

Toying around

miguel sicart
game design

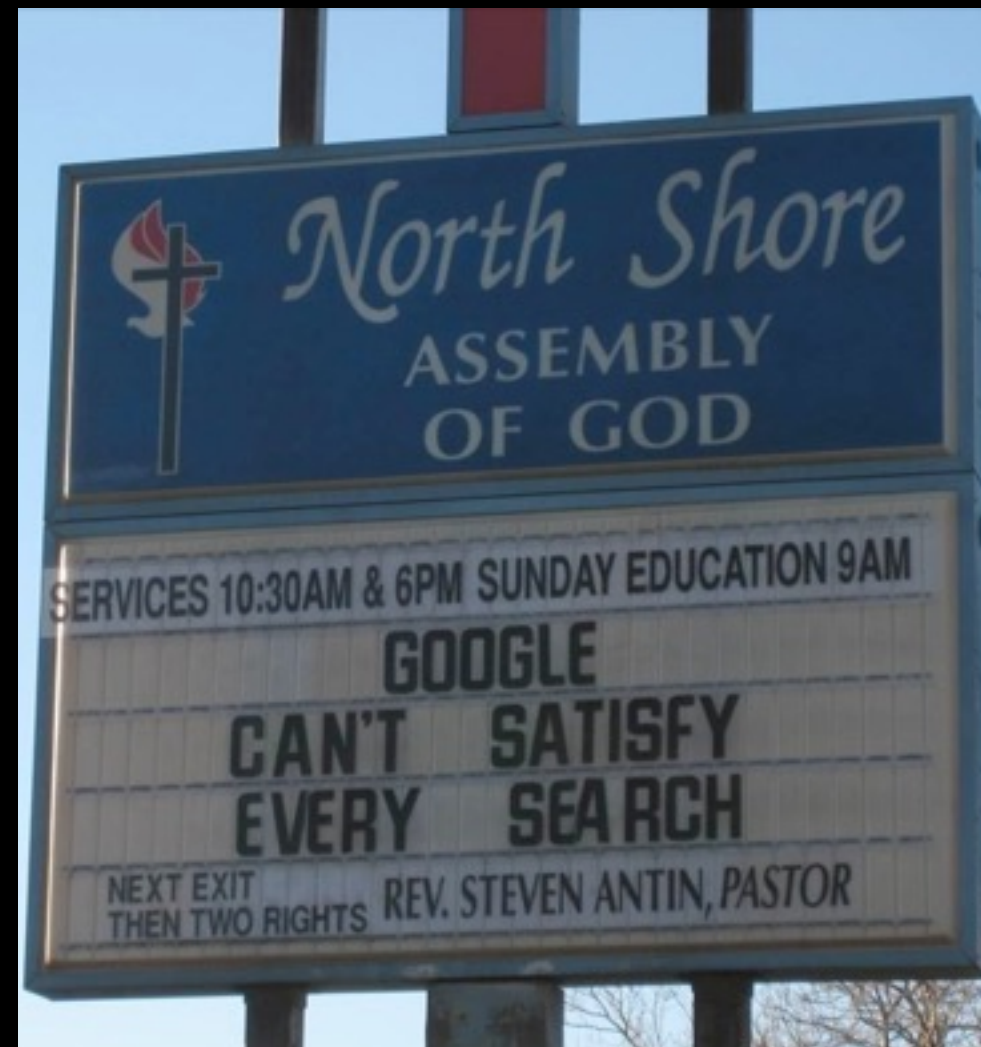
Today's Menu

- Returning to concepts - where games start
- Toying around
- Prototypes, minimalisms
- What toys can teach us about game design
- A principle for approaching game design

Out!

A New Challenge

- 10 minutes to create a game that:
 - uses these objects
 - two players
 - has three turns
 - there is a score
 - playtime does not exceed 5 minutes





Approach to the constraints?

