



# Super Mario Bros. NES 1985.

INTERACTIVE MEDIA DEVELOPMENT CA1

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## Introduction.

As part of our Interactive Media Development CA we were asked to recreate a level from a classic 8-bit game of our choosing, using the Unity 3D framework. For my CA, I have chosen one of my all-time favourite games, Super Mario Bros. for the Nintendo Entertainment System. To this day, I still dig out my dad's old NES from the wardrobe and start up the game every now and then. However, the popularity of this game is not simply determined by my love for it, in 2005 a IGN poll (popular gaming media outlet) named the game as [0] "pioneering", "Highly Influential" and as the "greatest game of all time". [1] The game was the best-selling game of all time for a single platform for approximately three decades at over 40 million units.

## Gameplay.

Super Mario Bros. sees gamers take control of 2 plumber brothers, Mario (the most famous, red character) and Luigi the younger of the two (green and only available through the multiplayer selection). The game is renowned for popularizing the side scrolling subgenre of the early 1980's. The main objective is to rescue Princess Toadstool, who has been taken prisoner by the game's main antagonist Bowser. In order to rescue the princess, the player must battle through the Mushroom Kingdom spread across multiple levels, each filled with Bowser's forces, whose objective is to stop Mario's mission of saving the princess. Each level begins on the far left of the platform and Mario must battle through his obstacles both player and environmental to reach the far right of the screen where a flag pole awaits (the goal of each level). Upon reaching the flagpole the level is completed and the score is tallied, from here Mario moves onto the next level, and an ever-increasing difficulty in opposition. The game consists of 8 worlds, each with 4 levels within, at the last level of each world a face of with either Bowser or one of his higher difficulty forces.

The levels in the game consist of coins scattered throughout for Mario to collect. These are converted into score, and if Mario collects 100, he will be rewarded with an extra life. Mario starts off with 3 lives, each time Mario is killed he loses a life, loss of all lives results in game over. As well as the coins, there are also special bricks throughout the worlds with a question mark on them. These boxes have the ability to produce either a coin, extra life or a power up. Power ups alter Mario's state, if Mario receives a Super mushroom he will double in size and gain in effect a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance should he be hit by an enemy or obstacle. Another power

up is the fire flower, this gives Mario the ability to shoot fireballs which kill enemies. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and final power up is a magic star, magic stars offer Mario invincibility for a certain amount of time indicated by him flashing multiple colours, as well as invincibility and enemies he touches off will be killed instantly. Mario's base attack without any power ups is to use his stomp ability, he can kill enemies by stomping on their heads (goombas) however with koopas (the turtles) his stomp only causes them to retract into their shells from here he must discard of their shell by kicking them into a pit. Mario can also kill enemies located on bricks above by jumping into the brick from beneath.

Within these worlds and levels there were often secret rooms filled with coins which Mario could access through certain pipes. These secret rooms helped to involve the player and give a certain sense of achievement and reward once discovered. Along with the secret rooms there were also secret warp zones, where once discovered Mario could teleport to further worlds. These were the cream of the crop as far as rewards went, and where almost the first real existence of "cheats" in a game.

All these factors helped to make it one of the most famous and popular games of all time. The player had multiple ways to interact with the game and ways of defeating enemies and manoeuvring through the levels, such as secret vines. Giving the player a sense of experience not offered by many games of the time. This I believe was key to Mario's success.

# Modern Context.

## Evaluation.

Mario at its time was revolutionary. It set the standards of games to come and was one of the most popular at the time. However, look at it from a modern context and some changes could be made in regard to the current gamer of 2017. Gamers of this generation have only ever known graphics worlds apart from that of the classic NES, and along with this they have become content greedy. These traits can give us an idea on how to improve the game and bring it through to the modern era.

## Improvements - Graphics

Although graphics at the time were quite good in the game from a modern context they are out dated, not even from a sense of modern 3D graphics, but from a modern pixel graphics game. In modern times, there is a huge demand for high quality realistic 3D graphics but there is also a thriving retro looking market for pixelated games. Allowing for cleaner looking graphics while still capturing the retro feel. I think that this would suite this game much more than producing a realistic 3D version of the game. Games such as children of Morata can achieve beautiful art within their games while still using the 8 bit feel (image 1.).

## Children Of Morta



Image 1.

## Improvements – Character selection.

In the original game, there was some extremely limited character selection, only available in the multiplayer option. An improvement which I believe would be extremely beneficial for the game would be to include a character selection option. Along with having characters unlockable through a completion system. E.g. you start off with your base characters Mario and Luigi and can choose between them even in the single player game, upon completing the game with one of the these another character(s) is then unlocked. Bringing in an incentive to replay the game multiple times. Nintendo could include characters from other high level titles, bringing in new dynamics and ways to play with each character. Characters such as the one included in the image below. However, these could be given a pixelated make over in order to keep with the theme of the game. Implementation would require the creation of a new sprite sheet and creating a character selection screen at the beginning of the new campaign or level (see next improvement).



Image 3.

### Improvement – New Content.

As outlined above the current generation of gamers are content hungry and demanding. It is very rare that a game in the modern day is release without at least some new content being added or purchased at some stage. This helps to keep players interested and increase the replay ability of the game. New content could include new worlds to which Mario takes his adventures. Perhaps even utilising the new characters within the game to help complete these levels. E.g. letting the player choose which character to play before each level, and having the certain abilities that a charter has beneficial or detrimental in completing the level. Along with these new worlds they could also implement new enemies and environments to increase the difficulty of the levels. This new content would be created from scratch in unity using new sprites for the environment and enemies, along with new scripts for these new enemies and environmental behaviours



# References

[0],[1]: Wikipedia. 2017. Super Mario Bros. - Wikipedia. [ONLINE] Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Super\\_Mario\\_Bros.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Super_Mario_Bros.). [Accessed 10 March 2017].

Image 1: NowGamer. 2017. The 10 Best-Looking Pixel Games Of The Next 12 Months | NowGamer. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.nowgamer.com/the-10-best-looking-pixel-games-of-the-next-12-months/>. [Accessed 10 March 2017].

Image 2: Super Mario Bros HD @ PixelJoint.com. 2017. Super Mario Bros HD @ PixelJoint.com. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://pixeljoint.com/pixelart/79091.htm>. [Accessed 10 March 2017].

Image 3: Super Mario Characters Picture Quiz - By WiiJAY87. 2017. Super Mario Characters Picture Quiz - By WiiJAY87. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.sporcle.com/games/WiiJAY87/super-mario-characters-picture-quiz>. [Accessed 10 March 2017].