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Timeline Takedown

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I would like to thank me for working relentlessly this year

I would like to thank Anthony Edwards, he has been incredibly helpful this year going out of his way to help out and genuinely caring about issues I encountered or questions I have.

And lastly thank you to me again

Abstract DONE (314 words)

This report outlines the development of Timeline Takedown, a first-person, wave-based survival shooter developed using the Unity game engine. The project draws inspiration from classic round-based survival modes, such as those found in Call of Duty Zombies. The motivation behind this project stems from my personal experience growing up with games in this genre. In recent years, I have observed a noticeable decline in the quality and innovation of similar games, which led me to explore creating my own version - tailored to deliver a fun, replayable experience for my friends, family, and broader audiences who enjoy this style of gameplay.

This report begins with an exploration of existing games within the round-based survival shooter genre, examining what made them successful and identifying the key developers and titles that influenced the field. Following this, I will outline the objectives and deliverables of the project I created, along with the method of approach taken to meet these goals. In this section of the report will also be a lit review, where I discuss blank.

This main body of this report focuses on the development and implementation of the game. I will be discussing the project management techniques I used to maintain a steady and efficient workflow throughout the project. I will also be breaking down the development sprints and discussing what was achieved at each phase, and when they took place. Additionally, user testing will be covered detailing the tools and methods used to gather feedback and the resulting changes made to the game.

The final section of the report will feature an end of project review, where I will reflect on what was achieved throughout this project, and the quality of the work achieved. This will be followed by a reflection, evaluating what went well, what could have been improved, and how this experience will affect how I work on projects in the future.

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GitHub Repository:

Itchio Page where the game is hosted:

Insert link to your code submission directory

1. **Introduction (400 words)**
   1. **Overview**

Timeline Takedown is a video game developed for PC, with an initial release planned for Itch.io, and potential future release on Steam. The game was created using Unity Editor version 2022.3.18f1, with all scripting written in C#. Inkscape was used to design the game’s user interface elements.

The gameplay takes place across two distinct levels, each featuring a unique theme to provide variety and maintain player engagement. In each level, the player must survive five escalating waves of enemies before facing a final boss encounter in round five. Defeating the boss rewards the player with a timepiece part, which is required to progress to the next level. This core gameplay loop is designed to offer a structured yet intense survival experience that encourages strategic play and replayability.

* 1. **Audience**

**Timeline Takedown** is designed to fall under the **PEGI 12** age rating, as it features “violence in a fantasy setting or non-realistic violence” (1). The visual style and gameplay avoid graphic content, making it suitable for younger audiences compared to more intense survival shooters. Despite its simplified tone, the game retains the core appeal of the round-based survival genre, offering an engaging and fast-paced experience that is accessible to a wide range of players.

The game fits within the round-based survival shooter market, alongside titles such as *Call of Duty Zombies*, *Killing Floor*, and similar wave-based experiences. However, unlike these examples which typically target an audience of males aged 18 to 34 (2), often due to more mature themes and realistic violence, Timeline Takedown is intended to reach a slightly broader and younger demographic. Its simpler mechanics and less intense tone are designed to be more approachable, reducing the learning curve while maintaining the genre’s core excitement.

* 1. **Purpose**

The purpose of Timeline Takedown was to create a game that would be enjoyed by my friends , family , and players all over the world who enjoy playing games in this category. I wanted to create a game in the Round Based Survival category that hadn’t quite been done before, I wanted to make something unique that I would enjoy playing, I wasn’t bothered about if the game would be successful or make any money.

The aim of this game is to survive, explore the map design and have fun. The game includes story telling at parts such as the introduction to the game and the end game.

1. **Background, objectives & deliverables**
   1. **Project Background**

Timeline Takedown is a round-based survival shooter, these types of games have become a widely recognised and 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. 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 maps, 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. (Maybe more like not custom levels but relevant cux it has same weapon theme and enemy and map)

As part of this project, two (possibly three) 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, player agency, and environmental design contribute to overall player engagement in round based survival games.

* 1. **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 (1) | * “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(3). |
| 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 (4) 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*

* 1. **Objectives & Deliverables**

A Game Design Document (GDD) was created for Timeline Takedown and can be found in the appendix of this report. 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 itcho page built for the game and uploading a working .exe on the itch page was also a “must have” requirement.

1. **Ludology**

 is the study of games, the act of playing them, and the players and cultures surrounding them.

