Invasion of the Cyber Trolls

JFF
JFF – Institut für
Medienpädagogik

Competences

INFORMATION AND DATA LITERACY	COMMUNICATION COLLABORATION	SAFETY

1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering data, information and digital content

1.2 Evaluating data, information and digital content

2.1 Interacting through digital technologies

2.2 Sharing through digital technologies

2.3 Engaging in citizenship through digital technologies

2.4 Collaborating through digital technologies

2.5 Netiquette

2.6 Managing digital identity

4.3 Protecting health and well-being

PROBLEM SOLVING

5.3 Using digital technologies creatively

Tags

- Trolls
- Hate Speech
- Digital board game
- Discussion culture on the Net
- Resistance to provocation
- Recognition of other opinions
- Empathy
- Teamwork
- Strategy development

Time frame

2 – 8 hours

Audience

- Young people between the ages of 12 and 21
- 6 – 24 participants (3 – 4 young people per group) + 1 game leader

Overview

The workshop uses game-based methods. The central component is a digital board game (*Invasion of the Cyber Trolls*) for youth groups about identifying and preventing Hate Speech and handling it adequately. Hate Speech on the Net is a great challenge in digital life. Young people in particular suffer from this kind of destructive behavior: firstly because a considerable part of their lives takes place on the Net and secondly because they have to contend with many uncertainties due to their development processes. Accordingly, media educators are called upon to take preventive and supportive action.

The digital board game *"nvasion of the Cyber Trolls* makes such a contribution:

This game is about ridding the social networks of "trolls". These beings - here depicted as proverbial trolls - symbolize people on the Net who make disparaging and provocative statements towards others. Thus, *Invasion of the Cyber Trolls* contributes in a playful-metaphorical way to the identification of Hate Speech and to the responsible reaction of it.

The digital board game can be played on tablets or computers. Once the game has been finished the participants, discuss which solution they have found to deal with the trolls.

Context

Invasion of the Cyber Trolls is suitable for school classes as well as for child and youth work. The workshop offers special added value for teenagers and young adults who are currently involved in the topic of Hate Speech. However, mindfulness and empathy are required, as negative experiences that have been made in this context may be triggered again.

The workshop materials contain texts such as: "*Beware, this troll knows what he is doing! He deliberately spreads lies and actively makes sure that other people feel bad. He even goes beyond the boundaries of the Internet for this and could become a real danger.*"

Furthermore, the evaluation asks about personal experiences in the following and similar situations:
- Personal insults by known persons
- Intentional dissemination of rumors / lies
- Insults made to groups of people / society

The *Invasion of the Cyber Trolls* workshop was originally developed by the Open Knowledge Foundation but adapted for Play Your Role. Unless otherwise noted, all materials can be used under the Creative Commons License CC-BY 4.0, OKF DE. The Open Knowledge Foundation has compiled all the information you'll need to conduct the workshop yourself. An overview of all materials, a detailed schedule as well as teaser videos and ready-made information material for printing yourself can be found at demokratielabore.de/workshops/invasion-der-cybertrolle/ (German) and playyourrole.eu (English).

The central component is the digital board game of the same name, available in open source in German. The English version is in development. Unless more localized versions become available, we recommend using the game only with pupils who have a sufficient level of German or English proficiency.

Required media

Venue:
- 1 small room per group of 4 or separate areas in a large room
- Tables and chairs, projector
- Drinks, snacks
- Presentation material (paper, pens, markers, tape, adhesive dots, etc.)
- Tablets/Computers + WebApp "Invasion of the Cyber Trolls"
- Flipchart to note down the values for groups and the whole workshop

Media:
- One tablet, mobile phone or laptop per group
- Board game and App
- Ninja handout
- Target handout
- Play material

Objective

The goal of the game *Invasion of the Cyber Trolls* is to free the social network from "trolls". To achieve this, the team members have to solve tasks and confront opponents who confront them with hostilities and nasty sayings. Instead of classical fights, however, these can only be defeated by appropriate behavior. To do this, it must first be considered how to recognize and deal with "trolls" on the Net, how to prevent Hate Speech and how to argue well in debates.

