



Designing Gameplay

Researching and testing Nintendo's game design

Malin Ribäck

Arcada

Biblioteket och Språkenheten

Helsingfors 2019

EXAMENSARBETE	
Arcada	
Utbildningsprogram:	Mediekultur
Identifikationsnummer:	6847
Författare:	Malin Ribäck
Arbetets namn:	Gameplays design – Undersökning och test av Nintendos speldesign
Handledare (Arcada):	Mirko Ahonen
Uppdragsgivare:	
<p>Sammandrag: Studien gick ut på att utforska hur spelföretaget Nintendo designar gameplay. För att testa resultaten i praktiken skapades ett game design-dokument. Därför börjar arbetet med att diskutera vad game design-dokument är och vad de används för. Game design-dokumentet som gjordes i samband med studien är en kombination av det huvudsakliga game design-dokumentet och ett konceptdokument. Därför tar arbetet också upp skillnaderna mellan dessa dokument. För att utreda hur Nintendo designar gameplay utfördes en litteraturundersökning. Materialet som användes i litteraturundersökningen består av intervjuer. Majoriteten av intervjuerna härstammar från Nintendos egen hemsida. För att utforma en teori tar arbetet upp några befintliga teorier för hur Nintendo designar sina spel. För att kunna diskutera Nintendos gameplay definieras gameplays koncept genom att diskutera olika definitioner av olika författare som tar upp ämnet i fråga. Litteraturundersökningen inleds med en presentation av varifrån materialet för studien har kommit. Inledningsvis tar också arbetet upp två viktiga spelutvecklare från Nintendo, för att ge insikt i varför just de personerna är viktiga. För att presentera en helhet över hur Nintendo designar gameplay studeras, organiseras, presenteras och diskuteras innehållet från litteraturundersökningen. Resultatet från undersökningen visar bland annat att när Nintendo designar sina spel, fokuserar man på följande saker: Att göra spelen användarvänliga, att forma dem enligt deras funktion, att göra spelvärlden responsiv i förhållande till spelaren och att undvika störa eller avbryta spelarens inlevelse i spelet. Resultaten visar också att Nintendo siktar på att göra sina spel bekväma och roliga att spela genom att utmana spelaren lagom mycket och göra spelen i sig belönande att spela. Slutligen visar resultaten också att Nintendo försöker göra sina spel unika och bygga dem med gameplay som grund. Under diskussionen kring litteraturundersökningen presenteras resultaten och hur de har tillämpats i game design-dokumentet. Arbetet diskuterar också vilka principer game design-dokumentet inte kunde följa, samt varför. Arbetet behandlar endast de aspekter inom speldesign som kan kopplas till gameplay och som dyker upp i intervjuerna.</p>	
Nyckelord:	Gameplay, Nintendo, Speldesign, Game design-dokument
Sidantal:	61
Språk:	Engelska
Datum för godkännande:	29.5.2019

DEGREE THESIS	
Arcada	
Degree Programme:	Media culture
Identification number:	6847
Author:	Malin Ribäck
Title:	Designing Gameplay – Researching and testing Nintendo’s game design
Supervisor (Arcada):	Mirko Ahonen
Commissioned by:	
<p>Abstract:</p> <p>The study set out to research how the game-company Nintendo is designing gameplay. To test out the results, a game design document was made. Thus, the study starts out discussing that game design documents are and what they are used for. The game design document that was produced in relation to this study is a combination between the main game design document and a concept document. Thus the study also brings up the differences between these documents. To find out how Nintendo is designing gameplay, a literature review was conducted. The material used for the literature review consists of interviews. The majority of the interviews come from Nintendos own homepage. To shape a theory, the study brings up a few existing theories for how Nintendo is designing their games. In order to discuss the gameplay of Nintendo; Gameplay is defined by discussing different definitions of gameplay among authors in the field. The literature review starts out by presenting where the material comes from. Two important game developers from Nintendo are also brought up, and why they are important. In order to present how Nintendo is designing gameplay; The content from the literature review is studied, organized, presented and discussed. The results from the study show for example that when designing games, Nintendo is focusing on the following things: Making the games user-friendly, to have the form follow function, making the gameworld responsive in relation to the player and avoiding interrupting or breaking the immersion for the player. The results show also that Nintendo is aiming to make their games fun and feel-good to play by making sure that they are challenging the player moderately and making the games rewarding to play. Finally, the results also show that Nintendo is trying to make their games unique and made with gameplay as the core. When discussing the literature review; the results are presented and demonstrated how they have been applied to the game design document. The study also discusses what principles the game design document couldn't follow and why. The study focuses solely on the aspects of game design that relates to gameplay that is covered in the interviews</p>	
Keywords:	Gameplay, Nintendo, game design, Game design document
Number of pages:	61
Language:	English
Date of acceptance:	29.5.2019

1	INTRO.....	6
1.2	Background.....	6
1.3	What is a Game design document?.....	6
1.3.1	<i>Why do we make Game design documents.....</i>	7
1.3.2	<i>What is the difference between the Game design document and the Concept document?.....</i>	8
1.3.3	<i>What is and isn't included in the Game design document?.....</i>	9
1.4	Who is Nintendo? And why Nintendo?.....	9
1.5	Research question.....	9
1.6	Objective.....	10
1.7	Method.....	10
2	THEORY.....	12
2.1	Developing an analytical framework.....	12
2.1.1	<i>Theories on how Nintendo work.....</i>	12
2.1.2	<i>Mark Brown.....</i>	13
2.2.2.1	<i>Mark Brown's theory: Nintendo - putting play first.....</i>	14
2.2	What is gameplay?.....	15
3	THE GAMEPLAY OF NINTENDO.....	19
3.1	Fun for everyone: Making games user-friendly.....	19
3.1.1	<i>Looking at the game.....</i>	22
3.1.2	<i>Shigeru Miyamoto.....</i>	22
3.1.2.1	<i>The Miyamoto method.....</i>	23
3.1.3	<i>Realistic play.....</i>	24
3.1.4	<i>Compromising cutscenes for the sake of immersion.....</i>	25
3.2	Feel good gameplay.....	25
3.2.1	<i>The reward vs the journey.....</i>	25
3.2.2	<i>Pacing courses for the players of today.....</i>	26
3.3	Gameplay first.....	27
3.3.1	<i>Gameplay before the story.....</i>	27
3.3.1.1	<i>The Legend of Zelda: Never emphasize the story.....</i>	28
3.3.2	<i>Gameplay before art.....</i>	28
3.3.3	<i>Sound that follows function.....</i>	29
3.3.3.1	<i>Inventing unique sound design: The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time.....</i>	30
3.4	Doing games differently.....	31
3.4.1	<i>Coming up with effective ideas.....</i>	32

4 DISCUSSION.....	33
4.1 Make “Fun for everyone” – User-friendly games.....	33
4.1.1 <i>Having the form follow the function.....</i>	33
4.1.2 <i>Realistic gameplay.....</i>	34
4.1.3 <i>Keep the player immersed as much as possible.....</i>	35
4.2 Feel good gameplay.....	36
4.2.1 <i>Don’t put too much weight on the reward – Make the gameplay itself rewarding</i>	36
4.2.3 <i>Challenge the player moderately.....</i>	36
4.3 Doing games differently.....	37
4.4 Making gameplay at the core.....	37
4.5 Applying these principles.....	38
5 CONCLUSION.....	40
APPENDIX: TIMESCAPE GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT	42
SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA.....	49
REFERENCES/SOURCES.....	56

1 INTRO

This study will discuss game design, focusing on the design of the gameplay. In relation to this study, a game design document has been made. Because of that, the study will start by discussing what game design documents are and what they are used for. After that, the study will be describing and discussing what gameplay is and what it means when designing games, with the help of literature from the field. Following comes the main study: A literature review of Nintendo that is focusing on their design of gameplay. Lastly are discussions and conclusions of the findings from the literature review of Nintendo, and how they tie into the game design document.

1.2 Background

Game design lies in my field of interest. It is also relevant for me to build a portfolio, but producing a full game all on my own in this short time isn't very realistic. Therefore, I have chosen to instead make a game design document, based on what I can learn about game design from Nintendo. Since my main interest lies in game design, rather than the other fields in game production (like programming, sound, graphics, art, animation, etc.) I found that making a game design document to be a more fitting project for me. I have chosen to study Nintendo because I find their games the most unique in their field when it comes to gameplay. It caught my interest in particular watching youtuber Mark Brown's video on Nintendo designing gameplay. While you can find plenty of literature in the field of game design about designing games, I have found that literature regarding how Nintendo is making games more difficult to come by. That is why I believe it could be of great interest in the industry to get this insight of Nintendo's way to design their games and gameplay.

1.3 What is a Game design document?

For my study, I have taken what I have learned about designing gameplay like Nintendo and used that to make a game design document. My motive was to test how someone outside of Nintendo would use these principles. But in order to discuss game design documents; we need to understand what a game design document is:

A game design document (GDD) is a document written before and (usually) during game development. The GDD can be mainly used for two things: One is to show someone outside the production what the game is about before it's made (for example someone who you seek funding from), the other is to provide the development team a reference point for how to make the game. (Oxland, 2004, p.237)

The GDD is like an instruction manual for the game developers on how to build the game. Not to be confused with a manual for the player to tells them how to play the game (Oxland, 2004, p.240). A GDD is meant to be written in such detail so that the reader won't have to fill in any gaps themselves, and so that the developers cannot implement their own interpretations of the game design during development. (Oxland, 2004, p.240 & Bethke, 2003, p.106)

1.3.1 Why do we make Game design documents?

Back in the day when development teams we're smaller, GDD's weren't obvious to have. Nowadays when the game development industry is much bigger and development teams much larger, GDD's are much more obvious to have to help keep everyone in the development team on the same page. (Adams, 2003, p.13-14 & Rouse & Ogden, 2005, p.307) Adam Ernest also brings up a few other things GDD's are useful for:

- Making and recording of made decisions: putting them on paper for clarification, definition, and record.
- Communicating the decisions made to the rest of the development team
- Sometimes they are simply needed for contractual obligations or simply proof to your funder or publisher that the product is legit

(Adams, 2010, p.57)

Game design documents name and shapes vary from game to game and team to team, and there is no template. This part in particular is something Jesse Schell emphasizes in her book "The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses". (Schell, 2015, p.48) Kevin Oxland (2004, p.233) also points this out in his book "Gameplay and design", and Rouse &

Ogden in their book “Game design: theory and practice” (Rouse & Ogden, 2005, p.307-308)

While many define the game design document as something where you specify something or everything about your game. Jesse Schell brings up how Jason Vandenberghe makes this comparison between the game design document as being the specification of your game vs being only the theory of your game:

“The trouble with GDD’s is that they are literally out of date the moment you write them. Design documents are expression of your current theories about what will make your game good...but until you see those theories in practice, you cannot know. Unfortunately, it is in our nature to treat official documents as though they were specifications, or scripts, or blueprints. They are not- they are theories”

(Jesse Schell, 2015, p.426)

Usually, the GDD is split into many different documents, each covering a specific part of the game and game development. Exactly which documents the game design document is split into, and what they are called differ from author to author. The GDD I have chosen to make is something of a mix between a main GDD and a concept document. Therefore, in this study I’ll only be focusing on the documents dedicated to describing the game in large (the main GDD), and the document selling the game (the concept document). I won’t cover the types of game design documents that go deeper into the other specific parts of game design.

