Submission Worksheet

IT265-002-S2024 - [IT265] Game Case Study 1

Submissions:

Submission Selection

1 Submission [active] 2/8/2024 5:40:26 PM

Instructions

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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.
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1acEHH2ymFQIeGGimqXyL1KO0Y4fG9IUt2Cbi6GAUslY/view
If a selection turns red, that means it's already chosen and you'll have to pick something else (it's first come first serve). Do not edit anyone else's content/selection and be mindful if multiple people are working on this sheet at the same time.

Step 2:
Use one of these sites to playtest, explore, and analyze your choice (note you'll have to do other research as well on your own):

1. https://www.free80sarcade.com/all2600games.php
2. https://games.aarp.org/category/atari-games
3. https://playclassic.games/games/action-atari-2600-games-online/keystone-kapers/play/
4. https://www.tripletsandus.com/play-classic-80s-arcade-games/play-atari-2600-video-games/

   If for some reason none of these work, any alternatives work as long it's as close to the original game as possible.

Step 3:
Analyze, research, and review your chosen game. Collect resources (website links, etc that you used during the exploration) include these with the responses in the related sections. Fill in the responses of the below prompts/checklist/etc.

Step 4:
Save the worksheet. Export the PDF. Upload it to the mentioned branch name (below) on GitHub. Create a pull request and merge it to main. Upload the PDF to Canvas.

Branch name: M2-Case-Study-1

Tasks: 16 **Points:** 10.00

Game Overview (1.25 pts.)

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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: Historical Context and Game Description

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Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: Gameplay Mechanics

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Software Architecture and Technology (1.25 pts.)

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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: Technical Framework

v EXPAND v

Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: Innovations and Challenges

v EXPAND v

Gameplay Mechanics and Level Design (1.25 pts.)

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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: Mechanics Analysis

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Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: Level Design

v EXPAND v

Graphic and Audio Design (1.25 pts.)

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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: Visual Design

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Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: Audio Design

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User Interface and User Experience (1.25 pts.)

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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: UI Design

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Checklist
*The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Describe the layout of the game's user interface (UI) and how it functions. Discuss elements like menus, icons, and on-screen prompts, and how they help players navigate and understand the game.
☐ #2	1	Evaluate how well the game's UI communicates important information to players. Discuss aspects such as clarity, readability, and the ability of the UI to provide necessary game details without overwhelming or confusing the player.

Response:

The actual UI of Atlantis really only consists of the score shown at the bottom center of the screen. There is no life counter, since the targets you're supposed to protect are the various city buildings in the water, which are removed from the screen upon their destruction by the death ray. And if you lose a base, you will no longer be able to fire from that turret, since it will also be removed from the screen. In place of any on screen prompts for things like the screen-clearing enemy ship, or incoming death ray, the game instead opts to use sound cues. As a result, the "UI" of Atlantis doesn't take the shape of an interface at all. Every bit of information the player needs to know for a given gaming session (aside from the score) is telegraph by means of the gameplay itself. As a matter of fact, there's no indication as to what score is even needed for a player to regain one of the buildings they've lost (as a sort of "bonus life") so it is unclear what level or performance (score) is expected of players in order to be rewarded with a bonus life to further their current round.

Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: UX Analysis

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Checklist
*The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Discuss the overall feel of playing the game, focusing on how different aspects of the game contribute to the player's experience. Analyze how these elements, such as ease of use, game flow, and feedback, affect the gameplay.
☐ #2	1	Evaluate the design decisions made to enhance the player's experience. Consider factors like tutorial design, learning curve, and player engagement. Discuss how effective these choices are in making the game enjoyable and accessible to players.

Response:

The game feels smooth to play, with my only complaint being the cooldown between firing rounds of shots - which of course, is something that's an inherent part of some of these fixed shooter games, and contributes to the sense of precise skill and timing needed to become really good at them. The way you fire the other cannons feels the slightest

precise skill and timing needed to become really good at them. The way you fire the other cannons feels the slightest bit awkward to me, and I'm not sure why. On pc the controls are mapped to the arrow keys, so you'd hold down the key in the direction of the turret you want to use while you're firing, and sometimes I feel a little too slow when switching between bases, just barely messing up my timing such that when I fire, the bullet comes out of the wrong gun.

