Curtin University

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET
Electronic or manual submission

UNIT CODE:	GRDE2105
UNIT TITLE:	Game Design Introduction
YEAR:	2015, Semester 2
ASSIGNMENT:	Project 1 – Game Analysis
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DEGREE ENROLLED:	Digital Design
DUE DATE:	25/9/2015

SECTION 1. Game description and background.

1: *Mirror's Edge* is a first person action adventure platform game following the story of faith, a courier runner who uses parkour techniques to evade an oppressive government which has built a 'perfect' utopian society derived from a totalitarian concept whose core ideals encourage the enforcement of their law, no matter the consequences.
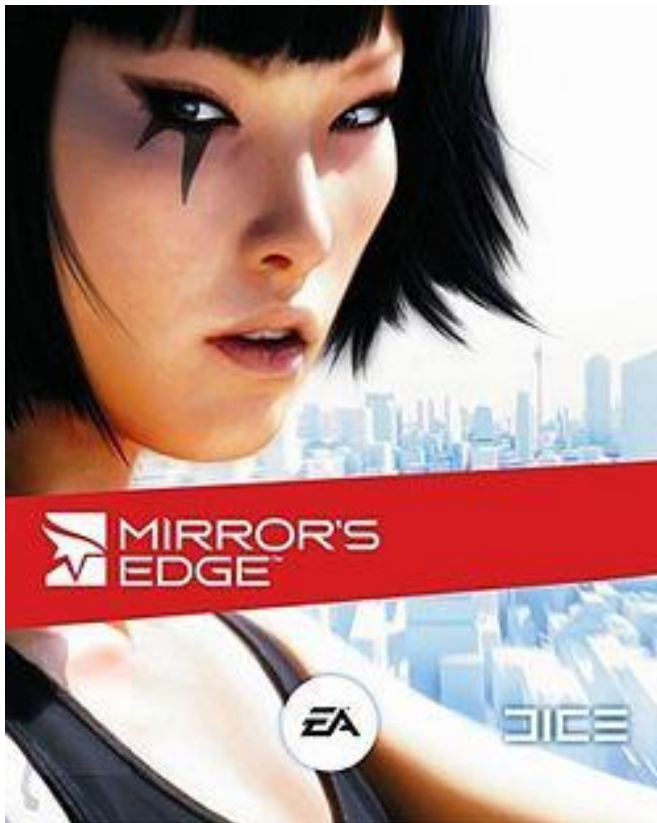
2:

Figure 1 Game title cover

Figure 2 Gameplay concept

Figure 3 Game environment

3: mirrors edge is undoubtedly one of the greatest gaming experiences I have ever witnessed. When this game was released in 2008 I instantly related to the fundamentals of this game on a personal level. The oppressive nature of this game combined with the parkour mechanics of using the surrounding environments as conduits to flow / project you path of escape really inspired a sense of freedom & escapism values in me. No matter how crowded & dark the world may seem, there is always faith in one's own ability to survive in our conditioned and controlled society. These concepts I identified with as core survival attributes which I assimilated into my personality during incredibly difficult periods in my life, asides from standard teenage angst and an uncontrollable sense of change for the worst, I adapted the story of faith as a beacon of light, I found myself delving into this game for the both a sense of escapism literally, and metaphorically. This game saved my life.

4: One of the defining instruments Mirror's edge uses to captivate it's audience is it's stimulating sense of immersion. The game places the user vision through the first person perspective, opting over the more traditional 3rd person perspective common within the gaming industry at the time of its release. *"It's an interesting spin, if not wholly new, and it has a way of immersing you as you speed towards your destination." (gamespot, 2009)* Mirrors edge enhances the dynamic of motion and therefore extra visceral visual experience by using this intuitive method which encourages player's instinctual behaviours by simulating an experience akin to real world mechanics to discover the 'flow' of the games level design. Additionally mirrors edge compliments this by integrating arm, leg and torso movements into the field of vision which contributes to an authentic playing experience.

5: Mirror's Edge is a video game developed by EA DICE, published by Electronic Arts first released on November 11, 2008.Originally it was designed for PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360. Later, on January 13 2009 a Microsoft windows version was released driven by Unreal engine 3. (Wikipedia, 2015) Ben Cousins, creative director of DICE announced in 2007 that their studio was branching away from their massively popular battlefield franchise in search of something new *"something fresh & interesting."*(Gamesindustry.bizz, 2007) expecting a need to diversify away from proven mainstream success games titles.

