

Brainstorming

(Chapter 6, GDW: Conceptualization)



(originally by Jeff Wilson and Maribeth Gandy)

Where do ideas come from?

- Process is often necessary to get started
- No self-censoring
- Constraints can be good
- Teamstorming
 - State a purpose
 - Different views
 - Vary the structure
 - 100 ideas an hour!

Your Game Idea

- It is a mistake to copy current game
 - Or to create hybrid
- ...but critique as you play games
- Mechanics come first
 - Don't be distracted by dramatic elements

Brainstorming Techniques

- Inspiration Game List (by genre/platform)
- Idea Fountain (jot list as things pop into your head)
- Categories / subcategories (taxonomy of ideas)
- Idea Tree
- List (everything about one topic)
- Idea Cards
- Shout it out (into a voice recorder)
- Stream of Consciousness (try to write as fast as you can think)
- Randomize (dictionary or magazine lookup and then write about topic you find)
- Research (research a topic in detail)
- Put it on the wall (white board)
- Extreme Measures (try something you wouldn't normally do)

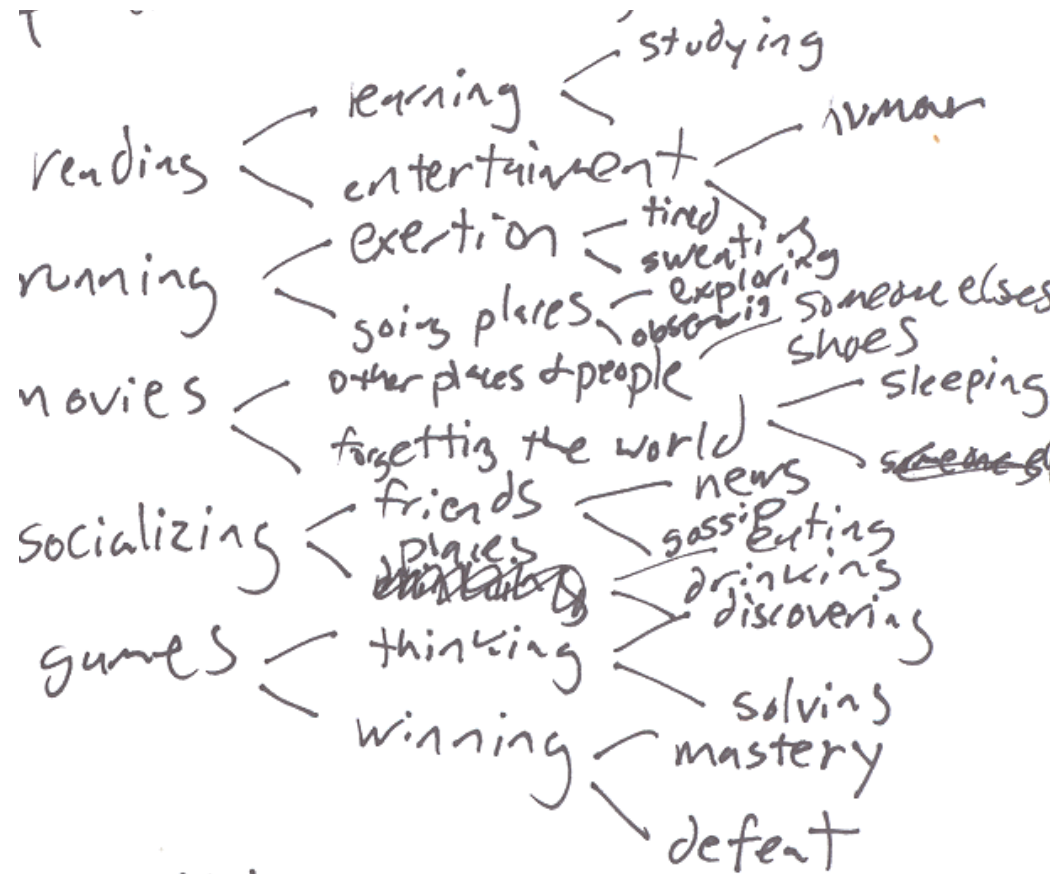
Brainstorming activities

- In groups of 3 or 4
- Idea trees
- Idea cards
- Randomize
- Generate 3+ very rough game ideas

