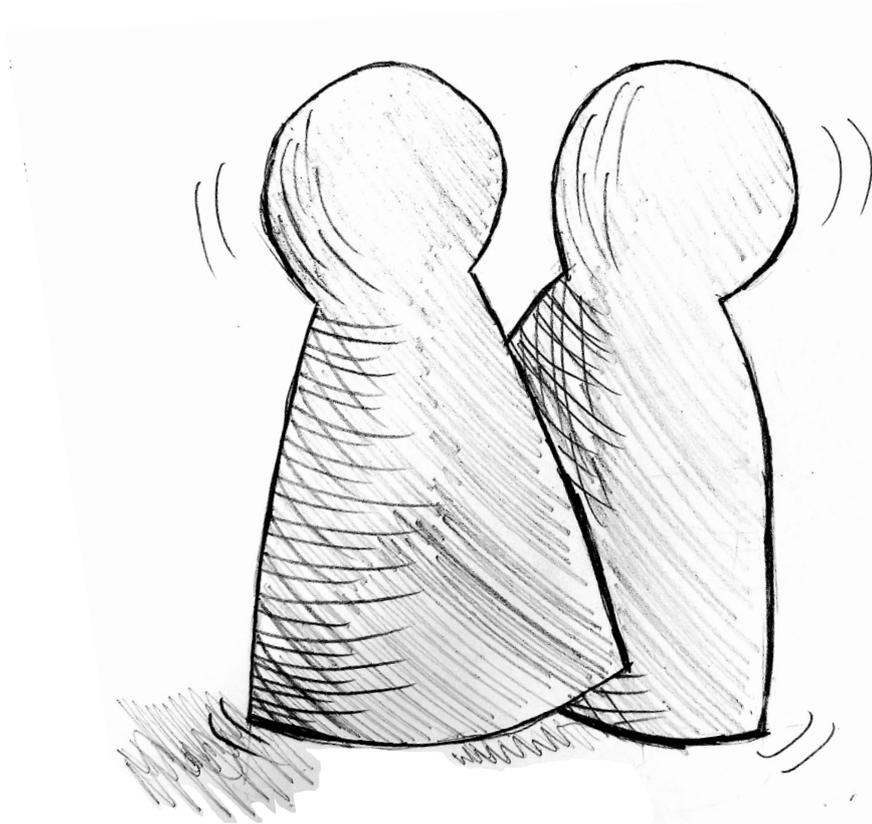


Using Game Principles in UX Research: A Board Game for Eliciting Future User Needs

Supporting Creativity through UX Design

Original paper by K. Slegers, S. Ruelens, J. Vissers and P. Duysburgh

Illustrated by Karlijn Simons | simonskarlijn@gmail.com



Slegers, K., Ruelens, S., Vissers, J., & Duysburgh, P. (2015). Using Game Principles in UX Research. Proceedings of the 33rd Annual ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - CHI '15. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2702123.2702166>

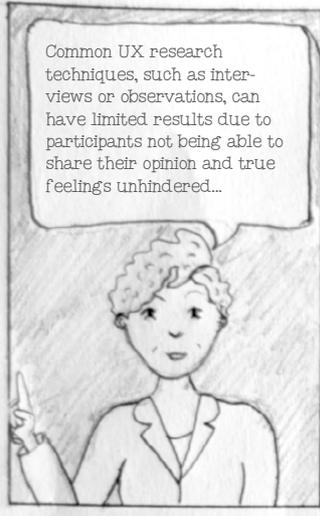
Online access via: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/34630868.pdf>

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Instructor: Neil Cohn | neilcohn@visuallanguage.com | www.visuallanguage.com



Hi, I'm Karin Slegers

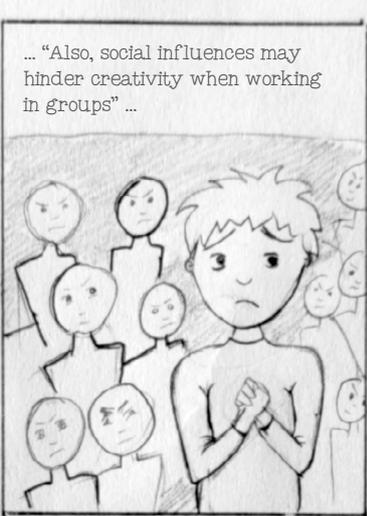
And I'm Sanne Ruelens...
... and together with our colleagues Jorick Vissers and Pieter Duysburgh...
...we would like to talk to you about the use of game principles in UX Research



