CMS.300 – Intro to Video Game Theory

Session 17– GAME AESTHETICS

Reading

> *Camper, Retro-reflexivity*

Concepts/Keywords

- remediation

- platform studies

- intertextuality

Goals

- Exemplary analysis, each section shows different types of analysis (platform/technology, gameplay) → Focus on historical context, how content relates the game to other texts

- Introduction to game aesthetics

- close reading

Defining game aesthetics

- Difficult term (we'll see next week)

- Based on reading

  - Retro aesthetics

    - audiovisual style

    - gameplay – difficulty

  - Other examples

    - VVVVVV

    - Cave Story

    - Knytt Stories

    - Shotgun Ninja

What are "retro" aesthetics

Visual:

> Resolution, Colour Palette, Sprites (number of colours)

Audio:

> Chiptunes, Low-Fi Sound

Gameplay:

> Difficulty (home computers are the hardest games), scarce savegames, appeal to rote memory/constant trial & error

→ EACH RETRO GAME PAYS HOMAGE TO SPECIFIC AESTHETICS – one can ID the platform they refer to

CMS.300 – Intro to Video Game Theory

Why Retro games?

- Nostalgia is part of it – although these games also appeal to players who were not alive when the platforms were out

- Aesthetic restraint; almost a statement

- Associated indie developers – harkens back to "bedroom coders"

    o smaller teams or solo developers

- Appeal to literacy – Identifying the platform and games (although not necessary to enjoy them)

- BUT – these games are playtested, accommodated to new audiences – VVVVVV save spots!

For presentation assignment, the goal is tracing the context and influences on other games

CMS.300 / CMS.841 Introduction to Videogame Studies
Fall 2011