Classification of board games
an easily adaptable system to classify board games

The department of Teachers Education of the Catholic College Brugge – Oostende (KHBO) in Belgium uses board games in their Teachers Education. The College works in association with de non-profit organization ‘Flemish Games Archives’, well known within the gaming community. It has at its disposal the largest collection of board games, books and magazines in the Benelux.

One of the objectives of the Flemish Games Archives is to find a system to easily classify the thousands of different board games, so that students, teachers and researchers can use those games that have one or several similarities.

After research in several Archives, study of many books and drawing a comparison between many web sites, the "KHBO Games Archive" came up with a system that offers them an easy access to equivalent board games.

The question many researchers ask is very simple:

"I know that particular game and I would like to know what other games are similar. Can you give me a list of equivalent games?"

Piet Notebaert will demonstrate the way games are classified in their database. This system proved to be very successful and is set up to be easily adapted to new game systems.

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A. EXISTING SYSTEMS TO CLASSIFY BOARD GAMES

1. The Game Companies

This would be the first place to study classifications systems. But this inquiry is rather disappointing. Many game companies develop very simple classifications.

A few examples:

- **Hasbro**
  - Get Together Games
  - Family Game Night
  - My First Games
  - Adult Games

- **Jumbo**
  - Lotto
  - Child games
  - Learning games
  - Society games
  - Language games
  - Word games
  - Special features

- **Ravensburger**
  - Child games
  - Pocket games
  - Card games
  - Play and learn games
  - Games for the family
  - Games for adults

- **Amigo Spiele**
  - Card games
  - Family games
  - Child card games
  - Child games
  - Tactical games
  - Collection card games
  - Pokémon and Diskwars
  - Role-playing games

and so on...

It’s obvious that game companies are not the place to find a clever classification system.
The staff members responsible for this archives are the first to set up a systematic classification of board games. One can read their rich experience (Spiel des Jahres, Deutschland) in their system. Whoever studies this classification finds a very strong insight into the different systems of board games.

1. Classification of board- en table games

1.1. The group of dice and be lucky games
   1.1.1. Pure dice games (Yahtzee)
   1.1.2. Start and target games (Ludo)
   1.1.3. Find and catch games (Catch the hat)
   1.1.4. Tactical dice games (Can’t Stop)

1.2. The group of lay down games
   1.2.1. Symbol lay down games (Domino)
   1.2.2. Letter lay down games (Scrabble)
   1.2.3. Number lay down games (Rummikub)
   1.2.4. Tactical lay down games (Café International)
   1.2.5. Lotto games (Lotto)
   1.2.6. Figure lay down games (Tangram)
   1.2.7. Image lay down games (Puzzles)

1.3. The group of thinking games
   1.3.1. Strategic thinking games (Chess)
   1.3.2. Tactical topologic thinking games (Halma)
   1.3.3. Combination and decoding games (Mastermind)
   1.3.4. Memory games (Memory)
   1.3.5. Solitude games (Solitaire)

1.4. The group of role-playing games
   1.4.1. Society games (The Game of Life)
   1.4.2. Trading games (Monopoly)
   1.4.3. Detective and policeman games (Scotland Yard)
   1.4.4. War and conflict simulation games (Risk)
   1.4.5. Fantasy and SF role-playing games (Het Oog des Meesters)
   1.4.6. Sports and race games (Jockey)
   1.4.7. Traffic games (Stop & Go)
   1.4.8. Travel games (Trip around the world)

1.5. The group of dexterity and action games
   1.5.1. Dexterity games (Mikado, Jenga)
   1.5.2. Action games
   1.5.3. Reaction games
   1.5.4. Sports games

1.6. The group of remaining games
   1.6.1. Quiz and guess games (Trivial Pursuit, Barbarossa)
   1.6.2. Psychological and conversation games (Sympathie, Therapy)
   1.6.3. Others
2. Classification of card games

2.1. Abstract card games
   2.1.1. Card possessions games (Whist, Bridge)
   2.1.2. Value of the card games (Skat)
   2.1.3. Lay down games (Uno)
   2.1.4. Card combination games (Canasta)

2.2. Role playing card games
   2.2.1. Society card games (Koalition)
   2.2.2. Trade card games (Koehandel)
   2.2.3. Detective and policeman card games (Sherlock Holmes)
   2.2.4. Adventure card games (Digging)
   2.2.5. War and conflict simulation card games (Armour Supremacy)
   2.2.6. Fantasy and SF role-playing card games (Magic The Gathering)
   2.2.7. Sports and race card games (Der Ausreisser)
   2.2.8. Traffic card games (1.000 Bornes)

2.3. Communication card games
   2.3.1. Ask and answer card games
   2.3.2. Quiz card games
   2.3.3. Astrology card games
   2.3.4. Creative card games

This system proves to be sufficient for those who want to know how to classify games. But if you want to find a game system you prefer you would have to look into several categories at the same time.