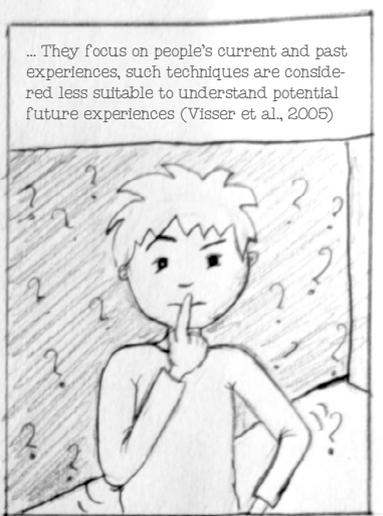
Common UX research techniques, such as interviews or observations, can have limited results due to participants not being able to share their opinion and true feelings unhindered...



... More common UX research techniques can fail to provide a safe environment to fail and make mistakes



... "Also, social influences may hinder creativity when working in groups" ...



... They focus on people's current and past experiences, such techniques are considered less suitable to understand potential future experiences (Visser et al., 2005)



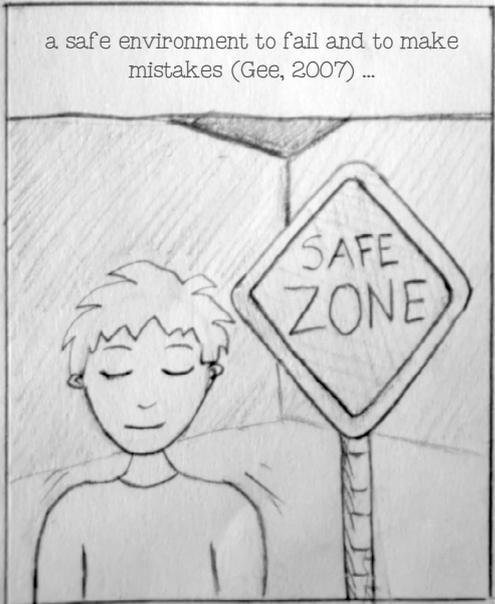
Why not make the UX Research more fun and eliminate these negative aspects?



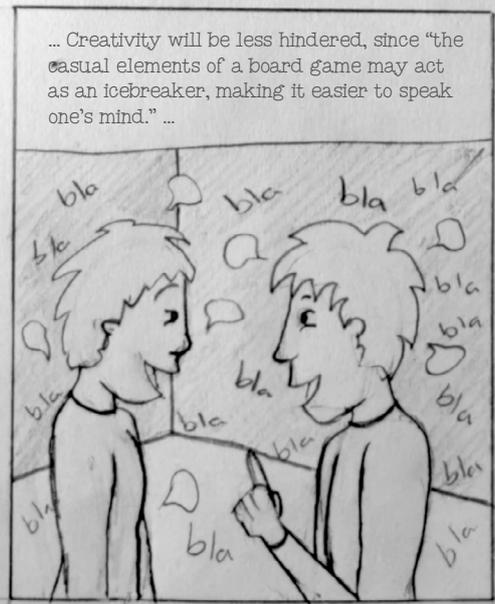
How about adding Game Principles to the UX research design



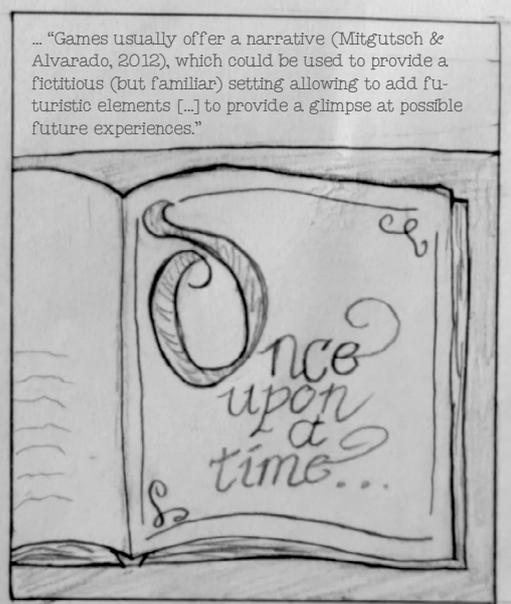
"Gamification, has mostly been used in the design of new applications [...], game principles might also be used as a technique in UX research as games are considered to provide..."



a safe environment to fail and to make mistakes (Gee, 2007) ...



