= Light gun shooter =

 Light gun shooter , also called light gun game or simply gun game , is a shooter video game genre in which the primary design element is aiming and shooting with a gun @-@ shaped controller . Light gun shooters revolve around the protagonist shooting targets , either antagonists or inanimate objects . Light gun shooters generally feature action or horror themes and some may employ a humorous , parodic treatment of these conventions . These games typically feature " on @-@ rails " movement , which gives the player control only over aiming ; the protagonist 's other movements are determined by the game . Games featuring this device are sometimes termed " rail shooters " , though this term is also applied to games of other genres in which " on @-@ rails " movement is a feature . Some , particularly later , games give the player greater control over movement and in still others the protagonist does not move at all .
 Light gun shooters employ " light gun " controllers , so named because they function through the use of light sensors . Mechanical games using light guns had existed since the 1930s , though they operated differently from those used in video games . Throughout the 1970s mechanical games were replaced by electronic video games and in the 1980s popular light gun shooters such as Duck Hunt emerged . The genre was most popular in the 1990s , subsequent to the release of Virtua Cop , the formula of which was later improved upon by Time Crisis . The genre is less popular in the new millennium , as well as being hampered by compatibility issues , but retains a niche appeal for fans of " old school " gameplay .

 = = Definition = =

 " Light gun shooters " , " light gun games " or " gun games " are games in which the protagonist shoots at targets , whether antagonists or objects , and which utilize a gun @-@ shaped controller ( termed a " light gun " ) with which the player aims . While light gun games may feature a first @-@ person perspective , they are distinct from first person shooters , which utilize more conventional input devices . Light gun games which feature " on @-@ rails " movement are sometimes termed " rail shooters " , though this term is also applied to other types of shooters featuring similar movement . The light gun itself is so termed because it functions through the use of a light sensor : pulling the trigger allows it to detect light from the on @-@ screen targets .

 = = Design = =

  Targets in light gun shooters may be threatening antagonists such as criminals , terrorists or zombies , or they may be inanimate objects such as apples or bottles . Although these games may be played without a light gun , the use of more conventional input methods has been deemed inferior . Light gun shooters typically feature generic action or horror themes , though some later games employ more humorous , self @-@ referential styles .
 Light gun shooters primarily revolve around shooting large numbers of enemies attacking in waves . The protagonist may be required to defend himself by taking cover , or by shooting incoming thrown weapons , such as axes or grenades . The player may also compete against the clock , however , with some games also featuring boss battles . Games may also reward the player for accurate shooting , with extra points , power @-@ ups or secrets . Games which do not pit the player against antagonists instead feature elaborate challenges constructed mainly from inanimate objects , testing the player 's speed and accuracy . More conventional games may feature these types of challenges as minigames .
 Light gun shooters typically feature " on @-@ rails " movement , which gives the player no control over the direction the protagonist moves in ; the player only has control over aiming and shooting . Some games , however , may allow the protagonist to take cover at the push of a button . Other games may eschew on @-@ rails movement altogether and allow the player to move the protagonist freely around the game 's environment ; still others may feature a static environment . Light gun shooters utilise a first person perspective for aiming , though some games may allow the

player to switch to a third person perspective in order to maneuver the protagonist .

= = History = =

 Mechanical gun games existed before the emergence of electronic video games , as far back as the 1920s . The first light guns appeared in the 1930s , with the Seeburg Ray @-@ O @-@ Lite . Games using this toy rifle were mechanical and the rifle fired beams of light at targets wired with sensors . These evolved throughout subsequent decades , culminating in games such as Sega 's Periscope ( the company 's first successful game , released in 1966 ) , which required the player to target cardboard ships . Throughout the 1970s , mechanical arcade games were gradually replaced by electronic video games , following the release of Pong in 1972 , with 1978 's Space Invaders dealing a yet more powerful blow to the popularity of mechanical games . Light guns used in electronic video games work in the opposite manner to their mechanical counterparts : the sensor is in the gun and pulling the trigger allows it to receive light from the on @-@ screen targets . Computer light pens had been used for practical purposes at MIT in the early 1960s , and the Magnavox Odyssey had a light gun accessory , in the production of which Nintendo was involved .
 Light guns first became popularly used for video games in the mid @-@ 1980s , with Nintendo 's Duck Hunt being a much @-@ loved example . Sega 's Virtua Cop , released in arcades in 1994 , broke new ground , popularized the use of 3D polygons in shooter games , and led to a " Renaissance " in the popularity of arcade gun games . The game was inspired by the Clint Eastwood film Dirty Harry as well as a coffee advertisement in which a can of coffee grew larger in a gun 's sights ; in Virtua Cop the player had to shoot approaching targets as fast as possible . The acclaimed Time Crisis by Namco , released in Japanese arcades in 1995 and Sony 's PlayStation console in 1997 , introduced innovations such as simulated recoil and a foot pedal which when pressed caused the protagonist to take cover . The game 's light gun controller , the GunCon , was also acclaimed . Namco also released Point Blank for the PlayStation in 1998 ( previously available in Japanese arcades as Gun Bullet since 1994 ) , a 2D sprite @-@ based game featuring a unique minigame structure and quirky , humorous tone . The game was critically acclaimed and received two sequels , both for the PlayStation console .
 Light guns were suppressed for a time in the U.S. after the 1999 Columbine High School massacre and its attendant controversy over video games and gun crime . Since the late 1980s light gun controllers have been generally manufactured to look like toys by painting them in bright colours . In Japan , which lacks the gun crime found in the U.S. and in which civilians cannot legally own guns , more realistic light guns are widely available .
 Light gun shooters are less popular in the new millennium than in the 1990s , with new games in the genre seen as " old school " . The Time Crisis and House of the Dead franchises continued to receive acclaimed installments , with the arcade machine for the latter 's House of the Dead 4 Special ( 2006 ) featuring large screens enclosing the player , as well as swivelling , vibrating chairs . Some games attempted to incorporate elements of first person shooter or survival horror games through the use of less restricted character movement and exploration , with varying degrees of success . Others , however , unashamedly paid homage to 1990s arcade gameplay , even embracing a somewhat parodic style . Light guns are not compatible with modern high @-@ definition televisions , leading developers to experiment with hybrid controllers , particularly with the Wii Remote for the Nintendo Wii , as well as the PlayStation 3 's GunCon 3 peripheral used with Time Crisis 4 . Others have used the PlayStation Move motion control system .