

Course: IT265-002-S2025

Assignment: Case Study 1 - Atari

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Status: Submitted | Worksheet Progress: 100.00%

Potential Grade: 10.00/10.00 (100.00%)

Received Grade: 0.00/10.00 (0.00%)

Grading Link: <https://learn.ethereallab.app/assignment/v3/IT265-002-S2025/case-study-1-atari/grading/jvn>

Instructions

1. 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:

[Game Selection Spreadsheet](#)

If a selection turns red, it has already been chosen. Do not edit others' content/selection and be mindful if multiple people are working on the sheet simultaneously.

2. Step 2:

Use one of these sites to playtest and analyze your game:

- [Free 80s Arcade](#)
- [AARP Atari Games](#)
- [Keystone Kapers](#)
- [Triplets and Us](#)

If none of these work, use an alternative close to the original game.

3. Step 3:

Analyze and research your chosen game. Collect resources and include them in your responses for related sections.

4. Step 4:

Save the worksheet, export as a PDF, and upload it to the mentioned branch on GitHub. Create a pull request, merge it to main, and upload the PDF to Canvas.

Section #1: (1.5 pts.) Game Overview

Task #1 (0.00 / 0.50 pts.) - Game Details - Note the Game's title, de

Weight: 66.67%

Weight: 33.33%

Objective: *Game Details - Note the Game's title, developer, publisher, platform, genre, and release date*

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

- Title: BurgerTime
- Developer: Data East
- Publisher: Data East, Bally Midway
- Platform: Atari 2600
- Genre: Action, Platformer, Puzzle
- Release Date: 1983

Source: https://www.retrogames.cz/play_020-Atari2600.php#google_vignette



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Task #2 (0.00 / 0.50 pts.) - History and Industry - Note the historical

Weight: 33.33%

Objective: *History and Industry - Note the historical context of the game's release and its place in the industry*

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

The game is a port of a pretty popular arcade game that came out a little late in the Atari 2600's as it had already been out for 5 years when BurgerTime released on it. It was more well known for its arcade version which sold x units. This came out during the height of the arcade's popularity, so when Mattel made a deal with BurgerTime's publishers and realized how successful it was, they decided to port it to every possible system they were connected to. At first, the head programmer of this port, Ron Surratt, was convinced this game couldn't be brought to the Atari because they were too many moving characters in a row on screen and that would cause glitches. To get around this they made the sprites extremely simple and made a decent port. In the industry it's known as one of the more popular arcade classics, but the Atari version isn't known.

Sources: <https://onitama.tv/gamemachine/pdf/19830301p.pdf#page=16>,
<https://history.blueskyrangers.com/mnetwork/burgertime.html>



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Task #3 (0.00 / 0.50 pts.) - Compare the game to similar games of

Weight: 33.33%

Objective: Compare the game to similar games of the time

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

BurgerTime was a pretty high quality arcade port for it's time because it functioned similarly to its arcade version, which is rare when it comes to bringing arcade games to the Atari. Some other good examples include Breakout, Pong, and Space Invaders. In terms of gameplay and level design, it really reminds me of Donkey Kong on the Atari. In both games, the player walks across lines in a void, avoids enemies, (food or barrels), heading towards them on that line, and have to climb ladders to accomplish their goal. The original Mario Bros on the Atari has a gameplay loop of going on platforms and defeating enemies with items too. BurgerTime was also popular enough to have a couple clones and very similar games like Beef Drop.