... Creativity will be less hindered, since "the casual elements of a board game may act as an icebreaker, making it easier to speak one's mind." ...



... "Games usually offer a narrative (Mitgutsch & Alvarado, 2012), which could be used to provide a fictitious (but familiar) setting allowing to add futuristic elements [...] to provide a glimpse at possible future experiences."

LITERATURE ON
GAME PRINCIPLES
USED IN
UX RESEARCH

Because there is not much available literature on the subject, "We illustrate the potential usefulness of this approach with an initial case study"

How about a study on TIS?

Yes, TIS. It stands for Train Information System

"As a part of an ongoing, two-year research project aiming to develop a personalized, context-aware, multi-source train information system (TIS) [...] we wanted to understand travellers' needs regarding our future TIS concept."

We will invite experienced train travellers to play a board game.

"The board game was designed to represent a fictitious door-to-door train trip."

EVENT

EVENT

EVENT

HOME

Destination

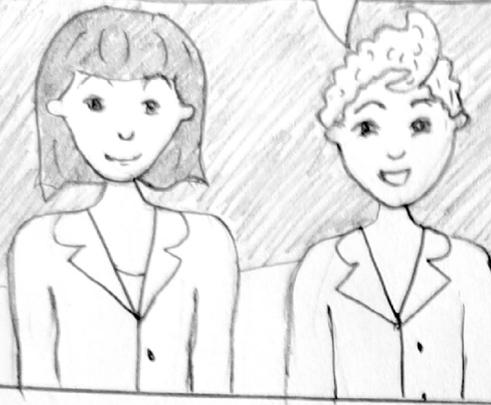
"During the game, players can ask questions to a futuristic, omniscient TIS via a chat program on a tablet. One of the researchers would answer the questions remotely."

TIS
HOW CAN I HELP?

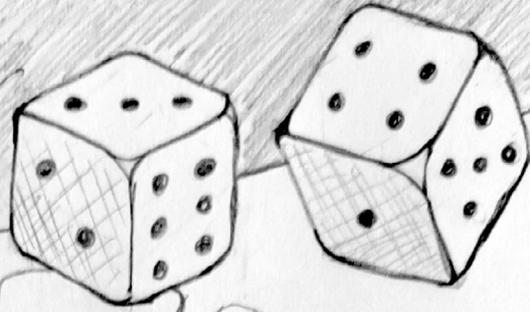
At the KU Leuven...

"The board game was first tested in a pilot session. [...] colleagues played the game for half an hour. Based on their experiences, we made several small changes to the game"

"Two workshops are organized with 30 participants (17 men, 13 women) [...] People who travel by train (at least occasionally) and who were interested in sharing their thoughts and expectations about future train information services were invited to participate."
Now, I'll explain how the game works ...

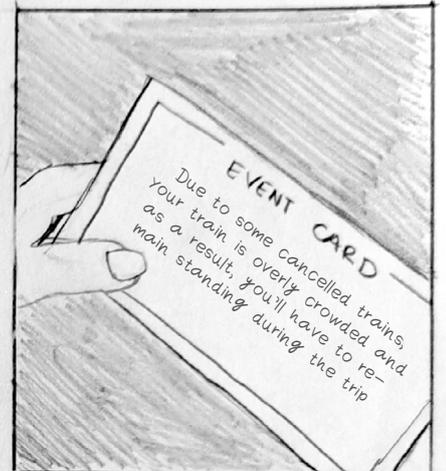
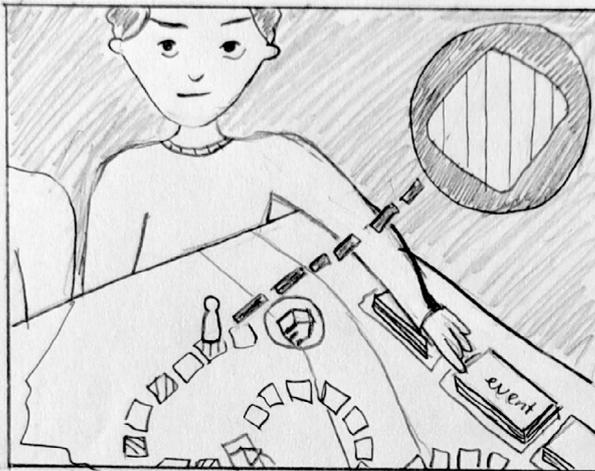