The system of the board game is simple enough to be learned and understood very quickly, but still provides incentives and a framework for the players' actions. An App on a tablet guides players through the game and the encounters, in which several solution strategies (e.g. discuss, be nice, report, ignore) are possible. Players present their strategies to each other after the game is finished and examine them for effectiveness in real life.

Preventive work is done by raising awareness of the topic: young people who have taken a critical look at Hate Speech are no longer at such high risk of expressing themselves in an inappropriate manner. In addition, these young people learn strategies for defending others and for self-protection when provoked, they acquire knowledge about appropriate behavior, learning to recognize other opinions, teamwork and strategy development.

SEGMENT 1:   Introduction and overview

- Introduction: Awakening the desire to play
- Warm-up: Teamwork, change of perspective and group formation
- Game preparation: Getting to know play material, agreement on roles:

Methods:
- Getting to know each other
- Warm-up game/icebreaker "Ninja" variation with theme (Superheroes instead of ninjas)

First the game leader explains briefly what it's all about (role play to save a kingdom from trolls) and gets an overview of the group by means of the following questions:
- Who is often online/offline?
- Who uses different roles online?
- Who is active in forums, messengers, networks?
- Who knows what a troll is?

"In Internet slang, a troll is a person who starts flame wars or intentionally upsets people on the Internet by posting inflammatory and digressive, extraneous, or off-topic messages in an online community (such as a newsgroup, forum, chat room, or blog) with the intent of provoking readers into displaying emotional responses and normalizing tangential discussion, either for the troll's amusement or a specific gain."

Wikipedia contributors. (2020, July 4). Internet troll. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 23:11, July 22, 2020, from en.wikipedia.org/w/index. php?title=Internet_troll&oldid=966031376

- Who has encountered trolls?

It is then explained that today is about how to deal with trolls and save an entire kingdom in the process.

Afterwards - as a warm-up game and "icebreaker" - the movement game "Ninja", which is widely used among young people, is played. Instead of ninjas everyone slips into the roles of their favorite superheroes. The game leader proactively supports the role play.

Afterwards the participants come together in groups of 4 persons. Each group takes a seat at a table with the board game and all its elements, including the App (preferably on a tablet - PC or mobile phone are also possible). When the start button is clicked, the App guides the participants through the game: first, the participants are asked to agree on the roles and to prepare the corresponding figures and character sheets.

SEGMENT 2:   Game

- App introduces the game: Story and rules
- Core game: Practical experience, group cohesion, recognizing trolls and dealing with them

Methods:
- App
- Digital board game

In the App you are welcomed and introduced to the following situation: "The Cyber Empire is overrun with hate and rude trolls and must be saved."

The game starts and the App explains what you can do in the turn.

Basic: The middle of the board must be kept clear. Small trolls emerge from four nearby rooms and move towards the middle. If you meet them, you have to make decisions about situations that are explained via the app. If the players get into the rooms, they can try to free them from the "head troll". To do so, they can use their skills to gather various information and then decide on different behavior patterns. The game is over when all rooms are freed.

SEGMENT 3:   Evaluation

- Game evaluation: Playful reflection
- Reference to non virtual life: Reflection
- Workshop evaluation: Final round

Methods:
- Game-based reflection
- Transfer: Transferring gaming experience to real life
- Final round

In the third phase of the workshop, the character sheets are evaluated. The players have previously noted which behaviors were tried out against small and large trolls and which were successful how often. These behaviors are then added up per person, per group and ultimately for all of participants.

The following basic questions are then discussed:
- How did you decide?
- Which behaviors do you think work well and why?
- Do your simulated actions also work in real life?
- What would you do differently in real life?
- Do you know of other troll species?
- How can you recognize their behavior?
- Are there other ways of acting?

After that, targets on the themes of the game are handed out for each group. These are each quartered and marked with key points, such as "Direct experience // Do I know // Did I have in the environment // Do I find it very/less bad". Now all participants are asked to stand up and put

a cross on each target for their answer. Then each group evaluates its target with the help of the following guiding questions:

- Why is the outcome of this workshop like this?
- What would be the estimated result for all of Germany?

