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Why game genres die
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Declaration Form/form of consent

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The project will discuss why particular games lose popularity. The games discussed will be from the 90's to present day. The games selected will be RTS's, platformers and from the horror genre. These have been selected because of their popularity at the time, and due to some of them having a similar downfall. Case studies will be included of the games which illustrate the turn in popularity, reasons why there was a turn in infamy and the impact on sales across the world. The games that will be discussed include Sonic the Hedgehog, Rayman, Command and Conquer, Age of Empire, Silent Hill and Deadspace. These have been selected to illustrate how and why games have evolved through gaming history. The aim of the project is to find why particular games have lost favour with the gaming community and to put in place awareness so this can be avoided with future games design. The research question is why do games genres die, however this calls in to questions whether game genres die or whether the games that use particular genres lose popularity and why this would be. The objectives that I intend to take investigate this project will be through secondary research of reviews and experiences of the players and through primary experience of playing the games myself, from these experiences a rich analysis will be conducted. I propose to look at these films to see if there is common ground.

CHAPTER 2 - Decline of the genre, Platformer Sonic the Hedgehog Platformer - Rayman

Case Study 1 Sonic the Hedgehog

A platformer game is where a character moves through the platforms either by jumping or exploring through different levels, collecting collectables and engaging with enemy characters. The first platformer game released was Donkey Kong in 1981 and the genre has developed from basic graphics to a 3d format. Further areas that have developed are the levels of complexity within each game. Each platformer was unique to a certain degree and dependent on characters, world design and narrative. With some being unique many had formulaic structures which included a protagonist having to rescue another character usually female through a set of challenges. This format echoes plot structure seen in film theory. The uniqueness came from design aesthetics within each game, such as character having individual designs or skills and abilities such as Sonics Spin dash or Marios ability to gain powers from mushrooms. Interest from player was through new levels and powerups or technological advancements as the games moved from 2d to 3D space. Within the 2000's platformer games also changed structure of narrative to being more action orientated in design this may be related to the social constructs of the time and also may have been affected by continual need for design development to

keep audiences interested. To discuss audience engagement further two platformer games have been selected which will be used as case studies, Case study 1 will be Sonic Case study 2 will use Ubisoft's Rayman.

Platformer games are focused on a particular character and their world by jumping to connecting platforms, exploring and in some cases collecting objects to gain points, additionally combat moves may also be used. The best example is Sonic the Hedgehog where you have enemies to slow down the pace of the game, where you need to jump or spin dash on or through them to destroy their character and in some cases this would add to the point system.

The first platformer game that was designed was Donkey Kong in 1981 which was made for arcade games. The transition from arcade games to home consoles was through the Magnavox's Odyssey in 1972, games were limited to one per unit. Fairchild developed the first home console that could use cartridges, this made the console more flexible through its use with a limited range of games. Atari popularised the changing of games through a cartridge system and by 1977 had created numerous games such as Pacman, Space Invaders, Missile Command and Pong. Colour was also implemented, however limited in colour palette.

An over-saturation of released games for the home console caused the game crash in 1983, it became saturated as a lot of companies started shutting down their game development divisions, even Atari started redistributing or selling off parts of their divisions. Once a player had a console this then affected consumption of further

hardware. Companies were rereleasing old games on the newer consoles which did not meet the needs of the players and in turn impacted sales.

Nintendo, a major Asian company in the games industry released platform game Mario in 1985, at the time this was a new and exciting games design which players had not seen before. This change in games direction was and is seen as the resurrection of the industry at that time. Nintendo in addition to creating new and exclusive games which were fresh to players, also created a far more advanced console, due to its better-quality pixel ratio (reference) where images were sharper and more engaging. Nintendo used the systems for ten years although discontinued the NES in 1995.

Nintendo's main competitor was the American company Sega. Sega was an up-and-coming rival company which wanted to challenge Nintendo's popularity. They did this by producing their own console, realising that they would need some hook or mascot to represent their new device, and to challenge Sega's already in place Mario mascot, they eventually developed the character Sonic the Hedgehog and released the platform game on the console Sega Genesis in 1988.

The constant competition between the two companies created a cycle of continual creative development, with multiple games releases from both sides. In 1990, Artist Naoto Ohshima and programmer Yuji Naka were asked to create the mascot. From over 200 sketches of different characters, this was reduced to three, a dog, Teddy Roosevelt and the hedgehog which were then tested out on people within Central

Park, unanimously the hedgehog mascot was selected. The mascot took inspiration from pop culture in its design elements included reference to Michael Jackson shoes and the colours used in the album *Bad*, (Ocbazghi and Schnyder, 2020) however as *Sonic's* main colour was blue taken from Sega's logo, one could also construe that the red and white were added to create a nationalistic embodiment to the American flag. American pop culture was significant, with both reference to Jackson in styling and Madonna as his initial girlfriend. His character proved popular in the 90's and friendly and relatable in design to a wider audience with rounded character styling. In 1998 Sonic had a major character redesign, the once rounded character moved to a more streamlined and street fashion inspired character. In addition, his personality changed, this incorporated being able to speak and being more animated and energetic in design. The character was affiliated with a more teenage demographic, therefore changing from a character that appealed to a wider audience to a younger and more rebellious age group that were interested in street culture. This can be seen through change of tone of the character from a darker blue to a lighter and dynamic blue, a change length of hair, a change in shoes from general red shoes with a stripe to a more functional and sporty design, grips are evident to appear in later designs of the character, this denotes reduction of slipping and speed, the gloves are less prominent and the character general moves from a more curvaceous character family friendly character to one that is more angular in design and a more 3D dimensional concept.



