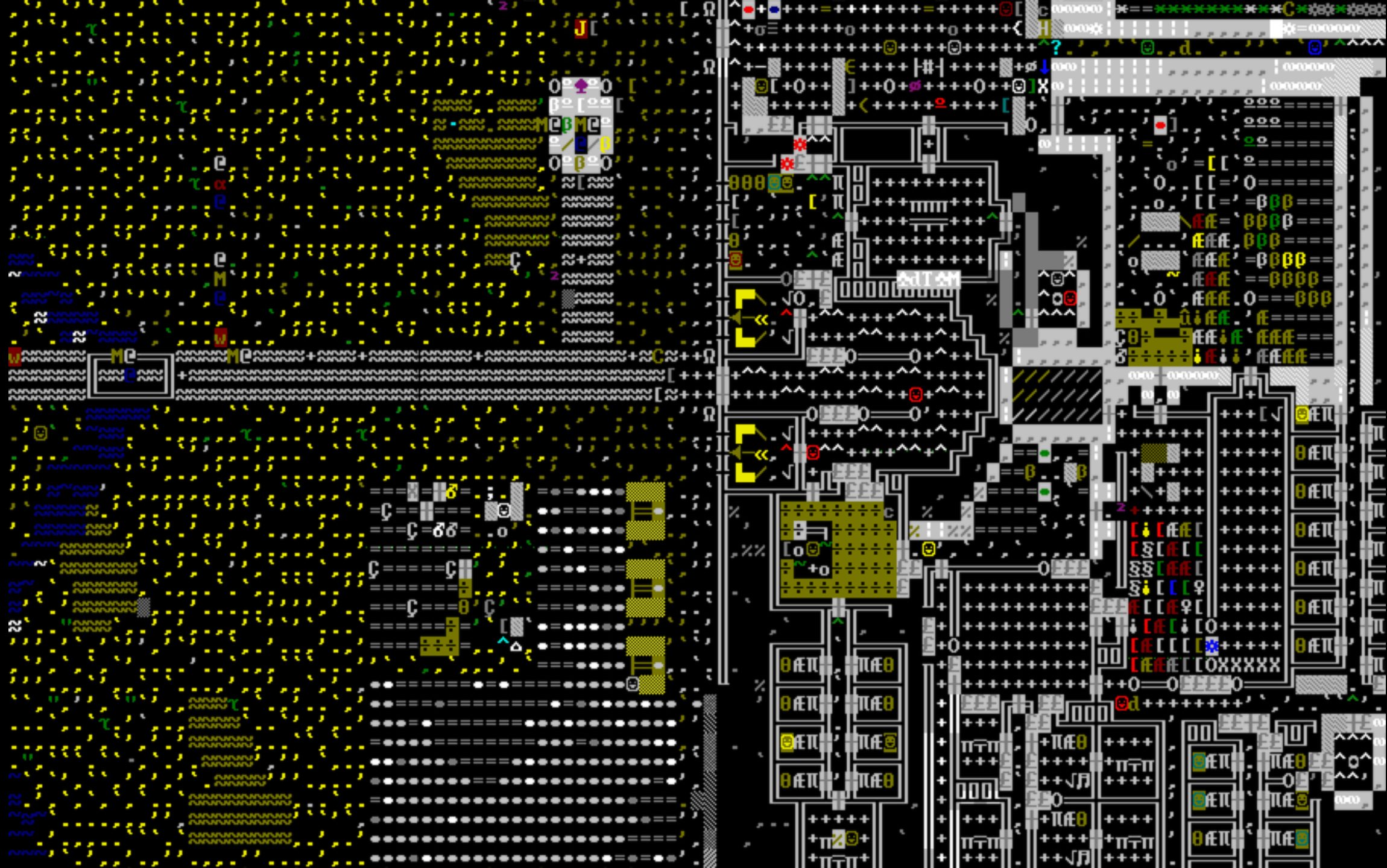# RimWorld: Contrarian, Ridiculous, and Impossible Game Design Methods

Tynan Sylvester
Ludeon Studios

UBM

Not a game - a story generator

This design pillar helped break assumptions.

Not a game –a story generator

GAME
- The skill test assumption

STORY
- Protagonist gets an unexpected, disproportional pushback

If you're generating the *whole* story, this is an unsolvable contradiction.

Not a game – a story generator

GAME

- Failure means the skill test is concluded, so we end the game
- Threaten player with real-life game-over

STORY

- Loss is an essential part of a story, not its conclusion
- Threaten player with loss of something *in the story*

If you're generating the *whole* story, your mechanics *must* include loss and recovery.

Not a game – a story generator

GAME

Maximum beauty & clarity

STORY

Maximum effectiveness as imagination-food

RimWorld has graphics like a novel has a typeface.

