



Featuring...

Hollow Knight

General Information:

Name:	Hollow Knight
Publisher/Developer:	Team Cherry
Platform(s) Available:	Windows, Mac, Linux, Switch, PS4, Xbox One, Wii U.
Genre(s):	Metroidvania, Platformer, Indie, Exploration, Adventure, Side Scroller.
Target Market:	A game for all ages, achievable to win by children, yet challenging enough for teens and older audience desiring additional content and intensity.

Game Overview:

The core gameplay of Hollow Knight can be summarized simply as a metroidvania type game. It starts the player off with minimal character functionality, just movement, an attack and healing. Gradually the player gains new capabilities, such as a double jump, dash, super dash, ranged spells, and other unique features. This is done as the player explores, finding hidden treasures, minibosses, bosses, and even rewards purchased from stores. The game is simply about exploring freely, seeing where you are currently capable of going, and as abilities are unlocked, so too is access to unknown areas.

The visuals in the game are phenomenal. Somehow simple in design, yet detailed shading, layers, fluid hand drawn animations, effects and lighting give a breath of fresh air to the game. The art style is unique, featuring more bug-like, cartoonish characters, and a vibrant atmosphere that is relaxing, yet exciting. The audio is all created specifically for the game, with relaxing melodies, intense boss music, plenty of ambient noise that fits right in, along with amusing character noises and gibberish audio from non player characters.

The interface is fairly straightforward, you have 4 windows: your character with their weapons, and abilities displayed, a map of the area (if obtained from the map maker in the area),

the trinkets your character is currently using and owns, and fun facts and hints about all the enemies you've encountered or beaten.

The story is for the player to discover on their own, through lore, item descriptions, dialogue, and contemplation. The only knowledge the player is given, is the area they are in was once a great kingdom, brought to ruin. The only beings left deep inside the kingdom have mostly been driven mad, and become primitive. However the story is very rich for those desiring to delve into it, with a satisfyingly beautiful, yet chilling story to be told to any who wish to challenge themselves.

Game Critique:

The game was one of the most fun games I've ever played, and among my favorite games of all times. The game felt unique, lifelike, the perfect amount of challenging, familiar yet with unique concepts and exceptionally improved classic features, and fluid combat.

I've already replayed the game 2 more times since this course begin, and it is just as fun with different endings, additional content, and 3 free DLC's kindly given by the developers for its fans.

If I had to describe this game in one word, it would be "Rich". Rich in effort, rich in music made, characters drawn, and map design thought out, boss mechanics and difficulty arranged. The developer team was very small, comprised of only a few individuals, and they put their hearts into this game, and you can really feel the love they had for this project they undertook for so long.

I believe this game is great for males, females, children, teens, adults, casual gamers, adrenaline seeking gamers, and anyone who enjoys adventure, combat and exploration games. The art is simple and "cute" yet also can be "scary" or "cool". The combat increases steadily and fairly, so that anyone can manage completion of the base game/mandatory areas and bosses, yet offers a desire to explore all the optional content with all its difficulties and excitement.

The game motivates its players with how much content there is to unlock, and how much they quickly get to unlock. It's paced in a way that never feels overwhelming, and when you

really feel the need for an ability or function, it seems to be something the player finds very soon after. Other metroidvania game can't compete with the atmosphere, audio, visuals, and life this game has. With how fluid the graphics are, combat feels very consistent, and real, as opposed to some more pixel type metroidvania games that are fun, yet don't push you into the story and life of the game.

The only problem I had with the game, is that it shouldn't require a special item to be equipped (taking up an equipment slot that could be better used) for a compass to tell, where on the map the player is. Other than that, the UI is great, gameplay is perfect, and I really can't say a negative word of what was done poorly, or "bugged/glitchy".

The only suggestions I would have to "improve" the game, is potentially more weapon types, and different armor to unlock or cosmetics to use.

Final Analysis:

This game was inspiring to say the least. As a gamer, and a developer, there was so much to strive for. A development team of such few members showed, a "game of the year" quality game is possible with the right passion, effort and time, even without a large studio or financial backing.

Having the most realistic or "best" graphics is something many top notch studios are capable of doing, and while great, never feels unique or set's their games apart from others. Hollow Knight shows that what set's a game apart from others visually is taking the risk to have a unique style suited for the game specifically, that can be simple at base, yet by adding on layer by layer, tiny animation by tiny animation, simple affects become a masterpiece.

Keep the mechanics of a game simple, yet offer creative and diverse ways to use those simple skills, and ceiling for which to strive to achieve. Having a plethora of abilities or skills can often times be confusing or take a lot of mental thought to coordinate combos and other higher level combat movements. However these require you to think about the exact sequence of keys and skills to use, rather than having the player focus more on the game and the moment they are in.

This game made me realize I need to make a unique design that feels natural to me, yet unique and something to be passionate in. Sometimes simplicity is best, and sometimes an eye to detail is what's necessary. It's important to find a good balance between both aspects.

Level design should be intuitive, while some challenge is nice, it's important to have a player always feel like they are progressing towards a goal, or at least know the general path to their goal.