



GAME FEEL

THE POPULAR YET ELUSIVE PROPERTIES OF GAME DESIGN

FT. JUICE!

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INTRODUCTION

Game feel is an “elusive quantity” in games, with which the industry commonly describes aesthetics, player control and feedback loop. However, it is vague and without a standard definition. This makes it difficult to pass down information for making higher quality games or for research. This paper justifies the need for a more precise vocabulary and context-aware application of game feel principles.

The paper explores the purpose of game feel for industry and academia, its broad, multifaceted nature, its commonly addressed aspects, and fitting contexts to strive for good game feel.

OBJECTIVE

Discuss how to approach the topic of “game feel” holistically and apply its principles meaningfully in the future.

METHODOLOGY

Desk research summarises the most prominent points of view on this topic.

Popular names such as Vlambeer, Sakurai, Game Maker's Toolkit share their anecdotal experiences, which are also referenced by researchers to bring the whole discussion to one language!

INDUSTRY

Game feel and juice have been treated with importance since Swink in 2008, and good examples are universally popular, but practitioners have a hard time articulating them - “when it’s there, nobody notices it, but when it’s not there, everybody notices it!” “Good game feel” is intuitively known to express player-oriented design in physics, polish and feedback (juiciness), and support.



CONTEXT AWARENESS

Forerunners such as Jonasson, Purho and Nijman advise “juicing it up” all the way. However, over time practitioners and researchers have noticed that not all juice is good juice. Better game feel is achieved through moderation and context awareness. What feelings does a game convey to its players? Regardless of genre or pace, juice should amplify these feelings, “doubling down on whatever your game is about”.

ACADEMIC WORK



Research on game feel attempts to understand the effect of aesthetics and game feedback on players. Without a holistic definition, the focus in papers tends to be narrow, with much possible future work after every empirical study. This means that most research has yet to encompass game feel fully - although some papers with focus on summarising descriptions by players and designers are making a good step forward.

DID YOU KNOW?

Studies found that people's skills and performance did not improve on “juicier” games - but sometimes, people still found more enjoyment and perceived themselves as better players!



DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

In summary, game feel is desirable, intuitive, but difficult to grasp systematically. Industry and academia can advance if they manage to find a common language for its discussion, teaching and application.

What could help further is a wider, educated and context-aware audience! Then game feel will be closer to universally improving games.

