



LIZARDS & LIES

Rules

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Goal of the Game

A player's goal is to either spread or stop the spread of conspiracy theories online. At the end of your turn we will determine if you receive any points based on your character's specific goal (see below). In this initial release we outline a 3-round style of play, but you are welcome to play for longer.

There are 4 playable actors representing two teams (Spreaders and Stoppers). Below is a brief summary of their goals with a larger description of their play included later in the document.

Playable Actors

Conspiracy Theorists (Spreader): Conspiracy Theorists focus on communities where they have engagement to quickly spread a message across different networks. They build up support in one network quickly, or construct a chain of connections that grow throughout a system.

Edgelords (Spreader): Edgelords focus on choosing specific communities within which they sow dissent. They love to “double-down” on their posts and engagement, allowing them to repeat the cards they play for a massive impact.

Platform Moderators (Stopper): Moderators respond to reported content by moving through networks. Over time, they can gain funding and train algorithms that allow them to add more Moderators to the board.

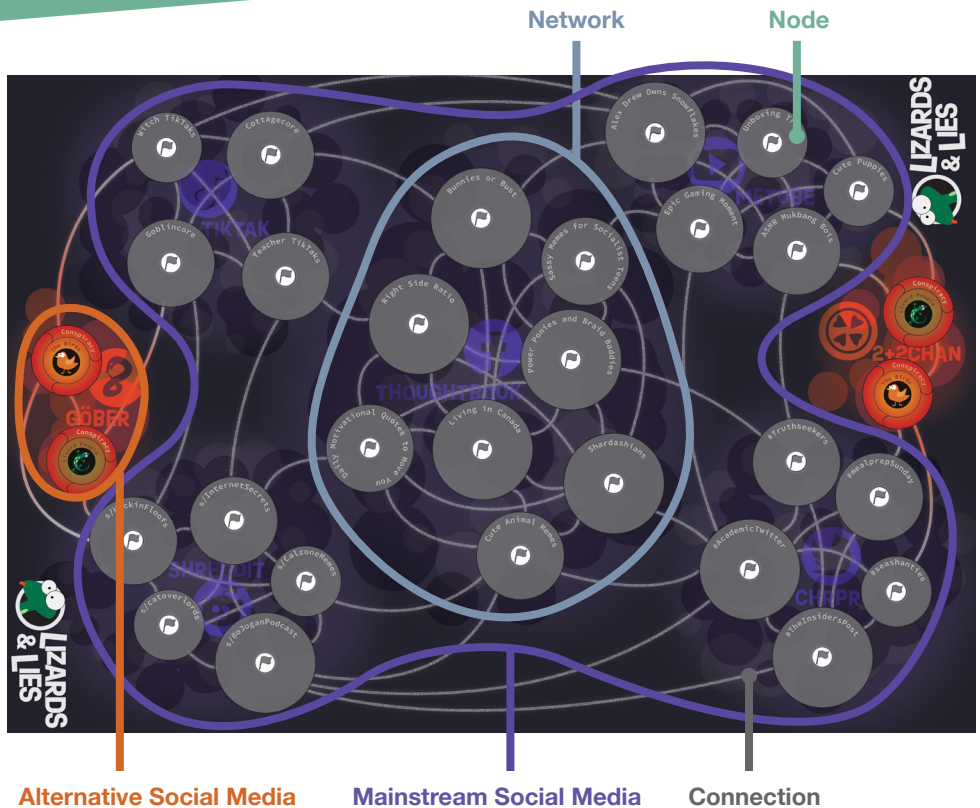
Digital Literacy Educators (Stopper): Digital Literacy Educators focus on slowly building up aware users who can naturally fight back. If given enough time, they can correct entire networks and help others learn necessary fact-checking skills.

Game Contents

- 1 Game Board
- 1 Scenario broken into 3 rounds of play/text
- 48 Player Character cards (12 for each playable character)
- 4 Player Boards (1 for each playable character)
- 4 Rules and Keywords reference cards
- 6 Moderator Meeples
- 50 Bird Conspiracy tokens
- 50 Lizard Conspiracy tokens
- 50 Critical Literacy tokens
- 8 Vulnerability tokens
- 15 Flag tokens



Description of Board



The game will be played on a game board. The board contains the following:

- 1. Mainstream SNS:** These are the “popular” social media sites and are represented by the networks of Thoughtbook, Chrpr, Shreddit, Tik Tak, and MeTube. Play occurs within these spaces.
- 2. Alternative SNS:** These are social media sites that are harder to govern and act as the “base” for the spreading of conspiracy theories. Cards do not affect these spaces (content cannot be removed or added to them).

3. **Networks:** These are meant to reflect specific platforms as mentioned in the Mainstream SNS. They are organized by a series of bubbles and clumped nodes. Some cards or events reference networks, so read carefully.
4. **Nodes:** These represent specific communities within a network and are visualized through circles on the board map. The majority of cards focus on interacting with nodes.
5. **Connections:** These are lines meant to show information pipelines between nodes.

Setup

1. Open and place the game board within reach of all players.
2. Choose and place the player boards in front of each player: either one Spreader and Stopper for a 2-player game, or all four for a 4-player. At this time a 3-player option does not exist. Stagger the boards around the table as Spreader -> Stopper -> Spreader -> Stopper.
3. Place the Bird and Lizard Conspiracy tokens in reach of the spreaders. Place the Critically Aware tokens within reach of the Digital Literacy Educator player. Place the Moderator and Flag tokens within reach of the Platform Moderator player.
4. If needed, place the reference cards within reach/visibility of the players.
5. Give each player their small deck of cards.
6. Place 1 Lizard Conspiracy token on the corresponding node within 2+2chan and Atekun.

7. Place 1 Bird Conspiracy token on the corresponding node within 2+2chan and Atekun.
8. On the board, add 1 Bird Conspiracy token to a node connected to 2+2chan. Then add 1 Lizard token in a node in a different network connected to 2+2chan. Repeat with Göber . If you are unsure where these are, see the map visual described on page 5.
 - a) If playing with a Platform Moderator, allow them to place 3 Moderators on the board. Each must be on a node in a different network, with one residing in the centre network (Thoughtbook).
 - b) If playing with a Digital Literacy Educator, have them place 1 Critically Aware token in the centre network (Thoughtbook). Then place 1 additional token in 2 different networks on a node connected to Thoughtbook.
9. Have everyone shuffle their decks and draw 5 cards. They can then choose to discard any cards and draw back up to 5. The discarded cards do not go back into their deck until they run out of cards.
10. Start playing with the following turn order:
Spreader -> Stopper -> Spreader -> Stopper.
Whichever characters you insert into that order is up to you, but it will remain for the rest of the game, so choose wisely!

Gameplay



Rounds:

The game will occur over 3 rounds played out through a specific scenario (in this case a political election). A round is as follows:

1. Read part of the Scenario Card (to set the scene)
2. Incorporate any effects from the Scenario Card
3. Each player takes a turn (see page 9)
4. Read the scenario round end condition (depending on board state)

Turns

Each player's turn is somewhat unique where they will go through a series of steps that follow the player boards. They typically follow the outline below:

1. Follow player boards:
 - a) Player-specific action (this is depending on the actor you are playing as)
 - b) Cards played from their hand
 - c) Discard any cards they do not want anymore
 - d) Redraw to hand limit (5 cards)
2. Determine points earned
3. Reactions by other players. (At the start of this phase, players must declare if they want to react—this is to avoid people reacting to reactions).

Basics of Gameplay

- As the game goes on, players will use their cards and specific actor abilities to add or remove different conspiracies and tokens from the game board.
- Each node has a maximum amount of tokens it can hold (4 of any mix of conspiracy tokens; 3 of Critically Aware tokens) and filling a node allows players to better spread (or slow the spread) of a theory.
- Players receive points at the end of their turn BEFORE reactions occur. Focusing on your objective to control a network or scrub one of conspiracy should be a driving force for your turn. In a four-player game, we encourage you to try and plan with your teammate an effective strategy to achieve your goals.

Key Rules/Terms

Buy In: Each node has a **maximum number** of tokens it can hold (4 for conspiracy tokens of any theory; 3 for Critically Aware tokens). When a player card or power **adds** a token to a full node (e.g., the 5th conspiracy token) a “Buy In” will occur. Instead of adding another token to the node, the player will add one to each connected node, if there is room. This can happen **once** per player card/power (so Buy Ins cannot trigger other Buy Ins).

Theories: Some cards will be differentiated based on the conspiracy theory they help deal with or spread. There are two theories: (1) that the lizard people are taking over and (2) that birds are government drones. Cards that reference a specific theory **can only be used to spread or stop that theory** and will not impact the other theory (i.e., a lizard-themed “Spread Conspiracy” card will add one Lizard token to the engaged node and one Lizard token to a connected node). If the card does not specify a theory when adding tokens, the player can choose either theory.

Reactions: At the end of each player’s turn there is an opportunity for the other players to react. Each player may only react **ONCE** between turns. Additionally, you cannot draw back cards after using a reaction, and reactions cannot be used on your turn. At the start of this phase, players must declare if they want to react—this is to avoid people reacting to reactions.