Fig. 1 Sonic the Hedgehog Redesign

Popularity in platform games has been consistent since games were released in 1981, This is due to the types of audience that platform games are directed at and the time period of introduction. Audiences first introduction is usually in childhood and many people start playing games from the age of three. Current studies have suggested that earlier than this can contribute to ADHD and Language issues and directs parents to limiting screen time across any platform for this age group (Sigman,2012) currently there is no legal limit on this within the UK unlike other countries.

In contrast, academic researchers have investigated the positives effects video games can have on children over the age of two years of age. This research states

that it can improve numeracy and literacy skills with the Department of Education in 2012 using the app *Martha Speaks Dog Party* in schools and testing children between three to seven, as a consequence of introducing this game students' vocabulary and literacy improved by 31 % (Stuart, 2014). Furthermore, in this same Guardian article states that "There's a wealth of evidence to suggest that games can help with hand-eye coordination, puzzle solving, logical thinking, spatial awareness, teamwork and a host of other vital, transferrable skills".

Interestingly, Sonic falls into this bracket with games having an expected age of 8+ for the players as supported by games reviewer for commonsensemedia.org David Chapman (no date) with many of the positive attributes highlighted above including hand eye co-ordination, puzzle solving, spatial awareness being the most prominent. Other areas that I consider important are amount of visual stimulation, processing speeds, reaction times and engagement.

With regard to the *Rayman franchise* which was created in France by the company Ubisoft Montpellier in 1995, this game was developed initially by Michel Ancel although with input from graphic designer **name** who had a large impact the on the progression and development of different versions of the game. After the first game the second game Rayman the Great Escape, was released 5 years later in 2001. As the games developed so did the size of the company with the team growing dramatically over its fifteen-year life cycle.

It was it also a 2D game, while every other game franchise was turning to a 3D platform. It was also considered diverse in its level design, very wacky and bizarre play cartoon in design, it was originally developed by Michel Ancel a young developer who was a programmer at Ubisoft Montreal, that joined the company at 17 years of age. He didn't have a target market although it was eventually aimed towards children due to the wacky design and child friendly nature. It was originally meant to be released on the Atari. Jaguar but it was more popular when released on the PlayStation. There were numerous iterations of the game on Playstation and was developed further to be released on other devices.

There were multiple releases on the PC where expansions were available, with many being exclusive to Europe. These expansions added additional levels and then it got another expansion with it gaining fan made levels that were submitted to the Ubisoft website, this was the main way that it retained interest with its audience. Raymen 2 would move away from the 2D animation and performing style and move towards a 3D design. I think it's because platforms were dying around that time and they also introduced another mascot in the form of the Raving Rabbits and they

became more popular. The characters got their own multiple spin offs and capitalised on their popularity with party games, mini games and TV show which greatly entrenched these characters into pop culture.



Fig. 2 Rayman

until the which made in return to the to the site platforming sidescrolling platforming aspect so why do you think the rabbits were more popular than ramen

The decline of popularity was due to several areas; Ancel, the original director left after the popularity of Rayman 2 to complete another project called Beyond Good and Evil for Ubisoft. It feels like once conglomerates take over and the companies get too big they do not really know what they're doing, they have money which they invest in the product and financial backing from other people although lose sight of the enjoyment aspect. The product is seen as a commodity and as such the people responsible surround themselves with other like-minded people, rather than people that are passionate about the game. Rayman 2, like many of these games once they

get too big, financial backing comes from sources are only interested in the money rather than the actual game. Control and decision making seems to go definitely.

In September 2020 Rayman creator Ancel quit video game design to work on a wildlife sanctuary prioritising happiness over profit amid an investigation into his disputed behaviour to other staff. With Kotaku stating that "Ancel's management of the project reportedly resulted in constant changes and fluctuations in scope, leading to "an unusual amount of [staff] exhaustion, depression, and burnout"(Kotaku, eurogamer.net, 2020). In response Ancel stated that

"Take a few people with rage and jealousy and let them speak in the name of hundreds," he wrote, "Publish the news fast so that it combines with sexual harassment from other news at Ubisoft. Is this serious? Is this what you expect from a national newspaper. I will fight for the truth because such accusations are a shame. I worked hard on every of my projects and always had respect for the teams".

In response to the Instagram post Acel posted, Frederic Condolo (2020) one of his ex work colleagues had this to say

"I worked with Michel on Rayman Origins from start to finish. There were already strong grudges at the time, I was told that I would not last two months with him. I discovered a passionate person yes, a perfectionist yes, demanding yes, but very human. It takes a lot of energy to work with him

because he will want to push everything to the maximum, for the enjoyment of the players, and I understand that for some it can be stressful. But frankly, I've never had so much fun at work, and there was a family atmosphere on the project”.

Therefore there are several reasons as to Rayman's demise. The time period is one reason and mismanagement another however internally the function of the team is also important, the director vision is so important however the pressure put on the director to achieve winning game after winning game does highlight the cracks in the software developing team. The team will have many facets and these can be either supportive or dismissive to the end goal, the environment will be competitive and possibly toxic which may undermine the abilities of others.

