

ZENITH

THE GOOD THE BAD
&
THE UGLY

Gordon D. Ross
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Intro.

A climbing game sounds like a nice idea and it is, but this a platform game, that goes up.

It fails to offer the overwhelming sensation of extreme altitude that I feel a game of this nature should impose.

To put it simply, it doesn't instil a fear of falling.

Gameplay

Performing the various climbing techniques does not require any skill on the part of the player. The only moves that necessitate any special co-ordination are jumping techniques, much like any other average platformer. This does not help distinguish this game as a different genre.

It may be seen as novel to be climbing walls all the time rather than running around. However if we look at it logically, due to the range of moves available whilst performing such manoeuvres, it is not unfair to describe the game as a top down platformer, with a limited span of directional control and sluggish movement.

The gameplay needs more variety. Mario style slide sections would be nice and would help add much needed curvature to the game.

The football shooting gun thing is a pleasant change from the continuous ascent and more sections that display this level of ingenuity would be an improvement.

Graphics (and how they can aid gameplay)

I want atmosphere, I want lighting, sod this omni-light bollocks. Give me character, give me fear. (Just don't beat me up OK!)

Lighting can help disguise the blocky nature of the levels without utilising a large number of intricate polygon shapes.

Use large stretched textures, such as metallic looking gouraud shaded polygons and then use filters, transparent polygons and light sourcing to apply the look that you desire. You can use dark areas to hide animation problems and you can use spotlights to affect the gameplay. You are only safe to climb while lit, laser sights appear on you and you must take cover. You must light certain areas of the level by locating light switches, only by doing this will you be able to negotiate the remainder of the wall etc.

Animation and “nice touches”

The game jumps between animation routines too often. When you perform certain manoeuvres the play can be seen to jump or move without any explanation in the form of animation. This really must improve.

On parts of the wall some animation can look out of place. Subtle changes in the way of extra frames, or replacement of frames should be implemented to correct this.

Special effects add a lot to a game, and in the case of Die Hard (The Driving section) virtually made the game. The lighting effects I mentioned earlier would go some way to making the game seem a little more spectacular, or at very least interesting, however this is just one part of the process. Steam, fog, mist, fire, ice, flowing water and things of that nature should all be used. It brings the game to life, it makes you think things are happening on a grander scale. The player sub-consciously imagines what might be producing these conditions, perhaps clues as to their purpose could be conveyed through their animation and placement. As with Shakespearean plays, the player can experience greater fulfilment by guessing, or working out what might be happening else where, without being shown it directly.