"Common phases of the journey were visualized [...] to understand the questions travellers would ask the TIS in each phase. To move along the track, players threw two dice to determine how many squares they were allowed to move their playing piece, adding some randomness to the game."



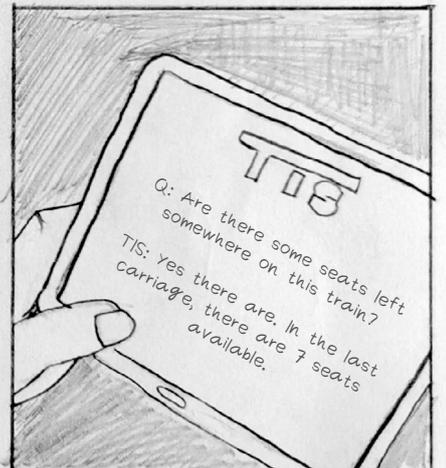
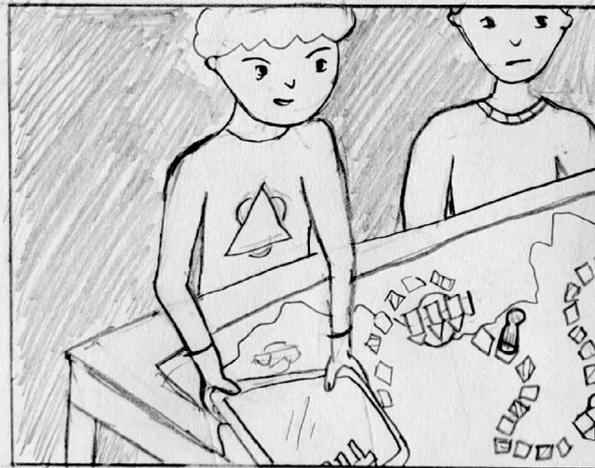
There are three types of squares.

The event square allows the player to draw an event card. These cards represent "common and realistic events that might happen during each phase of a train trip [...] These cards were based on data collected in a previous series of ideation workshops."



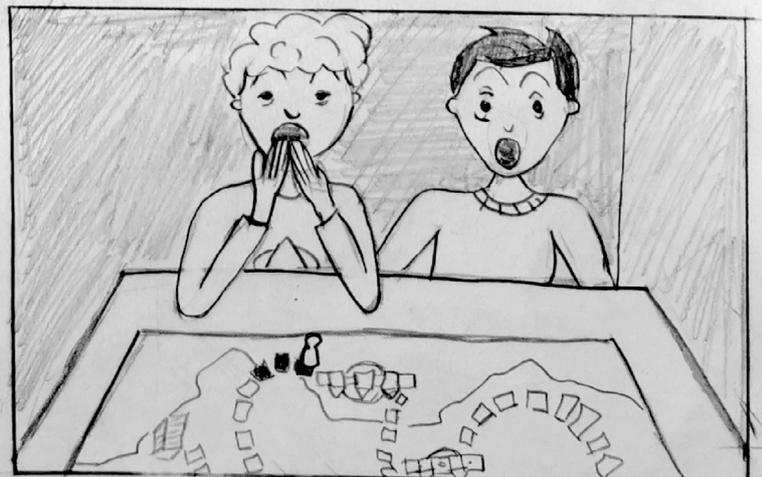
The blank square allows the player to ask an open question to the TIS.

