

Unit 14: Deconstructing Computer Games

Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to give learners an understanding of computer games and the platforms that enable people to play them. Learners will examine game platforms and their limitations, learn about essential components that contribute to a computer game, and deconstruct a game.

Unit introduction

In the games industry, 'game deconstruction' is a common technique used by game developers to help build better games. It is the reverse-construction of a successful title in an attempt to break it down to identify its parts and the ways in which those component parts are put together. This unit develops understanding, language and focus points that should enable learners to deconstruct games.

Entrants to the computer games industry need to have a basic awareness of the differences between the capabilities of the platforms which allow the games to run, and their associated special peripheral devices. They also need to understand basic components that together shape a final game and they should be aware of common genres of games, differences between the genres and the types of audience each genre appeals to.

In the modern games industry, to make the best profits, game titles are seldom produced to be hosted on only a single platform. But each platform has different requirements, capabilities and peripherals and so it is important for learners to investigate the development of computer game platforms to identify limitations that affect the games that can be played on them.

The technique of deconstruction is based on the understanding that each game has building-block parts, and that these can be investigated. A major component of a game is its visual style, and so to perform a full deconstruction learners should examine the visual style of computer games and have opportunities to recognise its importance in engaging the attention of players.

Gameplay is a further main component of a game and learners should study core aspects of gameplay to find what makes games enjoyable. Games are built to match the needs of an audience and in this unit learners will have opportunities to identify and classify typical audiences for the games studied.

They will investigate genres commonly seen in computer games. This unit gives learners knowledge, understanding and practical experience of structured gameplay. Learners will apply their learning by analysing a computer game to describe its component parts in detail.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know about computer game platforms
- 2 Know about computer game components
- 3 Be able to deconstruct a computer game.