1.3.2 What is the difference between the Game design document and the Concept document?

The concept document (also called the overview document by Oxland, high concept document by Ernest and pitch document/proposal by Rouse&Ogden) is meant to sell your game to investors who will give funding for your game development. (Oxland, 2004, p.253 & Ernest, 2010, p.58). It’s supposed to grab one’s attention so that they’ll want to meet you and see what the game is all about. (Ernest, 2010, p.58 & Rouse&Ogden, 2005, p.308) The concept document can also help keep the game’s focus. (Bethke, 2003, p.205-207)

The GDD is the manual for the development to make the game from (Bethke, 2003, p.205-207). It's something that follows up on the concept document. (Oxland, 2004, p. 274-275) The GDD is something that can keep growing and change during the development process. (Oxland, 2004, p.237)

1.3.3 What is and isn't included in the Game design document?

The full GDD needs to fully describe in detail the gameplay of the game, it needs to tell what the player can do, how they do it and how this becomes a compelling gameplay experience. The GDD also broadly outlines the story, levels/worlds, characters, and objects of the game. I use the word "broadly" since the main amount of details for each section are usually described/defined in depth in separate documents. The GDD should neither cover the technical part of the process since that's what's the technical design document is for. The GDD is used as a reference point from which to build the game, but it is not a document that tells the developers how the functions are implemented. (unlike the technical design document) (Rouse & Ogden, 2005. 2nd ed, p.309-317)

1.4 Who is Nintendo? And why Nintendo?

This study will be focusing on is Nintendo. Nintendo is a company that has produced some of the most famous and successful games and gaming consoles. Some of the most famous games from Nintendo are games from series like Super Mario, The Legend of Zelda, Donkey Kong and more.

To do a throughout study of Nintendo, a company that everyone knows makes high quality and successful games could provide e great insight into the process of designing great games. I also believe it could be very relevant from an academic perspective in game design education.

1.5 Research question

This study's research question is "How is Nintendo designing gameplay?". To help answer this question, the study will cover how Nintendo has been making their games

throughout the years. To also help answer the research question, the study will need to look at the question “what is gameplay?”.

1.6 Objective

This study’s main objective is to help define gameplay, research the way of making gameplay at Nintendo, and test it out. The objective is to learn how to design gameplay more like the game-developers at Nintendo. This study is aiming to present the process of making games at Nintendo, while also presenting why the games are/where made that way. To gather the information necessary and learn what makes the gameplay-design of Nintendo, a literature review is conducted and then followed by a game design document. The game design document’s purpose is to try out these findings hands-on. Therefore, this makes for another objective of the study: Testing these findings and find out what something made with these principles, used by someone outside of Nintendo, would look like. The study will mostly focus on Nintendo as a whole, but it will also be necessary to go a little more in depth on some of the game designers from Nintendo.

1.7 Method

For this study, the method of choice has been conducting a Literature review. I have been using “The literature review: six steps to success” by Lawrence A. Machi & Brenda T. McEvoy as a reference.

Lawrence A. Machi and Brenda T. McEvoy define a literature review as the following: “The basic literature review summarizes and evaluates the existing knowledge on a particular topic. Its purpose is to produce a position on the state of that knowledge” (2012, p.2). Using this position, the one conducting the review can then answer the question of the study (Machi & McEvoy, 2012, p.4).

According to Lawrence A. Machi and Brenda T. McEvoy: To begin a literature review, one should start out by choosing a research interest. This research interest is then developed into the study question. The study question then eventually turns into the research topic that identifies and frames the literature review (2012, p.2). In my case, I

chose game design and gameplay as my research interest; from which I formed my research question “How is Nintendo designing gameplay?”; which framed my literature review to researching game design and production of Nintendo of Japan.

According to the authors of my reference: One should start out by asking themselves whether they are “trying to present a thesis that defines the current knowledge about a topic” or if they are “arguing a thesis that defines a research problem for further study”. (Machi & McEvoy, 2012, p.xv) In this study, I have chosen to simply establish the current state of knowledge of my topic.

When one has conducted the literature search and are about to start surveying their findings, one should proceed according to the authors “organize the data into categories and themes”. “Then you must analyse these findings to establish what is known about the topic of the study (Machi & McEvoy, 2012, p.64). In my case, when reading and searching for literature, whenever I found something that I found related to my topic, I saved it in my notes. Eventually, these notes piled up and I stopped looking for further literature. I then categorized all my notes into categories which I then could analyse individually. This process is called the literature survey by the authors and is further explained as follows:

“The literature review gathers the prior knowledge about the subject of study. Surveying begins by examining the information gained from your literature search, and transforming it into findings. It concludes by building the findings into a storyline that describes what is known about the topic under study. Surveying requires three tasks:

1. Assemble the collected data
2. Organize the information
3. Analyse the patterns of the data

(Machi & McEvoy, 2012, p.88)

After analysing the patterns of data, one can then write the review. The authors split the writing of the review into two tasks: 1. Write to understand and 2. Write to be understood. As you write, you might start to understand and place the final pieces of your findings, while you focus on to also write to be understood by others. (Machi & McEvoy, 2012, p.88)

2. THEORY

2.1 Developing an analytical framework

When official game developers from Nintendo are asked to define the “essence” of large game series from Nintendo, the answers can differ depending on who you ask. They all have their own things and details from games that they think are in one way or another part of the game’s “essence”. Nintendo’s games are different from other companies’, and there are also theories that the very process of making games at Nintendo differs greatly, compared to the process of other game companies. Interviews from game developers at Nintendo is one way to get an insight into the process, perhaps the only way. While there haven’t really been any studies done on the process of making games and gameplay in general at Nintendo, you can still find a handful of people who in one way or another discuss the games of Nintendo, how and why they are made that way. To help shape my hypothesis of how Nintendo designs their gameplay, I tried looking a little further into a few of these people and what they had to say about the topic.

2.1.1 Theories on how Nintendo work

Most of these theories are easiest found on YouTube channels that cover themes such as games and game design. Most of them usually don’t cover the *general* design principles of Nintendo and go only into specific Nintendo games, which wasn’t what I was looking for. What I still found however is that something that seems to be a well-known design principle is the “Form-follow-function” principle by Shigeru Miyamoto. Both users “Warbot” of the YouTube-channel “Design doc” and Mark Brown of the YouTube-channel “Game makers toolkit” talk about this principle. (“Warbot”, 2016a & Brown, 2016)“Form-follow-function” being the principle that anything in the game should look the way it functions. In other words: looking at something, the player should get an understanding of what it is, what it does and possibly how to interact with it.

Something else that “Warbot” of Design doc has mentioned is how Nintendo is always trying to do things their own way and design new ways of play with the help of new consoles and controllers. (“Warbot”, 2017) He has also talked about how Nintendo is

always trying to teach the player the game concept through gameplay (instead of for example through text, dialogue or cutscenes). This being an effort to seamlessly teach their players how things work, while still challenging them. (“Warbot”, 2016b)

I have also come across Jon Williams on his YouTube-channel “Turbo Button”. Through his video “Nintendo’s Unsung Genius – Yoshiaki Koizumi” a few supposed Nintendo principles came up: One of them being that Nintendo is focusing on making “the most basic forms of interaction to be fun in themselves” in their games, and how Miyamoto when making Super Mario 64 “pushed the need of just controlling Mario moving around to be fun”. Another theory that came up in the same video is the principle that (according to Yoshiaki Koizumi himself, a game developer of Nintendo who has worked on both Mario and Zelda games) the goal of Mario games shouldn’t be completing the game, but to have fun playing it. Something else that comes up in the video is that Nintendo games need to be as easy as possible to pick up and play, they need to be very player friendly in general. Jon Williams also brought up how Yoshiaki Koizumi brings up camera control (or according to Koizumi, the preferred lack of) and how much care needs to be put into this to make a good user experience, both for the player himself, but also for anyone watching. (Williams, 2016)

2.1.2 Mark Brown

One final user I want to talk about more in particular is Mark Brown of the YouTube channel “Game makers toolkit”. I want to focus more on him, as he was the only one I found who actually proposed actual general design principles of Nintendo’s gameplay design in his video “Nintendo – Putting Play Fist | Game Maker’s Toolkit”. Mark Brown is a former games journalist (he used to write for “Edge”, “Eurogamer”, “Wired”, “Pocket Gamer”, and “The Escapist”). After that, he turned to YouTube and his now very popular YouTube-channel “Game Maker’s Toolkit” where he has over 600 000 subscribers. On his channel, he discusses and teaches game design and I find his videos of good quality and their sources reliable.

2.2.2.1 *Mark Brown's theory: Nintendo – Putting Play First*

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2u6HTG8LuXQ&t=224s>)

Mark Brown talks about in his video how you make the core of a new game for example by using a story, emotion, simulation or just simply building on an already existing game. He talks about how other game developers usually choose one of these aspects and then lays the gameplay on top. Compared to other companies, according to Brown: Nintendo starts this process by making the gameplay first, and then making the other elements, like the story, characters, world and aesthetic. Mark Brown also refers to how Nintendo chooses one or a few basic game mechanics that the player can use to do various different things (like for example Mario's jump from the Super Mario series, which is used to both navigate obstacles, and kill enemies.) This becomes the core gameplay mechanic from where the rest of the game is built upon. The same principle remains in follow-up games in a game series of Nintendo. Follow-up games in a game series are based on the original title, but according to Brown: Nintendo always adds a new form of gameplay to give the game something new (like for example the gravity in Super Mario Galaxy, which is a new addition of gameplay to the Super Mario series). Brown claims that Nintendo sees no point in making a new game in a series if they cannot make a new gameplay mechanic to build the game upon.

Finally, as I mentioned on the topic of "Theories on how Nintendo work" on page 9: Mark Brown also talks about Shigeru Miyamoto's principle "Form-follows-function", that things in his games should "look the way they function".

The key points in Mark Brown's video are how Nintendo makes games with gameplay at the core (and never anything else) and Shigeru Minamoto's "Form follows function". This study will be using these theories from Mark Brown's video as a hypothesis for the study of gameplay at Nintendo, while also keeping in mind what the other users said about the game design of Nintendo.

Now that we have established the theories, to answer the question “How is Nintendo designing gameplay” we need to first understand what “gameplay” is.

2.2 What is gameplay?

“Gameplay is the primary source of entertainment in all video games. When designing a game, it is the *first* thing to consider“. (Adams, 2010, p.19)

There is no universal official definition of gameplay, which makes it tricky to explain. Authors in the field have all their own thoughts about the subject. In their works, they usually specify how they choose to define gameplay before they bring it up, or they don't. Gamers “have a well-defined implicit notion of what gameplay is” (Fabricatore, 2004, p.5) and usually the information gets across when using the term, it is mostly in the attempt of defining gameplay itself where lots of different interpretations arise. Adam Rollings and Adam Ernest touch upon this very subject of the nonexistent definition of gameplay in their book “Andrew Rollings and Ernest Adams on game design”:

“There is no universally accepted definition of gameplay ... There is a reason for this difficulty: The concept of gameplay is extremely difficult to define. Each designer has his or her own personal definition of gameplay, formed from exposure to many examples over the course of a career. Gameplay is so difficult to define because there is no single entity that we can point to and say, "There! That's the gameplay." Gameplay is the result of a large number of contributing elements. The presence, or lack thereof, of gameplay can be deduced by examining a particular game for indications and contraindications of these elements.“

(Rollings & Adams, 2003, chapter 7)

Let's look at a couple of different definitions of gameplay from different authors in the field:

Carlo Fabricatore refers simply to gameplay as “the set of activities that can be undertaken by the player” (Fabricatore, 2004, p.5). However, he also talks about something called the “core gameplay” as “the set of activities that the player will undertake more frequently during the game experience, and which are indispensable to win the game”. Finally, he also brings up game mechanics, which some of them (called

the core gameplay mechanics) allow the player to do these core gameplay activities. (Fabricatore, 2004, p.13)

Jennifer Jenson and Suzanne de Castell bring up four different definitions or traits of gameplay: First, they mention how gameplay is something that in digital game cultures defines the character of the game. Second, they mention how Rollings and Adams decline to define the concept because. According to them, gameplay is “the result of a large number of contributing elements”. Third they bring up a suggested trait of gameplay by Chris Crawford: “I Suggest this elusive trait [game play] is derived from the combination of pace and cognitive effort required by the game”. From this they make the connection that with this, gameplay can be translated into a balance between the level of challenge and the abilities of the player. Bases on this, they say that the gameplay is good when these two are in balance, and that this balance depends on the abilities of the player. Lastly, they bring up the flow theory by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and how digital games can generally provide this flow state, thus making the activity of playing a goal in itself, according to the authors. (Jenson & Castell, 2007, p.38-39)

Even though Jenson and Castell said in their book that **Andrew Rollings & Ernest Adams** does not define gameplay, I still found this definition of theirs in their book:

Sid Meier once defined gameplay as "a series of interesting choices." This is an excellent starting point and forms the basis of our definition of gameplay. We take this statement one step further with our formal definition of gameplay: One or more causally linked series of challenges in a simulated environment.

