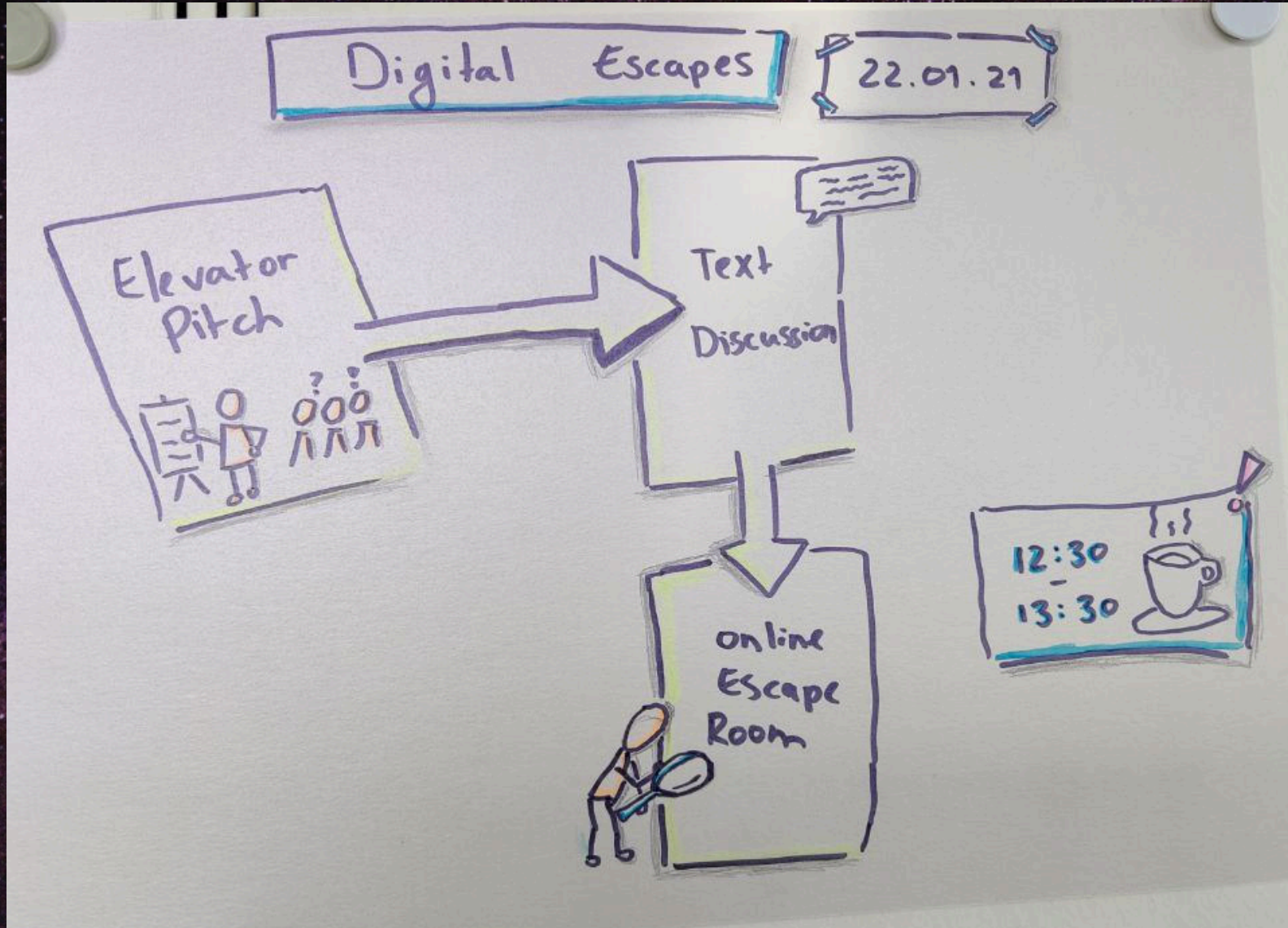


# Digital Escapes. On the Importance of Spatiality in Game Design.

*Block II, session 1*

*22.01.21, 10:15 – 16:45 h*

# Course of today



# Games as Systems

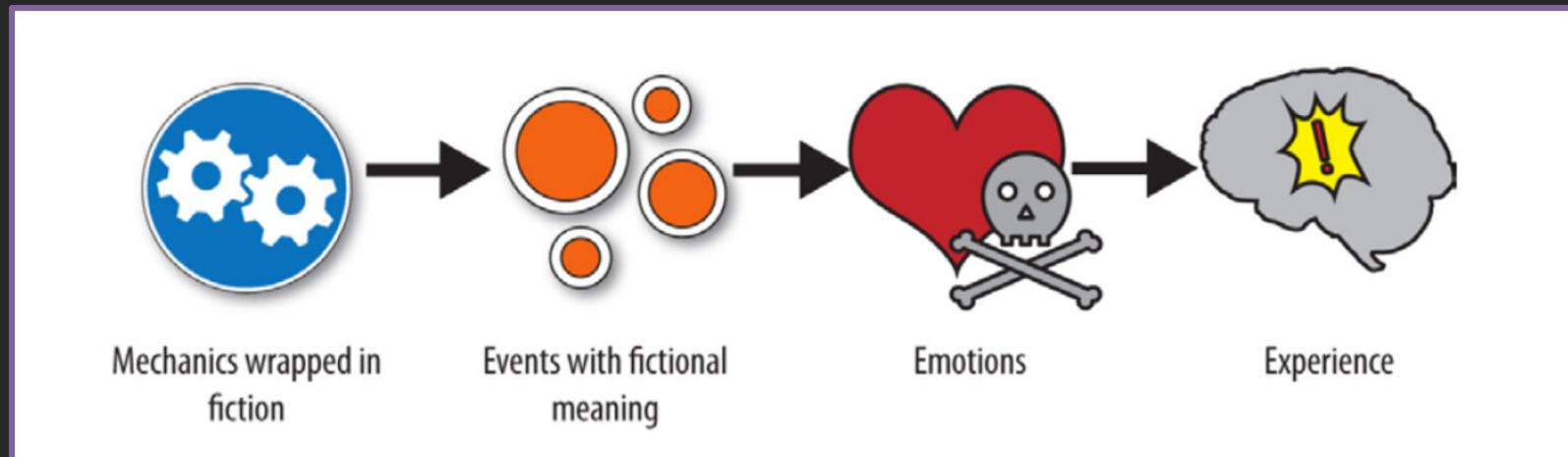
„At the heart of every game is a set of formal elements that when set in motion, create a dynamic experience in which the players engage.“

(Fullerton 2019: 129)

„A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that result in quantifiable outcome.“ (Salen/Zimmerman 2004: 80)

