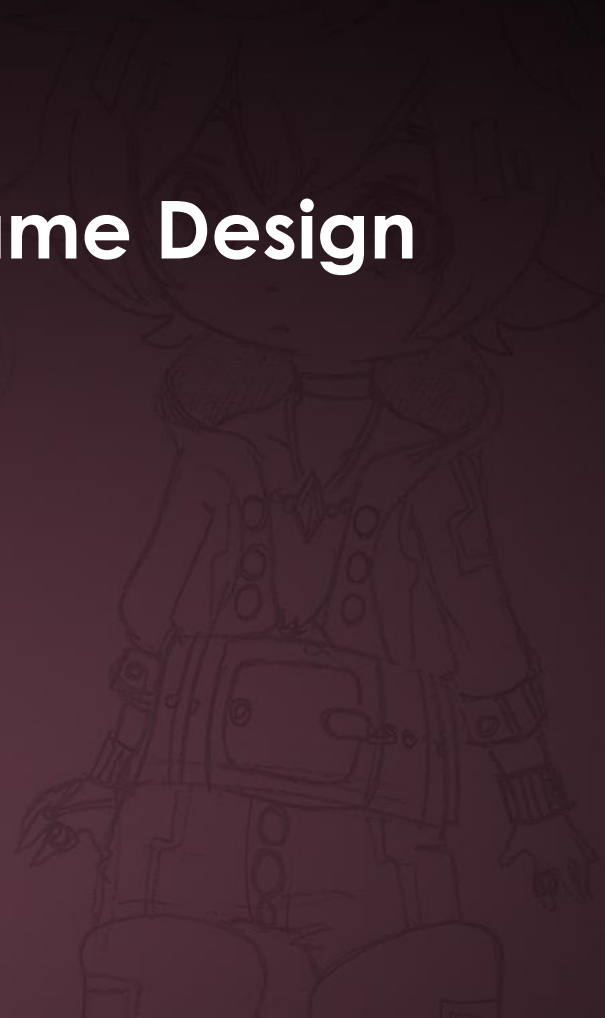
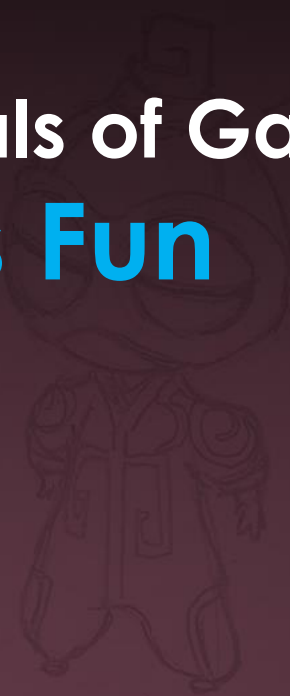
Adams and Rollings: Fundamentals of Game Design

Making Games Fun



normal job in
crazy ass world.

fixed position
- talking to
npc's





The Game Designer's primary goal is to provide **entertainment**, and gameplay is the primary means by which games entertain.

Without gameplay, any activity may be fun but it is not a game.



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How does the designer provide fun?



“Ninety-five percent of what makes a game fun has *nothing to do with imagination or creativity.*

The vast majority of things that make a game not fun – boring or frustrating or irritating or simply ugly and awkward – *result from bad execution rather than a bad idea.*

The number one reason a game fails to be fun is that it contains elementary errors.”

