

GAME DESIGN APPROACHES FOR EDUCATION

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YOUR SPEAKER

- 14 Year veteran of the Game Industry
- Worked on nearly all major platforms
- Present focus in Social and Mobile Games
- Entrepreneur
(1 positive exit, 1 partial exit and one narrow escape)
- Chairman of the Board, IGDA

IGDA

- International Game Developers Association
- 7000 members worldwide
- 104 Chapters in 30 countries
- Programs focused on linking Academia with Industry
- Serious Game Special Interest Groups
- www.igda.org

DON'T PANIC: I AM A GAME DESIGNER!

THIS MORNING WE WILL:

- Discuss and Review a scant few successful design approaches in current games
- Review some psychological “bugs” in the human brain that designers presently exploit
- Reserve some time for questions

BUT FIRST, THE UNEXPECTED SEA CHANGE IN GAME DEV

- Complete revamp of development approach away from full development to MVP (Minimum Viable Product)
- Previously we built what we wanted players to have, not what they communicated they had wanted.
- Heavy/Extreme reliance on Analytics to drive further investment
- Most important step is to “Find the Fun”
- Forces Entrepreneurial Thinking to succeed

DESIGN APPROACHES

What's
working?

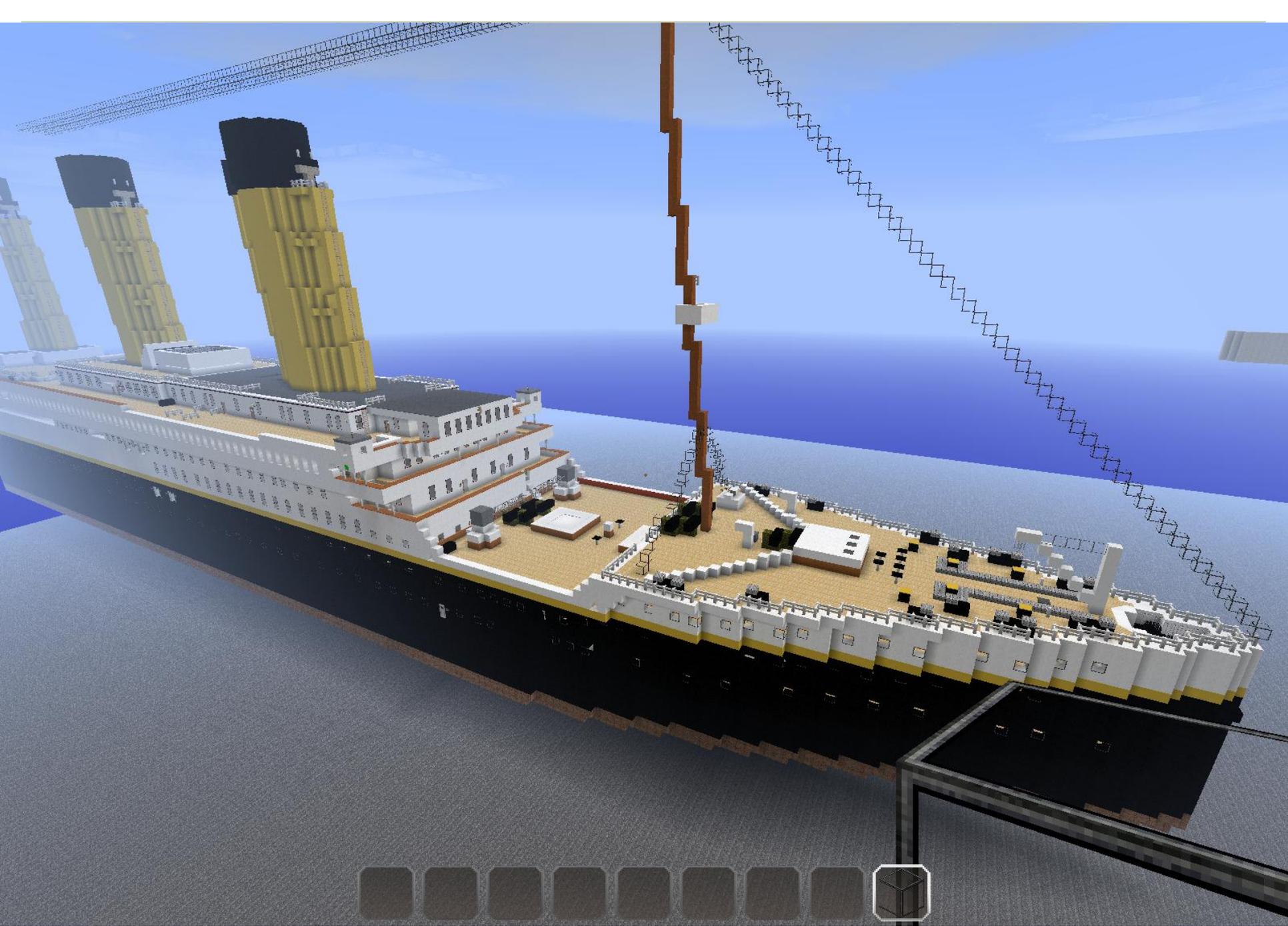
USER CREATED ENVIRONMENTS

- One of the largest growth areas in recent years.
- Player engagement goes through the roof when they can have a permanent impact on the virtual environment they frequent
- Don't underestimate the value of including small opportunities to create.

