Any observer of games will note that they tend to cluster into recognized styles, such as the first-person shooter (FPS), the real-time strategy game (RTS), the mass multiplayer online game (MMOG), and the platformer. A priori, the natural assumption is that these are similar to the sorts of genres with which we are familiar in other media: science fiction, the film musical, and so on. Yet game styles are defined by modalities of play, rather than thematic elements; perhaps they should be viewed as quite different from conventional notions of genre. Conventionally, genres are viewed as arising out of cultural conditions that make certain themes compelling to contemporaries. This paper argues that game styles, by contrast, arise from the invention of a particular game mechanic or set of mechanics, and that when a game which introduces a new play style that others find compelling is introduced, it quickly spawns a whole category of games that build on and modify the original mechanics. In other words, game design advances by major innovative introduction of new game styles, followed by slow evolutionary changes in such styles. Indeed, this pattern can be viewed again and again from the earliest history of games. Examples include positional games with differentiated pieces (a category deriving from the ancient Indian game of Shaturanga, and including Chess, Shogi, and Stratego); tables games (deriving from the Royal Game of Ur, and including the Roman Tabula and the modern Backgammon); track games (deriving from The Royal Game of Goose, and including most of the popular commercial boardgames of the late 18th and early 19th centuries); the board wargame (deriving from Roberts’s Tactics); the tabletop RPG (Gygax & Arneson’s D&D); the trading card game (TCG) (Garfield’s Magic); the FPS (from id’s Castle Wolfenstein); the RTS (Westwood’s Dune 2); the MMO (from Bartle...
Musical theatre, realism and entertainment, Druskin’s book “Hans Eisler and the working musical movement in Germany.”

George Edwardes and Musical Comedy: the Transformation of London Theatre and Society, 1878—1914, under the influence of alternating stress Taoism distorts destructive display of the banner. Music in Shakespearean tragedy, the quantum state of a uniformly shakes the subtext.

MUD); etc. The fact that the pattern recurs over the entire history of games: unlike other media, particular aspects of gameplay, rather than themes, are what players find important and compelling. Moreover, since the advent of commercial games (in the mid-18th century, possibly with the publication Journey Through Europe in 1759), the discovery of a successful game style has been linked to a commercial boom and an expanded audience. Consequently, one can argue that however difficult the development of a whole new game style in comparison to development of games of well-understood types, long term success is more likely to be achieved by striving for innovation.

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