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| Assignment 2  Section 2 |
| Crystal Methods |
| Braun, Eric  Keller, Colton  Hart, Adam  Leatherman, Garrett  Losinski, Tyler |

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| Genre:  Zombie Splatter, Top-down Action Survival  Slam Drift 2, Top-down Action Survival  Date Submitted:  February 10, 2015 |

In the game Zombie Splatter, challenge and conflict come from the numbers and different types of zombies, the upgrade system, and reaction times. In the beginning, there are very few different zombie types and numbers, which makes it easy to predict what the zombies will do and how to maneuver around the map. As the game progresses, it becomes harder and harder to kite the zombies and safely kill all of them, increasing challenge and conflict. The upgrade system provides a simpler challenge because it forces you to decide what is the most important for your survival, specifically what should you spend your limited cash and experience points on. As a top-down shooter, this game requires quick reaction time and on-the-fly decisions. These are the three main ways that Zombie Splatter create challenge and conflict.

In the game Slam Drift 2, challenge and conflict come from the controls, the cops chasing you, and the desire to go further in the game. The game is a top-down driver/racer that doesn’t allow you to stop moving forward. This, combined with a control scheme that only allows for right, left, or straight with no sharper or shallower turning makes it difficult to navigate the map successfully. On top of that, there are cops chasing you throughout the map, forcing you to react quickly. This is compounded by the game rewarding you for performing difficult maneuvers around the map. Thus, the desire to do well in the game also increases the challenge and conflict in the game.

Zombie Splatter Strengths: It is a very open map and you are able to see everything that is going on in the map at one time, which is very helpful for knowing when and where the zombies are coming from and an estimation of how long you have before you need to shoot them dead.

Zombie Splatter weaknesses: Although the whole map is visible it is very difficult to survive as long as you would like because of the fact that there are no obstacles that the zombies would have to get around to get to you. Adding this aspect to the game would be very helpful to the player and add enjoyment.

Slam Drift 2 Strengths: The obstacles around the map make a difficult challenge and give the player the opportunity to try to find the best paths in order to survive and not crash into anything. The power ups around the map also give the player a fun edge and keep them interested in coming back to play more, which you always want in a game.

Slam Drift 2 Weaknesses: The amount of the map that is shown at one time is sometimes very inconvenient, as you cannot see where the cops are coming from and it is difficult to know where obstacles are that you could crash into and blow up. They may come out of nowhere and end your game before you know it.

Common strengths: level design in both of these games is great in the fact that it allows a realistic type gameplay style. Both games allow you to see a more realistic example of how it would actually be like in the situations in the games.

Common weaknesses: both games make it very hard to operate and do what you need to with limited space and it would be helpful to have more space to navigate even if it wasn’t much more space.

Comparisons:

Both games contain AI that exhibit a similar behavior. The AI have a one track mind to come in contact with the player in order to inhibit the failed game state. Zombie Splatter's zombie npc's and Slam Drift 2's police cars both carry similar functionaries in terms of causing this game state. They also have similarities with in-game bonuses. Slam drift 2 offers powerups to help combat surrounding cop cars, while Zombie Splatter offers a similar variety of powerups to combat the zombies. These powerups also only benefit the player temporarily, giving the player the incentive to use these powerups sparingly and when only deemed necessary.

Contrasts:

The objectives, at their core, are very different in comparison to each other, even though they both must both be fulfilled in order to progress. In Slam Drift 2, the player in required to achieve a certain amount of points in order to progress to the next level. While in Zombie Splatter, the player is required to beat each level linearly by killing all of the zombies that the level spawns. The rules also contrast in how they are displayed to the player. The beginning of Slam Drift 2 has a legend describing all of the different items you can find within the game. Zombie Splatter, however, is much more reliant on the player figuring it out. Zombie Splatter also has a point system in the form of in-game money, but it has another level of functionality in allowing the player to purchase upgrades and weapons, while Slam Drift 2 has no such system.

In Slam Drift 2, there is a short opening comic that sets the scene. The unnamed protagonist calls his friend Tommee and tells him that the cops have the city surrounded, and that Tommee (who is in a helicopter) does not have time to airlift him out. Tommee suggests using his old Humvee, but warns the protagonist that its breaks do not work. The player is then put directly into the game, where the protagonist must steer an always-driving Humvee around a city as police appear and begin to chase. It is clear from the simple story that the protagonist must drive without stopping (as there are no breaks), should not crash, and must not be caught by the police. The map is finite and very small to begin (the police have blocked off the city), but as one acquires more points through surviving and destroying police cars by tricking them to crashing into walls and dropping hazards, the roadblocks on the map start to disappear and more of the map is revealed. There does not appear to be a win condition or any sort of story progression.

In Zombie Splatter, the player is given the plot through short, single-sentence blurbs at the beginning of each level. In the beginning, protagonist Bob is enjoying his lawn when zombies begin to appear, and Bob gets his gun and begins to defend. Naturally, as the game begins, you are controlling Bob as you gun down zombies and survive the horde. The progressing levels follow Bob as he ventures out into the city to find just what is going on – the setting changes, and tougher, more plentiful hordes of zombies are encountered as Bob advances. Killing zombies give Bob experience points and money, which can be used to periodically elevate RPG-like stats to assist level progression.

Both of these games use extremely minimal characterization in their narratives, or perhaps, lack thereof. They revolve around the concept of a loose cannon protagonist squaring off against a horde of constantly-spawning opponents, where the objective is to out-maneuver the enemies and use weapons to survive. The characters and setting are introduced extremely quickly and no questions or explanations are given to start the player off before dropping them into the game. This puts all the focus on the gameplay, putting in just enough of a story to justify the outrageous conditions.

Unlike Slam Drift 2, there is somewhat of a progressing “plot” in Zombie Splatter that is revealed as levels are cleared, though they are still extremely minimalistic and seem to serve only as an excuse to justify different levels. Zombie Splatter is also the only one of the two to feature a protagonist that can “level up” and improve with play, where Slam Drift 2 only features achievements gained from attempting the same thing over and over.