

Unit 2 Assignment: Analysis

Introduction

2142 words

For my unit 2 project, I chose video games. Video games have been a significant part of my life for better or for worse, for more than three quarters of my life. In this project I will do a general analysis on video games which will tell the history of video games, their impact, notable members in the Video Game industry and the goals and rules of them among other things. In my Focused analysis I will be talking about the social aspects of video games, notably the online multiplayer community, especially my favorite game from this genre, Team Fortress 2.

History and Social Impact

Video games didn't always have a significant impact on society. Their rise in popularity started in the late 70s to early 80s with companies like Atari, Magnavox, and Commodore. Video games have caused entire companies like Atari to crash in the early 80s due to the implementation of quantity over quality in the early 80s and in turn gave way for companies like Nintendo to pick up the pieces and rebuild the Video Game industry anew. Video Games continue to maintain relevance in the present day society. Video Games will most likely always be an important part in human culture. In a study conducted recently more than 40% of the people surveyed said that video games provide emotional relief. Also mentioned in the survey, many people have made friendships through playing games or talking about them. This survey shows that the societal impact of video games is that of a past-time or form of escapism from the

hum-drum of everyday life and its drag on the psyche as well as something of a social network in itself. I can say without a doubt from personal experience that playing video games is a great portal for relaxation, escapism and emotional relief, perhaps too great of a portal sometimes. The history of video games began earlier than one might expect. As a matter of fact, Video games have started as early as 1952 when British Professor, A.S. Douglas created OXO for his dissertation at Cambridge University. OXO is another name for Tic-Tac-Toe. In 1962 Steve Russel created a game called "SpaceWar!" for the PDP-1, which was a cutting edge computer at the time commonly used in universities at the time. SpaceWar! Was the first game that could be played on multiple platforms at once, making it the first multi-peripheral multiplayer game. The First commercially available video game system started its life in the year 1967 as a prototype created by Saunders Associates Inc., a company lead by Ralph Baer. The title of this prototype device is the "Brown Box". Ralph Baer licensed this console to the company Magnavox, which sold the device as the Magnavox Odyssey, which was released in the year 1972, as such, Ralph Baer is referred to as the "Father of Video Games". As mentioned previously, the Video Game market crashed in 1983 due to oversaturation from multiple competitors. In 1985 Nintendo, which was originally a Japanese playing card company that started in 1889, helped revitalize the video game industry and also regulated third party games to help prevent the crash of 1983. Nintendo created some of the most iconic series, such as Mario, Legend of Zelda and Pokemon. The video game industry has quite a few notable names like Shigeru Miyamoto, one of the higher-ups at Nintendo, Markus Notch, the creator of the phenomenon, MineCraft, Gabe Newell, co-founder of Valve, the company that developed my favorite game, Team Fortress 2 and my

favorite online game service, Steam, which is a digital store and social network all rolled into one.

Discourse Community

Video games have many different discourse communities tied to them, as different games are designed to cater to different audiences, for example Sonic is designed to cater to literal neanderthals with it's simplistic uninvolved playstyle of charging into stages nigh invulnerable, but I digress. The most common discourse community tied to video games is the gaming community as a whole. I'd say in order to be a part of the gaming community you'd have to at least have one console and have played a game on it recently. Us "gamers" typically communicate using abbreviated lingo, especially in multiplayer games, for example, AFK stands for Away from keyboard, meaning the player is occupied with something else and BRB which stands for be right back. In order to join the Gaming community you'd need to play a game and form opinions on it and you'd need to still be a little young at heart.

Rules and Message

In the incredibly diverse genre that is Video Games, there is no strict set of rules as a whole. Certain sub genres of video games have different rules. For example, First Person Shooters must have the player seeing the world directly through the eyes of their character.

Sandbox games don't have any strict rules or story, they give the player the tools to make their own worlds and stories. Platform games test the player's skill on a 2D and sometimes 3D plane with floating platforms to jump between, like mario. Some games have messages behind them, but not all games do. A great example of a game with an interesting deep message behind it is Ratchet and Clank, a 2002 Playstation 2 game about a feline alien of the Lombax species, Ratchet and his robot, Clank, who travel the galaxy collecting weapons and upgrades. In Ratchet and Clank, the main antagonist is the evil leader of a corporation called Megacorp, Chairman Drek. Drek's homeworld was extremely polluted due to excessive industrial work, leading him to destroy planets and taking their pieces to build a new one. The message of this game is an anti-corporate greed message. Another game series with an actually surprisingly deep message is my favorite 2D platforming game series, Megaman. Mega Man is a series about a robot boy named "Rock" who offers himself to be turned into the fighting robot, Mega Man, to fight powerful robots who have been granted sentience and as such have risen up against their masters. Mega Man's messages, intentional or not is one warning of the dangers of artificial intelligence. Another really good example of a game with a message is Undertale. In Undertale you play as a human child lost in the underground world populated by monsters who act and think like people. In undertale you "fight" these monsters but the game gives you alternative ways of finishing the fight via pacifism and rewards you with a better ending if you take the "Pacifist Route". UnderTale preaches a message of acceptance and pacifism, telling it's viewers that violence isn't always necessary. However, a game doesn't need a deep message to be a great game, for example, Team Fortress 2, which is a game about 2 teams of mercenaries fighting each other with nonsensical weapons and crude M rated humor has no deep message, but still captivates

countless players to this day despite being a 13 year old multiplayer game. Another game without a message is Minecraft, Minecraft has no ulterior message and despite this, it has sold millions of units due to its captivating gameplay.

