Submission Worksheet

Submission Data

Course: IT265-002-S2026

Assignment: Case Study 1 - Atari

Student: Joseph J. (jdj32)

Status: Submitted | **Worksheet Progress:** 100%

Potential Grade: 604.00/604.00 (100.00%)

Received Grade: 0.00/604.00 (0.00%)

Started: 2/9/2026 2:43:09 PM

Updated: 2/9/2026 9:33:08 PM

Grading Link: https://learn.ethereallab.app/assignment/v3/IT265-002-S2026/case-study-1-atari/grading/jdj32

View Link: https://learn.ethereallab.app/assignment/v3/IT265-002-S2026/case-study-1-atari/view/jdj32

Instructions

1. **Step 1:**
   From this spreadsheet, pick a game you plan to analyze (selection must be unique) and put your UCID to the left of it:
   Game Selection Spreadsheet
   If a selection turns red, it has already been chosen. Do not edit others' content/selection and be mindful if multiple people are working on the sheet simultaneously.

2. **Step 2:**
   Use one of these sites to playtest and analyze your game:

   - Free 80s Arcade
   - AARP Atari Games
   - Keystone Kapers
   - Triplets and Us

   If none of these work, use an alternative close to the original game.

3. **Step 3:**
   Analyze and research your chosen game. Collect resources and include them in your responses for related sections.

4. **Step 4:**
   Save the worksheet, export as a PDF, and upload it to the mentioned branch on GitHub. Create a pull request, merge it to `main`, and upload the PDF to Canvas.

Section #1: (150 pts.) Game Overview

Progress: 100%

≡✎ Task #1 (50 pts.) - Game Details - Note the Game's title, developer, publisher, platform, genre, and release date

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

Title: Pitfall II: Lost Caverns

Developer: Activision

Publisher: Activision

Designer: David Crane

Platform: Atari 2600

Genre: Platformer

Release Date: 1984

Resources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitfall_II:_Lost_Caverns#CITEREFItow1984

https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0340903/releaseinfo/

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≡ Task #2 (50 pts.) - History and Industry - Note the historical context of the game's release and its place in the industry

Your Response:

Pitfall II was released during the fallout of the Video Game Crash of 1983. The video game market had become oversaturated with 3rd party developers only recently coming into existence (Activision being the first in 1979). This, combined with competition from home computers such as the Commodore 64, crashed the game market. Pitfall II broke sales expectations and ended up the highest-selling console game of the year.

Resources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitfall_II:_Lost_Caverns#CITEREFItow1984

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_crash_of_1983

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≡ Task #3 (50 pts.) - Compare the game to similar games of the time

Your Response:

APitfall II was more advanced than other Atari 2600 games of the time. While other newer consoles of the time, such as the Famicom (AKA the NES), were significantly more advanced than the Atari 2600 (which was 8 years old at the time), Pitfall II pushed the limits of what the Atari 2600 could handle. Developer David Crane created a custom computer chip called the Display Processor Chip, which allowed for improved graphics and music, surpassing the Atari 2600's original hardware limitations.

Resources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitfall_II:_Lost_Caverns#CITEREFltow1984

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Section #2: (2 pts.) Gameplay Mechanics And Level Design

Progress: 100%

≡✎ Task #1 (1 pt.) - Core gameplay mechanics and how they shape the player's experience

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The core gameplay loop is dodging enemies (jumping/timing walking under) while exploring the map in search of 3 main "items" and collectibles that increase score. Collecting these things adds to your score, while dying and falling too far decreases your score. The presence of checkpoints makes this game a somewhat forgiving platformer. It keeps the bar for entry lower, while the potential for a highscore run keeps the game engaging for more skilled gamers.

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≡✎ Task #2 (1 pt.) - Level design and how it affects gameplay

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The level design is rather basic, likely due to hardware restrictions. You follow a somewhat linear path around the map, collecting gold bars and looking for the objective "items". This style of level design encourages the player to explore, loop back, and try new things when they have nowhere left to explore (a blind jump is required to obtain one of the objective "items").