1. Introduction to Ludology / Game Studies
2. Genre & Gameplay Analysis – Round-Based Survival Games
3. Case Study – Call of Duty Zombies
4. Map Design and Environmental Ludology
5. Mechanics & Player Feedback
6. Ludology Reflections on Your Development
7. Conclusion

**4. Method of Approach**

**4. 1 Methodologies**

When deciding on a development methodology for Timeline Takedown, I chose to use Agile. As a solo developer, Agile was the perfect fit as it allowed me to adapt and evolve the game based on new ideas, playtesting results, and feedback. For instance, one level originally began as an underwater map, but after testing the swimming mechanics, I realised it added unnecessary complexity. I made the decision to pivot and redesign the level as an abandoned hospital, which better suited the gameplay and development timeline.

Agile worked well for me because it doesn’t lock you into a rigid plan. This flexibility is ideal for solo game development, where iteration is constant, and creative direction can shift at any moment. I organised my work into two-week sprints, each with clear goals and deliverables. These sprints helped keep my workload manageable and track progress on what had been done and what needed to be done. I also had regular supervisor meetings at the end of each sprint, which I attended everyone without fail. These were useful as they allowed for discussion of the progress made on the current sprint , receive feedback and ask questions.

For project management, I used Trello to track tasks, prioritise features, and stay organised throughout development.

**3. 2 Technologies**

Enemy AI maybe idk YEH I THINK SO

**3.3 Project Management Approach**

This project was managed by breaking down tasks into Sprints. The sprints took place every 14 days and consisted of a set list of tasks that I had to complete during that sprint time. In order to manage my Backlog, Sprints, Important dates and other key times I used

This dude spoke about phases (sprints)

Image

Speak about how long each sprint took and typically how many tasks were there

Trello

Github how I labeld commits and only would do them if neeed , good if I needed to refer back to old save. Used the Desktop app as it had a easy interface

**7.Implementation**

**7.1 Planning & Research**

Read Books

Watcged videos

GDD

**Sprint 1 (8.11.2024 – 22.11.2024)**

For my first sprint I started by creating my GitHub Repository

Set up Trello and github

Paper Level Designs

GDD

Movement

Player

Playing around with modelling tools and finding assets

Sprint 2 (22.11.2024 – 6.12.2024)

Started to create level 1 Design

Started to implement mechanics ?

Create Basic UI

Create Game States (start, menu , pause)

Devlog 1?

Sprint 3 (6.12.2024 – 20.12.2024)

Map Models starting to be created,

Game States

Found assets online

Not to sure what I did in this sprint , I think on the Trello this can count as 3 and 4 maybe

* 1. User Testing GO THRO AND RE RITE

User Testing was crucial to the development of this project as I needed to get an understanding of what the general public thought of the game at its current state, so I can receive feedback and apply changes that become apparent through that feedback.

When creating the user testing forms I decided to make the questinare annonamouse as I had no need to collect personal data, I just wanted to receive feedback on the game, I was asking no personal questions. With having no personal data collected , that meant I did not have to spend more time adhering to GDPR and other data regulation rules as I just cut it all out by making it annoanmous.

I wont discus every single playest as this would take up half of this report, I will cover the most impactfull ones, and leave the data below:

**First Play test** 17/02/2025

My first Play Test was conducted on the 17/02/2025, this playtest was shortly after I had finished with my first level. I conducted this playtest in person inside of the University of Plymouths Smeaton Building. For this playtest I created a excel spreadsheet that held questions and required the testers to fill out their responses in a dedicated box next to the questions. You can find photos here link to apendenciees

Speak about what I chose to test in this ..

A screenshot of a computer screen

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

*Figure IDK, User Testing Excel sheet*

The playtest proved to be successful as I got feedback that I would proceed to use to iterate on my game such as a bug with the boss not spawning in, and players not knowing that they can pick up health packs. I took this feedback and made it so the boss spawned and so on…

**Changing the Testing Approach / Method**

However, this method of testing using an excel sheet was extremely unprofessional and so much more complex than just creating a forms doc using google forms or Microsoft forums as this method overwhelmed the tester with so much text on the screen and unclear instructions on what they need to fill out and where. Because of this I created a new user testing document using Teams Forums , that I would use in the testings in the future. I used this because …. Ez to turn into redable data etc

You can view the revised empty testing document here : link

Or View photos In the appendix

**Continuing testing**

All dates testing happened

**Testing Results**

The results were turned into data for graphs and stuff so its easy to read, this was used to improve changes to the game. You can view all the data here in apendenciees.