Finally, the groups briefly present their results based on their own target. The questions are read out and the result of the discussion is summarized. This is followed by a short joint discussion and reflection:

- What do you take away?
- Which open questions remain
- What was good / not so good?

In a nutshell

Invasion of the Cyber Trolls is a game-based, digitally supported workshop for youth groups for the identification and prevention of Hate Speech and the adequate handling of it. The central component is the digital board game of the same name.

To support the transfer of knowledge from the game to everyday life, classical pedagogical methods such as guided group discussions and other methods of reflection are also used.

Sources/Links

The Itinerary *Invasion of the Cybertrolls* is based on the game and worshop concept *Invasion der Cybertrolle* CC-BY 4.0, OKF DE. Download the materials and app:

- *Invasion der Cybertrolle* (original German version): demokratielabore.de/workshops/invasion-der-cybertrolle/
- English version: playyourrole.eu
- Ninja: ultimateninjacombat.com

Instruction Manual of the Game
Invasion of the Cyber Trolls

Introduction

We know them all: trolls on the Internet. In this game, you'll have to work together and, with a little thought and luck, prevent the cybertrolls from taking over the Internet completely. Protect your savespace and make the Internet a place of cooperation!

Preparation

Get pens, message boards, characters, the troll guide and character sheets ready. To play you also need a webapp: demokratielabore.com/workshops/downloads/invasiondercyberrolle/app
You can access it with any device that can display web pages. On mobile phones and tablets it also works offline, if you save it as an App on the start screen.

Start of the game

Select a character, pick up the corresponding character sheet, write your name and, if desired, your nickname on it. The person with the role of "scholar" should already take a closer look at the troll guide to ensure that you are prepared for the head troll battles. When you start the app, you can add your own swear words and (de)activate the read aloud option under settings. Then press start and you will receive detailed instructions on how to set up the game board and how the individual moves work.

Aim of the game

Your task is to protect your safe space and at the same time get to the social media rooms where you have to defeat the purple head trolls. Along the way you will fight normal little green trolls and receive messages that can be both positive and negative.

Procedure

The person who last published something on a social platform is allowed to start, after that it goes on in turn. A move works like this:

- Touch your character in the app
- Move up to 2 fields
- Stand or land on a field with a troll: troll fight
- Stand or land on a field with a message tile: message
- Stand or land on a door to a social media room where there is another person: open the room
- Ready? Tap your character again. Was it all four players' turn: troll's turn

Move

You can move 0, 1 or 2 squares. But only horizontally and vertically, not diagonally. You can move to all squares, even if they are already occupied by others. The safespace counts as one large field. Actions (message, troll fight, open the room) can be triggered before or after your steps:

e.g. troll fight ⬜ move 1 field back ⬜ message ⬜ move 1 more field back ⬜ open the room.

Message

If there is a message tile on your field, you can open the message with the message button. Good or bad things can happen. Sometimes you will be asked to place the tile in the bottom bar of your character sheet so that you don't forget its function. Afterwards, the position of a new tile is always digitally diced. If there is already a tile on the field, roll the dice again. If all tokens are gone, no more tokens can be placed.

Green troll fight

If there is a green troll on your field, the fight will start immediately. Press the troll fight button and then decide how you react to the troll attack. Others can help you, but you must decide.

IMPORTANT: DOCUMENT EVERY VICTORY AND DEFEAT ON THE CHARACTER SHEET WITH THE CORRESPONDING SYMBOLS! THIS IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE EVALUATION.

Open the room

When two figures are on the door panel in front of a social media room, the main troll fight begins. Press the "open the room" button and set which two figures (click on the figures) open which room (click on the room) and fight all 4 together.

Use your special skills for this: open the left side menu and select one of your two skills to find out more about the troll. The more you know about the head troll, the easier it is to look up its type in the troll guide and get tips on how to deal with it. Then choose one of the four ways of dealing with the troll and live with the consequences.

