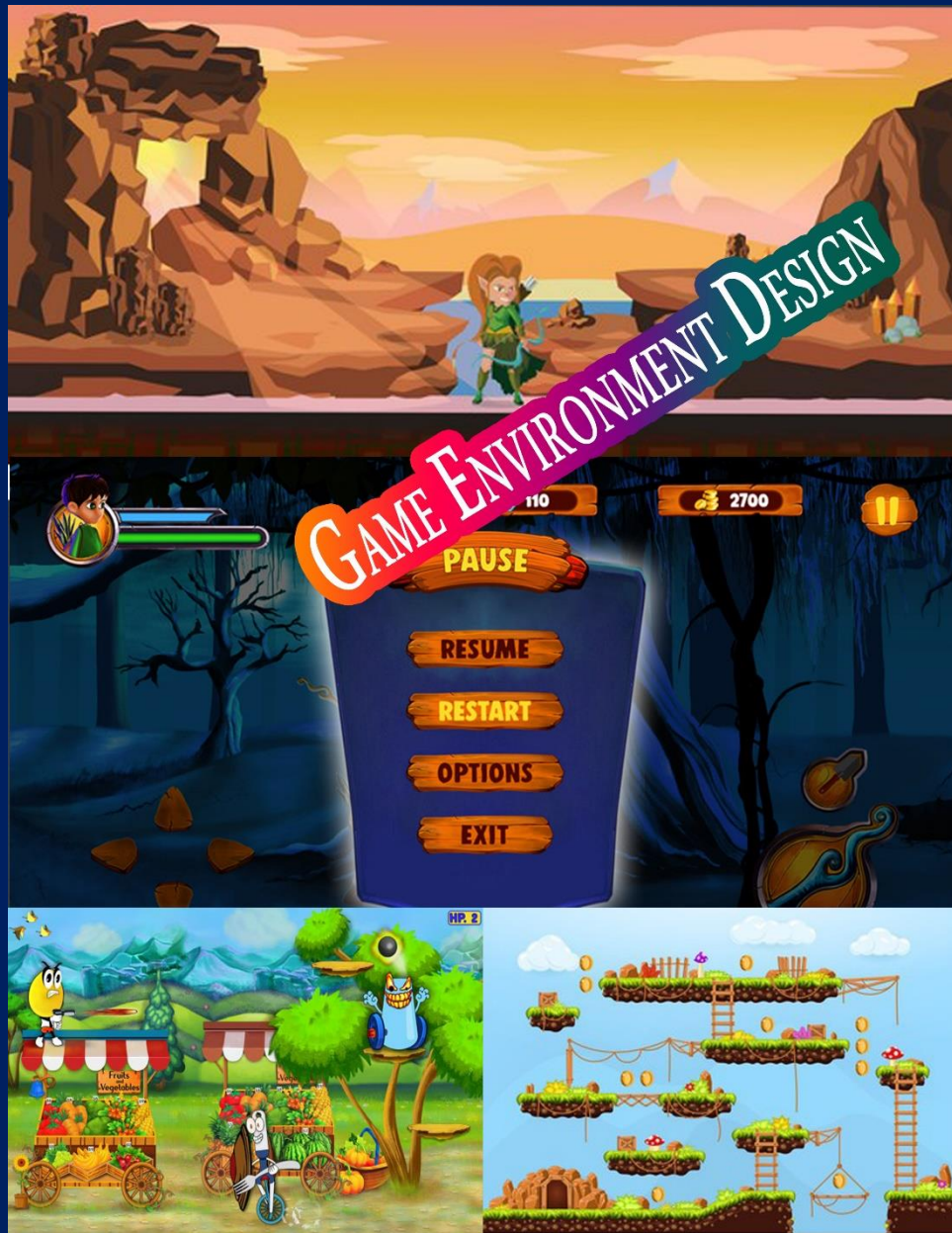


Game Environment Design



Title: Game Environment Design

By: Ali Akbary

Chapter 1 Introduction to Game

Learning Outcome

Objectives of this chapter are: -

- What is the Game?
- Where the game idea come from?

