

Game Design & History (ACCA4033) - Game Design Document

Alex Walton

BA Computer Games Design (Hons)
School Of Applied Computing - University Of Wales Trinity Saint David

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Target Demographic / Official Ratings

Beginning with the steam profile page, FTL is highlighted with multiple tags to showcase what genres and gameplay styles this title is mainly associated with.

Down below is the tag list.



Of these tags, the core genre for FTL is sci-fi due to the narrative being centered around space, and the core gameplay is a unique mixture between roguelike and strategy due to the necessity of managing limited resources effectively on a singular save file. It is because of this genre combination that FTL may appeal to multiple demographics that may boost overall popularity.



FTL: Faster Than Light

Subset Games



Release Dates & Platforms:



PC -
14/09/2012

Advice for consumers

This game has been rated PEGI 12 for use of mild bad language. Not suitable for persons under 12 years of age.

Brief outline of the game

This "spaceship simulation roguelike-like" allows you to take your ship and crew on an adventure through a randomly generated galaxy filled with glory and bitter defeat.

Content specific issues

This game contains infrequent use of mild bad language. The

word "bastard" appears multiple times in the text boxes.

Other issues

The majority of the violence in the game is implied in nature, as it involves battles between spaceships. Two spaceships attack one another with various projectiles in an attempt to destroy their enemy's ship and crew. When a ship has been destroyed it explodes and splits into multiple parts before vanishing.

Platforms

Linux, Macintosh, Windows PC



Fantasy Violence, Language

No Interactive Elements

Rating Summary

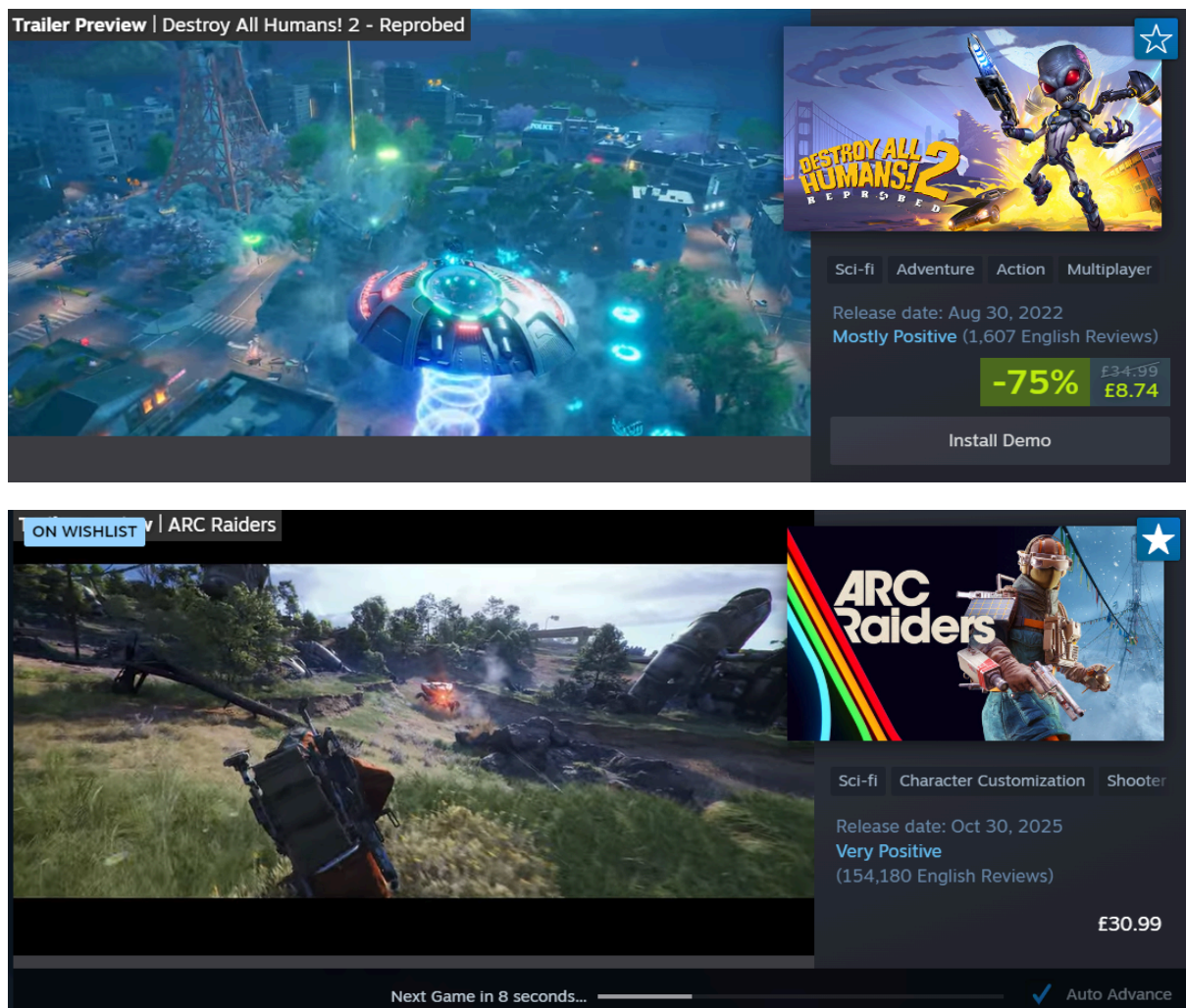
FTL: Faster Than Light is rated E10+ for Everyone 10+ by the ESRB with Fantasy Violence and Language. This is a strategy game in which players can command the crew and systems of a spaceship through battles and text-based events. As players travel across the galaxy to deliver information, they encounter hostile pirates and rebel aliens. Players can engage in fire fights with enemies, commanding their crew to shoot lasers and missiles at ships. Ships break apart and explode when defeated. Crewmembers are occasionally depicted fighting intruders from a top-down perspective. The word "bastard" appears in the dialogue.

