Game Design & the Future of Advertising

Mark Mulvey

STRATEGY DIRECTOR, CRITICAL MASS

@MarkMulvey

Critical Mass

Game Design and the Future of Advertising

Mark Mulvey, Strategy Director

© 2018 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Wait, why video games?

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

‘No Man’s Sky,’ Don Draper, and Why My Optimism Has Fists

I accidentally liked a game that many hate. Then I started thinking.

Mark Mulvey
Aug 30, 2016 · 7 min read

> **“For those who enjoy wandering and wondering equally, or consider them the same.”** — an employee at my local bookstore recommending a book by Italo Calvino. I think his name was Bennett.

No Man’s Sky cover art

Best Available Interface

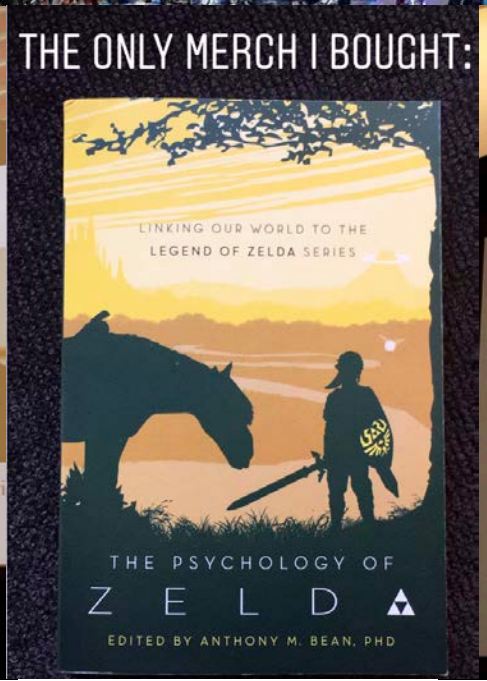
The Nintendo Switch feels satisfying to use, which makes it extraordinary.

Mark Mulvey
Nov 14, 2017 · 6 min read

Nintendo’s new gaming system, Switch, is what I should have dreamed of as a kid. It’s joyful, it’s friendly, and it dazzles because it decided to approach play from the vantage point of childish daydreams — fancifully, and with complete disregard to what exists, what came before, or what’s technically feasible. Nintendo’s innovation here cannot be understated. They are designing the curve you’re trying to get ahead of.

PAX
EAST
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
ROOSTER TEEH
LAWBREAKERS

Dr. Kelli Dunlap
@KelliNDunlap
Dr. Anthony Bean
@VideoGameDoc
Dr. Ryan Kelly
@DrRKelly
Dr. Rachel Kowert
@DrKowert
Dr. Sarah Hays
@XsarahdactylX
Dr. Chelsea Hughes
@aeneiaa
Adam Davis "Dr. Mari
@GametoGrow
Docs on Docs on Docs

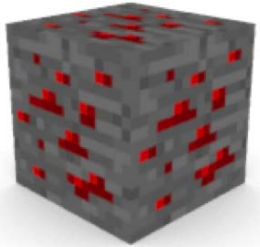

THE ONLY MERCH I BOUGHT:
LINKING OUR WORLD TO THE
LEGEND OF ZELDA SERIES
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF
ZELDA
EDITED BY ANTHONY M. BEAN, PHD

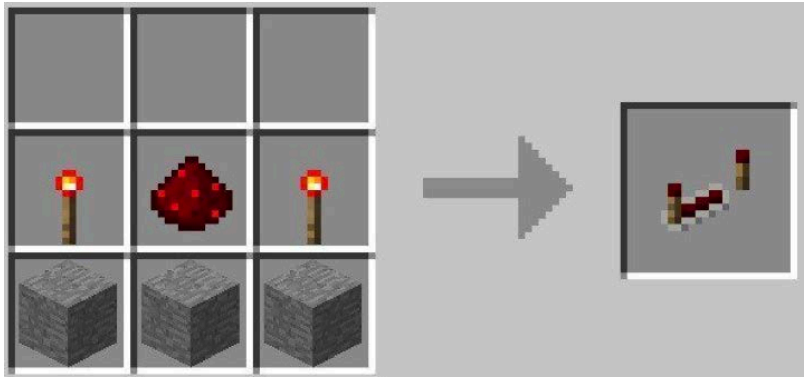
Influencers and Brands:
Putting It All Together
...
PAX
EAST / BOSTON, MA

Encounters as Material:

“How Can I Use This?”

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.





