April 8: Bending & Breaking Rules

Game Design
CMS.608/CMS.864

Jesper Juul
Sorry about that

• Zimmerman/Salen, *Rules of Play*: Ch. 21
• Callois, *Man, Play, Games*: Ch. 4
• Sniderman and DeKoven, *The Game Design Reader*
Today

• Emergence revisited
• Bending & breaking rules
• Cheating
• Exercise: Add rule changes (and perhaps cheating) to your game
Emergence revisited

• How do you create emergence?
• What is it good for?
Bending & Breaking rules

- Standard Player
- Dedicated Player
- Unsportsmanlike Player
- The Cheat
- The Spoil-sport

- Who are you? When?
Is a cheat code cheating?

• Distinguish between:
  – There is an official right way of playing the game.
  – An official *wrong* way of playing the game.
  – There are also *unofficial* wrong ways of playing the game.
Cheating in multiplayer

• **It is** immoral to cheat in multiplayer?
  – Always?
  – What is, and what is not cheating? Bots? Scripts?
  – What are the criteria by which we argue?
Cheating in single player

• **Is** it immoral to cheat in single player?
  - Is a walkthrough cheating?
  - Is a cheat code?
  - Is action replay?
Cheating in single player

• **Is** it immoral to cheat in single player?
  – Is a walkthrough cheating?
  – Is a cheat code?
  – Is action replay?

• **Yes**: The game is a social contract.

• **No**: The game can be used however you like it.
Can you make a game about changing the rules?
Can you make a game about changing the rules?

Distinguish between

- Meta-rules
- Rules

Image removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see http://www.looneylabs.com/Resources/images/fluxx/fluxx_3_1_prodshot_bw.tif
Changing parameters vs. changing rules

- Parameters: Unit X now moves 3 squares per turn
- Rules: The goal is now to end with the fewest points.

- No hard distinction between these two?
Rules changed by the game: An example

• Conclusion
  - Players like rule changes that change strategies
  - But dislike rule changes that cause difficulty spikes (in single player)
Do you want to prevent or support the breaking of rules?

- **Prevent** for the **right** reason: The game would become less fun.
- **Prevent** for the **wrong** reason: I have the right to decide how players play.
- **Support** for the **right** reason: Give players a sense of ownership; more content in the box.
- **Support** for the **wrong** reason: Because it is cool.
Exercise: Changing rules in your game project

• Make an addition to your design that allows players to change rules in the game
  - “Change rules” as in “players accept that it is called ‘changing rules’”.
  - Test to the extent possible

• Optional: Make a change that makes “cheating” an official part of the game
  - “Cheating” as in “you call it cheating”.

• Back at 16:25
The use of rule changes and cheating

- What does it do?
- Support/prevent?
- Players as co-designers or illusion of players as co-designers?
- Single vs. multiplayer