(Adams & Rollings, 2007: 278)



According to Adams and Rollings, making a game fun mainly consists of **avoiding the things that reduce fun.**

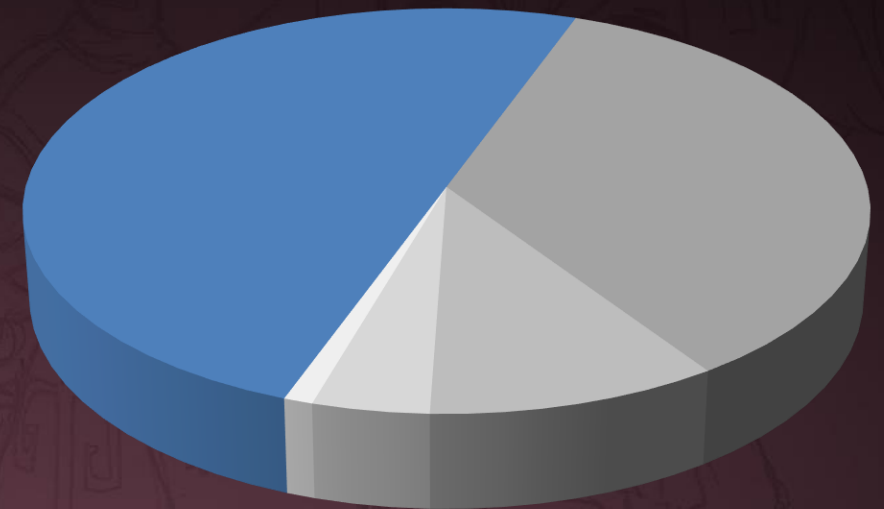
Their breakdown of the different aspects of game development that contribute to fun is as follows:



50% of making a game fun consists of avoiding errors.

Bad programming, bad music and sound, bad art, bad user interfaces and bad game design all ruin the player's fun.

Basic competence will get you up to average.

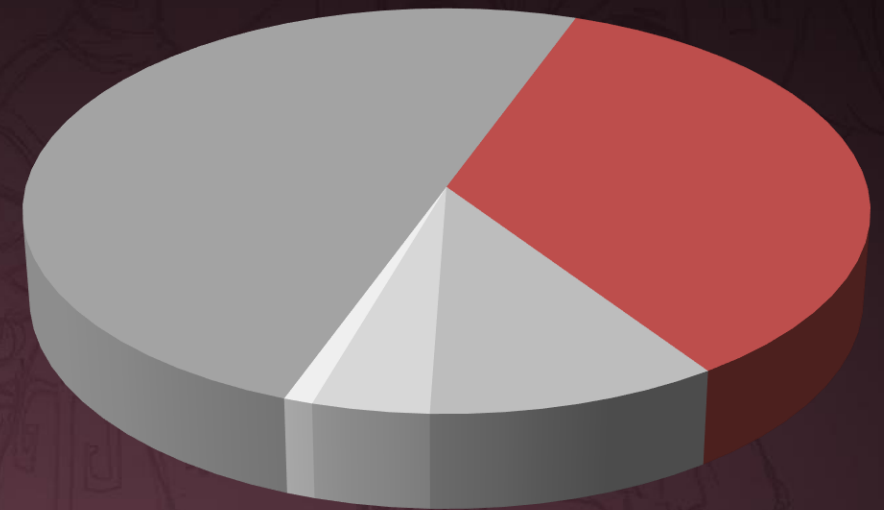




35% of making a game fun comes from tuning and polishing, **attention to detail** and getting everything perfect.

Bug fixing is in the first 50%, not here.

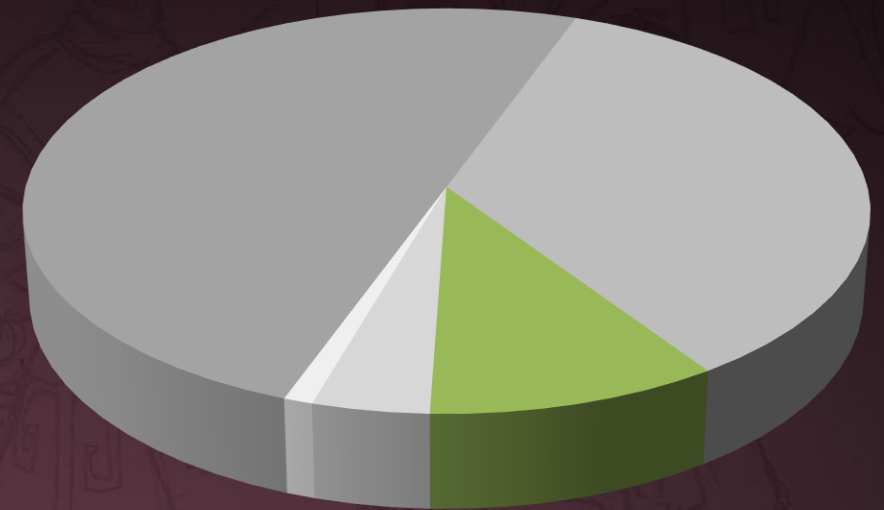
Long and dedicated tuning sets a good game apart from a mediocre one.





