

HISTORY OF VIDEOGAMES, ASSIGNMENT #4

MCAD LS3322, SPRING 2007

Due Date

This assignment is due at the beginning of class 13 (Wed Apr 9).

Overview

Your fourth assignment is to play a classic computer game from the early era of home computers (1977-1986). Then, you must describe the gameplay and your experience. You should spend 2-4 hours playing, to get a good feel for this game. Many of these early games appear simple, but are surprisingly complex.

Games

You must choose one of the following games to play:

Ultima IV : Quest of the Avatar (Origin Systems, 1985)

This is a classic, large RPG game that pushed the technology at the time and had a very large scope. This game had many innovative features, especially in comparison to a "traditiona RPG". If you like RPGs, this will be the game for you to play. Information on this game can be found here:

<http://www.uo.com/archive/ultima4/u4encore.html>

This game has been completely rewritten (legally) for modern PCs and Macs, so you can play this game easily – it's very slick:

<http://xu4.sourceforge.net/download.php>

Zork I : The Great Underground Empire (Infocom, 1983)

This is as classic as text adventures get. If you are a writer, or into fiction, this will be the game for you. Information and instructions on Zork I can be found here:

<http://gallery.guetech.org/zork1/zork1.html>

This game can be played online, in most modern browsers:

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~pot/infocom/zork1.html>

You can also download and play, Mac or PC:

<http://www.csd.uwo.ca/Infocom/>

Karateka : A game by Jordan Mechner (Broderbund, 1984)

This is an early action / fighting game that set a new height for production values and art direction. It was a truly groundbreaking game. You can find information and instructions about this game here, and you can play it online:

<http://virtualapple.org/karatekadisk.html>

If you have issues playing this game online, you can download the disk image at the bottom of the page, and play this game in an emulator on a PC:

(<http://applewin.berlios.de/>)

or on a Mac:

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~gp/Virtuall/>

If you choose Karateka, you must play this game to completion.

What To Hand In

You must turn in the following to receive full credit (**100 points total**).

Gameplay Description (40 points)

Thoroughly describe the gameplay of this game. Describe how the world works, and how you interact with it.

Depth (10 points)

How deep is this game? Is this something you could complete quickly, or would it take a while? How long did you play this game, and how well to you think you began to understand the game and the game world?

Immersion (10 points)

The graphics in these games are very simplistic and primitive compared to games of today. Did you ever feel immersed in this game, despite the simple graphics, or not

Quality (10 points)

Did you like this game, and did you feel it was well done? Please describe things you liked, and things you did not like, and why.

Experience (10 points)

Describe how far you got in this game? If you picked Zork, type "score" to see how far you gotm then describe how you got that far. If you played Ultima, describe the various areas you explored, and the creatures, people, and towns you interacted with.

Writing (10 points)

Since these games could not rely on fancy graphics, how well did they make up for this with story? Was the story and writing good, bad, or someplace in the middle? Give examples of what you liked and didn't like.

Changes (10 points)

If you had the chance to update this game and make changes to it, what would you do differently?