

Project Proposal

by Daniel Thomas

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L6 – Independent Project (BA)

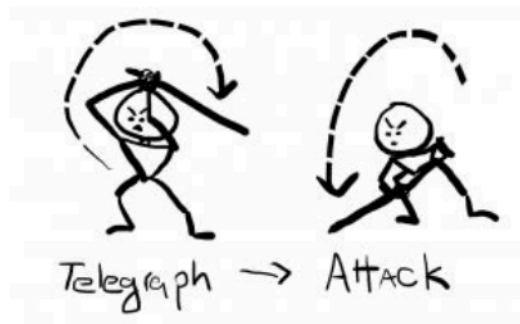
BA Animation & VFX / BA Computer Games Design

**Animation in Video Games and How They Effectively Give Feedback to a
Player**

Daniel Thomas (2003824)

15/10/24

For my independent project, I would like to look at how the animation of elements in games effectively convey to the player what's going on, not just in terms of the story and character, but also in terms of gameplay as well. I believe that this is an interesting topic as I feel clarity on what's going on is arguably more important in games than in videos and movies, due to them being played by people with the progression of the game often having to be unlocked by the player. I think an example of this comes within the form of attacks in video games from enemies, where there is usually some build up in animation needed before the enemy attacks to prepare the player for what it's going to do. I believe this is important in gameplay as if something is telegraphed wrong, it can cause frustration as players would find that unfair [1]. There are several other reasons why players like variety of animation in games, such as bringing the world and characters to life [2] and making the player feel more immersed [3].



[1] A drawing from *Chaotic Stupid*, showing how telegraphed attacks work

I also feel that it's interesting to see type of games and specific gameplay sections in them where the animation shines, as different types of animation is to be expected with games with different genres, stories, theming, and even the time coming out to see how it compares to others, something also to be expected when shifting from 2D game animation to 3D game animation. Namely, I always think it's fun to explore how animation changes from an old game series as it goes on, such

as seeing Mega Man, a series originally confined to sprite animation on the NES, adapt graphically as the software increased, though still managing to keep a consistent style in animation throughout moves, even from the switch from 2D to 3D, making it iconic and memorable. Similarly, games intentionally try to go for a more pixelated retro style, such as Shovel Knight, which still manages to contain a large variety of animations, using it's modern tech to do things older consoles couldn't achieve at the time, such as being able to use more colors and having sprites flicker less [4]. To find out more about these topics, I can look at both books covering animation, such as The Animator's Survival Kit by Richard Williams, and other gaming websites or articles explaining how and why games are animated the way they are, finding out whether it was to help the player, based on the trends and technology of the time, or both.

For the practical part of my independent project, I would like to make some game animation myself, giving myself various characters and giving each of them a handful of animations, seeing how well I can convey something about either the character, the action, or the hypothetical game to the viewer. This will mostly be in 2D, mostly since I feel comfortable with that style of animation. Furthermore, the program I plan to use for this is Aesprite, a program for making pixel-art sprite animations, which ties nicely with the topic of looking at older games' animation, and newer games trying to keep the same art style while expanding on the animations. While I think it would be good to experiment with styles, I think I'll mostly stick to a cartoony style for these animations, mainly so I can experiment more with exaggeration [5], a trait more seen in cartoony games than others with a more serious tone. As I'm mostly interested in seeing how well I can make it clear what the animations are supposed to represent to the player, it would be good to have multiple variations of animations for one action, to compare which one relays the weight of the action the best. I could even possibly get other people to see them and see which one has the best feedback.

By the end of this project, I would like to have created more than 3 characters, designed for a 2D platformer game, with a wide set of animations, one of them being a playable character, and the other being an enemy character, both having a wide range of animations for movement, attacks, damage taken, and any other bits to show personality such as idle animations. I think a basic stance, two attacks, and a form of movement from the playable character, and a range of animations for the enemy such as attack and damage taken would be achievable by the interim.

On top of this, I would also like to create a boss character. Not only should this be more complex than the regular enemy character, as it could move, but it should also have more emphasis on the attacks as it's a stronger foe. At this point, I would have also researched the topic more, being more prepared to tackle the animation.

