

**What if we could make
games that do good?**

Stephen Knightly

TEDx Auckland

26 September 2010



Laws

VS

Poppins



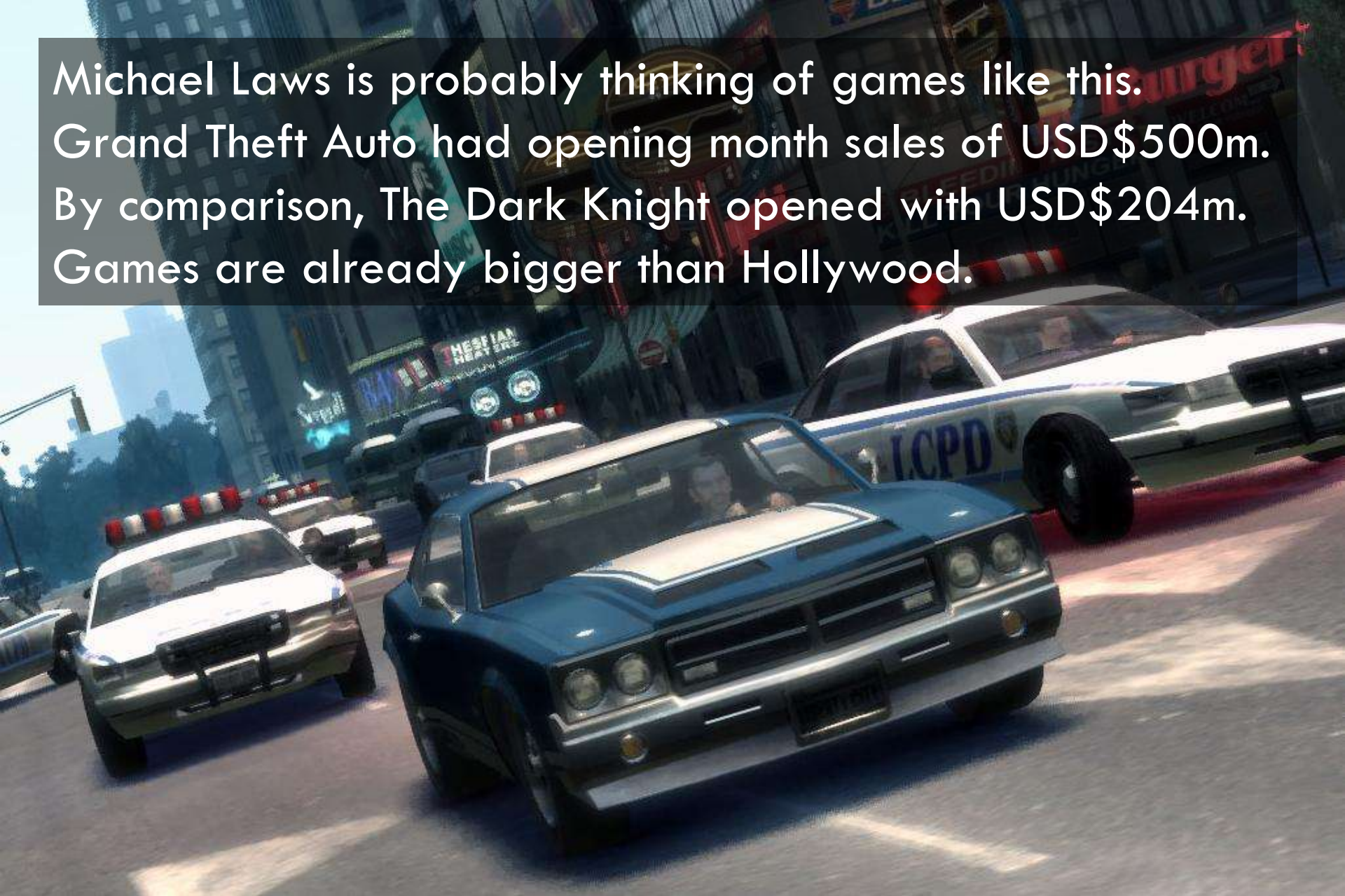
**“In every job that must be done,
there is an element of fun.
You find the fun and snap,
the job’s a game.”**

Mary Poppins, Supernanny

“If mass murder was ever to be committed in this country, it would be committed by a gamer.”

