19263112 – Sam Kingston Ryan

This section will be relating to the current development of games for virtual reality, and the security features that are making them more accessible for everyone. To begin, I would like to explain that much of my source for this information is first-hand experience. I have had an Oculus Rift S for about six months now and have played a plethora of games since. Examples of these include ‘Blade & Sorcery’[[1]](#footnote-1), ‘Arizona Sunshine’[[2]](#footnote-2), and ‘Beat Saber’[[3]](#footnote-3). After discussing these three, I will go on to cite sources on the development of triple-A games in VR such as ‘Half-Life: Alyx’[[4]](#footnote-4).

‘Blade & Sorcery’ is a prime example of the incredible capabilities of modern Virtual Reality systems. Available on Vive, Rift, and Index, this game uses a first-person perspective and smooth movement to drill home the dangers of medieval combat. By smooth movement, I mean the player-controlled movement wherein they use a joystick to move similarly to most console games. In contrast to this is the teleportation system that other games use, which was developed primarily to help people who get easily motion sick. The implementation of VR in ‘B&S’ is perfect, despite it being in early access. As the description of the game states: “The era of the VR weightless, wiggle-sword combat is over.” ‘B&S’ uses the Unity engine with realistic inverse kinematics, to make every interaction you have with your surroundings feel weighty and accurate. This game has had a huge impact on the current VR industry and is still receiving regular large updates. (Ahem).

‘Arizona Sunshine’ serves as the go-between between single-person teams like ‘Blade & Sorcery’, and the huge triple-A teams of ‘Half-Life: Alyx’. With a modest team of seventeen people, ‘Arizona Sunshine’ released in 2016 as the best VR Zombie Survival game of its time. With innovative fun gunplay, extreme tension, and fresh storytelling techniques, ‘AS’ showed the potential of larger VR games long before Triple-A companies had caught on to the idea. The tension present in this game is thrilling, with the pocket-lint.com explaining that “The lighting and atmosphere is where this game really shines, especially in the variety of moving between light and dark areas.”[[5]](#footnote-5) As mentioned, ‘AS’ also introduces new storytelling techniques only relevant to the VR scene. Rather than a quest journal, or any markers, your character cracks jokes and thinks aloud to himself. This leaves you to figure out what the Arizona cowboy means by his dark humour and temperamental attitudes. Overall, ‘Arizona Sunshine’ is mentioned here because of how integral it was to the creation of larger, better games in the current era of VR, like those which I will mention later.

‘Beat Saber’ is arguably the simplest and most addictive of the games I have mentioned. The premise is “a VR rhythm game where you slash the beats of adrenaline-pumping music as they fly towards you, surrounded by a futuristic world.”, as described by the Steam Store page I have referenced. I strongly believe that, despite being the worst game on this list, ‘Beat Saber’ is the biggest thing to pull new players to VR right now. Sitting at 1,276 concurrent players on Steam at the time of my writing this, 500 players above second place, there is clearly something that keeps people playing[[6]](#footnote-6). My explanation is mods. Mods are unlicensed additions to any video game by fans of said game. For ‘Beat Saber’, mods come in the form of new surroundings, coloured sabers, and most importantly new songs to swing along to. ‘Beat Saber’ without any downloadable content from the developers themselves, comes with roughly twenty songs to enjoy. With mods, that number is above twenty-six thousand, five hundred and twenty, with more getting added every day[[7]](#footnote-7).

1. ‘Blade & Sorcery’, *Steam Store,* Valve, <https://store.steampowered.com/app/629730/Blade_and_Sorcery/>, (accessed 01/05/2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ‘Arizona Sunshine’, *Steam Store,* Valve, <https://store.steampowered.com/app/342180/Arizona_Sunshine/>

   (accessed 01/05/2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ‘Beat Saber’, *Steam Store*, Valve, <https://store.steampowered.com/app/620980/Beat_Saber/>, (accessed 01/05/2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ‘Half Life: Alyx’, *Steam Store*, Valve, <https://store.steampowered.com/app/546560/HalfLife_Alyx/>, (accessed 03/05/2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A. Willings, ‘Arizona Sunshine review: Now with even more zombie slaying madness’, *Pocket-lint,* <https://www.pocket-lint.com/ar-vr/reviews/141915-arizona-sunshine-review-zombie-shooter-is-at-the-pinnacle-of-vr-gaming>, (accessed 02/05/2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://vrlfg.net/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://bsaber.com/songs/top/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)