IMAGINETIC
SIMULATION + DESIGN
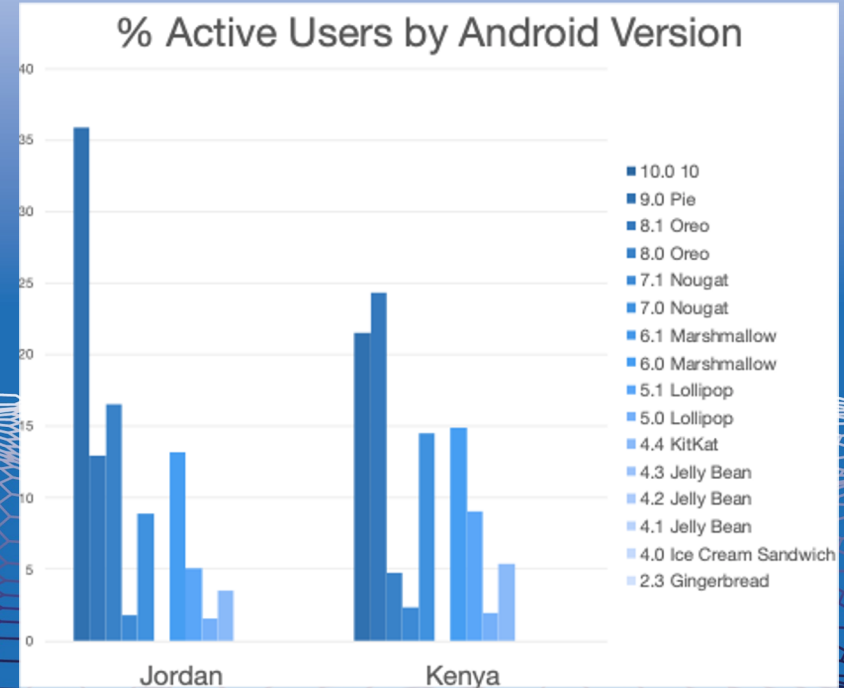
Professional Distributed Games: Lessons from D&D

Tom Fisher tfisher@imaginetic.net
Stefanie Game
Nur Senavci

The Problem with Online

% Active Users by Android Version

Legend:
- 10.0 10
- 9.0 Pie
- 8.1 Oreo
- 8.0 Oreo
- 7.1 Nougat
- 7.0 Nougat
- 6.1 Marshmallow
- 6.0 Marshmallow
- 5.1 Lollipop
- 5.0 Lollipop
- 4.4 KitKat
- 4.3 Jelly Bean
- 4.2 Jelly Bean
- 4.1 Jelly Bean
- 4.0 Ice Cream Sandwich
- 2.3 Gingerbread

Jordan — Kenya

2

The Rule of 2:

Digital takes twice as long

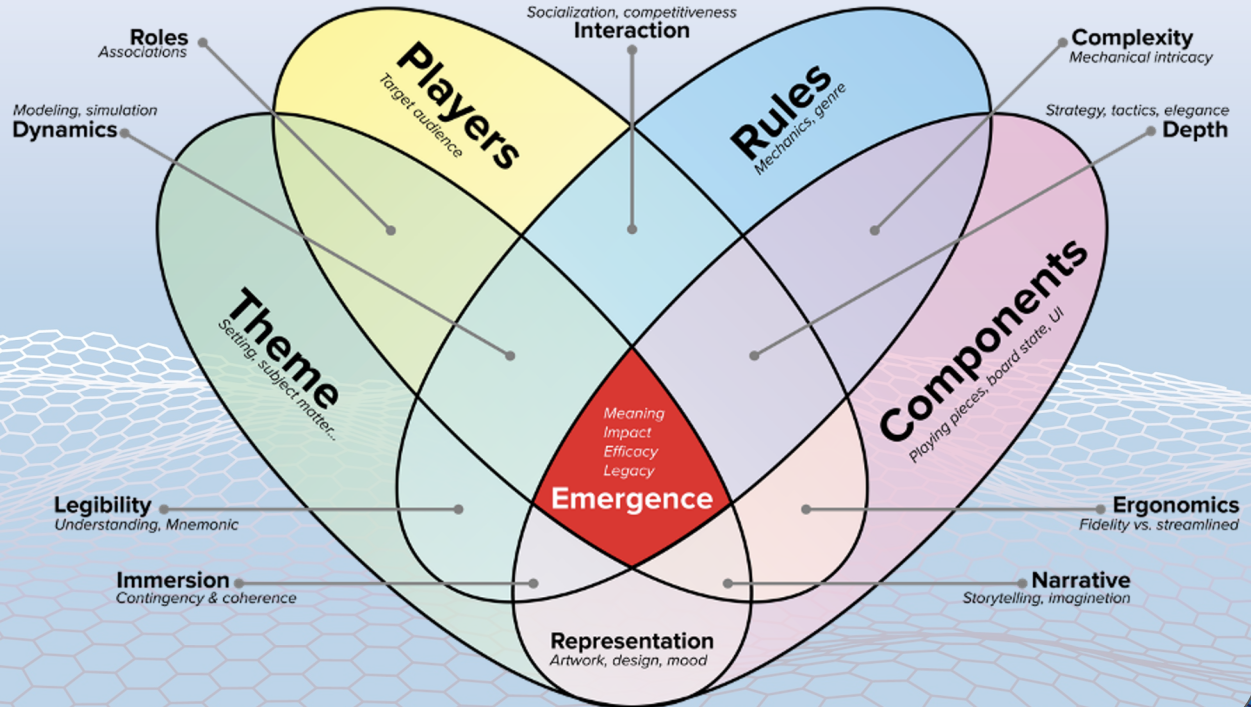Have 2 Copies of EVERYTHING: BACKUP Plan

IMAGINETIC
SIMULATION + DESIGN

Expensive and Shiny is NOT a Guarantee of Success

Expensive and shiny is just a guarantee of expensive $$$ (and shiny)

The "Artichoke"

The Science of Games

Roles
Associations

Modeling, simulation
Dynamics

Socialization, competitiveness
Interaction

Complexity
Mechanical intricacy

Players
Target audience

Rules
Mechanics, genre

Strategy, tactics, elegance
Depth

Theme
Setting, subject matter...

Components
Playing pieces, board state, UI

Meaning
Impact
Efficacy
Legacy
Emergence

Legibility
Understanding, Mnemonic

Ergonomics
Fidelity vs. streamlined

Immersion
Contingency & coherence

Narrative
Storytelling, imagination

Representation
Artwork, design, mood

IMAGINETIC
SIMULATION + DESIGN

0. Thou shalt keep them engaged

Guide players, but ensure they retain player agency. Avoid steering the game towards a particular outcome.

1. Thou art always right

Be the final arbitrator for decisions and missing rules. Acknowledge errors, fix them, and keep the game moving, but maintain authority.

2. Thou shalt endeavour to say yes

Encourage outside-the-box thinking within the reality of the game. Avoid "no", but keep players on track.

IMAGINETIC
SIMULATION + DESIGN

3. Thou shalt be passionate and animated

Be the most energetic in the room, you set the tone.

4. Thou shalt have a plan (but don't over-plan)

Know the rules, know the audience, know the outputs. Having a plan and contingencies provides comfort and preparation for almost all scenarios.

5. Thou shalt give players agency

Ensure players can make free decisions based on game information, that further affects the game scenario.

6. Thou shalt use words wisely

All words said become a game rule. Language should also be engaging and encouraging.

7. Thou shalt be balanced in rulings

Neutrality and consistency is key. Ensure previous rulings are continuously reflected throughout the game.

8. Thou shalt know your players

Trust, engagement, and immersion is based on knowing your players. Competition and cooperation can also be encouraged by team stacking.

9. Thou shalt steal ideas and examples from other facilitators and adjudicators.

Until a personal style is developed, steal the style, energy and pacing of your previous great facilitators. Steal, but steal ethically.

10. Thou shalt keep the game moving

Ensure there is always something going on or something to do during the game.

2050
The Last City

by Stefanie Game

2040

Global Warming Peak

Global food shortage, leading to the collapse of states.

The United Sovereign Cities (TUSC) Alliance is formed.

2043

Odenport established as a sovereign city state

Increasingly threatened by its neighbour, Amcastan, due to its abundance of resources.

2045

Amcastan begins supporting local fanatics

Disturbances and threats push Odenport to become a prospective member of TUSC, securing a defense alliance.

2050

Amcastan invades Odenport

The military invasion of Odenport by Amcastan pushes TUSC to send reinforcements.

Amcastan Commanders,

Your mission is to take control of Odenport by ***capturing key locations*** and ***immobilizing TUSC units***.

TUSC Commanders,

Your mission is to ***evacuate civilians from the city via the port or airport***, and to ***defend key locations*** against Amcastanian attack.