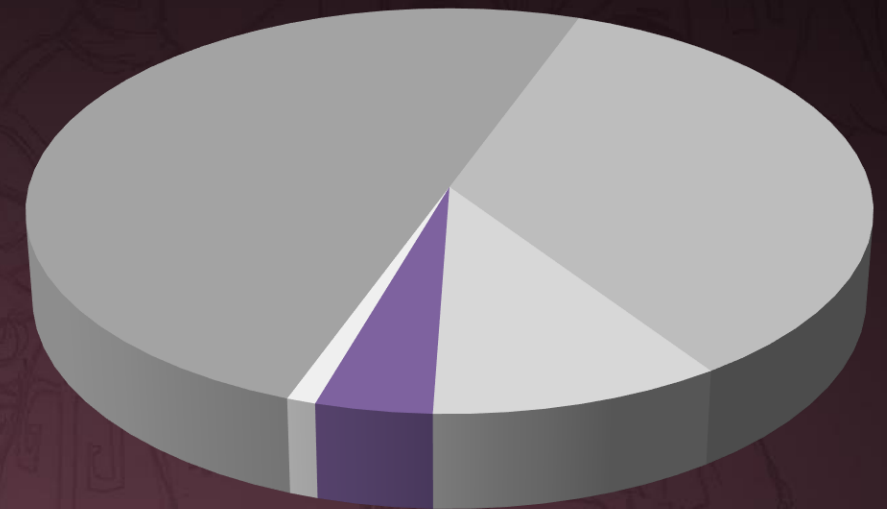
10% of making a game fun comes from imaginative **variations on the game's premise**, taking the elements of the game and constructing an enjoyable experience out of them.

Of this, Level designers contribute **9%** and the game designer contributes **1%**.





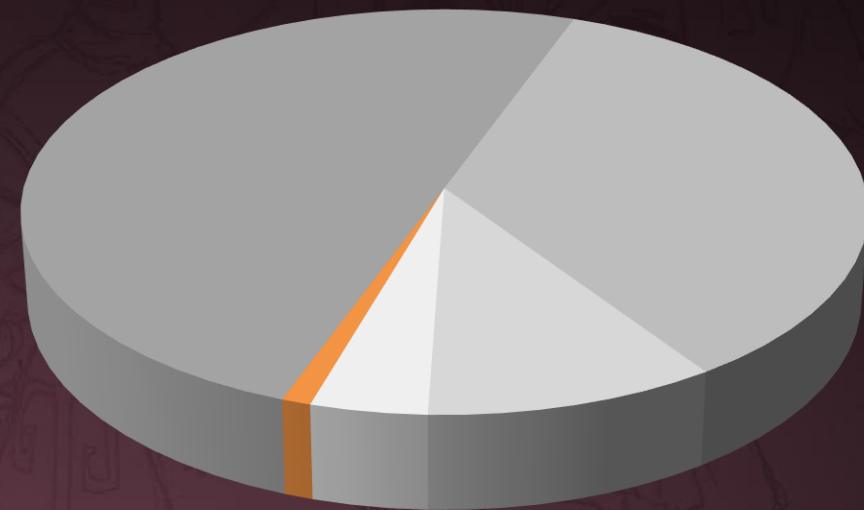
4% of making a game fun results from **true design innovation**: the game's original idea and subsequent creative decisions that you make.