Mirror's edge is renowned for its distinct visual themes and styles, the game relays on basic colour theory returning to a more defined strong use of primary colours to texture its environments. Examples being exterior environments being predominantly white, sliver, blues, yellows & oranges where trees would lack foliage, appearing completely white instead of their natural colours, this is a deliberate design choice. Head Producer Own O'Brian certifies these colour choices as purposeful design implementation. "allows the player to focus on the runner vision guidance, as well as serving as a health meter; the colours become less saturated as Faith starts to take damage." (wikepedia.org, 2015)

During the games construction DICE partially developed a new engine known as Frostbite, however Mirror's Edge use's Epic's Unreal Engine 3 instead of the new game engine as it remained untested. Due to mirrors edge unique lighting system a intuitive new system was required called 'Beast' established by Illuminate Labs in partnership with DICE. This lighting system had been developed particularly for the software's ability to accentuate light complimenting the different art style of mirrors edge by sanctioning reflections of light as well as colour. To combat eerier feeling of simulation sickness a common by-product found in many first person genre games, mirrors edge designed a small reticle which they positioned centre screen. The purpose of this reticle was to help aiming and focal points, which helped prevent ill desired dizzy spells. The game also deploys a 'runner vision' which guides the player to the nearest objective or local point of interest. The player can also unique identify with this vision as all these objects are coloured in red hues, instantly exaggerating their location in contrast with the games otherwise slimline coloured environments.

A demo release was placed on the PlayStation store in October of 2008, followed by Xbox LIVE Marketplace during the same month. After the release in November DICE announce their gold status achievement celebrating by announcing PS3 & XBOX 360 versions would be shipping to retailers worldwide on November 13th. The following year Mirror's edge found it's debut on the PC with Microsoft Windows versions allow support for enhanced physics on smoke and glass materials.

As a complementary story package DICE in 2008 announced a short comic titled *limited-run* book series adaptation of the game to be published in collaboration with DC Comics-WildStorm. This story was also written by *Rhianna Pratchett*, the very same writer artists who created *Mirrors Edge*.

In November of 2008 Electronic Arts Australia commissioned an innovative advertising campaign in which flyers equipped with the same colour scheme prominent in mirrors edge were posted around the city containing headlines such as '*Do you have the Edge?*' with team members boasting similar messages on their shirts. They also held live media events, street parkour events, to generate initial interest and help seed the thoughts of parkour to the Australian community. The posters would lead the viewers to online sites containing reaction tests creating from in game footage, which helped spread a firsthand experience to the Mirrors Edge excitement and experience. *"The mirrors edge campaign here in Australia was so incredibly successful, it attained global recognition within the electronic arts worldwide" (Mardon, 2011)*

SECTION 2. Analysis of Rules and Strategies.

1. a simple description of a games can be defined as:
    "A game is a rule-based system with variable and quantifiable outcomes, where different outcomes are assigned different values, the player exerts effort in order to influence the outcome, the player feels emotionally attach to the outcome and the consequences of the activity are negotiable." (Jesper, 2003) By observing the Mirrors edge through these disciplines we can define how the game is constructed.

Mirror's edge educates the player of the ruling system via the menu screens with operational player controls, these are explicit rules describing how to play the game. Other menu & loading screens contain helpful hints which display constitutive rules, providing formal logic which dictates the underlying game rules i.e hints describing how best to avoid combat sequences, encouraging the player to out manoeuvre the enemy as opposed to strait out combat as this a fundamental aesthetic and rule element within the game. The game also eases the player into it's rule mind set with a prologue training level at the beginning of the game. This level provides the player with experiences to understand these ruling systems by given them environments to test the players capabilities, this level also provides a chance for the player to educate themselves with implicit rules, such as the effects of gravity, i.e if faith falls off the ledge of building the player will hit the ground on impact and die, it's through these experiences that unwritten rules are learnt.

On a mini scale mirror's edge does implement a variable outcome by placing the player in environments constructed with the illusion of choice, presenting the player with many obstacles and pathway choices in which the player may reach it's end goal for the area from a variety of multiple exits thereby providing a playing with a level by level sense of variable outcome scenarios.