***Michael Laws,
Talkback Host & Mayor***

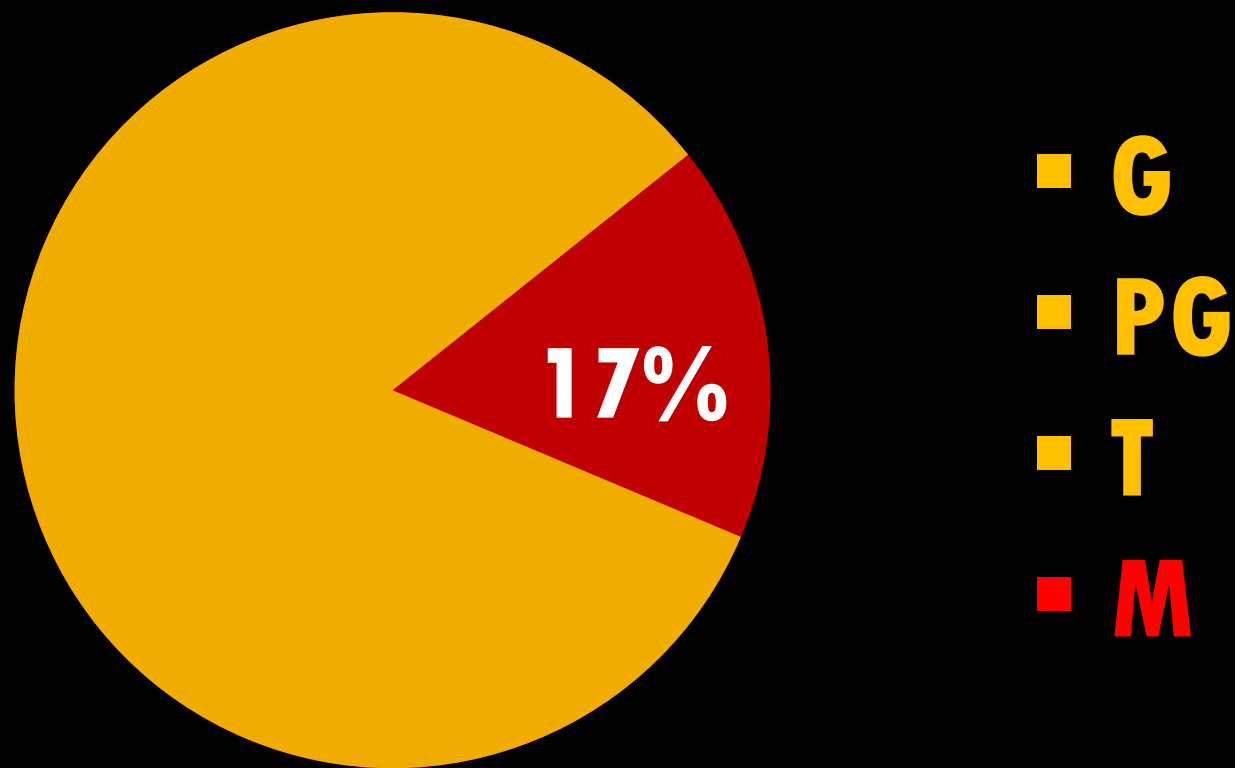
Michael Laws is probably thinking of games like this. Grand Theft Auto had opening month sales of USD\$500m. By comparison, The Dark Knight opened with USD\$204m. Games are already bigger than Hollywood.



