



*Integrated Project on Pervasive Gaming*  
**FP6 - 004457**

Work package WP9: *Socially Adaptable Games*

**Deliverable D9.8A:  
Game Design Document – “Coup”**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document presents a game description for the Coup mobile phone game prototype.

### **Purpose of this Document**

The purpose of this document is to provide a summarized and structured presentation of the contents and mechanisms of the Coup game prototype. The prototype is available for download at <http://gamelab.uta.fi/Coup>.

### **Target Audience**

This document is intended as a public document to primarily the IPerG internal reviews and reports, but also to all interested parties within the European game designer community.

**Deliverable Identification Sheet**

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<b>Abstract (for dissemination)</b>	Coup – a mobile phone game about climbing up in a feudal social hierarchy by collaboration and betrayal. The main socially adaptable feature is the viral invitation to the game.	
<b>Keywords</b>	pervasive gaming, mobile phone game, social acceptability	

<b>Version Log</b>			
<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Rev No.</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Change</b>
2006-09-25	0.1	Jussi Holopainen	First version, adapted to the template from previous versions of the Design Document
2006-10-05	0.9	Jussi Holopainen	Comments from other partners
2006-10-12	1.0	Jussi Holopainen	Final polish



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This document has been developed to provide a common game design description for all prototypes developed under the IPerG 6<sup>th</sup> frame work agreement. Here you will find an overview of the game design of the Coup mobile phone game prototype.

## 2 GAME DESIGN OVERVIEW

Features	The Deluge Game Design
<b>Research Goals</b>	<p><b>The primary research goals are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asynchronous Cooperation: how does the asynchronicity of the collaborative actions in the game affect the players’ immersion and social interaction.</li> <li>• Expanding social interaction: the players form an explicit social hierarchy within the game with an option for viral invitation of new players. What kinds of core game mechanics can support and motivate social interaction between players in a mobile phone game.</li> <li>• Pacing: the game is supposed to reflect the spontaneity of social interaction when using mobile phones. The game, however, requires cognitive switching from daily routines to the game activities. What kinds of problems (and design opportunities) this brings to the players?</li> <li>• Viral Invitation: the players are able to invite new players from within the game. What kinds of game mechanics support the viral invitation and how does it affect the balance of the game.</li> </ul>
<b>Design Goals</b>	<p><b>The primary design goals are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include viral invitation as a game mechanic, which has an effect on the progression of the player.</li> <li>• Support asynchronous cooperation using messaging.</li> <li>• Design the core game mechanics to support cooperation and motivate social interaction between the players.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure Tools</b>	/ The prototype is using the MUPE (Multi-User Publishing Environment) developed by Nokia
<b>Genre</b>	Social multiplayer game of collaboration and competition
<b>Target Group</b>	<p><b>Selected Target Group</b></p> <p>Casual players, players more interested in expanding social interaction than the blood-and-gore type of game. People who use mobile phone communication capabilities in many ways from phone calls to SMS and email.</p> <p><b>Reasons for selecting Target Group</b></p> <p>The target group is used to the communication asynchronicity of the basic game mechanics of Coup.</p>
<b>Core Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cooperation and social interaction – players finding out with whom to build, whom to trust, etc.</li> <li>• pacing – the game is designed for maximum freedom in the player’s choice of length of playing sessions, times when to play.</li> <li>• The viral invitation model supports the main gameplay.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Pervasive Features</b></p>	<p>The main pervasive features are the temporal pervasivity through asynchronous collaboration. The viral invitation is a weak form of social pervasivity.</p>
<p><b>Other innovation in game design</b></p>	<p>The game progression is tied to the players place in the social hierarchy.</p>
<p><b>Gameplay</b></p>	<p>Coup is a moderately multiplayer game of high chivalry, quarrelling aristocracy, and gruesome backstabbing. The main goal is to stay as high up in the feudal hierarchy as long as possible and at the same time gain renown and gold in tournaments before dying of old age. The hierarchy is formed by the players themselves; if you invite new players to the game you will automatically be their lord, at least for awhile. In order to climb up the hierarchy you can either try to overthrow your lord by force or try to persuade the higher ranking players to move you up in the hierarchy. The most coveted position, the Emperor, has ultimate power over the kingdom. Unfortunately, Emperors usually do not stay as Emperors for long as all the other noblemen try to get that position.</p> <p>The main screen gives you an overview of your status in the game. The brownish upper left hand status bar gives you an overview of your current renown, that is, how you are esteemed by other lords and the people of our country. If you have new messages there is a scroll icon to the right of the renown status. Your current gold is displayed on the upper right corner. You have four knights and they can be home, travelling or away in a tournament. This is displayed by the four small knight icons above your name. The age and your current health are displayed on the bottom. Menu gives you access to the game actions.</p> <p><b>Tournaments</b></p> <p>The main way to gain wealth and honour, and also to meet new players, is to host or participate in tournaments by sending one or more of you knights to it. If you are not the Emperor you will have to receive the permission from your lord to host the tournament. A request for hosting the tournament is automatically send as a message to your lord and when it is accepted the tournament appears in the tournament list. When you think that enough knights are in the tournament you can start jousting. The tournament begins and after a couple of seasons of jousting the winners are announced. The more knights you have in the tournament in comparison to other players the higher your chance of winning. You can send your knights to other players' tournaments as well. You can later withdraw your knight from the tournament if you wish to do so.</p> <p><b>Ruling</b></p> <p>The main screen displays what is your current knowledge about the hierarchy between different lords. Here you can browse the hierarchy and gain more information about the other lords. You can also start overthrow and liberation attempts and handle gold transfers from the ruling menu.</p> <p><b>Overthrow</b></p> <p>If you wish to climb up in the hierarchy by force you can try to overthrow your current lord. This is achieved by recruiting regiments with your gold and sending them against your lord who, however, can recruit regiments of his own to defend. The battle lasts for several seasons and you will get reports in your message box. It is often a good idea to try to gang up with other players to cast down the unpopular lord. If your overthrow attempt is successful you will switch places with your lord, if unsuccessful your lord can decide how to punish you, for example, by demoting you lower in the hierarchy or denying you the permission to participate in tournaments. Note also that losing in overthrow attempts has a negative effect on your renown.</p> <p><b>Liberation</b></p>