WHAT IS A GAME?

There are many definitions of the word "game," none of which has been universally accepted for the purposes of defining the limits of game design. One of the following tentative definition: "An activity with rules. It is a form of play often but not always involving conflict, either with other players, with the game system itself, or with randomness/fate/luck. Most games have goals, but not all (for example, The Sims and SimCity). Most games have defined start and end points, but not all (for example, World of Warcraft and Dungeons & Dragons). Most games involve decision making on the part of the players, but not all (for example, Candy Land and Chutes and Ladders). A video game is a game (as defined above) that uses a digital video screen of some kind, in some way."



Figure 1 The Sims and SimCity

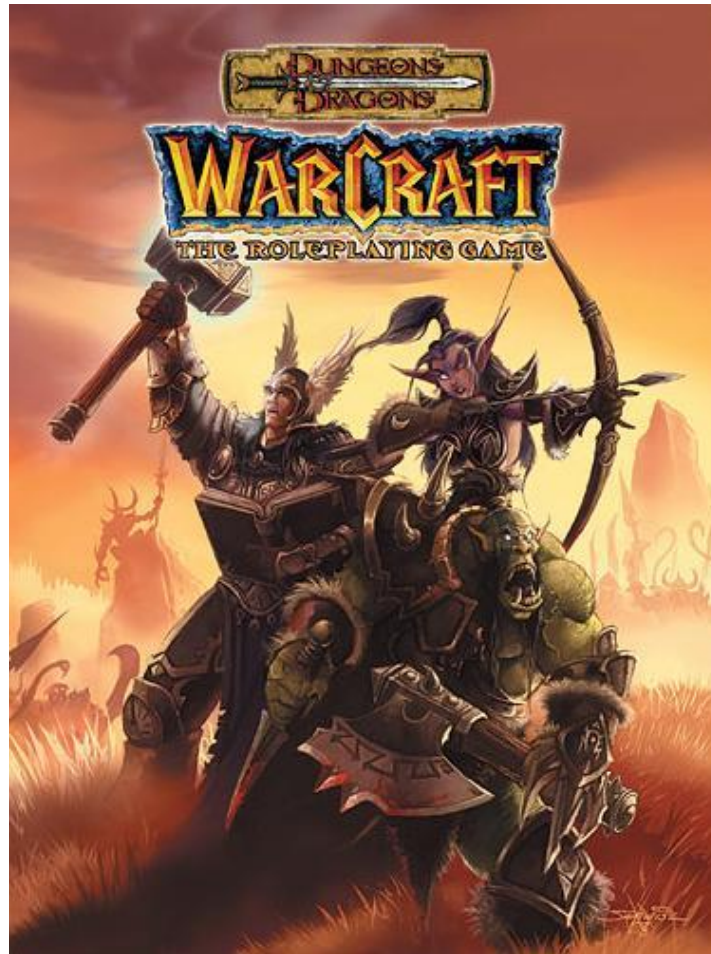


Figure 2 World of Warcraft and Dungeons & Dragons



Figure 3 Children Game

WHERE DO THE GAME IDEAS COME FROM?

Are you having trouble coming up with new game ideas?

If your mind is going blank and no matter how hard you try nothing seems to come to you. Do not worry. We have all been there. The truth is ... being creative and coming up with game ideas is a skill that you must hone, not a talent. Anyone can become a master at generating awesome game ideas if they apply and practice the right methods.

Although, there are dozens of different techniques that will help you unleash your creativity. Here are compiled a list designed specifically with game developers in mind. Each of these methods will help you get those creative juices flowing again and make it easy for you to come up with a killer game idea.

