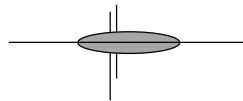


Simultaneously fun and frolic,
serious and profound,
numinous and competitive...
The HipBone Games

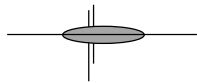


The HipBone Project

Take a Nobel-winning game design,

build a compulsively enjoyable game,
simple enough a child can play it,
yet with room for mastery...
with applications in education and psychology,
interesting academic implications,
and varied commercial potentials —

offer it free on the Web,
sell it to the games industry / online services,
and pitch it to foundations, educational institutions
and maybe the President of the United States...



And you have the ambitious project known as

The HipBone Games

MUCH OF THE CURRENT DISSATISFACTION WITH

the electronic media suggests that their prospective audiences are a good deal more perceptive than they are dreamed of in the marketing theory of Time Warner and Fox Television (cf. the diminished network ratings, the improved standing of C-SPAN, the ability of twelve-year-olds to simultaneously listen to Beck, watch *Friends*, and work problems in advanced algebra), and before too long I expect the editors at *Wired* to discover Hermann Hesse's novel *The Glass Bead Game*...

HESSE'S BEAD GAME LENDS ITSELF SO OBVIOUSLY

to the transcendent aspirations of the Internet that it's probably only a matter of months before Microsoft buys the rights to his name for one of its software programs. The company's marketing strategists might first want to consult Charles Cameron, reachable on the Internet at hipbone@earthlink.net, the foremost of 263 correspondents concerned with the implications of Hesse's novel.

MEANING TO HONOR THE AUTHOR, NOT ONLY WITH

a computer game replicating Das Glasperlenspiel but also, in the best of all hypothetical worlds, with a digital notation for the music of ideas, Cameron last July posted 6,000 words of text that introduced
as many motifs as might be needed for a
choral symphony...

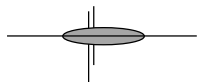
— Lewis Lapham
Editor, Harper's magazine

Take a Nobel-winning game design...

Hermann Hesse won the Nobel Prize in 1946 for his novel *Magister Ludi*.

At the center of this book is the concept for a game — The Glass Bead Game — which Hesse describes in so much detail, you can almost taste the excitement of playing it. Interestingly enough, this game concept is also eerily prophetic of such recent technical advances as the personal computer, the Internet and the World Wide Web.

And from a game design point of view, it's an incredible challenge to build a playable implementation of Hesse's Game — something of a designer's holy grail, in fact. There are now about half a dozen variants on Hesse's Game in various stages of development and play, with Charles Cameron's *HipBone Games* at the forefront...



Your game does seem to really call to mind the Bead Game.

— Scott Kim, *Puzzle Master*, Segasoft

When someone asks me which of the Glass Bead Game variants I recommend, I tell them to try the *HipBone* games first. They're the state of the art.

— Gail Sullivan, web mistress, *The Glass Bead Game* homepage

Build a compulsively playable game...

The HipBone Games are as simple as thinking of one thing which reminds you of another.

For the basic and variant rules, a selection of boards and sample games, see the HipBone sampler

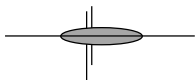
They are board games in which players link one fact or idea with another, claiming points for each link. They're played on a series of simple boards which provide positions for the ideas to be played into, and whose structure mandates which ideas should be linked to which others. And as games of ideas, they are as varied as conversations...

Sports buffs can trade sports stats on the game board, dreamers can spin webs of the stuff of their dreams, scholars can play scholarly games, feuding family members can use the game to explore their differences and figure out their common ground.

The games are just a wee bit intoxicating, because the heart of the game — the “associative leap” from one idea to the next — is one of the headiest of human experiences.

And as viciously competitive — or warmly collaborative — as you choose.

HipBone Games have been successfully play-tested and played for over three years by private individuals, and in groups on a variety of internet mailing lists.



Whoever said “ecstasy is my frame of reference” must have had your game in mind. My daughter and her friends would LOVE this... appealing to many different types.

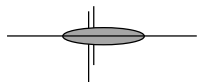
— Carol Haas, player

A give-and-take of thinking styles and wit ... on-line match of ricocheting intellects.