(Rollings & Adams, 2003, chapter 7)

Adams Rollings published later a book of his own called “Fundamentals on game design” where he defined the essence of gameplay as the relation between the challenge and the action. He also brings up how fantasy and imagination are part of the gameplay by some, as the player is pretending to be someone/something else in a setting. However, according to Adams, this “unnecessarily complicates the definition of gameplay. The player’s imaginary role is not the gameplay; the gameplay arises from the role” (Rollings, 2010, p.9)

Geoff King and Tanya Krzywinska defines gameplay in their book “Toms Raiders and Space Invaders: Videogame Forms and Contexts” as the following: “The particular set of non-real-world tasks, goals or potentials set for the player’s enjoyment within an on-screen arena, performed according to a set of pre-established rules and as a result of which a number of different outcomes are possible.” (Geoff King & Tanya Krzywinska, 2006, p.9)

Jussi Hopolainen explains gameplay as: “Gameplay can be understood as caricatures of intentional behaviour within rule-governed symbolic structures” (Hopolainen, 2011, p.12)

Wolf & Perron refers to gameplay in their book “The video game theory reader 2“ as the junction point between the game and the player. They then refer to Jesper Juul that says that the games rules or functions are not the gameplay, but the way it is played. Not a mirror of the rules, but “consequence of the game rules and the dispositions of the game player” (Wolf & Perrson, 2009, p.109-110)

Bethke defines gameplay in his book “Game development and production“ as the “formalized interaction that occurs when players follow the rules of a game and experience its system through play”. It is according to him what happens inside games as the “experience of a game set into motion through the participation of players” (Bethke, 2003, p.3-9)

While the definition of gameplay all differs from author to author, they still share a common theme. The short answer could be something along the lines of gameplay being what you do in the game, but I think we can be even more specific: Gameplay is something you do as the player token inside the game, following the game rules and game mechanics.

Based on what Jennifer Jenson and Suzanne de Castell said, the quality of gameplay can be measured by looking at the levels of challenge vs the abilities of the players. If this relationship is good, the gameplay is good. If these can create a flow state in the player: The quality of gameplay is also good.

The definition of gameplay is often associated with what you do in the game. This can be linked to the game mechanics. Mechanics is also one of the four basic elements of which games are made, according to Jessie Schell. She defines mechanics as the procedures, rules and, goals of the game. Mechanics is also something unique to games. Other similar media like books and movies all share the elements of a story, aesthetic and technology, only games have mechanics, according to Schell. (Schell, 2015, p.51-52) Fabricatore defines game mechanics as being the tools for gameplay, in a player-centered perspective. (Fabricatore, 2004, p.7). Something key to the core gameplay is the player-token, which Fabricatore claims to be the most important of all game mechanics (Fabricatore, 2004, p.13).

Something I lastly want to highlight about gameplay is core meta-gameplay that Fabricatore brought up when talking about core gameplay. (Fabricatore, 2004, p.5-6) This is something very recognizable from Nintendo's gameplay. Something key when designing, for example, Mario games is to have a single (core) game mechanic that can serve many different purposes. Core game mechanics are activities the player does most frequently throughout the game. A core meta gameplay activity is essentially a core game mechanic, only that it can do many different activities through the same action. The most key game mechanic to this is the player token, which uses the game mechanics to execute the core gameplay. One of the most famous examples of this is in Mario games where Mario (the player token) can jump (core game mechanic) to both navigate through the level, and kill (most) enemies (core gameplay).

3 THE GAMEPLAY OF NINTENDO

The following are my findings from my literature review of Nintendo, categorized as I mentioned in the “method” chapter. My main source has been interviews, mostly conducted by Satoru Iwata and published on Nintendo’s official website under his own section “Iwata Asks”. But I have also found interviews using the “Wayback Machine” visiting the “miyamoto Shrine.com”-website. Additionally, I have also found some sources by simply using google. Again, most of my content for the literature review comes from Satoru Iwata and “Iwata Asks”. I find this source very reliable as Iwata used to be president of Nintendo, and because the interviews he conducted are discussions between the developers themselves.

Satoru Iwata and Shigeru Miyamoto are two key people from Nintendo that I will refer to a lot throughout my study. **Satoru Iwata** was the President of Nintendo between 2002-2015 but he worked for Nintendo also before his time as an official Nintendo employee through HAL laboratory. Iwata came up with the idea that their games needed to be fun for everyone and put this principle in use using the Nintendo Wii and the Nintendo DS, which both became huge successes. He has also collaborated with Shigeru Miyamoto on many games. **Shigeru Miyamoto** is a game designer and producer at Nintendo who has worked at Nintendo since the 1970s. He is the creator of some of Nintendo’s and the world’s biggest and most famous game franchises, like for example Super Mario, The Legend of Zelda, Donkey Kong, and Pikmin.

3.1 Fun for everyone: Making games user-friendly

When Iwata became the president of Nintendo in 2002, the main objective was to expand the gaming population:

Even if we make great products, if the number of new customers doesn't increase, it won't reach people. That was clear to us, so doing the easy was not an option. If we could do away with such goals, all we have to do is make new versions of games that are already a hit. That's much easier than creating a new game. (Hobo nikkan itoi shinbun, 2007a)

Iwata believed that in order to further expand the gaming population, games need to be made so anyone can play regardless of being an experienced gamer or not. An example of games like these is the Mario series which he believed was games "for everyone." (Iwata,

2009a) Iwata has claimed that Nintendo is always trying to find new ways to reach new types of customers. (Iwata, 2006a)

While trying to reach out to new customers, Nintendo also needs to consider the already present fans of Nintendo. Iwata spoke about in an interview how Nintendo is trying to reach out to both of these groups of people simultaneously, but he goes even further into the importance of making games for new players. Iwata thinks it's important not just to make a larger audience, but to also help improve video games position in society. Iwata believed that as people might not associate good things with videogames. That videogames will "rot your brain" and such. He thought that this image would never improve if they didn't reach out to those who don't yet appreciate videogames. He also mentioned how this negative view on videogames can affect those who are already playing so that they would feel guilty for playing games and then stop playing videogames altogether. He believed that if we can turn this around, make these new players play videogames, then society would become more accommodating toward videogames and it would become easier to make more conventional games. Lastly, Iwata also pointed out that "if we don't also develop things for non-gamers, the future for game fans will become bleak" (Iwata, 2006b).

Miyamoto also mentions in another interview, that when they are making Mario games how they always have to provide satisfactory entertainment for both the veterans and new players. He brings up Super Mario Galaxy 2 where they put in various tweaks so it would be entertaining for both beginners and veterans who seek a challenge. One of these tweaks was letting experienced players try to collect all the stars. (Minkley, 2010a) This is not mandatory to beat the game so new players wouldn't have to collect the more challenging stars to finish the game.

Miyamoto has also talked about the importance of expanding the gaming population, but instead in the light of companies competing with each other:

It's not all about competition. We should be looking at who is offering a unique experience and who can create a new user base for the video game market. We all need to encourage people who are currently non-gamers to start playing. If all we do is talk about a battle between the three

consoles, and which one is doing better, that will do nothing for the games industry as a whole. (Metro Newspaper, 2003)

Iwata compared in an interview Nintendo's design elements with Apple's, in the sense of being simple and easy to understand. He thinks that while both are striving for simplicity, they are still different because their priorities are different: "For example, we won't hesitate to choose making something more durable over making it 0.5 millimeters thinner. By contrast, I don't think Apple needs to perform repeated endurance tests dropping iPods from the exact height of a bicycle basket" (Iwata, 2009b).

Another example of a Nintendo game that is striving to be "made for everyone" is Pokémon. Junichi Masuda is the executive director, producer and composer at Game Freak who works on Pokémon. Masuda explains in an interview after the release of Pokémon black 2/Pokémon white 2 how he pays attention to those who haven't played the games before, putting in elements that he finds easy to understand. He also explains how in Pokémon "not everyone has to play toward the same goal. (Iwata, 2012a). Different types of players can strive for different things while playing the game.

In association with the release of Super smash bros brawl: A game for the Nintendo Wii released in 2008 in the Super Smash Bros series, Iwata did an interview with the game's director: Masahiro Sakurai Sakurai (also creator of Kirby and director of Kid Icarus Uprising, who worked under Iwata while they both worked at HAL laboratory, now founder of Sora Ltd.). Throughout the interview, they discuss mostly the game in question. More importantly, they also talked about the division between making games for new customers and already experienced gamers.

Iwata mentioned how the balance has been thrown off by how quickly consumers make purchases and then grow tired of them, which creates the feeling that the designers need to constantly add more content and depth to their games to keep the customer's attention. Sakurai says that because of this he believes that Nintendo is taking a step in the right direction by breaking this belief with games like Wii Sports and Wii Fit that focuses on being "games for everyone". He meant that games like these are helping to get people into the entertainment of games that wouldn't have been otherwise. Iwata also mentioned that

he believes that we shouldn't separate the casual gamers from the core gamers, and not necessarily always treat them as two separate entities because all casual gamers can grow to eventually become these core gamers. Iwata means that it's important to always try to reach these new players, or one day there will be no more customers. (Iwata, 2008a & Iwata, 2008b)

3.1.1 Looking at a game

Something Shigeru Miyamoto have been discussing with Gunpei Yokoi (former game designer of Nintendo who created the Game&Watch, Gameboy and invented the cross-shaped d-pad) is when playing a good game, the player should always be able to know what to do, by just looking at the screen. Because by looking at the game, the player knows immediately what the goal it. If they know the objective, they won't blame the game but instead themselves if they mess up because of it. (Iwata, 2009c). This is something that have been crucial to Nintendo's game design since the Game&Watch, as the Game&Watch games start out immediately without introduction. The players literally cannot do anything else than trying to find out themselves what they are supposed to be doing by looking at the screen at what's currently happening in the game.

Iwata has also mentioned several times that he believes that a well-made game is a game that is fun both to play and also watch someone else play. (Iwata, 2007b & Iwata, 2006c & Iwata, 2013a) Miyamoto has also mentioned that the games that he finds interest in are the ones that play differently while they are also fun to watch for others. Like Samba de Amigo, EyeToy and Nintendo's own games like Donkey Konga. (E3 Roundtable, 2004). Miyamoto is aiming to create relationships in his games, both socially with people playing together in front of the TV, and between the controller and the characters on screen. (Superplay Magazine, 2003)

3.1.2 Shigeru Miyamoto

Iwata has referred to Miyamoto as "Nintendo's linchpin", stating that it is essential that he continues to work at the heart of Nintendo (Iwata, 2006b). Iwata has explained that while

many might see Miyamoto as someone full of art, inspiration and having a natural gift for coming up with ideas. However, Iwata says that this isn't the case, but rather that he is extremely logical: "He creates a mixture of left-prefrontal-oriented elaborate logic, and dramatic ideas that people are blown away by". (Hobo nikkan itoi shinbun, 2007b)

Discussing what the "Miyamoto method" of designing games is, Miyamoto himself has stated that "Even if we gathered all the developers together to discuss it, we couldn't get everyone to fully understand what that method actually is" (Iwata, 2006i). However, one can still point out a few of these Miyamoto-methods:

3.1.2.1 The Miyamoto method

My view of making videogames is to make an environment in which people can try out many things and become creative. In other words, I try to let the players understand something very simple as the basic background and then I challenge them so they will like to challenge many different things to become creative. (Minkley, 2010b)

Two reoccurring themes when Miyamoto is designing games is that "Form follow function" (as mentioned on the topic of "Theories on how Nintendo work" on page 10 and Mark Brown's theory on page 12) and that "A good idea is something that solves multiple issues at once". (Minkley, 2010b). "Function" is a reoccurring keyword and Iwata points out how Minamoto's games are based around functions, (Iwata, 2011c) as the function determines the design and not the original idea. (Iwata, 2012b)

