

Introduction (what is peggle)

To keep things simple peggle deluxe is a game where you shoot metal balls at a bunch of pegs to clear the board and rack up as much points as possible.

Released on the 27th of February 2007 by PopCap games, the same developers behind games like bejewelled and the (once) highly popular Plants Vs Zombies games, peggle initially on computer systems like windows and Mac but would later be released for the Xbox Live arcade where it began to become way more popular.

Before this review kicks off proper there is one thing I wanted to talk about. Peggle Deluxe is indeed the first release in the Peggle franchise which probably confused you as much as it confused me, and though I couldn't find anything about this online I want to throw a theory into the ring. I believe that PopCap games wanted Peggle to be more appealing to buyers, so they threw the deluxe into the title to make it seem that this is the definitive version of the game (which in a way it is) while in fact it's the only version that exists.

Genre

This is an arcade/ puzzle game, but in my opinion it's an arcade game first and a puzzle game second, mainly because of aspects of the game I want to talk about later. As well as that it is a very casual game, something that literally anyone could pick up and will be will easily understand what they need to do and end up enjoying.

Visual style

The art style of peggle to me gives off the same energy as those art pieces that you would see on carnival rides which I think compliments the games arcade style gameplay really well. This style covers things like the design of the levels to the design of the characters in the game.

Intended demographic

This game was meant to be played by anyone and everyone, that being people who don't play games often or are new to games to people who do play games a lot taking a quick five-minute break from work (which I swear I don't do in your lectures) or don't have any

particular game to play at that time and just want to play something. In other words, it's a fun timewaster game.

Use of audio and visual feedback and its impact on the player

The audio in the game is meant to be a mixture of relaxing while you sit in the menus and planning shots, satisfying when you hit pegs and get the ball in the bowl, the anticipation of getting close to hitting that last orange peg and exciting when you end up beating the level (which plays the ending part of Oda to joy by the way), which really makes the player feel accomplished when they finally beat that one level.

One other thing I noticed while playing that the music that plays during gameplay starts out super simple, but as you progress throughout the game a add a new instrument/part to the song with each world, which not only makes the player feel accomplished as they progress through the game but it also good to keep the player engaged as the levels start to become more challenging.

Game structure (levels, life system, time-based, points-based, etc.)

The levels of the game are designed to look and play like Pachinko, down to the way that the pegs are setup to the way the levels are played, but rather than leaving gameplay up to chance, peggles allows the player to aim the ball in the direction they want making up the whole core gameplay.

Each level has a number of different types of pegs there are:



Blue pegs:

The bog-standard pegs of the game, these are used to make up the basic structure of levels.



orange pegs:

The targets. These pegs are the goal of each level, you have to hit all of them in a level to complete a level.



Green pegs:

The fun part. These pegs will give the player a power-up, each of them unique depending on the level, I'll go into each of them later on in the review.



Purple pegs:

Last but not least. These pegs are not required to complete a level, but when a player hits one, they will get a burst of points, speaking of which.

The point system

The player will earn points while they play when doing a lot of different things, from hitting pegs as well as getting a longshot bonus or hitting a wicked peg combo to at the end at the level with the score buckets. These points serve two purposes. One, the game will keep a track of the total amount of points that the player earns during gameplay which is always displayed regardless what screen you are on, it doesn't really serve a grand purpose and it's only there to show off how much the player has played the game, as well as to show off to other people.

The second (and the more impactful) use of points is during levels. During each turn if you are able to earn 25,000 points you will get a free ball, essentially making your turn completely free. This can also be achieved by landing the ball in the free ball bucket at the bottom of the stage.

One last way to get a free ball is a by chance safeguard, if you somehow manage to miss everything and fall straight out of the stage the game will flip (or more accurately spin) a coin to decide if you should get your shot back. This can trigger any time and every time that the player misses which is surprisingly forgiving for this game.

Challenges

The real challenge of this game all comes down to how each stage is laid out and what kind of gimmicks are introduced, the most common of which being non-peg obstacles which are usually used to funnel the players ball down a particular part of the stage or to obstruct

direct access to peg, which would require the player to bounce the ball off a different part of the stage in order to reach.

Another gimmick is to stack pegs on top of each other to create layers of them to force the player to make multiple shots at the same group (or get lucky with some good rebounds).

The only thing that ruins the game for me in some levels is the layout of the pegs, not the structure of pegs but where type of pegs are placed. See every time that you load up a stage it randomizes where all the types of pegs are placed including the orange and green pegs, which can really determine the difficulty of the stage. For the orange pegs it only just determines where you need to aim which isn't too bad, but the placement of the green can affect the usefulness of power-ups, this can really make or break an attempt at a stage. Of course, this can only affect some of the stages of the game depending on the setup and the power-ups present in the stage, in which I will go into more detail soon.

This fact can really cheapen the experience for and really ruined some stages for me.

Funnily enough this was brought up early in development of Peggle during one of the first iterations of Peggle while it still played like Pachinko by Sukhbir Sidhu, who was head of production at the time. Written in the "Making of Peggle"[1] ("too random and luck-based" recalls Sukhbir. "The main issue was finding the right balance of luck versus skill.").

Game flow

On its own all stages of Peggle play similarly, the only variety coming from the layout of the pegs and what gimmicks are added to each stage. But a few levels in the game introduces power-ups, courtesy of the Peggle masters that are introduced at the start of each world. These power-ups help to add more depth to each level.