— Washington Post

simple enough a child can play it...

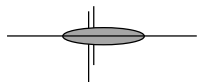
Jason, age eleven, played the game and taught his mother. PhDs in astrophysics have played it. People who hate games have played it.



Jason: What's this game called?
HipBone: I don't know. I guess it's my game.
Jason: It's My Game.
HipBone: No, not your game, mine. I invented it.
Jason: My Game. You just said it was My Game. I'd like to play My Game again please...

yet with room for mastery...

A game a Chess or Go master wouldn't be bored to play — which an artist can use as a multimedia art form, a scholar as a device for comparing and contrasting ideas across disciplines, a meditator as a way of seeing diversity in unity and vice versa... and in which core gamers can always find more vicious wrinkles to explore, different levels of play, and a variety of extended boards.



Your game feels very much like Go... you can be elegant and subtle, but also vicious: this is a game of having a rapier wit.

— Mike Sellers, Archetype Interactive

This game teaches a different kind of intelligence.

— Susanna Dorr, player

Beautiful!!! ... an exquisite ongoing dialog on the forces of nature, reality, and the human experience...

— Cyndara Morgan, list-owner, Alexandria

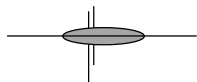
with applications in education and psychology...

HipBone Games have been used to train staff members and to engage and stimulate students in a model United Nations program drawing high schoolers from Mexico, Canada and the US.

To explore dreams with a psychotherapist, on a privately-maintained Internet mailing list.

As an aid in conflict resolution and family counseling.

And to teach creativity and the principles of aesthetics to students in a Los Angeles art school, under the watchful eye of a master painter.



They were scheduled to play one game for an hour and we ended playing two games, switching teams, for three hours. A smashing success.

— Tom Hall, GLICA Model United Nations trainer

The cognitive processes that you are interested in developing are critical to a decent education.

— Elliot Eisner, American Educational Research Association

Games with a psychological depth, unequalled as far as I know.

— Walter Logeman, psychotherapist

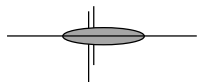
interesting academic implications...

Players in a HipBone Game use analogy and metaphor to make moves — constrained by the game board — and analysis to “score” them.

As a result, an archive of game moves is a useful database for the study of pattern recognition, the way one thought connects with another, metaphoric thinking, the nature of creativity itself, and other topics of interest to AI researchers, semioticians, psychologists and others.

The games can also be viewed as an artform ideally suited to the World Wide Web, and as a form of “polyphonic” discourse — and studied as “neutral” expressions of aesthetic principles, or as innovative multimedia variants on the use of hypertext.

Lastly, as implementations of Hesse’s Glass Bead Game, they are of potential interest as “models” of such things as neural processing, the Internet and the Web.



Is it possible to have a formal logistical system that captures the notion of “intuitive leap”?

— David Gelernter, *The Muse in the Machine*

An archive of HipBone games can provide a wealth of examples... Here we have a ‘toy universe’ ready-made for AI researchers wishing to tackle the slippery slopes of analogy, metaphor, resemblance, the making and taking of meaning.

— Derek Robinson, “The HipBone Games, AI and the rest”

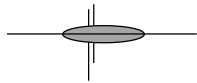
and varied commercial potentials —

HipBone Games — with certain modifications, formalized extended boards and some eyecatching graphics — are ideally suited to presentation on the online services, since the same engineering would work for a variety of areas: entertainment, family, movie and sports trivia, education, dreamwork, self-help, problem solving, etc. And they'd even make an excellent device for "getting to know" people in a "romantic links" area.

The possibilities are endless — a board game with Trivial Pursuit type cards, a TV game show along the lines of Jeopardy, a PBS series with James Burke or Bill Moyers, a Voyager style CD-ROM...

And that's just the HipBone Games as we now have them.

HipBone is actively pursuing other game ideas and a variety of avenues for including HipBone and GBG sensibilities in CD-ROM and online computer games for entertainment and education.



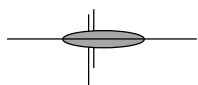
Like a cross between Trivial Pursuit and Rubik's Cube.

