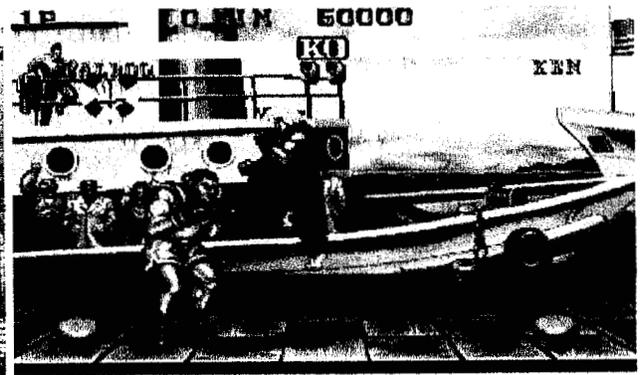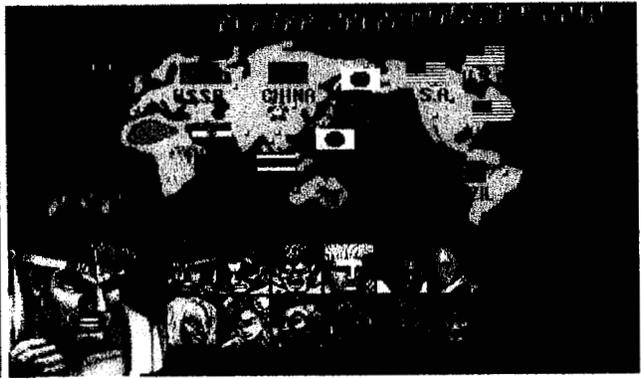Tom Kolich

STS 145: History of Computer Game Design

Review of Street Fighter II Turbo: Hyper Fighting

Tom Kolich

STS 145: History of Computer Game Design

February 22, 2001

Review of Street Fighter II Turbo: Hyper Fighting

Street Fighter II Turbo: Hyper Fighting (SF2T) was first released on the Super Nintendo

Entertainment System in November 1992. It was widely popular, but its success did not come all

at once. Its direct predecessors were the original *Street Fighter, Street Fighter II: The World*

Warrior, and many other games in the fighting genre that paved the way for this hit.

Developed by Capcom Entertainment, *SF2T* was produced by Mark Hetherington and

Mat Sneap. The Production Manager was Sherry Kross, the Art Director was John Tombley, and

was made with Quality Assurance by Ben Hendricks, Kevin Holt, and Richard Moody. Paul

Bates, Ashley Finney, Mark Hetherington, Tim Rogers, and Robert Watkins programmed the

game, and Nigel Bently and Matt Dixon worked on the graphics segment of the production.

Finally, Music and Sound work was completed by Neil Baldwin and Steve Duckworth.

The story of *SF2T*, from the original SNES instruction manual, describes how "twelve

fighters from across the globe have come together to race one another to see which of them" has

the ability, strength, stamina, skills, and courage to become the ultimate champion. Once the

player has selected a fighter, he will circle the globe in order to defeat all opponents and be the

crowned master. Each player uses punches, kicks, and special attacks to defeat each challenger

in one-on-one combat.

The twelve combatants are: Ryu, the 150 lbs. Japanese Shotokan Karate expert, Edmond

Honda, the 304 lbs. Japanese Sumo wrestler, Blanka, the 210 lbs. Brazilian Jungle Fighter,

Guile, the 191 lbs. American Special Forces warrior, Ken, a 169 lbs. American Shotokan Karate

master, Chun-Li, a Chinese Kung Fu master of undisclosed weight (and the only female in the game), Zangief, a 256 lbs. Russian Wrestler, and Dhalsim, a 107 lbs. Indian Yoga guru. The bosses that are also selectable by a human player in the *SF2 Turbo* edition are Balrog, the 252 lbs. American Boxer, Vega, the 208 lbs. Spanish Ninjitsu expert, Sagat, a 283 lbs. Muay Thai fighter, and, finally, M. Bison, a 254 lbs. fighter of unknown origin.

