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Let's Play: Exploring Interaction Design Challenges of Digital Tabletops using Games

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Digital tabletop surface computers provide face-to-face groups an opportunity to interact with and share complex, up-to-date digital information in a manner not previously possible. However their large display format and horizontal orientation introduce a number of design challenges. Tabletop games, such as card and board games, provide a useful context in which to explore potential interaction design solutions for this computing platform. They can require the use of complex data sets (e.g., historical war games), the use of private data (e.g., competitive card games), or collaboration and information sharing (e.g., cooperative board games). They are also fun and engaging to play, which addresses a long-standing research challenge when evaluating new design solutions: Study participants are intrinsically motivated to engage in user studies of proposed design solutions and tend to relax and act fairly natural during the studies, even when situated in a laboratory setting. This talk will present ongoing projects from Dr. Scott's Collaborative Systems Laboratory (http://csl.uwaterloo.ca) related to interaction design research set in the context of digital tabletop gaming, including digital tabletop conversions of the commercially available Pandemic cooperative board game (Z-Man Games) and Dominion empire-building card game (Rio Grande Games).

Dr. Stacey Scott is an Assistant Professor of Systems Design Engineering and English Language and Literature and Associate Director of the Games Institute at the University of Waterloo. She holds a B.Sc. in Computing Science and Mathematics from Dalhousie University (1997), a Ph.D in Computer Science from the University of Calgary (2005), and she completed postdoctoral studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (2005-2007). Her research interests primarily focus on the design of large-format surface computing systems, such as interactive walls and tables, that support collaboration and socialization in real-world task domains, such as military command and control, emergency response, and gaming. In general, her research interests include computer-supported collaboration, surface computing, interface and interaction design, and information visualization.

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