Focused Analysis

For my focused Analysis I will be going in-depth about one of my favorite games of all time, Team Fortress 2. In this analysis I will be talking about my history the premises, concepts, rules, and the history of the game itself.

History of Team Fortress 2

The first Team Fortress game was a modification of a First Person Arena Shooter game called quake released in the year 1996 created by Robin Walker and John Cook. This mod was remade in the year 1999 on the GoldSource engine after Walker and Cook were hired by Valve, creator of the GoldSource engine. Team Fortress 2 in its final release is completely different from the original concepts proposed, after all the game was in development for almost 9 years. In the beginning, Team Fortress 2 was supposed to be more gritty, taking on a more modern military combat and significantly less cartoony feel compared to the final version. In the 2000s, Team Fortress 2 was delayed as Valve would be moving from GoldSource, to the Source engine, an engine made from scratch rather than a modified version of Quake's engine. After the announcement of the delay, Valve went silent for some time until 2006 at EA's press conference

where they had shown the trailer, as it was to be shipped with the EA published Orange Box, a collection of newly released Valve Games. This trailer showed the Team Fortress 2 we know today, complete with a more animated art-style and 9 distinct playable characters called classes, The Scout, Pyro and Soldier making up the offense classes, Engineer, Heavy and Demoman making up the Defense, and Medic, Sniper and Spy composing the Support classes. These 9 classes were also in the original Team Fortress but weren't as distinct in height and body type. Since then, Team Fortress has received many content updates bringing about many new weapons and other things I'll mention later.

Team Fortress 2 and its Intended Audience

On the ESRB ranking system for games, Team Fortress 2 scores an M for Mature. Despite its animated appearance, the game features blood, exploding body parts (also known as gibbing due to the meaty giblets that rain down), alcohol usage, and foul language among other things. Examples of crude humor in Team Fortress 2 include Jarate, which is an item for sniper that is essentially a jar filled with his urine that he can throw on enemies to deal extra damage with every subsequent attack for a short period of time, and the scout who upon dominating (killing a player 5 times without being killed by them) someone playing as heavy, will sometimes make a remark about him being a "Fat Bald Bastard". Despite the game being rated mature, myself and many others have played it at a very young age, I started at 12 years old after watching my brother play, but occasionally you see kids even younger playing, which people used to insultingly call squeakers for their high pitch voices.

The many Concepts and Terms of Team Fortress 2

In the year 2007 Team Fortress 2 was very basic, with only 6 maps(areas in which you play the game), these are 2Fort, Granary, GravelPit, Well, Hydro and DustBowl as well as no weapons besides the stock ones. As the game received updates it gained new weapons for players to use Starting with the Gold Rush update way back in 2008 which gave some classes 3 new weapons as well as new maps. In 2009 the game received a new concept in the form of cosmetic items, typically called hats. Hats are items that players can use and trade or even purchase with real world currency to make their character stand out more. In 2012 my favorite game mode was released, Mann VS. Machine, a game mode in which you and 6 other players fight hordes of mechanical copies of the 9 classes while trying to prevent them from delivering a bomb to your base, in the event that a robot brings the bomb to base and detonates it you have to restart the wave, there is a version of Mann VS. Machine where you pay for a ticket and have a chance of winning special items at the end of a set of missions which is called a tour. The core concept of Team Fortress 2 is similar to its precursors, 2 teams of RED and BLUE (stylized as BLU) fight each other in an array of game modes while completing certain objectives. Among these game modes is the most popular, CTF (Capture the flag) in which players try to take the enemy team's flag which is in this case a briefcase with top secret documents and run it back to their base without getting killed. In some scenarios on 2Fort, players will ignore capturing the flag and turn the map into an endless deathmatch until someone takes the flag back to base 3 times winning the round much to everyone's dismay. Team Fortress 2 unlike it's precursors also has a story, told through webcomics and computer animated videos using the game's engine to introduce

them. The first of the “Meet The Team” videos was for Heavy, big, burly minigun wielding man from the Soviet Union.

The Impact Of Team Fortress 2

Team Fortress 2 has undoubtedly had a significant impact on me over the years. I’ve managed to rack up around 3,381 total hours playing this masterpiece of a game on steam, and that number won’t stop growing anytime soon. Team Fortress 2’s development may have stagnated a little since 2017 but that doesn’t stop people from having fun and taking part in the community. The Team Fortress 2 community is very lively, skilled creators design and upload weapons, cosmetics and even maps to the Steam Workshop, where if Valve likes them enough and they get enough support, the items have a chance of making it into the game! There have been entire updates based around user created content, like the most recent major update in October 2017, Jungle Inferno which brought about over 40 new cosmetic items made by the community and 5 new maps made by the community. The community of this game has no set age, TF2 fans can be young or old and still have a great time with the game, lending to its great design and world of characters both unique in design and personality. Since Valve just finished working on releasing a new game, Half-Life: Alyx, it’s possible the game will soon receive more content, which makes me excited to see where valve will take this old dog of a game in the new decade.

Citations

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