Submission Worksheet

Submission Data

Course: IT265-002-S2026

Assignment: Case Study 1 - Atari

Student: Salma E. (se342)

Status: Submitted | **Worksheet Progress:** 100%

Potential Grade: 604.00/604.00 (100.00%)

Received Grade: 0.00/604.00 (0.00%)

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Grading Link: https://learn.ethereallab.app/assignment/v3/IT265-002-S2026/case-study-1-atari/grading/se342

View Link: https://learn.ethereallab.app/assignment/v3/IT265-002-S2026/case-study-1-atari/view/se342

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: (150 pts.) Game Overview

Progress: 100%

≡⁄ Task #1 (50 pts.) - Game Details - Note the Game's title, developer, publisher, platform, genre, and release date

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

- Game Title: Dolphin
- Developer: Matthew Hubbard - Activision
- Publisher: Activision
- Platform: Atari2600
- Genre: Action-Arcade, Adventure, Chase, Sea/Underwater
- Release Date: May 1983

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≡⁄ Task #2 (50 pts.) - History and Industry - Note the historical context of the game's release and its place in the industry

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The Atari 2600 Dolphin game was released when the Atari 2600 among other game consoles had reached its peak in popularity in the U.S.. But this, however would lead to an oversaturation in the video game market as companies pushed out a lot of low quality games. This was still advantagous for games like Dolphin to have been released when its publisher, Activision, focused on producing and publishing higher-quality games. The Dolphin game also stood out for its audio-cues and engaging visuals although the game leans more towards difficult with its faster than average pacing.

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≡⁄ Task #3 (50 pts.) - Compare the game to similar games of the time

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The Dolphin game resembles the Fathom Atari 260 game with the underwater theme and goal to navigate through obstacles as the player is being chased by an enemy. Similar to the Seaquest game (another 1983 Activision game), it follows the same underwater theme, although the player is a submarine pilot whose goal is to rescue other divers with limited oxygen whie fighting off underwater predators.

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

Level Design

Progress: 100%

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

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The game uses basic joystick movements : up, down, left, and right. The player is navigates through the sea as a dolphin whose main goal is to avoid its enemy squid while passing through vertical lines or walls of seahorses. The game uses audio-cues to indicate the place of opening among the fast-approaching obstacle wall of seahorses(higher pitc. You can speed up by capturing ocean waves in shapes of arrows going in the direction you're facing, but also slow down when capturing an arrow in the opposite direction of where you're heading. Players have 4 dolphin lives and can gain additional dolphins after every 20,000 points they reach. The player can also jump above water and capture seagulls, allowing the player to be "energized" and given the limited ability to touch the squid for additional points. The game becomes progressivey harder as it speeds up making it harder for the player to listen to the audio-cues and navigate through the obstacles. The game requires precision and concentration.

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

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The game is set underwater with approaching obstacle lines of seahorses. The levels consist of these obstacle lines with only one opening for the player to pass through. The audio cues indicate the placement of the opening; the higher the pitch, the higher its placement, and the lower the pitch, the lower the placement of the openings. Missing the openings slow down the player but the ocean waves allow the player to speed up or slow down depending on the direction the ocean wave arrows ("<" ">") are facing. Occassionally, dolphins can jump above sea level and reach seagulls earning them limited abilities although this remains a risky move as the player has to reach back down without hitting obstacles or the enemy chasing them. The game quickly becomes challenging but the levels are relatively easy to understand and play through.

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Section #3: (150 pts.) Graphic And Audio Design

Progress: 100%

≡✍ Task #1 (75 pts.) - Game's visual appearance, artistic choices, and how they contribute to the experience

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

aThe game is visually pleasing with its complimentary colo scheme utilizing blues and oranges. Most of the game appears underwater in the deep blue which slightlt contrasts with the orange horizon above the sea. The color of the dolphin, squid, and seahorses underwater are more brightly lit in stark contrast to the blue backgdrop; this is effective in making the characters stand out visually. The animation of the characters including the dolphin player, squid, and seagull are smooth. There are clear visual cues in the change of colors with the squid enemy for example, indicating a power up seagull approaching. The clear, deep-blue undersea and visually distinctive characters makes it easier to lay and navigate underwater without any distractions of other design clutters. Overall, the game appears very clean and polished, especially when it was released during a time when poorly produced games were published during this time (1983).

