

## Games Showcased in the 2009 MLTI Student Conference Play Sessions:

With the exception of the Wii games, all other games are available either as downloadable demos, or for free. A brief explanation for why each game was selected follows each game title.

### 1. Action Games:

#### Shoot 'Em Ups:

*1942: Joint Strike* (XBox 360, PS3)

A decent "intro shmup" - not incredibly original or a classic - but a good exemplar of all key elements of the genre. Also has a good two-player mode, which is a bit of a rarity for shmups.

*R-Type Dimensions* (Xbox 360)

A masterpiece: a shmup that allows for careful - but fast - moment-by-moment tactical planning, rather than just twitch response.

*Ikaruga* (XBox 360)

A masterpiece: what happens when the shmup picks up time-dependent strategy elements?

*fIOW* (Mac - <http://intihuatani.usc.edu/cloud/flowing/>)

A thesis game: slow down the shooter, and take away the bullets - what do you get? How is your experience related to playing a traditional shooter?

#### Platformers:

*Super Mario Galaxy* (Wii)

Take everything we learned about 2D platformers (*Super Mario World*), everything we learned about 3D platformers (*Super Mario 64*), distill it, and recontextualize it using motion sensing controls - this is the result.

*PixelJunk Eden* (PS3)

A thesis game: can you boil down the platformer to traversal only, and still have a workable game? How is your experience related to playing a traditional platformer?

*Braid* (XBox 360; Mac - <http://www.playgreenhouse.com/game/NNONE-000001-01/>)

A thesis game: can you build dense narrative into the structure of a platformer? And what happens to the game learning experience when it is possible to "rewind" errors?

*Beautiful Katamari* (XBox 360)

A thesis game: can you merge traversal and acquisition and have a workable platformer? What about turning assumptions about goals on their head, in a game defined by mayhem as a driving force that creates order?

### *Little Big Planet* (PS3)

Take the best ideas of the platformer, and couple it to a near-freeform (except for some important constraints) creation engine - what do you get? Does it transcend traditional platformer constraints?

### **Sports Games:**

#### *Wii Sports* (Wii)

How does the sports videogame experience interact with motion sensing controllers? How does suspension of "physical disbelief" work in this case?

#### *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09* (XBox 360, PS3)

How do sports games interact with the limitations of a traditional controller to create a "believable game"?

#### *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09 All-Play* (Wii)

What happens once you lift this restriction?

### **Rhythm Games:**

#### *Dance Dance Revolution Hottest Party* (Wii)

How does "direct" physical control affect the game experience? What about the social environment that surrounds players?

## **2. Narrative Games:**

### **Interactive Fiction:**

#### *Zoom* (Mac - <http://www.logicalshift.demon.co.uk/mac/zoom.html>)

The engine that runs IF games.

#### *Bronze* (<http://inform-fiction.org/I7Downloads/Examples/bronze/>)

Bronze was designed to introduce people to IF - easy to get into, but smart enough to hold people's interest.

#### *The IF Anthology* (<http://www.inform-fiction.org/I7/About IF - Anthology.html>)

A superb selection of approaches to IF - from traditional Dungeons & Dragons, to high literature, and everything in between.

#### *Facade* (Mac - <http://www.interactivestory.net/download/>)

A thesis game: can IF be made more truly interactive? Can progress in a game be measured by dramatic focus evolution, rather than objectives accomplished?

### **Action/Adventure Games:**

#### *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* (Wii)

Take everything we learned about 2D action/adventure (*The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past*), everything we learned about 3D action/adventure (*The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*), and recontextualize it using motion sensing controls - this is the result.

### *Okami* (Wii)

A thesis game: how are game interactions and narrative affected when painting is the dominant action metaphor?

*Lego Indiana Jones* (Xbox 360, PS3; Mac

<http://www.macgamefiles.com/detail.php?item=20363>)

*Lego Batman* (Xbox 360, PS3; Mac

<http://www.macgamefiles.com/detail.php?item=20364>)

The Lego games are quite remarkable in how they've solved the issue of appealing to intro and experienced gamers alike, and how to approach cooperative gameplay, while maintaining fidelity to the spirit of each movie franchise represented.

### **Role-Playing Games:**

*Eternal Sonata* (XBox 360, PS3)

A very pleasant, easy to get into RPG in the Japanese tradition (e.g. the Final Fantasy series); also notable for its use of musical Chopin-based metaphors.

*Avernum 5* (Mac - <http://www.avernum.com/avernum5/index.html>)

A well-designed RPG in the American tradition (e.g., the Ultima series) with a strong tutorial.

### **3. Simulation Games:**

#### **Real-Time Strategy:**

*Command & Conquer - Red Alert 3* (XBox 360, PS3)

The latest installment of a classic of the genre, with a gentle learning curve for beginners.

*Darwinia* (Mac - <http://www.ambrosiasw.com/games/darwinia/>)

An "abstracted" version of RTS gaming - what elements become clear, once you strip away the window dressing?

*PixelJunk Monsters* (PS3)

A thesis game: can you boil down the simplest form of the RTS - the tower defense game - to just a couple of core elements, and still have a workable game?

#### **Turn-based Strategy (World):**

*Civilization Revolution* (XBox 360, PS3)

*Civilization IV* (Mac <http://www.macgamefiles.com/detail.php?item=19303>)

The classic - even in the demo version, you can start studying how assumptions about connections between game elements influence the game's depiction of history.

#### 4. Puzzle, Traditional and Board Games:

##### **Puzzle:**

*Bejeweled 2* (XBox 360, PS3; Mac - <http://www.popcap.com/games/free/bejeweled2>)

The basic puzzle form: solve sequences in fixed 2D space.

*Lemmings* (PS3)

Now, add 2D traversal and a mild time constraint to the mix - how does this affect the game experience?

*echochrome* (PS3)

Take it one step further: add 3D traversal with a twist to the mix - what happens now?

*Portal* (XBox 360)

Take it even further: add 3D traversal and physics with a twist to the game experience - what's the result?

*Portal: the Flash Version* (Mac - <http://portal.wecreatesstuff.com/>)

Finally, take it one step back: how does projecting the 3D *Portal* experience into 2D affect the gaming experience?