However as the game story is linear based, although the flow and level design may deceive you otherwise; they're really only is quantifiable outcomes in mirror's edge. Either Faith is captured or killed during her levels, each one with progressing senses of difficulty, or the player reaches the level end goal, as the game is designed overall in a linear story fashion this eventually equates to the player finishing the game by reaching that end goal area on the last level, achieving victory of the game & thereby producing a quantifiable outcome. Exceptions of this may include downloadable extra content, however there again these levels all eventually have an end goal area yet these levels are time based arenas which do produce variable outcomes by allowing players to reach their end in

the fastest possible time, producing variables in both allotted time played strategies used to achieve this. All this downloadable content is outside the story of the game & therefore not relevant.

To an extend mirrors edge does incorporate a sense of valorisation by portraying the 'runners vision' in a standout red hue the players are able to quickly identify preferred or suggested routes to maintain the fastest possible momentum within the game as opposed to slower, user oriented exploratory pathways. The game also deliberately hides intelligence packages in the form of yellow messengers' bags, once located these bags then add extra story content often in the form of symbolic spray paints on walls close to these bags, adding a sense of political world satire. Additionally these bags once collected also count as achievement awards (a status system implement by the PlayStation 3 network) which often contribute to unlocking game trophies.

Player effort is another defining attribute common in all game principles. Mirrors edge engages its audience and their contributing effort by unlocking new levels and areas to explore once the player reaches their goal, thus progressing the player through the linear story content as well. The game in addition with its runner vision mechanic also rewards the player for their skills and movements used to bypass obstacles by increasing the speed of Faith upon successful completion of more difficult actions such as wall running and extended jumping followed by smooth body rolls into faster running paces. Building momentum affects how far you can jump, wall run, slide etc the longer you maintain this momentum, the harder to stop the player becomes, the game encourages the player to seamlessly chain these individual moves together to keep their speed high. Actions such as shooting, strafing, turning, running uphills & going backwards all slow the player down & thus create some environments unreachable due to lack of speed. Through this player effort action based reward system mirrors edge maintains a state of fast fluid game play.

Attachment is the key to any good story. Mirrors edge implements an array of methods to maintain their audiences capture, and maturing interest for the development of the game. Firstly mirrors edge is developed with a surreal sense of real. A simulated game in the way that when we move, there are repercussions, one of the most authentic and prize winning experiences about mirrors edge is it's ability to enable their audience to relate to Faith's movements. "*Even our most athletic and graceful specimens – and you're controlling one in Mirror's Edge- take heavy steps and run out of breath. Our vision shakes as we sprint, heads bobbing up and down. When we jump… we're leaping off leg muscles and propelling a human body. It's messy, precarious." (Plunkett, 2013)* players were able to gain attachment to this game by comparing it's mechanics to real world situations, we all want run, to flow through city's, to feel free, I believe this to be one of its strongest attachment quality's. *"Mirror's Edge felt real, and that's what made it so special."(Plunkett, 2013)*

Another method the game immerses the user into becoming attached is its great story delivery method, both with unique visuals contained in their sfx cinematic sequences and their emotionally powerful combination of music provided by composer Magnus "Solar Fields" Birgersson's to create a truly binding experience. The music score introduces the player to Faith's world with a musical personality at the start of the game, reaching it's crescendo after Faith literally jumps a leap of faith from the top a large building to red crane on the other side of a massive sky-scrapping drop, the free-fall in the air music dissipates, then returns upon her successful landing of the manoeuvre, in this way the music score powerfully envelops the user into her world. Music is a companion that remains with the user all the way throughout the game building Mirrors edge story until a final masterpiece during it's credits titled *still alive* featuring *Lisa Miskovskys* with lyrics that detail the

adventure of Faith and her sister Kate, the power of resistances against overwhelming odds in a society gone mad, the importance of fighting for life no matter how grim the circumstances and the connection of family. It's these themes that resonate throughout Mirrors Edge and this track is an absolutely wonderful complimenting tribute to the game. To this day I still listen to that soundtrack on my daily commutes, a personal reminder of the powerful attachment I will forever hold for to game.

