THE LAYERED TETRAD
Topics
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- The Layered Tetrad
Topics

- The Layered Tetrad
- The Inscribed Layer
Topics

- The Layered Tetrad
- The Inscribed Layer
- The Dynamic Layer
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- The Inscribed Layer
- The Dynamic Layer
- The Cultural Layer
Topics

- The Layered Tetrad
- The Inscribed Layer
- The Dynamic Layer
- The Cultural Layer
- The Responsibility of the Designer
The Layered Tetrad
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  - Expands upon those that came before it
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    - Both the impact of the game on culture and the affect of culture on the game
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  - Instead helps you understand and analyze
    - The elements that are needed to make a game
    - The dynamic behavior of those elements during play
    - Both the impact of the game on culture and the affect of culture on the game
- We use the term *game*, but this is applicable to any form of interactive media or experience
The Layered Tetrad
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- Presented in a tetrad (based on Schell's)
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  - **Mechanics:** The systems that define how the game will react to play. The elements that separate games from other media
The Layered Tetrad

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- **Mechanics:** The systems that define how the game will react to play. The elements that separate games from other media.

- **Aesthetics:** The looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations of the game. Game art, sound, and more.
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- **Technology**: The underlying tech that makes the game work.
The Layered Tetrad

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  - **Mechanics:** The systems that define how the game will react to play. The elements that separate games from other media.
  - **Aesthetics:** The looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile sensations of the game. Game art, sound, and more.
  - **Technology:** The underlying tech that makes the game work.
  - **Narrative:** The story, premise, characters, etc. of the game. Renamed from Schell's to show its breadth.
The Layered Tetrad

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  - **Mechanics:** The systems that define how the game will react to play. The elements that separate games from other media.
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- **Presented in three layers**
The Layered Tetrad

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  - **Mechanics:** The systems that define how the game will react to play. The elements that separate games from other media.
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  - **Narrative:** The story, premise, characters, etc. of the game. Renamed from Schell's to show its breadth.

- **Presented in three layers**
  - **Inscribed:** The game as created and encoded by the developers.
The Layered Tetrad

- **Presented in a tetrad (based on Schell's)**
  - **Mechanics**: The systems that define how the game will react to play. The elements that separate games from other media.
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- **Presented in three layers**
  - **Inscribed**: The game as created and encoded by the developers.
  - **Dynamic**: The game's behavior during play.
The Layered Tetrad

- Presented in a tetrad (based on Schell's)
  - **Mechanics**: The systems that define how the game will react to play. The elements that separate games from other media.
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  - **Narrative**: The story, premise, characters, etc. of the game. Renamed from Schell's to show its breadth.

- Presented in three layers
  - **Inscribed**: The game as created and encoded by the developers
  - **Dynamic**: The game's behavior during play
  - **Cultural**: The game's relationship to society
The Inscribed Layer
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- Game as created and encoded by developers
The Inscribed Layer

- Game as created and encoded by developers
- Similar to Schell's Elemental Tetrad
The Inscribed Layer

- Game as created and encoded by developers
- Similar to Schell's Elemental Tetrad
- Limited to elements that exist when the game is not being played
The Inscribed Layer
The Inscribed Layer

- Mechanics
The Inscribed Layer

- **Mechanics**
  - Systems that define how the player and game will interact
The Inscribed Layer

- **Mechanics**
  - Systems that define how the player and game will interact
  - **Includes**: Player interaction pattern, Objective, Rules, Resources, Boundaries
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- **Aesthetics**
The Inscribed Layer

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- **Aesthetics**
  - How the game looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and feels
The Inscribed Layer

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  - Systems that define how the player and game will interact
  - **Includes:** Player interaction pattern, Objective, Rules, Resources, Boundaries

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  - How the game looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and feels

- **Technology**
The Inscribed Layer

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  - Systems that define how the player and game will interact
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  - How the game looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and feels

- **Technology**
  - Paper and digital technology that enable gameplay
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  - Systems that define how the player and game will interact
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- **Narrative**
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  - How the game looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and feels

- **Technology**
  - Paper and digital technology that enable gameplay

- **Narrative**
  - Authored premise, characters, and plot
The Dynamic Layer
The Dynamic Layer

Players

Inscribed Layer

Mechanics
Aesthetics
Technology
Narrative
The Dynamic Layer
The Dynamic Layer

- The game as it is being played
The Dynamic Layer

- The game as it is being played
- Players move the game into the dynamic layer
The Dynamic Layer
The Dynamic Layer

