

Game Critique Assignment

Name: Goh Wei Zhe

Course: GAM100F19A

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1. Game 1: Kudryavka



Figure 1.1 & 1.2

1.1 Introduction

Kudrayavka is a texted based game designed with a member of 4 by team NaCl. Kudrayavka is an individual game that plays against the system where player controls a battle spaceship to destroy all the enemies and bosses or survive for the entire game of the stage in order to proceed. Players are entitled to 7 lives at the start of each game. Their mission is to collect as many points by destroying as many enemy and survive as many stage to achieve the highest score on the leader board.

1.2 Strength and Weakness

The first impression given to me from this game is that it has a well-designed and immersive game introduction screen. The game loading duration was just right such that it keeps the players entertained while not frustrating players with long loading time ruining players' first time experience. It has a very simple yet nice profile designed with a green box shown in figure 1.1. It consist of very simple key controls, precise and clear instructions on getting novice player to understand how the game is to be played. For instance, it uses a single key to do multiple functions such as using the "space button" to select options and to shoot in game. Furthermore, since this is a real time game, the development team was thoughtful to implement a pause and quit button for players to take short break from long period of playing.

However, there were also a certain aspects which were not being done as perfectly. The team developer did not take into consideration of allowing players to enjoy playing the game in a full screen view. In addition, when players maximises the screen view, disorganised designs were scattered all over the screen shown in figure 1.3. Furthermore, after some time playing as a novice player, I reached the highest level where I completed the game within an hour and could not proceed any higher anymore.



Figure 1.3

1.3 Game Mechanics, Graphics, Music and Sound Effects

The developers of this games make uses of various game mechanics to enhance the players' gaming experiences. It uses a set of scoring system from defeating enemies and creating a leader board for players to create their personal best score. This game is designed such that the difficulty of the level get harder every time the player passed the stage. Players are also not restricted by the key movements as they are able to control movement from side to side but also up and down to avoid shots and to face off enemies.

Meanwhile, graphic designs, music and sound effects are also vital in players' gameplay experiences. I like how the development team had spent time creating the design of the battle spaceship differentiating from its enemy's look using simple and nice with nice animation. However, I suggest to change the colours of enemy shots to a brighter colour with larger colour contrast such as white for players to easily see and dodge bullets from enemies. The Sound effects added were relatively relevant to this game concept, improving players' virtual experience.

1.4 Improvements

Additionally, given with more time and bigger budget, I have several suggestions to highlight to the development team for them to further improve on the game. Since this game is an individual game played against with the system and players might get boring playing alone after sometime. I recommend to have an option that allows a second player to join in and play along for more fun and interaction together. With more players playing together, it is also necessary to increase the difficulty of the game such as increasing the number of enemies, increasing the health of bosses and the maximum level of this game. Aside from upgrading difficulty of the game, it is important to have better and powerful weapons with more varieties that players are able to choose for their likings to bring along with them for battle.

1.5 Summary

From my personal gaming experience as a novice player, Kudrayavka is a very simple yet fun that consist of simple game controls, clear and precise intructions. It is not difficult for novice player to understand the game with well-designed graphics, animation and sound effects. Overall, I had a relatively well gaming experiences and would rate this game a score 8 out of 10.