## The MDA Framework





(Sylvester 2013: 44)

## Information structures

- Hidden
- Open
- Mixed
- Dynamic

„The less information players have, the less informed their choices will be. This affects the sense of control they have over their progress.“ (Fullerton 2019: 148).

### Information glut

The decision is no longer a decision

#### **Causes:**

- Too much information  
Implemented in the game
- Metagame information

### Information starvation

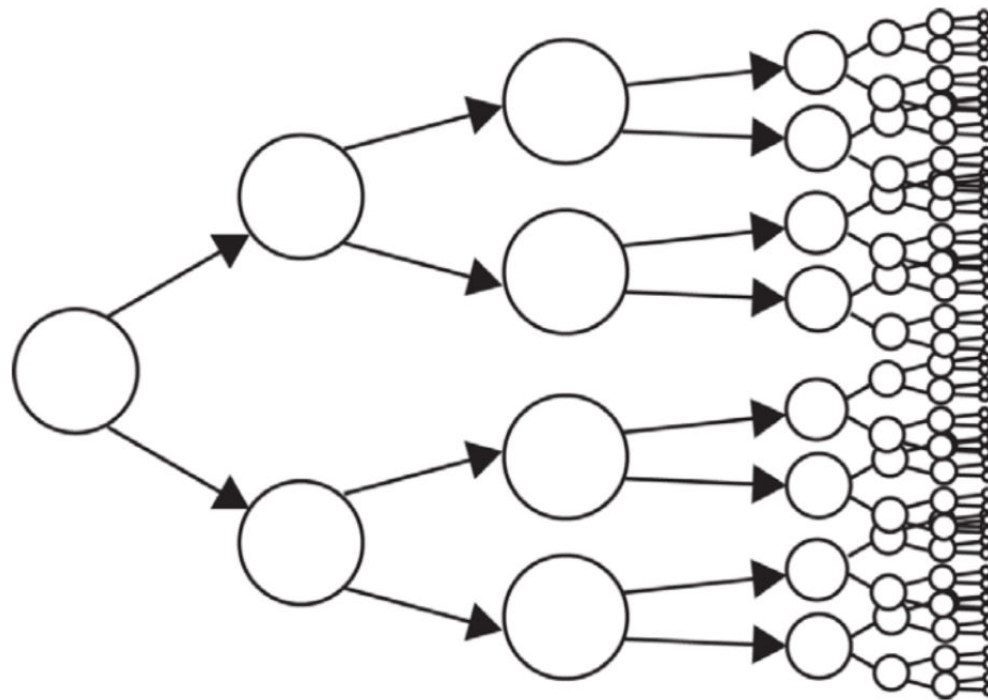
Game collapses into reactive thrashing and random choices.