2: Mirrors edge uses a collaboration of game theory's all working cooperatively to achieve its level design. The game produces a world of imperfect information, one in which the user is unaware of all the variables and available outcomes or sources of interactivity / involvement. The level designs maintain a mixed or seemingly randomized disruption of available strategy's the player may choose to achieve victory conditions with the various levels, Examples being multiple interactive elements with which to run, slide, wall run, crawl, jump over as the player explores the level maps. The game also provides quick take (disarm) down actions which the user may implement should they decide to fight their way through levels instead of the encouraged flight tactics. Mirrors balances fast paced movement particular in combat situations with the ability to slow down the user perception of time, as a strategy to assess available manoeuvres / counter moves, in order to navigate potential threats or altering terrain. There is also a fair amount of game balance developed by pay off matrix of risk to reward ratio- sometimes the most obvious routes are not always the safest / fastest etc. The game provides both positive & progressive reinforcement for quality actions made by the user in the form of audio compliments / mockering from your ally mercury, a character who is formerly a runner himself but now provides mid run intelligence to his 'crew' of runners in the field. This element of the game also provides stable character development with general banter between the in game characters whose audio conversations are heard by the player. The game also provides varying levels of difficulty which can be toggled in the game menu screens as method of user controlled balance.

SECTION 3. Analysis of Narrative Elements.

1 & 5: Mirror's edge portrays its story using multiple narrative elements. Firstly the creation of a world, more especially the city scape of this world is an example of evoked narrative. The Designers of this game choose not to name the city in which the player finds their environment opting instead to use the city as a metaphor for a potential outcome of cities everywhere in our world. "I've deliberately not named it, because it's nowhere and it's everywhere. It's an amalgamation of lots of different cities. And it's an amalgamation of lots of different things that are happening around the world."(totilo, 2015). The title itself is another example of evoked narrative, as the Mirrors Edge refers to the mirrors/ class of city buildings, of gleaming skyscrapers and deserted streets. The general public became complacent with a comfortable lifestyle at the sacrifice of their freedom. However others, like faith who refused to conform, became outcasts and were pushed to the edge of society. As senior producer Owen O'Brien states "They exist on the edge, which is where the mirror's edge comes from." (totilo, 2015). Before the player has even started their gaming experiences ideals of an evoked totalitarian utopia world already are summoned to the mind as a narrative elements.

Secondly user dictated enacted narrative element is deployed within the games structure. By navigating their environments in vastly different routes each play through the game encourages different pathway choices with positive feedback in the form of trophies PlayStation points etc. as

the user completes various stages of the game new areas are unlocked, often with a thought provoking cut scene as illustrating key narrative points within the games story. These cut scenes are trigged through correct player enactments of pathway choices to reach the levels end goal states.

Cut scenes are used for a game function, usually for narrative illustration of the story progressing the player to the next stage. These cut scenes force events to occur. These scenes can be measured as identifiable indicators for game goals and usually distribute game information with how to achieve said goals which helps boosts a player's motivation and provides context of meaning for the narrative elements.

Embedded narrative elements are also consistent throughout mirrors edge as signified both from political propaganda graffiti hidden throughout the level maps, often near messenger bags, and through audio communications between faith and other in game characters such as merc, kate, jacknife etc. another example of embedded narrative elements would include in game advertisements for sports drinks, banners on the sides of cranes for whom to vote for etc. The majority of these interactions are triggered through player choice, and are not necessarily critical to portray the games story.

Mirrors Edge does offer a degree of emergent narrative in so far as the player's choices of combination between obstacles to reach their destinations are entirely dependent on player action. Also there is an online playable mode capable with the game, however I believe these are mainly just time trail races against other player controlled characters. In this manner it does offer a slight level of emergent narration particular of a player has created their own level design. Beyond that however emergent narrative is not Mirrors edge strong suit.

All these narrative elements are a direct result of player-character decisions and their consequent story counterparts are formed from a result of the agency relations of the users interactive experiences.

2 & 4: This game utilizes an episodic series timeline structure to portray it's story. Each level map is reminiscent of an episode, tied together to create an overall story arch when all episodes are placed in array together. Mirrors edge also manipulates the structure of time within general gameplay cut scenes to help establish a since of time passing relative to real world hours spend enjoying the game. i.e some levels are set during sunset, night, others sunrise and day cycles are included in game levels, however in any particular one level a player may not be able to stay stationary and witness an entire day/ night cycle like players have come to expect from titles such as Grand Theft Auto series.

