

Video Games Genres

From A to Z

Types of Genres

- First Person Shooter
- Adventure
- Action
- Board/Card
- Role-playing
- Simulation
- Sports
- Strategy
- Puzzle
- Text-based
- Artificial Life
- Online
- Cross-genre hybrid

Text-based Games

- Text-based games are all but a thing of the past. Generally if you see a text-based game today, it's created by a amateur programmer.
- Text-based games are driven forward by text. You are presented with some text, and you reply by typing an answer. The game can be purely text, or can be text driven with a rendered scene.

Example: Text-based Game

Pong: The Text-Based Game
Brought to you by [Karber.net](http://www.karber.net)

Excellent, the left paddle has needed a leader like you for a long time. With your help, we may just be able to destroy the evil enemy that is the left paddle.

So suit up, Commander, and [serve our crew there](#).

Score:
You: 0
His: 0

→

Pong: The Text-Based Game
Brought to you by [Karber.net](http://www.karber.net)

The incredibly sneaky right paddle has bounced the ball back in our direction.

What dishonor! The right paddle has attempted to give us a love blow by using the ball before us! What ever shall we do?

[Move the great paddle up!](#)
[Hold the paddle steady!](#)
[Lower the paddle!](#)

Score:
You: 0
His: 0

←

Pong: The Text-Based Game
Brought to you by [Karber.net](http://www.karber.net)

He's gotten one by us!

To serve the ball again, click [here](#).

Score:
You: 0
His: 1

Play it here: <http://www.karber.net/textbased/pong/>

Example: Text-driven Game



Curse of Monkey Island (copyright: Lucas Arts 1995)

Board/Card Games (con.)

- Board/Card games are exactly how they sound. They are computerized versions of game that can be played with physical pieces.
- Board and card games are known to all ages, and thus appeal to even computer illiterate users since its only a matter of learning how to use the controls.
- While text-games are a thing of the past, board and card games are still very much alive. If you haven't seen someone playing solitaire in the recent past, it would be very surprising.

Board/Card Games (con.)

- In recent years, with the increase of internet use and high-speed to home users, more and more people are playing games of bridge, slingo and poker against other people around the world. Sometimes gambling with money is involved (fake or real), and sometimes it just score tallied.
- The simplistic nature of the game allow people to download and play the games in little time adding to the appeal.

Example: Board/Card Games



Monopoly 64 (Copyright: Destination Software)

Puzzle Games

- Puzzle games, like card and board games, are known to all ages. The idea to pose a problem and find a solution. Some puzzle games can be won, while others go on until you lose.
- Recent years have not seen any breakthrough puzzle games, but rehashed versions of classic like Tetris and Dr. Mario
- These games are often times small and easy to create. For that reason many of these games are available for free online.

Example: Puzzle Game

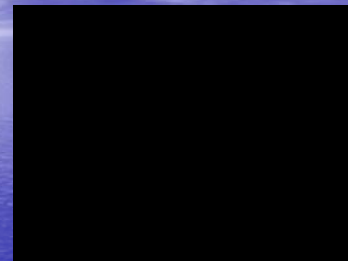


Download and play Balloon blowout here:
http://www.splashweb.com/Games/Puzzle/Big_Balloon_Blowout_screenshot.html

Strategy

- Strategy games range from board style (like Chess) to war games.
- The idea is to provide a game that requires thinking and reasoning to successfully win. A good strategy game rarely lets a brute force strategy win.
- The attraction is using your mental skills instead of your button pressing skills (though that can be part of it)

Example: Strategy



(Click to Play)

Battalion Wars (GCN) Copyright: Nintendo 2004

Artificial Life

- While it can be argued whether this is a game or not, the idea behind it is to raise and maintain a "living" entity.
- If you neglect the entity, bad things will happen (it could get mad, run away, or even die)
- Tamagotchi is probably the best known artificial life game.

Example: Artificial Life



Click to Play

Nintendogs (Nintendo DS) copyright 2006

Action

- Action games are typically split up into two main categories, shooting and non-shooting.
- Action games appeal to audiences that like non-stop, "edge of the seat" game playing. Exploring a world is typically not something action gamers look for in a game.

Action (con.)

- There are different elements that make up an action game (though it doesn't have to contain all of them). The some of the main ones include:
 - Lives – A limit of the number of times a player can die in the game before having to start the game/level over.
 - Energy – Sometimes also known as health (or ammunition), is a measurement of how much damage/firepower the player has left.
 - Power ups – Replenish the vitals, such as ammunition, health, energy.
 - Time Limit – A time limit requires the player to complete a task within an amount of time.
 - Scores – Typically used for bragging rights, but can also give a reward, scores are tallied up by pulling off special abilities or combinations.

Example: Action



Click to Play

Devil May Cry 3 (PS2) Copyright Capcom 2005

First Person Shooter (FPS)

- In the past 10 years, First Person Shooter games have gained so much popularity, they can be considered a genre in their own right.
- In a first person shoot, you control the avatar, which typically has a weapon of some sort and you see the world as the avatar does.

