

Game and Learn:
An Introduction to Educational Gaming
2. What Is A *Good* Game?

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A Tale Of Two Games

One of The Best Videogames of All Time: *Pitfall!*



One of The Worst Videogames of All Time: *ET*



What Makes a Game Fun?

Games and Boredom

| When Players Say... | ...They Mean |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The game is too easy | Game patterns are too simple |
| The game is too involved | Players are uninterested in the information required to detect patterns |
| The game is too hard | Patterns are perceived as noise |
| The game becomes too repetitive | New patterns are added too slowly |
| The game becomes too hard | New patterns are added too fast |
| The game runs out of options | All game patterns are exhausted |

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Games and Boredom

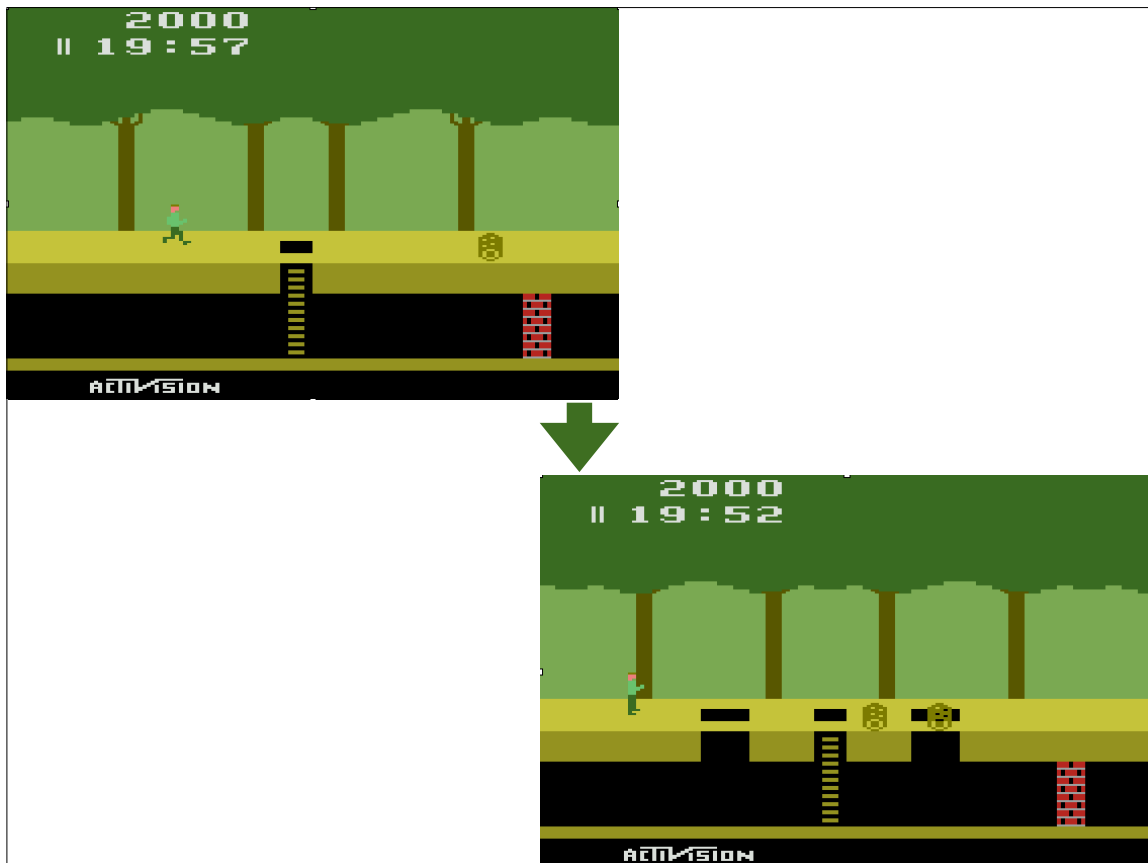
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Successful Games

| Include These Items... | ...To Avoid |
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| Preparation before challenges | Results due to pure chance |
| A sense of a game space | The perception of the game as trivial |
| A solid core mechanic | The game not being perceived as a game at all |
| A range of challenges | The game being exhausted too quickly |
| A range of required abilities | The game being perceived as simplistic |
| Skill in using the required abilities | The game being perceived as tedious |

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Three More Key Items for Success

| You Need to Have... | ...Because |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Variable feedback | Players like to see greater skill result in greater rewards |
| A way to accommodate beginners and experts playing together | You don't want to see beginners get clobbered, and experts "bottom feed" |
| A definite cost for failure | Players feel cheated by "never-lose" games |

Exercise: Good & Bad Games

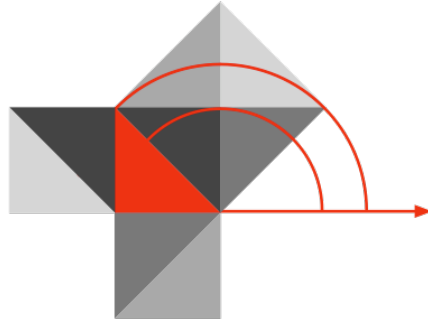
- Good Games:
 - *Pitfall!* (Atari 2600)
 - *Aladdin* (SNES)
 - *Super Mario 64* (N64)
- Bad Games:
 - *E.T.* (Atari 2600)
 - *Captain Novolin* (SNES)
 - *Superman 64* (N64)

Resources Cited

- **What Makes a Game Fun:**

- Koster, R. *Theory of Fun for Game Design*. Paraglyph. (2004)

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