

GameGame © Aki Järvinen 2005

1

## component

Components are represented by objects that players are able to manipulate in the course of the game.

Components provide a source of identification, desire, or opposition for players. They are potential objects of interaction; tools to play with and against.

Examples: Pieces in a board game, a deck of cards, credits, characters, items, tokens, resources.

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## goal

Goals are 'the end toward which effort is directed' i.e. objectives that the game system sets for the players.

An explicit, clearly stated goal distinguishes a game from a non-game. For game designers, goals are means to guide player motivations. Subgoals enable more frequent rewards for players.

Examples: Defeat the opponent, score most points, save the Princess, get out of a maze, win a million euros, etc.

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**deck 1**  
**1st page**

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## victory / end condition

A particular goal rule that states when the game is won, lost, or it reaches a stage where play stops and player efforts are valorized.

Victory conditions make games competitive. End conditions are often used to circumscribe the duration of a game.

Examples: 90 minutes of play time in soccer, losing all 'lives' in Pac-Man, first to score x points wins, 'Bingo!' etc.

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## environ- ment

Game environment provides a space for other game elements.

Game environments guide and confine the player into certain paths, events, and play a part in the game's visual identity. They are either boards, fields, or virtual environments.

Examples: The 8 x 8 grid of Chess, a Monopoly board, a football pitch, virtual suburbias in The Sims, mazes in Pac-Man, etc.

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## t h e m e

Game theme is the subject matter of the game. It provides a meaningful context for everything that takes place.

Theme is made visible through game rhetorics: i.e. how rules are communicated and other elements represented and/or simulated.

Examples: War in Chess, real estate trade in Monopoly, Lord of the Rings games, science fiction in Space Invaders, bodily contact in Twister, etc.

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## interface

Interface is a specifically designed tool with which the player can engage with the game and produce input to the game system.

The interface is constantly present as a part of the player experience. The specific design of interfaces is a particular trait of digital games.

Examples: Gamepad, joystick, keyboard&mouse, dance mat, EyeToy, Fussball table etc.

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## collecting

component mechanic

The player is allowed and encouraged, or possibly forced to possess multiple components.

Examples:

'Looting' items into an inventory in role-playing games, collecting items in Animal Crossing, accumulating cards in hand in Uno.

Themes: Pokemon, Fantasy  
Relations: Choosing, Allocation, Trading

## trading

component mechanic

Players trade components with other players or the game system, or they buy them with game currency.

Examples:

Buying a real estate or a hotel in Monopoly, changing cards from one's hand in Poker, buying clothes, weapons, etc. in Grand Theft Auto.

Themes: Commerce, Colonization.  
Relations: Bidding, Collecting

## allocating

component mechanic

Managing quantifiable resources in the game, such as components, time & effort, in the hope of a reward.

Examples:

Upping the ante in Poker, allocating resources to building armies instead of infrastructure in a strategy game, voting in GameGame.

Themes: Betting, Management  
Relations: Bidding, Trading, Collecting.

## choosing

component mechanic

The player is presented with making an informed or uninformed choice (e.g. a guess) between a number of options.

Examples: Rock-Paper-Scissors, answering a multiple choice question in a trivia game, choosing where to place next mark in Tic-Tac-Toe.

Themes: Lotteries, Election, Trivia  
Relations: Collecting, Submitting

## corporate takeover

On his/her turn, the holder of this card may force the next milestone immediately. S/he gets to discard the remaining deck, and obtains the publisher card. Milestone begins.

Discard after use.

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## play-testing

The owner of this asset is able to playtest the design extensively.

On his turn, the player may look through the top 3 cards of the draw deck and choose one of the cards.

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# publisher card

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**P u b l i s h e r**

Accepts



**P u b l i s h e r**

Declines

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**a s s e t**

**head-hunting**

With your brilliant concept, you are able to lure talented designers from a fellow player. You may steal one of their cards.

Discard after use.

GameGame © Aki Järvinen 2005

**a s s e t**

**research**

You are able to take advantage of brilliant game researchers. Pick either a card from the draw deck or the asset deck without discarding another or spending a budget token.

Discard after use.

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# asset cards

## substituting

component mechanic

The player is able to substitute a component with another or change its attributes.

Examples:

Transforming a pawn into a queen in Chess, gaining a level in RPGs.

Themes: Fantasy, Sci-fi  
 Relations: Allocation, Collecting, Choosing

## building

spatial mechanic

Assembling constructions to the game environment, often with the help of components and their combinations.

Examples:

Building a city in SimCity, interior design in The Sims, playing Jenga.

Themes: Urban planning, geometry.  
 Relations: Allocation, Placing.

## navigating

spatial mechanic

Planning & assigning one's route in relation to the game environment and the spatial rules it imposes.

Examples:

Assigning component waypoints in strategy games.

Themes: War, exploration, seafare.  
 Relations: Manoeuvring, Racing.

## placing

spatial mechanic

Placing a component on the game environment in order to execute plan.

Examples:

Laying tiles in Carcassonne, playing Domino, jigsaw puzzles, drawing a symbol in Tic-Tac-Toe, placing directions in Chu-chu Rocket.

