Submission Worksheet

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IT265-002-S2024 - [IT265] Game Case Study 2

Submissions:

Submission Selection

1 Submission [active] 4/15/2024 2:08:02 PM

Instructions

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Step 1:
From this spreadsheet pick a game you plan to analyze (selection must be unique) and put your UCID to the left of it. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1MQpOF4Sfas-PANB-d5s9iGH4l4a6zknyW4cYepzPxAs/view
Do not edit anyone else's content/selection and be mindful if multiple people are working on this sheet at the same time.

Step 2:
Playtest your game choice (or review streamers playing the game)

Step 3:
Analyze, research, and review your chosen game. Collect resources (website links, etc that you used during the exploration) include these with the responses in the related sections. Fill in the responses of the below prompts/checklist/etc.

Step 4:
Save the worksheet. Export the PDF. Upload it to the mentioned branch name (below) on GitHub. Create a pull request and merge it to main. Upload the PDF to Canvas.

Branch name: M2-Case-Study-2

Tasks: 16 Points: 10.00

● **Game Overview** (1.25 pts.)
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● Task #1 - Points: 1
∨ EXPAND ∨

Text: Historical Context and Game Description

Task #2 - Points: 1

EXPAND

Text: Gameplay Mechanics

Software Architecture and Technology (1.25 pts.)

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Task #1 - Points: 1

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Text: Technical Framework

Checklist

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Describe the game engine and any special software (middleware) used to make the game. Explain why these were important for making the game work.
☐ #2	1	List the programming languages and software tools used to build the game. Discuss how these tools helped in creating the game's features.

Response:

This game was built in a custom game engine, which handled the complex generation this game needed, and translated it into the ASCII format for us to see. The steam version is just a reskinned version of the original game, and offers a more standard graphical interface, but is still on the same engine. The core of Dwarf Fortress is written in C/C++, providing low-level performance and control over system resources. These languages are well-suited for developing efficient simulation and procedural generation algorithms.

Task #2 - Points: 1

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Text: Innovations and Challenges

Checklist

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Identify and describe any new or unique technical features in the game. Explain how these features made the game different or improved it.
☐ #2	1	Discuss any major difficulties the developers encountered while making the game. Describe how they solved these problems.

Response:

Dwarf Fortress is known for its continuous development and the addition of new features over time. While it's challenging to pinpoint specific "new" features due to the game's iterative nature, there have been several notable features and improvements that have shaped its gameplay experience:

Z-levels: One of the defining features of Dwarf Fortress is its use of multiple Z-levels, allowing players to build

structures, mine tunnels, and explore caverns in a three-dimensional world. This adds depth and complexity to fortress construction and exploration, as players must consider vertical space as well as horizontal, and also increases the freedom within the world tenfold.

Procedural Generation: Dwarf Fortress employs extensive procedural generation to create its worlds, including geography, civilizations, historical events, and individual characters. This results in highly varied and unpredictable gameplay experiences, with each fortress offering unique challenges and opportunities.

Adventure Mode: In addition to fortress mode, Dwarf Fortress includes an adventure mode where players can explore the game world as an individual character, undertaking quests, battling monsters, and interacting with NPCs. This mode adds another layer of depth to the game, allowing players to experience different aspects of the expansive worlds.

Personality and Relationships: Dwarves in Dwarf Fortress have distinct personalities, preferences, and relationships with each other, which affect their behavior and interactions. This adds depth to the game's storytelling, as players witness friendships, rivalries, and conflicts unfold among their dwarven population.

Accessibility Improvements: While Dwarf Fortress initially featured ASCII graphics, later versions introduced graphics and improved user interfaces, making the game more accessible to newcomers without sacrificing its depth or complexity.

The main issue that was talked about before the game was released was the possible performance issues. This level of detail would require a lot of system resources without proper optimization. However, hard worked paid off, and this game shipped in a great state, and due to its minimal graphics, it was able to run even on low end machines. However, obviously, you can still break this game by stretching it to its limits, especially in the late game when you have can have over a thousand dwarfs running around and working.

● **Gameplay Mechanics and Level Design** (1.25 pts.)
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● ᐯ EXPAND ᐯ
Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: Mechanics Analysis

● ᐯ EXPAND ᐯ
Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: Level Design

● **Graphic and Audio Design** (1.25 pts.)
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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: Visual Design

Checklist *The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
		Describe the game's visual appearance and the artistic choices made. Discuss elements like color, art style, and thematic

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	consistency, and how they contribute to the game's overall look and feel.
☐ #2	1	Discuss the design of the game's characters and environments. Focus on aspects such as realism, creativity, and how they fit within the game's world. Explain how these designs enhance the player's immersion in the game.

