
Game Critique

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY

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Donkey Kong Country

General Information

Name and Developers

Donkey Kong Country is the game I will be reviewing. It is developed by Rare and published by Nintendo.

Platform

Donkey kong country was available for play on SNES, Game Boy Color, Gameboy Advanced and most modern Nintendo consoles as a virtual game. The platform I will be reviewing the game on is Gameboy Advanced.

Genre & Target Market

The main genre of this game is Platformer. Donkey Kong Country targets children and teenagers with its low game complexity and difficult level design.

Game Overview

Core Gameplay

The core game play of Donkey Kong Country involved two monkeys, Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong, traveling between platforming levels and collecting bananas with an occasional mini-game. The player finds these levels by traveling on a world map from one destination to another. There are 40 different levels where the user must collect bananas and defeat monsters by jumping on their heads. Most levels involve many unique movement mechanics and a unique theme. The player can ride mounted animals, swing from ropes, be launched out of a barrel and swim to get to the end of the level. The player can find special hidden levels by running into walls or jumping off screen. These levels allow you to collect a large amount of bananas while you are playing as a rhino, shark, frog, or bird. The mini-games also allow you to earn more bananas and get KONG letters. Some mini-games include funky fishing, a fishing game where you had to time your fishing hook to catch

the most fish, and candy's challenge, where you had to jump into boxes at the right time to get a matching symbol.

Visual and Audio style

The visual style of the game is simple with elaborate movement animations on the characters. The background for most of the levels is a repeating image with a single style of texture for the obstacles. The characters and monsters have many well animated movements which are seen when they jump, walk, swim or mount an animal. The audio used in the game is very detailed and always fits the theme of the map. Each different style of map has it's own music style which helps the user feel more integrated into the environment and each character has its own unique movement sounds.

Controls

Donkey Kong Country had very simple controls. The left and right arrow keys allowed your character to run in the specified direction, the down arrow key allowed the character to duck, the A key allowed the character to jump and the B key lets the character roll left or right. The difficulty of the game came from timing these simple movements controls to get your character to the destination.

Story

The story behind the whole game is based around a missing stash of bananas. Donkey Kong goes to his storage of bananas to find that they have been stolen. Then he sets out on a journey to recover his bananas. The different animals that Donkey Kong can ride or become in mini-games are his friends in the story and are there to help him recover his bananas.

Game Critique

I found the game to be quite fun because the levels were fast paced and challenging. However, they became repetitive in terms of level design. Although, the game did provide a variation of themes to be progressed through, the levels inside one particular theme felt repetitive.

The difficulty of the levels in Donkey Kong Country varied. Some levels were easy and could be finished in minutes. Others took practice and required several attempts at the level. This variation

kept the player alert and ready for new challenges.

I played Donkey Kong Country years ago on my Gameboy Advanced when it first came out. It was one of my first games on the Gameboy Advanced and took me a long time to beat the first time. I now played the game again and enjoyed different elements of the game. On my first play of the game I remember being frustrated at the difficult levels but enjoying the mini-games a lot. On my recent playthrough, I enjoyed the difficulty much more and still had a lot of fun finishing the game.

Therefore, I believe this is a good game for the target market of children and teenagers because it doesn't require too much attention and provides instant gratification. Different age groups will enjoy different parts of the game.

If I had to describe Donkey Kong Country in one word, it would be 'Addictive' because the difficult levels and fun music make the player want to keep trying until they finally finish the level.

The challenging levels will motivate the players to keep on trying until they are able to finish the level. I think this game provides a higher level of difficulty compared to other platformers of the same era.

Something innovative about Donkey Kong Country is the quality of vivid graphics they were able to provide in that generation. Other than that the fast-paced side scroller builds upon an established formula and does it with good execution.

A key strength of Donkey Kong Country is that it provided short and challenging levels that allowed me to pick up the game on a mobile platform and quickly begin enjoying a side scroller without too much story or waiting.

The key deficits of Donkey Kong Country was the repetitive feeling when you couldn't beat the level and the only thing to do in the game was to retry the same level over and over again.

One improvement Donkey Kong Country could have implemented to fix the problem of repetitive hard levels is providing more unique paths in the world view map so a player could try another path if they are stuck on a specific level.

Final Analysis

One major insight I gained from playing Donkey Kong Country, in respect to my team's game design project, is the use of the world view map. In this game the world view map was very strict and didn't allow the player to define their own path. I really didn't like this and I think in our

game design project we should give the user multiple choices of levels they want to start on the world view map. Giving the player more options will be harder to implement because it will result in unexpected paths, but it will ultimately be more enjoyable.

Another way this game can influence our game design project is with their use of mini-games. Currently our team hasn't discussed anything other than the core fundamental game-play but later on we could consider including some mini-games to further increase the play experience.