Section #3: (150 pts.) Graphic And Audio Design

Progress: 100%

≡, Task #1 (75 pts.) - Game's visual appearance, artistic choices, and how they contribute to the experience

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The game's visuals are very good for the hardware available. I would even call the sunset in the above-ground area objectively pretty, regardless of its simplicity. The contrast between the color above ground and the dark tones below adds to the cave-diving-esque experience.

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≡, Task #2 (75 pts.) - Sound design, including music and sound effects, and their impact on the game

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

This game is incredibly advanced for its time and the hardware. It was the first Atari 2600 game with a fully scored music track and sound effects. The music starts with a heroic jingle before looping on it main background music, with exeptions for reloading checkpoints where the game plays a bit more somber of a tone. The track and sound effects, however basic, pull you more into the game, let you know how you should feel when you reload a checkpoint, and give a sense of accomplishment upon completion.

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Section #4: (150 pts.) Narrative And Storytelling

Progress: 100%

≡, Task #1 (75 pts.) - Narrative structure, main plot points, and setting

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

This game takes place in a lost cavern in Machu Picchu, Peru, where Pitfall Harry is looking for his niece, Rhonda, Quickclaw the cowardly cat, and the stolen and hidden Raj Diamond. Additionally, there are some stolen US gold bars to recover, and a stone-aged rat a university wants to study.

Resources:

https://www.ataricompendium.com/archives/manuals/vcs/pitfall2_diary.pdf

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≡, Task #2 (75 pts.) - Character development and how it integrates with gameplay

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

There are two points of character development in the game: Pitfall Harry's discovery of Red Crosses (checkpoints), and balloons. The checkpoints are theorized to be magic, energized healing centers created by the Incas. These red crosses transport Pitfall Henry back to their location when he would be knocked out of commission. The balloons are specimen bags filled with steam that allow Pitfall Henry to float up otherwise unclimbable heights to continue through the map. These balloons were created by Rhonda as a signal that she was still alive.

Resources:

https://www.ataricompendium.com/archives/manuals/vcs/pitfall2_diary.pdf

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Section #5: (150 pts.) Impact And Reception

Progress: 100%

≡, Task #1 (75 pts.) - Critical and player reception, including reviews and feedback

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

As previously mentioned, Pitfall II was the highest-selling console game in 1984. It recieved positive reception from critics, who stated it was an improvement from the already critically acclaimeed Pitfall. They praised the graphics, sound design, and gameplay loop, while critiquing the storyline and lack of game overs (idk why you want these).

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📝 Task #2 (75 pts.) - Game's impact on the gaming industry and its cultural significance

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

Pitfall II was one of the first games with a checkpoint system as opposed to the traditional lives system of the time. This and its level design philosophy were likely inspirations for the Metroidvania style of games. It was also one of the last great games of the Atari 2600, as newer generation consoles were taking focus. Later "sequels" were released, though David Crane stated they were not "Pitfall sequels as much as other games with the name Pitfall placed on them."

References:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitfall_II:_Lost_Caverns#CITEREFItow1984

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Section #6: (2 pts.) Reflection

Progress: 100%

📝 Task #1 (1 pt.) - Was the game "fun"? What made it fun or not?

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

It was kinda meh, to be honest. I would attribute a decent chunk of this opinion to the fact that I'm stressed about other classes, and would like to give the game another try once my courseload lightens up. However, there were a few factors that kept me from really enjoying the game. I understand the hardware limitations on the game, but the respawn times, input response time, movement feel, and lack of movement options all made the game feel a little annoying. I've been too spoiled by new games that a lack of features that I am used to basically every game having kinda turned me off from Pitfall II.

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📝 Task #2 (1 pt.) - Reflection on the learning experience and ease of research

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

information on the game was not very difficult to come by, as there are multiple wikis and blog posts about the game. Primary sources are a whole different story. Obviously, there is the game manual to reference, but other than that, much of the marketing/reception/context behind the game is locked behind old newspaper paywalls. The transfer of information has changed much with the age of the internet. Much of the information I was looking for likely spread through newspapers, television advertisements, and word of mouth. Of the three, newspapers are paywalled, many television adverts are lost, and word of mouth about the game has long since halted.

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