

# Fiction and Stories in Games

(digital or not)

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Fiction vs. theme

# Fiction vs. Theme

- How do non-digital games construct their fiction?
- How can non-digital games construct a story?

[Demonstration fight from Soul Calibur IV](#) removed due to copyright restrictions.

# Games with story vs. story-driven

# Games telling stories?

- In fact, games do not technically “tell” stories.
- Who is the storyteller in a game?
- Story of the fictional world vs. story of the player.

It's not storytelling,  
it's storybuilding.

# Storytelling vs. Storybuilding

- Storytelling
  - Continuous
  - One-way communication
  - Order of events and disclosure of information determined by the author
- Storybuilding
  - Fragmented
  - Collaboration between narrative design and player
  - Order of events generated by player's interaction

# Story-building games

Images from [Once Upon A Time](#) and [Gloom](#)  
removed due to copyright restrictions.

How do non-digital  
games construct  
their fiction?

# Building the fictional world?

- Title
- Character Design
- Environmental Design (sound and visuals)

# Title

Image from [Zombies Ate My Neighbors](#)  
and [The Earth Dies Screaming](#) removed  
due to copyright restrictions.

# Character Design

Image of [Sonic the Hedgehog](#) removed due to copyright restrictions.

# Environmental Storytelling

Screenshots from Portal removed due to copyright restrictions. Please see:  
<http://www.mobygames.com/game/windows/portal/screenshots/gameShotId,257129/>

How do non-digital  
games design the  
story of the player?

# Story of the Player

- Embedded: Pre-established by the game. (*The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess*, 2006)
- Emergent: Not dictated by the game, but the result of the player interacting with the system. (*The Sims*, 2002)

# Story of the Player

- Game Premise / Goal of the game
- Game Events
- Micronarratives

Trailer for [Uplink](#) removed due to copyright restrictions.

# Game Premise

# Micronarratives

Image of a [Jet Set Willy T-shirt](#) removed due to copyright restrictions.

# What do we gain from bringing a story?

- We understand our experience as stories, so it helps the player understand the game.
- Explain the world and / or encourage the player to explore it to know more.
- Provides consistency to the world, so be sure to have a consistent view about the world.

Questions?

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CMS.608 / CMS.864 Game Design  
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