 The story does subscribe to a hero monomyth structure, whereby the audiences meets Faith, is advised of a dangerous world, encounters said danger, recovers at Mercs tent (end of mission one) meets the game mentor (Mercury himself) crosses the threshold (when Faiths sister is attacked and the player over hears via radio) tests and approach of inner most cave (player pursues her framed sister to help her) the ordeal (fighting back the main villains and police forces) etc. in this fashion of structured narrative the overall story arch of mirrors edge could be identified as a hero monomyth.

However the games theme produces a scarily relatable set of circumstances whom everyone would find disastrous. It is a sad day to realize that we do in fact live in a cruel world where people are framed, taken hostage, murdered extorted etc. it's in these themes that we find our usable

character Faith, who is entirely vulnerable to bullets, the effects of gravity, getting hit by trains etc, and yet she charges through this world despite the dangers. It's with this in mind I would argue the story is also relatable generic story. Faith herself is has no heroic qualities, she's an everyday person, with a belief in herself & determination to do extordinary things.

3: The story of mirrors edge is filled with dramatic narrative. It creates suspense by thrusting the player into acting out mindboggling parkour manoeuvres to navigate the level designs. *"Mirror's Edge is more about speed and momentum, and when you can connect your moves in a flawless stream of sliky movements, it's eminently thrilling and satisfying." (gamespot, 2015)* The visual aesthetics and grow darker as the player takes damage from oncoming bullets and punches from enemies in hand to hand combat combined with action pressed audio this games level of suspense is limitless.

Intermitted short bursts of audio communication between in game characters in conjuncture with moments of silence and wind hurling down emptied streets, plus news reels overlapping in lifts detailing current game events as simulated media responses all help create a sense of curiosity within the game.

A major plot point within the game also details a betrayal of trust between supposed friends, and confirmed enemies (jack-knife) . on your first play through of this game, the narrative does hint towards something fishy, or uncanny about the communication signals being broadcasted however the player never fully understands the weight of this surprise until the character jack-knife, revels himself to be a traitor.

SECTION 4. Analysis of Simulation Qualities.

1: The underlying activity this game produces is the act of parkour, a method of transport getting one's own body from point A to point B as quickly as possible. To the majority of the world's population I would speculate this is largely an unrealistic activity however this is a sport practice by athletic enthusiasts the world over. This game simulates a realistic activity's in an unrealistic (yet) environment.

2: Although the games terrain visuals are instantly recognizable as a cityscape utopian environment with a provided runner vision which directs the player towards interactive objects such as pipes, lifts, doors etc not every single piece in the environment can be manipulated or used. Not all doors will open for the player, some pipes may appear superficially strong as a Faith hangs from it creating an unrealistic exposure to the map environment. Although the player hears gusts of winds it's not enough to know the protagonist off balance when scaling skyscraper walls. The exception possibly being when traversing pipes extending from one building to another, although these unbalancing mechanism are produced from the act of Faith running across the pipe, not the wind itself, if a player where to attempt to stand still during this situation they fall to their deaths, i.e repercussions of situation not environment.

3: Each level houses varying degrees of difficulty in mirrors edge. The initial stages are all about introduces the user to controls, and the world Faith and her crew live in. The game creates scenarios in which the user is constricted with time elements and refined from all path directions usually in simulated roadblocks or building ledges with no nearby ledge to reach too. The game forces the character to exhibit emergent behaviour through use of chase sequences, being hunted by police

sirens, actual squad members shooting and chasing after you with intelligent AI mechanics to follow, and even predict your movements to produce a sense of urgent escapism from the games intentional restrictive pursuit nature.

SECTION 5. Analysis of Game Aesthetics

1: Mirrors edge is equipped with a crisp clean and simple design theory reminiscent of modern design philosophies. The game follows modern era trends by keeping the overall level design in accordance with minimalism design principles, i.e smallest amount of detail to produce largest coherent picture.

