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Multiplayer Mechanics

The Jackbox series is a game with released annual packs made for a group of around 2 to 8 players to play as a party. The Jackbox allows for one player to own the desired pack, and the remaining players to join their game via the internet browser. Along with this streamers can give a game code to an audience of viewers to also join the game. Specifically looking at the Jackbox Party Pack 8, there are a total of 5 minigames to play. Each game is unique with different conditions for winning and losing. There is a drawing game where the best wrong answer wins, a trivia game, a job interview using the words made by other players, a team based survey game, and a social deduction game. Since each gamemode allows for either a private party of around 2 - 8 players or the private party and an audience to play there can be an interesting outcome to each game. Depending on the game there will either be a team of the core players facing off against the audience or the audience votes on what the core players do. The addition of the audience, albeit not necessary, can help to determine the outcome of a game and negate ties with other players, and in a sense speeding up the game. I believe the purpose of the audience is simply to add more input to the game, especially ones where voting is required. If the game did not have an audience function the game may hinder as many streamers play the Jackbox, but when it comes to the average person it has no real use. I am uncertain if this is part of the game or not, but the ability to join a random game as a part of the audience to spice up someone else's game. This coupled with the ability to join from the browser gives players the ability to play a full game without the need to purchase it, and thus could be persuaded to purchase the party pack to play with friends.

The second game I choose is Destiny 2’s ability system. In Destiny 2 each player, known as a guardian, has a set of various abilities. These abilities are a special melee attack, a grenade, a double jump of some variety, a class ability dictated by their selected class, and a super ability. The grenade, special melee, class ability, and super ability all take time to recharge; however there are scenarios in the game that allow the player to decrease the overall time required to charge their abilities. Most modern shooters have the traditional grenade and melee however the melee is a simple close range attack, and the grenade can be one of many but they do not replenish unless picked up or otherwise resupplied. By having the grenade attached to a cooldown the player will know that they can use the ability after a set amount of time. On top of this Destiny 2 has it set to where each subclass has only 3 different grenades, and a special melee depending on the skill tree the player choses. This allows other players either in PvE or PvP to recognize what subclass a player is using, as well as what tree, thus determining what super ability the player may come to use. This adds some skill required to recognize and adapt to the possible situations that could arise, especially in PvP. To prevent the game from being solely focused on using grenades, much like Halo, Destiny 2 does not replenish basic abilities on respawn, unless in the set gamemode that allows that. Lastly is a class's super ability, a short but powerful attack, strong defense, or supportive ability that takes some time to charge. Each class has unique super abilities, but each class has abilities that revolve around attacking, defending, or supporting. Each super lasts less than a minute if the super is not used, such as attacking with an attack based super, or a few seconds if an attack based super is to continuously attack. This is to prevent an overwhelming advantage to the player in their super, but if they must run to a destination gives them a small window of opportunity to do so. In PvE this gives players a tool to accomplish their goals, making harder activities slightly easier, and in PvP gives a team that card to reverse the flow of the game and turn a loss into a win. Overall I enjoy the ability system in Destiny, and if Destiny did not have its ability system it would be just another shooter with better than average gunplay.

The third and last game is the Forza Horizon lineup. Forza is a series of racing games exclusive to Microsoft platforms and the Horizon variations of Forza are open world instead of locked to set tracks. In Forza Horizon multiplayer there is a toggleable ghost mode that is enabled when a car is going backwards on the track, at a complete stop, or is driving backwards. This ghost mode makes the car slightly transparent and removes the car to car collider, allowing other players to move through them. I like this mechanic because it prevents griefers or trollers from ruining the game experience, as most race games are plagued by rammers who will do anything to prevent others from gaining a lead. Although the ghost mode can be disabbled by the game host it is usually kept on in matchmade games as each game has at least one person dedicated to ramming. Although the mechanic is not needed it was a nice addition to the game that helped ease the frustration of playing with other players that are either worse than you or do not care about your enjoyment. Without the mechanic Forza would still be the same, but more casual players may stray away from multiplayer races in favor of racing against the AI.