Koichi Ishii was the development producer for "The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time 3D". In an interview regarding the game, he talked about how the overall picture of a game becomes clear only when many people look at it and how this is the way of Nintendo. When the developers at Nintendo look at things from what he called the "X-axis", he compares Minamoto's view to the "Y-axis". Ishii explains how Miyamoto has a skill for seeing things from his viewpoint, and how quickly he can find new viewpoints to look from. These different ways of looking at their work bring a lot to the development of their games, according to Ishii; "Miyamoto-san's point of view raises the entire Nintendo staff to a higher level" (Iwata, 2011d). Iwata has also pointed

this same thing out about Minamoto's special talent in finding and changing viewpoints (Iwata, 2007b). Another viewpoint that Miyamoto often observes is the “view over someone else's shoulder”. He watches someone play a game that the player hasn't experienced before. He then pays close attention to how the player is playing and understanding the game's notion. (Hobo nikkan itoi shinbun, 2007c) Miyamoto is always thinking of the player when making his games. “Will this will make the players happy or not?” (Iwata, 2007b & Iwata, 2011d)

3.1.3 Realistic play

“Realism” at Nintendo games doesn't necessarily mean realistic graphics, but rather if the world is responding accurately to the player. Something that Miyamoto often mentions is how the player should enjoy the world without it feeling unnatural. (Iwata, 2006j)

Miyamoto points out that the logical elements of the game need to be neatly integrated into the game. The player will try to do the logical thing in the game as if in real life, and if something doesn't work the way it would seem it would, the player gets upset. (Iwata, 2006i)

It's like setting the scene for a play rather than recreating the world as it is. If you don't tell people they should be making a stage, they go ahead and try to make an entire world [...] Imagine a scene with lots of small stones. On the one hand, you could make it so that the player can move every single one. But if you can successfully communicate the premise that there are also stones that don't move, they will accept this. So, it is far more important to make the stones that can be moved, to move naturally from the player's perspective, rather than making every single stone movable. (Iwata, 2006k)

"What's happening in the game world should feel true to life". (Iwata, 2006k) To achieve this, in “The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess”: the game developers worked hard to make the playable character's movement realistic, while not laboured. Achieving all of this while not spending too much time on it. When it was first announced that Twilight Princess was going to feature more realistic graphics, Aonuma (the producer of the game) was concerned that it was going to cause a lot of extra work. That making the game too realistic would make the gameplay suffer. Because of this, Miyamoto said it was okay to not aim for complete realism when making the game. (Iwata, 2006k)

3.1.4 Compromising cutscenes for the sake of immersion

In games like *The Legend of Zelda*, cutscenes are used to prepare the player for what's to come and focus the player. This was the job of Kawagoe who worked on the cutscenes for "*The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess*". He said that when making the cutscenes, they were focusing on letting the player control the game as much as possible instead of having the player just watching. For example, by letting the player control the pacing of the cutscene. (Iwata, 2006g) Cutscenes today are usually non-interactable. These types of cutscenes are usually greatly avoided when making *Zelda*-games in order to let the player be in as much control as possible to make them feel immersed in the game. (Iwata, 2006j)

3.2 Feel good gameplay

When making *Mario* games at Nintendo. It is very important that it feels good and responsive to control the character. The controls itself should feel like a toy that is fun to interact with. (Iwata, 2007e)

In an interview regarding "*Super Mario Galaxy 2*" for the Nintendo Wii, Yoshiaki Koizumi, who worked on the game from the "Entertainment, Analysis and Development department" at Nintendo, referred to Miyamoto that in order to make a game work, you have to create and balance both "resonance and a sense of unusual". "If nothing is unusual, it isn't striking, and if it doesn't resonate, no one wants to stick with it." (Iwata, 2010a)

3.2.1 The reward vs the journey

Miyamoto explained once in an interview that if the journey (the game itself) is fun, then the ending doesn't really matter. He explained that he has been told that rewarding the player is really important in games, but he doesn't agree. He believes that the important thing is that the journey is fun. If the journey is fun, then the reward doesn't really matter because the journey *is* the reward. Miyamoto also says that game creators get their priorities mixed up when making the reward vs the actual game. He thinks that they are putting all their efforts into making a splendid ending, and not the actual game.

One example of making the journey the reward at Nintendo is when making “Link’s crossbow training”, Miyamoto specifically told the creators to focus on making the main gameplay rewarding and fun. He even suggested not making any bosses at the end of the levels. (Iwata, 2007f)

3.2.2 Pacing courses for the players of today

Miyamoto has been talking about how the games have become larger and the courses longer, now that games are 3D (in this case, he is comparing 2D and 3D Mario games). The player would now have to replay a much larger portion if they fail, so developers put checkpoints in the middle of courses. Miyamoto explains that it is important for it to be fun to replay the stage if you fail in order to grow more attached to the level and have it leave an impression on the player. (Iwata, 2006c). “The longer you play, the more you should get into it” (Iwata, 2007f). If something doesn’t take too long to replay, the player will be more willing to try again. Miyamoto believes that by placing checkpoints in the middle of stages makes it easier for the player to move on, and thus the stage won’t leave an impression on the player. While he admits he is not for adding too many checkpoints, he also admits that: “I don’t think it’s right when someone who wants to relax and play a game for a few minutes, has to spend 30 minutes trying to get just one star!”. (Iwata, 2006c).

One example of where they found a good balance can be found in Super Mario Galaxy: Miyamoto explained that they added checkpoints in the middle of courses, shortened the courses and had the bosses appear faster. So that busier players with less time can more easily enjoy the game. (Iwata, 2006c)

A principle of Miyamoto’s is to have the players easily breeze through the easy part of the stage over and over, instead of placing checkpoints right before the difficult parts. The part where the player can breeze through makes the player feel good and it helps them get better at the game while leaving difficult parts to challenge the player. Having the player repeatedly fail the difficult parts with no easy parts in between will only unnecessarily strain the player.

Miyamoto compares this to when playing arcade games back in the day. When the “continue”-system developed, the players were always playing at the very limit of their abilities. This could lend a thrill to the player but wouldn't give them the sense that they were good at the game, according to Miyamoto. He also mentions that it won't feel good playing that way. Miyamoto thinks that the ideal is to have this nervous excitement in moderation, while still enjoying the game. (Iwata, 2009a)

3.3 Gameplay first

3.3.1 Gameplay before the story

“Nintendo’s products rarely start with a story; gameplay always comes first”. This came up in a discussion between Iwata and Mitsuhiro Takano from the “Software Development Department”, who worked in the script and character dialogue for Star Fox 64. (Iwata, 2011e). Miyamoto has also pointed out when making games, that the gameplay is the most important aspect, compared to the story where he puts the least priority. (Fragzone, 2002). Miyamoto believes that, while it is important to create epic tales, a good story alone cannot make a great game. He said that “depending on what kind of characteristics are added to a game, the fundamental enjoyment behind it can get lost amongst all the gadgets”. (Iwata, 2007f). He went more into depth about this in an interview in Nintendo Power: He said he doesn't believe that a story alone can make a game exciting. He doesn't think that the story has no value, but that the gameplay being interesting should be the first priority. What he meant by this is that the player should be “actively involved in the game”. He refers to the story as just another way to catch the player's interest, like enemies or puzzles. Miyamoto thinks that if someone is simply looking for a good story, they should pick up a book or a movie instead of a game. With games, you get the interaction you wouldn't get with those other media, according to Miyamoto. (Nintendo Power, 1998)

Iwata explained in another interview that when Miyamoto is making characters, he does not care for the character's background, but more about the role that the character

is playing. Miyamoto thinks about it from the point of the game function. Instead of focusing on the non-playable characters backgrounds, he thinks one should instead use these characters to bring out the player's characters purpose. (Iwata, 2011c)

3.3.1.1 The Legend of Zelda: Never emphasize the story

One example of where gameplay always comes before the story is when making games for "The Legend of Zelda"-series. Takano is a game developer at Nintendo who has worked on the Legend of Zelda since "The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time". He was in charge of the story scripting and cutscenes for "The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess". In an interview regarding "The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess", Takano said that the plot for Zelda games are always first broadly outlined by the director at the start, then as they add new gameplay elements, they add something to the story to accommodate these new gameplay elements so that they fit into the story. The storyline in Zelda is simply there to accommodate the gameplay and turn that into the plot. (Iwata, 2006l)

Miyamoto said that when making Zelda-games, they start by making the system and getting familiar with the hardware, making the game based on functions and not the story. (Iwata, 2011c & Iwata 2011f). While people think (according to Aonuma: producer and manager of the "The Legend of Zelda"-series) that The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time had an epic story, Aonuma says that it isn't the story that's epic, but the experiences that the player has throughout the game. In a sense, these experiences are only added to the story. These experiences build the story that makes the game epic (Iwata, 2011g). Iwata has however mentioned that while Nintendo is always creating the functions first and adding the story and setting later, that doing it the other way around is also valid (Iwata, 2011h).

3.3.2 Gameplay before art

Takizawa (who worked as the art director for "The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess" and the artwork manager for "The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker") believes that when working on a game that "artists need to listen carefully to the directors, planners and programmers about what kind of game they are going to make". He believes that artists shouldn't be making decisions on their own until they know clearly what kind of game

they are going to be producing. He thinks that the role of the artists is not to create what they want to, but to create “the best possible visual representation in response to the kind of game that the developers want to create”. Iwata has confirmed that this is a very characteristic way of working at Nintendo. (Iwata, 2006n)

Miyamoto believes that while games could partially be considered an art form, the ultimate goal is not for the artistic expression, but for the design of the gameplay and to reach as wide of an audience as possible. Miyamoto thinks that a lot of game designers are focusing too much on creating incredibly realistic worlds when they should be focusing on creating new gameplay. Instead of choosing which aspect of the technology to use to bring out the most creativity to their games, they instead try to do everything that it allows. Because of this, they are wasting their efforts on things that aren't as important, causing the games to become less innovative and creative (C&VG, 2003). Miyamoto also said once that he thinks people are too busy making beautiful games and pushing the performance of the hardware instead of working on what he thinks is the most important: The creative side of making games. (MSNBC, 2000)

3.3.3 Sound that follows function

Just as the function defines the design: The music also follows function. The music in Nintendo's games has the role of portraying many different things. The sound needs to tell where the player is located, what kind of gameworld it is, what kind of place the player is in at the very moment, and when the location changes to something completely different. The music also needs to portray the state the player is in: are they in danger, or in a safe environment? Is there a time limit currently running out, or can the player take their time? Music is also used to tell the player what kind of story is currently unfolding. (Iwata, 2016a)

When Ryo Nagamatsu (developer at Nintendo who worked on “Super Mario Galaxy 2”) had made a nice melody for the world map in “New Super Mario Bros. Wii”, he was told by Koji Kondo (Composer for Mario and Zelda games since 1985, creator of the famous overworld theme from the first Super Mario Bros) that the tune was too good for the

world map. Kondo said this because he thought that instead of putting a good song during the world map which would incline players to stay and listen; they should put something else that would incline the player to start playing the next stage right away. (Iwata, 2010b)

Something that Mahito Yokota (a developer at Nintendo who has been working on Mario Music since “Super Mario Galaxy”) is playing close attention to when making music for Mario games is the intro. Mario games are replayed a lot, and because of this Yokota is paying attention to make sure that the player won’t get tired of the intro as they replay. Something else that Yokota points out is that when making Mario games is that they never use any sounds that would make the player feel bad. When the player dies in the game, instead of punishing or making the player feel bad, they instead find a more cheerful or comical approach. This way they tell the player to try again instead of creating a somber feeling or agitating the player. “It’s important that we say ‘Play again!’ rather than ‘You’re done for!’”, according to Kondo (Iwata, 2016a).