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≡✍ Task #2 (75 pts.) - Sound design, including music and sound effects, and their impact on the game

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The Dolphin Atari 2600 games stands out for its use of sound-cues. The placement of the opening among the approaching wall of seahorses (obstacle) is indicated by the pitch of the sounds: higher placement = higher placement; lower pitch = lower placement. There is no background music which makes it all more easier to hear the sound-cues in the game. There are also different sounds played when the player powers up, reaches speed boosters (arrow waves), is affected by the seahorse obstacle and the squid enemy; this follows standard audio feedbacks in most games, although may not have been common for an Atari2600 game. The audio cues are very distinctive from one another as part of the game's main mechanics.

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Section #4: (150 pts.) Narrative And Storytelling

Progress: 100%

≡✍ Task #1 (75 pts.) - Narrative structure, main plot points, and

setting

Your Response:

The games takes place in the dangerous sea where you play as an endangered dolphin whose main goal is to keep away from the large squid enemy chasing after you. You must navigate through walls of seahorses throughout the sea and you are guided by magical seagulls that grant you limited abilities. The narrative is very straightforward without much change or progression as you continue to play. The player does reach milestones after reaching a set number of points (20,000 and 300,000). There is no dialogue or cut scene, nor is there an en; this is a basic survival-chase game.

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≡, Task #2 (75 pts.) - Character development and how it integrates with gameplay

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The Dolphin game's narrative is very straightforward and lacks character development. The dolphin main character is endangered and on the run from a squid, occassionally guided by magical seagulls; while he is vulnerable and has to endure a lot of obstacles (literally and metaphorically), one could argue that the dolphin remains resilient. The endangered story does evoke an sad/emotional response. The dolphin has 4 additional lives, has the ability to gain an extra life for every 20,000 points milestone reached and can temporarily power up, demonstrating the main character progression in the story.

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Section #5: (150 pts.) Impact And Reception

Progress: 100%

≡, Task #1 (75 pts.) - Critical and player reception, including reviews and feedback

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The Dolphin Atar2600 game has recieved a lot of mixed feedback with many praising its unique audio-based game mechanics and smooth graphics/animation, while others have argued that the game is not replayable with too many things to focus on at once, requiring too much precision. The walls of osbtacles only have a single opening that the player must quickly find and go through. The placement of the upcoming obstacles are indicated by the pitch of the audio cues, requiring the player

to match the pitch with the placement as the game becomes progressively faster. The gave is rated a 66/100 on retrogames.cz and a 2.9/5 on GameFAQs. The visuals and audio-based mechanics are impressive for an atari2600 game but as a survival-chase game, it's too difficult. I don't find myself wanting to replay the gave after the first few plays; I agree with the overall public perception and feedback on the game.

≡, Task #2 (75 pts.) - Game's impact on the gaming industry and its cultural significance

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

This game stood out for its impressive audio-based mechanics with the use of audio cues. This game demonstrated the high quality Atari2600 games of Activision's during the 1983 video game crash when companies kept producing and publishing low-quality games. The game has had a huge impact on future developments of games with audio-cues integrating in the game play (central to the game mechanics). This game may have been experimental for its time as well as its producer and publisher, Activision, but it drastically boosted their reputation and has further contributed to its further establishment in the gaming industry, accounted for its high-quality production.

Section #6: (2 pts.) Reflection

Progress: 100%

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

Progress: 100%

Your Response:

The game is fun once you get around understanding the mechanics, especially with the audio-cues and additional power-ups but it requires too much precision. I don't think this game is that fun after the first few tries. I liked the addition in the ability to pace back and forth, but it had too many risks and I prefer more laid-back games.

≡, Task #2 (1 pt.) - Reflection on the learning experience and ease of research

Your Response:

The game is easy to access online and there are many helpful guides and reviews of the game that have made the research portion of the game more easy in comparison to other Atari2600 games I tried to research and found inaccessible and unfinished. I enjoyed playing the game the first few tries and I appreciated its simplicity.

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