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The first-person gunplay in *Killing Floor 2* is very immersive due to other aspects of the game that enhance the first-person experience. *Killing Floor* is a series of first-person co-op survival horror games. The objective is to kill and survive through waves of zombies, leading up to a final boss fight.

A first-person point-of-view, as a mechanic, can seem somewhat simple, as we see that FPS games are very popular. First-person games often feel the most immersive, because we are able to put ourselves in the character's shoes, as we are literally looking through the character's eyes. But, it is not only the perspective of first-person that makes us immersed in the game.

First-person games are like a puzzle. Each piece is important to make the puzzle complete. The real objective of a first-person game is to immerse the player into the game. The player cannot be immersed if each piece of the puzzle doesn't fit perfectly. Once this puzzle is complete, the player is able to be completely immersed in a game.

Killing Floor 2 is an example of a puzzle that was perfectly pieced together.

Animations

When what you're looking at is *supposed* to *feel* realistic, it is important that it *looks* and acts realistic. Guns, the main game mechanic, are right in the players face for the entirety of the game. It is imperative, for the sake of immersion, that these guns feel, look, and act realistically.

Each gun has a variety of animations. This is impressive, due to the large amount of guns present in the game. Each player class has their own set of gun-types at their disposal, which are purchased at a shop. Players are given a lot of options, ether between classes or guns, which allows any type of player to feel comfortable by being able to choose exactly which weapons they want to use.

With many different gun-types, each type should feel unique. Submachine guns fire very rapidly and have little recoil. Assault rifles are fully automatic, and more powerful than SMGs. Shotguns pack a crazy punch, and you feel thrown back every time you pull the trigger. Handguns are small and quick. These unique attributes help the player understand the playstyle they are using. Smaller, faster guns have quicker animations for reloading, while bigger, heavier guns take longer to reload. This even balance is important to be able to know which playstyle the player would like to approach the game with. It is good to have an even variety of gun-types on battlefield.

The reload animations are smooth, and look nice and fluid. These animations can also sometimes depend on certain perks that you can attain in the game. If a player has the Tactical Reload perk, they are able to reload much faster, and may allow for different reload animations on certain guns. For example, when you reload the pistol after emptying the clip, the character simply pulls out the empty magazine and sticks in a new one, cocking the gun as they return to aiming position. With Tactical Reload, the character will whip the empty magazine out of the gun to the side, slip in a new one, and release the slide. It is much quicker, and looks much cooler.

There are different animations for each weapon, depending on if you used all of the bullets in the clip or not. If you shoot all of the bullets out of the clip, the reload animation takes slightly longer; the character has to cock the weapon first before firing. If you reload before emptying the clip, the character simply slides out the old magazine, and puts a new one in.

If you try to reload the weapon while the magazine is still full, there are separate animations for this, as well. These animations act like a slick ammo-check that the character makes. The character will sometimes pull out the magazine to check if there are bullets in it, or will pull the slide back to see if a bullet is in the chamber, or will perform a smooth flip of the pistol around their finger.

All of these may seem like simple no-brainers in terms of weapon design, but they are very necessary to make the guns feel realistic to the player. It is apparent that a lot of time was dedicated to the animations, as they are smooth, and look awesome. The realism that the gunplay presents helps immerse the player, and enhances the first-person experience.

Player Influence

The impact that the player makes on their surroundings is also essential to making a world seem real. In *Killing Floor 2,* the player only has one main way to influence their environment: guns. The player is able to see and feel the impact that they make on their enemies.

Your weapons are able to shred through flesh like its butter. Body parts will burst and fly as your bullets tear them apart. The intense gore makes the player feel powerful with their weapons. This is not one of those games where you are supposed to feel weak and helpless against the horde of mutated beings. You are meant to tear through endless numbers of undead. For the lack of a better term, you're supposed to feel like a total badass. The game puts the player in this mentality, which helps push the player towards their goal and to defeat the final boss.

The player sees how their actions effect enemies. Aiming for the head will often result in an explosion of blood, leaving them to wander, headless. Shooting out their legs makes them topple over. Shooting an arm makes it come flying off. Tossing a grenade into a crowd results in a variety of body parts being sent in every direction.

Players are able to see their bullets come out of their gun and hit an enemy. This leaves no disconnect between the player, what they are doing, and what they are seeing. It is all connected. The player shoots their weapon, sees a bullet whiz away, and watches as an enemies head is torn off. The player knows exactly what is happening, and is satisfied at the results. A more immersive experience is created if you are able to directly see the impact you are making in the game.

Sound Design

In order to feel immersed in an environment, the game has to tap into our sense of hearing. The world can't feel realistic if it doesn't sound realistic. From

the weapons, to the in-game characters, to the soundtrack, *Killing Floor 2*'s sound design is a key element in the game's ability to immerse the player in the environment.

As the player can see, the guns are very powerful. But, in order to secure the immersion, they should also sound powerful… and they do. The deep, bass-y blow of the guns are loud and jarring, in a good way. Being able to hear the explosion of the weapon, to see the camera shake, the gun kick back, and to watch the dismemberment of your enemies, is an empowering rush. The adrenaline taking over your body makes you want to keep shooting. The combination of all of those really helps drive the player to the objective of killing enemies.

As the game progresses, the enemies will get stronger. Newer, more difficult enemies will come to try and shut the player down. Players will be able to hear the enemies approach. Sound cues are important to be able to understand what the player is up against.

When a large special enemy approaches, an intense, guttural roar breaks out and echoes throughout the environment. This incredibly distinct sound cue comes a few moments before the enemy stomps into your territory. This allows for the players to prepare for a hard duel against a strong enemy. The horrifying scream almost instantly brings an "Oh no" feeling across the players. Working together to take down this enemy is incredibly satisfying.