Suppose you like the bluff system in the game called ‘Condottiere’. This game presents itself also as a war-game. Where would you search? Will you take a look in the list of war-games? Or should you study the list of combination and decoding games?

We find that this classification does not work for those researchers who want to find similar games systems.
3. **Web sites dedicated to Board Games**

Searching the internet is a work of frustration and happiness. Most of the web sites dedicated to board games do not classify the games into different categories, but list the games in alphabetical or reviewing order.

But a few exceptions make the search successful.

![Image](http://www.boardgamegeek.com/)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18xx Series</td>
<td>Abstract Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>Action/Dexterity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arabian</td>
<td>American Civil War</td>
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<td>Card Game</td>
<td>Ancient</td>
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<td>Civilization</td>
<td>Ballooning</td>
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<td>Deduction</td>
<td>Bluffing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expansion for Base-game</td>
<td>City Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>Collectable Sets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mafia</td>
<td>Computer/Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miniatures</td>
<td>Deduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Napoleonic</td>
<td>Dice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Party Game</td>
<td>Economic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puzzle</td>
<td>Exploration</td>
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<td>Science Fiction</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Fighting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Horror</td>
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<td>Western</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Murder/Mystery</td>
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<td>Sports</td>
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<td>Trains</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Trivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Wargame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>World War II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This classification offers the researcher an easy way to look up similar game systems into the database of this organization. The problem with this method is that a particular game must be dedicated to one of the given categories. And this is not so easy. Many games could be listed into different categories at the same time.

An example:

Take a look at the ‘war-games’ to find ‘Condottiere’. You’ll find out that this game is not listed in the ‘Bluffing’ section (and Condottiere has a very good bluffing mechanism).
Harald Schrapers uses this classification:

1. Das besondere Spiel
2. Das Brettspiel
3. Das taktische Denkspiel
4. Das Verhandlungsspiel
5. Das Aktionsspiel
6. Das Karten-Brettspiel
7. Das Kartenspiel
8. Das Würfelspiel
9. Das Zwei-Personen-Spiel
10. Das Kommunikationsspiel

This easy system is used by many web sites. Not very useful indeed.

This post order company lets the buyer browse in a database to find games that match certain needs.

Clicking on the section ‘Spielart’ gives you some choices:

- Action
- Auktion
- Bau
- Bluff
- Brett
- CoSim
- Deduktion
- Denk
- Fantasy
- Gaudi
- Gedächtnis
- Geschick
- Handel
- Kommunikation

- Lege
- Memory
- Quiz
- Reaktion
- Renn
- Rollenspiel
- Sammel
- Sport
- Strategie
- Taktik
- Umwelt
- Wirtschaft
- Wort
- Würfel
This post order company offers many systems to find games. You can search by 'game genre' or by 'game theme':

### Game Genres
- Abstract Strategy
- Action & Dexterity
- Auction & Bidding
- Beer & Pretzels
- Betting
- Bluffing
- Civilization Building
- Connection
- Cooperative
- Educational
- Gambling
- Lateral Thinking
- Logic & Deduction
- Maze Games
- Memory
- Negotiation & Diplomacy
- Observation
- Racing
- Rail & Network
- Role-playing
- Set Collection
- Speculation
- Television Game Show
- Trading
- Trick Taking
- Trivia
- Voting & Election
- War & Combat
- Word Games

