About today

• Meaningful play (the what)

• Iterative game design (the how)

• Exercise in iterative game design
Everybody here is a game designer

- Change rules in board games.
- More money to start with in Monopoly.
- Card game variations.
- Change the playing field in soccer.
- Pretend to be somebody else.
What is game design?

• About the player experience. (The player should have the fun.)

• Challenging the player in a pleasurable way.

• Design a thing and design an experience.

• Paradoxes: Many experiences from the same fixed set of rules.
Two gods (according to Chris Crawford)

- **Storyteller:** Fly bird, fly. Blow wind, blow.

- **Designer of the laws of nature:** Birds *can* fly, wind *can* blow, gravity. (This is game design.)
OK, but what are you designing?

• Good game designs results in what?
Meaningful Play

- Salen & Zimmerman

- Meaningful play: When relation between action and outcome is discernable and integrated
Game design documents

• Introduction (a few lines)
• Background (optional – other relevant information)
• Description (describe the game to the play as “you ... experience, do etc...”)
• Key features (what stands out)
• Genre
• Platforms
• Concept art (perhaps)
• Target group
How to make games

- 1977 – ca. 1990: Just start coding
- 1990 – ca. 2002: Design document up front
- 2002 – present: Prototype and iterate
Mark Cerny’s Method

Myths:
1. Scheduling is possible
2. Don’t throw out good work
3. Milestones
4. Alpha = first playable
5. Killing a project is bad
6. The bigger the design document, the better
7. The consumer is king
Iterative Game Design

Zimmerman: *Play as Research*

1. Come up with a basic **idea**.
2. Implement a prototype that demonstrates the idea.
3. Playtest it.
4. Revise.
5. Repeat
Iteration wins
A Very Short Development Cycle (20 mins). 4:15

1. Start with Rock Paper Scissors
2. Play it
3. Make changes
4. Repeat at least 3 times.

• What did you try? How did it work?
What did you try? How did it work?