Alternative SNS: These nodes and networks are purely visual to help you reference the token colours for each theory. No player cards can affect them (some scenarios in the future might).

Engaged: Some cards will reference an engaged node. This is any node that has at least one of your tokens (even if someone else also has tokens on it).

Connected: This refers to any node with a visible connection to the selected node.

Vulnerable: A node marked as vulnerable will gain an additional conspiracy token the first time one is added to it. Once this happens, remove the Vulnerability token.

Tokens



Flags: These are primarily used by Moderators and help them remove content from specific nodes.



Conspiracy Theory: There are two types of theories, each represented by a different token (either a bird, or lizard image). These are primarily used by the conspiracy theorists and represent users believing in specific theories.



Critically Aware: These are primarily used by Digital Literacy Educators and reflect users who are applying critical analysis to content. They can help remove content from nodes.



Moderator: These represent users who determine what is and is not allowed in a community. Used by Platform Moderators, they roam around the map to check and remove content.



Vulnerability Token: These mark communities as vulnerable, which means the next time a conspiracy is added there it adds one more.

Scoring

Points are determined at the end of each player's turn and are based on specific criteria depending on whether they are playing as spreaders or stoppers.

4-player game:

- Conspiracy Theorists and Edgelords receive points for each Mainstream SNS network where they control **all** nodes. Each of the outer networks is worth 1 point (Chrpr, MeTube, Tik Tak, and Shreddit). The inner network (Thoughtbook) is worth 3.
- Platform Moderators and Digital Literacy Educators receive points for each Mainstream SNS network with **no** conspiracy tokens. Each of the outer networks is worth 1 point. The inner network (Thoughtbook) is worth 2.

2-player game:

- Conspiracy Theorists or Edgelords receive points for each Mainstream SNS network where they control **all** nodes. Each of the outer networks is worth 2 points (Chrpr, MeTube, Tik Tak, and Shreddit). The inner network (Thoughtbook) is worth 3.
- Platform Moderators or Digital Literacy Educators receive points for each Mainstream SNS network with **no** conspiracy tokens. Each of the outer networks is worth 2 points. The inner network is worth 3.

Player Character Full Descriptions:

Each of the playable characters has their own deck of cards, player boards, and tokens that they specifically use in the game. Each follows a different play pattern outline below:

Spreader: Conspiracy Theorists

Deck: 2 Reactions, 10 Actions

Play Description: Conspiracy Theorists rely on existing content in order to spread their content. Using their power alongside their cards, they can quickly work towards a “Buy In” within specific networks and regions. Alternatively, their cards let them build chains of support. To play them, focus on avoiding where Moderators and flags might be able to stop you, and see where you can build up support to spread your message.

Tips: They hold powerful reactions that allow them to negate some of their losses when content is removed, however conspiracy theorists rely on at least some support to exist in a network, so make sure you always have somewhere to add your tokens.

Spreader: Edgelords

Deck: 12 Step Disruptions

Play Description: Edgelords alter how their turn takes place by doubling down on actions in order to repeat behaviour. Unlike others, an Edgelord's cards alter the steps on their turn. They can play disruptions to change the steps written on their player board (completing the played card instead). However, they can only play one card per step, relying on their power to "double down" on what they played and repeat the action.

Tips: Edgelords have the power to add content to any node on the board. Being strategic in how they use this power can cause massive swings in support and proliferations of users that stoppers cannot properly respond to. Work with Conspiracy Theorists to create Buy Ins from existing support, or create spaces for them to engage with.

Stopper: Platform Moderators

Deck: 1 Reaction, 11 Actions

Play Descriptions: Platform Moderators have powerful tools for removing content but require set up to be successful. On your turn, use flags and Moderators to remove content with your cards

OR set up to have your 3rd step (evaluate Queries) do the work for you. Be aware of where you place and move your Moderators, as without their presence you cannot stop conspiracy. Additionally, recognize which theories you can and cannot stop on your turn and work with your cards to be as effective as possible.

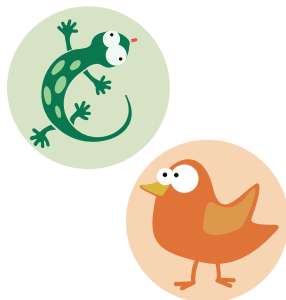
Tips: Do not hesitate to use your power as its effect can be just enough to stop conspiracy in its tracks.

Stopper: Digital Literacy Educators

Deck: 2 Reactions, 10 Actions

Play Description: Digital Literacy Educators focus on building “aware” users and then activating them (using cards) to remove content. Your removal cards, while powerful, are few and far between so think wisely about when you might use them.

Tips: Your ability to traverse the board is limited, so be wary of where you choose to build up your tokens.





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