In support of the associated tags exists the official demographic ratings for North America and Europe, awarded by the ESRB and PEGI respectively. PEGI has provided the 12 rating while the ESRB has awarded 'Everyone' 10+' for similar reasons - citing mild fantasy violence due to the advent of spaceships at battle with one another and infrequent use of crude language that is deemed suitable for use in titles of these demographic ratings.

After analysis of the store page tags and the official system classifications, it is reasonable to state that the target demographic for FTL are PC users in the age bracket of 10 - 12 who have interests in science fiction, adventure and space. FTL also has the advantage of having a secondary demographic appeal for users who invest in roguelike and strategy titles thanks to FTL's gameplay structure.

Similar Titles

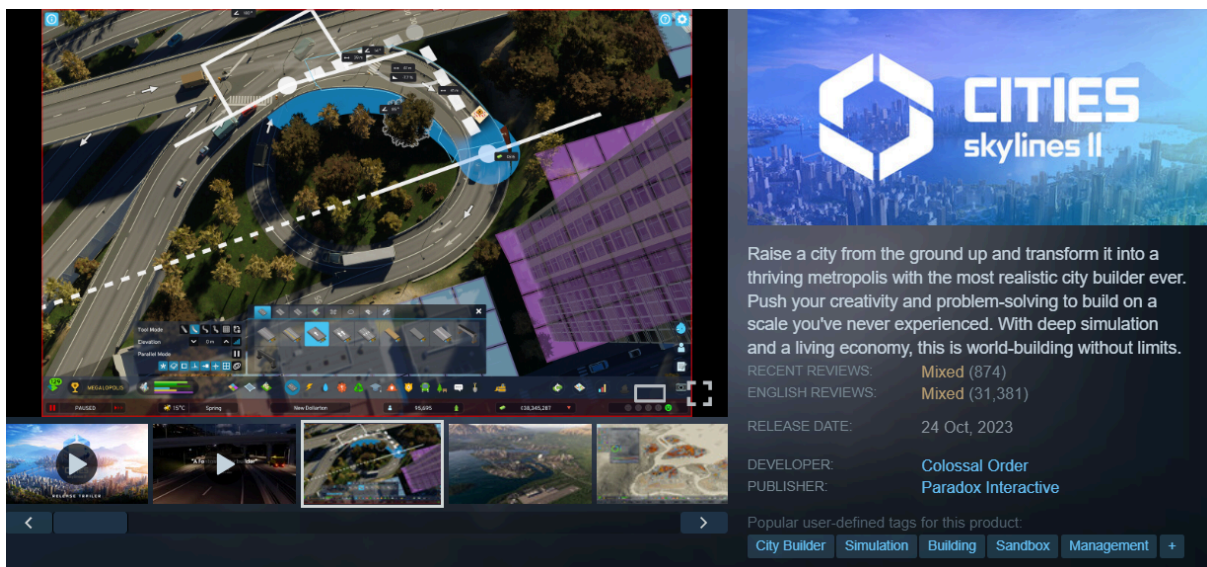
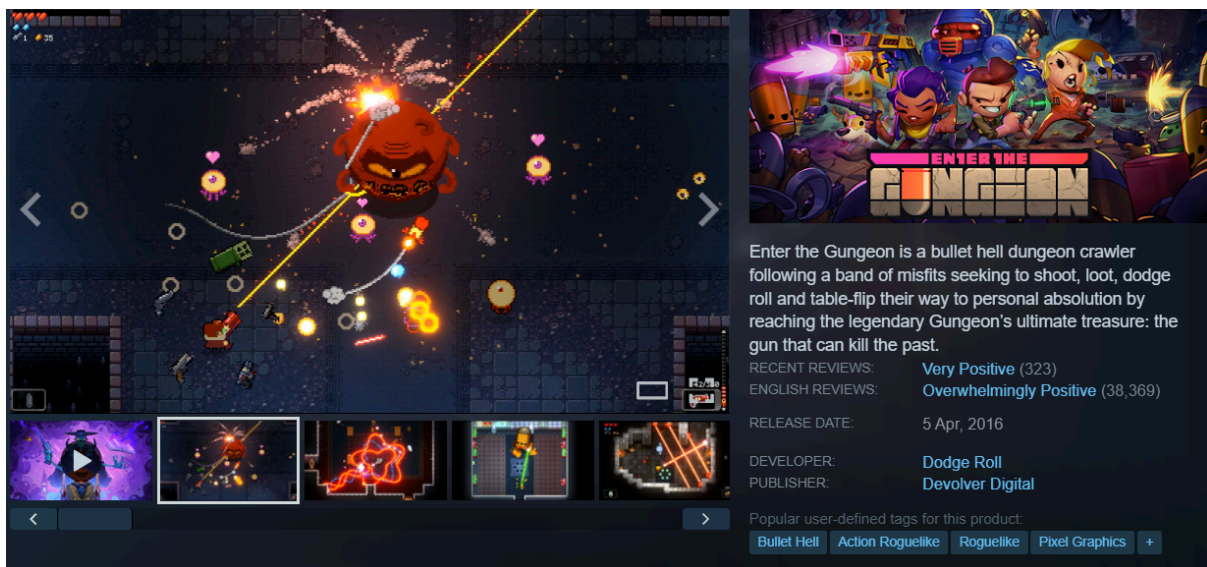
Following the identification of the target demographic for FTL, other titles that share similarities in theme, structure and style can be deconstructed to further identify every building block of an individual title. To begin with, thematic similarities will be broken down to showcase the thematic style and narrative FTL will follow, starting with the sci-fi tag, below are some examples of available sci-fi eccentric titles:



Destroy All Humans 2 - A role playing title in which the user assumes the role of an alien at the height of the cold war in the 1960s seeking revenge on humans who have committed wrongdoing against the alien. Narratively and scientifically, given that extraterrestrial beings with highly advanced technology are present in this fictional depiction of a time period it is feasible to assume that FTL took loose inspiration from this title.

Arc Raiders - Set in a future time period, a polar opposite from the previously mentioned title, Arc raiders is an extraction title designed to challenge users to utilise any means necessary to evade a common machine threat. Despite being released at least a decade later than FTL, comparing the narrative structure of both titles elements of Arc Raiders can be clearly identified within the key story flow of FTL.

After the breakdown of the narrative and thematic core comes the main gameplay structure which works in close symbiosis, identifying roguelike and strategy as the definitive interactive style, below are some similarly structured titles:



Enter The Gungeon - While thematically different from the sci-fi based nature of FTL, Enter The Gungeon leans heavily into the roguelike flow (a structure of which procedurally generated environments are navigated through with end conditions leading to user permadeath resetting progress, creating a new “game” within the game) offering users a high replay value as the environment and any progress made as a result of direct user input resets under required fail / pass conditions making every playthrough offering a fresh experience on every loop creating an invigorating and tight sense of renewed adventure and challenge.