Sound effects are something Shigeru Miyamoto pays very close attention to (Iwata, 2006c) Iwata also referred to “pouring lots of energy into sound effects” as something very characteristic of Miyamoto’s teams (Iwata, 2011i). Sometimes when making sound effects at Nintendo, they synchronize them with the music. In “The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker”, when the player hit an enemy, the sound effect is synced with the music. Donkey Kong Jungle Beat, whenever the player jumps, it’s synchronized with the music. In Super Mario Galaxy, they even managed to do this with streamed music (pre-recorded music). (Iwata, 2007d)

3.3.3.1 Inventing unique sound design: The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time

One example of a unique sound design that was made at Nintendo can be found in “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time”. “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time” had a unique way of playing and switching music at the time. Before The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time, if a game used a specific battle theme music during combat, usually the battle music would simply start playing when encountering an enemy: For example: in RPG’s: When an enemy is encountered, the screen switches to the battle mode followed by a fanfare and

the battle music starts. What happened in “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time” was that when an enemy was encountered, the battle music would smoothly fade in, and then fade out and go back to playing the previous music. This was new at the time.

Koji Kondo worked on the music for “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time”.

In “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time”, a reoccurring song throughout the game is the song for the “Hyrule field”. The player would always be greeted by this song as they return from completing a dungeon or visiting an area outside of the field. In order for the player to not grow tired of this song, Koji Kondo made about 20 eight measure components that could be played in any order. The music in the game could shuffle these components around and still sounds natural. Thanks to this, the player didn’t have always have to listen to the exact same song. Another reoccurring song is the battle theme, which he also made an eight-measure-component for that worked the same as The Hyrule field music. Using music that could shuffle itself, and having music smoothly fade in and out of battle was something original when “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time” was released (Iwata, 2011j)

3.4 Doing games differently

Being different than everyone else and to go their own way is one of the main principles of Nintendo, according to Miyamoto (Goergen, 2009). While it is also their motive to simply make good games, Miyamoto explains how it is also important to be different from your competition and set yourself apart from them: “If you have really large companies that are well financed and competing on the same merits, what it really comes down to is that whoever has the most money will win.”, because of this, setting yourself apart from the others (while making good games) is according to Miyamoto the way to go. (Los Vegas Roundtable, 2002).

According to Iwata, Nintendo is hoping to work towards the direction that there wouldn't be a set way that you play games. (Iwata, 2006a) They want to surprise the players: “You can’t open up a new market of customers if you can’t surprise them”, according to Iwata (Iwata, 2007a). In an interview regarding the Wii remote, Akio Ikeda (who works for the

“Integrated research and development division product development department” at Nintendo) said that Nintendo encourages its employees to try something different to everyone else, while lending support in their efforts. (Iwata, 2006e) Genyo Takeda (the general manager for the Integrated research and development division at Nintendo) has also stated that Nintendo encourages their employees to always challenge something new and that challenging these norms earns praise at Nintendo. Genyo Takeda refers this to being Nintendo’s style. (Iwata, 2006f)

A Nintendo game that has been referred to as being different than no other game (at the time) is “The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of time”. In an interview with “Hobo Nikkan Itoi Shinbun” regarding the release of the game, Miyamoto said that he wanted people to really see that they have made a game that other games cannot compare to. Eiji Aonuma also stated that Ocarina of time was a game where they did “things that others would never think of trying” (at that time) (Iwata, 2007c).

3.4.1 Coming up with effective ideas

According to Iwata, a good idea is an idea that can easily spur many new ideas (Iwata, 2007d). Miyamoto and Iwata have both mentioned that when making games at Nintendo, lots of people help out coming up with ideas. The responsibility doesn’t lie on just one person. (Iwata, 2006g & Mario Mania Strategy Guide, 1991). For example, when coming up with new Pokémon, Junichi Masuda (game developer who works on the Pokémon series) said that it’s better to do it in large groups instead of doing it alone (Iwata, 2012a)

4 DISCUSSION

When it comes to making games at Nintendo, I think that one can make the conclusion that the main designing principles come from Miyamoto, that his design principles and Nintendo's general design principles more than often go hand in hand. While Iwata also made a huge impact on Nintendo, I think it is Miyamoto that carries the groundwork of what makes the gameplay at Nintendo, while Iwata brought other things. Like for example the concept of "Making fun for everyone", which I think Miyamoto has helped embrace with his way of making games. Let's look at these principles that I think shape the games and gameplay of Nintendo, and how I implemented them for my GDD.

4.1 Make "Fun for everyone" – User-friendly games

In order to expand the gaming population, Iwata proposed that Nintendo would start making games for everyone, and so they did. By everyone they mean those who already play games, those who don't and sometimes even those that are just watching. But how does Nintendo make games for everyone? Nintendo makes sure that your average or beginner player can complete the game, while still having something more challenging for the veterans. These more difficult challenges need to be in the game, but they need to be optional, so they aren't in the way of the beginner being able to complete the game. I think that making games for everyone mean that there cannot be a very certain target audience since the game needs to appeal to as many people as possible. Because of this, I chose to not have a target audience for my GDD.

Something else that is key to making "Fun for everyone" at Nintendo is to make their games user-friendly. In order to help achieve this, Nintendo pays attention to the following things:

4.1.1 Having the form follow the function

Everything in the game should look the way it functions: Looking at something, the player should get an understanding of what it is, what it does and possibly how to interact with it. At Nintendo, the function determines the design and not the original idea. This is what's referred to as having "form-follow-function". But I think this principle can go

even deeper than just design. By just looking at the screen, the motive should become clear to the player. This way, one can tell the player how to play the game by simply showing, or even better, having the player experience it first-hand. The “form-follows-function” principle is also something that both Mark Brown and the user “Warbot” talked about in their respective videos. (Brown, 2016 & YouTube user “Warbot”, 2016a). In order to follow the “form-follows-function” principle in my GDD; the design had to take shape after the function. Some aspects that could have been covered are left open/unspecified in my GDD. The reason for this is partly because I’m only supposed to focus on the overall concept of the game in my GDD, but also because I could only specify certain elements when their respective puzzles are designed.

4.1.2 Realistic gameplay

“Realism” at Nintendo games doesn't necessarily mean realistic graphics, but rather if the world is responding accurately to the player. If you set up a too realistic setting and don't make everything able to respond accurately to the player, you are setting the player up for disappointment if he discovers something that he thinks should respond a certain way and then it doesn't. This could discourage the player to explore and experiment in the future. Even if you did manage to make a realistic setting where absolutely everything is responding accurately to the player, would it be worth it for the gameplay? According to Miyamoto, this is a waste of effort. (C&VG, 2003) When making games at Nintendo. They try to make only what's necessary, and then make sure that the player understands what is and isn't possible in the game. When Nintendo makes the rules and restrictions of the game clear to the player, the player can then act creatively on their own without the risk of setting the player up for disappointment.

My GDD doesn't specify the “realism” of the game very much since it felt obvious and redundant to write “The world responds accurately to the player”. While the graphics aren't specified, they are not supposed to be hyper-realistic as it would be unnecessarily heavy to run. Especially when simulating two different worlds at the same time. Hyper-realistic graphics would also make unnecessary work and could easily confuse the player.

If everything is super detailed, it can become unclear to what level of detail the player can do certain things.

4.1.3 Keep the player immersed as much as possible

Instead of telling through text or dialogue, Nintendo tries to have the player be in control as much as possible for the sake of immersion. If they want to tell a narrative or explain how certain functions work, they let the player experience it on their own as much as possible. Nintendo teaching the game and telling the story through gameplay and not through cutscenes and dialogue is also something that “Warbot” talked about in his video that I mentioned on the topic of “Theories on how Nintendo work” on page 10. Because of this, cutscenes are also supposed to be greatly avoided in the game of my GDD.

Now how do you achieve all this? By putting yourself in the player’s shoes. At Nintendo, they use a large number of developers to help out looking at the games from as many different angles as possible. Looking at the game from different angles is also something that Miyamoto does extremely well. To make the games feel good to play and being user-friendly, Miyamoto tries to design from the perspective of the player by constantly asking himself:” Will this make the player happy or not?”. The entire concept of Nintendo making their games user-friendly is also something that John William spoke about in his video through the words of Yoshiaki Koizumi.

Finding this player perspective is key to make games user-friendly as Nintendo does. Thus, keeping the player in mind as much as possible was key when I wrote the GDD.

4.2 Feel good gameplay

Something key to making games at Nintendo is that they need to feel good to play. The core-gameplay needs to be fun in itself, just as John Williams said in his video. To make “feel good gameplay”, I think means according to Nintendo that they are fun to play and that it feels responsive to control the character. In order to make “feel-good” and “fun” games, Nintendo pays attention to the following things:

4.2.1 Don't put too much weight on the reward – Make the gameplay itself rewarding

When making games at Nintendo, rewarding the player isn't the goal. Instead, the game in itself should be fun enough that rewarding the player at the end might not even be necessary, or at least not the goal, according to Miyamoto. Yoshiaki Koizumi also thinks this, according to John William. To achieve this in the GDD, I made the core gameplay loop not focus too much on simply rewarding the player with new upgrades. But instead focusing on making the gameplay rewarding by having the player constantly reward himself by solving puzzles that give the player the opportunity to find new directions and motives himself.

4.2.2 Challenge the player moderately

Something key when designing stage-based games at Nintendo is to not place checkpoints right before something that might be very challenging for the player. Instead, they make sure that there's something more manageable for the player in between the checkpoint and the challenging part. They do this to prevent exhausting the player and making him feel bad. Instead, they let the player play something more manageable to make him feel good and become better at the game, before having him tackling the challenge again. There should be "nervous-excitement", as Miyamoto refers it to, but in moderation. To have the player replay stages also lets him spend more time on specific stages which helps leave an impression on the player. It is however also important to not make replaying taking too long, as that might discourage the player from trying again. This is an example that focuses on stage-based games, but I think one could apply the concept of "giving the player some breathing space before tackling challenging parts" to almost any type of game. To imitate the concept of challenging the player moderately and giving him breathing space; The game in the GDD has sub-plots and side quests that the player can play in between the main objective. Through these, the player can discover different narratives and uses of his main gameplay tool.

4.3 Doing games differently

When making games at Nintendo, being different is important. By making their games different from everyone else's, they don't have to compete on the same merits as everyone else. A core concept of Nintendo is simply coming up with new ways to play through unique gameplay, with the help of the consoles they make. This was reflected upon in "Warbot's" video, and through my study, I have found this true. In order for Nintendo to be different, coming up with new ways to play is key. They achieve this by encouraging their developers to take different approaches and try new things while supporting these efforts. They also let large groups of people contribute with ideas, so their ideas aren't limited to one or just a few people.

Coming of as different can be challenging for anyone. You can't just copy a game system without changing it. In order to be original you need to make an effort to improve it. If this can be accomplished, you are one step closer to be unique like Nintendo. When making the GDD, I borrowed a mechanic from a Nintendo game and then built upon it. The core idea wasn't original, but I built a system around it that was.

4.4 Making gameplay at the core

I have found Mark Brown's theory to be true. That Nintendo designs with gameplay at the core. When making games at Nintendo, they build their game upon a gameplay-concept, which then the rest of the elements of the game is based upon. Everything takes shape according to the gameplay. This means that the setting's or story's purpose is only to be an excuse for what the player does in the game, that the artistic style is determined according to what the gameplay needs and that the purpose of the sound is to portray certain things to the player for the gameplay's sake. Through my study I have found that Miyamoto (and thus Nintendo) doesn't make games for artistic expression, to tell a story or make a statement, other than that games should focus on good gameplay and being fun for everyone.

When making the GDD, I found that making the game centre around the main gameplay mechanic was the most important. Because of this, everything in Timescape is supposed

to be built around the main gameplay mechanic and thus (as also mentioned on the topic of form-follows-function) I didn't bring up the things in the GDD that could only be specified *after* the rest of the game is more outlined.

For example: In the GDD, the plot is only broadly outlined/suggested because the details need to be based on what's needed for the different puzzles (main gameplay) to make sense in the game, the same goes for characters, sound, look and feel. These elements can only be specified when the game is more laid out in terms of puzzles and levels and what chronological order they have.

4.5 Applying these principles

The objective of making the GDD was to test out how to apply these Nintendo principles that we have discussed. So, following these principles the GDD for Timescape was created.

The game design document I have made is about a 3D third-person adventure puzzle game, that focuses on the player in the game using a device that can create spheres in which time is set back a set amount of years for the space the sphere occupies. The GDD is made to be more of a concept document GDD. This means that the GDD focuses solely on the overall concept and is *not* supposed to explain the entire game in full detail as the main GDD would.