#### **Causes:**

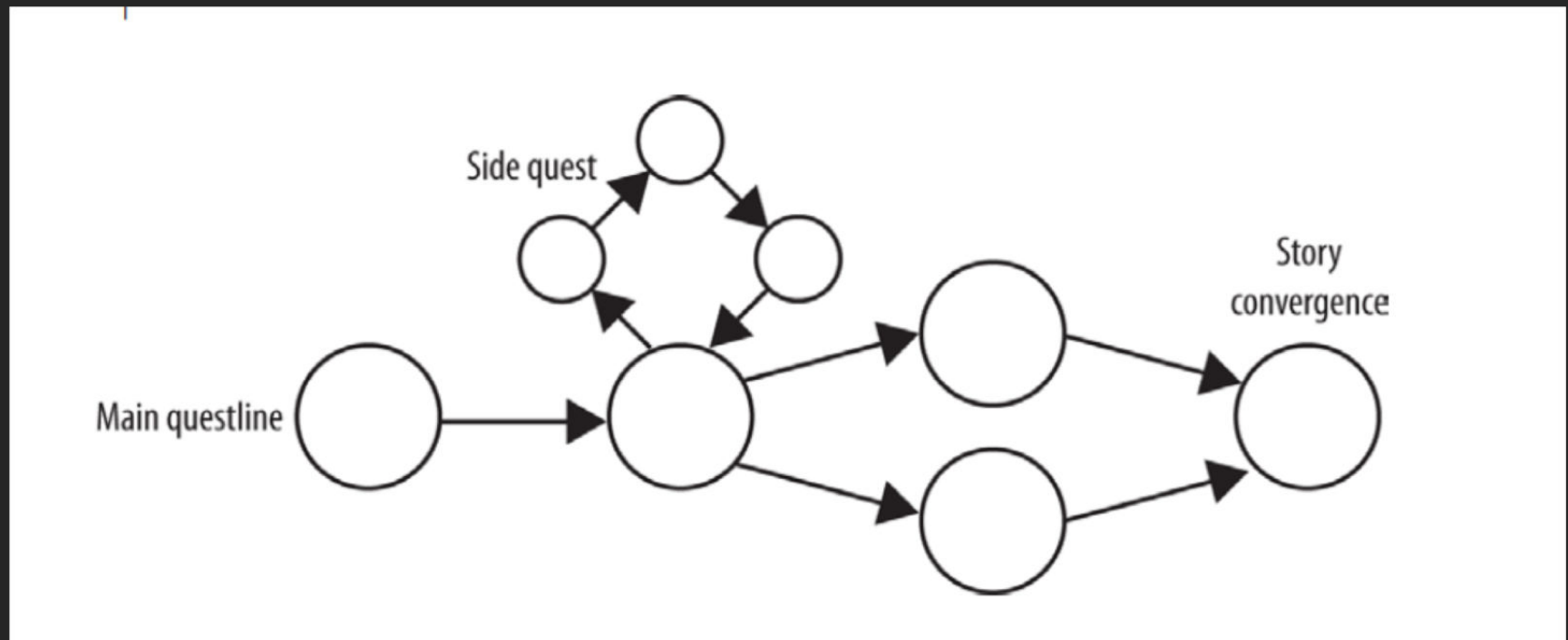
- Fictional ambiguity
- „*Authored challenge preparation problem*“



“Videogames are the epitome of this tendency to invest the activity of playing with a fictional frame of reference, to imagine our decisions within a rule-bound system as narratively relevant events in a fictional world and to understand the performance of a game as the gradual development of a narrative story.” (Domsch 2019: 104-105).



Branched story structure (Sylvester 2013: 99)



(Sylvester 2013: 100)

“A NARRATIVE TOOL is some device used to form a piece of a story in a player’s mind.” (Sylvester 2013: 83).

## **Spatial narrative**

- Environmental storytelling
- Privilege spatial exploration over plot development
- Evocative spaces
- Visual clues

vs.

## **Sequence narrative**

- Conveyed through concrete narrative artifacts
- Narrative that happens primarily as a sequence of events in time
- Narrative that is presented as a recounting of these events through sequentially arranged signs (e.g. words on a page).

“World narrative strengthens when a world is more coherent and expresses more internal connections.”  
(Sylvester 2013: 89).

“Within an open-ended and exploratory narrative structure like a game, essential narrative information must be redundantly presented across a range of spaces and artifacts. (...) The game world becomes a kind of information space, a memory palace.” (Jenkins 2004: 126)

Escape rooms provide **non-linear spatial exploration**  
in order to construct the **overall linear narrative**