Here is how: -

- Playing a lot of games.
- Networking
- From everywhere
- Be observant of the world.
- Seek input from others.
- Research
- Get active in gaming industry.
- Just start & Game idea will flow.

Playing lots of game

Through playing games, you develop a vocabulary of mechanics and dynamics that are the necessary building blocks of successful game design. It is important to play many different kinds of games, not just those you are familiar with.



Figure 4 Playing Game.

Games have the ability to transport us into a different world, entertain, and challenge us in exciting new ways. When you are trying to come up with your own unique game idea, they are also one of the best ways to find inspiration. It is really important to try to play a lot of different style games, not just your personal favorites. Try to start with the classics and work your way up to the Indies and then some of the more popular newer titles. Games like Space Invaders, Tetris, Mario Bros, and others is a good place to start, especially if you haven't played many of them before.

Believe it or not, most of the games that we consider to be classics were created by individuals or small development teams. Also, many of the classics are simple style games that feature dynamic gameplay with tons of replay value. All of which are the secret ingredients to a successful game. Revisiting them can help get those wheels turning again. Notable indie games like Limbo and Monument Valley are great to play

and study as well. Try to find a few of the top current games in different categories to play also.

When you are playing, pay close attention to all of the little details that make the game fun and unique. Grab a small notebook and jot down any features, themes, color schemes, characters, effects, or gameplay mechanics that stand out to you.

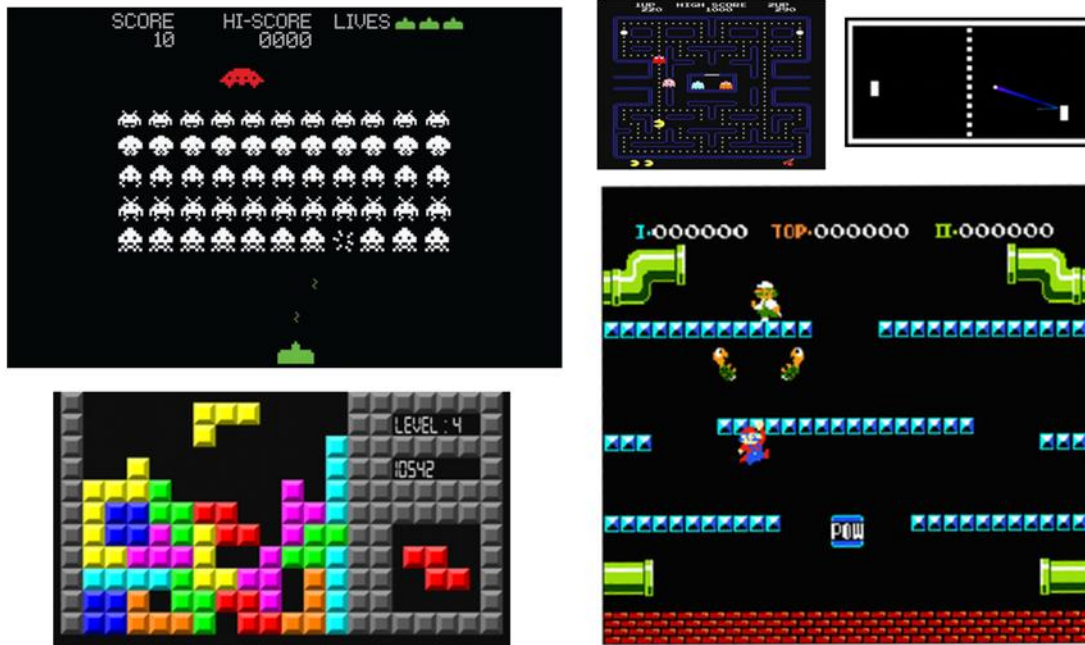


Figure 5 Playing Games

Networking

Networking with other designers. Two designers talking about the possibility inherent in a topic is a sure-fire way to produce a game. Mind you, it might be a bad game, so it is important to have a qualified pool of people to give you objective feedback as well. Still, designers share methods and always spur each other on to deeper thinking.