IMPORTANT: DOCUMENT EVERY VICTORY AND DEFEAT ON THE CHARACTER SHEET WITH THE CORRESPONDING SYMBOLS! THIS IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE EVALUATION.

Troll's turn

When it was everyone's turn, all the small trolls (who are not standing on a field with a game piece) move forward along the arrows on the game board towards safespace. They will not move to fields where other trolls are already standing. They line up one after the other. Afterwards the head trolls call for reinforcements: roll the dice twice to see from which space new small trolls appear. Has a head troll from a room that has been rolled already been defeated? Are the two spawn fields, where the trolls were supposed to appear, already occupied? Lucky – no new troll will appear from there!

Tips

It makes sense for two people to run in one direction in order to get a social media room as soon as possible. Social media rooms that have been freed from the head trolls do not call for new little trolls!

- During the head troll fight, read exactly what the troll has done, use all your skills, try to find out what kind of troll it is with the help of the guide, and above all, discuss together
- If there are already 3 trolls (whether green or purple) in the safe space, it is best to guard the last field with a figure, so that another troll doesn't jump in by chance. Then you have lost!
- Small trolls cannot get past you. You can block their way while

moving. But be careful: until you have defeated them, you will not be able to get away either!

- There may be more than one game figure on a field. The advantage of being one of the good guys is that you can help each other to defeat a troll

Note on the game

The troll guide can also help with small trolls, but it does not necessarily have to. Trolls are and remain unpredictable. They are not always fair and therefore this game is not. Stay tuned anyway!

End of the game

You've won when all 4 purple head trolls have left the social media rooms. You have lost if the head trolls or the small green trolls have occupied all 4 fields in the safe space.

Evaluation

Now add up all data on all character sheets, i.e. how many times was lost or won with "ignore", "discuss" and "be nice / report". Discuss afterwards which tactic was used to win the most against trolls, which was used to lose the most, and whether this procedure actually works in reality.

What else have you observed? Have you encountered similar situations in reality? How can you recognize troll behavior as such?

Remix!

All materials and the App (demokratielabore.de/work-shops/invasion-der-cybertrolle) are freely available under the Creative Commons License "CC-BY 4.0, OKF DE" for downloading, printing, modifying and extending.

Characters Sheets

Healer

Ability against the head trolls:
1. Ask friends:
2. Ask parents:

Draw the symbols in the circles to count how many trolls you have encountered and what you have done:
- Ignore
- Be nice/ report
- Discuss

Defeated trolls:
+1 message +1 running
+ 2 running   – 1 green troll

Lost against trolls:
+1 message - 1 running
- 2 running   +1 green troll

Put the tiles here if you have a matching message:
- suspend the next round
- go three steps next round
- take only one step next round
- paralyse one troll at the end of the round
- immune against negative consequences

Seeker

Ability against the head trolls:
1. google the troll
2. check his page

Draw the symbols in the circles to count how many trolls you have encountered and what you have done:
- Ignore
- Be nice/ report
- Discuss

Defeated trolls:
+1 message +1 running
+ 2 running   – 1 green troll

Lost against trolls:
+1 message - 1 running
- 2 running   +1 green troll

Put the tiles here if you have a matching message:
- suspend the next round
- go three steps next round
- take only one step next round
- paralyse one troll at the end of the round
- immune against negative consequences

Fighter

Ability against the head trolls:
1. confront troll
2. ask troll friendly

Draw the symbols in the circles to count how many trolls you have encountered and what you have done:
• Ignore
• Be nice/ report
• Discuss

Defeated trolls:
+1 message +1 running
+ 2 running   – 1 green troll

Lost against trolls:
+1 message – 1 running
– 2 running   +1 green troll

Put the tiles here if you have a matching message:
• suspend the next round
• go three steps next round
• take only one step next round
• paralyse one troll at the end of the round
• immune against negative consequences

Scholar

Ability against the head trolls:
1. search for articles
2. search for a website

Draw the symbols in the circles to count how many trolls you have encountered and what you have done:
• Ignore
• Be nice/ report
• Discuss