- Not ugly
- Easily identifiable
- Minimal noise
- Intensity hierarchy
- Fast implementation
- Leave room for interpretation

Not a game – a story generator

	Perceived by player	Not perceived by player
Present in game	Normal	Unperceived complexity
Not present in game	Apophenia!	Normal

Apophenia how-to

1. Abstracted feedback

2. Long-term relevance

Not a game – a story generator

GAME

Focus: Interesting mechanics

Make mechanics that are compelling for the player

STORY

Focus: Character emotion

Make mechanics that generate diverse emotions from the character's POV

Good task selection can save a *lot* of effort.

SATISFICING

- Choose first acceptable option

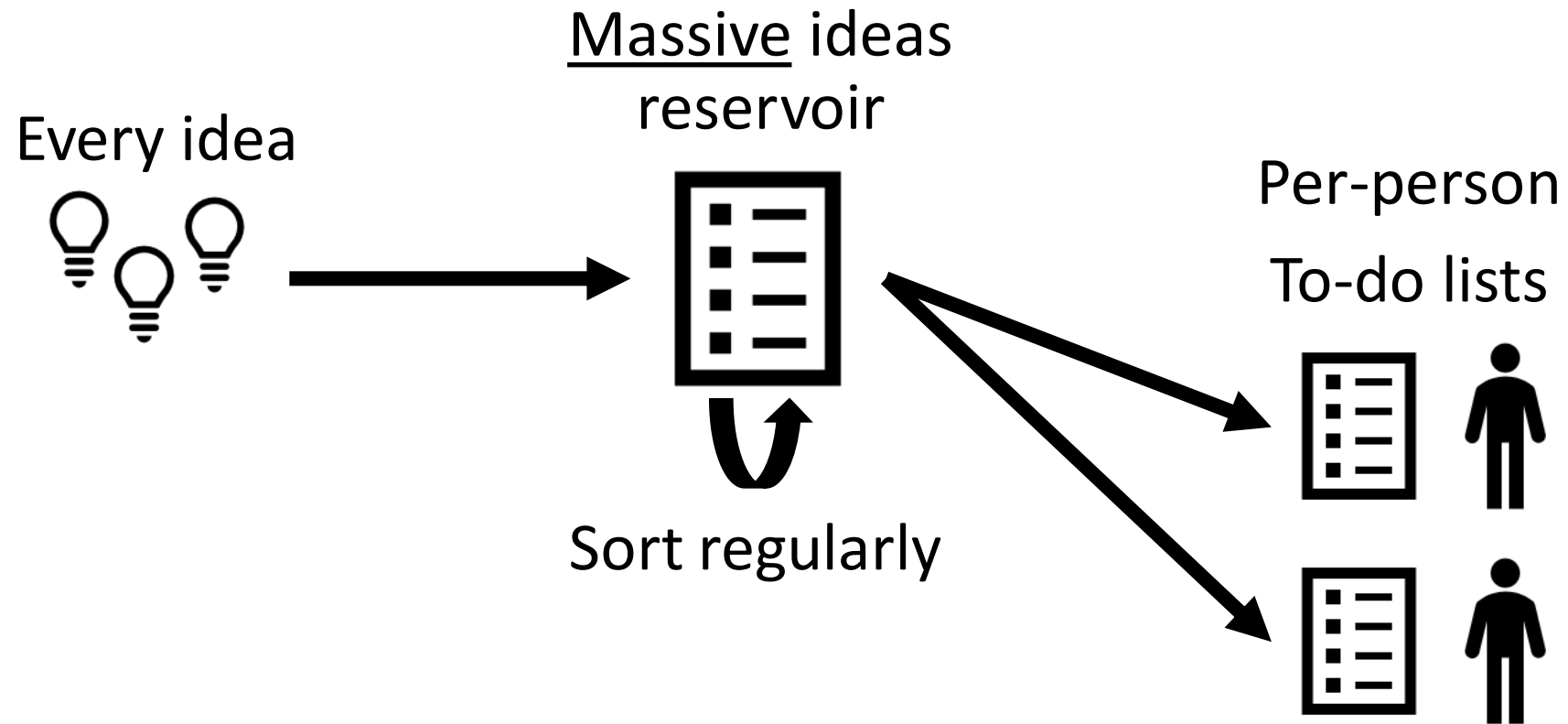# OPTIMIZING

- Compare all options, choose best

The problems with plans

- Discarded inspiration
- Discarded feedback
- Discarded test learning

Ludeon method

Every idea

<u>Massive</u> ideas reservoir

Per-person To-do lists

Sort regularly

Ludeon method advantages

1. Retain inspiration
2. Reduce bias by confirming choices over time
3. Future knowledge advantage
4. No status quo bias
5. Asynchronous work
6. Ideas fight their way to the top

Ludeon method: The ship-necessary razor

Is it possible to ship without it?

It's not - really?

Really? Actually *impossible*?

What if we did ship without it?

Okay.

Contrarianism requires

- Deep belief
- Introspection
- A commitment not to self-indulge, emotionally or cognitively
- Distrust in the crowd's though processes
- Luck

In a tournament market, there is no alternative.

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