# Game Design in a Mine Field: Creating Strategy Browser Games

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# Introduction

**InnoGames**

**Eike Klindworth**

- Creative Director at InnoGames

- Co-Founder of InnoGames

- 8 years experience

- Game Designer on
  - TribalWars (2003, 40m registered)
  - The West (2008, 16m registered)
  - Grepolis (2009, 10m registered)

- Favorite Games
  - Age of Empires 2
  - Diablo 2

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# Strategy Browser Games

Examples of Browser Strategy Games:

TribalWars, Grepolis, Ogame, Ikariam, Travian, Evony

- Build up a city, planet or base
- Playing together with strangers
- Battle against other players are in focus
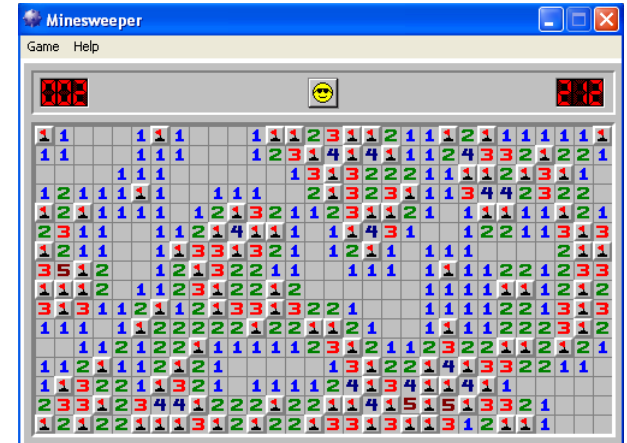- Big maps with up to 50.000 players
- More than one world

# Mine Field



**Challenges in the game design**

- Every player is connected to every other player
- Other players influenced by exploits
- The competition between player is not only a ranking system
- Different starting dates
- Different time spent
- Asynchronous game play
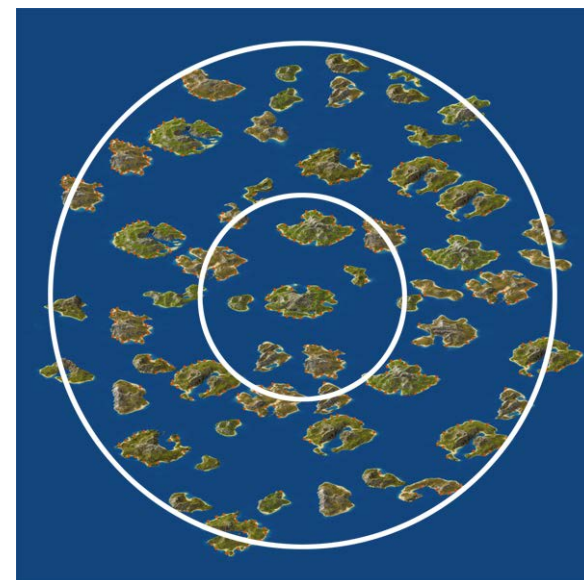- Conquering
- Hard to change balancing

# Starting Date

*Challenges*

- Big players attack new players
- Success has to be possible with a late start as well

*Solutions*

- Beginners protection
- Protection through distance
- Area Ranking
- New worlds

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# Players Spend Time Differently

*Challenges*

- Hardcore and casual players play on the same world

- Hardcore players have to get some advantages for their time invested.

- Players should fight against players of the same size.

*Solutions*

- The main tasks are doable in a few minutes on a daily basis

- Less rewards for attacking smaller players (experience, resources, points)

- Less attack power for bigger players (morale)

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# Asynchronous Game Play

*Challenges*

- Attackers can take the initiative
- Attackers are able to react during fights
- Attackers can pick their opponent
- Attacks at night

*Solutions*

- Night bonus for defenders
- No big advantage for activity during fights
- Defenders can choose default settings in advance
- Long walking durations

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# Prohibit Conquering

*Pros*

- Active players cannot lose their villages
- Players can spend days outside of the game
- Many player like to build something

*Tips*

- Fights should be important for the players
- Focus on ranking
- Implement another special thing

# Allow Conquering

*Pros*

- Gives the game emotions
- Good for monetization
- Good for DAUs
- Better an end with dread than dread without an end



*Tips*

- Restart next to your friends/alliance
- Restart with some advantages
- Quick conquering
- Vacation mode

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# Game Play Changes

Version 2.1

*Challenges*

- Destroys players strategies
- Keeps the game attractive
- Are necessary to avoid imbalance
- Are necessary for monetization

Version 2.2

*Solutions*

- Avoid game play changes by well calculations
- Rock-Paper-Scissors systems
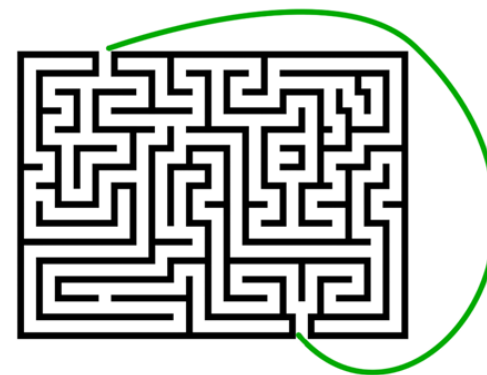- Communicate it early to the players
- Change something only on new worlds

# Conclusion

*Tips to avoid problems in strategy games*

- Start with a prototype early
- Create more than one solution for a problem to find the best one
- Think nasty
- Don't create too complicate systems

## Questions?

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