Slow erosion of confidence and obscurity

CHAPTER 3 - Decline of the genre RTS Command and Conquer RTS Age of Empire

Decline of Horror

“The horror film genre explores the deepest of human fears, seeking to provoke emotions in its audience related to the fear of the unknown, to a natural or supernatural threat, and to the “disgust over its potential aftermath” (Tamborini and Weaver, 1996, p.2) arising from the consummation of that threat.”

Between Reality and Fantasy: The narrative Strategies of the Horror Genre in
Productions by Laika Studios

Horror traditionally has come from the written text which was then translated to the cinematic as technology advanced. The first horror film was produced in 1896, called *Le Manoir du Diable*, the first horror game was called *Killer Shark* in 1972 and prequelled *Jaws* (1975) by three years.

“The principal allure of Gothic horror stories is the building, release and rebuilding of tension through the creation of uncertainty, mystery, suspense, fright, and shock” (e.g. Bordwell 2013; Brophy 1986; Keisner 2008; Waller 1985) and these emotions and motivations are parallel through both storyline and technology, building on these as technology advances.

The Horror genre has evolved and changed over the years the genre evolved from film and the cinematic to games with such titles as *Resident Evil* (1996), *Silent Hill* (1999), *Dead Space* (2008), and *Outlast* (2013), however as the horror genre slowly lost popularity within the game industry, it would normally be kept alive through the indie developer areas of gaming such as the first game release dates of *Outlast* (2013) by Red Barrel Games, *Last Five Nights at Freddy's* (2014) by independent developer Scott Coffin for Scott Coffin Games and *Amnesia* (2010) By Frictional Gaming and the Chinese Room.

Playing a horror game for people can be stressful, intense and immersive as you feel everything the their character feels the atmosphere the sense of dread and the feeling that someone's always watching you with no control over the situation with the inability to defend yourself not knowing what is there.

Atmosphere might also affect gameplay as it depends on where you're playing the game could affect the atmosphere for example when I played outlast it was in the dark mainly to help me see but it helps with immersion which also helped intensify the scares and thrills. (Lovecraft),fear is “the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind ... and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown” (1973, p.12).

Silent Hill was based in an actual town in America called Centralia, Pennsylvania. In 1962 the town decided to burn the landfill area, however the fires spread through tunnels which eventually led to a coalmine which is still burning (Bachman, 2020).

This constant smog effect is core to the design of the game as is the limited amount

of people within the town, which is due to the evacuation of its people, currently there are very few people that have decided to remain. These two elements are core to the design of the franchise, the continual foggy vision disrupts the view of the player, and the limited characters add to suspicion and suspense aimed at each character from the player.

The First Silent Hill chapter came in the form of a computer game which was released on 31 January 1999 on the PlayStation, it was developed by Konami and Team Silent. It was a success, making and was compared to another horror game franchise Resident Evil in some ways, while Resident Evil focused on a more jump scare approach and body horror “Silent Hill is devised to be more psychological in nature, more about character and atmosphere, intending to convey a tone of dread, anxiety, and helplessness” (Perron, 2012, p.2) with Silent Hill having a more psychological approach to the games plot.



Fig 3 Silent Hill

Silent Hill is a game based around the town of Silent Hill where people encounter monsters based off their fears and emotions, the first game story was based around a man called Harry Manson who while travelling crashes and enters the town of Silent Hill, when he awakes from the crash to realise that his preschool daughter Heather Mason is missing and enters Silent Hill with the aim of being reunited. The plot of the game is about Harry's exploration through the town to search for his daughter which the game alludes to from the introduction. The horror structure is explored by "ordinary individuals" who "are caught up in the evil plan of a religious cult known as 'The Order'" and have to battle monsters and other humanoid creatures that spring forward from the supernatural power of tortured minds (Perron, 2012, p.1).

The film franchise is designed from a third person perspective, the action unfolds by using this method, the correlation between player and the cinematic experience is evident. The game was produced "to convey a tone of dread, anxiety and helplessness" (Perron, 2012, p.2). Realistic 3D environments are also used to enhance the horror aspect and make the experience more relatable to the player. The games were available for PlayStation 2 and X Box and Microsoft Windows. The first two felt as if experience and reflection rather than gameplay was their focus and this led to many players having a deeper experience, on top of game play this is supported by Riser in Perron's Silent Hill the Terror Engine (2012, p.2) "that the series isn't simply a game but a rather uniquely powerful emotional experience".

Within the gameplay experience there are 4 diverse types of archetypal player (Perron, 2003, 242-44). Richard Bartle (2006) states that these consist of *cheater*, who cheats their way through the game, *achiever* who is interested in point accumulation and aiming to rise in levels, *explorer* this player enjoys forcing the game to the maximum and is concerned with maxing out hardware, *socialisers* who are interested in the social aspects of the game and *killers* who get their pleasure from domination and related power attributes often used as a form of escapism from reality.

SH2 is normally seen as the most recognisable game due to its complex story and interesting characters and narratives. In Silent Hill 2 the player follows the story of James Sunderland who adventures to the town of Silent Hill in search of his wife who has sent him a letter to come to the town, although she is dead, he seeks to find her and unfurl the story of the situation. In doing so he encounters other people that have been motivated to enter the town by compulsion by the town Silent Hill itself.