Figure 6 Network with Game Designers

From Everywhere

Look for game ideas in everything you do and challenge yourself to make a game or think about making a game about a topic at least once a day. Right now, around you, there are sounds you are completely tuning out: the flip of the page, the sound of your own breathing, and perhaps music or a television in the background. Game design can be tuned out or tuned in the same way. If you actively listen for the possibility and go with it, you will find game ideas everywhere.



Figure 7 Look Around you

Be Observant of the World

As Steve Jobs once said, "Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they did not really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while."

To be creative and come up with game ideas you have to be able to connect things. And to connect things you need to be observant. Start paying attention to all the little details. Notice your environment, people, and all the small things that we often overlook. The treetops, the clouds rolling by clothes tumbling in the dryer, virtually anything can be used as inspiration when you are fully aware. You never know what might spark an idea for a new theme, background, or interesting gameplay concept.

Try to pay attention to everything around you and come up with ways you could implement them into your game. Ask yourself, "Could this be used in a game?" If so, 'How?' Write it all down. The answers might surprise you. You will also find that your creativity level will spike as you continue to practice being observant. Ideas can spring from the strangest places.



Figure 8 Observation

Seek Input

As the wise saying goes, 'When in doubt, ask.' Always seek out input from others when you are trying to come up with game ideas. Ask around. Try to start up a 'game related' conversation and sneak in some possible game concepts that you have been bouncing

around in your head. Be inquisitive and find out what type of games people like to play by asking your friends, co-workers, family members or even strangers on the street. The more opinions, the better. If it is a concept, you have been thinking about but not quite sure, ask people what they think of it. Remember, you do not have to tell everyone you are working on a game when you do this. If you are afraid of someone possibly stealing your idea, you can be vague with your question and still gain valuable feedback. Asking around will help you get a good idea of which direction you could go with your game.



Figure 9 Seek idea from others.

Research

To come up with a great game idea, you need to know what is already working. Research is a necessity, especially if you are trying to come up with winning ideas. It is important to research which games are topping the charts, in which categories, and why, so you do not end up wasting your time on a concept that no one is going to like or play. Researching the charts and current trends will give you a slight advantage and make it easier to brainstorm new ideas.

To research just browse the top charts in the App Store. Look at all of the high-ranking games in the same category that you want to make your game in. Pay close attention to the games that appear to be from indie developers and write them down. Then thoroughly research each game. Google to find out more information about the games. Then download and play each game. Analyze the game's features and jot down any

element that stands out. Examine your notes and use them as starting points to base your game idea on.



Get Active in the Gaming Community

Being active in the gaming community is another way to spark creativity and generate game ideas. When you are involved in the game scene, ideas automatically come more easily to you. So, get involved! Become active in the gaming community. You have to do more than just play a bunch of games to do this. To be involved you need to join and actively participate on the forums. Browse different message boards and read what other gamers and developers are discussing. Post and ask questions. Get curious. The gaming community is an untapped resource that developers need to take advantage of. You can find inspiration, learn tips, and get guidance, network, and gain lots of useful feedback from gamers and peers.



Figure 10 Involve in game activity.

Just Start & Game Ideas will Flow.

If you are having trouble coming up with game ideas, sometimes it helps just to start creating something. It is easy to get overwhelmed with your own expectations on what you should be making. Diving right in and making a 'practice' game can alleviate a lot of the self-imposed pressure and unleash your creativity. When you are not worried about making a perfect game, and you are just messing around, your wheels will start turning, and ideas will come to you as you go. Just pick a random game type and run with it. You might just end up with the perfect game, by accident. You never know.

When you feel stuck, try one or all of the great tips mentioned above. Remember, making games, in general, should be a fun process. If you are struggling to come up with game ideas, take a deep breath, breathe out and relax. Play a ton of games, be observant, try different methods of brainstorming, research, work within your limitations and remember that ideas will come to you as you go.

