

"Using these cards as part of the design process helps open up the discussion of what our games can do. Can we bring human values and complex emotions into game play? The answer is absolutely yes."

- *Kellee Santiago*
Game Designer, That Game Company

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

"From a computing standpoint, what I believe the cards do is open up students' minds to think of possibilities. There is more than one perspective for any technical problem. Grow-a-Game cultivates brainstorming and helps technical people avoid a "one solution mentality."

-- *Christopher Egert*
Rochester Institute of Technology
Games Program

"The Grow-a-Game cards are a playful, accessible way to introduce values-based discussion into the creative process of game design. The results I've had with my students have been amazing-- they are challenging themselves and each other to produce some of the best student work I've seen come out of our classes to date."

-- *Tracy Fullerton*
USC Interactive Media



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grow-a-game!

**A CARD BASED ACTIVITY TO DISCOVER AND
INCORPORATE VALUES IN THE DESIGN PROCESS**





The Grow-a-Game cards are a game design tool developed by Tiltfactor Lab as part of the Values at Play research project. They can be used a number of ways, depending on the size of the group using them and the group's design experience. While the cards can be used within the structure of a formal game, they can also be used to stimulate discussion or to provide constraints for brainstorming sessions.

The cards can facilitate analysis of the values present in systems such as video games, or they can be used for imagining modifications to existing games or for designing entirely new games.



There are six card categories in the grow-a-game cards: ACTIONS, CHALLENGES, GAMES, GOALS, WILDCARDS, and VOTES. With the exception of Wildcards, each category has a different color and symbol; the cards have an icon on one side and text on the other. Challenge, Game, and Goal cards all have brief explanations underneath their titles in case the player is unfamiliar with the topic.

The cards focus on human values, and they are applicable in a variety of design tasks.

How to use the cards:

Participants work together to draw a card with a value printed on it – “cooperation,” “privacy,” or “fair representation,” for example. Players take turns discussing instances where these values already occur in games. Then, facilitators lead the participants through the addition of constraint cards, such as game mechanics, example games to “mod,” and social issues that might be affected using the approach that the value provides. Instructions come with every package of cards, and players are free to modify the deck as they see fit, using the wildcard “blanks” to tailor the deck to their circumstances and needs.



Grow-a-Game Workshops have been presented at:

Center for 21st Century Skills CT September 2008 – 150 participants

Games for Change 101 Workshop , NYC June 2008 – 140 participants

American Educational Research Association Conference, NYC March 2008 – 25 participants

Games, Learning & Society Conference Madison WI July 2008 – projected 40 participants

“Values in Games Workshop” Games for Change, NYC June 2008– 150 participants day 1, 70 participants day 2

Digital Games Research Association Tokyo September 2007 – 25 participants

Game Developers Conference Education SIG San Francisco February 2008- demonstration

Gamelab NYC February 2008-demonstration

The Virtual 2006: designing digital experience, Södertörn University, Stockholm, June 2006 –prototype

Selected Research presented at:

DiGRA 2007 (Tokyo, JP, September 24-28, 2007)
CHI 2007 (San Jose, CA, April 28 - May 3)

DiGRA 2005 (Vancouver, BC, June 16-20)

CHI 2005 (Portland, Oregon, April 2-7)

Selected Research:

Mary Flanagan, Helen Nissenbaum, Jim Diamond, and Jonathan Belman. “A Method for Discovering Values in Digital Games.”

Mary Flanagan, and Helen Nissenbaum. “A Game Design Methodology to Incorporate Activist Themes.”

M. Flanagan, D. Howe, and H. Nissenbaum, “Values in Design: Theory and Practice.” (forthcoming)

Mary Flanagan, Daniel C. Howe, Helen Nissenbaum. “New Design Methods for Activist Gaming.”

Mary Flanagan, “Troubling ‘Games for Girls’: Notes from the Edge of Game Design.”

Mary Flanagan, Daniel C. Howe, Helen Nissenbaum. “Values at Play: Design Tradeoffs in Socially-Oriented Game Design.”