Themes: Geometry, spatial relations.  
 Relations: Allocation, Choosing.

## manoeuvring

movement mechanic

The player's challenge is to manoeuvre in the spatial constraints of the game environment.

Examples:

Steering a vehicle or a character through challenging game environments, e.g. Super Mario Bros, SSX.

Themes: (Motor) Sports, Chase, Exploration.  
 Relations: Navigating, Combat

## operating

procedure mechanic

Taking an action that produces a specific game system operation, i.e. a procedure.

Examples:

Rolling a die, spinning a wheel of fortune, opening a door.

Themes: various  
 Relations: Choosing, Timing

## bidding

procedure mechanic

Making an offer on a game component or an area of game environment possessed by the game system or another player.

Examples:

Placing a bet, bidding for paintings in Modern Art the card game.

Themes: Sports, contests, art.  
 Relations: Trading, Choosing, Allocation, Conquering.

## aiming & shooting

manipulation mechanic

Taking an aim towards a target and trying to hit (or miss!) or capture it in the hope of a reward.

Examples:

Throwing darts, kicking a football, shooting bubbles in Bust-a-Move.

Themes: War, sports, espionage, etc.  
 Relations: Timing, Arranging, Enclosing, Navigation

## discarding

component mechanic

Discarding a component or using one to displace another.

Examples:

Discarding cards in a card game such as Gin Rummy, displacing opponent's token in Checkers.

Themes: Fantasy, Sci-fi

Relations: Fighting, Collecting, Choosing

## arranging

component mechanic

Arranging the order, assembly, or location of game components.

Examples:

Arranging jewels of Bejeweled into sequences of three, combining Tetris blocks, arranging a Magic the Gathering deck.

Themes: Puzzles, etc.

Relations: Choosing, Collecting, Sequencing.

## submitting

component mechanic

Submitting information for evaluation by the game system, moderator, or other players.

Examples:

Answering a question or an inquiry, predicting outcome.

Themes: Trivia, tests

Relations: Reconnaissance, Allocation, Choosing, Voting, Performing.

## timing

spatial mechanic

The player has to enact an action in a specific time frame to cause best results.

Examples:

Timing one's steps in Dance Dance Revolution, having a chance to answer in a quiz show.

Themes: Music, combat, trivia.

Relations: Aiming & shooting, Choosing, Operating, Combo, Submitting

## dis-charging

player mechanic

Cancellation of an agreed action or alliance through an operation that is acknowledged by the game system.

Examples:

Betraying another player's trust by changing sides, discharging a team member.

Themes: Social relationships.

Relations: Contract

## manipulating

procedure mechanic

Keeping possession of a component and/or handling/controlling it.

Examples:

Keeping possession of the ball and dribbling with it in basketball etc.

Themes: Sports, various

Relations: Manoeuvring, Arranging, Collecting

## sequential movement

movement mechanic

Moving a component or oneself in sequences or turns, e.g., from point to point. Possibly includes making a choice of direction or length of movement.

Examples:

Moving a piece in Chess or Monopoly, moving troops in Starcraft etc.,

Themes: War, exploration, chase.

Relations: Choosing, Allocating, Manipulating, Combat, Reconnaissance

## conquering

spatial mechanic

Conquering a component or a game environment, thus gaining possession of it.

Examples:

Conquering a city in Carcassonne, or Europa Universalis.

Themes: War, colonization, business

Relations: Combat, Allocation, Bidding, Manoeuvring

## fighting

component mechanic

Attacking opponent component(s) or defending oneself from them. Various submechanics (techniques, actions, weapon-related) are possible.

Examples:  
Shooting etc. in Grand Theft Auto, etc.  
Fighting in Tekken or Tomb raider series.

Themes: War, Crime, Martial arts, Boxing, Exploration, etc.

Relations: Manouevering, navigation, weapon mechanics

## dialogue

communication mechanic

Players are able to enter into dialogue with game system or other players.

Examples:  
Conversing with non-player characters (e.g., Secret of the Monkey Island), tabletop RPGs, chatting in MMORPGs, etc.

Themes: Narrative, Characterization

Relations: Reconnaissance, Contract, Performing.

## composing

kinetic mechanic

The players are afforded means to give birth to images and sounds.

Examples:  
Sound effects in Rez,  
'Viewtiful' mechanics in Viewtiful Joe.

Themes: Special effects, Psychedelia, Comics.

Relations: Combo, Fighting, Timing, Manouevering.

## combo

interface mechanic

The ability to string together instances of certain mechanic in order to produce variations or cumulative effect.

Examples:  
Combining tricks in Tony Hawk Pro Skater, moves in Tekken, etc.

Themes: Sports, Fighting.

Relations: Fighting, Manouevering, Sequencing, Composing.

## performing

communication mechanic

Performing with the means of communication that the game system and technology affords.

Examples:  
Performing a character in a RPG via physical and verbal means, or by written language in MMORPGS, drawing in Pictionary, etc.

Themes: various

Relations: Dialogue; Submitting, Reconnaissance

## trans- forming

kinetic mechanic

The players are given an ability to transform the flow of time or space to better their chances of overcoming in a challenge.