There is no tutorial, nor on screen instructions, which is fine since the gameplay is obviously very simple at it's core. However, it also leaves room for surprise when you realize (when *I* realized) that there's another button you can press for a slightly faster mode of fire (or even just when I realized that I could make use of the other two guns! I thought I only had 1 for first day I was playing the game myself). Tiny discoveries like this allow for a player who perhaps didn't know everything about the game to have a better and easier time getting a higher score.

● Narrative and Storytelling (1.25 pts.)

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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: Narrative Structure

Checklist
*The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Describe the game's story, including its narrative structure, main plot points, and the setting in which it takes place. Discuss how these elements come together to create a cohesive and engaging story.
☐ #2	1	Analyze the storytelling techniques used in the game, such as dialogue, cutscenes, or environmental storytelling. Evaluate how effectively these techniques convey the story and engage the player.

Response:

Atlantis takes place in the Atlantic Ocean, overseeing the portion of the ocean where the City of Atlantis is built. It is being attacked by the Gorgon invaders, and the player is in control of the city's last line of defense against them! The player has to make skillful use of the 3 defense bases on the surface on the water to hold back the never ending onslaught of the Gorgon vessels' attacks. But no matter how hard the player tries, Atlantis is doomed to fall and will eventually be destroyed by the Gorgon's onslaught; as the game only ends when all city buildings are destroyed. (And once you pass 90,000 points, buildings and bases no longer respawn as a reward for amassing 10k points in a wave.) The game is big on the idea of inevitability (I mean, the message "Atlantis is doomed!" was a key piece of its advertising and promotional), and how even your best effort will not be enough. Every time a settlement or building in the city is lost, the explosion from the death ray that vaporized it causes a blinding light to flash across the screen. And at the end of it all (the end of the game), the destruction of the city is felt in the resounding shock wave - the screen blinking rapidly - really instilling a sense of loss and failure at having been bested by the alien invaders.

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Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: Character and Integration

Checklist
*The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details

		Discuss the development of the game's characters. Describe their roles within the story, their
☐ #1	1	personalities, and how they evolve throughout the game. Consider how the characters contribute to the overall narrative.
☐ #2	1	Examine how the game's narrative and characters are integrated into the gameplay. Discuss how story elements are woven into the game mechanics and how this integration affects the player's experience.

Response:

There are no individual characters in Atlantis. As a substitute for any individuals or main characters/protagonists, the game instead makes the main point of interest the City of Atlantis in the ocean below that you are meant to protect. Being an entire city, instead of one living breathing person gives any form of connection a very unique feel, since if the player is to feel any sort of sympathy, it will come in a much larger form. Seeing a city get destroyed right in front of your eyes, as a direct result of your failure to protect it would probably affect certain people a lot more than seeing a main character get punched in the face would affect them.

● **Impact and Reception** (1.25 pts.)
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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: Reception and Impact

Checklist   *The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Research and summarize how the game was received by critics and players. Include key reviews, ratings, and player feedback. Discuss any notable praise or criticism the game received.
☐ #2	1	Analyze the game's impact on the gaming industry. Discuss how it may have influenced game design, trends, or inspired other games. Consider any lasting effects it has had on the industry.

Response:

[https://www.mobygames.com/game/10248/atlantis/]

Atlantis was a widely well-received game, and sold very quickly upon release just through word-of-mouth and packaging alone. Early reviews in video game magazines were good, appearing in Billboard magazine's Best Selling Video Games list - 12th in the top 15 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DP1BFvEtMgA]. And it's still being reviewed in the modern day. It attained the highest score (A+) on Woodgrain Wonderland's Atari game review blog - https://woodgrainwonderland.wordpress.com/2016/09/25/atari-2600-game-reviews-asteroids-through-atlantis-ii/#:~:text=Atlantis%20(Imagic%2C%201982,the%20effort.%20A - and apparently 94% of Google users liked the game!

