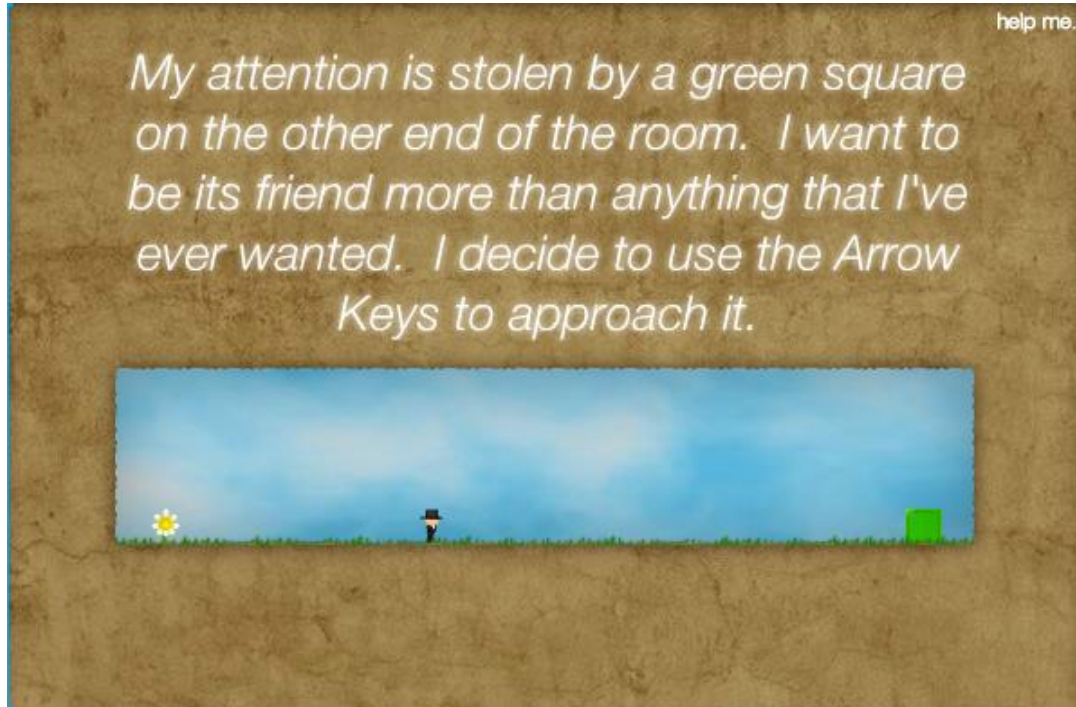


Research the Problem: The Company of Myself

This is a non-educational puzzle platformer. I picked The Company of Myself to serve as the example of puzzle platformers.



As you can see it shares many features with my game. This will be common, as all platformers are mechanically identical. The movement is the same- with the three directional arrow keys moving the user in their respective directions. The level is also completed by getting to an end objective, in this case it is a green square that the maker has decided to give no backstory or deep meaning to.

This introduction perfectly encapsulates the beauty of the 2D platformer. In the first level 3/5's of the tutorial has been complete. You have all the movement and the objective explained in three sentences and a single strip of a level. Of course while this is relatively clear, creator of the game has also included a list of controls. By pressing the "help me." on the upper right corner you will be given a list of the controls.

Just walking to a green square isn't much of a game. Unlike dangling a carrot over a donkey's head, most platformers like to put a medal at the end of an obstacle course:

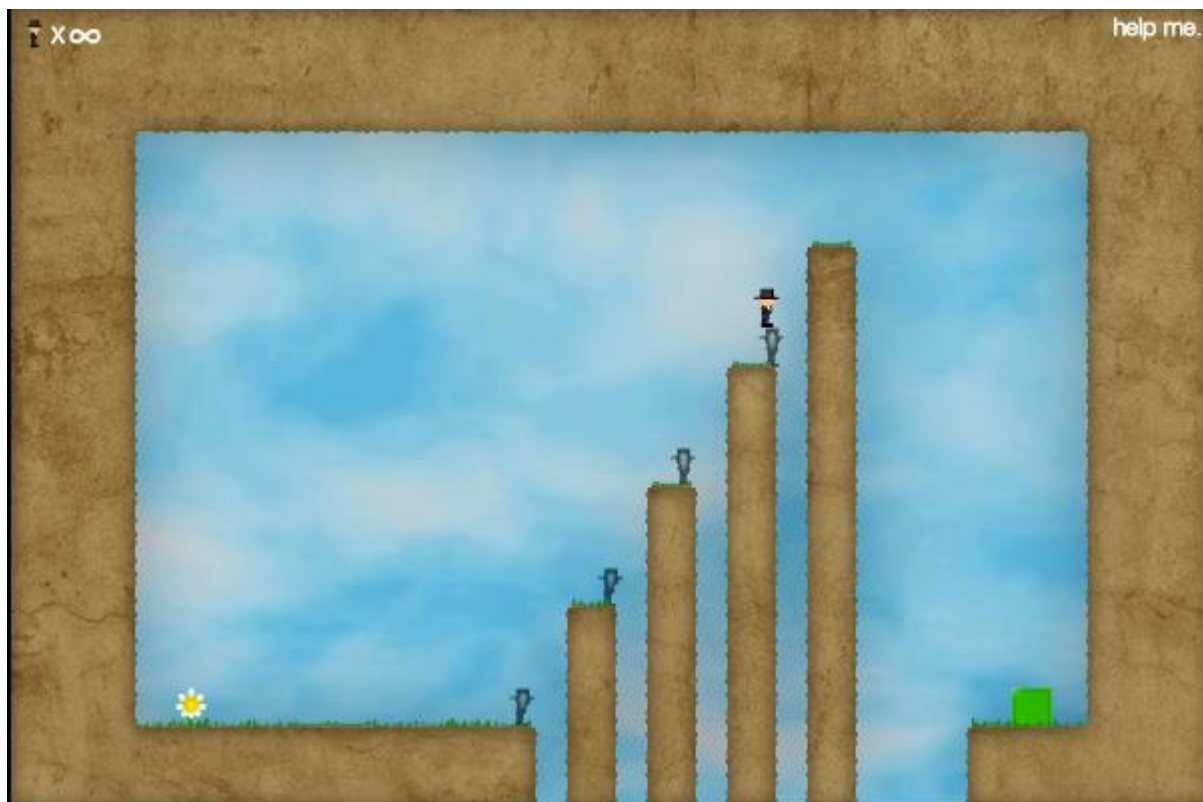


This now introduces all the core mechanics behind a platformer- platforms. By putting the green square behind two platforms the game is now a puzzle. The old method of walk up to the green square is now void, the player now must analyse the situation and come up with a solution that will get them to their objective. In this case, jumping onto the first platform will get you over it, but the second is too high. This forces the player to really think, they'll have to come up with the idea of jumping from the first platform to the second, using the gain in height to compensate.

This game is story driven, each level has a narrative that explores the concept of human relationships and solitude. These themes make me believe that the game is intended to an older audience (the difficulty of the later levels also make me believe this). This is important as there is a lack of obstacles and many other visuals.



While my game follows the mechanics that are a standard in a platformer, it is missing one feature that CoM includes. Most of the complex platformers overcome the simplicity associated with the game type by including an extra feature or a 'gimmick'.



While my game focuses on obstacles with science themes that the player uses the spacebar to interact with, CoM spacebar has a different function. Pressing spacebar will reset your progress in the level and create a solid shadow clone that will mimic your actions up to the point when you

pressed spacebar, standing it place after. This gimmick allows the game to create puzzles like the one above. The user has to constantly repeat his steps to continue, using his past failures as a literal stepping stone to get to the end goal.

This mechanic fits the game quite well, as even by himself, he still need help. It also encompasses the idea of learning from past mistakes and leaving your past behind. This is further augmented with the creator deciding to include death in the game. This actively shows that all the shadows or 'past selves' (it is never explained what these things are) are left to die. On the other hand, I decided that I didn't want my game to include death. If you die and have your progress reset for the whole level, this can lead to a player getting frustrated. I have no plans of making a frustrating or 'rage game' (I will be exploring one later), I want to make a simple promotional game.



To conclude, CoM is a great game to look at when discussing platformers. At the first glance you may feel like I copied the fundamental idea of it- but you'd be wrong. CoM is an original game but did not make those controls, other than the shadows it still uses the basic rules of a platformer. The longer you play the game, the more you realise that it is the themes and execution that make it unique. My game is for promotion; therefore, it uses simple levels with important interactions. CoM focuses on its narrative and difficult gameplay to deliver an enjoyable game.