MINECRAFT





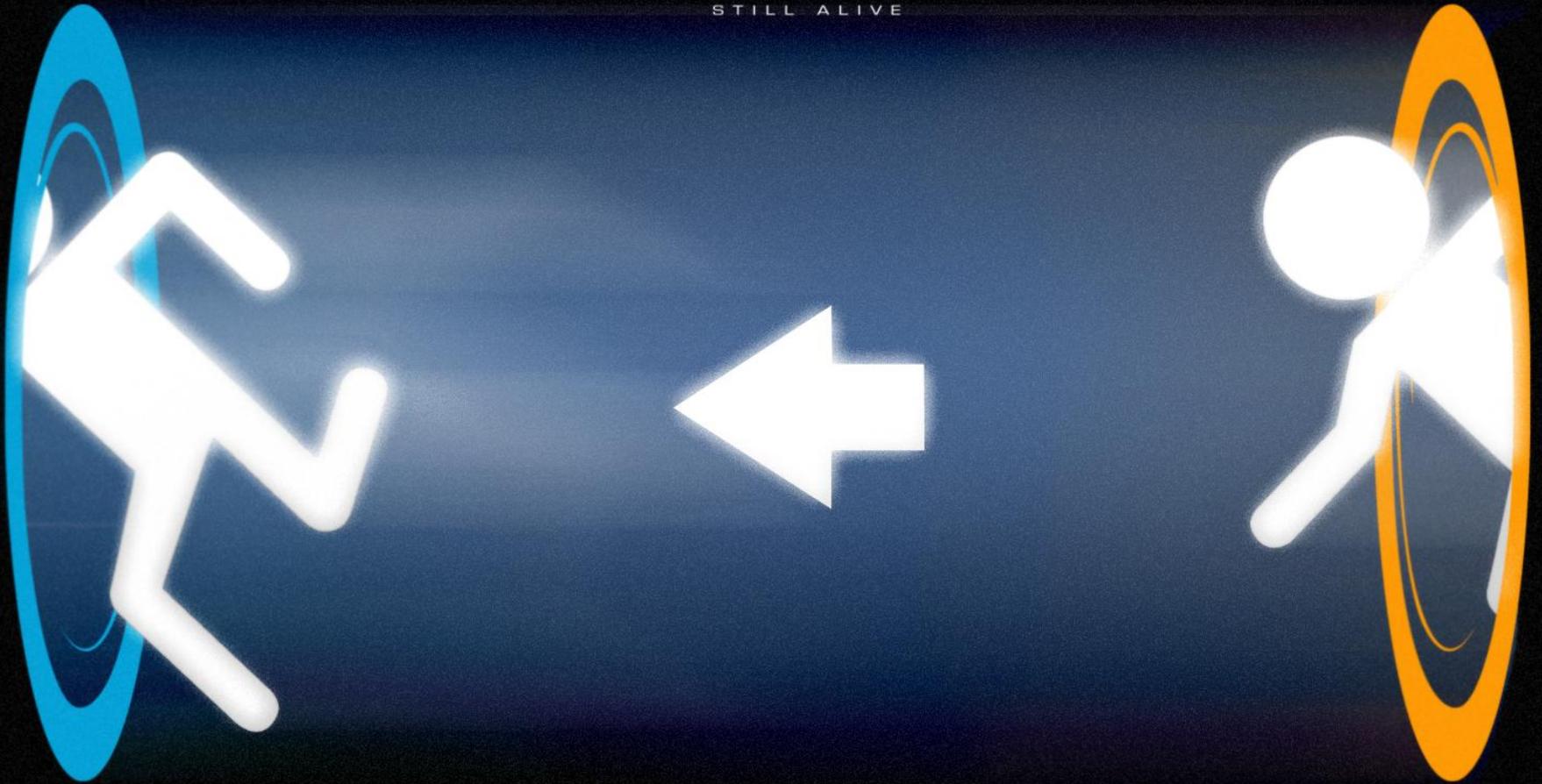




FRICITIONLESS TUTORIAL/ONBOARDING

- Critical component of the prevailing business models
- Extremely limited set of options with the early promise of later expansion
- 4 clicks/taps or less!
- Remembering the Sea Change, we don't want to actually build anything that can't prove it will be used by the player. Where is the value in that?
- Allowing for over customization is a very bad idea

PORTAL
STILL ALIVE



Now you are thinking with portals

WORDS TO LIVE BY...

- “Any sufficiently advanced tutorial is indistinguishable from gameplay.” – Christopher Keeling, with hat tip to Arthur C. Clark

ANALYTICS

- An area where MS&T has long been ahead of the Game Industry
- The key question is what events are actually being captured
- Our focus is to answer two questions:
 - What does the player enjoy doing as evidenced by repeat action?
 - Where do we expand our offering in accordance with question 1?
- We want the player to express their interest through their decisions, not force them through a pipe
- The focus is on actual input and not achievement of goals

THE VILLE



ENROLL YOUR PLAYERS IN YOUR SUCCESS

- **Kickstarter!**
- **The voice authentic is a MUST**
- **If you're using games as an educational platform, you must play games.**

The image shows the Kickstarter logo, which consists of the word "KICKSTARTER" in a bold, sans-serif font. The word "KICK" is in black, and "STARTER" is in a bright green color. The logo is centered within a white rectangular box that has a slight drop shadow, making it stand out against the light green background of the slide.