	<p>If you wish to break away totally from the current hierarchy you can start a liberation attempt. This works in a similar way to overthrow attempt but if you succeed in liberating yourself you will be crowned a competing Emperor and you will take all your subjects with you to form a new hierarchy. Liberation is much more costly and difficult than overthrow.</p> <p><b>Change of Office</b></p> <p>If you are pleased or displeased with one of you subjects you can change his place in the hierarchy by switching places of your two subjects. You can do this swap between all you subjects in the hierarchy below you.</p> <p><b>Messaging</b></p> <p>Here you can browse through the messages you have received from other lords or your Advisor. Each lord has an Advisor, whose responsibility is to keep his lord updated on what happens in the country. Of course, you can also create, delete, and reply to messages.</p> <p><b>Gold</b></p> <p>Here you can give gold to other lords and also request gold from them. Giving gold is one way to keep your subjects or your lords happy. Requesting gold is usually a form of punishment but it can also be used to get support for overthrow and liberation attempts or defending against them.</p> <p><b>Inheritance</b></p> <p>In case of you death you can name one of your subjects as your inheritor and you can also decide how your remaining wealth is distributed. Note that when you die your wealth is divided into twelve parts and you must decide how they are distributed.</p> <p><b>Chronicles</b></p> <p>If you die of old age as an Emperor you can write a piece of you own in Coup chronicles, the others can only browse through them.</p>
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<b>Play Modes</b>	The game is intended for mobile phone only	
	<b>Mobile Game Play</b>	<b>Stationary Game Play</b>
	Online	None
	Offline	
	<b>Spectators</b>	
	None	
<b>Game objectives</b>	<p>Here are the primary game objectives:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The main goal is to stay as high up in the feudal hierarchy as long as possible and at the same time gain renown and gold in tournaments.</p>	
<b>Game World</b>	The game world is fictional feudal society.	
<b>Storyline</b>	Coup is a moderately multiplayer game of high chivalry, quarrelling aristocracy, and gruesome backstabbing.	

<b>Graphic Theme</b>	<b>Design</b> Tournaments and late medieval noblemen.
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### 3 GAME FLOW