Ed S. Tan states that “all-natural viewers of the traditional feature film have in common is their desire to experience emotion as intensively and as abundantly as possible, within the safe margins of guided fantasy and closed episode” (1996, p.39)

Many games have been successful in the horror genre and this relationship has been noted, Richard Rouse III states that “the goals of video games and the goals of horror fiction directly overlap, making them ideal bed mate (Rouse, 2009, 15)

Moreover, “The player is thrown into a dangerous situation with a clear, undeniable “kill to survive” motivation. The evil forces are numerous, and all deserve to die.

Hence horror games are a natural fit” (Rouse, 2009, p. 16)

The last game in their series was P.T. demo which was released on 12 of august 2014 developed by Kojima production with collaboration with Guillermo del Toro, Designer by Hideo Kojima, Publisher by Konami for the PlayStation 4 with the full game being cancelled due to conflict between Konami and Kojima at the time in 2015 do to Konami being more focused on making money and Kojima focused on the art side of the game development with many of the players supporting Kojima and disowning Konami for their greedy tactics shown in metal gear survival released on the 20th of February 2018.

In contrast to Silent Hill the Dead Space franchise will also be discussed. Dead Space came out in 2008 and was developed by Visceral Games, Sumo Digital, IronMonkey Studios and Eurocom and was designed by Glen Schofield, Matthias Worch and Brent Robbins then published by Electronic Arts, ak tronic Software & Services GmbH. Dead Space was inspired by games like Resident Evil 4 (2005) and System Shock franchise additionally films such as Alien (1997) would have been significant. The game was originally going to be a sequel to System Shock but did not happen due to losing the rights to the franchise and the release of Resident Evil 4 and its new game play design. The first iteration of Dead space came out in 2008 with the last game Dead space III coming out in 2013, therefore popular for 5 years. The company itself shut down in 2017.

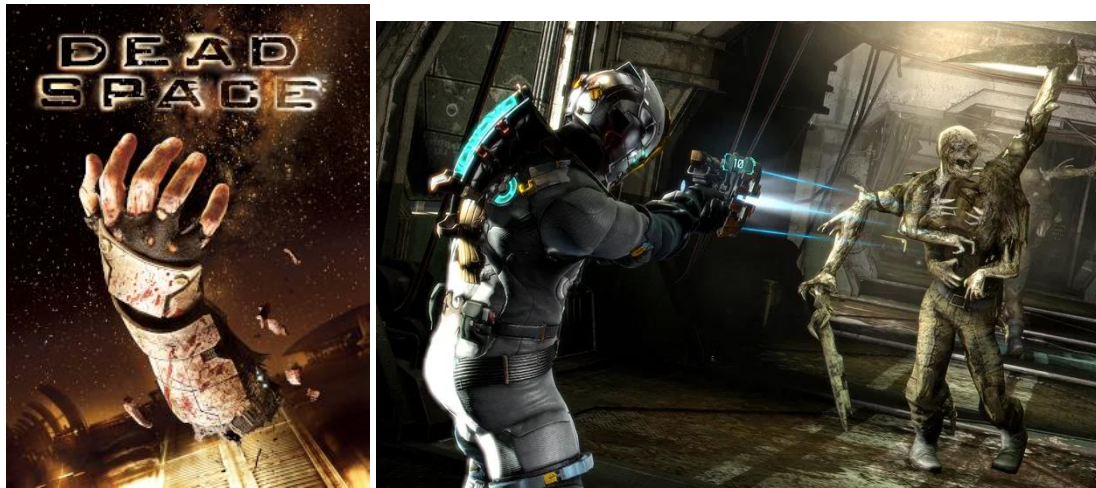


Fig. 4 Deadspace

The premise of the games is that normally the player takes control of Isaac Clark, the protagonist character, to explore space craft with the aim of dismantling monsters called necromorphs. The process of getting rid of the monsters involves puzzles which also progresses the storyline.

Horror is used throughout Dead space through atmospheric presence, suspense, and difficulty of killing enemies, necromorphs are not usual enemies they can rush the player, so an intrinsic part of the game is to annihilate them through firing at them as many times as possible and amputation through shooting. The gratification of the player through violence is linked to body horror, “body horror finds strength in the way it goes against what is considered normal anatomy and function in biological species (not limited to human): that it is indeed biological horror” (Spook Squad Podcast, 2019).

“Interspecies hybrids are abnormal and undesirable not only in the sense that their creation does not occur naturally, but also in that they are essentially

evolutionary dead-ends. They can produce no offspring of their own and can therefore not continue their lineage and contribute to the growth of the population. This goes against the inherent drive of all species, which is to procreate, pass on their genes to the next generation, and have offspring that are themselves reproductively successful (Drickamer, Vessey, and Jakob 307).

The categories are species, reproductively isolated biological groups that are not supposed to be brought together. This category confusion is especially frightening when the monster is partly human (Tudor 30) ...The uncertainty of what will be produced by the unnatural union is what frightens. (Cruz and Lopez, 2012).

