

Spot it!

A small bit of history of the creation of SPOT IT: SPOT IT is over 50 symbols, 55 cards, 8 symbols per card, and there is always one and only one matching symbol between any two cards. But how does it work? SPOT IT is based on a principle of interaction according to which two lines always have a single point in common.

In 1976, Mister Jacques Cottereau had the idea of creating a generalization of a famous "fun mathematic" puzzle, named Kirkman's Schoolgirl Problem, or the Ladies' Problem, which is the following: "15 young ladies from a boarding school go out each day for a walk in rows of three. How can we proceed so that each of them only ends up in the company of each of the others once?"

With the help of techniques developed from theories of error correcting codes, he built a few structures which generalized the problem. These structures are well-known by mathematicians under the name of "incomplete balanced blocks."

Based on the special properties of these structures (the principles of intersection and of optimization), Mister Jacques Cottereau successively created two games by "dressing them up" in an unconventional way.

The first of these games, a "strange retriever" was published in the "Le Petit Archimède" and "Pour la Science" magazines (The Young Archimedes, and For Science, respectively).

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In the Spring of 2008, Denis Blanchot discovered a few cards from the "game of insects", created decades earlier. He is struck by the genius behind the intersection mechanic and works with Jacques Cottereau to turn it into a "real" game.

For Denis Blanchot, the "good points" style patterns must be rethought as they are too complex and prevent a reflex-style party game. The icons must allow for quick identification, and must be more playful and easily understood. Fluidity is required. At the same time, the cards are too few (31) and contain too few figures (6); the game moves on to 57 cards containing 8 figures to finally get the real feeling of play, meaning a projected number of combinations in the seven digits. The rules of the game must still be written ... In short, there's an entire extra layer of creation yet to be done.

Many prototypes and playtests, notably with children, are done by Denis Blanchot, who also, on his own, takes the additional step of getting in touch with publishers. The Play Factory team would finally end up working with Denis Blanchot to publish the final form of the game.

In early Fall 2009, SPOTIT, as it is known today, is launched!