Not only that these power-ups can be a massive help when completing levels, emphasis on the "can" as some of these power-ups are a lot better than others. To help demonstrate this I'm going to go over each Peg Master and their associated power.

Bjorn the unicorn

Power: shot preview

Type: added to player



This is the first power-up you will encounter in the game, so it makes sense that this one is on the simpler side. All this one does is show the player where their shot is going to go as well as the trajectory of the first bounce and it only lasts three turns.

This power works brilliantly as a tutorial in disguise, teaching the player how to aim as well as the physics of the ball so the player can hopefully have a good idea about how it will work once, they move on from this stage and continue on.

Jimmy the mole



Power: Multi-shot

Type: Interacts with ball

This power will spawn an additional ball into the stage when you hit a green peg, which comes from the green peg depending on what angle you hit the peg.

Unfortunately this is the first of the luck affected power-up because of the problem I was talking about earlier, because how the green pegs are randomly placed in the stage on each time you load up the stage sometimes the green pegs will be placed somewhere where the spawned ball will fall out of the stage without hitting anything.

This isn't saying it's awful though, as the spawned ball will grant you the same amounts of points your main ball does when they hit pegs, it can also fall into the ball bucket at the bottom of the stage and give you an extra ball.

Kat tut



Power: Pyramid power!

Type: Affects the stage

This power is relatively simple (despite its name), all it does is add two tiles to the ball bucket which ends up covering up the majority of the bottom of the stage.

This is a great power as the tiles let the balls bounce off those tiles which usually extends your turn and, in some instances, can scoop the ball into the bucket if it's slowly rolling on the tiles.

Splork the alien



Power: Space blast

Type: Instant effect

This power will cause a big blast (hence its name) triggering all the peg in a small radius.

This is another power up that its effectiveness is dependent on where the peg is placed in the stage, as the radius of the blast is fixed so if the peg is placed on the outside of the stage, it will only have so many pegs to hit.

Claud the lobster



Power: Flippers

Type: Affects the stage

This power will add two lobsters claws at each side at the bottom of the stage which act like pinball paddles, which you can use to knock the ball away from the bottom of the stage.

This one is just a fun power-up, and really changes up the game while its active. If your skilled enough it can extend your turn to comedic degrees.

Renfield the pumpkin



Power: Spooky ball

Type: affects the ball

This power will allow the ball to fall back to the top of the stage when it falls through the bottom.

This is an amazing power, effectively acting as an extra turn and can usually end up getting you enough points for an extra ball (and sometimes even more).

Tula the flower



Power: Flower power (real original guys)

Type: Instant effect

This power acts similarly to space blast, but rather than effecting all pegs in a small radius it instead targets orange pegs in a wider radius.

Even though its similarity to space blast, this power is a badly effective by the green peg's placement as it has a much large range than space blast, but it is still only as effective as how many pegs are near it.

Warren the rabbit



Power: Lucky spin

Type: Random

This power is unique as instead of being one power the player could a selection of four all on a spin wheel. These effects range from a triple score multiplier for the next shot, gaining an extra ball, the ball gaining a “magic hat” for the current and next shot, and finally a rotating selection of previously used power.

So, I’ve talked about how the luck aspects of this game can sometimes ruin this game, but this is the exception, this power up is just fun to use as (nearly) all the potential outcomes are useful for the play, except the magic hat. The magic hat will sit on top of the ball and extends the hitbox of the ball up, which can be good if you're at the top of the stage but most of the time the green pegs will be near the middle/bottom which really hampers its usefulness.

Lord Cinderbottom



Power: Fireball

Type: Affects ball

This power increases the size of your ball and allows your next shot to pass straight through pegs, which would count as hitting them.

This is just a super useful power up, not much else to say about it to be honest.

Master Hu



Power: Zen ball

Type: affects the ball

This power calculates the best possible shot that could occur based on your starting trajectory and automatically change the direction your ball is travelling accordingly.

This power is not only super strong but super interesting, as nearly all the shots that this power will cause will always end up with huge combos and somehow usually ends with the ball in the ball bucket.

I would love to see the calculations that this power does in the background.

After this stage there is one more world that allows the player to choose which power they want present during the stage, as a trade-off these stages are the hardest that the adventure has to offer.

Replay value

Once you have finally completed every level and have become a “Peggle master” you get access to the 75 challenge levels, switch is a great way to get the player to come back and play the game more.

But if the challenge levels aren't your thing Peggle deluxe offers a lot of other things for the player to do post adventure mode, you are able replay any level you want and choose whatever peggle master you want to use in quick play. Or maybe you want to challenge your fellow peggle masters, you can fight it out in the dual game mode.

Ok this is going on for way longer than it's supposed to I'm going to cut this short and get to the final segment.

Positive and negative aspects of the game

Pros

- Simple to understand premise
- Easy to learn but hard to master
- Fantastic art style
- Varied level design

Cons

- Randomization of peg types can make some levels unnecessarily hard
- Lack of variety when it comes to background music

Reference list

[1] Popcap games, Making of Peggle, Popcap.com, Jun 13 2009

https://web.archive.org/web/20090613055052/http://www.popcap.com/extras/makingpeggle/big_idea.php