2. Game 2: ALTerra

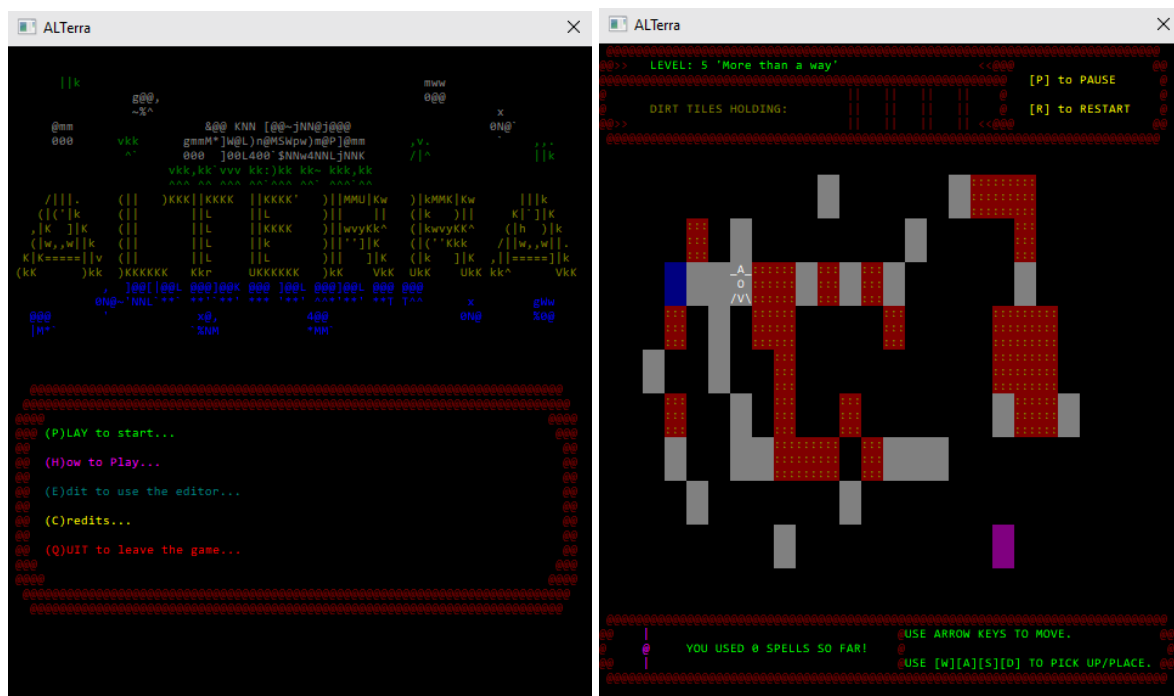


Figure 2.1 & Figure 2.2

2.1 Introduction

ALTerra is a text based game that is designed by a team of 4 members. ALTerra is an individual game that plays against the system where players controls the wizard around in the game using the arrow keys and uses several key buttons such as “W,A,S,D” to pick up/ place wasp. The maximum tiles a player could pick up is 3. There is no limited time to how long the player takes to clear the stage but the player loses once they steps onto a missing tile. The mission of this game is to cross over the landmasses to the end point.

2.2 Strength and Weakness

The first impression given to me from this game is that it is a game that requires critical and good strategic thinking skills along with some patience in order to clear the stage. It helps to stimulate and build players’ logical thinking which are suitable for young children and elderly to play. Different stage titles such as mentioning “More than a way” will be displayed at the top of every stage for players to have a better overview of how this stage is required to be cleared shown in figure 2.2.

Despite after reading the game controls, I did not understand how to play the game when I first started playing the game. The control instructions given were not clear such that they only mention vaguely that the “W, A, S, D” buttons were all used to pick up/ place wasp shown in figure 2.3. Developers should mention the individual functions of the keys such that “W” is used to pick up the wasp in front of the wizard while “D” is used pick up wasp toward the

right side of the wizard. It took me some time to figure out and clear the first stage. There was also an abrupt stop to the music throughout the game after a certain period.

