

To this day, Space Invaders is one of my all-time favourite games. Born the same year as me (1978), it is a classic in every sense of the word.

What I love is the simplicity, There is no heavy backstory, there is no complicated power-up system, no fancy boss battles or in-game purchases!

The instructions whole scene was set in one line of the four lines of instructions.

Game ends when players “Laser Bases” are all hit by invaders missiles or when invaders overrun the base.

Simple as that! In one line of text, you know everything you been to know. You control a laser base and you need to defend it from the invaders. You quickly learn that there are some building you can hide under, but they can be destroyed and that from time to time a bonus can be had from hitting the mothership style alien.

Simplicitas est Perfectum

So what's the point of this? Well, exactly what I said Simplicitas est perfectum, Simplicity is perfection. Space Invaders has been going for 40 years, pretty much unchanged, and is simple as simple can be. It has no real-time multiplayer but manages to be social by way of nothing more than 3 letters on a leaderboard. It has no complex onboarding, yet is easy to play within seconds. The gameplay does not change with each play, but it still forces you to evolve and learn new strategies.

Simple Changes

You can also learn from how a simple design can be radically changed with simple mechanic changes.

I recently saw an interesting spin on the formula in an arcade near me. You sat in a chair with a challenger besides you, shooting into the screen at the Invaders. One simple change to the formula made it look really fresh.

In your gamification designs, look to see what you can do to make it more simple. What can you strip away without losing the core of the design, but that can make that core shine through more brightly. Does it need that extra points or upgrades system (Force Arena, I'm

looking at you)? Do you need to have ten mechanics where one will do? Can those ten be combined into one, more streamlined and elegant mechanic?

As they say, KISS - Keep It Simple Stupid.