Each battle is comprised of three rounds, with the first winner of two rounds advancing to the next combat. A round consists of a given 99 second time period to completely sap all the energy from his opponent by inflicting bodily damage. Each competitor starts each round with a full energy bar at the top of the screen, and each hit takes away from that energy allotment. If the time expires with both fighters standing, the player with the most energy left is declared the winner of the round. A human player is given the opportunity to try again if he or she is defeated by a computer player. An extra round is possible, however, if a double knockout occurs; this happens when both contestants take away each other's remaining energy at the same time. The user interaction consists of six buttons, and the directional controller pad on the SNES system. Three punch and three kick buttons are all at a player's disposal, and they come in Jab, Strong, and Fierce varieties, with each getting stronger, yet slower, respectively. Using combinations of these punch and kick attacks and the directional controller, the player inflicts damage.

Employing certain sequences of button presses performs special moves. For example, one of Ryu and Ken's special attacks, the Fireball, is an energy projectile thrown by pressing down and then right in a continuous motion and pressing any punch button. The speed of the projectile is determined by which strength level punch button was pressed. *SF2T* has three major modes; Normal Mode is much like *SF2: Champion Edition*, with normal speed gameplay and without the added special moves of Turbo Mode. Turbo Mode can be played at up to ten

different turbo speeds, and has additional special moves and abilities for many players. The third major gameplay mode is Vs. Mode. This pits human player against human player in either Normal or Turbo Mode, and is probably the most entertaining facet of the game.

The goal of *SF2T* is to defeat all twelve enemies, including an AI version of your own player, and be declared World Champion. Upon beating the final boss M. Bison, a story-like ending is shown, with different endings depending on the chosen player. In Vs. Mode, there is no ultimate goal except for defeating other human challengers time and again.

In determining the genre of *SF2T*, one must look at the fighting games that came before it. Two dimensional, left-to-right fighting games were popular in the era before the dawn of *Street Fighter*. Games like *Double Dragon*, *Streets of Rage*, and Capcom's own *Final Fight* dominated the fighting genre. Each involved dueling with hordes of weaker enemies in order to fight a more difficult boss at the end of each level. In 1987, the original *Street Fighter* was released, to little fanfare. It was a primitive game for a niche market, but it did pioneer the 2D one-on-one fighting game. When *SF2T*'s older sibling *Street Fighter II: The World Warrior* hit the gaming scene in 1991, it immediately made an impact at the arcade and on home systems. While the first *Street Fighter* only allowed the player to choose from two different warriors, *SF2* expanded the player selection to the eight, non-boss characters present in *SF2T*. As players flocked to *SF2*, Capcom then released an upgrade, *SF2: Champion Edition*, allowing playable bosses and the ability for a character to battle himself on screen. Capcom later developed *SF2T* as a reaction to the unofficial, so-called *Street Fighter 2: Rainbow Edition* that hackers had made by rewriting some of the source code and allowing all sorts of options, both before and during combat. Therefore, *SF2T* is a 2D one-on-one fighting game.

SF2T had many descendents as well, all adding more options and increasing the legend of the *Street Fighter* series. *Super SF2, Super SF2: Tournament Edition, Super SF2 Turbo, Street Fighter: The Movie*, and many other incarnations such as *SF III* and *SF Alpha* all came after the huge success of *SF2T*.

A major innovation of the SF2 series was the moving graphics in each fighting location's background. In Las Vegas, for example, where Balrog calls home, there are gamblers tossing chips around, show dancers strutting, and people cheering on the fight. These background details scrolled along with the action to reveal other sections of the scene, and were all on top of the incredible graphics at front-and-center. The vivid colors of each fighter brilliantly lit up the screen. The ruffles on a player's clothing were shown in detail. The animation was faster and smoother and any fighting game that came before.