Players are able to identify the kind of enemy that is approaching before they might actual see it. One of these harder enemy types has a chainsaw for an arm, and players can hear a chainsaw revving, and can prepare to stay away from this close-ranged enemy. Another type has large metal grinding

blades attached to each arm, and is the largest enemy besides the final boss. Players can hear the loud footsteps of this enemy, and can see the camera shake as it approaches. With this, players are able to adapt to certain situations based on what they hear.

The characters in the fight are very talkative. You can choose between many characters to play as. This does not affect gameplay, but allows players to customize how they look. Each character has many voice lines for every situation.

Players do not always utilize the in-game chat ability. The communication between the *characters* of the game is important to listen to if your *teammates* do not communicate with their microphone. Your character will express of their lack of ammo, will shout when they are reloading. This can alert Support perk players that players may need ammunition, and can offer to give them some. Similarly, for Medics, characters will shout when they are at low health, telling Medics to heal them. Weapons will also spawn on the ground for players to pick up, and characters will shout out to others that there is a weapon up for grabs. Characters also compliment themselves or others, or will taunt the enemies. Small voice lines like these seem almost infinite, and occur for almost every situation. It makes the characters feel like real unique people, each with their own sassy personality.

The gory slaughtering and slaying of zombies comes with an empowering soundtrack. Fast-paced heavy metal tracks give the player the courage to fight for their lives. As someone who is, personally, not a fan of metal music, it is necessary to enhance the feel of the game, and I am able to appreciate the

impact that the music makes on the game. It reinforces the feeling the player is supposed to feel; like a total badass.

The total sum of the sound design in *Killing Floor 2* proves to be an important aspect of the immersion. Playing the game without sound would not have nearly as much of an impact on the player. The real feeling of hearing it all, and taking it all in, is essential to the game-feel of *Killing Floor.*

Zed Time

I decided to refrain from mentioning Zed Time previously in the essay, because I think it deserved its own section.

Zed Time is a similar mechanic to Bullet Time from the *Max Payne* game series. Time slows down for a short period of time, and you are able to take precise shots as time almost comes to a stop. In *Killing Floor*, this is triggered randomly when an enemy is killed, and effects all of the players in the game.

Zed Time capitalizes on how every other piece of this *Killing Floor* puzzle fits perfectly. The combination of Animations, Player Influence, and Sound, with Zed Time is a great way to give an amazing game-feel.

Sound Design in Zed Time

When Zed Time is triggered, which is random after killing an enemy, players know exactly what is happening. Players are able to hear a distinct sound cue, one that is like a hum that lowers in pitch and volume as time slows down. The music fades away, and all the players are able to hear is the slow crack of their weapons firing and the bursting of body parts, with the sound of

blood spilling. Characters may even be mid-sentence when this happens, and players can hear the voice slow down and lower in pitch as time slows.

As Zed Time exits, which is only after a few seconds, a hum crescendos as the game speeds back up to a normal pace. The music picks back up, and the game continues. Even if the player is playing with their eyes closed, they will know exactly what is happening. There is not always time to think, and this sound design is essential to understand what is going on during fast-paced gameplay.

Player Influence in Zed Time

When time slows down, shooting enemies may prove to be the most fun thing about *Killing Floor.* As Zed Time is entered, blood starts to spew slower, and limbs start to fly slower. When shooting in Zed Time, the player is able to see bullets whiz through the air and hit enemies, and see the enemies' heads burst in slow motion. The Zed Time mechanic enhances that connection between the player and their effect on their enemies. It lets you see more closely the way you are killing the zombies, which can make the game environment feel much more real. Zed Time adds to that feeling; the rush of killing in such a gory fashion, that makes the player want to keep playing.

Animations in Zed Time

Zed Time allows the smooth and fluid animations to really shine. To make the guns still feel real in slow motion, they had to have nice, smooth animations that didn't jitter or stutter when slowed down. Shooting a hand gun in Zed Time

looks and feels very satisfying. The player can see the character's finger pull and release the trigger. Next, the muzzle flare brightens up the screen as the bullet leave the barrel through flame. The slide kicks back and makes the character's hands to reel backwards. The player can see into the chamber as a new bullet is loaded from the magazine as the casing from the previous bullet is flung out. The slide jumps forward, and the cycle continues as the player slaughters hordes of zombies. The screen shakes violently when a weapon is shot, and weapon attachments, such as scopes, can be seen to shake and rattle in the rail of the gun. These detailed animations secure the realism that the guns present.

When Zed Time is entered, the screen goes black and white, while any red colors are saturated. This exaggerates the gore and blood that explodes from enemies. The orange light from the muzzle flare shines color on enemies that are close to the barrel of the weapon. This cool effect builds on the necessary feeling of power. Being able to clearly see the blood and gore spewing and bursting gives the player a strong feeling of predation, which continues to drive them towards the objective of killing enemies.

Conclusion

Killing Floor 2 can be seen just as any other first-person shooter game. First-person mechanics are common in games, and seems like a simple kind of game style. It is a very immersive kind of game genre, for its ability to portray the player as the character. First-person mechanics goes hand-in-hand with the rest of the game, as the rest helps support the immersion that FPS's provide.

Killing Floor 2 exemplifies the perfect combination of game mechanics to make the experience as immersive as possible. The simple mechanic of a first-person perspective is greatly enhanced by the rest of the game's mechanics. Sound and visuals are very important to make the world believable and fun. The perfect execution of well-made game mechanics makes *Killing Floor 2*'s first-person gunplay a surreal and immersive experience.

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