Cities Skylines II - A different type of experience, Cities Skylines II takes a strong stance on strategy style gameplay as the user must construct a city and the related infrastructure / subsystems on finite resources of which the user must acquire with viable methods in the simulated economy.

Design Elements

In-Game Content

Beginning when a new save file is initiated, the user is greeted with the opening menu screen which introduces the user to their ship and related resources as seen in the below image:



The user is provided with a variety of customisation options to further provide a truly personalised roguelike experience. Of these options, the following are available:

Ship name - The most simple custom variation on offer is the ability to alter the name of the spaceship before the ensuing journey

Ship and Type - Starting off with only one ship, the user may unlock various different ships and types by meeting certain gameplay conditions and when done so they may be selected for use in future playthroughs

Layout - Indirectly linked to the users strategy for the playthrough, the layout refers to how the different rooms are positioned along the ship, including rooms that are utilised by the users ship crew for resource management to survive the playthrough.

Crew - The first set of crew that is available to the user follows the same simple variety methods as the first, as the individual names can be altered and basic appearances can be swapped from a preset library.

Weapons - Beginning with starter weapons, the user has no variety in available weapon selection as different weapon types must be acquired throughout the title by meeting set conditions for future gameplay use

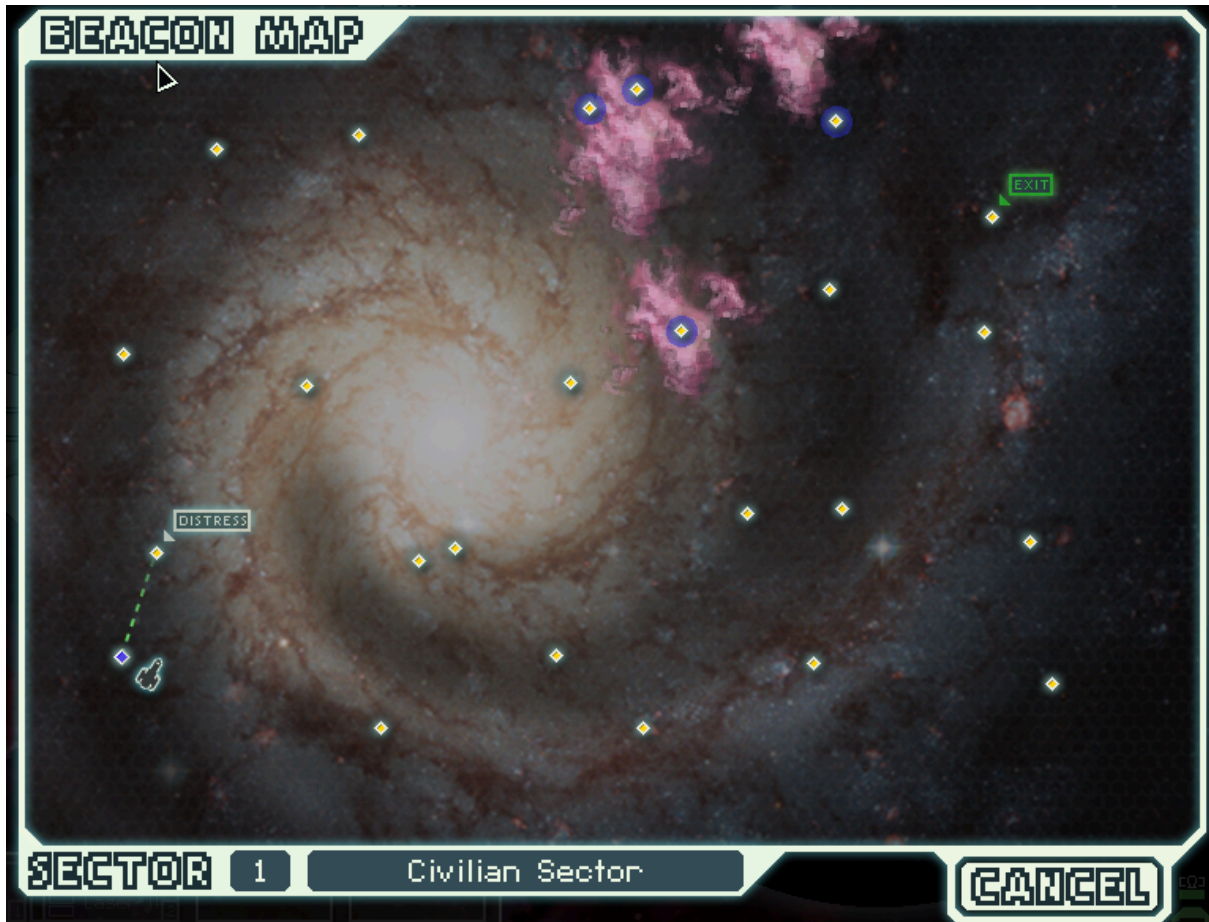
Drones - No drones are available to the user when the game is started for the first time, the user must acquire drones through gameplay, and when attached to the ship the drones provide different support boosts to various systems

