

Megagame
Makers

Dave Boundy



Me

- a newcomer (first Megagame in 1991)
- 108 Megagames
- RPG Background
- 3 Megagame Designs
 - Washington Conference
 - Price of Victory
 - Interesting Times



Jim Wallman



Chrissy Sliney-Biss

Megagame Makers

- 30 years (+10 years before)
- 175 games
- 10,300 attendances
- 3,600 people
- 488 active



Megagame Makers – The Innovators

- *The Dawn of Time*
- *Innovation* – tracing developments
- *Megagame Makers* – culture, ways
- *Today* – aliens hit the fan

stop after each part for questions to the panel

- omg-con-panel-questions



Video Clips

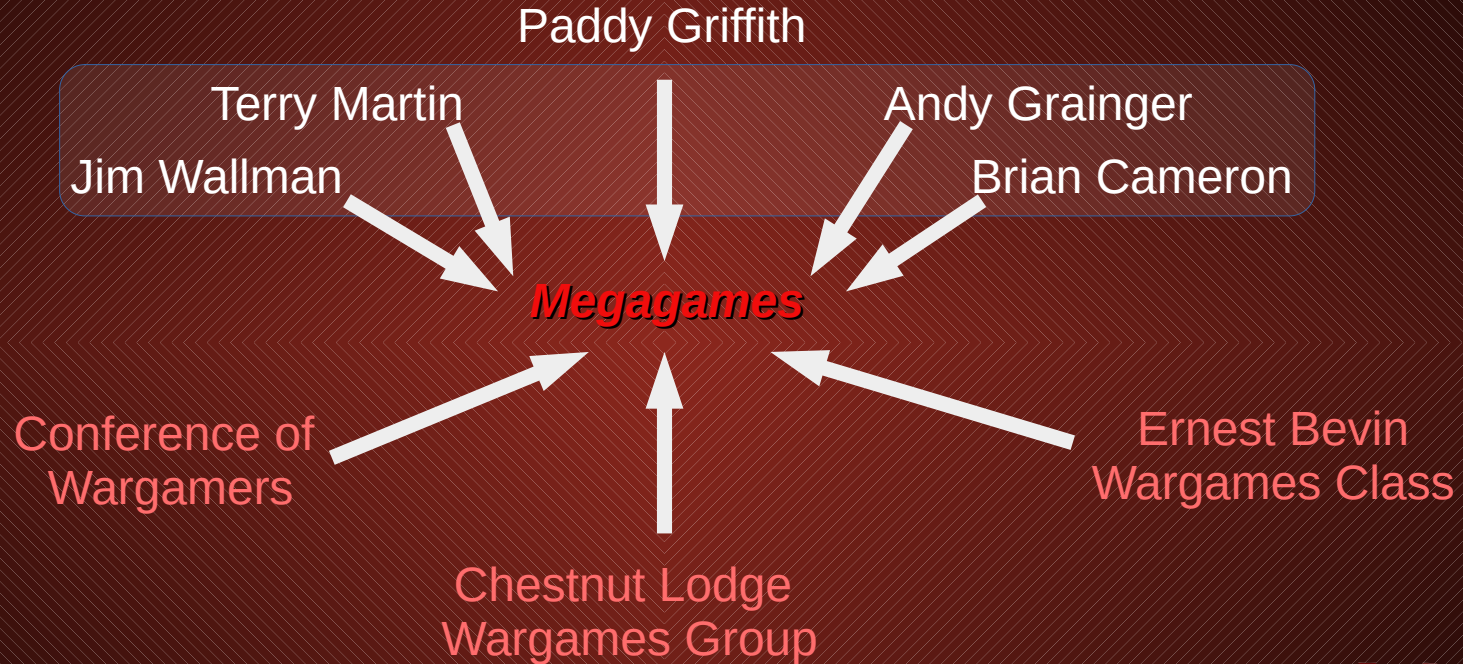
- Link in the text channel
- Terry Martin
- Bernard Ganley
- Andy Grainger
- Neil Parker

Megagame Makers

The Dawn of Time



New Ideas – NOT Wargames



Ernest Bevin College

"a tough school - it wasn't always a bed of roses" Sadiq Khan, mayor of London

- Better known for the wargames class run by Brian Cameron

CLWG (founded 1975)

- “*Chestnut Lodge Wargames Group* is dedicated to improving game design through Quality, Criticism & Development”
- The role of CLWG is hard to overstate
- I found a free-wheeling, “let’s break the mould” approach when I went there



Conference of Wargamers (COW)

- Melting pot of people wanting to move beyond wargaming as it was
- Moor Park 1980 – residential college
- Still meets every year in July

Memphis Mangler

- The first game to be called a Megagame
- Paddy Griffith
- Vietnam
- Big, different, NOT a wargame as would be known then, or now

*Megagame
Makers*

Innovation

*Megagame
Makers*

Launch of Megagame Makers

- 1990 - first MM game: *Springtime for Hitler* (1940 – Germany attacks)
- 167 players: too big for one person – very much a team effort
- First game with Press, Politics, all elements of a Megagame working together



Mechanisms

- **Simpler**
 - KISS - the model can be applied with fewer levers
- **Insight**
 - Master of Europe : Napoleonic
 - Interesting Times : China/ Warlords
- **Appropriate, innovative**
 - At Right Angles to Reality: Cthulhu

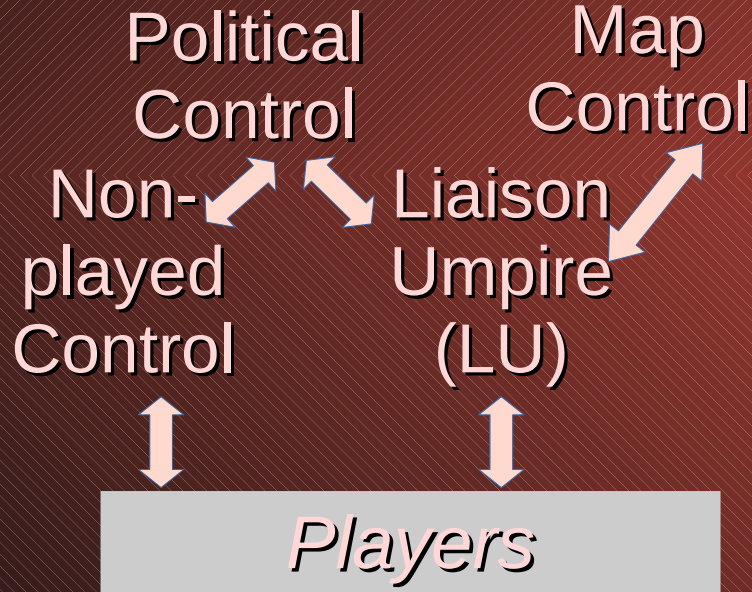
“Insanity does not, of course, prevent you playing the game. However, it will alter you view of the world. Should you lose all your marbles you will be given an entirely new set of game rules and a modified personal briefing.”

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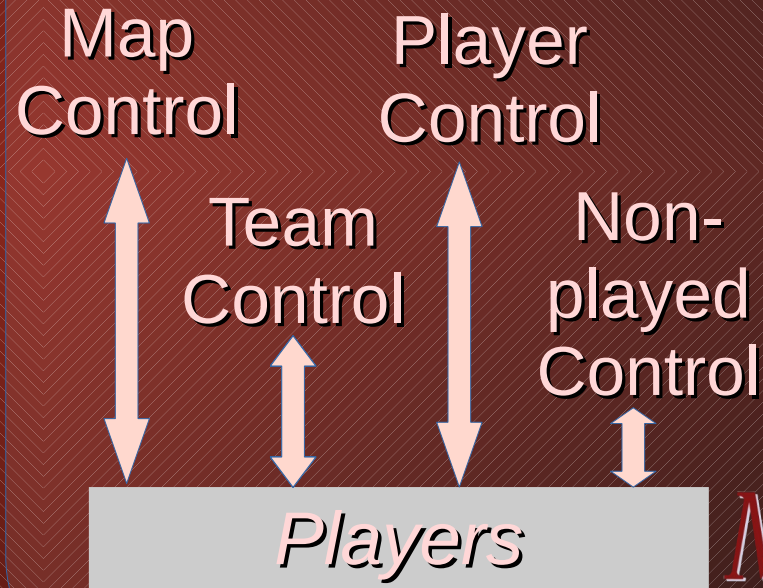
Politics

- Politics and Diplomacy is, of itself, interesting and fun
- Increasing importance
 - “there is politics in each game”
 - *Congress of Vienna / The Dancing Congress*: ground-breaking, a very new experience
 - *Washington Conference* : highest enjoyment score for London MM game.. confounded many
 - *A Very British Coup* : Labour Party politics
 - Much more to investigate and develop here

Hidden Movement



Open Movement



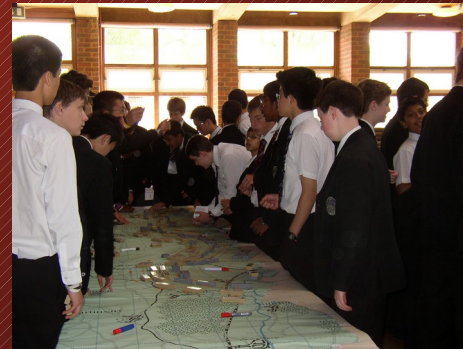
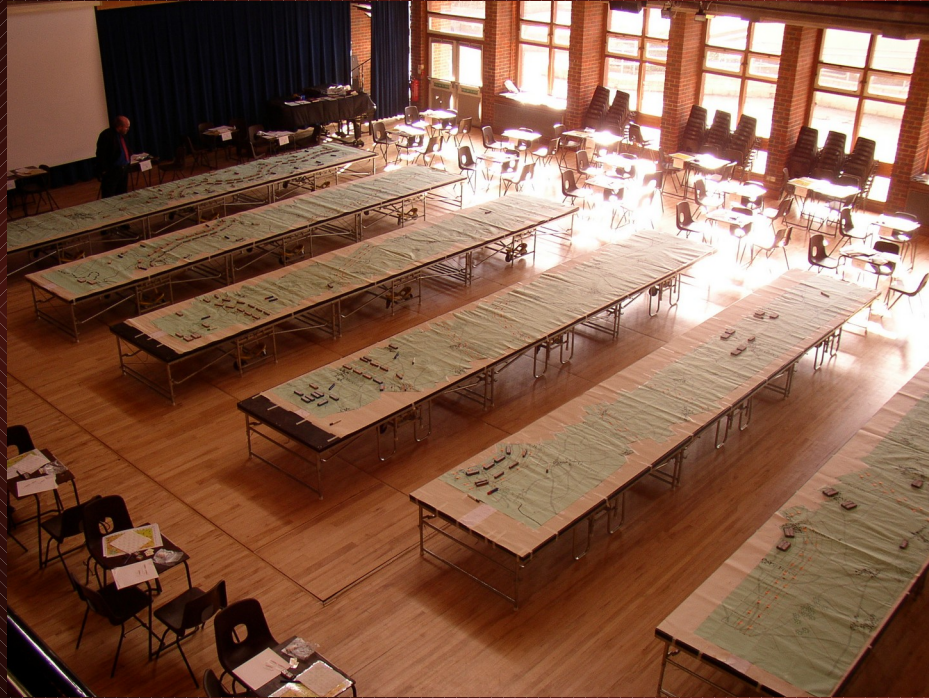
Presentation

- Pen and paint → bitmap → vector
- Spray paint → A4 / A3 panels → Large scale print
- 2 schools of thought – simple enhances playability / attractive enhances experience
- A few examples

Red Dawn – old-style map

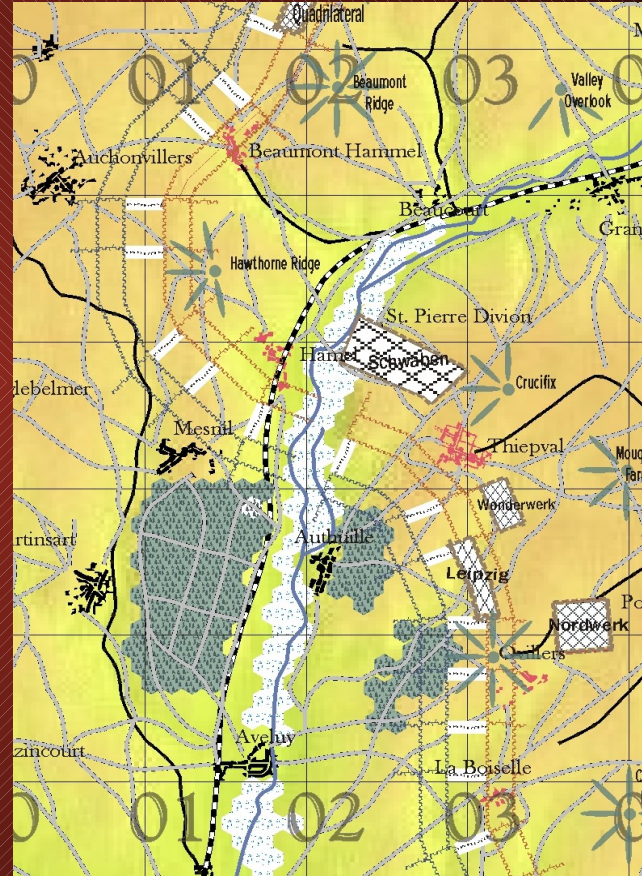
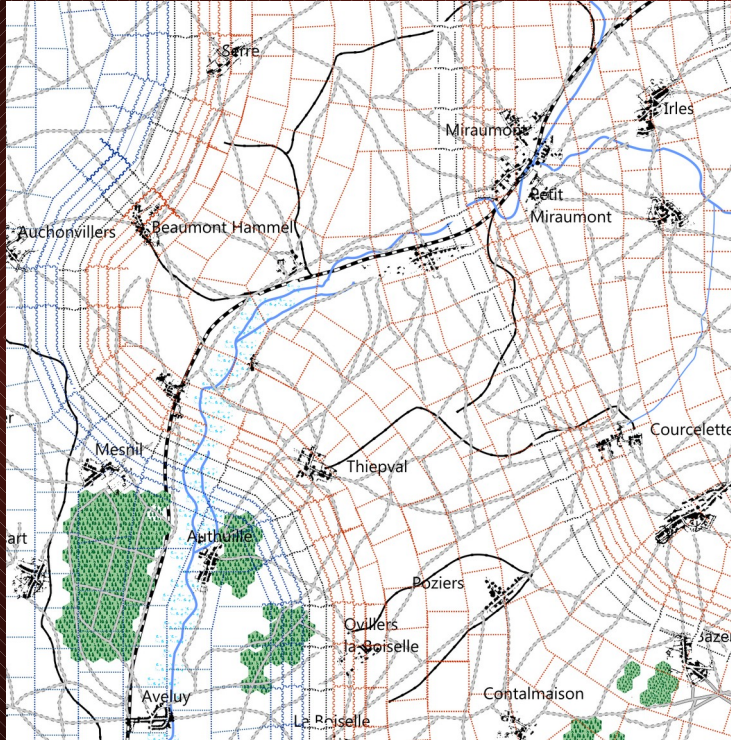


Price of Victory

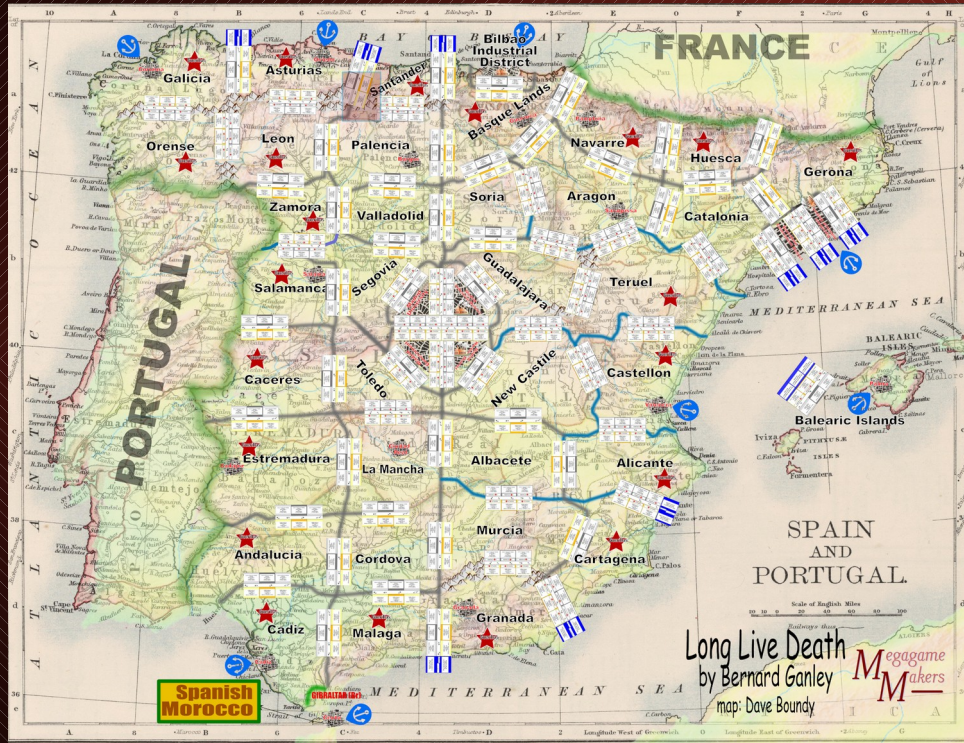


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Price of Victory

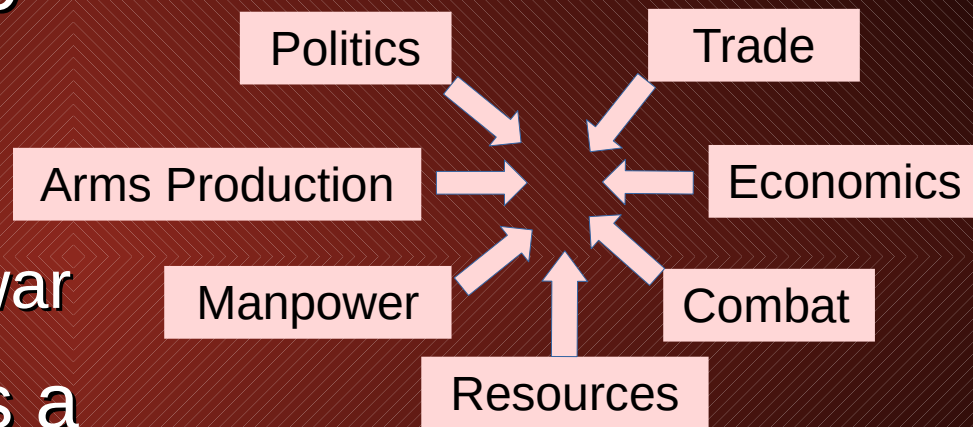


Long Live Death



Scale and Ambition

- The Last War – the 100th Megagame
 - 2 days
 - Every aspect of world war
- “no, we can’t do that” is a guarantee of a Megagame



The Last War



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Fantastic Themes

- Middle Earth-style fantasy
- Cthulu / Gothic Horror
- Superheroes
- A Star Trek game, by any other.....
- Zombies
- Pirates
- Game of Thrones
- Alternative Military History



late....and great

Final Frontier — definitely NOT a Star Trek game



Role Play

- Anathema to traditional wargamers
- *Sengoku*: a key game in role-play development
 - Clan warfare in Japanese Shogun era
 - alien culture to most, so stylised meetings, warfare and formal inter-personal dealings
- Role-play style developed organically

Sengoku



Press

- Now seen as a Megagame thing
- Started with *Unfinished Business*
- *Washington Conference*: individual team briefs and objectives
- Press competition in *Watch the Skies 2*
- International Press in the Wide Area
Urban Nightmare



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Culture and Approach

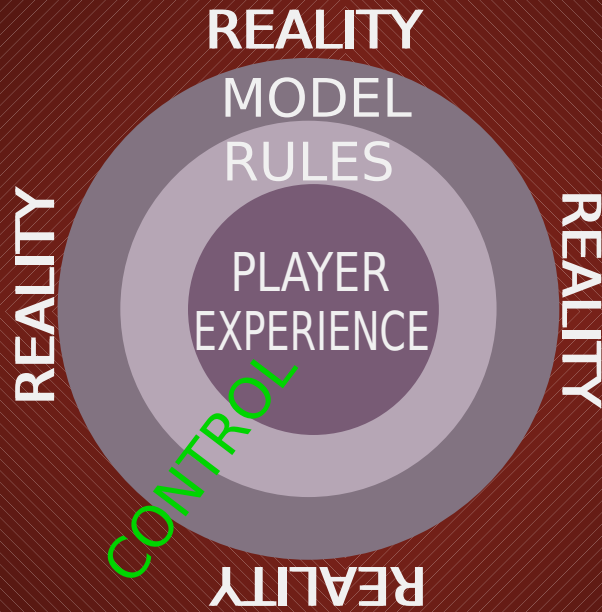


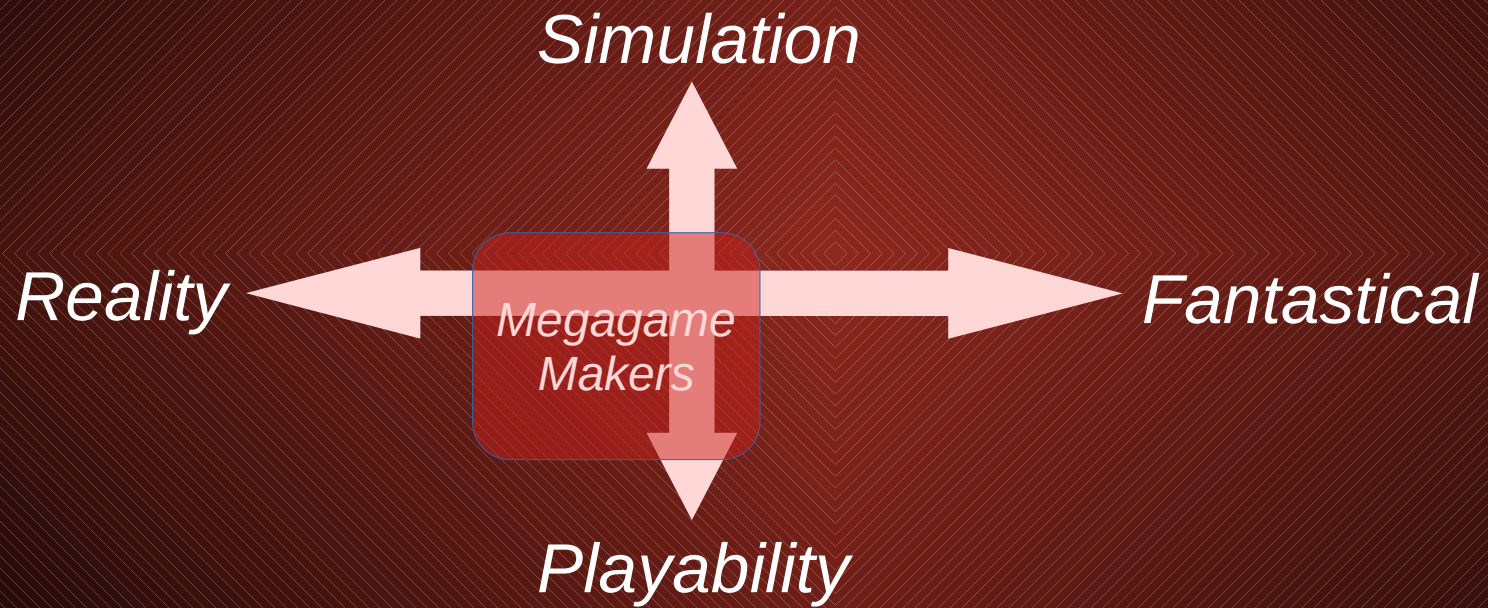
Megagame Makers – the full crew of miscreants



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Rules as a Guide

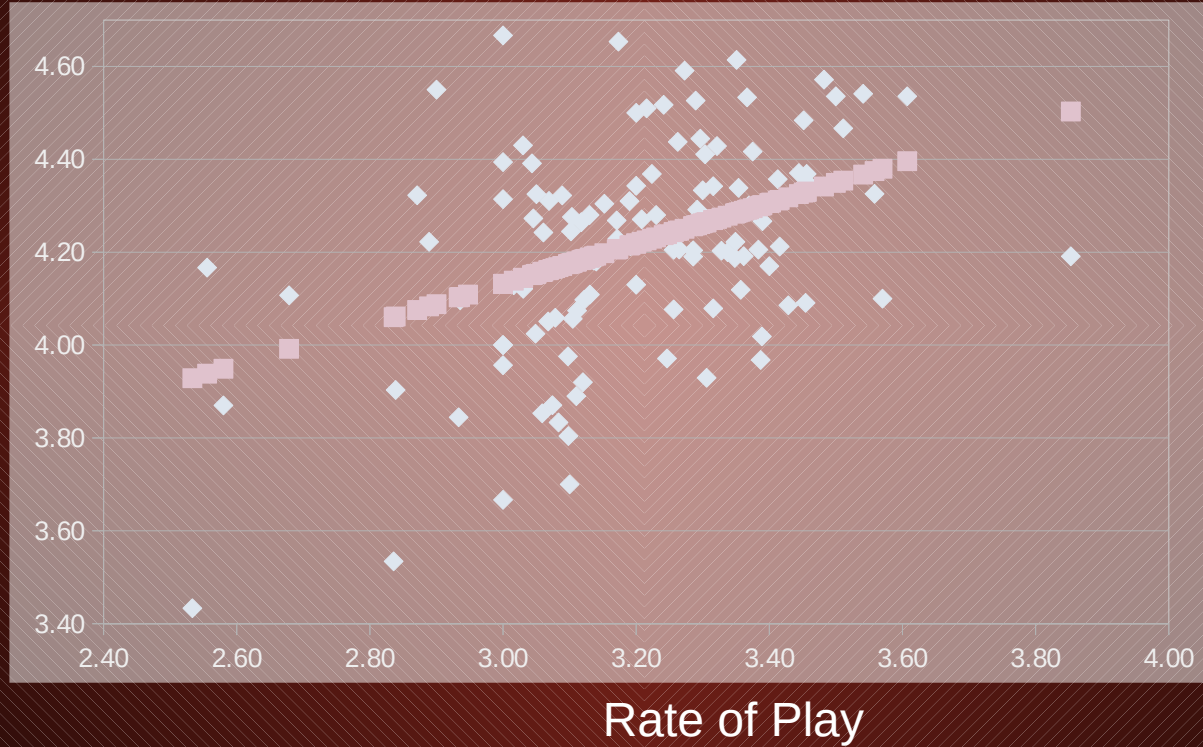




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Keep them Busy

Enjoyment



Victory

“Any game that cannot be won or lost is considered an “activity” and is out of scope.” - Board Game Geek

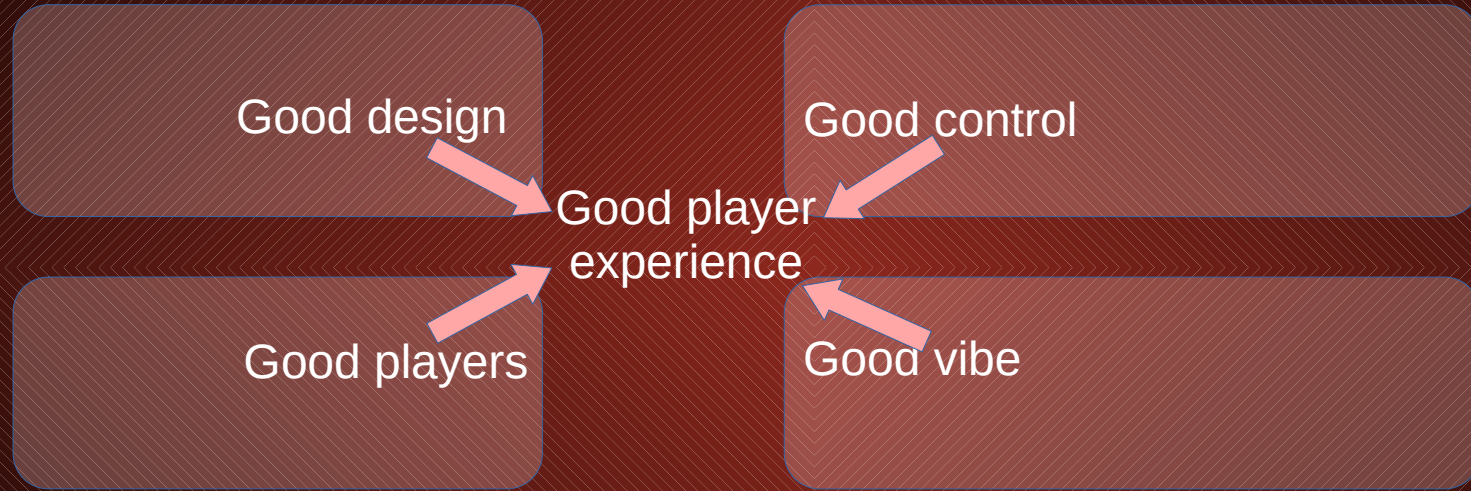
Zero Tolerance for Zero Sum (everyone in a Megagame can win or everyone can lose) – Megagame Makers



Feedback

- Always get feedback at the game
- Looked at very carefully, discussed in a lot of detail
- What went wrong + what went right. Improvement either way
- Most designers will contact a “1” afterwards

Megagame Makers – Success Factors



Megagame Makers – Success Factors



Megagame Makers

Today - Aliens Hit the Fan



Watch the Skies 2014

- SU&SD – a really good job on video and podcast
- Key facts:
 - 60 players
 - Popular theme
 - Aliens not entirely peaceful, because of Moscow casualties
 - Costumes the norm
 - Food bribes were poison
 - Psy-ops crucial

Watch the Skies 2014

WRONG!