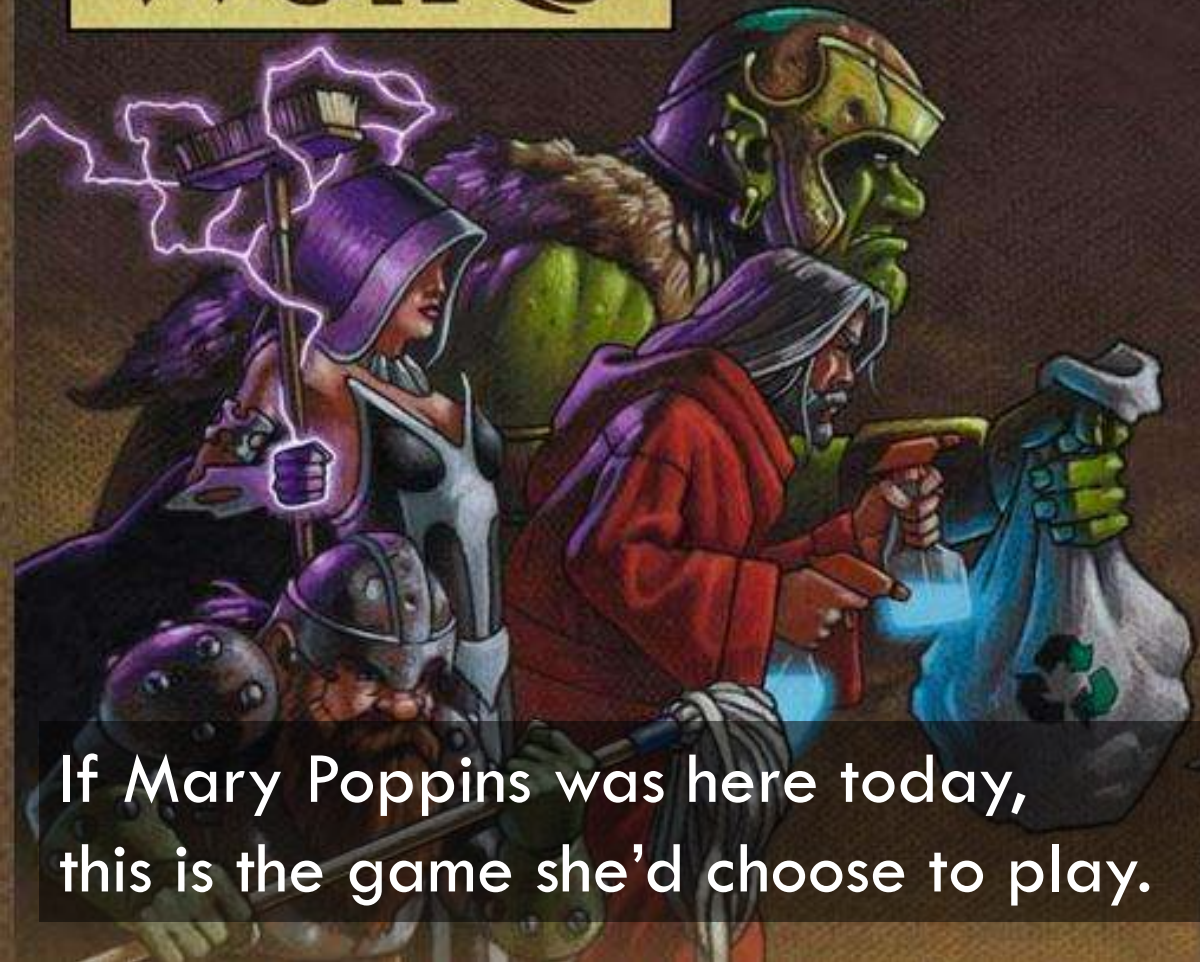
Grand Theft Auto 4, Rockstar Games

in **Game**

But the vast majority of games are not violent.
'Family Games' is the fastest growing genre of game.



Chore Wars



Finally, you can claim experience points for housework.