Mirrors Edge creates a memorable aesthetic experience through use of a strict controlled colour palette. By crafting a world primarily based off bold white, reds, oranges, yellows, greens and blues. The game uses white as a default colour for everything, which helps contribute to a futuristic and simplistic design theme. Building on this palette vibrant splashes of colours are added according to map location, each area contained primarily one complementary colour per area. Many objects within the environment are painted wholesale, with entire faces of an object textured off one flat colour, or indeed the entire object or building itself. This technique would be place comprehensively according to allocated level primary colour choice throughout the game. The design choice helps construct the architectural theme of a futuristic dystopian city filled with citizens whom stay indoors, choosing comfortable lifestyles over authentic culture. "*every surface has that fresh paint smell, newly dried matte too smooth and lustrous to have ever been touched. There's the sad sense of a city gleamingly maintained, but otherwise unsed." (Pentadact.com,2015)*

Maintaining harmony with the minimalist design approach these flat colours throughout the game remained pure, the level designs reduced shading to almost zero effect, they were quite light at best. This was to booster the brighter lighter scheme pace throughout the game. The game uses large amounts of glass and reflective surfaces to reflect super realistic lighting experiences. *"Mirror's Edge, a game defined by almost hyper-realistic lighting, got it right first time, choosing baked static lighting throughout."(Deadendthrills.com,2015)*

Interestingly the lighting effects and indeed minimalistic designed architecture were a by-product of programing refrainment, the designers wished to reduce memory spent on high detail dynamic lighting, by crafting their polygons throughout the world, for almost all objects. *"A lot of people don't realise that if you ever use dynamic shadows or lighting, that's a massive, massive chunk of memory gone straight away because you have to render the whole scene to an uncompressed, huge texture."(Deadendthrills.com, 2015)* Were most games would apply simple normal map textures across materials to simulate the illusion of 3d depth, mirrors edge actually created these objects to craft a realistic 3d environmental experience.

The audio score for this game compliments each scene magnificently with hyper intense sharping tones for chase sense, contrasted by enveloping rifts of air as Faith runs through her city. Calmer, tranquil tones are present in puzzle scenes and more peaceful exploratory areas, providing the user with a great sense of freedom. Faith also breathes heavily after long periods of sprinting, climbing etc, she registers pain from falls or damage from enemies with yelps adding to the authentic realism of this game universe.

Additionally the game is comprised of two visual story elements, the 'real world' in which the user enacts the story content, and the cut scene narratives, which are motion graphic animation aesthetic

based content *"Mirror's Edge* basically dabbles in two artistic realms: in-game visuals as a photorealistic but artistically done environment and cut-scenes as comic book-esc slides to tell the story*" (Delong, 2014).*Coupled together in combination with a wonderfully suiting sound score the game delivers the story content in an intuitive and coherent fashion.

2: Mirrors edge creates an aesthetic goal for players to specifically feel the thrill of momentum and the importance of flowing continuously, this game is designed to keep the player moving. This game facilitates immersion and agency as mentioned previously by steering the experience through first person goggles, combined with chase scenes delivered by extreme prejudice AI police / gang squad members all intent on causing the player harm. Combined with linear restricted environments, Mirrors Edge develops an ilinix mindset for the player by enhancing their awareness through induced adrenaline reactions to their environments to an almost super alter state, where the player is continuously solving puzzles on the run, with the game environments flowing pass at speed, this affect produces an almost hypnotic, trance like state with which the player is captured into.

The main story arch does produce aspects of mimicry within its theme, as the protagonists sister has been setup for a crime she didn't commit, thereby the crime of identity theft is present. However the focus always remains constant on Faith (user controlled player) to discover the story. Her character is never mimicked or questioned.

Additionally Mirrors Edge is an unforgiving game in the measure of creating a protagonist is realistically vulnerable to damages of the environments, falls, bullets etc. each level is a contest between the players technical prowess and reactions speed against predisposed traps and areas of danger. If the player is captured or takes too much damage they are killed, screen fades to white, and the users are re-spawned at the nearest waypoint to attempt the same scenario again. It's this method of hard play demystification of correct sequence of puzzle maneuverers that Mirrors Edge induces an Agon style of gameplay.