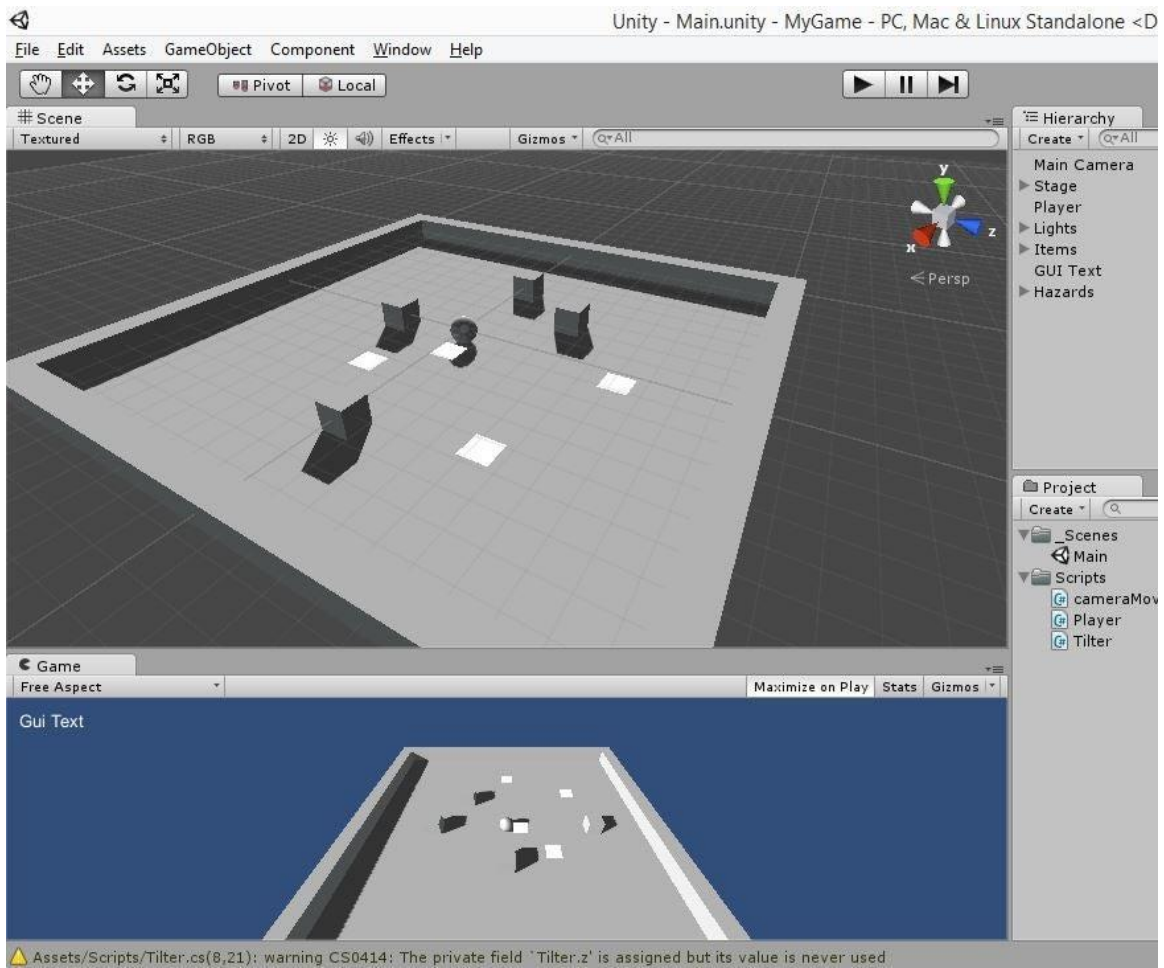


Figure 11 Start developing Game and idea will follow