Le Mans Analysis

Le Mans, is a racing game which was released to commodore 64 platform in 1982 by HAL Laboratory. Le Mans in real life refers to an endurance race which is officially called, “24 Hours of Le Mans” located in France (« 24 Heures du Mans » in French). 24 Hours of Le Mans is a 24-hour lasting endurance race which means the race starts and end the next day taking exactly 24 hours to finish. Basically, the car that covers the most distance in that time wins. Hence, one of the aims is to finish the race and to spend the least amount of time in the pits. The Game Le Mans, like the real-life race, is also an endurance racing game, yet it is not a simulation but an arcade racing game with no end and the aim is to continue racing as long as possible, scoring the highest.

GUI and Scoring:

When opening the game and starting the fist time, the player can notice that the GUI is on the right, the car in the centre and it is at the starting line. Looking at the GUI the player will notice the score, time left, highest score and current speed of the car. After playing a while the player can notice the speed is 320 km/h maximum and going forward will grant a score to the player. When passing an opponent car, the player will not gain an additional point but can see a pink car symbol on GUI appear. When the number of symbols reaches 10, which means sequentially overtaking 10 cars, the symbols will be removed and 1000 points will be granted. In a while, the time has been ticking down and after gathering 20 000 points a time extension is granted which is 60 seconds, time extension is rewarded every 20 000 points.

Environment:

The game also includes a day cycle as well as an environment and track cycle. The day cycle is such that after a while environment darkens and your cars headlight will be turned on. Also, opponent cars back and front lights will be turned on but their headlight will not illuminate the track. Differing conditions and tracks also come into play as there are multiple such as: winter-snow, split track, straight, chicane, and the pit for when the player crashes. The track is enclosed with a gravel surface which will slow the car down and the car will not accelerate. This gravel

surface also exists in the pit but the pit extends the track so the gravel will be on most left as the pit is placed on the left.

Opponent Cars:

The opponent cars go at a certain pace which is slower than the player's maximum speed. These cars are meant to be passed as to gain points but they are also a challenge as they can be crashed into forcing the player to get into the pits. The opponent cars can be different colours and will have differing movement patterns. Some will go in a straight line and some will swerve across the track. The speed of swerving of opponent cars will increase as the player gathers more points increasing the likelihood of crashing which means a difficulty increase. As the player gathers more points the amount of opponent cars will also increase.

Details:

Some example details of the game are:

- Wheels have a sprite which will turn faster as the car goes faster.
- All the cars are the same model and resemble a Formula 1 car.
- The car has only one forward gear, there is no in-game gear mechanic, and the sound is directly related to the cars' speed.
- Each opponent car has a sound and will have a pseudo doppler effect when the player passes them or vice versa.
- Player's car colour will change on random each time the attempt resets.
- Possibly a deliberate design choice, players car will not discolour when night time.
- A bug exists; where exiting out of the pit lane, the controls can be stuck as of centring the car to the track which may result in crashing into opponent cars.
- Snow condition will change the sound of the players car going forward, but will not change opponent cars' sounds.
- Localization is European as kilometres per hour is used for unit of speed and the pit is on the left.

Tips and Tricks:

- It is usually better to overtake on the left as the pit is on the left which will shorten the time player gets there in the case of a crash.
- It is much more advantageous to use all the pit lane to speed up and possibly overtake as there will be no opponent cars in the way and opponent cars can not swerve into the pit lane.
- To slowdown the player might want to intentionally drive on the gravel as this will slow the car down even faster.
- For night time driving it is better to focus on the opponent cars light than the front of your own car to avoid or overtake them.
- Always being on the throttle rarely results in good, its better not to crash than to go marginally faster.