Response:

The ASCII version of this game is made completely out of letters numbers and symbols, each representing something in the world, a creature, or a tile. They have different colors, ranging from the earthy greens to muted browns. This version of the game encouraged imagination from the player, and served the role as a storyteller and having you visualize it on your own, rather than showing the story itself to you. The steam version with the graphics is more normal, with hundreds of unique pixel/8-bit sprites for the dwarves and the world around it. This is more suitable for normal players who don't want to rely on imagination for the immersion and want a more standard gameplay experience.

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Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: Audio Design

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Examine the game's sound design, focusing on the music and sound effects. Describe how they are used and their quality. Discuss any memorable or unique audio elements in the game.
☐ #2	1	Explain how the game's audio contributes to its overall mood and setting. Discuss how sound and music influence the player's emotional response and enhance the gaming experience.

Response:

The whole time you are playing this game, based on an interval you choose in the settings, a completely original soundtrack plays in the background. This soundtrack is absolutely amazing, and features drinking songs sung by dwarves, ballads about dwarven hero's, and sad songs about past wars. These songs are amazing to hear, as they feel like the dwarves you are controlling are singing them to you. This game also has several alarm sound effects, which are meant to notify you when critical events happen, such as when more dwarves arrive, the traders arrive, or you are under attack.

● User Interface and User Experience (1.25 pts.)
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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: UI Design

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Describe the layout of the game's user interface (UI) and how it functions. Discuss elements like menus, icons, and on-screen prompts, and how they help players navigate and understand the game.
☐ #2	1	Evaluate how well the game's UI communicates important information to players. Discuss aspects such as clarity, readability, and the ability of the UI to provide necessary game details without overwhelming or confusing the player.

Response:

In both versions of this game, there is a very expansive UI system, which takes time to get used to. There are menus to assign dwarves to jobs, automate jobs/crafting, build things, mine things, make squads, manage resources, and so much more. There is also a UI to show some of the games critical data points, as well as a tutorial system which you can toggle if you need help with some of the basics. For the amount of stuff in this game, the UI handles it pretty well, and for me at least, was quick and easy to learn if you aren't afraid to make mistakes.

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Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: UX Analysis

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Discuss the overall feel of playing the game, focusing on how different aspects of the game contribute to the player's experience. Analyze how these elements, such as ease of use, game flow, and feedback, affect the gameplay.
☐ #2	1	Evaluate the design decisions made to enhance the player's experience. Consider factors like tutorial design, learning curve, and player engagement. Discuss how effective these choices are in making the game enjoyable and accessible to players.

Response:

Overall, this game can be quite overwhelming, but that's what makes it satisfying. There is no winning, so celebrating the little goals is what matters. When you start playing this game, you will be focused on learning, and you might struggle to survive for a reasonable amount of time. This game as a high learning curve, and it's nearly impossible to know everything about it, which is what makes it so compelling to me. One time, my fortress died out because I settled in an area where a civilization lived 500 years prior. This civilization before me worshipped monkeys, and did not hunt them, but fed and nursed them, which led to a huge population explosion. The civilization died out, but the monkeys continued to thrive in a nearby forest. Fast forward 500 years, I am 2 years into my settlement, alive and well. I decide to build a tavern to raise morale and attract people to live with me. I assign someone to play music in the tavern. This alerts the huge population of monkeys, which immedicably run over to my base and steal everything no tied to the ground. My dwarfs starve the following winter. To me, this is fun, and there is no other game where I can see this happening. If I were better and more prepared with a militia, I may have been able to stop it, but that's part of the learning curve.

Narrative and Storytelling (1.25 pts.)

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Task #1 - Points: 1
Text: Narrative Structure

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Checklist   *The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Describe the game's story, including its narrative structure, main plot points, and the setting in which it takes place. Discuss how these elements come together to create a cohesive and engaging story.
☐ #2	1	Analyze the storytelling techniques used in the game, such as dialogue, cutscenes, or environmental storytelling. Evaluate how effectively these techniques convey the story and engage the player.