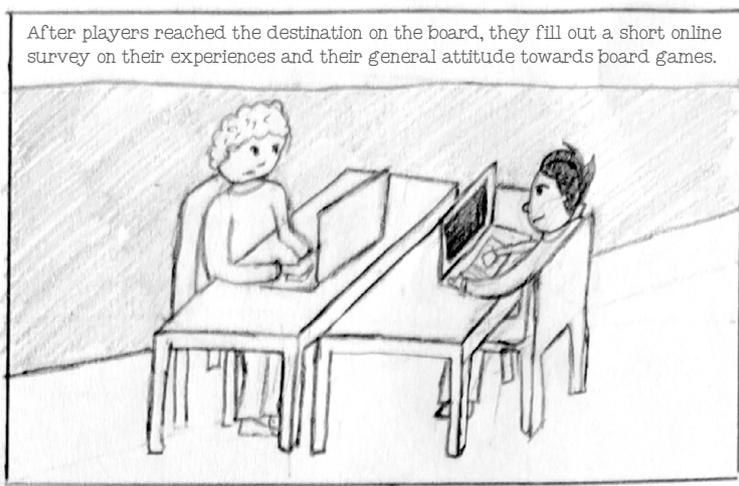
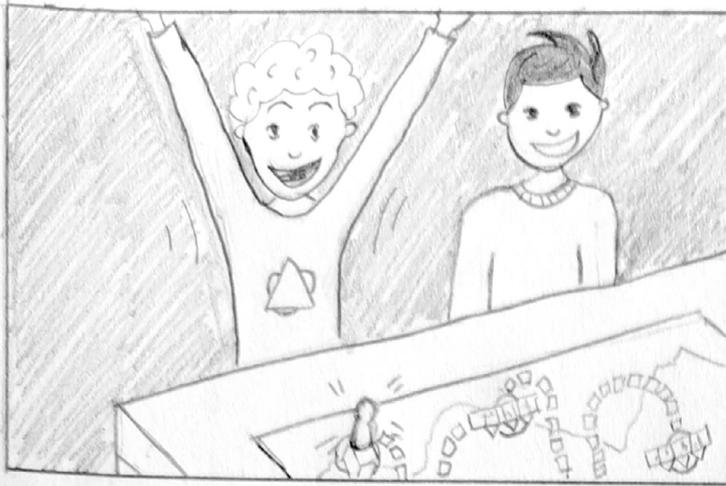
These questions can concern previously drawn event cards, or other general or personal questions about the train trip.



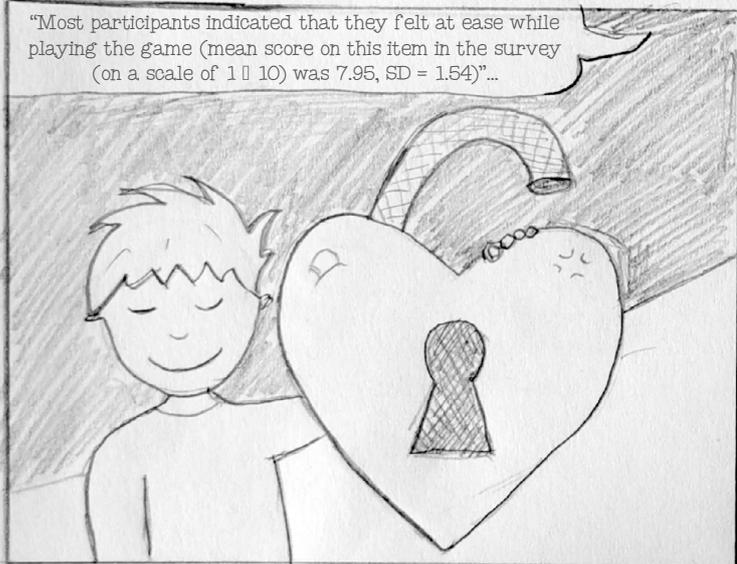
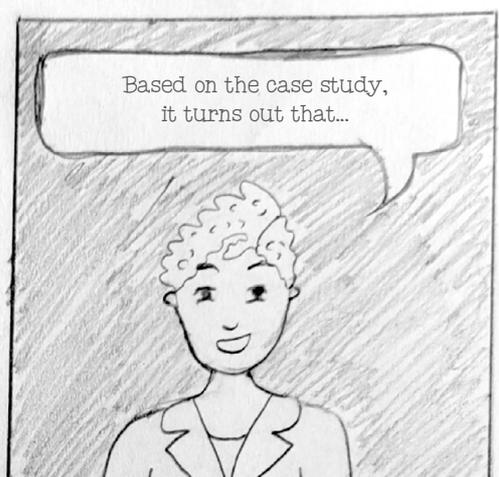
Last are the penalty squares.

