

Indiana Bones

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Indiana Bones is a turn based puzzle game about outsmarting the simple AI to retrieve the key and escape the game level. Having predictable AI and turn based movement takes away any chance out of the game, making it a true puzzle game. The player is in full control of the events of the game and its outcome. Although in its simple form at the moment, there is only one solution to each level, a more complex level system can be implemented to give the game more depth, since the game heavily depends on level design.

The first game I am going to compare to Indian Bones to is a simple web game called turn based pac-man. A self-explanatory title, turn base pac-man has player collect all pac pellets in a level to advance while being chased by ghost that move on alternating turns. Being turn based and having predictable movement gives the player full control of the game's outcome just like in Indiana Bones. In turn based pac man the player also has the power to undo moves, in case they have gotten themselves into an unsolvable situation, saving the time of restarting the level. This function is really nice to have in a puzzle game since now the player can work the solution out in their head as they go, and a mistake does not disturb the flow of the game as much, since it can be undone. Indian Bones does not have this feature yet, and may not have it. Since the player is encouraged to take the game a tad more seriously, a mistake costs them time and the inconvenience of having to restart the level. It also requires the player to know exactly where and when they made the mistake, or else they might take steps back and retry even in a doomed situation and get stuck in a loop.

Braid has a very cool twist on the turn based movement, while still giving the player total control of the game but also giving the game a smoother feel. The game moves forward in time when the player moves forward, freezes when he stops and goes backwards when the player does. This still gives the player control in a new way. The game also used keys to unlock different parts of the game, the player must venture through the level retrieve a key, then backtrack to the end of the level. This creates a cool two stage obstacle course, backtracking forcing the player to reface all the obstacles but backwards. Indian Bones does the same thing, the player must retrieve a key then get to the exit, which often can make the player know to solution to getting the key, but be lost in trying to finish the level. In both Braid and Indian Bones this gives the player two objectives instead of one. If the player only had to reach the exit they would have a very linear approach to the level, but with a key they must deviate out of their way to reach something, it also gives the game designer a predicable level state. The game developer knows that at one point the player is going to be standing in the exact spot where the key is, and can design levels around that fact.

Indian Bones is meant to give the player full control of what the game does, the only variable is how the player moves. This leaves nothing up to chance resulting in a very strict cause and effect type of game. The player makes a mistake and the puzzle become unsolvable. Giving the player a straight forward level can make things a little too easy. Forcing them to deviate from the linear path to the exit forces the player to jump over an obstacle before reaching the exit. Having the player have full control of the game gives them a true puzzle, one they have to solve in their own time, without rushing them through gameplay.