- Mechanics
The Dynamic Layer

- Mechanics
  - Players' interactions with inscribed mechanics
The Dynamic Layer

- **Mechanics**
  - Players' interactions with inscribed mechanics
  - **Includes**: Procedures, Strategies, Emergent game behavior, Outcome
The Dynamic Layer

▪ **Mechanics**
  – Players' interactions with inscribed mechanics
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▪ **Aesthetics**
The Dynamic Layer

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  – *Includes*: Procedures, Strategies, Emergent game behavior, Outcome

▪ **Aesthetics**
  – Aesthetics that are generated during play
The Dynamic Layer

- **Mechanics**
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- **Aesthetics**
  - Aesthetics that are generated during play
  - Play environment
The Dynamic Layer

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  - Execution of inscribed technology and code
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  - Aesthetics that are generated during play
  - Play environment

- **Technology**
  - Execution of inscribed technology and code

- **Narrative**
  - Narrative created as a part or result of gameplay
The Cultural Layer
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The Cultural Layer

- The game beyond play
The Cultural Layer

- The game beyond play
- Intersection of game community and society
The Cultural Layer
The Cultural Layer

- Mechanics
The Cultural Layer

- Mechanics
  - Game mods created by players that alter the Inscribed Layer
The Cultural Layer

- **Mechanics**
  - Game mods created by players that alter the Inscribed Layer
  - Impact of emergent play on society
The Cultural Layer

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- Aesthetics
The Cultural Layer

- **Mechanics**
  - Game mods created by players that alter the Inscribed Layer
  - Impact of emergent play on society

- **Aesthetics**
  - Fan art, remixes, cosplay
The Cultural Layer

- **Mechanics**
  - Game mods created by players that alter the Inscribed Layer
  - Impact of emergent play on society

- **Aesthetics**
  - Fan art, remixes, cosplay
  - Does not include authorized transmedia
The Cultural Layer

- **Mechanics**
  - Game mods created by players that alter the Inscribed Layer
  - Impact of emergent play on society

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- **Technology**
  - Game tech used for non-game purposes
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  - Effect of external cheating technology on game
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- **Narrative**
  - Fan-made narratives
The Cultural Layer
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  - The collision of the community of players and larger society
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    - The collision of the community of players and larger society

- What messages are our games sending into society?
The Responsibility of the Designer
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- All designers understand their responsibility for the Inscribed Layer
The Responsibility of the Designer

- All designers understand their responsibility for the Inscribed Layer
  - Most understand their responsibility for the Dynamic Layer
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    • Example of Team Fortress 2 hat behavior
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- Responsibility at the Cultural Layer?
  - The common perception of games
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  - The common perception of games
    - Puerile, Vulgar, Violent, Misogynistic
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  - Does it have to be this way?
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  - Games can be…
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  - Games can be…
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    • Educational
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  - The common perception of games
    • Puerile, Vulgar, Violent, Misogynistic
  - Does it have to be this way?
  - Games can be...
    • Prosocial
    • Educational
    • Meaningful
    • What else?
The Responsibility of the Designer
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- What can interactive media become?
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  - How can you as designers push the term *game* beyond what it means now?
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  - How can you respect your players and treat them well?

- I believe that it is our responsibility as designers to
  - Promote pro-social, thoughtful behavior through our games
  - Respect our players and the time that they dedicate to experiencing what we create.
Chapter 3 – Summary
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- The three layers represent a transition of agency from the developers to the players of a game
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  - The Inscribed Layer is entirely controlled by developers
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Chapter 3 – Summary

- The three layers represent a transition of agency from the developers to the players of a game
  - The Inscribed Layer is entirely controlled by developers
  - The Dynamic Layer is controlled by both developers and players
  - The Cultural Layer is influenced by developers but ultimately controlled by players and society at large
Chapter 3 – Summary

- The three layers represent a transition of agency from the developers to the players of a game
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- Next Chapter: The next three chapters will each tackle one of the three layers
Chapter 3 – Summary

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  - Chapter 4: The Inscribed Layer
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  - Chapter 4: The Inscribed Layer
  - Chapter 5: The Dynamic Layer
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  - Chapter 4: The Inscribed Layer
  - Chapter 5: The Dynamic Layer
  - Chapter 6: The Cultural Layer