When a player lands on one of these, they lose a turn, representing a delay or missed connection.





After players reached the destination on the board, they fill out a short online survey on their experiences and their general attitude towards board games.



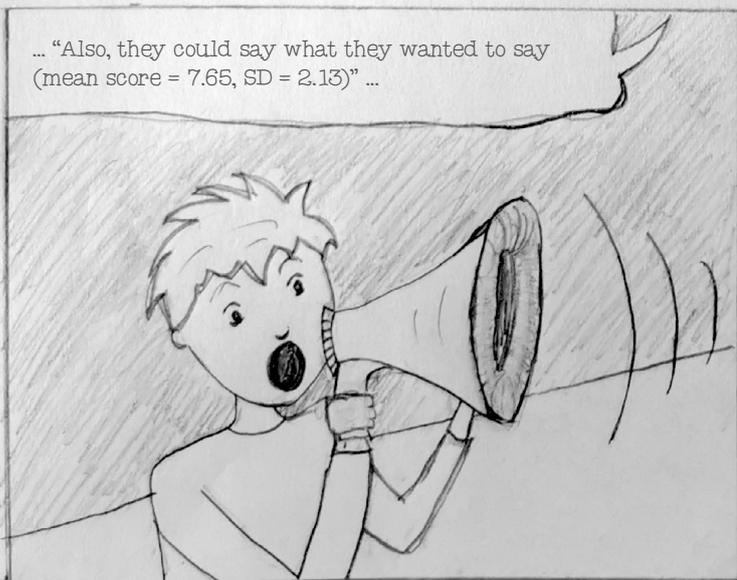
SOME QUOTES:

"It made it easier to talk to the other people." (pl.03)

"Nice game which made it easier to formulate an opinion." (pl.19)

"A pleasant and casual way of brainstorming." (pl.04)

"A nice and playful way to share experiences" (pl.02)

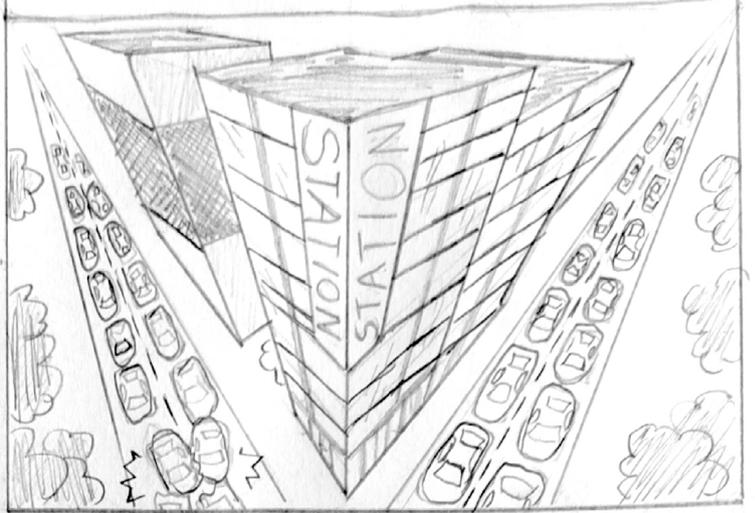


... "Seventeen of the 20 participants who filled in the survey indicated that they like to play board games in general" ...

... "By using a board game in our case study, we gained new insights that had not surfaced in our previous user research (using 'traditional' observations and interviews)."



Those new insights also include the understanding of future UX needs in certain specific events. When participants can only rely on recalling events, certain specific situations remain untouched, because participants simply have never experienced them.



