

# Playing History Design Rationale

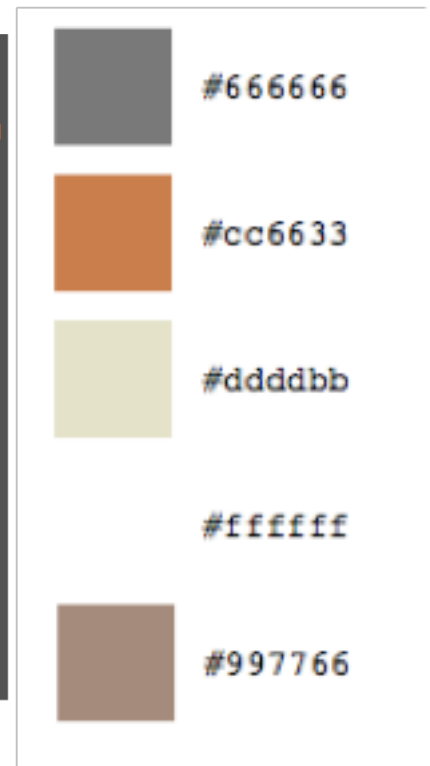
## Overview

The playing history project is fundamentally a directory for historical games and interactives. This design attempts to invite users to search and contribute to the directory.



## Font and Colors

The logo uses the Pixel based font Visitor and the monospaced font Andale Mono to invoke the style of classic video games. I generated the color pallet from a slightly more muted adaptation of a Nintendo controller. The muted colors present in this design also work well against most of the tones in the games i have added to the database so far. To tie the site together the pixel fonts from the logo are used for headings throughout the site. Andale Mono, is native to almost every Mac, and the CSS uses Consolas as a backup for PCs that which are may not have Andale installed.



# Playing History Home Page

The homepage attempts to explain the project, promote visitors to explore the repository, and explain how they can contribute to the project by rating and reviewing games.

## Top Row Content: Basic Site Use

At the top of the page Users can read about the overall goal of the project in the left top corner, moving to the right each of the top boxes call out the most important current site features, searching for games, and signing up to rate and review games.

## Featured Item: What to Expect

In the left column users see a specific featured game below the site explanation. This offers both a engaging visual, and a demonstration of the sort of individual games one can find in the directory.

## Tag Cloud: Navigation and Activity

Much of the homepage is dominated by the tag cloud, which is currently one of the most direct points of entry to the collection. As the repository grows and searches become more fruitful their may be a better option for this chunk of screen space

**PLAYING HISTORY**  
your source for historical games

ABOUT | ADVANCED SEARCH | BROWSE GAMES

**WHY PLAY HISTORY?**  
There are tons of free historical games, interactives and simulations on the web. *Playing history* aggregates info on these resources in a simple, searchable database making it easy to find, rate, and review historical games. There are currently 115 shared games.

**SEARCH FOR GAMES**  
Search through the directory of games.

**RATE AND REVIEW GAMES**  
The most valuable part of Playing History is community member reviews. Create an account and login to make contributions to the community.

Username:   
Password:   
Log In | Register for an account. | Forgot password?

**FEATURED ITEM**  
MAP OF THE MAYA WORLD

Students explore 15 Maya cities through an interactive map....

**PLAY GAMES ABOUT...**  
1066 3d African history **American history** american west ancient Antarctica Archaeology Archeological archeology archers architecture art art history Asia **battle** Belgium boat **British History** business calendar capital Central America ceremonies Chichén Itzá china church history **civics** civil war clothing colonial America **constitution** construction Copán cosmology cotton countries Croatia cult currency d-day Delaware economic economic history Egypt **England** European **European history** flag France Galileo gender gladiator Guy Fawkes Hastings historiography History history of science holocaust Honduras indigenous peoples industrial revolution iron age Italy Jamestown jazz **justice** language **law** mail map Maya military money multiplayer music mystery Napoleon navy New Orleans Norman Norway pearl harbor pharaoh Philadelphia prehistory preservation Ramose religion rights Robert Catesby Rome sea sim slice of life Spain stagecoach **supreme court** tomb train treasure Victorian Brittan Vikings Virginia virtual world war war of 1812 William the Conqueror

**World War Two** Yucatán

**RECENTLY ADDED GAMES**  
**DIGITAL DEADWOOD**  
Digital Deadwood, a persistent browser-based game, is a recreation of Historic Deadwood with free online multi-player games and real-time chat in a...