Recruit a party of adventurers from your household or office, and whenever one of you completes a chore, you can log it and claim XP.

[Find out more.](#)

Username:

Password:

Login

If Mary Poppins was here today, this is the game she'd choose to play.

CREATE A CHARACTER

Chore Wars, Kevan Davis

inGame



Les Driver, 98, of Dargaville
Plays Wii Sports on his Nintendo Wii.
Gamers are very diverse. The
average age of a gamer in NZ is 33,
and 44% are female.

What if...

**people spending hours
gaming could actually
learn something?**

They already are.

Let's give games to kids who don't get the chance to play them otherwise



Life Game Project: www.lgp.org.nz

inGame

These skills are commonly found in entertainment games

A word cloud of skills commonly found in entertainment games. The words are arranged in a dense, overlapping cluster. The largest words are 'Problem solving', 'Vocabulary', and 'Numeracy'. Other prominent words include 'Reflexes', 'Resource allocation', 'Economically rational choices', 'Bargaining skills', 'Environmental scanning', 'Newtonian physics', 'Strategic timing', 'Tool choice', 'Multitasking', 'Vectors', 'Spatial awareness', 'Technological progression', 'Reductionism', 'Historical facts', 'Mythological story', and 'Team specialisation'. The colors of the words range from white to yellow, green, and blue.

Strategic timing
Tool choice
Environmental scanning
Problem solving
Multitasking
Vectors
Newtonian physics
Vocabulary
Spatial awareness
Technological progression
Numeracy
Bargaining skills
Economically rational choices
Reductionism
Historical facts
Reflexes
Team specialisation
Mythological story
Resource allocation

“Serious Games”

Fun games that teach:

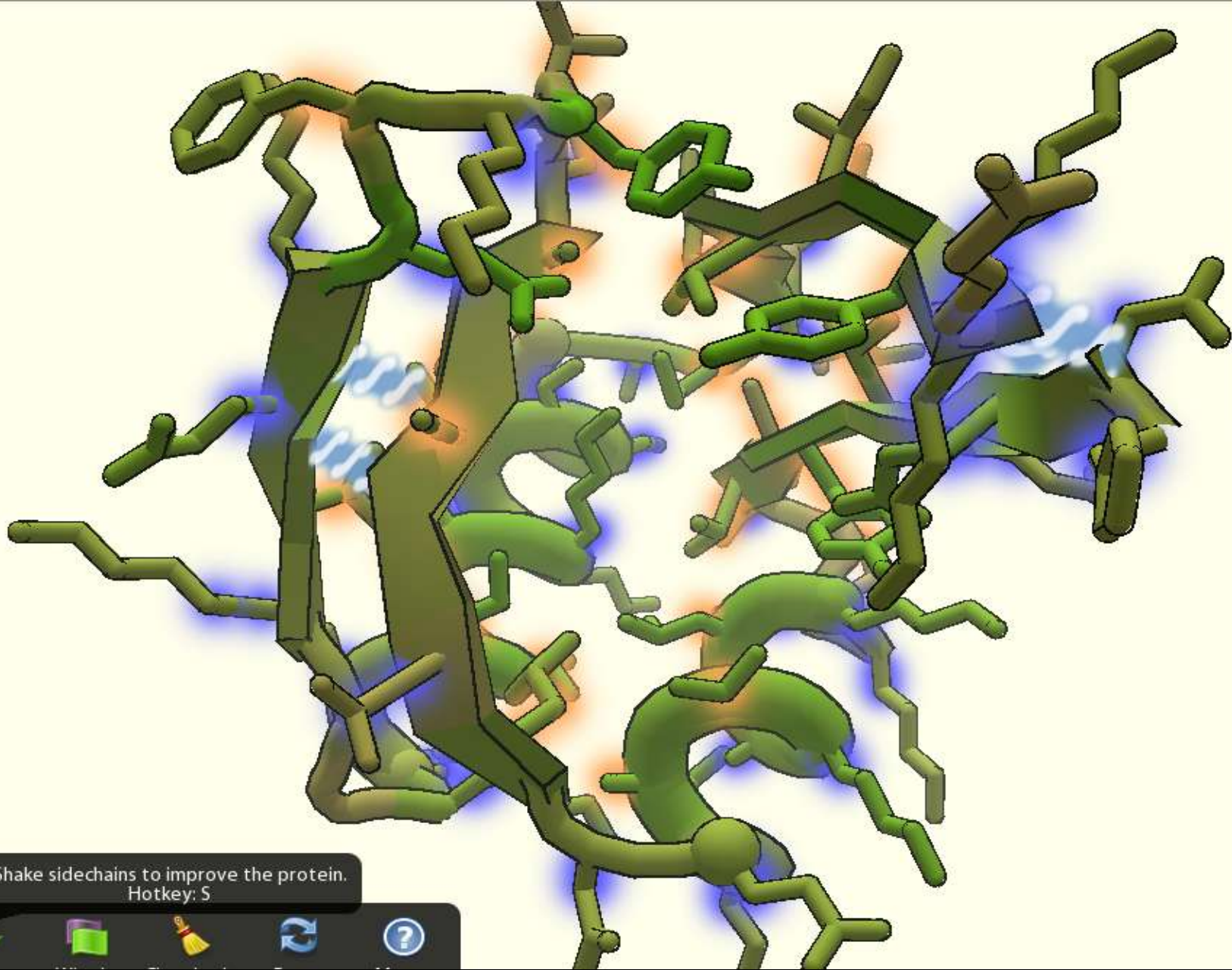
- **Science, Tech, Engineering, Mathematics**
- **Aid chemotherapy adherence**
- **Simulate peak oil**
- **Humanitarian aid**
- **American Antique trade**
- **Marine biology**
- **Depression self-management**

