

Case Study: FPS

Game Development Foundations

Last modified 02/02/16 by Sam Cartwright

Contents

- What is a First Person Shooter?
- Seminal FPSs
- FPS Mechanics
- Making a Great FPS

What is a First Person Shooter?

- Uses a first-person perspective
 - Traditionally, you never see the player
- Focused on gun and projectile weapon-based combat
- Traditionally shows the protagonist's arms at the bottom of the screen, carrying a weapon

Seminal FPSs

- First-Person Shooters that define the genre:
 - Wolfenstein 3D (PC, 1992)
 - Doom (PC, 1993)
 - Duke Nukem 3D (PC, 1996)
 - Quake (PC, 1996)



Seminal FPSs

- GoldenEye (N64, 1997)
- Half-Life (PC, 1998)
- Halo: Combat Evolved (XBOX, 2001)



Modern FPSs

- Almost all FPSs will have a single-player mode, but most modern games will also contain a multiplayer aspect
- Multiplayer game modes include:
 - Deathmatch / Team Deathmatch
 - Capture the Flag
 - Search and destroy
 - Last man standing

FPS Mechanics

- Movement:
 - Core movement involves forward / backwards, strafing, jumping, crouching, crawling, etc.
 - Player movement has evolved a lot since the early FPS games. Its an important aspect that can be difficult to get 'feeling' right
 - Other mechanics can be made based on movement:
 - Hiding in shadows (Splinter Cell)
 - Rocket jumping (Quake)
 - The camera is locked in a first person perspective and often includes a slight rocking motion when the player moves to increase realism
 - Sounds of breathing and footsteps also increase realism

FPS Mechanics

- Shooting weapons is the most important/satisfying mechanic in this genre
- Games in the genre often distinguish themselves by their selection of weapons
- Different weapons have different abilities, affecting enemies in different ways
 - Enemies may require strategy to overcome

FPS Mechanics

- Other mechanics found in FPSs:
 - Cover systems - use stationary or moving obstacles to avoid damage (Gears of War 2)
 - Enemy A.I (F.E.A.R)
 - Environment-based puzzles (Half-life)

Making a Great FPS

- Have interesting movement
 - Not every game needs to make you a super wall-running ninja. They just need to make movement interesting.
 - Think about double jumping, wall jumping, mantling over walls. This can boost the speed of the game and make shooting more interesting
- Have interesting places to move around it
 - Have an interesting environment
 - The vertical level design of Half-Life 2 was an important feature
 - Level design should empower and entice the player to move

Making a Great FPS

- Worthy Opponents
 - The job of a good enemy in an FPS is to move the player around the map
 - Enemies should push you to use all the elements of the game
- Awesome Guns
 - Guns should look cool in our hands, sound amazing, and help us engage with the game space
 - The feedback from firing is important – muzzle flash, recoil, sound, camera shake, etc. Make it rich and meaty

Summary

- First Person Shooters use a camera set to a first-person perspective
- They concentrate on weapons-based combat
- Player movement and shooting weapons are the core mechanics in this genre
- Modern FPSs also have a strong multi-player component

Extra Reading

- Article: History of First-Person Shooters
<http://uk-microsites.ign.com/history-of-first-person-shooters/>
- Article: Five Things Every Great First-Person Shooter Needs
<http://kotaku.com/five-things-every-great-first-person-shooter-needs-1653281844>

References

- IGN. 2016. *History Of First Person Shooters*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://uk-microsites.ign.com/history-of-first-person-shooters/>. [Accessed 02 February 2016].
- Techopedia. 2016. *What is First Person Shooter (FPS)? - Definition from Techopedia*. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.techopedia.com/definition/241/first-person-shooter-fps>. [Accessed 02 February 2016].
- Kotaku. 2016. *Five Things Every Great First-Person Shooter Needs*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://kotaku.com/five-things-every-great-first-person-shooter-needs-1653281844>. [Accessed 02 February 2016].