

Research and Analysis for Project 2

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1. Introduction

My idea for this game project came from the adventure-platformer, LocoRoco, the game that I spent days and night playing when I was a child. I liked the idea of gravity change in this game, and so I decided to build a puzzle game. As background research, I investigated and compared four games that is related to gravity change (some in the form of ground rotation):

- LocoRoco (Sony, PSP, 2006)
- Megaman X8 – Gravity Antonion Stage (Capcom, PlayStation 2, 2003)
- Beneath the Lighthouse (Nitrome, Android/iOS, 2015)
- Gravity Guy (Miniclip, Android/iOS/PC, 2010)

Among the four games, LocoRoco and Megaman X8 would be analyzed in detail in the same form as the sample R&A.

2. Detailed Analysis

a. LocoRoco (2006)

LocoRoco is a platform video game developed by Sony released in 2006. The most significant feature of LocoRoco is the control mechanic. Instead of moving the characters directly with direction keys, the player use the shoulder buttons to tilt the environment in order to roll characters around. The character can grow larger after eating a red flower, and can split into numerous little characters and then rejoin back to one.

The unique mechanism of this game would have robbed the game of its dynamicity if not handled carefully. In order to simply move right, the player has to tile the environment in clockwise direction and wait for the character to slip down the slope slowly. Because the player cannot move the characters directly, so he might feel impatient at first. However, the lack of dynamicity in the movement control is made up by the juicy visual and sound effects. The juicy response would give the player a sense of dynamicity even if the control mechanics is limited.

Despite the dynamicity provided by visuals and sounds, the game is still about slowing down. Through the adventure in the peaceful, colorful, fairy-tale world, the player would be relaxed and cheered. As we can see from the gameplay in Figure1, LocoRoco gives this cheerful atmosphere with its bright, colorful visuals. The cheerful and relaxing background music also plays an important role in making this atmosphere.



Figure 1. LocoRoco

b. Megaman X8 – Gravity Antonion Stage

Megaman is a classic game series that originated from a published by Capcom. Megaman features a variety of mechanics and special ability of player-controlled characters and enemies. Compared to LocoRoco which is a relaxing adventure-platformer, Megaman is a much more dynamic action game.

The mechanics that I am particularly interested in appears only in one boss-fight stage – Gravity Antonion Stage. I heard about this from my game-lover-friend when I told him about my idea (which made me change the subject of analysis from Beneath the Lighthouse to Megaman). I did not have the time and chance to play the game myself, but fortunately I was able to find a walkthrough video of Gravity Antonion Stage from Megaman X8 on Youtube.

While LocoRoco controls the movement by tilting the enviornement, i.e. changing the direction of the gravity, Megaman controls the movement of the character directly as almost all the platformers do. Megaman can change the direction of the gravity by 90 degrees or 180 degrees by when he hits the button. The way Megaman hits the button is similar to how Mario jumps on an enemy or hits a block. The direction change is defined by the individual bottons. This means that while Megaman provides much freedom to the player in terms of character control, but it does not provide much freedom in terms of the gravity changing. Well, this is acceptable since this is just one boss-fight stage in this game full of interesting mechanics.

The atmosphere of Megaman and LocoRoco is completely different as well. While LocoRoco is relaxing and cheerful, Megaman is dynamic, exciting and blood-stirring. The visual of Megaman is also colorful as LocoRoco, but in a cool (instead of cute) way. The background music of Megaman has a more “rock” in it to match the dynamic atmosphere.



Figure 2. Megaman

3. Features Comparison

	LocoRoco	Megaman X8 – Gravity Antonion Stage	My game
Genre	Platform, adventure	Action, adventure	Puzzle, platform
Control the character / environment?	Environment	Character	Character
Mechanism	Tilt using shoulder keys	Character hitting buttons	The wall Hero hits becomes the floor

Gravity dimension	30 degrees	4 dimensions	4 dimensions (possibly 8)
Style	Cozy, warm, cute, bright, colorful	Cool, dynamic	Limbo-style, minimalistic

4. Conclusion

It was not surprising that the sounds and the visuals would decide the atmosphere of a game. However, as I compared those games, I noticed that the movement control mechanics also have a large impact on the overall game atmosphere. The simple and slow movement control of LocoRoco makes it a cheerful, relaxing game, while as the freedom in movement control makes Megaman a dynamic, exciting game.