A 'factual game' about biodiversity in the Amazonian rainforest.



Flutter, Runaway Play

in Game



Rank: 17
48: Pro Pep

▼ Group Cor

Group Nam

- 1 The Lone F
- 2 Street Sma
- 3 Illinois
- 4 Berkelev

▼ Player Cor

- 16 psen
- 17 kathleen
- 18 versat82
- 19 darktorres
- 20 ccarrico
- 21 mbjorkegre
- 22 sslickerson

► Chat

Shake sidechains to improve the protein.
Hotkey: S

Foldit, University of Washington



Games have optimised this cycle



Motivated, self-directed learning

Games let you win and loose

Games let you experience consequences

Safely

Experiential learning

SKIP INTRO

X CLOSE

my Friend Quest .com



My Friend Quest, Brightmind Labs

in Game

A game to teach financial literacy.
What if you could safely loose money?



Cash Stash

in Game

Games are abstract formal systems

Games help us make sense of the world

Situated learning

We've always used games to help us explain the world

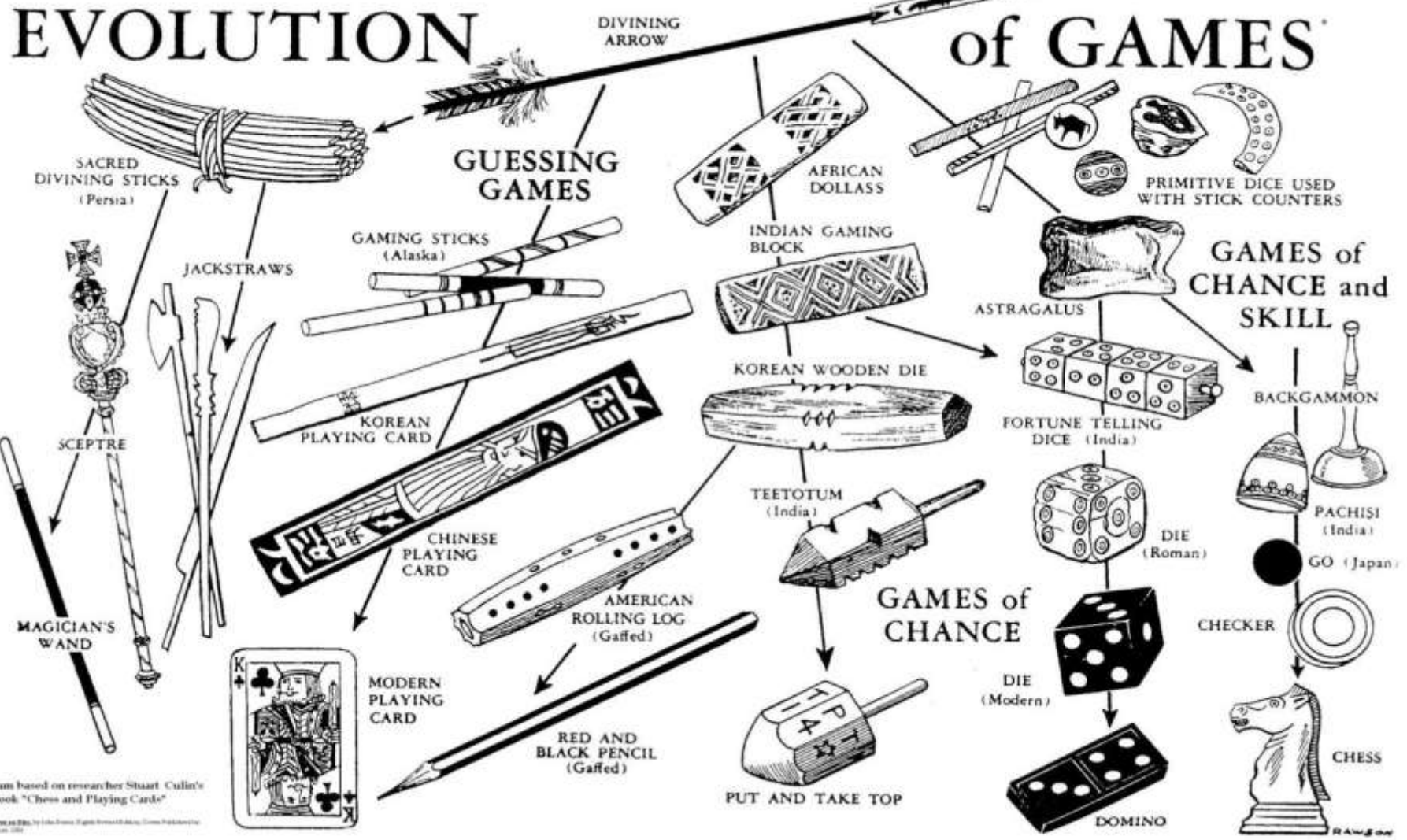


Diagram based on researcher Stuart Culin's book "Chess and Playing Cards"

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Stuart Culin (1896), Chess and Playing Cards

Games include worldviews and values

Critical thinking

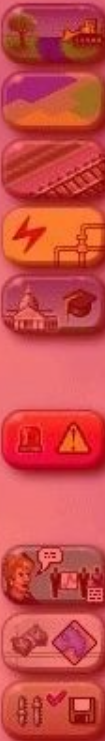
SimCity



Week **Giant Hairball Has Perfect Grammar, Linguists Say** **Broccoli Pops Cereal Not As Popular As Presumed**
New York City Pop: 443,278 \$547,151 14/5/2017



SimCity is a marxist, central planning simulator.