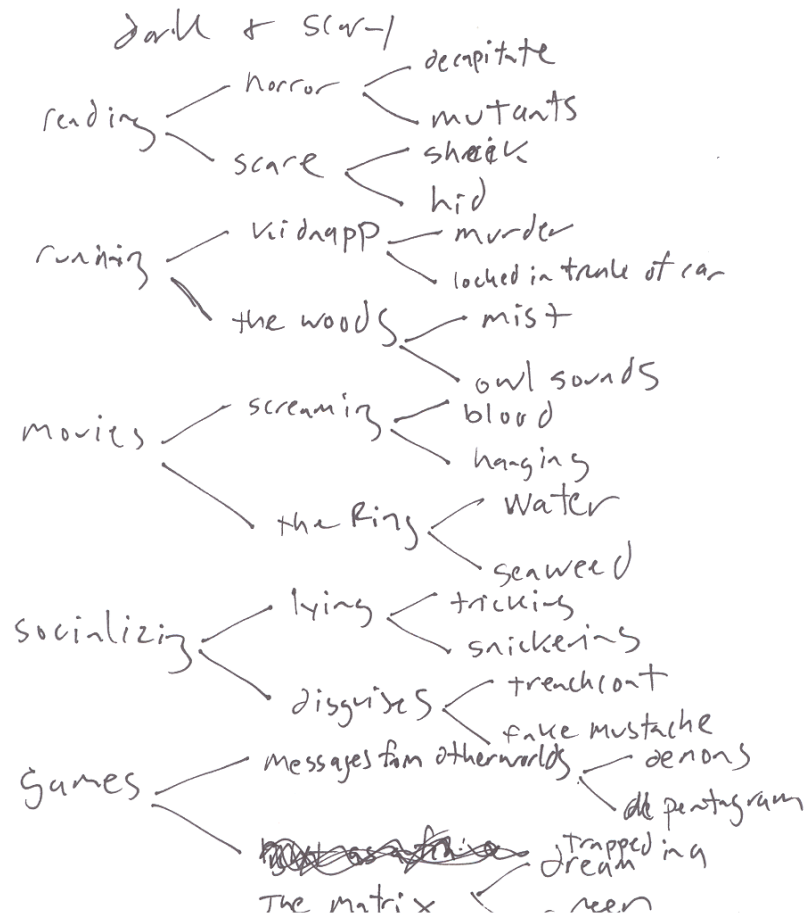
Idea Trees

- Write down 5 things you like
 - Branching off each. Two ideas related to that thing
 - Branching off each idea, 2 more ideas etc.
 - Do this again, but with a theme
 - Dark and scary, middle earth, robot-controlled dystopia etc.

My Idea Tree



Dark & Scary Idea Tree



My Idea Cards

- Random pairs of cards
 - Heart-beat transistors
 - Inky hair
 - Fish vegetables
 - Misty flock-of-birds
 - Knuckle spikes

My Randomize

■ Evade

- Hiding from the enemy. They are always on your tail. Somehow they always know where I am!

■ Ukrainian

- Crime lord controls the underground black market. Dealing in nuclear materials from the former Soviet Union.

■ Goober

- Peanuts. A stupid person, a slack-jawed yokel. farming

■ Foramen magnum

- Where the spine goes to the brain. The connection between the body and the mind. A vital connection you must protect. The location of cybernetic components? A good place for a machine to interface with your body?

The results of my brainstorming

■ Goobers

- A kids resource game where the player can grow different types of animal/vegetable hybrids (“goobers”). This is an online community game and your goobers will interact with each other and with other farmers’ goobers. They may be friendly to each other or they may attempt to eat each other

Heart Beat Transistor

- An arty game about relationships (I imagine it with toon rendering to look like “Waking Life” or “Scanner Darkly”). You make connections to people (friends? lovers?) And that is what is keeping you alive in the game. Perhaps you are passing information around your social networks? A puzzle game with no time pressure. Game experience should be relaxing and trancelike.

Foramen Magnum

- A game about the interactions of humans and robots at a time when they are becoming one.
- In the game you start out as either robot or human, but in the course of play you will take on parts from the other. But you may find these new parts don't bend to your will initially.
 - Maybe this is a puzzle game?
 - Not a simple “oooh I got a powerup by buying a mechanical hand” thing
 - The point is learning how to use the new parts. How to subdue, subvert the smart parts that don't want to behave.