<p><b>Overview</b></p>	<p>Coup is a moderately multiplayer game of high chivalry, quarrelling aristocracy, and gruesome backstabbing. The main goal is to stay as high up in the feudal hierarchy as long as possible and at the same time gain renown and gold in tournaments. The hierarchy is formed by the players themselves; if you invite new players to the game you will automatically be their lord, at least for awhile. In order to climb up the hierarchy you can either try to overthrow your lord by force or try to persuade the higher ranking players to move you up in the hierarchy. The most coveted position, the Emperor, has ultimate power over the kingdom. Unfortunately, Emperors usually do not stay as Emperors for long as all the other noblemen try to get that position.</p>
<p><b>Entering the game</b></p>	<p>There are two ways of starting to play Coup: you can create a game of your own (and be the first emperor) or you are invited to the game by another player, most probably someone you know in real life. The game time is divided in seasons, where there are four seasons (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter) in one year in game time. As in real life your character ages and, in the end, dies of old age. During your lifetime you try to get as much renown in the country as possible and, if you are lucky, you end your game as an Emperor and you can write your own piece in the Coup chronicle. You gain renown by being as high up in the hierarchy as possible and also by sending your valiant knights to victory in tournaments.</p> <p>Starting a new game</p> <p>Creating your own empire and being the first Emperor is easy. If you have not installed MUPE client yet please download and install it. Start MUPE and select Add icon to subscribe to a new service and enter the Coup service URL to the text box. Selecting OK from the menu takes you to the game creation screen where you can type in your Emperor’s name, select the gender and name your country and citizens. You must also specify the season length, which specifies how fast the game progresses. An average game lasts for about 200 seasons for one player so a 1 minute season length means that the game for one player lasts 3-4 hours and a game with one hour seasons lasts for about a week.</p> <p>After creating your own empire you can now start to invite other players to be your loyal subjects. Select Invite icon (the one on the left) from the main menu and enter the phone number of the person you would like to invite. Your newly invited loyal subject will receive an SMS with the invitation details. Often it is a good idea to discuss starting a new game with your friends before actually sending the invitations.</p> <p>Receiving an invitation</p> <p>If you already have the MUPE client installed the invitation SMS automatically launches Coup and you are immediately in the game. You will also receive a normal text SMS invitation if you wish to accept the invitation later. The text SMS invitation contains instructions how to install MUPE client and also a special invitation code. Install and start MUPE client and select Add icon to subscribe to a new service and enter the Coup URL to the text box. You can specify your character’s name and gender at the invitation screen. Note that you are automatically a subject of the player who invited you.</p>
<p><b>Switching play modes</b></p>	<p>If a player is offline (i.e. is not at the moment logged onto the game), game events can still be sent to the player, who can then choose to enter the game directly from the SMS containing the information on the game event. The player can also log in and out whenever she wants to.</p>
<p><b>Entering/Leaving and</b></p>	<p>The player can log in and log out of the game whenever she wants. The player may also choose to receive SMS notifications of major game events, which</p>

<b>re-entering the game</b>	automatically launch the client into that event if the player accepts the notification.
<b>Social Adaptability</b>	<p>The game is designed so as not to intrude on other activities. This is being achieved by such features as a time frame within which to answer an attack or a collaboration proposal. The recipient of such an event will therefore not have to interrupt any activity in order to play the game, but can wait until it is convenient to activate the game and react to the game event. If a game event is being ignored by the recipient, the game will continue anyway.</p> <p>The players form the initial social hierarchy by virally inviting other players to be their direct underlings.</p>
<b>Pacing</b>	The player starting the game can choose the season length, which determines the initial “heartbeat” for the game. Most of the collaborative actions are asynchronous, that is, the communication between players paces the game. The game itself can last from a couple of hours to even weeks depending on the season length.
<b>Typical Playing Situation</b>	Situations where people use mobile phone for leisure social communication, mainly in situations where the player has a couple of minutes of free time, e.g. commuting.

## 4 GAME CONTENT

Features                      The Deluge Game Design

<p><b>2D Graphic Design</b></p>	<p>See the interaction design document. Some example screenshots:</p>  <p>The first screenshot shows a character profile for Duke Hynderwell, including his title, age, and a portrait. The second screenshot shows the same profile with a menu overlay. The third screenshot shows a hierarchy menu listing subjects under Emperor Ruddock.</p>
<p><b>3D Designs</b></p>	<p>None</p>

<b>Colours</b>	See graphic design theme.
<b>Interactive Movie Elements</b>	None
<b>Physically prepared locations</b>	None
<b>Online content</b>	The manual and client download on the game website <a href="http://gamelab.uta.fi/Coup">http://gamelab.uta.fi/Coup</a> . The site also includes discussion boards for the players.

## 5 TECHNOLOGY USED

Device		Description and Function
Series 60 phones with 174x206 screen resolution and capable of running MUPE2 (e.g. 6600, 6630, 7610)		The platform for playing the game.
Internet enabled PC capable of running MUPE server and a web-server		The server handling the game logic.

## 6 FULL CREDITS

Game idea: Jussi Holopainen (NRC)

Initial design: Kimo Boissonnier, Juha Arrasvuori (NRC)

Interaction design: Ciarán Harris (NRC)

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Thanks: Jouka Mattila (NRC) for comments and some graphics.