### Game Themes
- Barbie
- Barney
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Batman
- Bionic
- Bowling
- Business
- Cabbage Patch Kids
- Care Bears
- Carmen Sandiego
- Castles & Knights
- Cow
- Cowboy / Western
- Crime
- Cycling
- Dinosaur
- Disney
- Egyptian
- Ellery Queen
- Exploration
- Fantasy
- Farming / Ranching
- Fighting
- Fish
- Food & Beverage
- Football
- French & Indian War
- French Revolution
- G.I. Joe
- Garden
- Garfield
- Geography
- Golf
- Goosebumps
- Government
- Guinness Book of World Records
- Hagar
- History
- Hockey
- Home Alone
- Horror / Spooky
- Horse Racing
- Humorous
- Hunckback of Notre Dame
- James Bond
- Jungle
- Lord of the Rings
- Lunch Money
- Mad Magazine
- Madeline
- Maisy
- Medical
- Medieval
- Mork & Mindy
- Movies & Television
- Murder, She Wrote
- Music
- Mystery
- Napoleonic Wars
- Native American
- Nature & Ecology
- Nautical
- Oil
- Oriental
- Pac-Man
- Pez
- Pig
- Pirate
- Pocahontas
- Pokemon
- Political
- Postage Stamp
- Power Rangers
- Raggedy Ann
- Real Estate
- Religious
- Ripley's Believe it or Not
- Robotech
- Science Fiction
- Seven Years War
- Sherlock Holmes
- Simpsons
- Smoking
- Soccer
- Spanish-American War
- Sports
- Spy
- Star Trek
- Star Wars
- Strawberry Shortcake
- Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- Tennis
- Train
- Vietnam War
- War of 1812
- Wayne's World
- Where's Waldo
- World War 1
- World War 2
- Wrestling
- X-Men

This method gives you many possibilities to find certain specific games.
This encyclopedia reviews more than 10000 games and offers the user a variety of search mechanisms.

You can search by game genre:

- Abstract
- Board (Family Games)
- Card Games
- Collectible Card games
- Dice only Games
- Memory
- Party Games
- Role Play Games
- Skill
- Trivia Games
- War-games
- War-games 3D
- Word Games

But you could also search the database on a keyword index:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>007</th>
<th>Air</th>
<th>Airplane</th>
<th>Animals</th>
<th>Art</th>
<th>Astrology</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Battletech</td>
<td>Bet</td>
<td>Bird</td>
<td>Block</td>
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<td>Business</td>
<td>Capture</td>
<td>Car</td>
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<td>Detective</td>
<td>Diplomacy</td>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>Dragon</td>
<td>Educational</td>
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<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Elephant</td>
<td>Explore</td>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Farwest</td>
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<td>Fish</td>
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<td>Football</td>
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<td>Goside</td>
<td>Gotmore</td>
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<td>Horror</td>
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<td>Hyppo</td>
<td>Ice</td>
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<td>Knight</td>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Link</td>
<td>Lovecraft</td>
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<td>Makerow</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Marvel</td>
<td>Match</td>
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<td>Math</td>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Monster</td>
<td>Motorbike</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mouse</td>
<td>Movie</td>
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<td>Mythology</td>
<td>Napoleon</td>
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<td>Orient</td>
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<td>Planet</td>
<td>Politic</td>
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<td>Pyramid</td>
<td>Queen</td>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Religion</td>
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<td>Romans</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
<td>Scorehigh</td>
<td>Sea</td>
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<td>Shape</td>
<td>Sherlock</td>
<td>Ship</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
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<td>Spy</td>
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<td>Starwars</td>
<td>Stockmarket</td>
<td>Superhero</td>
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<td>Tiles</td>
<td>Tolkien</td>
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<td>Train</td>
<td>Travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tv</td>
<td>Videogame</td>
<td>War</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Worldwar</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It looks as if the combination of categories and keywords works very successful in order to find certain specific games.
The classification method in this archives is the result of dealing with board games for many years. The organization organizes a lot of meetings where people learn about the different available games. The integration of the archives within an academic teachers education results also in a specific didactic classification system.

1. **Large Subcategories**

A first efficient grouping was developed to show the rich diversity of games to a broad public that attends lectures and speeches. The present offer in the world of board games was divided into several larger subcategories:

- to play alone
- cocktail games
- bluffing games
- construction and dexterity games
- deduction and detective games
- educational games
- fantasy and role-playing games
- financial games
- memory games
- card games
- young child games

- child games
- war-games
- circuit games
- ambiance games
- human relation games
- play-in-a-row games
- tactical games (abstract)
- tactical games (theme)
- adult games
- mathematical games
- word and quiz games

However, the games are so different that one single, unambiguous, systematical classification of each game into one pure category seems to be impossible.