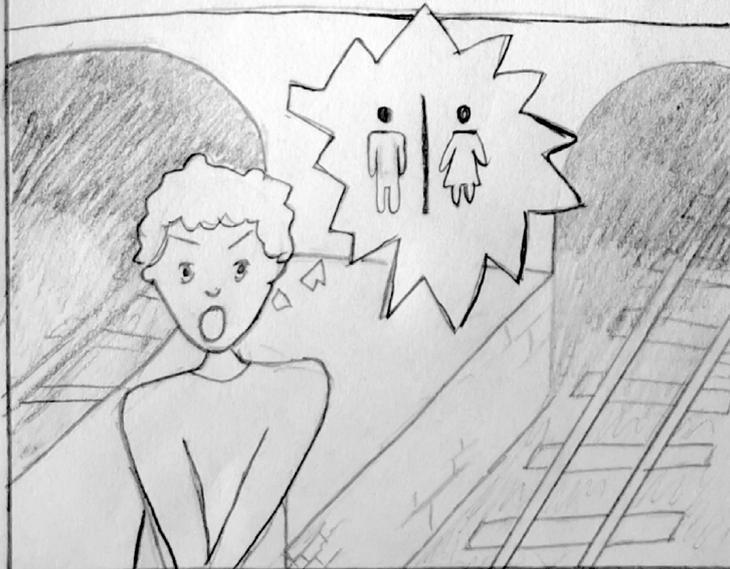
"This seems like a fun way to think about the topic to me."
(pl.14)

"In addition, several of the needs that surfaced during the analysis of the board game study results were specifically related to the future TIS under development" Some examples of these 'new' needs, that were not identified in our previous research are...

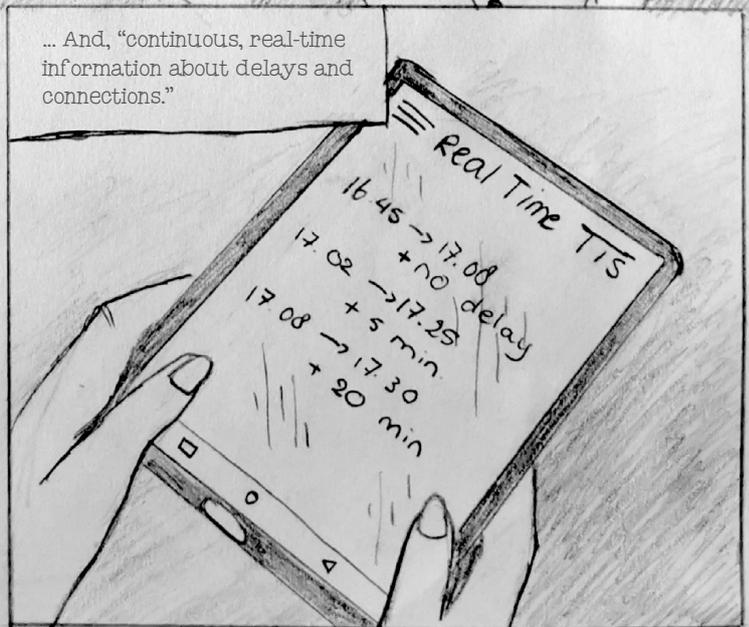
... "Information regarding the train or carriage one is in" ...

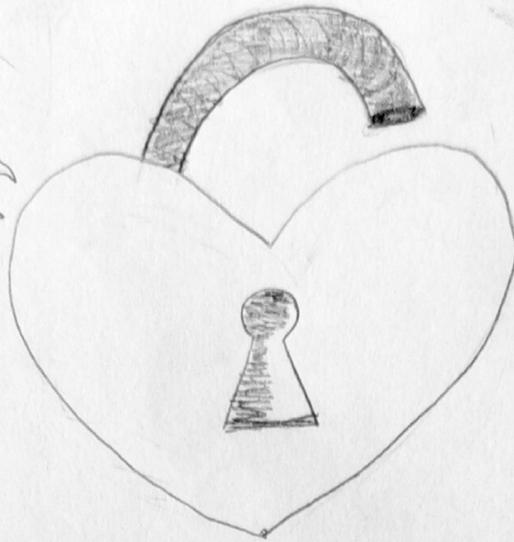


... "Facilities and services in and around the station"...



... And, "continuous, real-time information about delays and connections."





Based on this case study and its results, we can conclude that the use of a board game principle “create(s) a surprising and safe environment to share thoughts and experiences in a group setting”.

Also, it helped “to understand latent needs that are difficult to assess with more traditional UX research methods.”

“As this paper describes an initial case study, further research is necessary to validate this approach.”

For now we say thank you for reading, and...

... To be continued.

