Game History and Types of Fun

- In the past game history has consisted of lists of game platforms basically
  - boring!
- And then there's this elusive idea of “fun”
  - the rules don't actually describe the kind of experience
  - there are different types of fun
- The developers and players have very different perspectives (like Course 6 vs. CMS!) from the system vs. from the aesthetics.

Game history as incremental evolution

- Let's examine matching tile games
  - looked down upon in the game industry, even in casual games
  - but so popular!
- First came Bejeweled, then lots of clones
- Then Jewel Quest – moderate innovation
  - match on every tile
- 7 Wonders
  - pass “cornerstones” through the playing field
- Da Vinci Code
  - clear a path
- The family tree is quite complex! (SEE FAMILY TREE)
- There's a limit to how complex/difficult a casual game can get
  - the casual game audience has less patience for a steep learning curve or complicated instructions
- Comparative game history
  - Same Game vs. Tetris (the two “roots” of match-3 games)
- What's still missing from the tree?
  - 3D, competitive, innovations after 2005
- How do you determine what came first and what influenced what?
  - Example: Zuma, Puzzle Loop, Luxor, clones
- Developers want to be original, but players think of all games as versions of each other
- Should games be innovative or familiar?
  - A mix?
  - One new thing at a time?
  - There have been very successful games that were entirely new concepts
    - Katamari, Sims
- EXERCISE: make a game evolution tree

- Fun vs. system
  - Does knowing that Tetris is NP-complete tell us anything useful?
  - What is a game?
- The system, the machinery, or the emotions?
- The MDA framework doesn't hold for card/board games etc. where the players must understand the mechanics first.
- Maybe your design goals should be aesthetic?
  - “I want the game to make the player feel...”
  - there are many unpredictable types of fun!
- How do you make a player cry? (not through frustration!)
  - emotional development over time and effort
  - expectations for emotional involvement