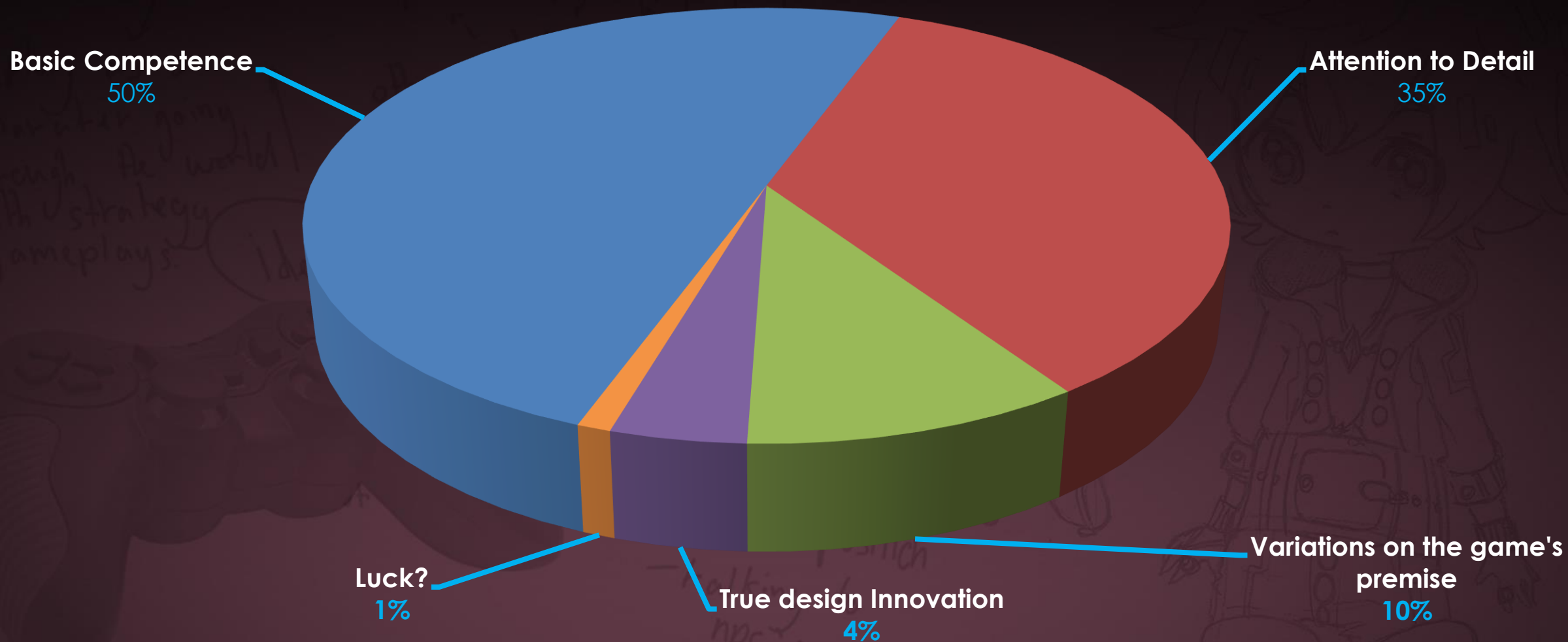




1% of making a game fun emerges from an unpredictable, unanalyzable, unnamable quality.

When you feel it is there, be careful about making changes to your design from that point on.







Adams and Rollings: Fundamentals of Game Design

Finding the Fun Factor



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As with many elements of game design, **there is no formula or specific approach** that makes a game experience fun.

However, Adams and Rollings provide a set of **principles to keep in mind** as you design and build a game.

Without these, you risk producing a game that is no fun for anyone.