Other elements of a game I would like animate are a collectible item, a damaging obstacle and the UI, though those will take lesser priority than the characters. These should also be done by the end of the project.

In conclusion, I would like to do a literature dissertation on how games animation feedback to the player to keep them immersed, and if they've improved or not in doing so, along with the practical being me making animations as a test to see if it's as easy as it seems and how many ways I can do it.

References

[1] "Telegraphs 2: Post-attack vulnerability", Mike Stout, Chaotic Stupid, September 14th 2015 (Online) Accessed: 15/10/24, Available: <http://www.chaoticstupid.com/telegraphs-2-post-attack-vulnerability/>

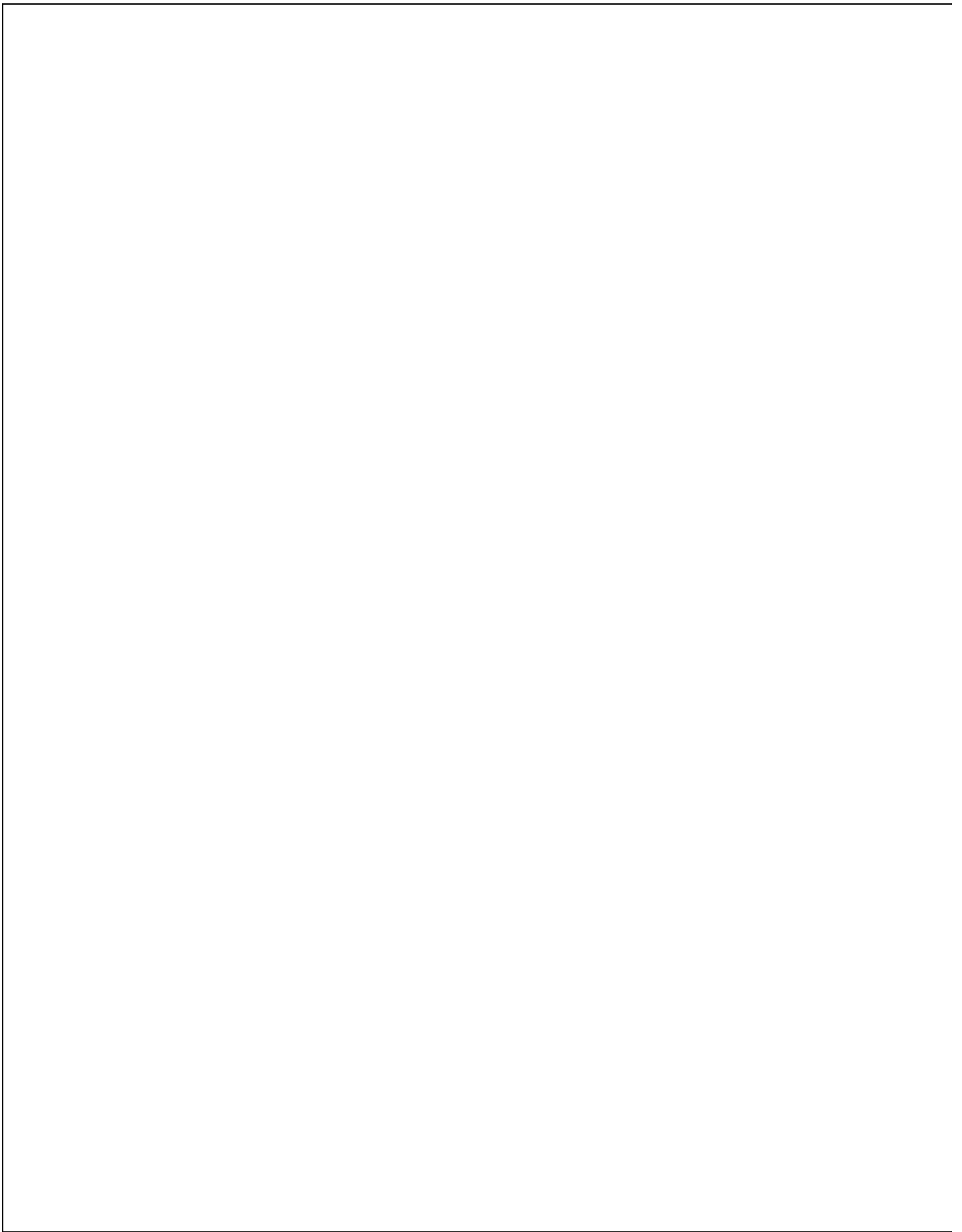
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- [5] "What is Exaggeration in Animation Principles?", Parsa Aminian, Pixune, October 2nd 2024 (Online) Accessed: 18/10/24, Available: <https://pixune.com/blog/exaggeration/>

Image References

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4. "Boss Ideas For Games", Retro Style Games, April 5th 2024 (Online) Accessed: 16/10/24, Available: <https://retrostylegames.com/blog/boss-ideas-for-games/>
5. "What's your take on telegraphs in ARPGs, good or bad?" Kuma, Crate Entertainment, February 1st 2020 (Online) Accessed: 19/10/24, Available: <https://forums.crateentertainment.com/t/whats-your-take-on-telegraphs-in-arpgs-good-or-bad/96204>



Project Proposal

GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

GENERAL COMMENTS

43 / 100

BA GAMES – PROJECT PROPOSAL – ACCA6020
INDEPENDENT PROJECT (5%)

Student Daniel
Thomas _____
Mark 43

Intro / A&O (500 words)		
Project title; Identification of a specific problem to be investigated; Well-defined aims and SMART objectives; Explaining why this project is worth doing; Discussion of what the project needs to do in order to be a success; Description any deliverables that will be produced at the end of the project	40	18
- Project title is an interesting topic and allows for a lot of potential with practical work but I feel that perhaps the title being gauged more as a question to be answered, or issue to be resolved; could allow for more scope in a theoretical/research context.		

-
There is some potential in the specific nature of the topic although some more academic language could be used. (For instance in relation to comparison with film, terms such as 'Passive Media' could have been used in opposition to 'Interactive Media'.

-
There are no SMART based objectives present in the document with only a loose presentation of overall aims for the project given.
How are you planning on gauging the success of the animations created in relation to your research?

-
No extensive reasoning for topic chosen/project planned other than personal interest in subject area.

-
There was some description of deliverables to be completed but again, no way explained to be able to gauge whether project fulfils the questions posed by research document. How will you gain the information that confirms the success of the practical items created? If a survey/play test, how

will this data be analysed and presented?		
Background to the Project (500 words)		
Description of how the work to be done by in the project relates to the work identified in the literature review; Discussion of any ethical issues raised by the project Identifying what has already been done within the field; Topic familiarity; Brief literature review using appropriate sources – 6-8 journal papers and book chapters rather than just websites; Selection of relevant models & concepts - There is a tenuous connection between proposed practical work and research area chosen. This is mainly because there is a lack of contextual references used that would typically make up a literature review. - There is no discussion on relating practical work planned with what has already been completed in the field, or how the work completed could lead to new viewpoints/outcomes. - It seems there is a clear interest in the topic, but	40	16

no familiarity is evident – as there is only one mention of a single software that is going to be used to create the pieces. How are they going to be compiled into something playable as mentioned? - There is no clear literature review present with brief mentions of certain games and the 'Animators Survival Kit. Mentions of other research to be carried out on 'gaming websites' is troubling as these would not be considered academically sound/viable. What further research is going to be conducted and how will these key pieces analysed feed into your practical work?		
Document Presentation		
Correct spelling, grammar and punctuation; Flow of narrative/fluency; Coherence; Word processed ; Correct use of referencing with bibliography; Strict word limit - There are some grammatical and punctuation errors throughout the document with some coherence issues; especially in the conclusion, making it hard to understand. - Document could be formatted in a way that uses more imagery to break up large	20	9

swathes of text, enhancing readability. - There is a correct use of referencing throughout following the IEEE format		
TOTAL	100	43

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