Response:

This game is fantasy based, with races like dwarves, humans, elves, and goblins. There are also mythical creatures like dragons which live in volcanos, or shadow creatures deep in the caverns. The story is generated and built by your choices and actions, so it is different every time. A large portion of the story can be seen, but many details can be read in the console, which displays individual actions and changes in the world, which cannot all be displayed visual on screen.

Task #2 - Points: 1
Text: Character and Integration

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Checklist   *The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Discuss the development of the game's characters. Describe their roles within the story, their personalities, and how they evolve throughout the game. Consider how the characters contribute to the overall narrative.
☐ #2	1	Examine how the game's narrative and characters are integrated into the gameplay. Discuss how story elements are woven into the game mechanics and how this integration affects the player's experience.

Response:

The games characters that you see are all the people living in the area you have chosen. You have your permeant dwarf residents that you start with, and as the game progresses, you can get migrants from many other races. You can also have temporary traders come visit you, messengers from other nations, and people temporality stay at your inn. Each of these people have their own personal story, such as love/hate relationships with one another, but also, they shape the story of the whole world. Some dwarf may cheat on her husband, and if the husband finds out, he goes on a

manic killing spree, killing 4 others before you can take him down. His personal story took out a large portion of your workers, which can affect your ability to survive.

Impact and Reception (1.25 pts.)

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Task #1 - Points: 1

Text: Reception and Impact

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Checklist *The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Research and summarize how the game was received by critics and players. Include key reviews, ratings, and player feedback. Discuss any notable praise or criticism the game received.
☐ #2	1	Analyze the game's impact on the gaming industry. Discuss how it may have influenced game design, trends, or inspired other games. Consider any lasting effects it has had on the industry.

Response:

This game has a great community of both beginners and experienced players, all with welcoming arms for anyone who wants to try, and ready to share the things they have experienced. IGN calls this game legendary, saying that even if you haven't played it, you've certainty felt its impact. The steam reviews are overwhelmingly positive, boasting these games accomplishments. Being an indie game made by 2 people, it was a huge inspiration to those wanting to do this seemingly daunting task. To this day, the only game that has been able to come close is a game called Rim world, but that one is not free, has tons of DLCS, and it also kind of a clone of Dwarf Fortress.

Task #2 - Points: 1

Text: Cultural Significance

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Checklist *The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Examine the game's cultural significance and the legacy it has left behind. Discuss how the game has been remembered over time and its status in the gaming community.
☐ #2	1	Describe the game's presence and representation in media, such as films, books, or online content. Discuss its role in fan communities and any influence it has had on broader cultural aspects, such as art, music, or social trends.

Response:

Dwarf Fortress is recognized as one of the classics, and it is still up and running smoothly today with regular updates. This game has been covered by countless journals and reviewers, all which give it praise. This game has an active and

very friendly community and has a modding community that is also very alive. This game is going to be remembered for quite a while longer, and it will take a real feat of a game to kill dwarf fortress.

● **Reflection** (1.25 pts.)
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Task #1 - Points: 1

Text: Describe your personal experience playing the chosen game

Checklist
*The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	Was it "fun"? What made it fun or not fun?
☐ #2	1	Is this genre/game-type aligned with personal interests?
☐ #3	1	What made you pick this game? Was it a good choice?

Response:

To me, this game is the definition of casual fun. A single player game where a controlling your dwarfs in a fantasy world, taking on challenges as they come, with nothing real at stake, because if you lose, you'll experience something new and fun the next time as well. I love management and resource games, and this game is everything I have been looking for in a game. If this game was multiplayer in some fashion, where I could play with my friend's coop, it would literally be the best game of all time every created and it would not even come close. I picked this game because I believe it should be way more mainstream than it is, and it needs to be talked about way more.

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Task #2 - Points: 1

Text: Assignment Reflection

Checklist
*The checkboxes are for your own tracking

#	Points	Details
☐ #1	1	What interesting or new "thing(s)" did you learn during your research and analysis?
☐ #2	1	Did you find it was easy to come across the information you were looking for? What was your primary means of research/analysis?

Response:

This information was pretty easy to find, as the brothers have their own website for most of this info, and rest was found with a simple google search. The most interesting thing I learned was the fact that this was written in c/c++. I like how the brothers didn't try to use anything crazy and complicated, and through hard work, they really made this masterpiece completely from scratch on their own time, really proving that anyone can make it if they work hard enough and have a good idea.

End of Assignment