Augmentations - Also without initial availability and unlocked later on, the user may select up to 3 augmentations that further provide stat boosts to ship systems

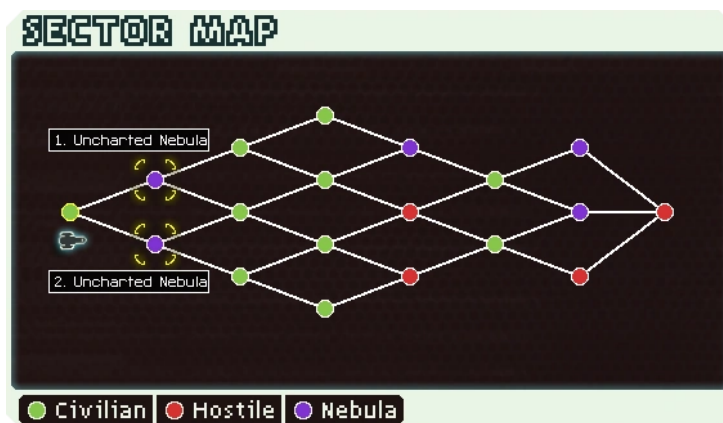
Difficulty - Before the user begins a new playthrough, FTL offers a 3 tier difficulty selection slider, of which enemy generation and scrap rewards collected are affected, and the final score on each playthrough also reflects this

Outside of these user input changes, as FTL is built around the roguelike structure the available environments, resources, opportunities and threats presented to the user will change with each save file allowing for an infinite range of possible outcomes within this title.

After completion of ship creation begins true gameplay. The user is provided with a multitude of ship systems that must all stay within the green threshold for safe travels. These systems present their own unique challenges as users must manage oxygen levels and health of the crew, the integrity and shield of the ship to prevent destruction, weapon systems to eliminate potential threats and energy levels to allow for an efficient upkeep of on-board systems during the playthrough.



FTL breaks down the safe travels into individual maps that are assigned different classifications and each beacon will present a random opportunity or hazard, to succeed the user must navigate through numerous procedurally generated sectors of increasing difficulty until they reach the final sector to win.



Characters

There are numerous character types that can be found within FTL that serve as both crew and enemies, these types are presented in the form of races and present with varying levels of characteristic stats. As stated below, these character races are the following:

Human - Common race, from earth

Engi - Presenting in a robotic form, Engi bodies are made from nanomachines

Mantis - Bears resemblance to real life praying mantis, human sized and hostile

Rockmen - Similar to humans, with the exception of tough rock like skin

Zoltan - A non human entity composed of harnessed energy

Slug - Intelligent race of territorial large slugs

Crystal - Descendants of the rockmen, solitary and peaceful entities

Lanius - Scavengers, composed of metallic lifeforms

Game Structure & Flow

Leading on from in-game content, FTL's core gameplay is designed to function as a branching structure due to its heavy roguelike mechanics, resulting in a non linear flow giving the player control as to how they choose to approach each challenge. After deconstruction of the in-game content a flowchart has been compiled to provide a visual key on how the gameplay mechanics are executed as seen below:

