

Analysis of Mechanics

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Title: Counter-Strike 2

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Author: Valve

Primary Genre: First-Person Shooter (FPS)

Secondary Genre: Tactical Shooter, Multiplayer Cooperative, Multiplayer Competitive

Style: Realistic, Practical

Analysis

Counter-Strike 2 (hereafter CS) is the fifth installment in the popular Counter-Strike franchise, succeeding *Counter-Strike: Global Offensive*. As a first-person shooter, players engage directly in combat through the perspective of their character, reinforcing the core FPS mechanic. The core game-play consists of two teams, the Terrorists (hereafter Ts) and the Counter-Terrorists (hereafter CTs), competing against each other in tactical, round-based matches. The objective for Ts is to plant the bomb at one of two designated areas called bombsites. Contrary to Ts, CTs must prevent the bomb from detonating. This structure calls for cooperation between teammates.

In the most popular mode of CS, called premier, you are awarded with elo points and placed on a leader-board. This competitive element is central to the game, as *Counter-Strike* has long been associated with professional eSports tournaments. However, the introduction of leader-boards and competitive rankings often attracts cheaters, leading many skilled players, including all professionals, to seek alternatives, such as playing on third-party services like Faceit, which offers superior anti-cheat protection.

One of the most compelling aspects of CS to me is its emphasis on tactical game-play. Each match is divided into rounds, with the first team to win 13 rounds claiming victory. Players switch sides after the first half. Each player is awarded in-game currency based on eliminations, rounds won beforehand, and if they planted (respectively defused) the bomb. This currency system introduces a strategic layer, where players must manage their finances to optimize their equipment for the upcoming rounds. This leads to a concept of "eco-rounds", where the team tries to make the biggest impact with limited resources. One famous example of this would be a play performed by a professional team, Astralis, where 5 players grouped up together to equalize the fighting chances. Another key tactical element in CS is the concept of "executes". An execute refers to a coordinated strategy where a team uses utility items - such as smoke grenades, flash-bangs, and Molotov cocktails - to gain control of a bombsite. Each utility item has a distinct function: smoke grenades block vision, Molotovs restrict movement, flash-bangs disorient opponents, and HE grenades deal damage. As you can imagine, utility items allow for many other tactical concepts.

The visual style of CS is realistic. But many mechanics are abstracted to ensure smooth game-play. Weapons, movement, and utility behave in ways that prioritize playability rather than strict realism, enabling players to move comfortably around the map and focus more on the strategic and competitive aspect of the game. Some of the mechanics that are created by this abstraction are run boosts, bunny hopping, surfing, etc.

In conclusion, the combination of realistic visuals, practical mechanics and competitive game-play makes CS a fitting example of a FPS. The integration of tactical elements, such as team coordination, resource management, and utility usage, enriches the experience. The mechanics are specifically designed to support its competitive nature, which to me is *Counter-Strike's* central appeal.