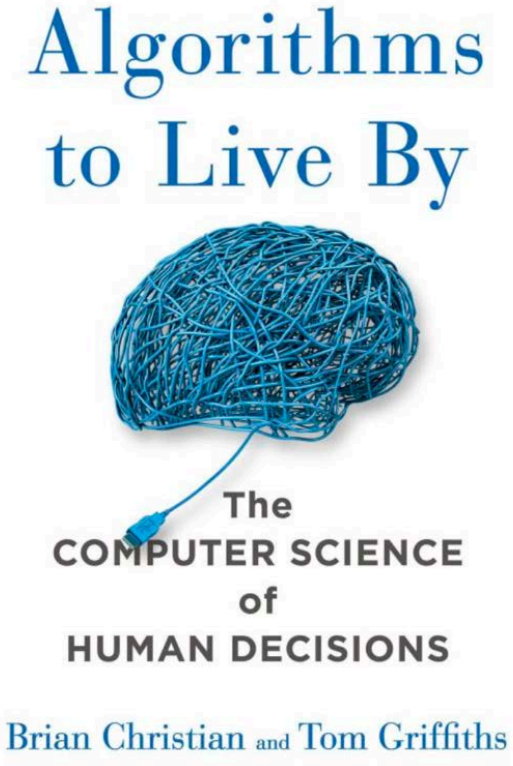
© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

1.
Explore

2.
Exploit

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

“Deciding when to stop your quest for the ideal apartment, or ideal spouse, depends entirely on how long you expect to be looking”



The answer from computer science is precise: 37% of the way through your search period.

If you’re spending a month looking for an apartment, you should calibrate for 11 days, and then you should grab the next best-of-all you find.

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Client feature request:

“More fun!”

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

What even are games?

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

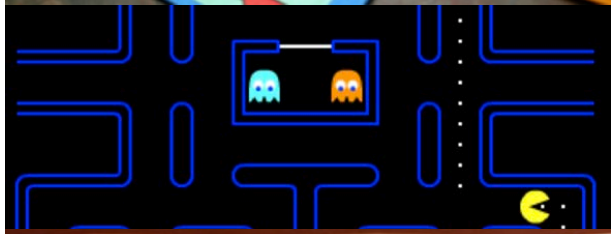
A game typically has 4 defining traits:

1. There is a goal. This gives the player a sense of purpose

2. There are rules. This encourages strategic thinking and creativity.

3. There is a feedback system. This reminds the player that the goal is achievable, and acts as motivation.

4. Participation is voluntary. Opting-in ensures a safe, pleasurable activity.



© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

What about gardening games?

A key principle of gardening game design is that relationships take time.

Other traits:

- Sustainability
- Infinite play
- Aesthetic of caretaking
- Coziness

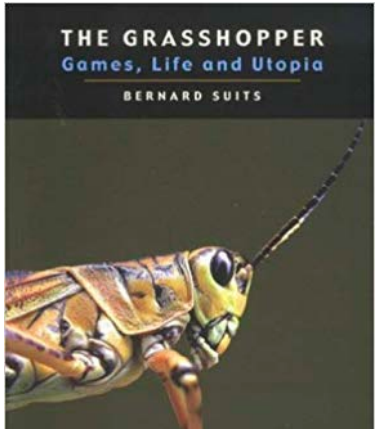
Are those “goals?” Is this a game?

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

The Lusory Attitude:

"Playing a game is the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles."

—Bernard Suits



© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Gamification

Applying typical elements of game playing (e.g. point scoring, competition with others, streaks) to other areas of activity…

… typically as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service.

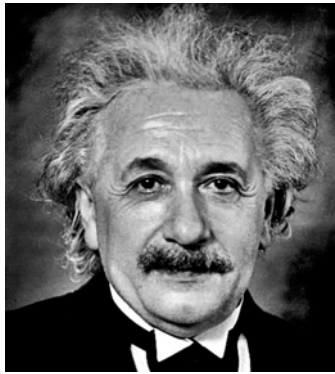
Gamefulness

Having the positive traits of a gamer (or a game) such as:

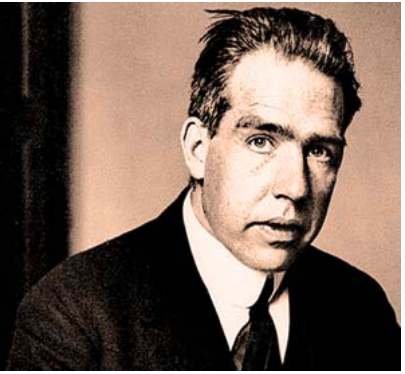
- strong motivation & goal orientation
- confidence in one's own capabilities
- enjoying the pursuit of new challenges
- perseverance in the face of obstacles
- passion for learning new skills

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

For creative edge, play > logic



“Games are the most elevated form of investigation.”