3: Traditional first person conventions within the game culture simply consist of frontal views of the environments created by camera perspectives, often this camera is attached to a horizontal object floating in the games environment simulating a torso. The screen is usually finished with a weapon protruding from centre bottom of the field of view to a 1/3 of the screen to replicate a user's experiences of 1st person view. Typical examples of this *include Doom series, Wolfenstine, Unreal Tournament, Halo, Quake series.* Mirrors Edge technically stays within the confines of this convention, however the game challenges almost all boundaries of this principle.

By removing the centre torso camera position and replacing it with a more realistic elevated shoulder/head position the camera enables the viewer to pan across all the environment, this includes the users legs, torso, hands, shoulder positions. This technique create a more favourable immersive experiences, especially considering the flow of level designs, where the map forces you to duck, roll, slide, jump etc altering the users perception of the game from a traditional point and shoot genre, to a fragile vulnerable simulated experience.

Traditional FPS (first person shooters) experiences includes hoards of enemies attacking you front on, with close encounters often sprayed with graphic gore content such as blood streamlining down a players view. Although mirrors edge is a fps, it radically alters the parameters by purposely encouraging the players to put these enemies in the rear view, behind the players vision, the tension

of the noise of these combatants and evidence of their bullets whizzing past your vision a steady incentive to continuously move forward, away from these hoards. It's this concept that challenges the conventions of traditional fps action adventure genre.

5: This games encourages players from all ages, however judging from the dvd case I would speculate a sense of escapism from oppressive authority figures Is definitely a key theme within this game, which can be easily identifiable for teenagers the world over as a common emotive response to their lives (I know it reached out to me when I was young). This game also contains themes of censorship, moderate violence, bullying, death, blackmail and betrayal, all are concepts adapt for young adults. The pace of the game also encourages dedicated involvement, so it's perhaps not the best choice for audiences who just wish to unwind from daily stresses for half an hour before bed. This game will keep the user involved and alert. that being said, because of the genre and medium itself, mature age adults will be able to appreciate the more subtle undertones this game has to offer, such as warnings of a potential society being forced into a utopian structure such as this game provides. A perfect example being my father, aged 63, still enjoys playing this game to this day. However as teenager I was attracted the free running parkour elements, it made me feel so alive, in contrast with today as a mid-twenties matured adult I able to appreciate the game for it's more impressive construction, such as the development and design principles used to create this game, I also encompass, relate and understand the core concepts more thoroughly as both an educated digital design student and vastly more life experienced personality. This game captured my attention at the perfect stage of life for me; I will continue playing it & possible iterations/sequels to the series as a committed fan for the rest of my life.

6: Unlike films which are confined by the passing of linear time i.e start film, middle and conclusion, gaming environments are usually restricted with space boundaries, an area in which the user can no longer explore.

As Mirrors Edge is developed in the first person perspective of an agile runner who scales all manner of objects surrounding her environments it was crucial to encompass level design with correct placement of boundaries and too provide a significant aesthetic of space.

The playable aspects of this game are created in an interactive 3-D environment game space. Parameter boundaries are often disguised as vast expanses of straight drops to an instant death, or fictional none interactive doors which will not budge. Timing boundaries such as areas which can only be reached by leaping in front of a rapidly passing train, or swinging jumps on successfully on correct timing of the release at the apex of the users swing also create intuitive ways to restrict the player from exploring areas of the city which have not been modelled. Another method to keep the user occupied and within the game parameters is through other in game character dialog advising you of the correct path which the user should take, i.e Merc through your earpiece navigating the user through the city landscape by directed them to correct locations, exit of rooms, tunnels, market places, areas of interest etc.

The design of this game is focused on immersion of the player, as such, mirrors edge strays away from traditional fps visual aesthetics by purposely not supplying the user with a heads up display containing health, stamina, ammunition states etc which have become commonly expected in

normal fps experiences. By taking away this non-diegetic space of the game design mirrors edge fully envelopes the user into the diegetic fictional world space of the game.