Examples:  
"Bullet time" in Max Payne, fast-forwarding time in The Sims and digital strategy games.

Themes: Special effects, Sci-fi, Fantasy

Relations: Fighting, Manouevering

## sequencing

interface mechanic

Producing input to the game system in correct sequence, and possibly in limited time frame.

Examples:  
Playing Mastermind, Frequency or Dance Dance Revolution, 'Quick-Timer Events' in Shenmue or Dragon's Lair.

Themes: Music, sports, puzzle, etc.

Relations: Timing, Combo

## herding

surveillance mechanic

Means to signal and/or control a component's presence in the game environment and guide it to a certain location.

Examples:  
Controlling the Sims, Herding cattle in Sheep, encouraging Yorda character in Ico to jump etc.

Themes: War, colonization, business

Relations: Enclosing, Manouevering

## enclosing

spatial mechanic

Enclosing part of the game environment and/or components in order to gain control or possession over them.

Examples:

Enclosing area in Qix, playing Twister, Catching butterflies in Loop.

Themes: Geometry, various

Relations: Conquering, Manoeuvring, Placing, Aiming & Shooting

## sequential movement

movement mechanic

Moving a component or oneself in sequences or turns, e.g., from point to point. Possibly includes making a choice of direction or length of movement.

Examples:

Moving a piece in Chess or Monopoly, moving troops in Starcraft, etc.

Themes: War, exploration, chase.

Relations: Choosing, Allocating, Manipulating, Combat, Reconnaissance

## story-telling

narrative mechanic

Telling or creating a story with the means that the game system affords (and within its rules).

Examples:

Continuing a story in Once Upon a Time, pitching in Game Game.

Themes: various

Relations: Dialogue, Submitting, Performing.

## reconais- sance

surveillance mechanic

Gathering information or making inquiries about surroundings, challenges, or other players.

Examples:

Scanning in Metroid Prime, asking the Game Master hints/elaborations in a tabletop RPG, establishing diplomatic relations in Civilization.

Themes: War, Colonization, etc.

Relations: Contract, Dialogue

## strength

body mechanic

Players are allowed and required to use maximum physical power to gain the best result.

Examples:

Boxing, Wrestling, Weight-lifting, Athletics

Themes: Sports, various

Relations: Accelerating, performing, sequencing, timing, manoeuvring

## motion

body mechanic

The players bodily stances (postures, gestures, etc.) effect the game system or benefit in dealing with its challenges.

Examples:

Playing Eyetoy games, jumping rope, bunny hopping, Twister

Themes: Dancing, Exercising, Sports

Relations: Performing, Sequencing, Timing, Manoeuvring

## ricing

body/component mechanic

The players/components are allowed to move as fast as possible in order to gain best possible result.

Examples:

Running, Swimming, Cycling, Athletics

Themes: (Motor) sports, Chase.

Relations: Performing, Sequencing, Timing, Manoeuvring

## Jumping

body/component mechanic

The players are allowed to jump in order to gain best possible result and/or complete a challenge.

Examples:

Basketball, Pole Vault, Rope Jumping, Super Mario Bros.

Themes: Sports, Chase, etc.

Relations: Accelerating, Sequencing, Timing, Manoeuvring, Performing

# mechanics cards

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## contract

player mechanic

A contract by two or more players is made through an operation that is acknowledged by the game system. I.e. informal co-operation is formalised with a game mechanic.

Examples:  
Assembling a team in sports games, becoming the Shogun's samurai in the card game Honor of the Samurai.

Themes: Sports, War etc.  
Relations: Discharging

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## role assignment

player mechanic

Player are assigned different roles, and thus possibly also mechanics, to participate in the game.

Examples:  
Playing as either Lieutenant, Medic or Soldier in Return to Castle Wolfenstein, taking Sauron's role in Lord of the Rings board game

Themes: War, sports, adventure, etc.  
Relations: Choosing, Allocating, Contract

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## artisté

This asset gives an artistic touch to the game's visual style, prop design, or audio.

If combined with a THEME, artisté pays extra budget card in case of a successful pitch.

Discard after use.

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## design consultant

During the milestone and the pitching round, the holder of this card is able to force the publisher into buying the concept.

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# asset cards

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**next generation technology**

The owner of this asset has developed next generation technology that is rumoured to enable new player experiences.

If combined with an INTERFACE, 'next gen tech' forces the publisher to buy the concept.

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**hype**

The owner of this asset is able to lure game journalism into frenzy about the upcoming game.

Hype pays one extra budget token in case of a successful pitch.

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**conference attendance**

On his/her turn, the player may propose a merger with one fellow player (who has not yet merged). If the player accepts, the two players combine half of their cards and assets. Their budget is combined in full. Play continues normally, with the merged players counting as one player.

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**scandal**

On his/her turn, the player may disband a merger of two fellow players. The player decides who gets what, on the condition that each player must be left with 2 cards minimum.

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**licence!**

The holder of this card has acquired rights for a film / television / comics / toy licence.

The licence pays one extra budget token in case of a successful pitch.

Discard after use.

**asset cards**