

Course: IT265-002-S2025

Assignment: Case Study 1 - Atari

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Status: Submitted | Worksheet Progress: 100.00%

Potential Grade: 10.00/10.00 (100.00%)

Received Grade: 0.00/10.00 (0.00%)

Grading Link: <https://learn.ethereallab.app/assignment/v3/IT265-002-S2025/case-study-1-atari/grading/jm2353>

Instructions

1. Step 1:

From this spreadsheet, pick a game you plan to analyze (selection must be unique) and put your UCID to the left of it:

[Game Selection Spreadsheet](#)

If a selection turns red, it has already been chosen. Do not edit others' content/selection and be mindful if multiple people are working on the sheet simultaneously.

2. Step 2:

Use one of these sites to playtest and analyze your game:

- [Free 80s Arcade](#)
- [AARP Atari Games](#)
- [Keystone Kapers](#)
- [Triplets and Us](#)

If none of these work, use an alternative close to the original game.

3. Step 3:

Analyze and research your chosen game. Collect resources and include them in your responses for related sections.

4. Step 4:

Save the worksheet, export as a PDF, and upload it to the mentioned branch on GitHub. Create a pull request, merge it to main, and upload the PDF to Canvas.

Section #1: (1.5 pts.) Game Overview

Task #1 (0.00 / 0.50 pts.) - Game Details - Note the Game's title, de

Weight: 66.67%

Weight: 33.33%

Objective: Game Details - Note the Game's title, developer, publisher, platform, genre, and release date

≡, Text Prompt

Your Response:

****Space Invaders (original) | Space Invaders (Atari 2600)****

Genre: Arcade, Shoot 'em up / STG

Developer: Taito | Atari, Rick Maurer

Publisher: Taito | Atari Inc.

Platform: Arcade | Atari 2600 (and following Atari consoles)

Release Date: April 1, 1978 (JP) | March 10, 1980
November 1978 (NA)



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Task #2 (0.00 / 0.50 pts.) - History and Industry - Note the historical

Weight: 33.33%

Objective: History and Industry - Note the historical context of the game's release and its place in the industry

≡, Text Prompt

Your Response:

Space Invaders was the first arcade shoot 'em up style game with an endless mode, pioneering the game style and setting off a wave of popularity for arcade games. Space Invaders has become widely influential, as its popularity and recognizable, pixelated art style became iconic, and inspired lots of other game developers to join the industry. For the Atari 2600, the port of the game "quadrupled sales" of the console. Though its success was not predicted by its publishers, the game's influence was vast, and its iconography still remains representing not only "retro," but sometimes even all of gaming.



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Task #3 (0.00 / 0.50 pts.) - Compare the game to similar games of

Weight: 33.33%

Objective: Compare the game to similar games of the time

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Your Response:

Before Space Invaders, there was a simplicity to the released games at the time. Prior to the 1978 release of the original Space Invaders, Atari 2600 games included titles like Breakout, Combat, Indy500, and Surround. All of these games are not only simple, but by comparison, very short. They also frequently contained a quickly and easily obtainable goal, such as 'defeat the other player,' or just to complete the challenge presented, like winning Breakout. Space Invaders created a new feeling, one thought of now as the arcade experience, an endless run to complete more and more scalable challenges. This ushered in the "arcade" genre as seen by modern gaming, and fundamentally changed video game history after its release.



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Section #2: (2 pts.) Gameplay Mechanics And Level Design

Task #1 (0.00 / 1 pt.) - Core gameplay mechanics and how they shape

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Core gameplay mechanics and how they shape the player's experience*

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

Space Invaders' core mechanic is shooting, where the player must move around in order to defeat all the aliens before they reach the bottom of the screen. The player has three lives, but will automatically lose if they fail to defeat all the aliens. The core innovations in gameplay are that the aliens are reactive, moving around and doing damage to the player's shields in turn. This reactivity is a change from previous games like Breakout, where the game is the Player versus a stationary environment, as opposed to a reactive "enemy" in the game. The aliens also increase in speed and descend, leading to a feeling of limited time, without just slapping a timer in the corner. The other main mechanic is the UFO, a ship worth bonus points that will occasionally flit across the top of the screen, forcing the player to make a skillfully timed shot in order to collect the bonus points. These features lead the player to feeling a bit more interactivity, response, and challenge from the game in contrast to more static games that precede it.



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Task #2 (0.00 / 1 pt.) - Level design and how it affects gameplay

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Level design and how it affects gameplay*

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Your Response:

The level design in Space Invaders is very static, where the game always takes place in the same permutation: lines of aliens begin at the start of the screen, and move back and forth, moving down when they reach the edges of the screen. This design is consistent between the arcade and 2600 versions, with a few mechanical changes that do not alter the overall game experience. The shields given to the player in the map provide a bit of strategic options, as they can choose to hide behind them or shoot through them in order to best defeat the aliens. As the game is endless, though the layout remains the same, the difficulty increases by the aliens shooting more frequently, moving faster, and in the Atari 2600 version, spawning new aliens after a number are defeated.