Every author of games studies the large amount of existing games and tries to select a brand new system based upon numerous game systems. Then he often created a new category.

As the Flemish Games Archives were expanding through the Flemish countries (Belgium and the Netherlands), and more and more people, clubs, reporters and researchers were visiting the Archives, the colleagues of the organization were being confronted more and more with questions as:

"I know that particular game and I would like to know what other games are similar. Can you give me a list of equivalent games?"

The systematic classification of the Deutsches Spiele-Archiv in Marburg was not sufficient anymore to give researchers a clear answer.

Their are more aspects that could characterize a certain game: playing time, level of difficulty, number of players, age to learn to play the game, a balance between luck and skill, and many more.

More and more we were convinced that an unambiguous classification was no longer preferable. A system of selection lists showed up.
2. **Selection lists**

We created 35 selection lists.

Each game can be assigned to six of those lists. This system gives the advantage that several aspects of a game can be respected. One certain game can hold clear bluffing aspects, but could also be easily considered to be a trade game (Adel Verpflichtet) or a war-game (Condottiere). Assigning the game to one category (bluff, trade or war) would hide other relevant characteristics of the game.

Here are the 35 lists we use (with two typical examples and the numbers of the other selection lists that have been assigned to the same game):

1. **Action Games**
   - sports and dexterity, you don’t sit calmly on a chair, in fact the chair might be unnecessary
   - Karambolage, Haba, 1995 (29, 32, 1)
   - Twister, MB, 1996 (32, 29, 1)

2. **Cocktail Games**
   - funny, simple, attractive, short game as an in between game or as a starter for a new activity - advisable as a warming up for a games evening
   - Tik... Tak... Boem!, Jumbo, 1999 (35, 2, 26, 29, 32, 11)
   - Halli Galli Junior, Amigo Spiele, 1998 (1, 32, 29)

3. **Bluffing Games**
   - pretending, not immediately revealing your intentions
   - Adel verpflichtet, Alea, 2000 (9, 21, 29, 7, 3)
   - Koehandel, Ravensburger, 1997 (3, 34, 20, 29)

4. **Board Games**
   - mostly abstract games on a board with figures that can be placed, moved or hit
   - Othello, Dujardin, 1980 (21, 31, 24, 4, 8)
   - Go Original, Jumbo, 1990 (4, 8, 21, 31)

5. **Conflict and Simulation Games** (COSIM)
   - they simulate historical, economic or military conflicts
   - Axis & Allies, MB, GameMaster Serie, 1984 (25, 33, 5, 14, 21)
   - Hannibal, Descartes, 1996 (5, 33, 14, 25)

6. **Cooperation Games**
   - working together is necessary to win: we win or we lose
   - Scotland Yard (uitgave 1996), Ravensburger, 1996 (21, 10, 6, 7, 9, 12)
   - Obstgarten (Boomgaard, Haba, 1986 (6, 22, 21)

7. **Deduction Games**
   - by logical thinking, combining and eliminating the possibilities finding the answer
   - Mastermind Challenge, Parker, 1995 (7, 8, 21)
   - Cluedo, Parker, 1949 (10, 7, 21)

8. **Thinking Games for two players**
   - tactics and strategy for two players (little or no chance factors)
   - Havannah, Ravensburger, 1979 (31, 8, 24)
   - Zértz, Schmidt Spiele, 1999 (8, 4, 24)

9. **Thinking Games for three or more players**
   - tactics and strategy for three or more players (little or no chance factors)
   - Eufraat & Tigris, 999 Games, 1997 (9, 21, 33)
   - Torres, FX, 1999 (9, 24)
10. **Detective Games**
   mob, thieves, detectives and policeman are involved
   - Cluedo, Parker, 1949 (10, 7, 21)
   - Een avondje moord (bruiloft), Hodin, 1995 (10, 33)

11. **Didactical Games**
   games with an extra didactical value
   - Multiplication Bingo, Trend enterprises, 1995 (11, 17)
   - Een reis door Europa, Ravensburger, 1995 (28, 11, 21)

12. **Diplomatic Games**
   collaborate in your own interest
   - Chinatown, Alea, 1999 (19, 12, 14)
   - Diplomacy, Jumbo, 1956 (21, 25, 12, 33, 3)