Now, for this GDD to take any shape at all, I have still broadly outlined the narrative, specified that the world is Metroidvania-like and that it features upgrades/unlockables. This game could easily have been the opposite of all this: Being open world, have a different narrative and having all abilities from the get-go. This is an iterative process, so the game being Metroidvania/open world is prone to change.

A Nintendo principle I couldn't follow was that many people should have been contributing with ideas. I couldn't follow this principle solely because of the shape of my production and thesis: I have written the thesis and made the production alone (and not in

a team) and my intention was only to make a GDD as my production and not make the game simultaneously. If I had been making the game simultaneously, it could have altered the process. For example, if I had been simultaneously making prototypes as I wrote the GDD, I could have tested the ideas to see if they worked out the way intended and then changed the GDD accordingly.

5 CONCLUSION

This study set out to find out how Nintendo is designing gameplay. To help understand the question; We defined gameplay as being something along the lines of what you as the player token do in the game while following the game rules and using the game's mechanics (but the definition can differ, depending on who you ask). Developing an analytical framework shaped by a couple of people in the game design field, I found that the theories and claims of these people to be true; that Nintendo's gameplay takes shape from the following principles:

Nintendo's games need to be fun for everyone. The games need to be built so that someone who hasn't played videogames before can complete the game, while also having challenges for someone who's good at videogames. That means that the games need to be user-friendly. In order to achieve this, the function needs to determine the design so that by simply looking at something, the players know what it is, what it does and possibly how to interact with it. This is the "form-follow-function" principle. By simply looking at the game the player should grasp the objective of the game. The rules and systems of the game need to be clear to the player so that the player can accurately act according to what's possible in the Gameworld to explore and become creative. Nintendo achieves all this by putting themselves in the player's shoes and looking at their games from many different angles to find out what makes the best possible experience for the player.

Nintendo's games need to feel good to play and it is important that the core gameplay is fun to do. In order for the game to feel good to play, the character should respond accurately to the player. The game also needs to have a good balance between challenge- and breathing-spaces. To make the game fun, Nintendo focuses less on rewarding the player after they have done something and instead make the whole experience as fun and rewarding as possible.

A true Nintendo game is finding new ways of play. This is something that sets Nintendo apart from the others. Their aim is to be different than everyone else in order to not have to compete on the same merits as everyone else and to more easily find these new ways of

play. To achieve this, developers at Nintendo are encouraged to try different things. Lots of people at Nintendo help coming up with ideas to find new and different ideas. The Gameplay is the most important part of the game at Nintendo. Every design decision is based upon the gameplay to either support or enhance it. Gameplay at Nintendo needs to be fun, different, and user-friendly. You need skilled game designers like Miyamoto to achieve this. They are constantly asking themselves: what is best for the player?

To test out these principles, a GDD was made for a 3D third-person adventure puzzle game called Timescape. Even though making a game like Nintendo would have required a team effort, the GDD was still successful. The identified Nintendo principles were applied to this GDD in order to present how these principles could be applied in practice.

APPENDIX: TIMESCAPE GAME DESIGN DOCUMENT

Timescape

Design Document

Summary

1. Game overview
 - 1.1 Genre and platform
 - 1.2 Concept
 - 1.3 Core objective/Gameplay loop/Game structure
2. Time traveling elements
 - 2.1 The past- and current time-world
 - 2.2 The device
 - 2.3 Amplifiers
3. Enemies
4. Controls
5. Narrative

1. Game overview

1.1 Genre and platform

“Timescape” is a 3D, third person, character-based, adventure puzzle game. The game puts emphasis on puzzle solving and exploration. The game is supposed to challenge the logical thinking of the player like games like “Portal” or “Baba is you” do, while also having the player discover and explore like in games like “Breath of the Wild” or “Fez”. “Timescape” isn’t currently made for any platform in particular, but it is meant for a platform that supports gamepads that feature analogue sticks.

Target audience: “Timescape” is meant for everyone that likes puzzles and exploration in games, no matter if they are experienced players or not. The game does not lean for either a more male or female audience.

1.2 Concept

The player receives a device that can create spheres in which time is set back a certain amount of years for the space the sphere occupies. The player uses this to interact with the world from the past through these spheres in the current world.

1.3 Core objective/Gameplay loop/Game Structure

The player explores areas/dungeons where he solves puzzles that leads him to new areas/dungeons to explore and solve puzzles. Throughout the game, the player is rewarded with upgrades for the device that unlocks new abilities that lets him discover new areas/dungeons and/or further explore old areas/dungeons. Throughout the game a couple of smaller sub-plots take place simultaneously that the player can discover, some of them also have accompanying side quests. These sub-plots and side quests serve as breathing space in between the main exploration where the player can discover different narratives and ways of using the device.

The player explores a Metroidvania-like world. The world might appear as an open world to him, all places are open to explore - if the player can figure out how to get to them. Clues are sometimes intertwined with the plot, and some places might not be accessible until the player has reached a specific point in the game that triggers a new happening in either the past or present and/or removes an obstacle in either the past or present. After beating the game, more side quests, areas and puzzles are unlocked. Upon beating the game, the player is also able to explore and discover whatever he missed before beating the game.

Core gameplay loop:

Explore > Solve puzzles > Find clues/new direction
>Explore > Solve puzzles > Get upgrade

2. Time traveling elements

2.1. The past- and current time-world

Two timelines are “simultaneously” happening in the game, by timeline I do *not* mean two alternative universes that do not share the same chronological history. The two worlds the player can access in the game are the *very same world, only that one is set x amount of years in the past compared to the other*. Depending on how far the player has progressed through the game, different things are set to happen at specific locations when the player creates a sphere in these locations. When necessary, happenings in the other time that aren't static needs to be able to naturally repeat so the player can repeat them if necessary (for example when solving puzzles).

2.2. The device

The entire game is based around the usage of the device. The device can create spheres in which time is set back a certain amount of years for the space the sphere occupies. The time-spheres work almost like a 3D lens or filter that you see the “other world” through. The device has 4 levels of abilities that the player unlocks gradually throughout the game. To familiarise the player with the concept of the time spheres and the device, the game starts out with the device on level 1

Level 1:

On level 1, the device can create and remove one sphere at a time where time is set back x amount of years for the space the sphere occupies. The player cannot enter this sphere, and nothing inside the sphere can exit into the player's world. Beings in the other time-world are oblivious to these spheres

Examples of what the player can do on this level: The player can peek into the past and find clues from the past, either from objects or beings in the past. This can be used to have the player, for example, find passages that became hidden over time, eavesdrop or spy on beings or observe how to interact with certain objects

Level 2:

On level 2, the player can create and remove one sphere at a time, at this point he can also enter the sphere. When entering the sphere all surroundings outside the sphere become the equivalent of the surroundings of the past, and the space inside of the sphere becomes the equivalent of that space in the current time

The player cannot exit the sphere into the other time-world, but the player can move the sphere with him as he walks, creating visually the impression of walking around in the other time. The player is however still physically in his original time-world inside the sphere and the player's movements are limited to what's possible in his time-world. Inside the sphere, he is visible in the other time-world, however, nothing in the other time-world can enter the sphere. To exit the sphere and have the surroundings in and outside the sphere revert back to normal, the player presses the right shoulder button.

Examples of what the player can do on this level: One can entice the player of what's beyond in the other world, while partially limiting him using obstacles in his own time, making the player think twice on how to navigate in the "different world", like a puzzle in its own way. The sphere can appear as a visual impression of a shield while he navigates around an environment he otherwise wouldn't be able to navigate in the other time, like for example bodies of water, fire, spikes or violent battlefields.

Level 3:

On level 3, the player can create a sphere, enter it, and exit into the other time-world. Like a spherical time-portal. The sphere cannot be removed unless the player is located in his own (present) time world outside of the sphere.

Examples of what the player can do on this level: The player can travel between time-worlds without restrictions and fully explore and interact with the other time-world

Level 4:

On level 4, the player can create a sphere, enter it, and exit into the other time-world. Like a spherical time portal, things and beings can also enter the portal and exit into the current time-world.

Examples of what the player can do on this level: The player can now move things and beings between time-worlds. However, the player also needs to watch out so that nothing that shouldn't enter the other time does that.

2.3 Amplifiers

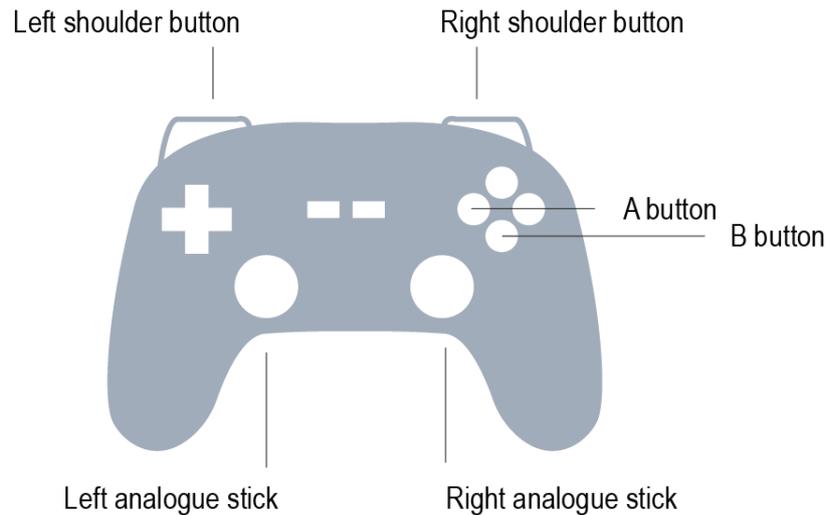
In certain locations, there are amplifiers that the player can use to make the sphere bigger in the current location. The sphere cannot be moved while amplified. This can be used to show a bigger setting when necessary, either for puzzle solving or story-related elements.

3. Enemies

Even though the game is puzzle-focused, and has no actual combat, there are still enemies in some locations and the player can get hurt or killed by these. Enemies are however not used for combat, but instead as tools to keep the player out of areas he is not supposed to visit yet. Enemies can also be used to further challenge the player, as the player may sometimes have to use stealth to navigate through enemies to solve puzzles. The player has one offensive move that he can use (not repeatedly) as a way to temporarily stun/stall certain enemies to give him a second chance getting out of a dangerous situation if necessary. The player cannot kill enemies this way, he can however still kill enemies when using his environment to his advantage when possible.

4. Controls

Because "Timescape" isn't developed for a platform or controller in particular, the graphic features a makeshift controller and the names of the buttons are temporary.



Player control:

Running/Walking – Left analogue stick

Camera control – Right analogue stick

Interact - A

Offensive – B

Device – Right shoulder button

Using the device

Create a sphere in one static location:

Holding the right shoulder button, an indicator is showed where the sphere will go, the player can adjust this using the right analogue stick, when letting go of the right shoulder button, the sphere is shot to the location indicated and activates, to remove the sphere, the player stands close to it and presses the right shoulder button again. If the player has unlocked the ability to step into the sphere, he can do so by pressing A while standing close to the sphere.

Creating a sphere that the player carries in front of him:

Pressing the right shoulder button once creates a sphere, to remove the sphere, the player presses the right shoulder button again

5. Narrative

Something bad is about to take place in the player's world. The player receives a device with time-portal-traveling abilities, he must use this to prevent what's going to happen and save the world.

A series of things in the far past is the cause of what happens in the future. The characters in the setting do not know exactly what could have been done to prevent their disaster. The player has to start out exploring the unknown far past to get clues about what's going to happen, and how to prevent it. Throughout the game, the player explores the past and present solving the mysteries of the incoming future and discovers what must be done and also eventually how. He then must start intertwining things from the past and present in order to stop what's going to happen in the future, while not causing significant errors in time that also could be disastrous. In the end, the player's efforts cause an error in time which changes time and neutralizes the incoming future disaster. The player is now a hero and has saved the world, but at what cost?

Timescape does not rely on cutscenes to tell the story. Instead, it is focusing on letting the player experience the story himself through the gameplay. Cutscenes are although not completely forbidden, just simply greatly avoided. There can still be cutscenes to portray big or crucial happenings in the plot.

