Computer & Video Game Genres

CSCI 130 – Computer Game Design

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List of Genres

- **Action**
- **Adventure**
- **Action-Adventure**
- **Role-Playing (RPGs)**
- **Simulation**
- **Strategy**
- **Casual**
- **Massively Multiplayer Online (MMOs)**

Action genre

- One of the earliest and simplest types of video game
  - Most arcade games were action games

- Action games require quick reflexes and careful timing to conquer obstacles

- Goal of most action games is to overcome enemies without being destroyed yourself

- Real-time game play

Action sub-genres

- **Sub-genres of Action games**
  - Platformers
  - Shooters
    - First-person shooters
    - Third-person shooters
  - Racing
  - Fighting

Action games

Platformer:
Super Mario Bros.

Racing:
Burnout Paradise

Fighting:
Tekken 6

Shooter:
Crysis

Adventure genre

- Another early vide game type
  - First appeared as text-adventure games

- Embraces a slow, cerebral game play style

- Game play involves:
  - Exploration
  - Puzzle-solving
  - Collecting items
  - Strong story elements

- Turn-based game play

- Only a few adventure games released each year

Myst

Action-Adventure genre

- A hybrid of the Action and Adventure genres

- Combines:
  - the fast, real-time action of Action games
  - the story elements and puzzles of Adventure games

- Has become increasingly popular
  - Action games such as Shooters are beginning to add stronger storylines and story trees, turning them into Action-Adventure games

Action-Adventure games

Uncharted 2

God of War II

Legend of Zelda:
Ocarina of Time

Role-Playing Games (RPGs) genre

- Originates from the *Dungeons & Dragons* pencil-and-paper fantasy role-playing game

- Players control one character or a small group of characters
  - players often form a close attachment to their characters, particularly if it's a single character (an avatar)

- Characters improve as they progress through the game
  - characters gain experience from battles and challenges
  - experience causes characters to advance in skills and abilities

- RPGs usually have strong story lines
  - often involving a "save the world" theme
  - setting may be fantasy, sci-fi, or real world

RPG games

Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion

Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic

Dragon Age: Origins

Simulation genre

- Simulation games attempt to replicate real-world experiences

- Such simulation games place players in situations they would likely otherwise not experience

- Simulation games should follow real-world rules as much as possible
  - players expect those rules to exist, and
  - they will employ their understanding of the impact of those rules when dealing with situations in the game

- Game play may be real-time or turn-based

Simulation sub-genres

- Vehicle
  - these games create highly accurate experiences in operating in vehicles such as airplanes, ships, tanks, etc.

- Process (Construction & Management)
  - these games simulate complex systems and processes, such as building & managing cities, civilizations, armies, railroads, etc.
  - these games are considered *constructive*, involving building and creating, rather than destructive
    - similar games that also involve destruction/conquest fall into the *Strategy* genre

- Sports & Participatory
  - these games allow players to compete in sports or other events, allowing them to "play" as a participant in the event

Simulation games

Vehicle:
Flight Simulator X

Process:
The Sims 2

Process:
SimCity 4

Sports:
Madden NFL 08

Strategy genre

- Strategy games have their origins in classic games such as chess, Risk, etc.

- Game play typically has the player managing a limited set of resources to achieve a particular goal

- There are generally two main components in strategy games:
  - *Resource management*, which includes constructing buildings and units
  - *Resource decisions*, which involves deciding how to put the resources into actions

- Most strategy games are militaristic, involving combative play and competition

Simulation sub-genres

- **Turn-based Strategy**
  - early Strategy games were predominantly turn-based
  - the "turn" interval is beneficial to strategy games, allowing players time to think through their strategies

- **Real-time Strategy (RTS)**
  - a later alternative to turn-based Strategy games, which uses real-time play
  - game play is much more action- and reaction-based, with much less time for players think through strategies
  - the real-time play places the player under constant pressure to balance the time spent managing the various resources and the troop building, movement, and combat
  - performing such multi-tasking effectively provides another degree of "strategy" in the game play

Strategy games

Turn-based:
Civilization IV

Turn-based:
Field Commander

RTS:
Starcraft

RTS:
Age of Empires III

Casual Games genre

- Games played by casual gamers
  - games tend to be short
  - no story line
  - they provide relaxing mental stimulation

- Such games are most commonly played on
  - Web browsers
  - Cell phones

- Includes:
  - Puzzle games
  - Casino games
  - Card games
  - Word games
  - Board games

Casual Games

Puzzle game:
Tetris DX

"Card" game:
Jamdat Mahjong

Board game:
Chess EveryWhere

Casino games:
Hoyle Casino

Massively Multiplayer Online (MMO) genre

- In MMOs, players play simultaneously with up to hundreds or thousands of players

- Massively multiplayer online (MMO) games have become very popular in recent years

- Reasons for the popularity of MMOs:
  - social interaction (on a large scale)
  - ability to play both
    - vs. the computer (PvE)
    - vs. other players (PvP)
  - the ability to play in teams (against computer or other players)

- MMORPGs (role-playing MMOs) started the MMO market, and still dominate it

- Other genres also exist as MMOs, including:
  - MMOFPS   (First-Person Shooter)
  - MMORTS   (Real-Time Strategy)
  - MMO Sports
  - etc.

MMOs: Pay-to-Play vs. Free

- The major MMOs are pay-to-play
  - players first purchase the game
  - then pay a monthly fee   (e.g. $15/month)

- Example Pay-to-Play MMOs:
  - World of Warcraft
  - EverQuest
  - Lord of the Rings
  - Eve
  - City of Heroes

- Also numerous "Free" MMOs
  - players may play for free   (no game purchase or subscription fees)
  - players <u>encouraged to purchase</u> extra items to increase their competitiveness in the game
    - extra resources or units
    - special items
    - temporary skill or ability boosts
  - most game play in free MMOs is PvP (player vs. player)

MMO games

MMORPG:
World of Warcraft

MMORPG:
Aion

MMORTS:
Battleforge

Sports MMO:
Football
Superstars