13. **Dice Games**
   dices determine the winner or are an important game mechanism
   - Last Chance, Ravensburger, 1994 (13, 29, 34, 18)
   - Tempo, kleine Schnecke!, Ravensburger, 1985 (28, 13, 22, 23)

14. **Experience Games**
   the theme of the game interrelates very close to the game experience; one identifies himself with the events, you feel as you are one of the pawns
   - Civilization, Compendium Games, 1980 (5, 19, 33, 14)
   - Formula Dè, 999 Games, 1997 (28, 14, 21, 29)

15. **Fantasy and Role-playing Games**
   they take place in a (mythical, futuristic) fantasy world and have often a written adventure as a basis
   - Dungeons & Dragons, TSR, Inc., 1974 (21, 14, 15, 33)
   - Magic, the Gathering, Wizards of the Coast, 1990 (20, 15, 21)

16. **Memory Games**
   being able to memorize is very important
   - Coco Crazy!, Ravensburger, 1998 (16, 2, 29, 23, 13)
   - Zicke Zacke Hühnerkacke, Zoch-Verlag, 1998 (22, 16, 11)

17. **Number Games**
   combine numbers, calculate, put in order,...
   - Multiplication Bingo, Trend enterprises, 1995 (11, 17)
   - Rummikub XP, Goliath, 1997 (21, 17, 31, 24, 9)

18. **Gambling Games**
   accept well calculated risks, accept the challenge of a gamble
   - Can't Stop, Franjos, 1981 (21, 13, 18)
   - Gambler, FX, 1998 (13, 18)

19. **Trade Games**
   earn money, play on the options market, buy or sell
   - Acquire, Schmidt Spiele, 1988 (21, 19, 9)
   - Modern Art, Hans im Glück, 1992 (3, 34, 19)

20. **Card Games**
   a deck of cards in your hand form the base of the game
   - Labyrinthe - le jeu de cartes, Ravensburger, 2000 (9, 24, 20)
   - Der Große Dalmuti, Amigo Spiele, 1993 (20, 2, 26, 29, 18, 21)
21. The Classics
exist for a long time, belong in every game library, international best sellers
- Haas en schildpad, Ravensburger, 1978
- Trivial Pursuit (Genus), Parker, 1995

22. Games for Small Children
reading and/or calculating are not a necessary skill
- Glückspilz (Geluks-Paddestoel), Selecta, 1999
- Würfelzwerge (Kabouters zoeken), Selecta, 1999

23. Short Time Games
they last at most half an hour
- Quarto!, Gigamic, 1992
- Simon (Senso), MB, 1996

24. Lay Down Games
you place playing pieces to create a row, a path, a combination on a game board or on the table
- Othello, Dujardin, 1980
- Tantrix, Mind Games Ltd., 1987

25. War-games
wars and battles are fought upon a game board
- Targui, Jumbo, 1998
- Shògun, MB, GameMaster Serie, 1986

26. Party Games
for a lot of people, often divided into several groups
- Brainstorm!, MB, 1998
- Strijd der seksen, Jumbo, 1998

27. Quiz Games
solve questions or unriddle brainteasers
- StripStrop, Deshker Productions, 1996
- Mindtrap, Spear's Games, 1993

28. Race Games
a track must be finished as soon as possible
- Mens erger je niet!, Jumbo, 1917
- Demarrage!, Jumbo, 1991

29. Ambiance Games
they present a lot of enjoyment, fun or suspense while playing
- 1000 Bornes (km), Dujardin, 1960
- Maffiosi, Parker, 1999

30. Solitude Games
to play (also) alone
- Katamino, Jeux PBM, 1992
- Take it Easy, FX, 1998

31. Play in a Row Games
playing pieces must form a row, series or a pattern
- Twixt (1962), 3M Bookcase Game, 1962
- Pente, Clipper, 1973
32. **Skill Games**
   you must perform an act correctly (build, place, mold, express, narrate,...)
   - Carabistouille, Hibou, 1990 (35, 26, 32, 29)
   - Pisa, Jumbo, 1985 (32, 22, 23, 30)

33. **Demanding Games**
   difficult to complex game rules to be studied and sometimes a very long playing time
   - Axis & Allies, MB, GameMaster Serie, 1984 (25, 33, 5, 14, 21)
   - 1835, Hans im Glück, 1990 (34, 33, 19, 14, 21, 9)

34. **Auction Games**
   to buy or sell by auction
   - Giganten, Kosmos, 1999 (19, 34, 14)
   - Modern Art, Hans im Glück, 1992 (3, 34, 19)

35. **Word Games**
   to form, guess or recognize letters or words
   - Scrabble, Spear's Games, 1949 (21, 35, 30)
   - Taboo Junior, MB, 1994 (35, 26, 29, 11)

3. **Thesaurus**

Keywords are also used to classify the games in our archives. Any combination of keywords can be assigned to each game.

