Research

Existing Games

Side Scrollers / 2D Platformers

Super Mario Brothers

- Wholly 2D, walking, running, jumping, climbing, swimming?
- A system of levels
- Upgrades stay with the character and are lost when the character takes damage or dies
- Enemies
- Parkour Obstacles
- Currency is used to give lives
- Boss every 5 or 10 levels
- Checkpoints mid-level

Sonic

- 2D, with occasional 3D levels
- Character can run, jump and defy gravity at points
- A system of levels
- Bosses at the end of each level
- Deadly obstacles, enemies, jump pads
- Currency is used as a life-line
- Checkpoints at the start / end of levels
- Has a timer

Angry Birds

- Wholly 2D
- Designed for mobile
- Physics-based
- Characters fly in arcs
- Different characters have different abilities
- A series of levels
- Once a level is beaten, the next can be accessed, however there is an added challenge of a star-rating
- Scores are compared online

Little Big Planet

- 2D but with 3 planes to traverse
- Designed for console
- Character can walk, run, jump and grab (and punch, to little effect)
- There are no ability upgrades, only cosmetic
- Extra abilities can be accessed by picking up items - they last for however long the level dictates
- Features a (turing-complete?) level editor / creator
- Levels are usually beaten in a linear order but there is the occasional branching path / side-mission
- Features multiplayer (online and local), both co-op and competitive
- Levels are mostly parkour based or puzzles
- There are collectibles that give points / cosmetics that count towards the score for that level

The games mentioned have stories but they are usually macguffins.

Indie Games

Getting Over It with Bennett Foddy

- Plays on a 2D plane using 3D meshes
- 1 Large Level
- Level's aesthetic changes as the player progresses
- Controlled solely with the mouse
- No score, there are self-imposed systems by the community e.g. speedruns
- Main draw is the dialogue from the creator
- Silly / Funny character
- Character can move any direction so long as they can be propelled that way by pushing / pulling against the terrain
- No true fail state except falling to an earlier stage in the level

QWOP
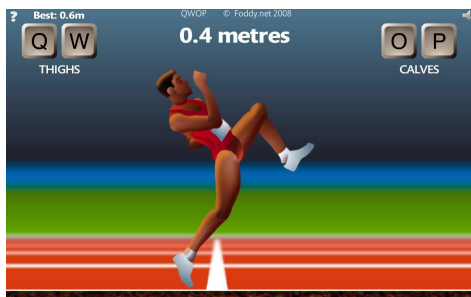
- Fully 2D - character has shadows, background is blurred, gives faux 3D effect
- Endless(?) level
- Score is governed by how far the player progresses
- Simple yet difficult controls
- Pick-up-and-play type game
- Silly / Funny character
- Appeal comes from getting friends to play it and comparing scores
- Fail state is falling over

Flappy Bird

- Fully 2D, retro aesthetic
- Character is always moving forward and falling in an arc
- The only control is to tap or click to get the character to flap in a sharp upwards arc
- Score is governed by how far the player progresses
- The fail state is touching an object
- Simple, addictive
- Pick-up-and-play type game (sessions are often quick)

Tiny Wings

- Fully 2D with a modern aesthetic
- Pressing and holding is the only method of control, it forces the character in a downwards arc
- The character is always moving forwards
- The player must use the terrain to give the character momentum
- Score is governed by how far the player progresses
- The player is attempting to outrun the Sun / timer
- More time is given to the player when they collect small suns
- The fail state is letting it get to night and falling asleep i.e. the timer running out
- Cosmetic upgrades are given to the player as they get higher scores and get better at the game

Champion Archer

- Fully 2D though the vertical position of the enemies can make it seem 3D
- Controlled solely with the mouse (to shoot arrows in arcs)
- A system of levels which get progressively harder
- The objective is to survive, the fail state is the enemies reaching the player
- The player earns currency by defeating enemies, more points are awarded for accuracy and efficiency
- At the end of each level, points can be spent on upgrades which carry over to the next levels
- The game is considered over and won when the player has all the upgrades

Aesthetics

Jotun

- Hand-drawn characters, enemies, bosses, animations
- Computer drawn isometric environment and weather effects
- Each level has its own style
- There is cohesion around a viking mythology theme
- Cartoon style
- Good use of bloom

Necropolis

- Simplistic low-poly aesthetic
- Great use of Vertex Shader
- Good use of fog and bloom (eyes, potions)
- Very little use of specular materials except on weapons and armour
- Character's colours are chosen by the player after unlocking them as permanent cosmetics
- Each level has its own style and colour palette

Google Icon Design

- Parallel shadow umbras
- Orthographic / Isometric
- Solid Colours
- No Gradients
- Striking, bold, etc.