SAMMANFATTNING PÅ SVENSKA

Det här arbetet behandlar speldesign med fokus på designen av gameplay. Syftet med arbetet är att studera hur Nintendo designar gameplay. I samband med studien har ett game design dokument gjorts. Syftet för game design dokumentet var att testa resultaten och visa hur man kan applicera dessa i praktiken. Ett game design dokument var ett realistiskt projekt för mig att jobba ensam på, på basis av den tid och resurser jag hade.

Jag valde att undersöka just Nintendo eftersom jag finner Nintendos spel att vara mest unika inom branschen när det kommer till designen av gameplay. Man kan lätt hitta massor av litteratur om speldesign i allmänhet. Däremot har jag märkt att det är svårare att hitta litteratur som beskriver hur just Nintendo designar spel. Eftersom Nintendo är ett välkänt företag som gör bra spel tror jag att det skulle ligga inom branschens intresse att få denna inblick i hur just Nintendo designar gameplay. Därför har valde jag att fokusera på just Nintendo i min studie om design av gameplay.

Eftersom produktionen som gjordes i samband med studien var ett game design dokument är det därför viktigt att förstå vad game design dokument är och varför man gör game design dokument

Ett game design dokument är ett dokument som skrivs före, samt (oftast) under produktionen av ett spel. Game design dokument kan användas för två olika saker: Att visa någon utanför produktionen hurudant spel som ska produceras, samt för att använda det som utgångspunkt för produktionsteamet. (Oxland, 2004, p.237) Det är viktigt att game design dokumentet görs så utförligt som möjligt för att undvika brister eller missförstånd i uppfattningen av spelet, både från den utomstående sida men också från produktionens sida. (Oxland, 2004, p.240 & Bethke, 2003, p.106)

Varför gör man game design documents? Enligt Adam Ernest kan man använda game design dokument för att dokumentera och kommunicera valen man gör. Han menar också att man ibland behöver göra game design dokument för att publiceraren eller bidragaren kräver att få spelet till pappers. (Adams, 2010, s.57) Game design dokumentens namn och form varierar från spel till spel och från produktion till produktion (Schell, 2015, s.48 & Oxland, 2004, s.233 & Rouse & Ogden, 2005, s.307-308). Många definierar game design

dokument som något var man definierar någonting eller allting om sitt spel. Jesse Schell pekar däremot ut hur Jason VandenBerghe menar att game design dokument inte är specifikationen av ett spel, utan bara teorin över vad spelet kommer vara. (Jesse Schell, 2015, s.426). I vanliga fall delas game design dokument in i många olika dokument var varje dokument står för en specifik del av spelproduktionen. Game design dokument ska fungera som en mall varifrån man kan bygga sitt spel, men det ska inte beskriva hur funktionerna ska implementeras. (Rouse & Ogden, 2005, s.309-317) Game design dokumentet som producerats i samband med den här studien är en kombination av ett vanligt game design dokument och ett concept dokument (koncept dokument). Vilket betyder att game design dokumentet i fråga endast beskriver spelet i sin helhet. Kännetecknande för ett concept dokument är att det ska kunna fånga intresse och sälja spelet till någon som kan ge dig finansiering. (Oxland, 2004, s.253 & Ernest, 2010, s.58 & Rouse&Ogden, 2005, s.308).

Forskningsfrågan för detta arbete lyder enligt följande: ”Hur designar Nintendo gameplay?” Metoden som valdes för att svara på den här frågan var en litteraturundersökning. Som referens till undersökningen har boken “The literature review: six steps to success” av Lawrence A. Machi & Brenda T. McEvoy använts. Enligt författarna ska man börja sin litteraturundersökning med att välja en ”research interest”(forskningsintresse) som sedan bildar forskningsfrågan som sedan formar litteraturundersökningen. (Machi & McEvoy, 2012, p.2). I denna studie valdes gameplay som research interest som bildade forskningsfrågan ”Hur designar Nintendo gameplay?”; vilket eventuellt ledde studien till att undersöka av speldesignen och spelproduktionen inom Nintendo. Enligt författarna ska man också välja infall man vill endast definiera den nuvarande kunskapen inom ett ämne, eller ifall man vill argumentera en annan avhandling som sedan definierar ett nytt forskningsproblem för vidare studier. (Machi & McEvoy, 2012, p.xv) Denna studie valde att endast definiera den nuvarande kunskapen inom ämnet. För att göra en litteraturundersökning ska man enligt Machi och McEvoy först samla och organisera informationen till kategorier och teman för att sedan analysera informationen. (Machi & McEvoy, 2012, s.88) Jag har följt detta genom att göra en anteckning varje gång jag hittade något som relaterade till

min forskning. När jag hade slutat leta efter material kategoriserade jag mina anteckningar som jag sedan kunde analysera individuellt.

För att hjälpa bygga en teori om hur Nintendo fungerar vände jag mig till några Youtube-användare som pratar om ämnet i fråga. Dom flesta användarna jag hittade talade mest om Nintendos spel i allmänhet, vilket inte var det jag var ute efter. Däremot hittade jag i alla fall några användare, och från dessa några teorier på design principer från Nintendo. Mest relevant var Mark Brown bakom Youtube-kanalen "Game Maker's Toolkit". Han var den enda som tog upp allmänna Nintendo design principer, och inte bara designen av specifika spel. I sin video "Nintendo – Putting Play First | Game Maker's Toolkit" diskuterar Brown hur Nintendo bygger sina spel med gameplay som grund. Han diskuterar också "form-follows-function" principen, vilket innebär att allt i spelet borde se ut så som det fungerar, för att göra det lätt för spelaren att förstå vad något är och hur det fungerar. Mark Browns teorier (samt dom andra användarnas teorier) användes i studien som hypotes för hur Nintendo designar gameplay.

För att kunna diskutera Nintendos gameplay måste vi förstå vad konceptet gameplay är. "Gameplay" har ingen officiell definition och författare inom området har alla lite olika definitioner, vilket kan göra gameplay svår att förklara. Fabricatore menar att spelare ändå har en tillräckligt klar uppfattning om vad gameplay är, vilket betyder att dom ändå kan använda begreppet och bli förstådda trots definitionen är flummig. (Fabricatore, 2004, p.5). Det är däremot när man försöker lägga fingret på gameplay i sig själv som olika tolkningar uppstår. Andrew Rolling menar att det finns ingen officiell definition av gameplay eftersom alla har en egen tolkning av vad gameplay är. (Rollings & Adams, 2003, kapitel 7). Genom att titta på olika definitioner från olika författare inom området kan vi konstatera att gameplay kan definieras något i stil med att gameplay är vad du gör i spelet med hjälp av karaktären som spelaren kontrollerar, genom att följa spelets regler och mekaniker.

Materialet som litteraturundersökningen bygger på är intervjuer. Majoriteten av intervjuerna kommer från Nintendos egen hemsida. Vissa intervjuer har däremot hittats

genom att använda ”Wayback Machine” för att besöka ”miyamoto shrine-com”-hemsidan. Samt har jag också hittat vissa intervjuer genom hederligt googlande. Många uttalanden i litteraturundersökningen kommer från två viktiga personer från Nintendo: Satoru Iwata och Shigeru Miyamoto. Satoru Iwata var VD för Nintendo mellan 2002-2015, men jobbade också före det för Nintendo via HAL Laboratory. Hann uppfann konceptet att Nintendos spel ska vara roliga, och för alla. Vilket han verkställde med hjälp av Nintendo Wii och Nintendo DS. Han och Shigeru Miyamoto har samarbetat på många spel tillsammans. Shigeru Miyamoto är en speldesigner och producent hos Nintendo som har jobbat för Nintendo sedan 70-talet. Han har skapat några av Nintendos och världens största spelsierier, som t.ex. Super Mario, The Legend of Zelda, Donkey Kong och Pikmin

Litteraturundersökningen kategoriserar Nintendos sätt att designa gameplay under fyra rubriker:

1. Vem som helst ska kunna spela Nintendos spel, oberoende om man är väl erfaren, eller aldrig har spelat tv-spel tidigare. Det här var Iwatas mål när han blev VD för Nintendo 2002. (Hobo nikkani itoi shinbun, 2007a) Med hjälp av detta kan Nintendo nå ut till en större mängd människor samtidigt som dom försäkrar att antalet människor som spelar tv-spel inte stagnerar. (Iwata, 2006b). För att åstadkomma detta måste Nintendos spel vara användar-vänliga, samt kunna utmana dom mera erfarna spelarna utan att kompromissa chanserna för någon som inte är lika erfaren att kunna spela spelet till slut. Det betyder att utmaningarna som ska utmana dom mera erfarna spelarna måste vara valfria att göra, för att de inte ska kompromissa den oerfarna spelarens upplevelse.

För att göra spelen användar-vänliga måste spelaren förstå vad hen ska göra genom att endast behöva titta på skärmen. Idealt ska det också vara roligt för en utomstående att titta på när någon spelar. Designen måste baseras på funktionen, med andra ord:

Formgivningen av något ska baseras på objektets funktion. Det här kallas ”form-follow-function” principen som bland annat Mark Brown diskuterade.

Spelvärlden måste reagera realistiskt och exakt enligt vad spelaren gör. Nintendo fokuserar på att göra reglerna och funktionerna i deras spel-världar så tydliga som möjligt för spelaren. När spelaren förstår vad hen kan och inte kan göra i spelvärlden kan hen bättre utforska världen och vara kreativ. (Minkley, 2010b) Istället för att simulera verkligheten bygger Nintendo upp sina egna världar var dom själva kan bestämma reglerna och lägga gränserna.

Nintendo undviker också avbryta eller störa inlevelsen för spelaren. Därför undviker man i huvudsak cutscenes i t.ex. Zelda spel. Ifall cutscenes ändå används låter man spelaren kontrollera någon aspekt av cutscenen för att hålla spelaren fördjupad i spelet. (Iwata, 2006g)

2. Nintendos spel måste vara bekväma och roliga att spela. Att kontrollera karaktären i sig själv ska helst kunna fungera nästan som en leksak som är rolig att använda bara i sig själv (Iwata, 2007e). Istället för att belöna spelaren i slutet av spelet fokuserar Nintendo på att göra spelen i sig själva belönande att spela, till den nivån att belöna spelaren i slutet inte väger lika mycket.

Nintendo måste också tänka på balansen mellan utmaningarna och delarna av spelet var spelaren inte behöver anstränga sig. Shigeru Miyamoto anser att det är viktigt att inte anstränga spelaren för mycket genom att konstant utmana spelarens gränser. Istället menar han att man alltid borde ge spelaren utrymme mellan varje utmaning var spelaren inte behöver anstränga sig lika mycket. När spelaren får emellan göra det han är bra på känner han sig bättre, samtidigt som han blir bättre på spelet. (Iwata, 2009a) På det viset spenderar också spelaren mera tid på en viss map/bana/level vilket gör det mera sannolikt att det lämnar i minnet hos spelaren efteråt. (Iwata, 2006c).

3. Alla delar av spelet byggs enligt vad spelets huvudsakliga gameplay är. Det betyder till exempel att spelets berättelse och visuella stil baserar sig på vad som krävs för att lyfta fram spelets gameplay. Miyamoto understryker ofta att gameplay är den viktigaste delen

av spelets design, (Fragzone, 2002) och att många andra ofta prioriterar fel angående detta. (C&VG, 2003).

Nintendos spel börjar sällan göra ett spel med berättelsen som grund (Iwata, 2011e), Miyamoto har även sagt att han lägger minst prioritet i spelets berättelse (Fragzone, 2002). Miyamoto säger att ett bra spel behöver mera än en bra berättelse. Det viktigaste för ett bra spel är att ha bra gameplay, enligt Miyamoto. (Iwata, 2007f).