Defeated trolls:
+1 message +1 running
+ 2 running   – 1 green troll

Lost against trolls:
+1 message – 1 running
– 2 running   +1 green troll

Put the tiles here if you have a matching message:
• suspend the next round
• go three steps next round
• take only one step next round
• paralyse one troll at the end of the round
• immune against negative consequences
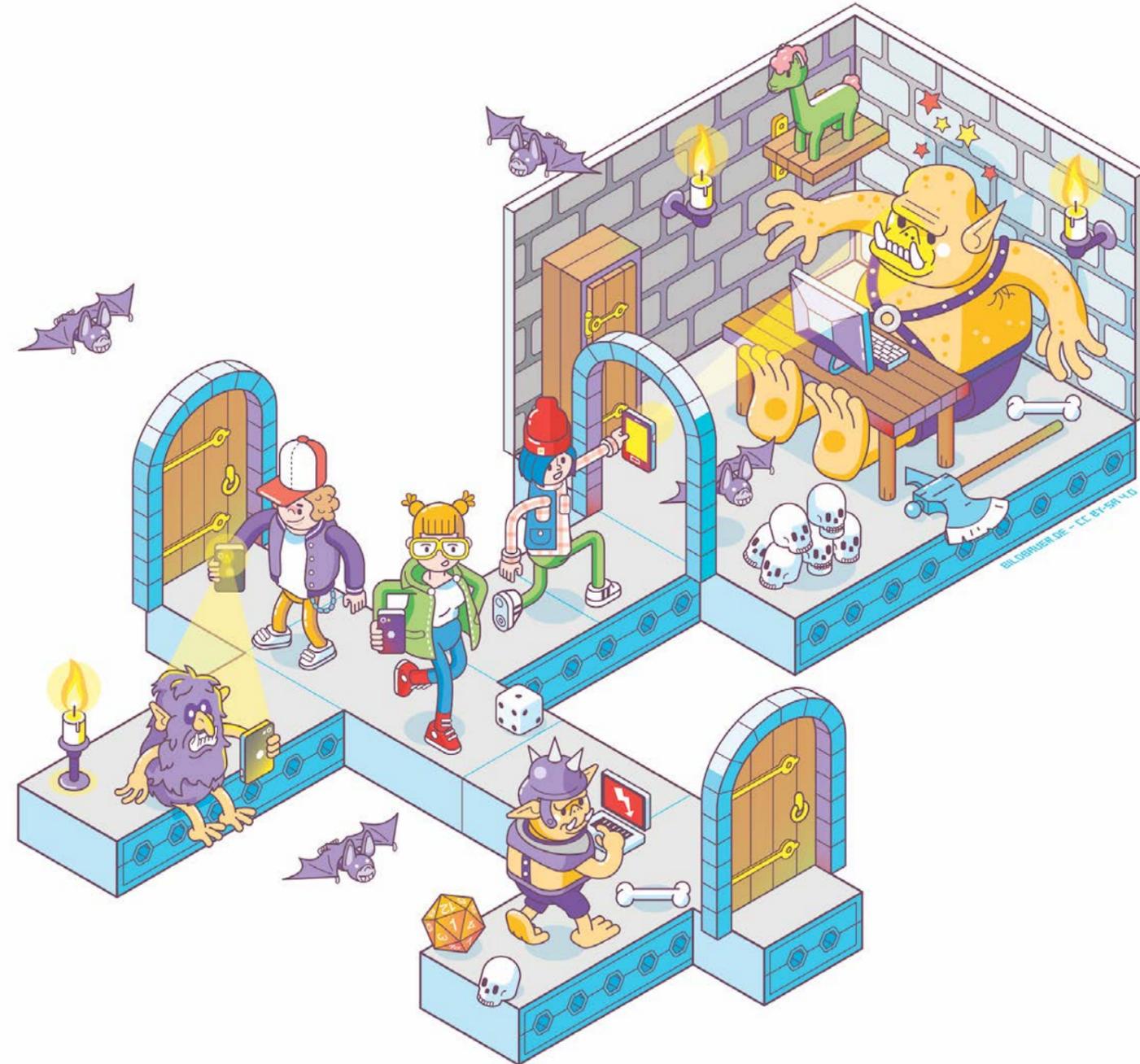
The Guide of the Cyber Trolls

With these records you can find out which level have the head trolls to decide on the right tactics! if you know the level, you can eliminate the worst decision from the beginning!