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantis_(video_game)#Reception]
It was Imagic's second biggest selling game, and was even a runner-up in the "Video Game of the Year" category at the 4th annual Arkie Awards. Generally, it became a long-time favorite of people who have played Atari games back then, and even stands out as an entertaining game to people nowadays. It was a unique idea, praised for such, as well as its outstanding and detailed graphics at the time. And it still reigns as a very challenging game even by modern standards.

[https://youtu.be/DP1BFvEtMgA?si=WHpXzdt4Qt9MnqwD&t=1547]
As a result of the game's success, as well as Imagic's other well-performing games, it inspired many other software companies to try their hand at infiltrating the video game industry, causing new startups just like them left, right and

center, and within a year or two, the new range of companies that were each taking share of the industries profits in combination with Atari and Mattel's 4th quarter earnings being lower than expected caused a steep drop in the stock market.

Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: Cultural Significance

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Checklist

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Examine the game's cultural significance and the legacy it has left behind. Discuss how the game has been remembered over time and its status in the gaming community.
☐ #2	1	Describe the game's presence and representation in media, such as films, books, or online content. Discuss its role in fan communities and any influence it has had on broader cultural aspects, such as art, music, or social trends.

Response:

Atlantis's impact on the modern day gaming industry is not very easy to trace. It is no where near as often referred to as games like Galaga or Dig Dug are, so to the general gaming community it exists as a old gem buried alongside many of the older games that existed for consoles which have been discontinued for a handful of years now.

Atlantis has a commercial, made during the big television ad boom that surfaced soon after the games release (https://youtu.be/95uyvxSimws?si=0N0kdYHGur9Md1WW). It was also used in Imagic's Destination Atlantis competition, where they asked all of their players to send in their high scores for a chance to win an exclusive copy of Atlantis II.

Reflection (1.25 pts.)

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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: Describe your personal experience playing the chosen game

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Checklist

#	Points	Details
☑ #1	1	Was it "fun"? What made it fun or not fun?
☑ #2	1	Is this genre/game-type aligned with personal interests?
☑ #3	1	What made you pick this game? Was it a good choice?

Response:

I'd say it was pretty fun! Most of its entertainment value definitely came from a place of personal challenge though. It's been a very long time since I played a fixed shooter game like that, so being so limited in my movement and abilities was something I haven't had to adapt to in such a long time that I found myself playing again and again just to see if I could end up getting the hang of it. I wouldn't say the game aligned with my personal interests per se (since my current interests are all rather modern), but I enjoyed it nonetheless. I mean, I really only chose this game because upon Googling the name of the game I like the pictures that showed up :) it had a nice amount of color (i REALLY. like. colorful things I'm drawn to bright, neon, vividly colored objects like a MOTH to a FLAME), and the setting looked fairly interesting so I just went with it! Solid choice. 8/10 experience

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Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: Assignment Reflection

Checklist

*The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	What interesting or new "thing(s)" did you learn during your research and analysis?
☐ #2	1	Did you find it was easy to come across the information you were looking for? What was your primary means of research/analysis?

Response:

I learned a lot more about the general gaming industry during the late 1900s, for example I didn't know that Activision had been around for that long - being one of, if not the only one of the big 3 companies (Activision, Atari, and Mattel) to still exit to this day, ESPECIALLY at it's current level of success. I haven't done such extensive research in a while, since I usually mind myself extremely unmotivated to do more than 3 different google search queries to find information for a topic I'm not at all interested in/passionate about. So the fact that this case study was on a video game probably helped me a lot, since I found myself scrounging the internet a lot more than I would for any other assignment. Since I couldn't find too much detailed information on just Atlantis as a game, I widened my search a little to look for things that pertained to Atari 2600 games in general (like the assembly language they used), or things that pertained to Imagic as a company. Suffice to say, I got pretty into the research.

End of Assignment