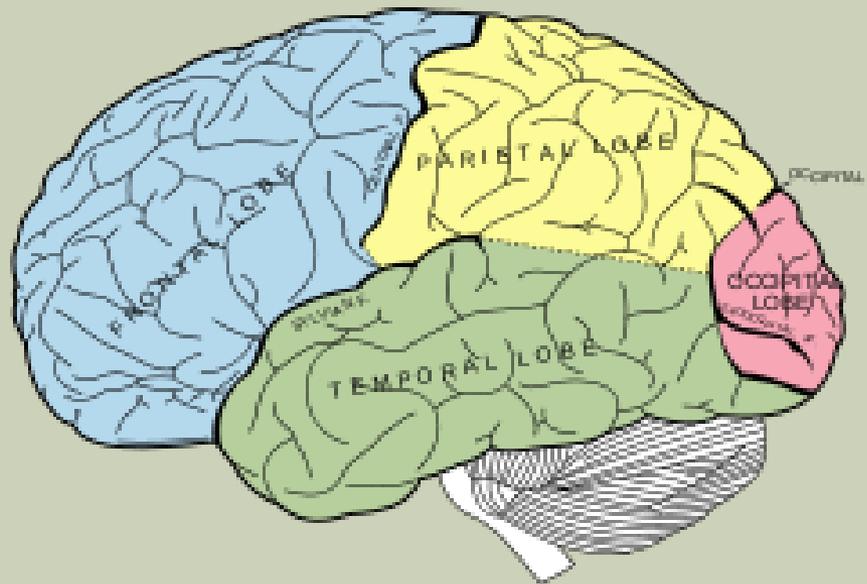
KICKSTARTER

BRAIN HACKS

Tricks
Game
Designers
are using

BRAIN HACKS

- Our brains love to build algorithms to solve problems
- We have some ingrained software defects in our minds that can assist the Game Designer



CURRENT DESIGN TECHNIQUES

■ Reciprocation

- We will do things for people who we think did us a favor, even if we don't like them
 - Social Games on Facebook are notorious
 - Designers use this to extract money from users, but it can have positive use.

CONSISTENCY FALLACY

- If we go on record, we are much more likely to follow through on our agreed promise.
- This can be a gateway to larger commitments like running a 5K.
- Game Designers can use the Consistency Fallacy to reverse engineer a long term goal into smaller bite sized components to accomplish said goal.

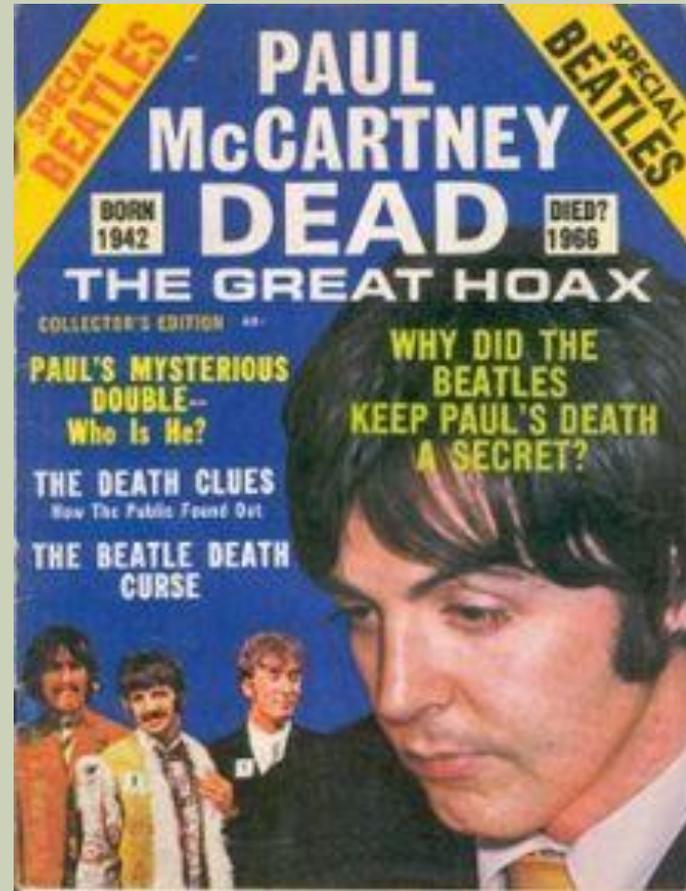
SCARCITY/COLLECTION

- Humans overvalue that which we think is scarce
 - We want advanced previews
 - Velvet rope treatment
 - We desire what few have regardless of the true value
- Designers utilize this brain hack in many ways. Virtual Goods are the newest angle, followed by Achievements
- Do your students/players feel like they are getting advance views/training?

CONSTELLATION

One of my favorites!

- The human brain is meant to pattern match
- We see things that we want to see if it helps us cope with a situation
- Players will hunt for this info
- ARGs



WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

- Find Entrepreneurial ways to approach teaching – The world is changing to quick to stand on ceremony
- Game technology is additive, not a replacement for other modes of instruction
- Have fun, your passion for a subject is more important than any bit of technology you can deploy

Q/A

Thank You

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