SECTION 6. Conclusions and Summary

1: Mirrors Edge with a genre of fps action adventure has many competing titles. The more dominant themes encompassed within this title include the act of parkour. Titles such as *Jet set radio*, *prince of Persia*, *prototype*, *dying light*, *portal* and *Assassins creed* all incorporate free running as a method of transport around their environments, however none of these titles primarily focus the user to implement these tactics in same measure as mirrors edge. In these comparable titles parkour is a freedom of choice, where is in mirrors Edge it's the only available form of movement as a game mechanic. Additionally all these examples carries Heads Up displays with data such as maps, life, weapons etc.

perhaps the only exception where this sense of immersion is just accepted as game mechanics would be Assassins creed, in which the story content of this series stresses the articulating idea that the user is in fact a real world character, locked in a simulation, in which they aware of the simulations existence. In this manner Assassins creed defeats the traditional fps spatial awareness of game parameters and involvement restrictions. Mirrors Edge prefers to give the user full view of their 3D environments with aesthetic design choices such as lack of huds. Additionally all game platforms carry collectibles as a valorisation technique to maintain their audience's interests.

Moreover another comparison included with Assassins Creed is the ability to toggle on/off a feature named eagle vision- an ability which the user may equip to find areas of interests by the game illuminating the environments with quick successive waves of gold- this is a similar design aspect which mirrors edge carries with its runner vision.

2: Mirrors Edge provides a harmonises symphony of design theory, game rules, and construction methods to develop a unique bridging of the techniques to create such a powerful game. From its adaptation of minimalism to it's complimenting colour palette choices which all provide wonderful surfaces to display Mirrors Edge unique lighting system nothing in this game was constructed without purpose. The audio is masterfully woven into the character and environmental psychics, the user weens for breathe after large chase sequences. The narrative elements ranges from evoked, enacted, to the cut scenes all work in conjuncture with each other to form a succinct and informative story. Mirrors edge provides the gaming industry with a unique breathe of fresh air for an otherwise over flogged first person shooter genre.

3: in my opinion Mirrors Edge has few qualities worthy of improvements in terms of design choices. However to maintain a stronger fan base and increase the re-playability aspects of the game, a multiplayer function would be a next logical step. Free running with your mates ghosts is just not the same as actually participating on the same map. A level design feature to create this said multiplayer maps would be an added bonus too, luckily there has been similar hype with this idea, and *Mirrors Edge Catalyst* which is the second game of the series but set as prequel to the original *Mirrors Edge* is destined to come out this Christmas 2015 which is confirmed to have similar content.

The only other short comings in this title could arguably be the short play time averaging around 6 to 7 hours to complete the game. The story content is masterfully delivered, however the investment of a user's interests in a title is definitely limited by a short story.

4: As is a common trait for all young teens my sense of adventure, for physical activity and immersion with the outdoors was a strong contributing experience to provide fundamental incentive to play mirrors edge. I lived in a laid back mountainous town in Tasmania when this title came out. As kid we used to spend a lot of time out bike riding, skating, and exploring the cliff faces of the surrounding peninsula, all of these experiences definitely heightened and encouraged a rebellious youth to explore beyond the boundaries of conventional society.

Additionally due to claustrophobic domestic situations I moved away from the family home at the under ripe age of 14, at the time I was naive to the world, and had a thirst for everything except the confines of welcoming homesteads. The culture of Tasmania adapts a laid back and care free attitude, although almost everyone harbours the same life perceptions and judgments of correct / incorrect life choices. This I found became quite deliberately distracting from my life goals, and I felt confined to a static city where nothing was ever accomplished. Much like the backstory of Mirrors Edge, were their citizens choose comfort over freedom, I related to these concepts on instinctual levels.

I began to identify myself as a *runner* of sorts too. Lazy Tasmania the 'perfect dystopian city' the messengers the couriers carried in the game represented the delivery of my 'dreams and potential aspirations' having to be illegally snug around, the constant chasing enemies all my 'inner demons' & life setbacks attempting to anchor my life into this quiet 'perfect' town. It's perhaps these core themes behind mirrors edge that I identified with and was able to enjoy the most out of the gaming experience. It's the game that encouraged my leave of state, towards brighter futures here in Western Australia back in 2009. Now eleven years later at the age of 25 I am yet to return home, however my life experiences and perceptions have developed beyond mere teen escapism.

As a game enthusiast it's important to note previous history with similar genre titles do add to the expectations and consequent potential playable enjoyment of new experiences with titles. However as Mirrors Edge derived away from conventional fps formula it's difficult to judge towards any proper gameplay experience, with perhaps the only possible exception being the Portal series, a fps puzzle adventure game. Both these games redefined conventions of fps adventure experiences and thus I believe complement each other in benchmark game experiences.

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