— Kimberly Bieber, interactive entertainment

An eye-mind game, a cognitive-twitch game — like Tetris for the higher brain centers.

— Mike Sellers, Archetype Interactive

and when the time is ripe —



NOW IS THE TIME to pursue a designer's dream: when large publishers desire quality content and actively seek independent groups that demonstrate both a vision and a plan. For those whose business is the creation of worlds, development is returning to the heady days of the mid-1980s, when a few people with a garage and a vision really could revolutionize the computer gaming industry.

— Sid Meier

offer it free on the Web...

Games played — as in Hesse's novel — as meditations, works of art or scholarship are not "commercial", nor intended to be so. We have therefore made the rules and boards for the HipBone Games freely available on the World Wide Web.

Such games do, however, serve an important though indirect commercial purpose: they generate publicity.

Our primary focus on this "GBG" aspect of the HipBone Games has already attracted favorable interest from the Washington Post and Harper's — and caught the attention of sundry game developers, artists and scientists, educators and therapists, as well as parents and children, friends, and stray net surfers...

And this approach has not only allowed HipBone to develop the varied aspects of the HipBone Project quietly and without undue pressure — it is also exactly in line with the "New Rules" of what Kevin Kelly recently called "the Network Economy":

Kevin Kelly
Wired:

Giving stuff away garners human attention, or mind share, which then leads to market share... this precommercial stage is brave, prudent, and vital... an applauded, level-headed strategy.

contact points:

players:
scholars:

We are always happy to welcome new players to the HipBone Games: whether you're keen on games or hate them, give ours a try — and let us know how things go. We are particularly happy to connect with scholars and lovers of Hesse's work.

artists:
writers:
musicians:

We invite artists, architects and filmmakers to try a solo game — our game format doubles as a multimedia artform uniquely suited to the Web. Writers will find it offers an intriguing structure for "polyphonic" writing, while musicians can explore the games as forms within the "virtual music of ideas".

journalists:

If you're a journalist interested in cyberspace, the arts, or the future of computer games — contact us. There's an amazing story brewing here...

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS

of the computer game of the future will be the introduction of relational aspects to gaming. Currently, most games are very transactional: shoot weapon, kill monster, get reward. Life is not so simple and games shouldn't be, either. Ever since I originally read *Magister Ludi*, I dreamed of a digitized Glass Bead Game that would bring people together and start conversations both online and around the computer. I dreamed of a game that would not only educate those without formal studies, but also would send me back to my library to learn more.

THE HIPBONE GAMES ARE PIONEERING THE

actualization of ideas which I only dreamed about. Right now, the web-based e-mail games offer stimulating ideas and new, exciting connections between previously unrelated data and symbols. Imagine being able to play computer-moderated games between humans or even playing a game against a Deep Hesse in the future. I look forward to multiple versions of the HipBone GBGs that will expand our understanding of intelligence, symbolism and meaning.

THEY JUST MIGHT ESTABLISH NEW LEVELS OF

artificial intelligence, artificial personality,
and neural networking, as well.

– Johnny L. Wilson
Computer Gaming World Editor-in-Chief

sell it to the games industry / online services...

We have a number of strategies for positioning HipBone Games in the existing CD-ROM games market or on an online service. Among other things, this would involve the use of extended boards, variant rule sets for both competitive and cooperative play, and preset “decks” of moves for games in specific topic areas such as movie or sports trivia.

As editor at large of The Cursor magazine for game developers, HipBone’s Charles Cameron keeps tabs on the stirrings in the industry, and feels the coming trend is towards games which draw from a wider audience than the present “core gamers”.

*Mike Sellers,
Archetype
Interactive:*

HipBone offers us a glimpse over the horizon at the future of games — where we are going, or could go. I think we’re headed for “emergent entertainment” — games in which the gameplay emerges out of the interactions of two or more people. HipBone Games are an almost pure distillation of that idea, because you’re dealing directly, mind to mind.

HipBone is eager to develop new games in this spirit: games which push the envelope in the direction of community and real — as opposed to IQ — intelligence.

contact points:

*investors:
agents:
publicists:*

We are exploring the usual avenues in search of support. We would be willing to carry development of the HipBone Games further with seed funding, to work with an established agency, or directly with an existing industry corporation.

