Video Game Design
Fun

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Game Design Workshop

Chapter 11 Fun and Accessibility

Types of Fun

Understanding types of fun helpful for **Brainstorming** as well as **Playtesting**

Willy beamish

As a Part of Brainstorming

Identify the categories of fun you are most interested in and direct your brainstorming towards those areas

Artic Fox (amiga)
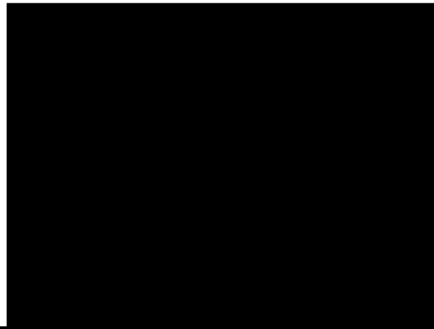
Playtesting: Is your game fun?

- Ask the playtesters…
- …but they will have difficulty articulating aspects of game lacking in fun
- Need tools to measure "fun factor" (playtest instruments)
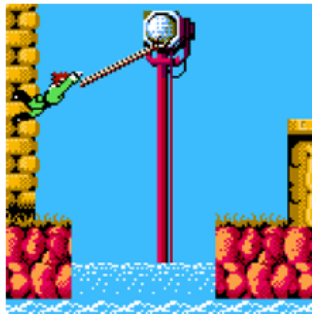 - Tailor to common types of fun

Challenge

- Reaching and Exceeding Goals
- Competing Against Opponents
- Stretching Personal Limits
- Exercising Difficult Skills

Mario Maker and a video of custom Super Mario World (Item Abuse 3)– example of some extreme challenges

Reaching and Exceeding Goals

- Clearly Defined?
- Too hard?
- Too easy?
- Ask playtester to state their goals

Competing Against Opponents

- Direct (e.g. combat in an FPS, fighting game, RTS, etc.)
- Indirect (e.g. rankings or high scores at the arcade)
- Support communication between competing players
- Observe what is driving the competition
- Players may find pleasure in a competitive aspect that you didn't anticipate

Stretching Personal Limits

- Players often enjoy meeting their own goals more than meeting goals set by game designer
- Games can let player set their own goals (some players don't like this)
- Examples: free-form: Electroplankton, SimCity, Civilization, high score challenges Tetris, FreeCell, Pac-Man; time trials – Gran Turismo
- Extending Goals, Examples: Thief – beat level unseen/no traces, beat any game in minimal time

VVVVVV - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VVVVVV

Examples: Street Fighter II – special moves/combos, Bionic Commando – Tarzan swinging, Descent – controls, XCOM – strategies for attacking aliens

Making Interesting Choices

- Sid Meier: "Games are a series of interesting choices."
- Choices should have consequences (otherwise the choice is a distraction)
- Micromanaging
- Players should be aware of consequences
- Create dilemmas

Play

- Games are arena for play
- Living out Fantasies
- Social Interaction
- Exploration and Discovery
- Collection
- Stimulation
- Self-Expression and Performance
- Construction/Destruction
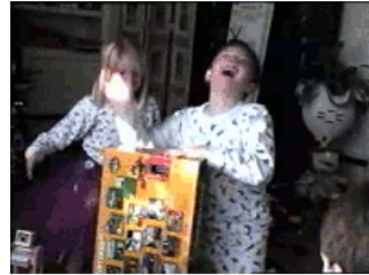
Living Out Fantasies

- Game players want to be something they're not: fighter pilot, wizard, superhero, etc.
- Players might want to explore intriguing social scenarios that go against ethics: Grand Theft Auto

Train simulator 2015 and some mario cosplay

Social Interaction

- Game can be forum for social interaction
- Can "hook" player
- Example: any MMORPG, web games, Sierra's ImagiNation Network

Exploration and Discovery

- Can trigger strong emotional responses from player:
  - Fear of unknown
  - Excitement from discovering treasure
- Exploration shouldn't become rote (strafing walls in Doom hitting use key, Shadow of the Colossus ambiguous direction cues)

Examples: Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time, Ultima series, The Dig

Collection

- W00T! Collectables within game
- Ingrained hunter-gatherer instinct?
- Operant Conditioning (Skinner Box)
- Examples: Diablo, any MMORPG, coins and power-ups in Super Mario series, etc.
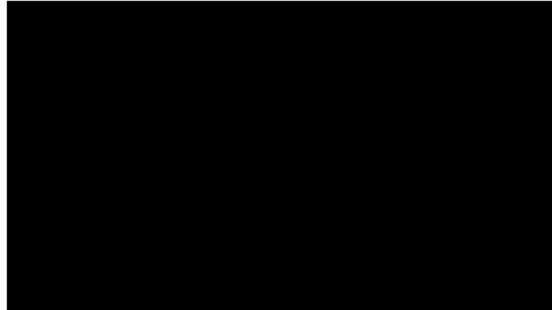
Stimulation

- Eye Candy
- Music
- Sound Design
- Force Feedback Controls

No Man's Sky looked great but….

Self-Expression and Performance

- Give players a chance to show off who they are and be creative
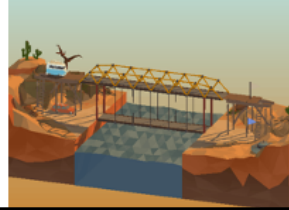- Character/Avatar Building and accessorizing

Diablo
Fallout4 Beavis and Butthead
Minecraft building timelapse

Construction/Destruction

- Construction can make player feel invested in game
- Examples: SimCity, Bridge Builder, PolyBridge, World of Goo
- Destruction: fun!
- Examples: Rampage, Half-Life 2, Katamari Damacy

Heavy Rain I think

Elements of Fun in Existing Games

- Think about your favorite game. What elements of fun are implemented?
- Which are the most important?

EverQuest

- Main goal: grow and improve your avatar
  - Sub goals: quests, adventures, tasks
- Competition among players
- Living out fantasy
- Social Interaction
- Exploration of virtual world
- Stimulation with graphics and sound
- Self-expression with role playing, avatar creation
- Stories and legends
- Destruction
- Collection of items

Tetris

- Goal: Clear blocks from screen
- Stimulation via music, colorful blocks
- Construction/destruction of blocks
- Collect all blocks in a single row

Elements of Fun - Observations

- No relationship between number of elements of fun and the amount of fun a player can derive from the game
- Making games fun is not about including every possible type of challenge or play but finding the right combination!