Here's the list we use (at present):

- Aardrijkskunde (geography)
- Actie (action)
- Antiek (antique)
- Aperitief (cocktail)
- Astronomie (astronomy)
- Autoracen (car races)
- Avontuur (adventure)
- Behendigheid (dexterity)
- Bekende personen (famous people)
- Beroep (occupation)
- Beurs (options market)
- Bijbel en geloof (Bible en faith)
- Bluffen en gokken (bluff, gamble)
- Bouwen en wonen (building & living)
- Cassette or CD
- Combinatie (combination)
- Communication
- Computer
- Concentration
- Construction
- Cooperation
- Cosim
- Creativiteit (creativity)
- Criminaliteit (crime)
- Deductie (deduction)
- Denken (thinking)
- Derde wereld (third world)
- Detective
- Dieren (animal)
- Dinosaur
- Diplomacy
- Dobbelsteen (die)
- Domino
- Ecology
- Educatief (educational)
- Electronic
- Energy
- Erotiek (eroticism)
- Eten en drinken (food and drinks)
- Fabels en sprookjes (fable)
- Family
- Fantasy
- Fietsen (bicycle)
- Film & TV
- Financial
- Fotografie (photography)
- Geduld (patience)
- Geheugen (memory)
- Geluid (sound)
- Geluk (good luck)
- Gemotoriseerd (with engine)
- Geneeskunde (medicine)
- Gerecht (court of justice)
- Geschiedenis (history)
- Getalspellen (numbers)
- Gezellige sfeer (atmosphere)
- Golf
- Handel (trade)
- Heksen en Tovenaars (witch, magician)
- Horror
- Kaarten (cards)
- Kansspel (game of chance)
- Kennis (knowledge)
- Klassieke Oudheid (classical antiquity)
- Klassieker (classics)
- Klimaat (climate)
- Kunst (art)
- Kwartet (quartet)
- Landbouw (agriculture)
- Legspeellen (lay down)
- Letters and words
- Literatuur (literature)
- Lotto
- Luchtvaart (aviation)
- Magic
- Magnetism
- Markten (market)
- Media
- Meerderheid (majority)
- Middeleeuwen (Middle Ages)
- Moderne tijd (Modern Times)
- Muziek (music)
- Nature
- Oorlog en vrede (war and peace)
4. **Projects**

As the Flemish Games Archives work together with the Department of Teachers Education in Brugge (KHBO), we organize a lot of lectures for students and teachers. In order to select the appropriate games for each lecture, we organized the database with a few extra options.

Each game can be assigned to one or more projects:

- A trip around the world in 80 games
- A journey through history
- Social education
- Family Games
- Educational games for small children
- Language games (primary education)
- Language games (secondary education)
- Math games (primary education)
- Math games (secondary education)
- Motion education
- Relations
- Environment
- ...
5. An Example

Suppose you are asked to search for games similar to ‘Adel Verpflichtet’ (F.X. Schmid, 1990, Klaus Teuber).

1. If you still have a CATALOGUE of the game company F.X. Schmid - a company that no longer exists - you’ll find that the game is listed between games for adults. This classification doesn’t help you to find other games with a similar system.

2. If you study the classification of the ‘DEUTSCHES SPIELE-ARCHIV’ in Marburg, Germany, you will have a hard time to find out in which category the game would be listed. Is this a ‘combination and decoding game’ (in the group of thinking games) or a ‘strategic thinking game’ (within the same group)? Or would this be rather a ‘detective and policeman game’ (in the group of role-playing games)? If you have more doubts, you will certainly find more categories where this game would fit.

3. At ‘BOARD GAME GEEK’ the game ‘Adel verpflichtet’ is reviewed as a ‘bluffing’ game. This means that we can now browse the ‘bluffing’ category to find similar games. This is the result:
   Not bad for a start.

