3D GAMING; THE PLAYSTATION AND NEW GENRES

VIRTUAL REALITY AND 3D

- VR research hit its stride in the early 90s.

- Game developers were pushing to create 3D worlds in games.

- 3D objects created using polygons.

- 3D math is relatively easy; the question is whether or not the hardware is powerful enough.

DACTYL NIGHTMARE

- Developed by Virtuality.

- One of the first commercially available arcade VR games.

- $65 K per machine.

- Players generally disappointed by the results.

OCULUS RIFT

- Consumer version to be released late this year or early next.

- Kickstarter-backed, plus gained VC funding.

- Sold to Facebook for $2B

- Wider FOV than competitors; first-mover advantage.

ID SOFTWARE

- Formed in 1991 by John Romero, John Carmack, Tom Hall and Adrian Carmack.

- Agreement with Apogee Software to develop shareware games.

- *Commander Keen* released in December 1990.

- Successful enough to lead to formation of Id.

3D TECHNOLOGY

- Texture mapping pioneered in 1974.

- Technological improvements by John Carmack permitted its use in real-time.

- Meant developers were no longer limited to flat coloured polygons.

- First commercial appearance in Wolfenstein 3D. Made Id into a top-tier developer.

DOOM

- Released December 10 1993.

- Not true 3D, but perceived as such.

- Innovated on many fronts: graphical, lighting, audio, multiplayer, textures.

- Pushed violence further than it had gone before.

- Story was intentionally paper thin.

LEGACY

- Doom was sold with a level editor.

- The impetus for the modding industry.

- Id licensed their 3D engine to other developers.

- Keys to making the FPS the dominant genre in the late 90s and 2000s.

PLAYSTATION

- Released December 3, 1994 in Japan. September 1995 in NA and Europe.

- 32-bit console sporting 3D graphics capabilities and CD-ROM media.

- Originally a collaboration between Nintendo and Sony.

- Announced at CES in 1991; Nintendo dropped Sony the next day for Philips.

3DO INTERACTIVE MULTIPLAYER

- Founded by Trip Hawkins.

- First released in fall 1993; discontinued by late 1996.

- A series of specs that could be licensed by 3rd part manufacturers.

- High price ($699) and market saturation was 3DO's downfall.

ATARI JAGUAR

- Released in late 1993 in NA; a year later in Japan and the EU.

- Derided for it's complex controller.

- A complete commercial failure; was not successful in signing on 3rd party developers.

- Failure forced Atari out of the console business entirely.

SEGA SATURN

- Released in late 1994 in Japan, and six months later in NA.

- The successor to the Sega Genesis.

- Primarily a 2D machine with some 3D capabilities.

- Launched early in the US in an effort to beat Sony; couldn't capitalize on opportunity.

VIRTUA FIGHTER

- Developed by Yu Suzuki of Sega.

- Released November 1993.

- Every character is made entirely of polygons.

- Inspired by earlier Suzuki game, *Virtua Racing*.

TOMB RAIDER

- Developed by Core Design in the UK.

- Originally designed as a male Indiana Jones type character.

- Had never been a popular female character before.

- More adolescent fantasy than feminist icon.

- Sold 7 - 8 million copies on Playstation alone.

GIRL POWER

- Associated with third-wave feminism (i.e. 1990s to present).

- Phrase primarily popularized by the Spice Girls, but had been used previously by members of the riot grrrl movement.

- Gained momentum around the same time *Tomb Raider* was released

- Increasing awareness within the industry of growing 'female demographic'.

BARBIE FASHION DESIGNER

- Released in 1996.

- The first sales breakthrough that proved games could appeal to a female audience.

- '…A version of femininity that is fundamentally lame.'

- Perpetuated the 'pink' game.

PURPLE MOON

- Founded by Brenda Laurel in 1995.

- Goal to create games for girls age 8 to 12; to create content that would get girls in front of computers.

- Found success with *Rockett's New School* and *Secret Paths in the Forest,* after release of *Barbie Fashion Designer.*

- Games were more or less visual novels that focused on core values espoused by young girls.

FEMICOM

- Established fairly recently.

- Simultaneously a critique of game culture and an archive of 'girly-games'.

- Goal is to attribute value to many of the games we think of as 'pink'.

- History of modding games to change main characters from male to female.

THE EFFECT OF TOMB RAIDER

- Popularity of Tomb Raider and Lara Croft pushed games further into the mainstream.

- Developers responded by making games targeted at older players.

- ESRB and rating system made this easier.

- New, more mature video game genres were introduced.

HORROR

- Technology limited what was possible in terms of scaring players.

- *The Rats*, a subversion of the adventure game genre.

- *Alone in the Dark*, 3D PC game set in a mansion in the 1920s.

RESIDENT EVIL

- Influenced by *Sweet Home*, an early Japanese 2D horror game.

- Released in 1996.

- Well known for its camp, cliche and generally poor voice acting.

- Introduced zombies into the survival horror genre.

SURVIVAL HORROR CONVENTIONS

- What defines the survival horror genre?

    - Resource scarcity

    - Low-light conditions

    - Zombies(!)

    - Sometimes puzzles; sometimes less focus on combat; sometimes mystery.

STEALTH

- Early games included *Castle Wolfenstein* and the Japan only release of *Metal Gear.*

- Genre defining games included (all released in 1998):

  - *Metal Gear Solid*

  - *Tenchu: Stealth Assassins*

  - *Thief: The Dark Project* (PC)

STEALTH CONVENTIONS

- What defines the stealth genre?

  - AI can detect player using multiple senses.

  - Opportunity to hide/cover.

  - Silent attacks/takedowns.

  - Often espionage-related themes.

- Many games employ stealth elements, although are not stealth games per se.

SONY'S DOMINANCE

- The Playstation was the platform with games, and it continued to dominate.

- Nintendo's N64 was released in 1996, but couldn't catch Sony, despite the success of *Super Mario 64.*

- Sega capitulated and stopped manufacturing the Saturn in 1998.

SUPER MARIO 64

- Held back on N64 launch until *Super Mario 64* was ready.

- First truly open 3D platform game; more successful than *Crash Bandicoot.*

- Emphasis on exploration.

- Heavy influence on all 3D open world games to follow.

NINTENDO'S MISTAKE?

- Elected to go with cartridges for the N64.

- Square wanted *Final Fantasy VII* to be released on CD.

- Long time partnership between Square and Nintendo disolved.

- *Final Fantasy VII* released as an exclusive for Playstation.