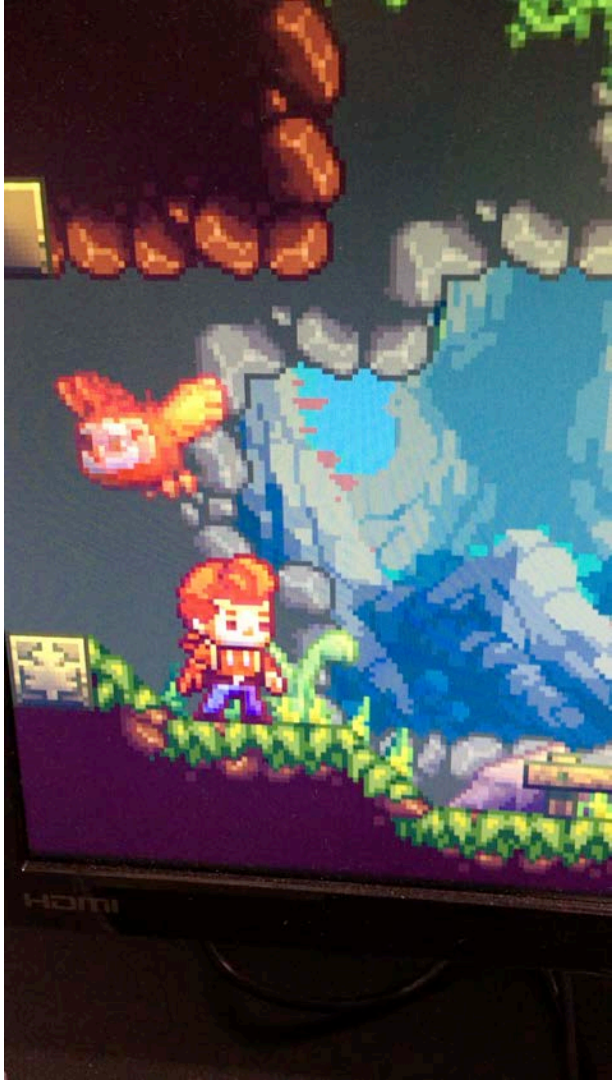


“No, no, you are not thinking, you are just being logical!”

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Experience Design at play

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.



© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

SKILLS
MAGIC
ITEMS
MAP
LEVEL 34
Tirdas, 11:21 PM, 22nd of Heartfire, 4E 201

© 2019 Co

Things you can do!

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

#critical-gaming

☆ | 1 | 1 | Add a topic

Search

Today

Mark Mulvey 4:52 PM
joined #critical-gaming.

Mark Mulvey 4:52 PM
set the channel purpose: Sharing video game inspiration and insights to help inform the digital experiences we design for brands

Pinned by you

Mark Mulvey 5:11 PM
This is the place where we can share links, clips, articles, books, and podcasts related to video games & gaming culture, and to chat around them to see what kinds of things might be applicable to our non-gaming world of brand marketing and experience design.

General themes I'm exploring and putting definition around at the moment!:

- Gamification vs. Gaming vs. Play
- Hidden Fun: The Power of Easter Eggs & Glitches
- Ambient Social Entities > NPCs
- Embedded Tutorials: Each Level As A Lesson
- Streaks & Leaderboards & Why They Work
- The Appeal of Difficulty
- Psychology of Gamers & Game-makers
- Types of Menus & Why They Work
- Streamer Culture & Etiquette
- E-Sports & the Nature of Fandom
- Brands of Gaming Culture
- Niche Gamer Products
- Retro Games & Nostalgia
- Pixel Art & Animations
- Zero-sum vs. Positive-sum Games
- Open-world & Sandbox Games

Message #critical-gaming

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Considerations for brand strategy

1. Talk to video game designers. They embrace constraints, and live at the intersection of code and immersive engagement.

2. Talk to gamers. They have grown adept at articulating where an experience starts to lose them and why.

3. Read about games. Design solutions, patterns, behavioral insights, terms, concepts, and metaphors abound. (This includes podcasts)

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Considerations for brand strategy

4. Play!

Gather material to craft into something new.

Which, after all, is what strategy is all about

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Thank You!

@MarkMulvey

@pudgyturtle

© 2019 Critical Mass Inc. All Rights Reserved.

#4AsStratFest

4's STRATFEST2019

Power to the People