The hardware enabling much of its success was Capcom's new CPS board. This technology allowed for sharper resolution and more animation than before. Along with graphical benefits, this piece of hardware had the ability to record digitized voices, and uses them a lot in the game. The music in *SF2T* was more advanced as well. This gave the game enthusiast a more real and engaging experience.

SF2T's control interface is through the six aforementioned buttons and the directional pad. Another major impact the *SF2* games had on the fighting genre was the added ability to buffer moves. A player can, while a previous move is still animating, begin performing the keystrokes for another move. The game keeps track of all the movements the user makes and when one move has finished, it will go right into the next. This allows what is now a staple in fighting games: the combination move. "Combos," as they are called, are sequences of moves executed one after another that leaves an opponent with no ability to recover or even block

between moves. Only experts of the game can complete the more difficult combos. This precise control interface ensures that a highly skilled player can always beat a challenger with little experience; previous games had given the advantage to those who could press their buttons the fastest. *SF2* places a premium on skill instead of random button pushing.

SF2T also features a controllable AI for the computer players. A human challenger can adjust the abilities of the computer opponents. Depending on the difficulty level, a cyber enemy may or may not have the ability to dodge a well-thrown fireball, or kick you at the right time to send you flying. SF2T's advanced AI allows the computer players to have a high degree of skill and to sometimes surprise you with a timely move. Of course, the multiplayer mode discussed above in the gameplay segment disables the computer AI in favor of a human competitor.

The game design is another reason that it succeeded so well. The replay value of *SF2T* is reasonably good. Each of the varied cast of characters had his or her own list of basic and special attacks that are implemented differently based on which fighter is currently on screen. Plus, the difficult combos are different for each warrior, and each takes long hours of practice to master. Furthermore, *SF2T* gave each fighter a different uniform color depending on which buttons were pressed to select him or her.

The pitfall of many games is their lack of play balance. If the actions required for success are mainly repeated over and over again, the experience of playing that game diminishes. An assortment of ways to play the game is essential to any video game. While *SF2T* does repeat the same basic structure over and over—the 2D one-on-one format—it works within the boundaries of its genre to expand a player's experience. There are many different strategies that can be utilized to knock the enemy to the ground, and these options only increase with experience playing the game. The strategic depth of the game runs the gamut from simple button

pressing (which is not very successful) to precisely timed moves executed in a specific order. However, there is generally not an overarching strategy that encompasses a player's experience. The emphasis in *SF2T* is not on deep strategy and puzzles, but in manual dexterity and quickness.

The success of *SF2T*'s game design is obvious--it sold millions of copies in the U.S. alone. Using new technology and innovative designs in the game, it had many exciting qualities not before seen in computer games. The *Street Fighter* series created a whole new genre of games not explored before by standing on the shoulders of great games like *Streets of Rage* and conceiving a better way to produce a two dimensional fighter. *SF2T* is considered by many the peak of the *SF* series, because it maximized the gameplay of the 2D one-on-one fighter before the market was flooded with *SF2* clones like the *Mortal Kombat* series, *Soul Calibur*, and the endless stream of *Street Fighter*'s latest versions. *SF2T* set the standard for using the latest technology to its maximum ability, and many games inside and outside the fighting genre followed suit. For another game in the computer gaming industry to repeat the success of *SF2T*, it must be as innovative, original, and engrossing as its worthy elder.

Bibliography

MobyGames.com. "Credits." 15 Feb 2001.
http://www.mobygames.com/game/sheet/gameId=1159

Petty, Nick. "The Story of Street Fighter II." 15 Feb 2001.
http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/jmurphy/JPT3500file/JPT.Projectfile/Jpt/Sf.html

"Street Fighter II Turbo: Hyper Fighting Game Manual." 14 Feb 2001.
http://www.world-of-nintendo.com/manuals/super_nes/street_fighter_2_turbo.shtml