

DESIGNING A WARGAME TO MEET A REQUIREMENT



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DESIGN AIM

What are the key questions that need to be answered?

Sometimes the questions asked do not seem make sense – or even relate to each other.

WHAT is your name?

WHAT is your Quest?

WHAT is the air-speed velocity of an unladen swallow?



DESIGN AIM

What is the Wargame Design Aim?

It might be to create a wargame that ...

- is a realistic training aid
- is a framework for some sort of research discussion or analysis
- is an opportunity to practice the operational art in a safe environment
- is an exploration of the possible course of action in a what if scenario
- is educational around real-world events or processes
- is ... [insert answer here]

Of course design aims are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

BUT they must obviously be clear and explicit.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

These are constraints or boundaries that affect your game design approach, such as :

Participants – who, how many, background, involvement, engagement

Time – how much time is available to play, how long do you have to design the game

Space – how much space is available to lay out the game and fit in the players

Venue – accessibility, familiarity, constraints (availability, opening times, staffing)

Level – at what level are the players operating (Div, Bde, BG, Coy etc)

Resolution – how much detail is required – the smallest separately represented unit

Equipment – special equipment – screens, maps, markers, counters, computers etc

Enthusiasm – creativity and game design requires enthusiasm for the project.

...and more

INITIAL STRUCTURE

Scope : Which of the various design considerations are most important and which are show-stoppers.

Structure – Determine the Level and Resolution

Time – what does a turn represent in real time?

- how many turns do we need to complete the game?

- how long can we take to resolve a game turn?

Open or Closed – how important is fog of war

Note : This is *long before* there is any consideration of game mechanisms or game materials (Maps / counters / whatever)

GAME MECHANISMS

Generally speaking, once you have identified the Aims and the structural framework, the mechanisms needed naturally fall out of this.

This is the easy bit. The game materials and the way the various elements fit together becomes much easier to identify and deliver.

BUT

Some mechanisms carry baggage. For example:

Games which **need** to represent variable risks will need a random number at some point. Some participants can be uncomfortable with randomness, but they are perfectly comfortable with the concept of relative risk.

Some games do not need to represent variable risk and so deterministic mechanisms are used. Some participants (particularly those who are game literate) can be uncomfortable with a lack of randomness.

GAME MECHANISMS

Map game using actual maps

Board game with hexagons

Area-based maps (i.e. RCAT)

Sand table game (3 dimensional representations)

Odds-based combat

Firepower scores

Randomness vs Deterministic

Structured discussions (Matrix game / seminar game)

Large or small games (do you need 2 players or 200 players?)

Simple or complex – occams razor

TESTING

TYPES OF PLAYTESTING

Playtesting is an important part of the final design process and is iterative. If at all possible involve those who will use the final game design.

- **UNBAKED** – a bunch of ideas and some stuff. Very free form and open ended. The brainstorming stage.
- **HALF-BAKED** – some mechanisms and some idea of the layout and materials – this is probably the time to do the most playtesting to form the game. There is still time to change direction.
- **COOKED** – a pre-production draft – ironing out wrinkles and picking up nuances



DESIGN AIM

HAS THE WARGAME MET THE DESIGN AIM?

It is easy to lose sight of the aim in the melee *and excitement) of game design.

Keep asking this question.

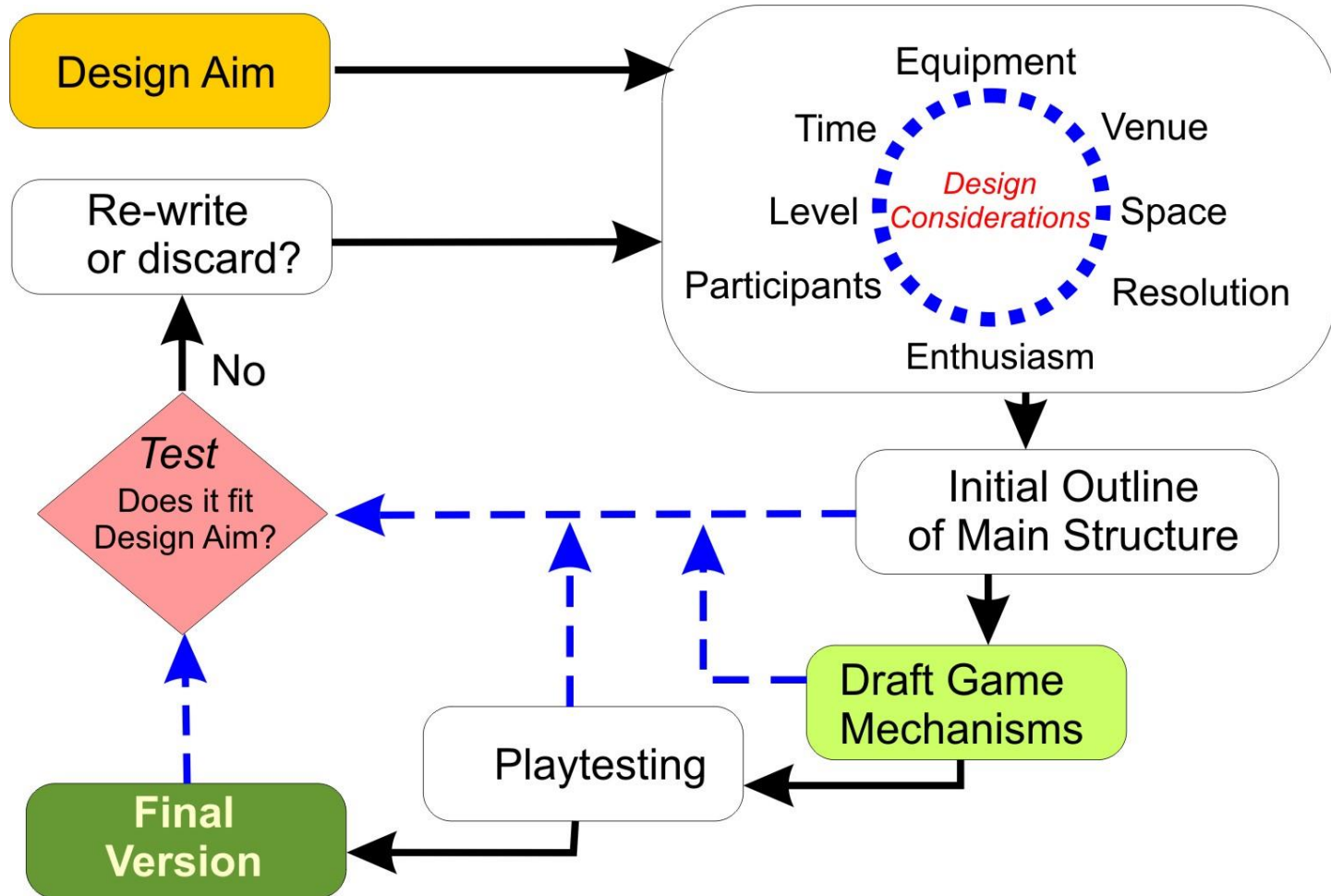
Be prepared to start again.

DEFENSIVENESS IS THE ENEMY OF GOOD WARGAME DESIGN

Just because you love your favourite game mechanism or game style does not mean it is necessarily the right tool for the job.

Openness and flexibility are the friends of good game design.

OBLIGATORY DIAGRAM



THANK YOU



PUBLIC RELATIONS TRACK : SAUDIA ARABIA

PR LEVEL	0	1	2	3	PR LEVEL	5
\$M INCOME	FAIL	2	4	7	9	

UNITS