- **Gameplay Comes First**
- **Get a Feature Right or Leave it Out**
- **Design Around the Player**
- **Know Your Target Audience**
- **Abstract or Automate Parts of the Simulation That Aren't Fun**
- **Be True To Your Vision**
- **Strive for Harmony, Elegance and Beauty**



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Finding the Fun Factor

Gameplay Comes First



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Adams and Rollings: Gameplay

Gameplay Comes First

Before all other considerations, create your game to **give people fun things to do**.

A good many games aren't fun because their **designers spent more time thinking about their graphics or story** than they did thinking about creating gameplay.





Adams and Rollings: Fundamentals of Game Design

Finding the Fun Factor

Get a Feature Right,
Or Leave it Out



It is far worse to ship a game with a **broken feature** than to ship a game with a **missing feature**.

Shipping without a feature looks to players like a design decision.

Shipping with a broken feature tells players for certain that your team is incompetent.



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BROKEN FEATURES DESTROY FUN



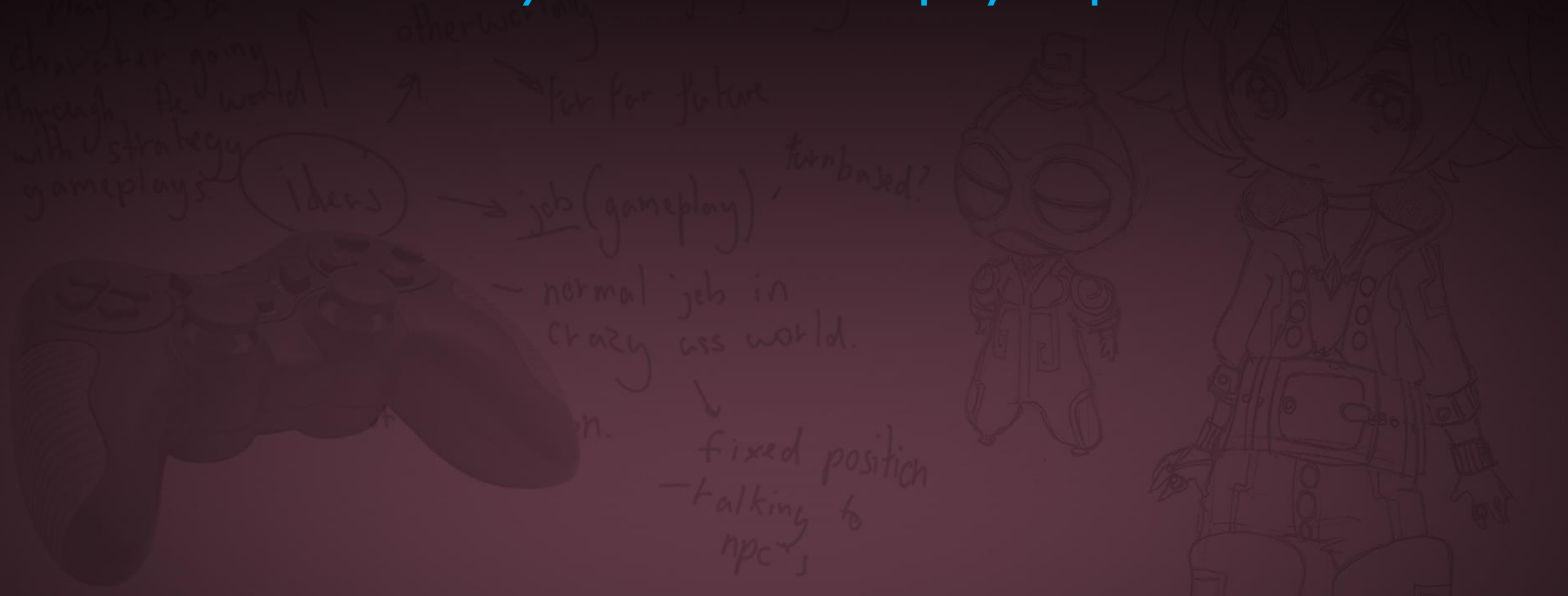
Adams and Rollings: Fundamentals of Game Design

Finding the Fun Factor

Design Around the Player



You must examine **every** decision from the **player's point of view**.