4. The website ‘GAMES WE PLAY’ puts our game in the list ‘Das Brettspiel’. That means that they consider this game to have the same qualities as Acquire, Barbarossa, Café International, Entdecker, Linie 1, Hexentanz, Manhattan, RoboRally and Zatre. This is not good at all. The games on the same list are so different that this is not the place to look for equivalent game systems.

5. The post order company ‘PLAY ME’ tells us that our game can be assigned to the following game systems: Bluff, Taktik, Auktion. If we could search the database they are using for those three words at the same time, the result would be a list of games that are equivalent to ‘Adel Verpflichtet’. Unfortunately this can’t be done on line. If you would like to perform such a query, you would have to search for each item one at a time, print the list(s) and compare the titles. But the system they are using is adequate. Multiple game mechanisms can be assigned to one game. This method works very well.

6. The post order company ‘FUNAGAIN GAMES’ works the same way. They describe our subject as:
   Categories: Board Games format, Bluffing genre, Set Collection genre, Art Collecting theme and special Adel Verpflichtet edition. But they go a step further. At the bottom of the web page you can search their database for the same categories at the same time. Unfortunately this query gives the same game as a result. Only searching the ‘bluffing’ systems gives you a list of 24 other games.

7. The ‘CLASSIC GAMES ENCYCLOPEDIA’ lists our game as a typical board game (Family game, usually have a board with a track, and some cards. Monopoly is a good example of this kind of game). Not very useful to start another search.
8. When we look at the classification system used by the 'FLEMISH GAMES ARCHIVES' we see that the game ‘Adel Verpflichtet’ is linked to several selection lists:

3 bluffing games  
7 deduction games  
9 thinking games for three or more players  
21 the Classics  
29 ambiance games

The lists #3 and #29 show the most characteristic elements of the game. Whoever plays the game, experiences the ambiance throughout the bluffing system. When you search the database by lists #3 and #29 you’ll find 17 games with similar game systems:

• Adel verpflichtet FX Schmid 1990 (9, 21, 29, 7, 3)  
• Adel verpflichtet Alea 2000 (9, 21, 29, 7, 3)  
• Capone Amigo Spiele 1994 (10, 3, 14, 19, 29)  
• Ciao, Ciao... Drei Magiër Spiele 1997 (3, 28, 29)  
• Familie Poen Ravensburger 1994 (20, 3, 29)  
• Flusspiraten Walter Müllers 1990 (3, 28, 29, 12)  
• Heimlich & Co Ravensburger 1986 (3, 28, 29, 9)  
• Karavaan Ravensburger 1990 (3, 28, 29, 19, 9)  
• Koehandel Ravensburger 1997 (3, 34, 20, 29)  
• Kohle, Kies & Knete Schmidt Spiele 1994 (3, 34, 19, 29, 12, 18)  
• Kuhhandel Ravensburger 1985 (3, 34, 20, 29)  
• Pfusch Heidelberger Spielev. 1992 (3, 10, 29, 14, 32)  
• Quartier Latin Daggit 1997 (20, 29, 3)  
• Rette sich wer kann Walter Müllers 1993 (18, 29, 14, 28, 3)  
• Safe & Partners Ravensburger 1986 (3, 28, 29, 9)  
• Sponsor Jumbo 1986 (3, 29, 28, 13)  
• Zum Kuckuck! FX Schmid 1997 (29, 20, 3, 18)

Anyone familiar with board games, will agree that this list gives you games with a similar game system as in ‘Adel Verpflichtet’.

6. Conclusion

The classification system we use in our database is one of the many ways to classify games. It’s not the system used by many researchers, but it proofed to be very successful for whoever visits our archives in Brugge.

The advantages are:

• Each game is no longer limited to one well defined category. It can be assigned up to 6 different lists.
• The 35 selection lists are clear defined. They give a very good survey of the different game mechanisms used in board games.
• It’s easy to introduce another list.
• One can easily find similar games. And that’s the most asked question we must answer.
• Searching the thesaurus and linking different lists gives us the opportunity to create new projects on demand.

The disadvantages are:

• You must know the different selection lists in order to be able to do some research on your own. You need a little support in the beginning.
• The search system is not yet available on the internet. The program we use (FileMaker Pro 5) can be used to publish the database as an online instrument, but we did not have the time yet to set things up. This should be done in the near future.