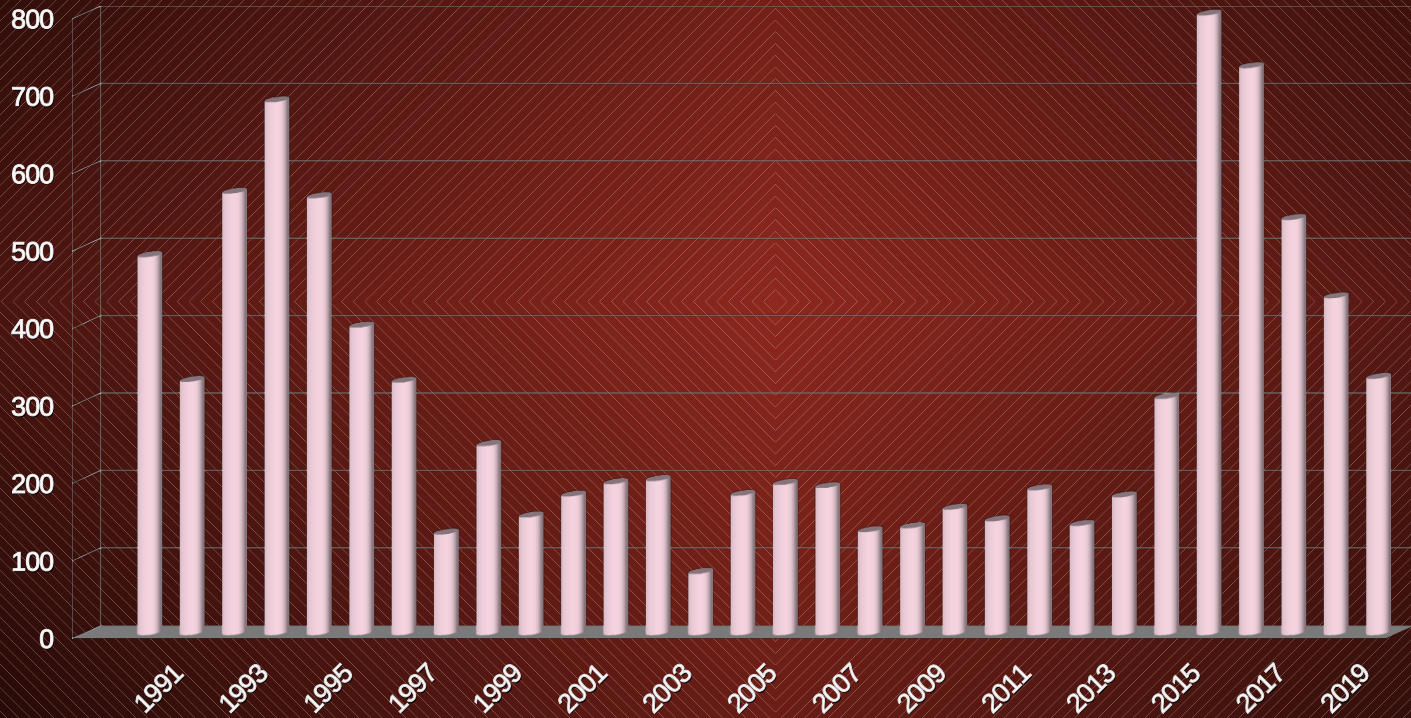
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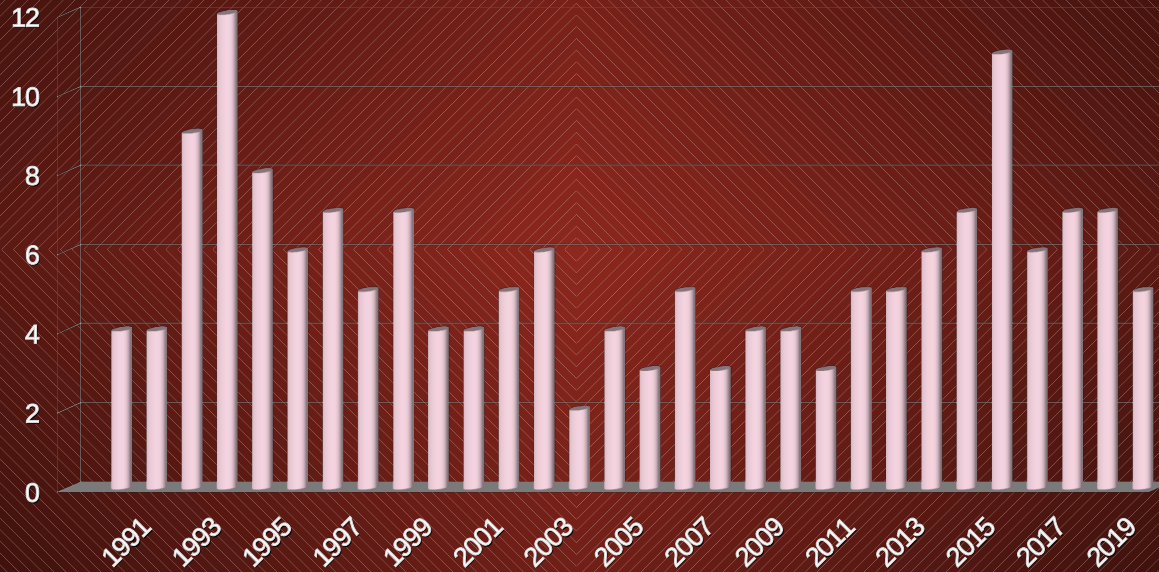
- True facts:

- 38 players
- Unpopular theme – difficulty recruiting
- Aliens entirely peaceful, I lied about Moscow casualties
- Few costumes, but Jerry was into them for USA and science
- John was trying to get rid of stinking Camembert, so the rest of us refused.
- Psy-ops only in the SU&SD imagination

Players Every Year



Games Each Year



Achievements Since 2014

- Kept up momentum
- Continued experimentation – including 300+ players
- Player base extended dramatically, but kept loyal
- More women involved
- History games being enjoyed by many more
- Admin smoother, with booking on new website
- Help and involvement to new groups in UK and across the globe



Challenges

- Involve more women, more BAME
- Evangelists for history
- Online
- Continue to disprove the fallacy that a hobby approach is inevitably lower quality
- Involve and develop more designers
- Develop more control
- Keep the players that have and will come along
- Most, I cannot yet imagine

Thank you, enjoy the rest of the Con and check out:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmYMm_-KMusy5PC4HZuWz259c-28yBXrf

<https://MegagameMakers.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mmakers>