När det kommer till den visuella delen av Nintendos spel har Iwata bekräftat att Nintendo klargör först vilken typ av spel dom tänker göra, fören dom börjar planera den visuella stilen. På det viset kan dom skapa den visuella stilen som bäst representera den typen av spel dom tänker göra. (Iwata, 2006n)

Ljudet och musikens uppgift är att förmedla olika saker åt spelaren, till exempel: Hurudan plats befinner spelaren sig i just nu? Är spelaren i fara? Borde spelaren skynda sig? Musikens uppgift i Nintendos spel är att också att hjälpa berätta för spelaren vad som händer i stunden. (Iwata, 2016a)

4. Nintendo försöker göra sina spel unika för att ackompanjera annorlunda sätt att spela. Nintendo uppmuntrar sina arbetare att söka nya sätt att tänka och göra saker (Iwata, 2006f). Shigeru Miyamoto säger också att Nintendo inte behöver tävla med andra spelföretag på samma sätt ifall Nintendos utgångspunkt är att vara unika. (Los Vegas Roundtable, 2002).

För att uppnå dessa saker försöker Nintendo tänka utifrån spelarens synvinkel. Spelutvecklarna måste konstans ifrågasätta vad som är bäst för spelaren. Detta är något som till exempel Shigeru Miyamoto gör bra. (Iwata, 2011d). Istället för att lägga ansvaret på en eller några få personer, väljer man hos Nintendo att ha så många personer som möjligt att hjälpa bolla idéer. (Iwata, 2006g & Mario Mania Strategy Guide, 1991) På det viset kan Nintendo lättare skapa unika spel med unik gameplay.

Spelet som uppfanns i samband med game design dokumentet är ett 3D äventyr-pussel spel ur en tredje persons vinkel. Designen för spelet skulle basera sig på dessa principer för att testa Nintendos design principer i praktiken. Arbetet diskuterar hur spelet har följt Nintendo principerna, samt vilka principer spelet inte kunde följa och varför.

REFERENCES/SOURCES

Adams, Ernest, 2010, *Fundamentals on game design*, New Riders, San Fransisco

Bethke, Erik, 2003, *Game development and production*, Wordware, Texas

Brown, Mark, 2016, *Nintendo – Putting Play Fist | Game Maker’s Toolkit*, YouTube

Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2u6HTG8LuXQ>

Accessed: 30.11.2018

C&VG, 2003, Miyamotoshrine. Available from:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20071005172459/http://www.miyamotoshrine.com/theman/interviews/140503.shtml>

Accessed: 14.12.2018

E3 Roundtable, 2004, IGN. Available from:

<https://www.ign.com/articles/2004/05/13/e3-2004-miyamoto-roundtable?page=3>

Accessed: 04.12.2018

Fabricatore, Carlo, 2004, *Gameplay and Game Mechanics: A Key to Quality in Videogames*,

Available from: <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/20927/>

Accessed: 17.3.201

Fragzone, 2002, Miyamotoshrine. Available from:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20071005172214/http://www.miyamotoshrine.com/theman/interviews/190202.shtml>

Accessed: 13.12.2018

Goergen, Andy, 2009, *Miyamoto Cites Uniqueness as Key Principle*,

Nintendoworldreport.com, Available from:

<http://www.nintendoworldreport.com/news/20573/miyamoto-cites-uniqueness-as-key-principle>

Accessed: 30.11.2018

Hobo nikkan itoi shinbun, 2007a, *Don’t do the easy*.

Available from: <https://www.1101.com/iwata/2007-09-12.html>

Accessed: 30.11.201

Hobo nikkan itoi shinbun, 2007b, *Something Special about Mr.Miyamoto*

Available from: <https://www.1101.com/iwata/2007-09-04.html>

Accessed: 4.1.2019

Hobo nikkan itoi shinbun, 2007c, *View Things over Someone Else's Shoulder*
Available from: <https://www.1101.com/iwata/2007-09-03.html>
Accessed: 4.1.2019

Holopainen, Jussi, 2011. *Foundations of gameplay* Available from:
<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:835337/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
Accessed: 17.3.2019

Iwata, Satoru, 2006l, *Like Trying to Mold Clay*, 2006l, Iwata Asks. Available
from: http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/twilight_princess/0/2
Accessed: 14.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2006a, *With One of These Remotes, You Can Do Anything*, Iwata Asks.
Available from:
http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/warioware_smooth_moves/0/0
Accessed: 30.11.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2006b, *Turning the Tables: Asking Iwata*, Iwata Asks. Available from:
http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/special_edition_interview/0/0
Accessed: 03.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2006c, *Sound Effects You Can Feel*, Iwata Asks. Available from:
http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/super_mario_galaxy/3/3
Accessed: 05.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2006e, *Taking Control Back to the Drawing Board*, Iwata Asks. Available
from: http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/wii_remote/0/0
Accessed: 03.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2006f *Towards a New Standard*, Iwata Asks. Available from:
http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/wii_remote/0/2
Accessed: 03.13.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2006g, *Always Striving to Stay True to the Spirit of Zelda*, Iwata Asks.
Available from: http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/twilight_princess/0/3
Accessed: 14.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2006i, *The Hands-on Approach*, Iwata Asks. Available from:
http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/twilight_princess/0/5
Accessed: 05.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2006j, *The Indefinable Essence of Zelda*, Iwata Asks. Available from:
http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/twilight_princess/0/0
Accessed: 14.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2006k, *A First-rate Link, Even by Nintendo Standards*, Iwata Asks.
Available from: http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/twilight_princess/0/7
Accessed: 05.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2006n, *Like Trying to Mold Clay*, Iwata Asks. Available from: http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/twilight_princess/0/2
Accessed: 14.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2007b, *From 5 to 95*, Iwata Asks. Available from: http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/super_mario_galaxy/0/3
Accessed: 04.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2007c, *When You Hear 'That Legend of Zelda Sound'*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/ds/zelda/0/4>
Accessed: 03.13.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2007d, *Good ideas*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/e32011/newhw/0/2>
Accessed: 04.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2007d, *Why Use An Orchestra?*, Iwata Asks. Available from: http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/super_mario_galaxy/2/0
Accessed: 23.1.2019

Iwata, Satoru, 2007e, *What is the "Essence of Mario"?*, Iwata Asks. Available from: http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/super_mario_galaxy/1/0
Accessed: 04.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2008a, *As if it was the last in the series*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/ssbb/1/0>
Accessed: 04.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2008b, *For First time Gamers*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/ssbb/1/1>
Accessed: 04.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2009a, *The Correct Way to Enjoy An Action Game*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/nsmb/0/8>
Accessed: 03.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2009b, *Turning the Tables: Asking Iwata*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/ds/dsi/3/0>
Accessed: 03.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2009c, *Mario Couldn't Jump At First*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/nsmb/0/0>
Accessed: 05.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2010a, *Mario Is Like a Musical Instrument*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/supermariogalaxy2/1/4>
Accessed: 05.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2010b, *Looking For The True Mario-Like Tune*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/supermariogalaxy2/2/3>
Accessed: 23.1.2019

Iwata, Satoru, 2011c, *Ganon's Castle as the Only Setting?*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/3ds/zelda-ocarina-of-time/4/0>
Accessed: 13.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2011d, *Development Staff: The Miracle*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/3ds/zelda-ocarina-of-time/3/5>
Accessed: 4.1.2019

Iwata, Satoru, 2011e, *Star Fox 2 that Almost Was*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/3ds/starfox/0/3>
Accessed: 13.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2011f, *Many Characters, Many Roles*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/3ds/zelda-ocarina-of-time/4/1>
Accessed: 14.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2011g, *Hospitality on the Attack*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/3ds/zelda-ocarina-of-time/2/5>
Accessed: 14.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2011h, *Rocket Fists Give Birth to an Ancient Civilization*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/zelda-skyward-sword/0/3>
Accessed: 14.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2011i, *A Town Designed To Function*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/zelda-skyward-sword/4/2>
Accessed: 23.1.2019

Iwata, Satoru, 2011j, *Koji Kondo Upends the Tea Table*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/3ds/zelda-ocarina-of-time/0/1>
Accessed: 23.1.2019

Iwata, Satoru, 2012a, *What Pokémon Values*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/ds/pokemon-black2-white2/0/4>
Accessed: 03.12.2018

Iwata, Satoru, 2012b, *It started with Tofu*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wiiu/splatoon/0/0>
Accessed: 21.1.2019

Iwata, Satoru, 2016a, *Music Follows Function*, Iwata Asks. Available from: <http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/super-mario-all-stars/0/2>
Accessed: 21.1.2019

Iwata, Satoru, 2997f, *The "process" as the reward*, Iwata Asks. Available from:
<http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wii/crossbow/0/1>
Accesses: 05.12.2018

Jenson, Jennifer & Suzanne de Castell, 2007, *Worlds in play: International perspectives on digital games research*, Peter Lang, Switzerland

King, Geoff & Krzywinska, Tanya, 2006, *Tomb Raiders and Space Invaders: Videogame Forms and Contexts*, I.B Tauris, London

Lawrence, Machi & Brenda, McEvoy, 2012, *The literature review: six steps to success*, 2nd edition, Corvin: A sage company, California

Los Vegas Roundtable, 2002. Available from:
<http://web.archive.org/web/20071005172705/http://www.miyamotoshrine.com/theman/interviews/010302.shtml>
Accessed: 30.11.2018

Mario Mania Strategy Guide, 1991, Miyamotoshrine. Available from:
<http://web.archive.org/web/20071005171650/http://www.miyamotoshrine.com/theman/interviews/0561.shtml>
Accessed: 12.12.2018

Metro Newspaper, 2003, Miyamotoshrine. Available from:
<http://web.archive.org/web/20071005171922/http://www.miyamotoshrine.com/theman/interviews/031703.shtml>
Accessed: 30.11.2018

Minkley, Johnny, 2010a, *Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto: In pursuit of happiness*, Eurogamer.net, Available from:
<https://www.eurogamer.net/articles/shigeru-miyamoto-interview?page=3>
Accessed: 21.1.2019

Minkley, Johnny, 2010b, *Nintendo's Shigeru Miyamoto: In pursuit of happiness*, Eurogamer.net, Available from:
<https://www.eurogamer.net/articles/shigeru-miyamoto-interview?page=2>
Accessed: 21.1.2019

MSNBC, 2000, Miyamotoshrine. Available from:
<http://web.archive.org/web/20071005172053/http://www.miyamotoshrine.com/theman/interviews/092400.shtml>
Accessed: 14.12.2018

Nintendo Power, 1998, Miyamotoshrine. Available from:
<http://web.archive.org/web/20071005172032/http://www.miyamotoshrine.com/theman/interviews/092400.shtml>

[erviews/0898.shtml](#)

Accessed: 13.12.2018

Oxland, Kevin, 2004, *Gameplay and design*, Addison Wesley, Boston

Iwata, Satoru, 2013a, *Pure Entertainment*, Iwata Asks. Available from:

<http://iwataasks.nintendo.com/interviews/#/wiiu/wind-waker/0/5>

Accessed: 04.12.2018

Rollings, Andrew & Adams, Ernest, 2003, *Andrew Rollings and Ernest Adams on game design*, New Riders, San Francisco

Rouse, Richard & Ogden, Steve, 2005, *Game design: theory and practice*, Second edition, Wordware, Texas

Schell, Jesse, 2015, *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses*, Second edition, CRC Press, Florida

Superplay Magazine, 2003. Available from:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20060907074051/http://www.miyamotoshrine.com/theman/interviews/230403.shtml>

Accessed: 04.12.2018

Williams, John, 2016, *Nintendo's Unsung Genius – Yoshiaki Koizumi*,

Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBnxbHndCw8>

Accessed: 5.5.2019

Wolf, Mark & Perron, Bernard, 2009, *The video game theory reader 2*, Routledge, London

YouTube user “Warbot”, 2016a, *Mechanics & Character Design – How Mario & Dark Souls Communicate Characters ~ Design Doc*, YouTube, Available from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vopm0YjjQcE>

Accessed: 5.5.2019

YouTube user “Warbot”, 2016b, *Teaching Game Mechanics Well – Guidance VS. Hand Holding ~ Design Doc*, Available from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIs5189lmRA>

Accessed: 5.5.2019

YouTube user “Warbot”, 2017, *Nintendo Switch – The History in the System ~ Design Doc*, YouTube, Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNr0aD1YbHA>

Accessed: 5.5.2019