Final Theme Decision – Egg Chef

***Note: This research will build on Ross’s friction game research…***

**Pocket Tanks**

A game using very simplistic art, themed off the Commodore 64 style of games.

Almost all the GUI takes place in a box at the bottom of the screen so as not to get in the way of the screen and be clear cut. The player characters (tanks) and the “Player 1” or “2” share a colour connection – the red tank has “player 1” written in red etc.

* Of the themes we have so far, trying to maintain the similarity principle would be more difficult for the ‘egg’ theme. Having different coloured eggs would likely remove from the immersion and simplistic realism we’d be going for, so we’d likely have to go for something like changing the frying pan colour and be more inventive with it. Alternatively we could try and use other principles such as proximity to maintain the clarity of our design.
* For the stunt snails idea, we could simply change the colour of the snails’ shells to match the “player 1” or “2” to make this clear. In playtesting of the basic prototype, occasionally people got confused which player was which (as did we) so we want to consider making everything as clear as possible so players can focus on game enjoyment above all else.

**Mario and Sonic at the winter Olympic games (Curling)**

A 3D game using fairly detailed models and maps, however there are aspects worth noting about it.

Even while moving, the camera and framing always makes an effort to keep the puck (the object being affected by friction) the centre of focus whenever possible and relevant. The GUI does rather clutter the screen, however UI items are kept towards the edges of the screen. The goal area (where the puck would ideally land) is extremely visible against the background at all times – something I believe to be particularly important in our game.

* For the sake of our game playing out as we intend for it to (in this current iteration at least), we want the whole track visible at once. Moving the camera along with the player characters we feel would take something away from the gameplay. It may work as a method of increasing difficulty in later iterations but for now, what we should take from this is that we need to make sure the player characters stand out against whatever backdrop we give the game.
* For the egg theme, the goal area will likely be much easier to show against the ramp (frying pan). The centre of a Teflon pan is usually red against the dark grey or black of the pan. Clarity while maintaining realism will be easy with this in mind.
* For the stunt snail theme, showing some kind of end goal against the leaf (ramp) will be rather difficult as we want to keep as much diegetic as possible.

**Trial Evolution**

A 3D game using high detail models and maps, however this time the game plays out much like ours – friction based and side-on view with the player character navigating ramps (albeit much more complex than we’re planning to have).

The GUI is generally kept as out of the way as possible, normally kept at the top or left edges of the screen. Start of each race is handled by a “3, 2, 1, Go” countdown but this appears in the dead centre of the screen. Since gameplay is not active yet, putting UI items in in the dead centre of the screen in a large font is fine as it means players get the clarity and it doesn’t interrupt gameplay. The start countdown is also signalled by little beeps and a small traffic light type item in the back layer of the track which shows the countdown via lights. Checkpoints and the finish line are shown with similar markers on the back layer of the track. This is a good idea of what signs we can have in the game, as well as things to consider for the more diegetic approach we intend to have.

**WarioWare (**[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmPbd4rEmRE**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmPbd4rEmRE)**)**

A 2D game series based on hundreds of very short party style minigames (occasionally featuring 3D minigames). The art style is generally very minimalistic and cartoonish.

Each minigames tends to require one single action (often repeated a few times) in order to successfully complete that minigame. You are typically given 3-10 seconds per minigame and they are rolled out in very quick succession. As such, lots of information has to be conveyed in a VERY minimal time frame. It typically throws a buzzword onto the screen like “fly” or “open” to tell you what you need to do to finish the minigame. It only shows what it needs to show otherwise there would be too much for the player to comprehend in that time.

There is a fair bit to be learned from all these games. We want our game to be just as enjoyable (though evoking different emotions in some cases), be able to condense the fun into very short rounds, to be able to convey as much information as possible while giving as little as possible (diegesis), have effective GUI placement on the screen, immersion into the game world, only to include what is necessary on screen and clarity of all objects in the scene.

From all of this research, I honestly believe that the **Egg theme** would be the ideal one to go with.

For the demographic we’re going for (12-35 both genders), it seems particularly appropriate. With snails some people may be put off by insects playing a major role in the game despite the absence of realism but an egg is just an egg. Everyone know how to cook an egg from a very young age. It’s a simple, much loved food with all ages which means everyone would likely understand the concept of the game far more quickly – just cooking the egg. While changing up the colours of eggs would likely pose an immersion problems, there are a number of ways we can solve the “which player is which?” issue. We have access to changing any part of the scene (the pans or the end goal too) or if we choose not to change those up, there are a number of things we can do with signs or the UI to show much more clearly which player is which. From a colour point of view, the egg, pan and end goal will all be very distinct from each other which will help the clarity massively. Sounds for such a game will be easy to find (clangs of metal, sizzling etc.), which will help to create the immersive experience and art assets will be relatively simple to produce to a high standard. This will give us plenty of time in the polish stage to add animations and spend time iterating and playtesting to perfect our user experience as best as possible.