You must examine **every** decision from the **player's** point of view.

**Games that lose sight of the player
lose sight of the fun.**



Adams and Rollings: Fundamentals of Game Design

Finding the Fun Factor

Know Your Target Audience



Different groups of players want different things.

It is much harder to make a game that appeals broadly than it is to make a game that appeals to a niche market you know well.





Whatever group you choose, **know what *they* want** and what *they* think is fun.





Whatever group you choose, **know what *they* want** and what *they* think is fun.

Then provide it.





Adams and Rollings: Fundamentals of Game Design

Finding the Fun Factor

Abstract or Automate Parts of The Simulation that Aren't Fun



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**Abstract or Automate Parts of
the Simulation That Aren't fun**

If you model your game on the real world, leave out the parts that aren't fun.



Fun



Not fun



Remember your audience!

Somebody who just wants a chance to race a fast car may **not be interested** in engine tuning or adjusting gear ratios.

To a hardcore racing fan, these aspects of the game are fun and a **critical part of the experience**.

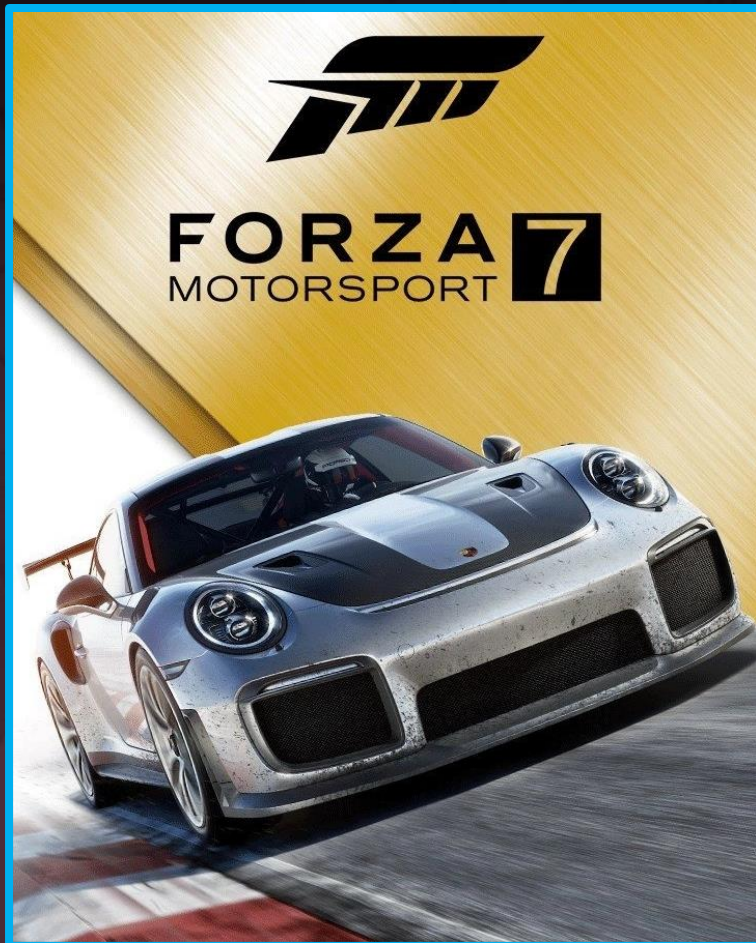


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Abstract or Automate Parts of
the Simulation That Aren't fun

Choose one market and **optimize the fun** for the members of that market.





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Adams and Rollings: Fundamentals of Game Design

Finding the Fun Factor

Be True To Your Vision



If you envision the perfect sailing simulation, don't add powerboat racing as well because you feel that adding features might attract a larger market.

