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EECS 494 W16

The Legend of Zelda is an action-adventure game released by Nintendo in 1986 for the

Famicom and later for the Nintendo Entertainment System in North America. In this game you

play as Link, a young boy trying to rescue Princess Zelda from the evil Ganon. To do this you

scour the land of Hyrule to find eight pieces of the Triforce of Wisdom which will give you the

power to defeat Ganon.

The game is played from a top-down perspective and includes real-time combat and

puzzle solving elements to progress through several dungeons and navigate a vast overworld.

Along the way the player collects several items to aid them on their quest such as the sword,

boomerang, bow, and bombs, each one of the items having special abilities that allow the player

to solve different puzzles.

The Legend of Zelda has been extremely influential to the gaming industry, spawning

several sequels and spin-offs in its own franchise as well as being considered a spiritual

precursor to the action RPG genre of games. Not only that but it is often considered one of the

first games with an open world and having non-linear gameplay. One of these games that

spawned from the wake of The Legend of Zelda is Diablo, a game developed by Blizzard

Entertainment.

Diablo is an action, hack-and-slash, RPG in which the player journeys through many

different, randomly generated dungeons in order to level up their character, collect items and

complete quests before eventually going to Hell to face the demon Diablo. Here we will

compare the game Diablo to The Legend of Zelda.

The first thing to note when comparing the two is the type of game. Obviously both

games are dungeon crawlers with the intention to collect items to prepare for later dungeons,

however, the main gameplay differs quite a bit. Diablo is a hack-and-slash style game which means that, in comparison to Zelda, Diablo has gotten rid of the puzzle elements in the dungeons, opting to make the combat system much deeper and much more complicated. Diablo also decided to make the dungeons much more the focus of the game making the hub world very simple compared to Zelda's much larger and more involved hub world. Making the hub world much smaller, however, meant that the dungeons were much more complex, hiding many more secrets and being much larger. In addition to the dungeons being larger and more complex, they were also randomly generated in Diablo, giving each player a different experience for each dungeon.

In addition to the dungeons being quite different in Diablo from The Legend of Zelda the playable character has also been changed quite a bit. In The Legend of Zelda there is only one choice of character, Link, who is the same for every playthrough but in Diablo the game gives you 3 different classes to chose from who all have different stats and abilities. This is to deepen the combat system even more by giving the players several different play styles to choose from. Diablo has also added character leveling which is something that the Legend of Zelda games have never had.

Finally the last big comparison is the number of items in Diablo vs Legend of Zelda. Diablo has a huge collection of items and spells that a player can collect and use in the game, many different types of swords and weapons, whereas Zelda only has one item per type. Because there are so many different items in Diablo none of them are really necessary to complete the game but it gives the players more choice in terms of the gameplay style. In The Legend of Zelda, almost all items are necessary to complete the game and so in this sense it's not as much a choice the player gets to make but more like a puzzle element has been completed.

Really what the differences between the two games come down to is where the focus of the gameplay is. Diablo is much more focused on the combat system and giving the players many different options for how to handle combat, while The Legend of Zelda is much more focused on the puzzle elements, making the player figure out the single way to complete the game, instead of giving many options giving them the choice of how they want to complete the game. While these two may seem different you can still see many of the similarities in that both games are about journeying around the world trying to find items and secrets to help you on your quest.

Another interesting game to compare to the Legend of Zelda is one of its own sequels, Ocarina of Time. The core ideas of the game remains unchanged; the goal is still to explore the world, collect rupees, defeat dungeons to gain new tools/weapons, etc. However, the fundamental difference between the two games is the perspective. Legend of Zelda is a 2.5D top down game, with one forced perspective. Ocarina of Time is the first game in the Zelda series to feature 3D graphics. While this switch opens up a whole new realm of possible gameplay and puzzle features, it also presents numerous design challenges and decisions that must be faced. The main challenge the player faces in this new perspective is learning how to control not only the player, but also the camera angle.

To make this challenge a bit easier, the designers added in Navi and Z targeting. Navi is a small fairy that will hover around various enemies/objectives and change color in order to let the player know they should point the camera in that direction. Z targeting is even more helpful, allowing the player to simply press a button to automatically snap the camera either forward, or lock onto a nearby enemy. The result of these additions to the game is a combat system that is actually a good deal easier to play than the original Legend of Zelda, for better or worse. In the original game, the challenge of combat comes from precisely timed attacks more so than from

aim. The puzzles in Ocarina of Time are much more varied, since the 3D environment allows for a whole new dimension of exploration. Dungeons tend to have multiple floors, something that wasn't seen nearly as much in the original game. At the same time, though, they are much more guided; the first time you encounter a new challenge, Navi practically walks you through it. In the original game, the first time you encounter the bladetrap room can be quite a frustrating experience.

Finally, the game Wanderlust: Rebirth is reminiscent of many mechanics present in the original Legend of Zelda. The game uses the same 2.5Dish top-down perspective, with a similar melee combat mechanic. The most interesting and different feature in Wanderlust, though, is the 4 player online co-op. The game is far newer than Zelda, however it still manages to capture that old school feel of a game through the gameplay style and classic aesthetic style. The inventory system in Wanderlust is a fair bit different; none of the items you find are required to complete any of the adventures or dungeons, as they are in Zelda. Instead, they provide you with various stats and abilities to make your character more powerful. In this way, the puzzles in Zelda are much more unique, requiring you to make use of the different weapons you find in various dungeons. However, Wanderlust is able to implement puzzles that involve multiple players, which can result in some very interesting gameplay.

The combat system in Wanderlust is far more interesting than Zelda's (to be expected from a newer game). While creating a character, each player chooses a class, which grants their character a specific set of skills. In Zelda, the player progresses from fairly useless (not even being able to attack) to a swiss army knife of different tools and weapons by the end of the game. While the build up is interesting the first time, it doesn't do anything to add to the replay value of the game like Wanderlust does (you can play through as each of the different classes for a unique experience each time).

Overall, The Legend of Zelda was a unique and revolutionary game for its time, providing a platform for many other games to build upon its legacy. As a standalone game today, it's still very playable, but through iteration over the years it has been vastly improved in sequels and spin-offs.