Gameplay

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Previous lecture

- Game Design introduction
- Unique Selling Point (USP)
- Brainstorming
- Homework -
  - 3 game ideas with a USP and a picture
Homework recap

- Form teams of 4-5 people.
- Every person chooses one of their game idea and tells it to others. (1 minute per person)
- Each group picks the most unique / interesting game idea.
Today’s topics

● Finding your target audience
● What makes games fun?
● Gameplay components
  ○ Game mechanics
  ○ Core gameplay loop
  ○ Challenges
● Gameplay limitations
Group task!

What players want from games?

Example: players want a challenge!
What player wants

Players want:
● a challenge
● to socialize
● a dynamic solitary experience
● bragging right
● emotional experience
● to explore
● to fantasize
● to interact
What player expect

- a consistent world -> expectation of what will happen
- to understand the game world bounds
- reasonable solutions to work
- direction
- to accomplish a task incrementally
- to be immersed
- some setbacks
- a fair chance
- to not need to repeat themselves
- to not get hopelessly stuck
- to do not to watch
Know your audience

- You can’t make a game for everyone
  - Who will enjoy this game?
  - What kind of challenge do they like?
Bartle taxonomy

1996 Richard Bartle -> Classifies players in mmo games
Primary category of players

Try to assign those players:

- CS GO player, speedrunner, cheater, typical facebook game player, 100% completionist, guild leader, modder, game wiki writer, youtuber Kripparrian

to a most suitable category:

1. Killers
2. Achievers
3. Socializers
4. Explorers
Finding your core audience

Describing your player is hard.

It is easier to describe the games he/she plays.
Test your target audience

Optimatica: Optimatica Steam Greenlit Trailer
Optimatica Steam Greenlit Trailer! Optimatica is an optimization game in an AI inhabited space station, where player constructs machines which will press buttons. So you don't have to! Button presses will unlock doors and give you access to better optimization...

2:36 · Uploaded on 03/21/2017 · View Permalink

Performance for Your Post

Top Audience: Men, 25-34

This percentage shows the breakdown of Total Minutes Viewed by age and gender for your video compared to the audience that viewed videos on your Page during the last 30 days.

Mar 21 - Feb 23
211 Minutes Viewed
82% Men
16% Women

Insights are recorded in the Pacific Time Zone and may not reflect the most recent data.
The golden rule

Do one thing, but do it well!

Don’t try to attract everyone by adding unrelated features.

You can always add more stuff later!
Gameplay

Gameplay - ?
Gameplay

**Gameplay** - interactivity that the game induces. How player interact with the game and how game world reacts to the choices.
Making Games Fun

Game designer’s primary goal is to provide entertainment.

Without gameplay the activity can be fun, but it is not a game. (Books, Movies...)

Things that contribute to fun:

1. **Avoiding elementary errors** - bad programming, bad art, bad UI and bad game design all ruin player’s fun.
2. **Tuning and polishing** - paying attention to details.
3. **Imaginative variations on game’s premise** - take the basic elements of the game and construct an enjoyable experience.
4. **True design innovation** - creative decisions that you make.
Finding the Fun Factor

There’s no formula for making your game fun.

“You can’t make it happen, so you might as well not worry about it. But when you can feel it there, be careful about making changes to your game design from that point on. Whatever it is, it’s fragile.” - Fundamentals of Game Design 3rd edition

Some principles to keep in mind as you design:

● Gameplay comes first.
● Get a feature right or leave it out.
● Design around the player.
● Know your target audience.
● Abstract or automate parts that aren’t fun.
● Be true to your vision.
● Strive for harmony, elegance, and beauty.
Gameplay components

- Gameplay mechanics
- Core gameplay loop
- Challenges
Gameplay mechanics

**Gameplay mechanics** are the rules or methods for interaction with the game.

These **rules** will cover:
- What player can do
- What other entities can do in response to player actions

**Game mechanics ≠ theme:**

Monopoly: Actions have a ‘theme’

GO: Actions are abstract
Core gameplay loop

What is the most important thing you are doing...

...again and again and again!
Core gameplay loop

What is this game?

Start
Move
Kick ball
Score
Core gameplay loop

What is this game?
Core gameplay loop

What is this game?

Start
Drive car
Kick ball
Score
Core gameplay loop

What is this game?
Core gameplay loop

What is this game?

Explore
Click on enemy
Kill enemy
Get loot
Core gameplay loop

What is this game?
Core gameplay loop

What is this game?

