# **2 - Background, objectives & deliverables**

## 2.1 Project Background

Timeline Takedown is a round-based survival shooter, these types of games have become a widely recognised and an engaging subgenre within the wider category of first-person shooters. These games typically challenge the player to survive increasingly difficult waves of enemies, the player tends to play strategically, use map knowledge to their advantage, and ration their resources in order to survive. One of the most iconic examples in this genre is the Call of Duty Zombies mode that was originally introduced as a bonus reward for completing the main games campaign in Call of Duty: World at War (Treyarch, 2008). This example was one of the first instances that popularised the round-based survival genre that included fast paced combat, puzzle like map design, hidden easter eggs, and wave-based progression.

This genre is known for its high replayability value, and its ability to create intense moments of gameplay. Players are placed in intricately crafted level, facing off waves of AI enemies that increase in both number and difficulty with each round.

This project explores the design and development of a custom round – based survival game that is created in Unity. Timeline Takedown and my thought process behind certain mechanics in this game take direct inspiration from the mechanics and pacing of Call of Duty Zombies. The goal is to develop a game that captures the intensity and satisfaction of surviving waves of enemies, while also exploring exciting locations through custom made levels and enemies.

As part of this project two fully playable maps have been created, each offering unique layout, theme, weapons, and enemies. These maps aim to test different survival strategies and enhance repalyabilty as they all have completely different layouts, for example one is inside a tight cornered hospital and another is outside in the sandy climate of Egypt. This project also investigates how wave escalation, enemy AI , and environmental design contribute to overall player engagement in round-based survival games.

## 2.2 Market / Competitors

Waved-based gameplay is a core mechanic used in many successful titles. The following table compares several games that utilise this system, highlighting their unique features, supported platforms, and player feedback to help inform future design considerations.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Game Title | Features | Platform | Reviews (Customer Feedback) |
| Call Of Duty Zombies | * “Easter Eggs” – Objectives hidden in maps requiring puzzle solving * Custom maps * Perk system * Progressive weapon upgrades * Large AAA team behind development | PC, Xbox, PlayStation, limited Nintendo products | Generally positive – praised for addictive gameplay, creativity, and replay value. However, more recent titles have shown a lack of player engagement due to poor choices by the developers such as replacing beloved voice actors with AI and using AI generated art (Yin-Poole, 2025). |
| Killing Floor | * Co – op survival horror * Unique perk system * Boss fights * Variety of enemies and weapons | PC, Xbox, PlayStation | Positive – loved for teamwork focus, fun to play with friends. But some say it can feel repetitive. |
| Left 4 dead | * AI Director dynamically changes the gameplay * Co-op story mode * Different infected types * Fast-paced wave combat | PC, Xbox | Very Positive – acclaimed for co-op fun, replayability, and modding support. |
| Sker Ritual | * Round based survival horror * Co-op (1-4 Players) * Supernatural enemies * Weapon upgrades and unique abilities * “Easter Eggs” – Objectives hidden in maps requiring | PC, PlayStation, Xbox | Mostly Positive – praised for atmosphere and gameplay loop, though some desire more content. |
| Deep Rock Galactic | * Co-op wave survival * Objective based missions * Class system * Procedurally generated caves | PC, Xbox, PlayStation | Very Positive – praised for teamwork mechanics, humour, and replayability. |

*Figure 1: Competitor Analysis*

## 2.3 Objectives & Deliverables

A Game Design Document (GDD) was created for Timeline Takedown and can be found in Appendix 1. During the development of this document, a list of key deliverables was outlined and organised using a priority-based system. This helped structure the development process by identifying which features and assets were essential for the core gameplay experience, and which could be considered lower priority or stretch goals, depending on the time available.

Must Have :

o Functional wave-based combat system with enemies and bosses

o Historical themed levels with unique enemies and environments

o Basic UI – Health display, ammo, wave counter, etc)

o Player movement and combat mechanics( movement, shooting, enemy targeting)

o Basic level progression with the time machine parts and boss fights

Should Have :

o Multiple difficulty settings( easy/normal/hard)

o Weapon variety (different weapons)

o Power Ups

o Sound Design that matches the map theme

Could Have:

o 2 player CO-OP

o Boss-Specific mechanics that vary depending on location (special attacks)

o Cosmetic customisation for player model and weapons

o Player level progression

Want to Have:

o More than 3 or levels, possibly up to 10

o Online support for friends to play over the internet

o Hidden challenges/missions (easter-eggs)

Although not being stated in the GDD directly, having an itch.io page built for the game and uploading a working .exe on the itch page was also a “must have” requirement.