**RECENT RATINGS & REVIEWS**  
Title: Map of the Maya World  
Rating: ★★★★★  
Review: Testing again, delete this.  
This is a new line  
By:  
Title: Map of the Maya World  
Rating: ★★★★★

**RAIL, SAIL, OR OVERLAND MAIL**  
Can you get 20 mailbags from Philadelphia to New Orleans in 1853? Use a stagecoach, boat or train to move the mail along actual mail...

## Playing History Home Page

The browse page serves as the primary interface between the homepage and individual game pages. Searches and tags all link into this interface. Its principle value is helping users chose individual games.

### Search Results

Because the page is primarily a means to drill down to specific games the results take up a majority of the page. Titles, with brief descriptions, tags and thumbnails are arranged to make it as easy as possible to make snap decisions on which results might be valuable.

### Ratings and Reviews

The ratings and reviews in the right column offer another way to discover games, underline the importance of the community of reviewers to the projects success, and demonstrate site activity.

### News Feed

The News feed occupies a small role on the page. Its presence on the page helps present the site as active, and offers another way for users to stay informed about the project.

The screenshot shows the 'PLAYING HISTORY' website, described as 'your source for historical games'. The page features a navigation bar with 'ABOUT', 'ADVANCED SEARCH', and 'BROWSE GAMES' links. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area is titled 'BROWSE ITEMS (9 TOTAL)' and lists several games, each with a thumbnail, title, description, and tags. The games listed are:

- A DAY IN THE LIFE**: Think that the Supreme Court doesn't really matter in your day-to-day life? Think again! Take a look at these ten everyday situations, and match them to the related Supreme Court decisions that directly impact your rights and...  
Tags: American history, supreme court, law, justice, constitution, civics
- COURT CONCENTRATION**: Learn about some of the most notable Supreme Court justices in the long history of the Court ...  
Tags: American history, supreme court, law, justice, constitution, civics
- LANDMARK CASE INTERACTIVE TIMELINE**: How well do you know the history of the Court's landmark cases? Place critical cases in the appropriate decade in this timeline of American...  
Tags: American history, supreme court, law, justice, constitution, civics
- DECIDING THE FUTURE: THE FUTURE OF THE COURT**: Log in to predict how the Supreme Court will vote in this year's most important cases....  
Tags: American history, supreme court, law, justice, constitution, civics
- JUST CHANGE: EXPANDING CIVIL RIGHTS**: Explores the Supreme Court's changing stands on the issues of citizenship and equality...  
Tags: American history, supreme court, law, justice, constitution, civics
- TALKING ABOUT MY CONSTITUTION: CAPITALISM AND CONFLICT**: Test your knowledge of Supreme Court history and the Constitution by matching landmark cases and justice quotes. ...  
Tags: American history, supreme court, law, justice, constitution, civics
- MAJORITY RULES: THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS**: What powers belong only the federal government? What powers do the states have that the federal government does not? What does the Constitution say about this issue? Find out how the Court has answered these questions over the...