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Section #3: (1.5 pts.) Graphic And Audio Design

Task #1 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Game's visual appearance, artistic choices

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Game's visual appearance, artistic choices, and how they contribute to the experience*

≡, Text Prompt

Your Response:

Space Invaders' art is an icon in the gaming industry. Though the assets have changed in some ways over the years and across ports, the oldest designs are nostalgic and popular, representing arcade games of the time. Old arcade games are a great example of how graphics do not make a game succeed or fail, as basic pixelated graphics created a game as wildly popular as Space Invaders. The gameplay and fun, meaning that the players enjoy the art regardless of its simplicity. Due to Space Invaders pioneering the genre, its art is also popular as it reminds of the era of arcades.



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Task #2 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Sound design, including music and sound effects

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Sound design, including music and sound effects, and their impact on the game*

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

Though maybe not what first comes to mind when Space Invaders is thought of, the sound design of the game presented a few popular innovations. Hardware still limited audio, meaning that the sound design of any games during the time was very simple, often with a track for a game's opening, and for when a player lost, and then sound effects for various aspects of gameplay. Space Invaders changed this, however, as it was the first game to include a continuous background track (a 4-note arpeggiated bass which also became iconic), but it was reactive to the game onscreen, notably increasing in speed and dynamics to react to gameplay. Although this is a common aspect of games today, Space Invaders was one of the first to include interactive sound as a part of the game.



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Section #4: (1.5 pts.) Narrative And Storytelling

Task #1 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Narrative structure, main plot points, and setting

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Narrative structure, main plot points, and setting*

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

The narrative of Space Invaders is simple: kill the aliens before they kill you. As it inherited from other similar arcade games at the time, its story follows similarly to others of the "defend the earth" style, where the player is mounted low, as ground for a descending invasion. This narrative, however, is a simple medium for the gameplay to flow through, and is not really thematic of why the game was successful, owing its success to its gameplay above its story. Though its setting is assumed to be earth, as the game was inspired by popular sci-fi

gameplay above its story. Though its setting is assumed to be earth, as the game was inspired by popular sci-fi, it could be any civilization or base that the player is defending.



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Task #2 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Character development and how it integrates

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Character development and how it integrates with gameplay*

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Your Response:

Aside from the aliens, the only visible character is the player's laser cannon mounted to the ground. This element is static, and more of a tool for the player than a character. However, there are some players who personify some of the aliens, frequently the red squid-like alien, as they are often most difficult to hit, being traditionally in the last layer of the wave, and moving extremely quickly. This, however, is a reaction and not supported by any material within the game itself.



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Section #5: (1.5 pts.) Impact And Reception

Task #1 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Critical and player reception, including reviews

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Critical and player reception, including reviews and feedback*

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Your Response:

Across the board, Space Invaders has been widely popular and accepted. It has had numerous ports and remakes, most of which have performed well. It has received praise and good ratings from critics and players alike, even through many iterations and minor gameplay changes over time. As it inspired and innovated so much at the time, it has become symbolic of the age of arcade games, and it is often remembered well by its

players.



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Task #2 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Game's impact on the gaming industry

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Game's impact on the gaming industry and its cultural significance*

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Your Response:

Space Invaders has recieved the Arcade Awards' "Game of the Year" award, the Guinness World Records' "Top Arcade Game of All Time" and others for its success and influence in the industry. As mentioned prior, its iconography and sound design have become symbolic of the genre and the industry, with many popular developers such as Shigeru Miyamoto claiming that Space Invaders inspired them to get into the industry. It represents the Atari 2600, and its effects can still be felt in the modern game industry.



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Section #6: (2 pts.) Reflection

Task #1 (0.00 / 1 pt.) - Was the game "fun"? What made it fun or not?

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Was the game "fun"? What made it fun or not?*

≡, Text Prompt

Your Response:

Yes, according to myself and many others. With a simple gameplay loop and solid visual and audio design, Space Invaders is an excellent example of gameplay concepts done right. Space Invaders in fun because it is interactive, where the game responds to you and requires active thought as well as some skill in timing, shooting, dodging, and using the shields well. It also provides a minimal story that is enough to make its basic gameplay feel purposeful, but not so much as to drive it. It is my personal opinion that the game is fun also in

part to its difficulty, being challenging enough to engage, but not so much as to frustrate.



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Task #2 (0.00 / 1 pt.) - Reflection on the learning experience and ease

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Reflection on the learning experience and ease of research*

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Your Response:

Researching Space Invaders was not difficult, as there are many effects that it has had that are well documented and discussed. As it was very popular, there was ample material to include in this assignment, and as I have played several iterations of the game before, it was personally interesting to me as well.



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