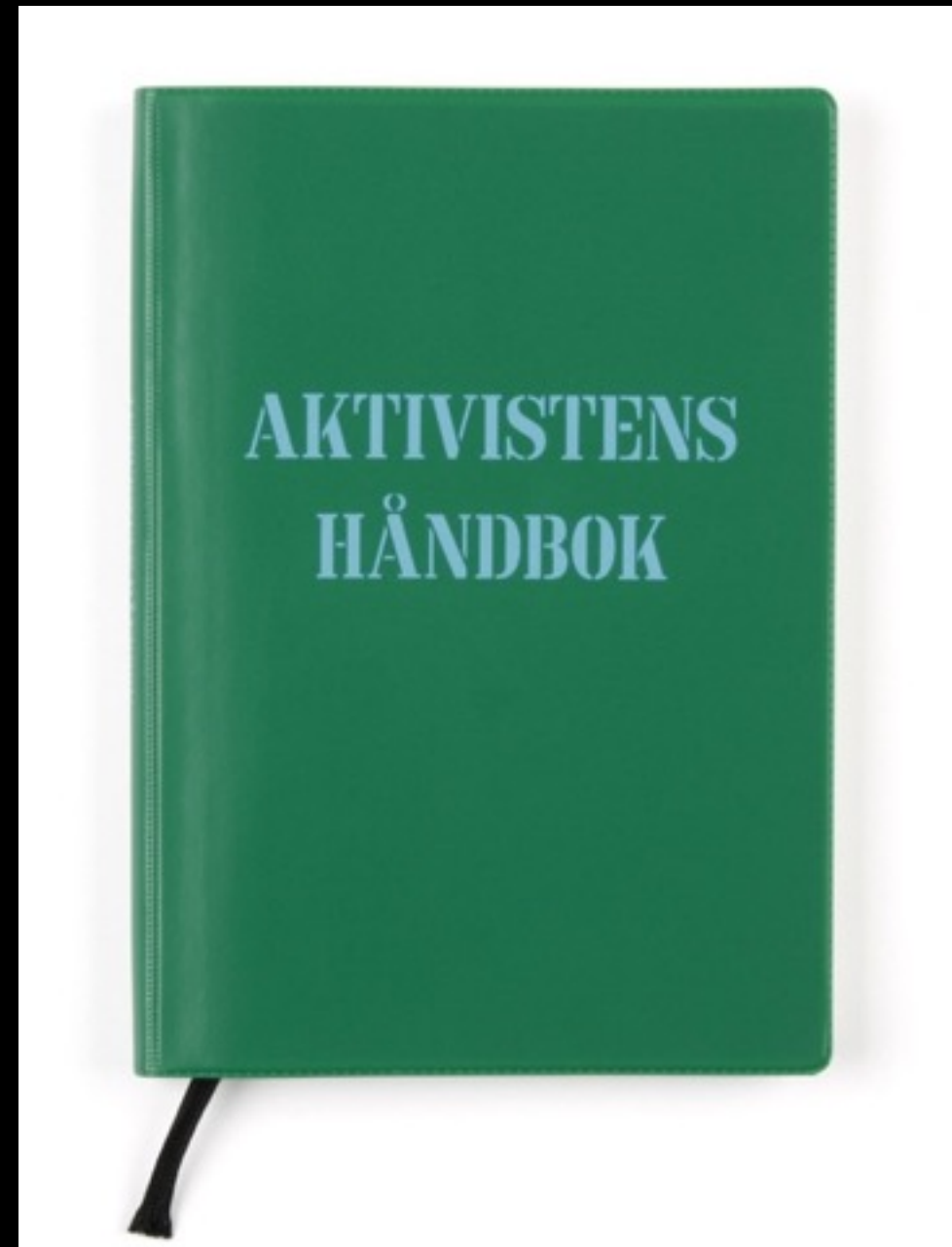


This is not easy

Two Elements of the Design Process

Logical: materials, systems,
effects, market, ...

Creative: coming up with the
most appropriate solution that is
as well a novelty one (we like
novelties)



Design Scope

What are the minimum game units (rules, mechanics, challenges) that can be prototyped to test a concrete game function/mode/level?



what are prototypes?

- Minimum exploratory requirements that do not distort the overall (design) intention!



Filtering Dimensions

- Design aspects to be explored by the prototype:
 - interaction
 - aesthetics
 - balance



Manifestation Dimensions

- Scope: what needs to be prototyped?
- Resolution: what is the granularity level of the prototype?
- Material: code, paper, flesh?



Prototyping

Spell out the filtering
and manifestation
dimensions!

Build the prototype
from them, and not
towards them!



In games?