Level 1 Pranksters and insulters. These trolls only live for reaction and want you to get really annoyed. They simply enjoy it and actually want to cause aimless trouble. Staying nice and friendly rarely helps here. Then they only think that you are easy prey!

Level 2 This troll pretends to be very serious about the matter, but he digresses on every topic and doesn't really listen. He usually does everything to be right. He is quite a know-it-all about this, even though he would never admit it. Discussing against him rarely makes sense. He likes to ignore the facts.

Level 3 The nasty guy who sometimes starts out as a joker, but then moves on to the personal level. He attacks people directly and is a little more dangerous, because he often disguises himself as someone who just wants to tell the truth. His only goal is to hurt other people. Ignoring him completely is not a good idea. Often, he does not stop on his own again.

Level 4 This troll has made it his business to break something. He wants to cause as much harm as possible to a community, thing, group or person and does everything to keep on badmouthing them. Sometimes he doesn't even realize what he is doing and rarely listens to good arguments. Only a few let themselves be talked to. If you're just nice to him, he might think he's in the right.

Level 5 Careful, this troll knows what he's doing! He deliberately spreads lies and actively makes other people feel bad. He even goes beyond the boundaries of the Internet and could become a real danger. Never face that troll alone. Arguing wildly will definitely backfire here.

Target Circles

Mark for each area how much you agree with the statements.

Personal insults by strangers
- ☐ I have already experienced that
- ☐ I have experienced that in my environment
- ☐ I think it is terrible
- ☐ I know how to handle

Personal insults by known persons
- ☐ I have already experienced that
- ☐ I have experienced that in my environment
- ☐ I think it is terrible
- ☐ I know how to handle

Reject other opinions / do not engage in discussions
- ☐ I have already experienced that
- ☐ I have experienced that in my environment
- ☐ I think it is terrible
- ☐ I know how to handle

Insulting people / social groups
- ☐ I have already experienced that
- ☐ I have experienced that in my environment
- ☐ I think it is terrible
- ☐ I know how to handle

Unintentional but naive spreading of rumours
- ☐ I have already experienced that
- ☐ I have experienced that in my environment
- ☐ I think it is terrible
- ☐ I know how to handle

Intentional spreading of rumours / lies
- ☐ I have already experienced that
- ☐ I have experienced that in my environment
- ☐ I think it is terrible
- ☐ I know how to handle

The Ninja Rules

1. Players form a circle, each standing at arm's width away from each other.
2. On the count of "3... 2... 1... NINJA!" all players jump into ninja poses. Choose your pose wisely!
3. Randomly choose a ninja to begin.
4. On their turn, each player is allowed to make one swift ninja attack. KAPOW! Thi can involve your whole body. HAYA! Eliminate others by striking their hand - the wrist is not included. You must stiffly hold the position you end your move in.
5. The next player is allowed to move once you have have finished your attack.
6. If you are attacked by another player, you may dodge using only your arms.
7. When only two players remain, they begin the final duel. The final two ninjas stop fighting, bow, and stand back-to-back. On the count of "3... 2... 1... NINJA!" they jump into poses. The ninja with the boldest pose goes first and play resumes normally. The game ends when only one ninja remains.

The Ninja Code

1. Be ridiculous. The "winner" is not necessarily the most celebrated player; playing with style is more important.
2. No pullbacks. You must remain in the position you finished your move in.
3. Real ninjas fight with honor. If your hand was struck, you're out!
4. The only referee is the crowd. Impress the crowd and they'll take your side in disputes.
5. Have fun. There will always be another game of Ninja!