

DGM 2221

Hite, Colin

2015 Fall UVU

Platformer Deconstruction

Super Mario Bros is a 1-2 player action adventure platformer. In the game you control Mario as he moves from left to right on various levels. Mario and the player respectively try to save Princess Peach by defeating the antagonist Bowser (her captor). If a friend plays, they take control over Luigi and independently navigate the levels on rotation with player one after their in game death. The game can be played either way however, and the goal is the same.

Within super Mario bros there are six mechanics in place. Firstly the player can navigate the 2D space by jumping, walking, running, swimming, or climbing. Second there is a level progression where the player moves from left to right. After reaching the end of the level the player moves onto the next one until they save the princess on the final level. The third mechanic is the environment. Within each level there are different obstacles that Mario must navigate around. These can be enemies, pits, platforms, projectiles and more. This is not easy because the player is also being timed, which is the forth main mechanic. If the player fails to reach the end of the level in time they die. Death in the game is determined by lives. If the player loses all of their lives then it is game over. This death and “game over” system is the fifth major game mechanic. However, there is also the sixth main mechanic of interacting with enemies and the environment. Mario can interact in a variety of ways like breaking blocks that he jumps

into and killing enemies that he jumps on top of. Different blocks and enemies have different properties though, so experiment and try new things with all of the game environment.

Super Mario Bros is known as sort of a "hallmark" game for defining collectables and power-ups. Within the game there are only five however. There are two collectables which are the 1-Up Mushroom and coins. The 1-Up mushroom gives the player another life, similarly after collecting 100 coins you gain one extra life. In the game there are also three power ups these include the Super Mushroom, Fire Flower, and the Super Star. Super mushrooms give Mario one more chance to get hit by enemies before dying and grow the player one more square taller. Fire Flowers also grow the player and provide one extra hit but, they also allow for Mario to throw fire ball projectiles at enemies as well. Last but not least the Super Star power-up grants Mario the ability to become invincible to all obstacles except pits. All of the collectables and power-ups give the player the chance to make the game a little bit easier. Lastly they are all transferable between levels except for the Super Star.

What do all of these power up and mechanics do? They make the game challenging and fun. It forces the player to learn what every item and enemy does in order to complete the level and ultimately the game. Even if you get a game over and have to restart the game you still feel compelled to figure out what lies at the end of the next level. There is also the fact that every movement is incredibly crisp and responsive

which makes platforming much easier and more fun. While playing it, I personally got excited about what comes next in the level. Because if I died too much before I reached it I would have to start from the beginning of the game and work my way all the way back to where I was! So if you have a friend and an afternoon it's definitely worth picking up to experience all of the competitive game play and laughs that can happen. And always remember to have fun!