Minimalist Game Design

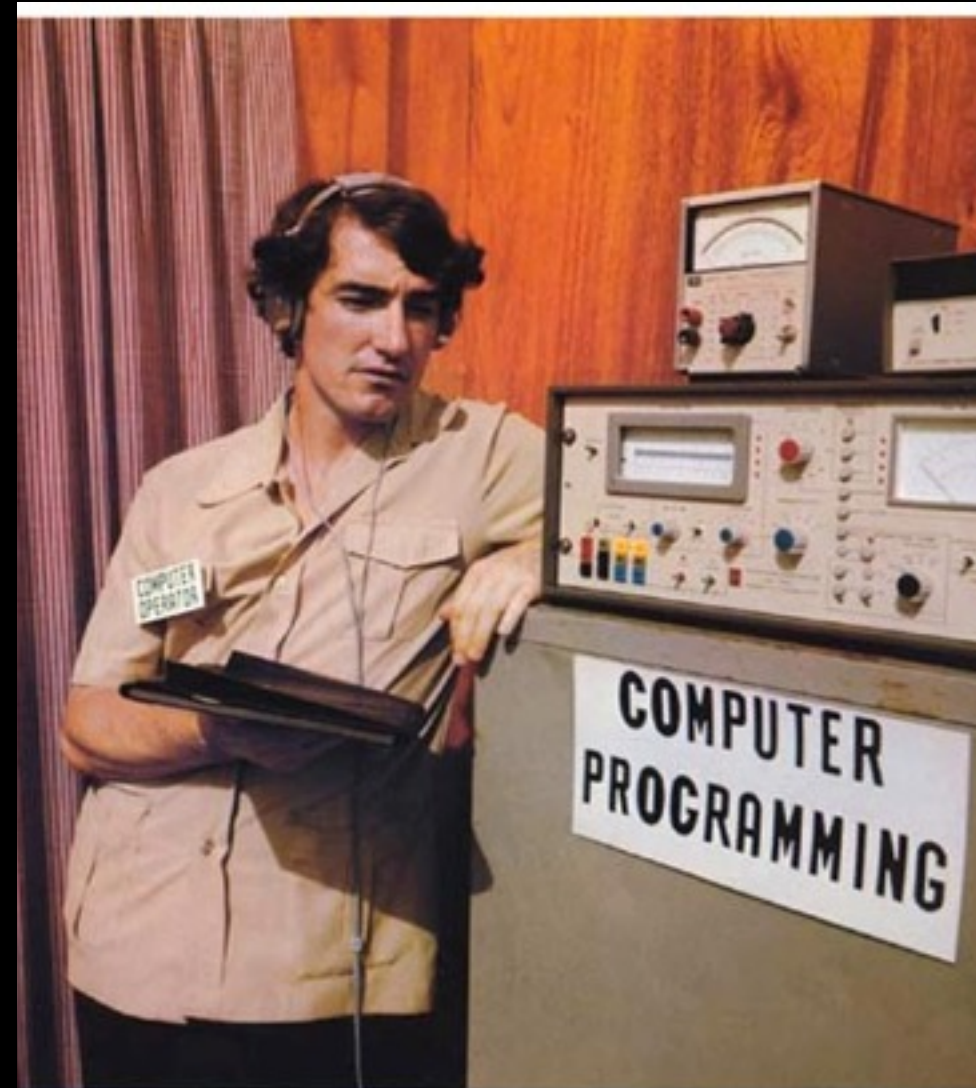
Low perceived complexity

Minimal controls

Themes, not narratives

Minimal:

rules - mechanics - controls - interface



In a computerized society where individuality is diminished, there are those who find little or no satisfaction in strict conformity to stereotyped living and are searching for their *own* answers to life's questions and how best to live, work and find happiness.

Approaching the task

Remember Toys!

- Toys are tools for playful interaction.
- They don't need internal rules (but can benefit from them).
- They guide interaction by focusing on affordances and constraints.
- Can be built onto games, while the minimum interaction is pleasurable.



Michael Mobison
playmobil Limited Edition

Mobison的容貌與膚色自出道以來發生了巨大的變化。他自己聲明做過3次手術：2次整鼻手術

Mobison的衣服右臂常有個臂環，據本人表示是為了紀念世界各地的兒童

只肯戴一隻手的怪怪白手套造型

老是短一截的黑褲露出白色襪子

Michael Mobison
Playmobil is a registered trademark of geobra Brandstätter GmbH & Co. KG.
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12座葛萊美獎等最高榮譽，全美音樂獎、全英音樂獎、靈魂列車音樂獎
Billboard年終排行等的最大贏家，更進而榮膺葛萊美獎及全美音樂獎頒
與當代傳奇獎及特殊成就獎

A Toy Approach

- Approach your concept, and ask:
- what is the essential, core component of this idea?
- Translate it to an interactive toy.



A Toy!?

Reduce to the minimum the influence of rules and goals.

Focus on
interaction,
communication of information
challenge structures

or
why is it interesting to play this
game?



The Principle of Localized Engagement

Translate the core element of a concept into a working toy-alike system that can test if there is a game in the idea, by affording and constraining behaviors.

Think about the minimum elements for engagement!



Toys, Fun, and Prototypes

- What you're doing is not prototyping, but **sketching**.
- A prototype is the object that contains the minimum exploratory requirements that do not distort the overall intention.
- A sketch is prior to that step.
- The point is not to make prototypes, but to identify what to prototype.



Context!

- The idea of design moves from invention to an ongoing process
- Making any object aligns the social (context) with the technological (material)
- Prototyping helps exploring this process, discovering 'user needs'
- Prototypes account for (explore) many things, some predicted, some not.



Summary