Order of Play

1. Play a Card
2. Order Units
3. Move Units
4. Spot Targets
5. Battle
6. Draw a Card

Order Units

Determine which units will be active during the turn (limited by active card instructions).
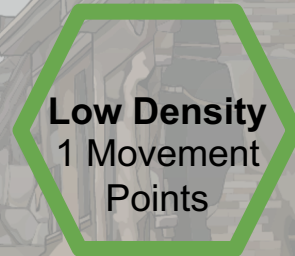
Only these units can move and/or battle.
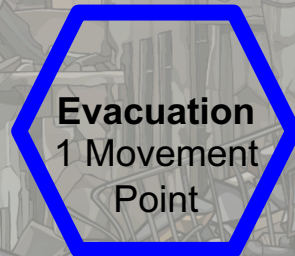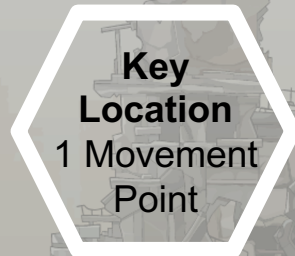
Move Units - Terrain Types

High Density
2 Movement Points

No Vehicles

Medium Density
2 Movement Points

Low Density
1 Movement Points

Road
0.5 Movement Points

Legged move 1

Water
Impassible

Only Aircraft & Hovercraft

Key Location
1 Movement Point

Evacuation
1 Movement Point

Rubble
2 Movement Points

Vehicles With Tracks

Spot Targets - Rules of Engagement

High Density

High Density

Medium Density

Medium Density

Medium Density

Water Range on Token

Evacuation Range on Token

Low Density Range on Token

Road Range on Token / Straight Stretch

Key Location Range on Token
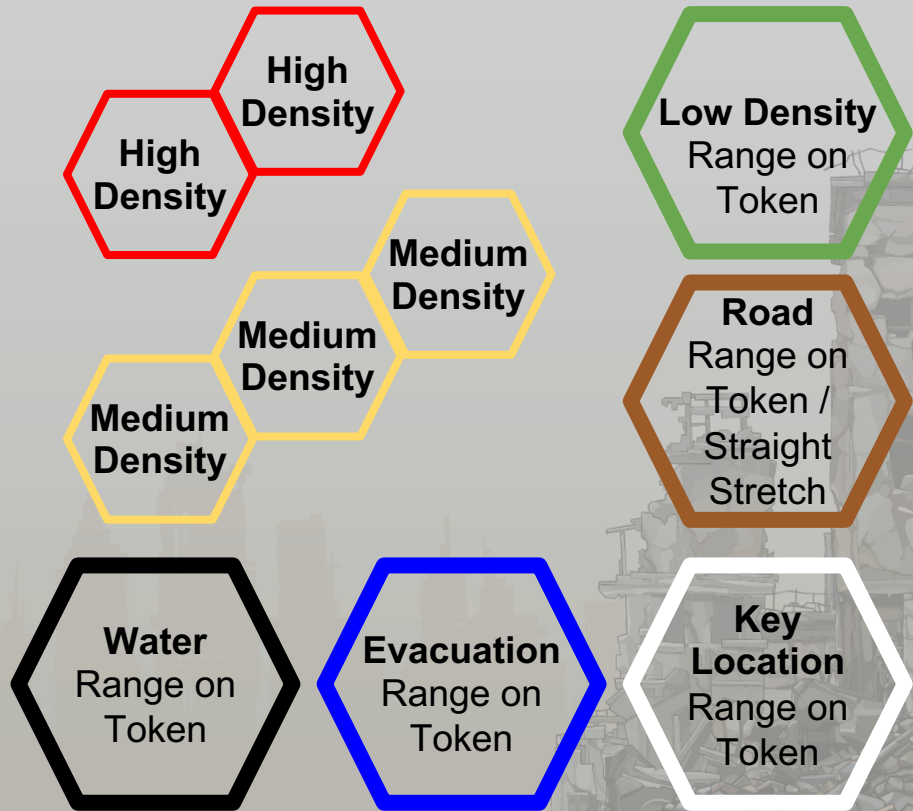
1. Active player rolls Spot die.
2. Defender rolls Sneak die.

If Spot > Sneak, unit is spotted.

If Sneak ≥ Spot, unit is hidden.

*If a unit moves following being spotted, it is no longer visible.
*Snipers are automatically hidden at the beginning of their next turn

Line of Sight:
- See through max. 1 *yellow*
- See into *red* but not past

Order of Battle

Attacker: Roll **x**D**y**

Defender: Roll 1D**y**

The numbers rolled on the attack dice that are **higher** than the number rolled on the defense die indicates the number of hits.

x is the number of lives left

y is the type of die indicated on the token modified by terrain or cards.

*Only spotted units can be attacked.

Post-Battle Resolutions

Close Assault Return Fire:
The number of misses rolled (attack dice rolled equal to or lower than the defense die) is the number of attack dice a defender can roll in a return fire versus the attackers defense.

Morale Check: If the defender takes a hit, conduct a morale check:
1. Roll the morale die indicated on the token.
2. Subtract the number of total hits taken by the unit from the roll.
3. If the difference is negative, the defender retreats towards its starting position by the equivalent number of hexes.