Explore
Shoot enemy
Kill enemy
Get loot
Core gameplay loop

What is this game?
Core gameplay loop

What is the core loop?
Core gameplay loop

What is the core loop?
Challenges

Even the most bare bone games has some sort of challenges.
Informing the Player about Challenges

**Explicit challenge** - game informs the player directly about it.

![Explicit challenge example](image1)

**Implicit challenge** - challenges that the game leaves to the player to discover.

![Implicit challenge example](image2)
Hierarchy of Challenges

Player will simultaneously face several challenges in the hierarchy.

Source: Fundamentals of Game Design (Ernest Adams)
Commonly used challenges

Physical Coordination Challenges:

- Speed and reaction time
Commonly used challenges

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- Accuracy and Precision
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- Intuitive understanding of physics
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Physical Coordination Challenges:

- Speed and reaction time
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- Intuitive understanding of physics
- Timing and Rhythm
Commonly used challenges

Physical Coordination Challenges:

- Speed and reaction time
- Accuracy and Precision
- Intuitive understanding of physics
- Timing and Rhythm
- Combination moves
Commonly used challenges

Logical and Mathematical Challenges:

- **Formal logic puzzles** -> classic deductive logic where the puzzle contains everything the player needs to know.

- **Mathematical challenges** -> don’t test the player’s mathematical abilities explicitly but often require the player to reason about probabilities.
Commonly used challenges

Races and Time pressure:

Player attempts to accomplish something before someone else does.

Time pressure discourages careful strategic thought and encourages direct brute-force solution.
Commonly used challenges

Factual Knowledge Challenge

Design rule: make it clear when factual knowledge is required.
Commonly used challenges

Memory challenge

Tests the player’s ability to recall things that he/she has seen or heard in the game.
Commonly used challenges

Pattern recognition challenge

Tests the player’s ability to spot visible or audible patterns.
Commonly used challenges

**Exploration Challenge** (exploration needs something extra to be a challenge)

- Spacial awareness challenges
- Locked Doors
- Traps
- Finding hidden objects
- ...

![Game screenshots](image)
Commonly used challenges

Conflict

Has direct opposition of forces. Some which are under player control.
Commonly used challenges

Strategy

Strategy means planning, including taking advantage of your situation and resource.
Commonly used challenges

Tactics

Executing a plan, accomplishing the coals that strategy calls for.
Commonly used challenges

Logistics

Logistical challenge such as transporting food and fuel to the troops.
Commonly used challenges

Survival and reduction of enemy forces
Commonly used challenges

Stealth
Commonly used challenges

Economic Challenge

Resources move from physically from place to place or from owner to owner.
Commonly used challenges

Accumulating resources

Wealth generation for using it to your own advantage.
Commonly used challenges

Conceptual reasoning and Lateral thinking puzzles

Both require extrinsic knowledge from outside the domain of the challenge itself.

**Conceptual reasoning** - require the player to use his reasoning power and knowledge of the puzzle’s subject matter to arrive at the solution.

**Lateral thinking** - Most probable solution is incorrect, the player must think of alternatives instead.
Set your own gameplay limitations

Limitations make your game better, for example:

- **Only one room** -> make it replayable
- **Only 3 buttons** -> make it easy to learn
- **No fighting** -> a new interesting gameplay
- **3 minute game sessions** -> easy to pick up
- **Only 1 health** -> make it challenging

Snake Pass

The Kingdom
Homework

Watch the presentation: Hearthstone: 10 Bits Of Design Wisdom

Expand 2 of your game ideas with gameplay
(You can also do it for new ideas if you think that they are better)

Write following things about each game:
1. Find two other games that are similar to your game. Add screenshots from those games. (try to find games that are different)
2. Describe the core gameplay loop of this game.
3. Describe the challenge of this game.
4. Write at least one gameplay limitation for this game.

Submit your homework in one well formatted PDF document.
(Deadline next monday 14.15)
Homework example

Game 1: “Indian Taxi Driver”

- **USP:** Drive a taxi in crazy Indian traffic.

**Other similar games:** Crazy Taxy, Traffic Rush

**Challenge:** Find optimal route through traffic and execute in time pressure

**Core gameplay loop:**
Pick up a client -> Navigate through traffic -> Drop the client -> Upgrade car

**Gameplay limitation:**
You can only pick up one client at once.
Next lecture - Game mechanics

- Game rules
- Mechanics / Dynamics / Aesthetics (MDA) framework
- Feedback loops
- Emergent gameplay
- Designing your game’s functional space
- Skills

Epic Heist
Story

Failure

Greed
Tension

Failure

Tension
Greed

Epic Heist
Story