On the right side of the page, there is a 'RECENT RATINGS & REVIEWS' section. It includes a 'BROWSE ALL' button and a 'BROWSE BY TAG' button. The reviews listed are:

- Title: Map of the Maya World  
Rating: ★★★★★  
Review: Testing again, delete this.
- This is a new line
- By: admin  
Title: Map of the Maya World  
Rating: ★★★★★  
Review: I would love to play with this again. I am such a big fan of interactive maps and I had no idea how Maya life mapped onto the contemporary world.
- By: guest  
Title: Map of the Maya World  
Rating: ★★★★★  
Review: xcvxfe ew gerg
- By: jsafley

Below the reviews is a 'NEWS' section with the following items:

- playing around with CSS on the site 8 days ago
- Looks like the feed is working! 38 days ago
- I need a few items in here to make this test real 38 days ago
- Doing some twitter tests to embed this feed on playinghistory.org 38 days ago

A 'follow me on Twitter' link is also present at the bottom right of the news section.

# Playing History Game Page

The item page has two primary functions. First to help a user evaluate a game against their needs and second, to provide a space for user contributions

## Game Data

The game data occupies the primary focus of the page. I broke it into two chunks, content: what the games about, and Classroom details: information relevant for use in classrooms. There is room for improvement in some of the data display

## Game Image

The large game image gives the page a bit of interest while also giving a visual impression of what the game is and how it works.

## Rating and Review

The rest of the page pulls in user reviews and ratings and offers logged in users the ability to review games. The general flow of the page from top to bottom moves from least involved and brief, checking game details, to most involved and detailed, in user reviews and comments.

The screenshot shows the 'Playing History' website interface. At the top, the site logo 'PLAYING HISTORY' is displayed in a large, pixelated font, with the tagline 'your source for historical games' below it. A search bar is located in the top right corner. Navigation tabs for 'ABOUT', 'ADVANCED SEARCH', and 'BROWSE GAMES' are visible. The main content area is titled 'MAP OF THE MAYA WORLD' and features a 4-star rating. The page is divided into several sections: 'GAME CONTENT' with a description, publisher (NOVA), URL, and time period; 'CLASSROOM DETAILS' with grade level (4-8) and game length (short); and 'RATING & REVIEWS' with a 5-star rating and a review from 'admin'. A 'RATING & REVIEW FOR ADMIN' section is also present, showing a 5-star rating and a review from 'admin'. On the right side, there is a map of the Maya world showing archaeological sites and modern cities. Below the map, there is a 'RECENTLY ADDED ITEMS' section featuring 'DIGITAL DEADWOOD'.

**PLAYING HISTORY**  
your source for historical games

ABOUT | ADVANCED SEARCH | BROWSE GAMES

### MAP OF THE MAYA WORLD

★★★★☆ (4 ratings)

#### GAME CONTENT

**DESCRIPTION:**  
Students explore 15 Maya cities through an interactive map.

**PUBLISHER:**  
NOVA

**URL:**  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/galileo/experiments.html>

**TIME PERIOD:**  
0300 0900

Tags: Maya, Central America, Archeological, Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, Copán, Honduras, religion, calendar, ceremonies

#### CLASSROOM DETAILS

**GRADE LEVEL:**  
4-8

**FREE:**  
yes

**GAME LENGTH:**  
short

#### RATING & REVIEWS

Rating: ★★★★★  
Review: Testing again, delete this.

This is a new line  
By: admin

Rating: ★★★★★  
Review: I would love to play with this again. I am such a big fan of interactive maps and I had no idea how Maya life mapped onto the contemporary world.  
By: admin

Rating: ★☆☆☆☆  
Review: NO GOOD!  
By: guest

Rating: ★★★★★  
Review: xcxfew gerg  
By: jsafley

#### RATING & REVIEW FOR ADMIN

Rate this item: ★★★★★

Review this item: I would love to play with this again. I am such a big fan of interactive maps and I had no idea how Maya life mapped onto the contemporary world.

#### RECENTLY ADDED ITEMS

##### DIGITAL DEADWOOD

Digital Deadwood, a persistent browser-based game, is a recreation of Historic Deadwood with free online multi-player games and real-time chat in a...