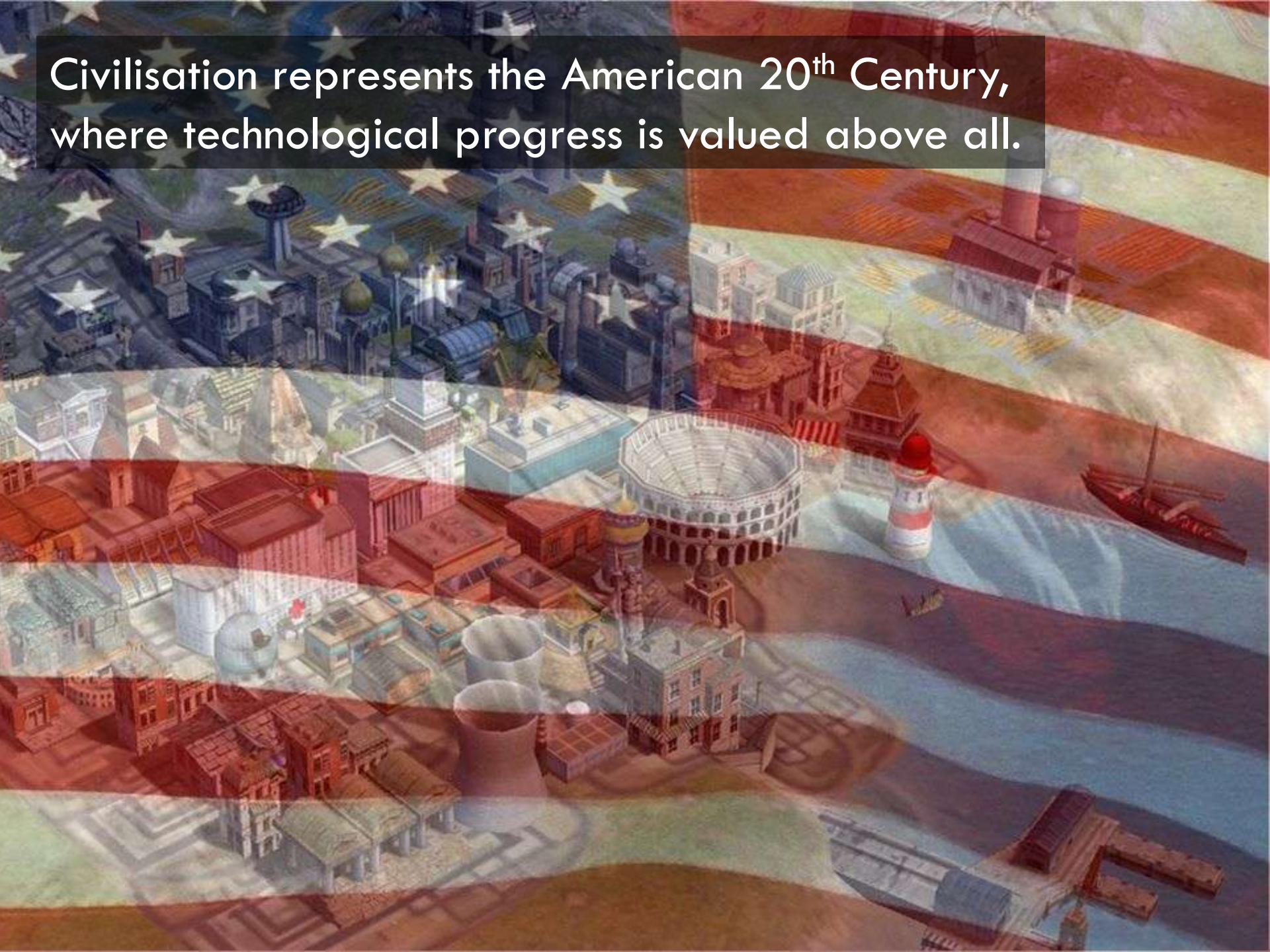
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New York City Pop: 443,278 \$547,151 14/5/2017

Civilisation



Civilisation represents the American 20th Century,
where technological progress is valued above all.



September 12th – a game whose rules show that
'violence begets violence'



Farmville teaches gift giving and generosity.
Players donated over USD\$1m to Haiti earthquake relief.



What if...

**we could take
games seriously?**