Adding powerboats will **distract you from your original goal** and cut in half the resources you were planning to use to perfect the sailing simulation.

Both halves will be inferior to what the whole could have been. **You will lose the fun** and without it you won't get the bigger market anyway.



Adams and Rollings: Fundamentals of Game Design

Finding the Fun Factor

Strive for Harmony,
Elegance and Beauty



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A lack of aesthetic perfection doesn't take all the fun out of a game but **the absence of these qualities diminishes it.**

A game that is already fun is **even more fun** if it's beautiful to look at, to listen to, and to play with.

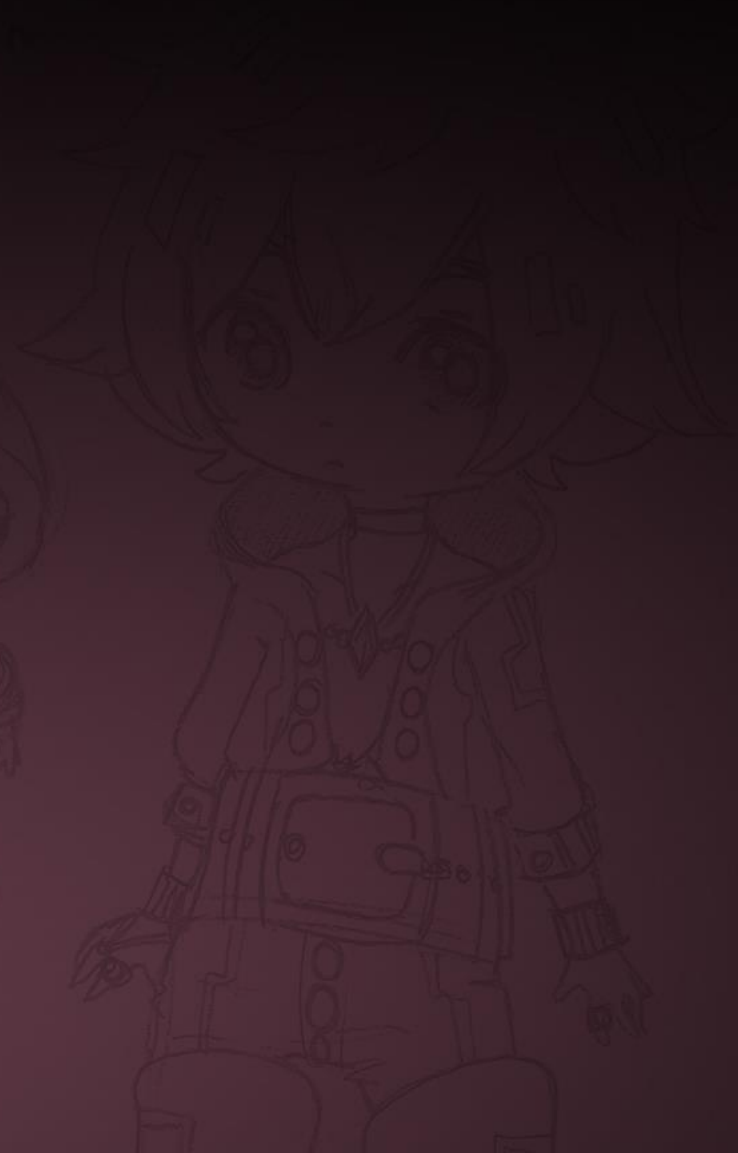
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Any questions?



Game Examples (Steam Library)

- *Super Hexagon* (Terry Cavanagh, 2012)
Example of core gameplay
- *Wonder Boy: The Dragon's Trap* (Lizardcube, 2017)
Example of presentation quality



Books

**Adams, E. & Rollings, A. (2007). *Fundamentals of Game Design*.
Pearson Education Inc, USA.**



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