Although Necromorphs are an amalgamation of human and alien infection/ virus there are similarities to zombie forms this is evident through lack of symmetry and uncomfortable angles in how they walk and move. The lack of symmetry is important as it adds to the uncomfortable feeling the player experiences. The loss of physical normality is conveyed through the lack of symmetry. "We have a natural appreciation for symmetry, a balance in proportions, in objects and other organisms, whereas the lack of it is often an undesirable trait. This is by no means limited to the human perspective of beauty. Other animals are also known to shun asymmetry" (Drickamer, Vessey, and Jakob 310–311). Biological horror "relishes the destruction

of the organic form to the point of unnatural evolutionary insignificance” Cruz and Lopez (2012).

Dead Space 2 takes place on a civilian space station built on what remains of Saturn's moons Titan where Clark wakes up in an asylum to a Necromorph outbreak where he must escape, whilst also dealing with a religious cult who worship this monolith called the Back Marker which is the source of the outbreak.

Dead Space 2 was a success with it being an improvement on the first game however it did not meet Electronic Arts financial expectations, Electronic Arts were technically the publishers of the game.

From a player's perspective Dead space 2 improved upon the aspects of the gameplay including enemy types, story and plotline and equipment used by Clark to defeat the Necromorphs, these included new abilities, new weaponry and zero gravity space section. The trailer for the second game was aimed at teenagers as this was directed at the rebellious element of growing up as if playing child against parent. The tag line for the trailer was why would you want to play this? Dead Space 3 was the least successful, technically it was positive as made more money than other games that year, however, did not make the proposed target Electronic Arts had set.

In this game, which is set further into the future, Clark is searching for a character from a previous game who has gone missing whilst searching for more Black Markers

to find a way to stop the Necromorphs outbreaks across the galaxy. Improvements that included include a multiplayer aspect, whilst being more heavily focused on action rather than horror, with a huge emphasis on micro-transactions.

Microtransactions are paid to play content and were in their initial stages of development, right before its peak. Finance of players hated it in Dead Space as it was a single player game and was not an online experience. At this point players were suspicious of the grounds for the game and whether the game was for their enjoyment or alternatively as a source of income for Electronic Arts (EA) with many thinking this was motivated by greed by the company. EA were recently sued in Canada due to the blurred line between Micro-transactions and gambling (Batchelor, 2020a). This development of greed and targeting a younger audience has also been noted where EA had promoted monetisation ads which had been included in children's magazines (Batchelor, 2020b). Children are encouraged to gamble and want to buy incremental increases in the game. EA are using under hand tactics to gain money from parents through the use of pressure from children. Children are also likely to feel greater pressure from their peers as there is also pressured to fit in with classmates and friends. This is such an issue now that some governments including Netherlands and Belgium have got involved and, in some countries, have outright bans on loot boxes and paid content of that nature (Newsbeat, 2019) (Webb, 2018) (Hafer, 2019). Due to this EA have still not recovered from the backlash from players.

Survival horror is a subgenre of horror and action adventure. Some horror games are aimed at 12+ (commonsensemedia.org) this can be seen in game like Five Nights at Freddy's, Secret Neighbor and from the Your Mom Hates Dead Space 2 trailer even though Dead Space 2 has an age rating of 18+

Immersion first person

Horror games appeal is to a narrower or niche audience. Developers lost interest in horror games. However, this still survives today through the indie developer area of games design with games like Five Nights at Freddy's, Outlast and Slenderman. In 2014 horror video game made more money than horror movies with game like The Evil Within, Alien: isolation and The Forest this might have been helped by content creators like Mark Applier and PewDiePie and due to the growth of websites like YouTube and Twitch. I feel there needs to be more research in this area as I feel it has less to do with games and more with the genre itself.

Chapter 4

RTS

A Real Time Strategy or RTS is a game genre where you control Fantasy, Sci-Fi or modern-day faction units which have the main objective of being to destroy the opposing faction or capture an objective of some kind. This study will discuss the following games, the Command and Conquer franchise and the Age of Empires franchise due to having similar outcomes and being one of the most popular RTS's of its time.



Fig. 5 Command and Conquer

Command and conquer is a contemporary based RTS inspired by modern day conflicts where the player takes control of one of two factions; the Global Defence Initiative and the Brotherhood of Nod with other factions added in later titles.

Command and conquer was developed by Westwood's Studio which developed the

following games Command and Conquer from 1995, Command and Conquer Red Alert 1996, Command and Conquer Sole Survivor online 1997, before being bought by Electronic Arts on August 17th, 1998. Shortly afterwards Command and Conquer Tiberian Sun was released in 1999, followed by Command and Conquer Red Alert 2 in 2000, Command and Conquer Yuri's Revenge in 2001, Command and Conquer Renegade in 2002 and Command and Conquer Generals in 2003. Due to poor sales Westwood Studios was closed by EA in 2003 with them having other developers take over the Command and Conquer franchise. The games involved being Command and Conquer 3 Tiberian Wars in 2007, Command and Conquer Red Alert 3 in 2008, Command and Conquer 4 Tiberian Twilight in 2010, Command and Conquer Tiberius Alliances in 2012, Command and Conquer rivals in 2018, with the games slowly declining due to EA's control of the franchise organisation.

The games follow the conflict between the Global Defence Initiative and the Brotherhood of Nod over the alien resource Tiberium with the player choosing which side to control, this also affects the ending that the player will have due the faction selected. Later games would change this premise however, with the Brotherhood of Nod being part of the Russian military, in addition an altered timeline would also be included in which World War II has never taken place. The playing of the game is formulaic in that once you have played the game preceding games are easy to use with players feeling comfortable with the developments. Technology changes in small increments with the emphasis on story or plotline.