*online services:
game developers:*

If you’re an educational software developer, an online service, or a game developer, we’re interested to talk with you.

publishers:

And if you’re a book publisher, there’s a book to be written here.

and pitch it to foundations, educational institutions...

While software for HipBone Game applications in education and psychotherapy may be developed as part of a package deal with an online service or CD-ROM developer — i.e., commercially developed boards with automated positioning of move titles, and emailing or messaging of moves — there is a great deal of content specific work which can only be done by educators and therapists “in the field”, and the HipBone boards available on the Web are entirely sufficient for current educational or therapeutic play.

We hope to establish our own non-profit organization to develop curriculum-specific materials and workbooks for K-12 and college level play, but would be equally happy to work under the auspices of an existing foundation: either way, we see the development of educational materials as something to be funded via the non-profit sector. Our aim would be to provide these useful tools at minimum cost to school systems and educators.

Therapeutic, conflict resolution and creativity training applications also require special care and development, although here it is likely that a variety of task-specific boards will be the major innovation. These developments, too, we envision as funded from the non-profit sector, with the results made freely or cheaply available to interested therapists and trainers.

contact points:

philanthropist:
foundation:

If you are, pray god, a philanthropist, or represent a foundation with educational or therapeutic interests, HipBone would like to talk with you, do the paperwork, engage a team, develop curricular materials and workbooks and report back — or much the same with regard to uses of the games in conflict resolution, therapy, dreamwork.

therapist:
teacher:
college:

If you represent an educational institution, work on curriculum development, or are a teacher or student, we would welcome your input.

computer scientist:
graph theorist:
aesthician:

Mathematicians into graph theory, AI investigators with an interest in questions of likeness, indexing, or the use of aesthetic principles in sorting massive bodies of text, philosophers of art and emergent technologies — we should perhaps be in correspondence...

and maybe the President of the United States...

With the third millennium upon us, President Clinton has announced a White House Millennium Program which will “highlight projects that recognize the creativity and inventiveness of the American people”, thus “honoring the past and imagining the future.”

HipBone views the turn of the millennium as a suitable time to hold world-wide “Games” comparable to the Olympics, but focused on mind and heart. A similar festival-of-games was recently held in London’s Albert Hall, but the HipBone concept of an Olympics of Mind and Heart goes further, including not only games of wit and intelligence — Chess, Bridge, Go and the like — but also other categories of striving and excellence in charitable, educational, creative, and compassionate activities. It would be our hope and intent that such an Olympiad should conform to the “amateur” spirit of the original Olympic Games...

HipBone is preparing a presentation to the President’s Millennium Program.

Other larger-scale projects include a nationwide student contest for the HipBone Games, a Glass Bead Game Conference — which we believe would attract notable speakers from computer science, game development and arts communities — and an eventual Institute of Glass Bead Game Studies and scholarly Journal.

contact points:

enthusiasm:
creativity:
skill:
administration:
finances:

Obviously our aspirations are large, and we shall require considerable help and support of many kinds as we explore our options.

We welcome collaborations of many kinds: your enthusiasm, creativity, administrative abilities and financial support, connections and referrals and all the rest will be most welcome.

Let the games begin!

play: HipBone Game boards and rules can be printed out or downloaded from the HipBone Games website at
<http://home.earthlink.net/~hipbone>

further details: A full description of Hesse's Glass Bead Game and the HipBone Games is available as part of our "background" package containing supplementary materials on all aspects of the HipBone Program. HipBone also has some completely un(GBG)related game ideas to discuss...

people: Charles Cameron, designer of the HipBone Games, is also Editor at Large for The Cursor, a magazine for game developers, and list-owner of Magister-L, an Internet mailing list for discussion of the design of playable Glass Bead Game variants. Charles is an Oxford graduate, writer and poet based in Virginia. He is ably assisted by David Hughes in friendship, organization, finance, web-design and in-house publishing.

contact: To contact HipBone Games, send email to hipbone@earthlink.net, write to Charles Cameron, 9735 Green Road, Midland, VA 22728, or phone (540) 439-9395.

Copyright © Charles Cameron, 1999. All rights reserved.