FPS (con.)

- Prior to be considered a genre, FPS was part of the Action Genre. Part of the reason for the deviation to it's own genre is due to the content not being constant, "edge of the seat" action.
- While FPS typically revolve around violent action, FPS can revolve around an adventure and exploration.
- Recent examples include Unreal Tournament 2004, Doom 3, and Return to Castle Wolfenstein.

Example: FPS



Click to Play

Unreal Tournament 2004 (PC) Copyright Atari 2004

Adventure

- An adventure game tells an interactive story, where typically the avatar is the main character in the story.
- A drawback to creating an adventure game is trying to allow the player to be in as much control of the storyline as possible (various possible paths and/or endings to a game).

Adventure (con.)

- Challenges is what drives an adventure game and sets it apart from reading a book.
- Challenges include: Locked Doors, Solving Puzzles, Collecting Pieces/Artifacts, Manipulating Objects/People, Understand Problems or Vague Messages.

Adventure (con.)

- In addition to your avatar, there is usually a supporting character to help you through the game. Some examples of the character are an elder, experienced champion, seer/psychic, etc.
- Since the main purpose is to tell a story, the most important elements include building dramatic tension and giving a purpose of quest (self-appointed hero or reluctant hero)

Example: Adventure



Play RuneScape at <http://www.runescape.com/>

Role-Playing Game RPG

- Role-playing Games are almost a hybrid of adventure and strategy genres. RPG's have a strong storyline that drives the game forward
- You control 1 or a party of characters that are usually customizable. Within a party of characters, each character has their own strengths and weakness that another makes up for.

RPG (con.)

- RPG's for year followed the same theme where over-world travel was a top-down view, in town/castle was a top-down or side scroller view, and battle was a side view with stationary characters.
- 3D capable hardware helped break that mold and more RPG's use unique views such as a roaming camera during a battle, or third person view in an over-world.

RPG (con.)

- RPG's are one of the most difficult types of games to create. Not only do you have to maintain the atmosphere (physics, environment, etc) and program the basics, but the statistics system for health, damage, upgrades, and such can be infinity more complex. The larger the game, the more complex the scalability must be.

RPG (con.)

- Earlier RPG's were implemented as text-based games with minimal graphics.
- RPG's originally were not video games, but games people actually played with each other, pretending to take the role of a character. They still exist today (E.G. Dungeons and Dragons) and for that reason RPG's are sometimes call Computer RPG's or CRPG's.

Example: RPG



Final Fantasy (Nintendo) Copyright Square Enix 1990

Simulation

- Like Artificial Life, it can be argued that Simulation is not a game.
- The idea is to take idea, concept, or actual event and replicate it on a computer.
- For example, no one can fly to Jupiter, but we have enough information that we can simulate a flight there.

Simulation (con.)

- Simulation games are created for the following reasons: training where your life is not on the line, allow people to do things that are prohibitive due to cost, lack of experience, or just physically impossible.
- Examples include The Sims, Roller coaster Tycoon, and Flight Simulator

Example: Simulation



Sports

- This genre doesn't really need explanation.
- People love playing Sport games often because they themselves can't physically play the sport well.
- The advantage of creating a Sports game is you can invent your own sport (like Quidditch which JK Rowling created for the Harry Potter books)

Online

- Online games are unique in that they aren't really a genre themselves, but another genre implemented online.
- Different games, based on their genre have radically different types of online play.
- Some examples are on the following slides

Online - RPG: MMORPG

- M.assive M.ulti P.layer O.nline R.ole P.layer G.ame
- This is the online equivalent of an RPG. This type of game creates an actual community as players all over the world interact to trade, sell, buy, fight and much more.
- Programming is very difficult to be able to balance synchronicity between players and hardware resources of servers.

Online - Strategy

- The best example of this would be a war game.
- Each side can have their own type of warriors, workers, and builders.
- The idea is to over take your opponents territory using strategy, even if that strategy is brute force, and build your own.

Online - FPS

- Online FPS games aren't much different from their non-online cousins
- You play against other players and there isn't really any strategy (except in rare cases such as capture the flag when you need to balance protection and offensive)
- More or less, kill them as many times as you can before they kill you.

Cross-Genres

- Cross-genre games are a blend of different Genres
- It's very tricky to have a successful cross-genre game since each genre has unique qualities targeted to specific audiences.
- It can go either way, you can blend two or more genres and it could attract players from those genres or disappoint players that their genre is tainted.

Cross-Genres (con.)

- Action-Adventure games might as well be their own genre since they are so successful and very widely used.
- Other Cross-genre games exist that are successful, but due mostly to the finesse of their implementation.
- Monster Rancher – Artificial Life/RPG
- The Legend of Zelda – Action-Adventure

References

- Andrew Rollings and Ernest Adams on Game Design (New Riders Publishing)