Technology

Change from online to mobile

The game was mainly a PC game however do come to consoles with certain titles but in the 2010's people took issue when the newest game was announced for mobile.

There are reasons for this as the last few Command and Conquer games were not as successful. These include Command and Conquer 4: Tiberian Twilight (2010), Red alert 3 (2008) and Command and Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars (2007). Also, the year before the release of Command and Conquer Rivals the game Star Wars Battlefront 2 was released on 17th of November 2017 with it being criticized for the blatant paid to win mechanics and poorly designed loot boxes, as well as the game being marketed to be a competitive game. Command and Conquer Rivals came out with mixed review with Metacritic giving it a 71% score and a 1.4 user score with many complaints relating to progression tied to loot boxes and an unbalanced ranking and upgrade system with many people seeing this as paid to win.

This is relevant when one considers The Theory Acceptance Model relating to computer games, whereby "[The] original Theory Acceptance Model (TAM) proposes perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness as beliefs about a technology that affects an individual's attitude toward the use of that technology" (Davis, 1985).

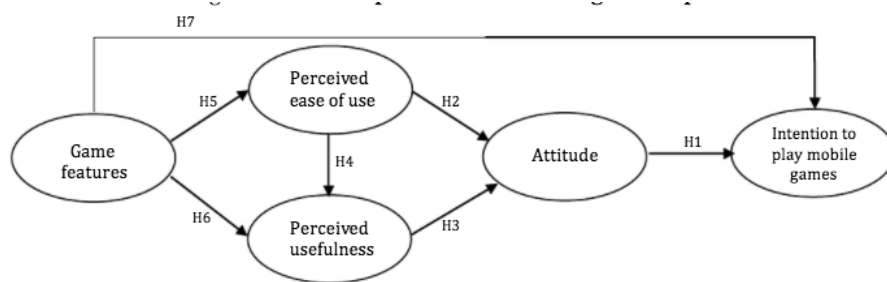


Fig. 6 The Conceptual Model of Mobile Games adoption

Perception of perceived ease of use and usefulness are significant features within the marketing of the game, both of which affect attitude as to whether players want to buy in to the next instalment. People will buy in to new instalment as there are elements of nostalgia within following a game. Additionally, familiarity, peer pressure, challenge and competitiveness are other reasons why players will follow the games within a franchise. These are all positive attributes of a fan base that the company can exploit.

Therefore, In contrast, the most recent games have changed to a mobile platform which many fans have been insulted by due to the history of addictive paid to win mechanics found on mobile games with EA showing that they are doing this intentionally according to CBC with an article called “Video game giant EA steering players into loot-box option in popular soccer game, insider says” Johnson and Ivany (2021) with paid to win or paid to play mechanics.

The conclusion therefore is that Command and Conquer has released too many games close to each other as well as Electronic Arts aggressive tactics that utilise loot

boxes and micro transactions, this is on top of the goal to compete with Blizzards Star Craft on Esports League was the downfall as the franchise.

EA has also used manipulative tactics to gain as much money as possible from its fanbase based on the short term.

Age of Empires

Age of Empires is a RTS based on real life historical factions and cultures from the most developed ancient and early civilisations by Assemble studios before being bought by Microsoft in 2001 who would own the property after Assemble Studios was shut down on 29th January 2009. Real Time Strategy games

"Introduce new pressures into strategy and war games because they require players to make quick decisions as far as how to use resources and time attacks. Some of the most popular RTS game series include "Starcraft", "Warcraft", "Command and Conquer", "Warhammer" and "Age of Empires" (Technopedia, 2021).

Assemble studios made Age of Empires 1997 and Age of Empires 2 1999, before being bought by Microsoft with Assemble studios which released Age of Mythology 2002, Age of Empires 3 2005, Age of Empire: The Age of Kings 2006 and Age of Empires: Mythologies 2008 under Microsoft with Assemble Studios last game released being Halo Wars after the company wanted to develop a Sci-Fi RTS due to moving on from historical and mythological content. Microsoft would have its

company develop and release Age of Empires online in 2011, Age of Empires 2: HD Edition, Age of Mythology: Extended Edition 2014, Age of Empires: Castle Siege, Age of Empires: World Domination in 2015 and Age of Empires: Definitive Edition 2018 with Age of Empires 4 being in development and due to be released in 2021.

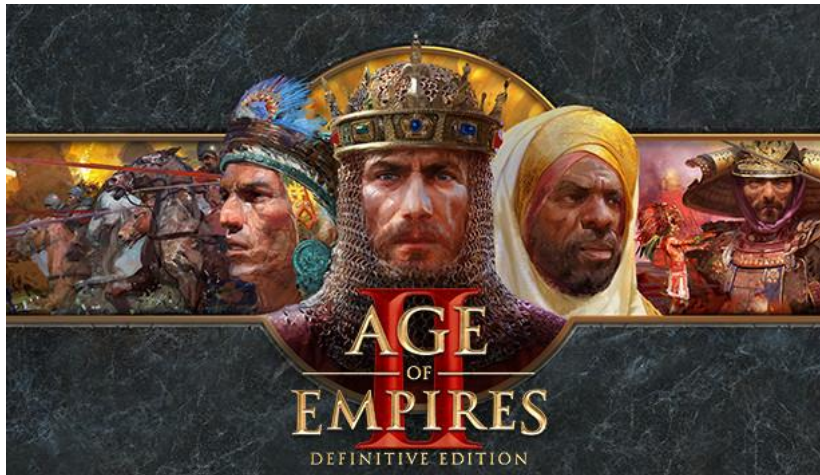


Fig. 7 Age of Empires

The Age of Empires 1 and 2 are the most popular of the games becoming cult classics and these get re-released regularly through its life. However, these were focused on telling history and gameplay although they were adaptable to the players' requirements. The game flow of any RTS is normally crafting, building, mining resources and combative play through sending units to destroy opposing players within gameplay. It takes a similar approach, however, is much slower and has a larger focus on building a civilization of a chosen culture. In creating the game format, Bruce C Shelley, Games developer for Age of Empires can be heard describing the merge between two popular games. In this he asks, "why don't we take the gameplay of Warcraft and Command and Conquer, this real time strategy gameplay, and merge it with the historical and economic aspects of civilization that I

had helped build a few years earlier” (2007). This merger between two popular RTS’s of that time period would prove to be a successful move that would create a classic.

After Microsoft bought Assembled studios, they would go on to create more additions to the Age of Empires for themselves, however, would be shut down due to the decrease of RTS within the period. The last game of Age of Empire was a spin off to the Halo franchise which also caused the end of Microsoft and the bungee partnership. Players still see the effect today in the Halo franchise, additionally, fans were uncertain of what would happen to the Age of Empires franchise. Microsoft would then make mediocre titles within the Age of Empire franchise, even making a mobile game like Command and Conquer: Rivals this was to compete against apps like Clash of Clans and the remastering of the main title Age of Empires games to mixed reviews.

The Age of Empire game would be kept alive through fan mods and E Sports tournaments. However, this was not enough to keep the franchise alive as overtime became repetitive due to the lack of advancement or change which fell on most RTS franchises. However, Age of Empires may return to its previous success due to the announcement of Age of Empires 4 in 2021. This release may see a return to formula however until then most of the player-base has remained with Age of Empires 2 and the multiple ports of that game.

My conclusion for Age of Empires was that the game designers hit a wall with no way to improve the game. Although it makes games in most time periods, even doing

mythology, closure of the company and Microsoft owning the brand, not knowing what to do with it has caused the game to be considered systematically dead.

Furthermore, due to the announcement of a new main title this makes me want to reconsider, however previous iterations have seen limited change so I believe that pattern will continue, I am hoping that is perception is wrong.

CHAPTER 5 – ANALYSIS

Franchise	Why has it declined in popularity	What happened for sales and interest to drop
	Mismanagement of the company Franchise killing sequel General degrade of quality over the years	
Silent Hill First came out PS1 – 31st Jan 1999 V2 24th sept 2001 V3 23rd May 2003 V4 2004 Silent Hill Origins 6th Nov 2007 Homecoming 2008 Shattered Memories 2009	Mis-management of Konami by Kojima Previously disturbed storylines that toyed with minds based on choices. Following games moved away from the original premise. Move from Horror to action (Playstation 3, Xbox 360, PC) War Hero - Lacked tension and reduced plot armour Boring gameplay poor controls	Silent hill 1 sold 2 million copies Silent hill 2 sold 1 million copies Silent hill 3 sold 300,000 copies Silent hill 4 sold 41,000 copies Silent hill Origins sold 8.4 million copies Silent hill Shattered Memory's sold 440,000 copies Silent hill Downpour sold 280,000 copies
Sonic Sonic Hedgehog 1 Released 1991 Sonic Blast 1996 (sonic went 3D)	When it moved to 3D the speed of the character was lost, it was flawed as the character was too fast for the games, and point of view shots which were important in feeling the speed were interrupted as often the character would run off screen and slowed down for platforming sections and the character felt inconsistent. The story felt convoluted. Cartoon character within the real world., additionally edgy Americanised visuals appealed more to teenagers which turned previous wider audience off, design flawed. Shadow the Hedgehog – guns in games	In 1991 Sonic the hedgehog sold 44.146 million dollars In 1992 Sonic the hedgehog 2 sold 14.7593 million dollars In 1993 Sonic CD sold 2.11 mil In 1993 Sonic Spinball sold 1 million dollars In 1994 Sonic 3 & knuckles sold 8.0925 million dollars In 1997 <i>Sonic Jam</i> sold 0.09 million dollars In 1997 <i>Sonic R</i> sold 0.08 million dollars

	1996 Sega realised that 3D graphics will be the next big thing and therefore try to adapt their character into this style of games design. So many spin-off games and different consoles for the different versions. “Sonic's rise continued, with gaming spin-offs and TV shows - an approach that would eventually devalue the brand, according to Steven Kent” (BBC, 2011)	In 1998 Sonic Adventure sold 4.586 million dollars In 2001 Sonic Adventure 2 sold 3.3913 million dollars In 2001 Sonic Adventure series sold 2.675 million dollars In 2002 Sonic Mega Collection sold 3.813 million dollars In 2003 <i>Sonic Heroes</i> sold 2.19 million dollars In 2003 <i>Sonic Battle</i> sold 0.07 million dollars In 2003 <i>Sonic Pinball Party</i> sold 0.003 million dollars In 2005 <i>Shadow the Hedgehog</i> sold 1.59 million dollars In 2005 <i>Sonic Jump</i> sold 8.8 million dollars In 2005 <i>Sonic Rush</i> sold 0.36 million dollars In 2006 <i>Sonic Riders</i> sold 0.93 million dollars In 2006 <i>Sonic the Hedgehog (2006)</i> sold 0.87 million dollars In 2007 <i>Sonic and the Secret Rings</i> sold 1.2 million dollars In 2008 <i>Sonic Drift 2</i> sold 3 million dollars In 2008 <i>Sega Superstars Tennis</i> sold 0.566 million dollars In 2008 <i>Sonic Unleashed</i> sold 2.45 million dollars
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		In 2009 <i>Sonic and the Black Knight</i> sold 0.0134 million dollars In 2009 <i>Sonic Chronicles: The Dark Brotherhood</i> sold 0.108 million dollars In 2010 <i>Sonic colour</i> sold 2.18 million dollars In 2010 <i>Sonic 4: Episode 1</i> sold 1.41 million dollars In 2010 <i>Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing</i> sold 18.12 million dollars In 2011 <i>Sonic Generations</i> sold 3.871 million dollars In 2012 <i>Sonic & All Stars Racing Transformed</i> sold 1.8 million dollars In 2012 <i>Sonic 4: Episode II</i> sold 0.41 million dollars In 2013 <i>Sonic Lost World</i> sold 0.91 million dollars In 2013 <i>Sonic Dash</i> sold 22.6 million dollars In 2013 <i>Happy Sonic! Live Wallpaper</i> sold 0.001 million dollars In 2014 <i>Sonic Boom</i> sold 0.62 million dollars In 2017 <i>Sonic Forces</i> sold 0.121 million dollars
Dead space	The game franchise died after the mismanagement of the third game due to mis-management of the parent company EI. Moved away from horror to focus on mainly the Shooter aspect. The company turned into an extra content and paywall franchise.	Dead space sold 1 million copies in 2008 worldwide. Dead Space 2 sold 4 million copies despite it having a budget of 60 million. Dead space sold 605,000 copies

		and was top-selling game in February 2013 in the United States and United Kingdom.
Rayman	The game franchise died due to the create is moving on to new projects burnout and evidence supports that that create was a perfectionist with also the lack of sales at launch for the two last titles.	Rayman sold 900,000 copies in two years of release Rayman sold 100,000 copies in the United Kingdom on PC Rayman sold 1 million copies by the end of March 2003. Rayman origin sold just over 50,000 copies during its first four weeks on sale Rayman legend sold 720,000 copies on Playstation 3, sold 550,000 copies on Xbox 360, and sold 420,000 copies on wii.
Command and conquer	late titles having too many transactions lack of innovation on gameplay and when there was it was not liked to do to pore design as well as Electronic Arts having a reputation. Leah titles under EA heavy heavily aimed towards the esports market rather than hands on new players While also forcing it to be a competitive game.	Command and conquer sold 3 million copies Command and Conquer Red Alert sold 3 million copies Command and Conquer Tiberian Sun sold \$8.08 million copies Command and Conquer Red alert 2 sold 4.3 million copies Command and Conquer Renegade sold 250.000 copies Command and Conquer Generals sold 100,000 copies Command and Conquer 3 Tiberium Wars sold 128,000 copies

Age of empires	Age of Empires ex re-releasing the same game multiple times with no innovation however is making a comeback with the announcement of age of empires 4, meaning that Age of Empires is not as dead as many people thought it was.	Age of empires 1 sold 25 million copies Age of empires 2 sold 3 million copies Age of empires 3 sold 2 million copies Age of mythology sold 870,000 copies

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

My conclusion to this research feels complete in some areas and lacking in others. A good example of this is in the horror genre, as I feel there still needs to be research but not into horror games but in the genre itself and even then, horror sort of still lived on through indie developers like Scott Coffin and Red Barrel Studios.

When it comes to platformers, I believe some areas at the end of my research needed further study with regard to the comparison of a Sonic franchise to the Rayman franchise. Rayman both were lacking in game titles whilst the Sonic Franchise was releasing games nearly every year which come across as overwhelming with some good games in there, however overtime all these games felt lacking or tasteless especially when the games became edgier to appeal to the younger audience of that time period.

Out of these games the only ones with a similar outcome were the RTS games where they were originally made by a company or by a bigger company, only two did not meet their standards and got shutdown and then they attempted to fill up the next game in the series without understanding why the game was popular. However, Command and Conquer had it worst off compared to Age of Empires as at least Age of Empires made a comeback with its fourth game unlike Command and Conquer although this did get a remake. Besides the remake the last new title they had was a mobile app consumed with microphone's actions aimed towards a competitive players, additionally it was alarming that through progression you must earn and could easily be bought through the ingame store but hopefully this will be a thing of the past as it seems governments across the world have noted this unique form of gambling.

Overall, I felt I reached the limit of my research in both Platform games and RTS's however I feel the reasoning behind the horror genre dying out, research suggests that this is due to it being a niche market. This is more relevant to the genre itself

and I feel that more research could be looked into this an into areas such as the impact and influence pop culture has on games and this concludes my research.

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