Source: <https://www.oldschoolgamer magazine.com/atari-2600-encyclopedia-do-you-know-burgertime/>



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Section #2: (2 pts.) Gameplay Mechanics And Level Design

Task #1 (0.00 / 1 pt.) - Core gameplay mechanics and how they shape the player's experience

Weight: 50%

Objective: Core gameplay mechanics and how they shape the player's experience

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

The gameplay consists of three things: traversing, collecting ingredients, and stunning enemies. The whole game is running across horizontal lines and going up and down ladders to escape enemies and make your burgers. You run across each ingredient to drop it to the level below until all the items drop to the last level with a plate. If you drop the topmost item, then it will fall and make each item below it drop one floor down as well. This means it's always best to try and start from the top, but enemies might make that difficult. You can temporarily kill enemies if they are underneath the ingredient when it falls and you can stun enemies by throwing limited salt at them. The player can choose to climb to the second floor from the top to find more salt when it spawns in for a short period of time. This brings in risk vs. reward, because enemies could attack them there and it's straying away from the main objective of completing burgers, however you do need salt to beat enemies when you're cornered.



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Task #2 (0.00 / 1 pt.) - Level design and how it affects gameplay

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Level design and how it affects gameplay*

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Your Response:

Each level has a combination of floors and ladders for the player to move through. At each floor, there are 4 burger ingredients arranged so that when you drop them down, they'll pile on top of each other from other floors. There are five enemies throughout each level that chase you and kill you immediately if they touch you. Each level's design determines how easy it is for enemies to corner you and how difficult it will be for you to get your ingredients without dying. Once you reach level 3 or 4, I think the levels aren't as well designed, especially the enemy spawn points because they could accidentally kill you. They also create multiple places where you have no other option but to salt the enemies, so it becomes about how much salt you collected, not how well you avoided the enemies. There are many dead ends and places where enemies easily surround you, which could have been fun if it didn't all depend on salt.



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Section #3: (1.5 pts.) Graphic And Audio Design

Task #1 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Game's visual appearance, artistic choices

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Game's visual appearance, artistic choices, and how they contribute to the experience*

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

It's a lot simpler than the arcade version, with each burger ingredient having the same burger bun sprite. The enemies are abstract blocks and other shapes, with one being a straight line that's a little hard to see. All the

enemies are abstract blocks and other shapes, with one being a straight line that's a little hard to see. All the collisions seem to be pixel perfect and since some of the sprites constantly change, it's a little frustrating to die immediately when you barely touch them. It's considered not great looking, even for the Atari 2600. A while ago I looked through the "Art of Atari" book by Tim Lapetino and saw some super detailed and nice looking BurgerTime art. That's a common thing with Atari, where the concept, box, and promotional art look so appealing and pretty but the actual game has this very simple plain pixels. Even though it's not directly in the game, the box art does contribute to the experience by helping to tell the story of game.

Source: <http://www.artofatari.com/>



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Task #2 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Sound design, including music and sound

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Sound design, including music and sound effects, and their impact on the game*

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

It might just be the emulator I'm using but certain sound effects, like the death one, are very loud compared to others. The music is light-hearted and fun but it can get a little repetitive after a while. It was composed by Patricia Lewis Du Long and is overall pretty good and catchy. I also think the sound effects when an enemy is stunned or when burger ingredients fall on each other are satisfying and help build the atmosphere of the experience.

Sources: <https://www.oldschoolgamer magazine.com/atari-2600-encyclopedia-do-you-know-burgertime/>
<https://history.blueskyrangers.com/mnetwork/burgertime.html>



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Section #4: (1.5 pts.) Narrative And Storytelling

Task #1 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Narrative structure, main plot points, and

Weight: 50%

Objective: Narrative structure, main plot points, and setting

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

Based on the character sprite and the burgers you make on the bottom, the story is about a chef who is trying to make as many burgers as possible without getting attacked by food monsters. The chef's only defense is a salt shaker that stuns enemies. The ads for BurgerTime confirm these theories, so it's a pretty silly but fun concept for a game. I don't really know the setting because it was a black void with white lines on it, but I'm guessing it could be a kitchen or restaurant.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjJ0TI3WENQ>



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Task #2 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Character development and how it integ

Weight: 50%

Objective: Character development and how it integrates with gameplay

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Your Response:

You play as a chef and in each level you have to make 4 burgers to get to the next one. You could say your character grows with each round of burgers you make. Maybe this means you become a better or more successful chef, especially since in each level the enemies get a little harder so you're overcoming more challenging task. Since the player develops as they play each level by getting a higher score and becoming better at the game, it makes sense to think that means the character is developing with you.



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Section #5: (1.5 pts.) Impact And Reception

Task #1 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Critical and player reception, including r

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Critical and player reception, including reviews and feedback*

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Your Response:

BurgerTime is considered by many people to be a classic, but not many of these people are talking about the Atari version. It was more successful as an arcade game and even on the Intellivision. The arcade version was the 11th highest grossing arcade game of 1982. Both the arcade and Intellivision versions received very positive critic reviews, with many reviewers noting its charm and addictive nature. Despite this, the Atari 2600 version is considered one of the worst ways to play the game. I couldn't find much more about the reception of this port specifically, except for some feedback about bugs. Some of the bugs people noticed include enemies randomly not dying when burger were dropped on them, glitches with enemy graphics changing when you get killed, and other issues.

Sources: <https://intotheverticalblank.com/2024/03/02/atari-proving-grounds-burgertime-2600-vs-7800-vs-atari8bit-5200-vs-st-up-next/> <https://history.blueskyrangers.com/mnetwork/burgertime.html>



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Task #2 (0.00 / 0.75 pts.) - Game's impact on the gaming industry

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Game's impact on the gaming industry and its cultural significance*

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Your Response:

It was one of the more popular arcade games and is still seen in some retro arcades that exist today. It actually continued on past the arcade and Atari days with 9 sequels and reimaginings throughout the years, with the most current one being BurgerTime Party! in 2019. Unfortunately, none of the sequels ever reached the popularity or quality of the original game. It's also been rereleased and included in classic collections many times, including Nintendo Switch Online's Gameboy collection. Even though I liked BurgerTime before this project, I had no idea there was an Atari version, and after playing I realized it's the same thing but with worse art. The game itself did have some significance in gaming culture, but the Atari version was much less known. Even the fact that I knew it without growing up with the Atari or arcades shows that it reached a wide audience and remains in people's thoughts.

Sources: <https://web.archive.org/web/20121107053004/http://www.burgertimeworldtour.com/>, <https://www.ign.com/articles/2019/08/30/king-of-fighters-burger-time-cabinets-appear-on-japanese-arcade1up-website>



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Section #6: (2 pts.) Reflection

Task #1 (0.00 / 1 pt.) - Was the game "fun"? What made it fun or not

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Was the game "fun"? What made it fun or not?*

≡ Text Prompt

Your Response:

It was fun because of how satisfying it was to complete each burger and it was addicting to try again when you failed. One aspect that kept me playing was identifying alternate paths and strategies while losing that I would tell myself to try the next run. It was fun to narrowly evade the enemies and try to manipulate them into going in a different direction so you could escape. It was also entertaining to watch each burger drop down on each other like dominoes and kill enemies by doing that. The only aspect that stops it from being fun at some parts is how frustrating the hit boxes can be and how impossible it feels when you get to level 3 and 4. When you get there, the enemies start being able to change direction in the middle of a ladder to follow you and it becomes overwhelming. There are parts where if you don't have any salt left, it's pretty much impossible to win. It starts to feel like there are no good pathways to take because each one could leave you surrounded at all sides. It's especially annoying in level 3 when you defeat an enemy and it spawns on top of you, so you're being punished for doing something good.



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Task #2 (0.00 / 1 pt.) - Reflection on the learning experience and ease

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Reflection on the learning experience and ease of research*

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Your Response:

I feel like I did learn a lot just from playing the Atari version of BurgerTime and thinking in detail about what made it fun and what took away from that fun. It was also interesting to see what people thought about it at the time, but it was very hard to find my sources. There were almost no official-looking content about the Atari version specifically most of it was people's thoughts and even that was difficult to find. The most information

version specifically, most of it was people's thoughts and even that was difficult to find. The most information I could find was by looking through the sources of BurgerTime's wikipedia page. For some of what I reference in this study, I use articles talking about the arcade or other versions, because the base gameplay applies throughout each one.



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