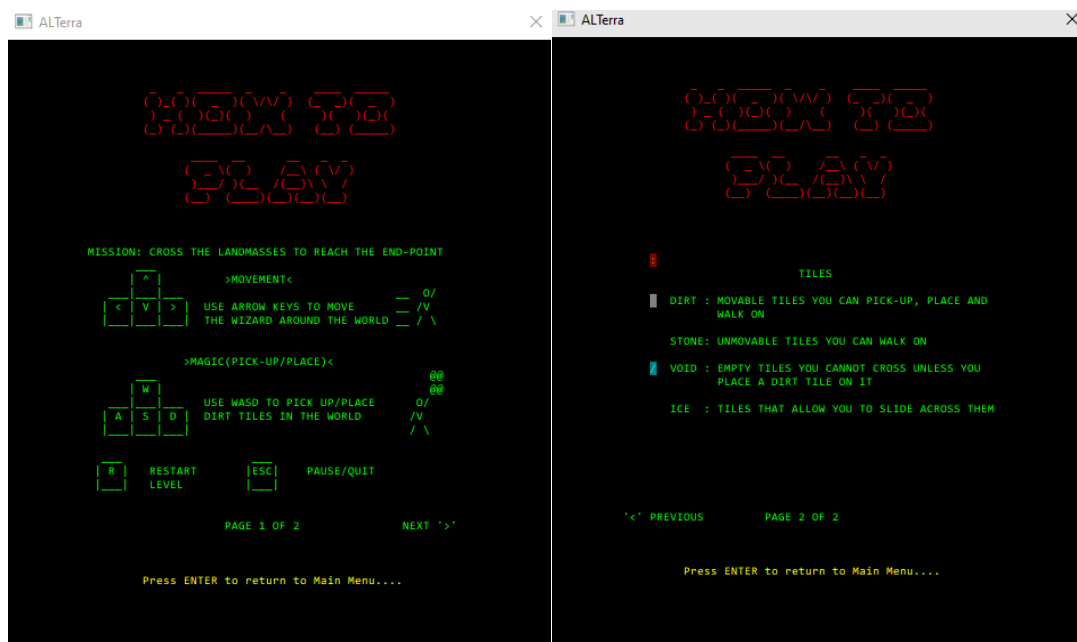


Figure 2.3

2.3 Game Mechanics, Graphics, Music and Sound Effects

This team of game developers spend much time in making uses of various game mechanics to enhance the players' gaming experiences. It applied the instant death function in the game such that the player loses instantly when they travel onto a missing land. Block puzzles were also introduced for players to pick/ place tiles to move themselves towards the end point.

While graphic design are important in a gameplay, I like how the development team had spent the time in designing the different graphics seen in different stages with the implementation of more obstacles as a game developer such as the different colour of tiles represented as well as obstacles faced in the game such as the water bodies. Minor details were also added in graphics such that leg of the wizard moves whenever the player pick up/ place a wasp. In addition, the development team also has to brainstorm and create the different level of game stages with increasing level difficulties for players. However, the graphics design on the game profile shown in figure 2.1 was a little messy as there were scattered designs of text around the game title serving no purpose but leaving the page disorganised. Different sound effects were being added in actions like picking/ placing tiles, crossing water bodies and when players clear the stage so that players will not get bored with having to hear same sound effects through different actions. The music implemented was relevant and appropriate to this game concept, thus, improving payers' virtual experience.

2.4 Improvements

Given with more time and bigger budget, I hope that the development team would further improve this game along with my suggestions. I would recommend the game developers to design a 'quit' button as players are only allowed to quit the game only through closing the

windows. Aside from that, an 'undo' step button is also necessary to be implemented in this game as more thinking and movements are required from the players after continuous clear of stages. They tend to make the wrong move that causes themselves to restart the entire stage as there were no 'undo' button designed. This results players who got themselves these far to clearing the stages and restart the whole level. I would recommend implementing a countdown for every stage for players to have a sense of urgency in clearing the stages quickly. Subsequently, adding a leader board at the end of the game to show case players with the highest level achieved within the shortest time spent and with minimum steps taken. This enables to motivate players to play the game and while continuously breaking their personal record.

2.5 Summary

From my personal gaming experience as a novice player, ALTerra is a game that requires critical, strategic thinking and solving skills in order to succeed in clearing the stages. It has a well-designed game graphics, animation and sound effect but with the lacking of clear gameplay instructions to be further improved on. Overall, I would rate this game a score 6 out of 10.

3. Comparative Analysis

3.1 Similarity and Differences

The similarities I discovered from playing the two games is that both games only have single player feature that plays against the systems and has a similar game mechanics such that the difficulty of the level increases as the stages go higher and higher.

However, there are also various differences between the two games. The game concept of Kudryavka was designed for players who likes battling and defeating enemies and bosses. It has a leader board implemented to intrigue players to achieve a higher score within limited health. On the other hand, the game concept of ALTerra was designed towards critical thinking and solving skills of players. This game is neither time based nor leader board implemented which allows players to solve the stage as long as they want.

3.2 Which one is more enjoyable

From my gaming experience after playing both games, I enjoyed playing Kudryavka more as compared to ALTerra. This is because I personally prefer games that does not require much thinking while having to crack my brain out such that I get frustrated and do not enjoy myself while playing the game. The development team from Kudrayavka also did a great job in designing clear gaming instructions and simple game mechanics that does not require me to figure out how to play the game despite after reading the game controls. Kudrayavka development team has also implement more game mechanics such as upgrading of weapons, losing lives as well as having a leader board at the end of the game which made the game more attractive which intrigue me to play more in the game. Kudrayavka also has lesser minor mistakes presented in my own perspective.

3.3 Game Criteria

One of the many game criteria that I am using to judge the game as a game critique will be looking at the presentation of the game such as the game profile is neat and appealing to attract players to play the game. Game Mechanics will be assessed as it will be used in different game concepts to target and attract the different ideal groups of players. Not all games include stories and content. However, well written background story and contents will definitely be a bonus for players to understand how the concept of this game comes from. User friendly controls are important such that it does not frustrate player into playing the game especially first time users. Next, I look into the game graphic whether it is well designed with animation to enhance players' visual experience. Last but not least, the gameplay such as great music and sound effects are one important factor as it would affect the ambience of the game