Playing History Design Rationale

Overview

The playing history project is fundamentally a directory for historical games and interactives. This design attempts to invite users to search and contribute to the directory.

Font and Colors

The logo uses the Pixel based font Visitor and the monospaced font Andale Mono to invoke the style of classic video games. I generated the color pallet from a slightly more muted adaptation of a Nintendo controller. The muted colors present in this design also work well against most of the tones in the games I have added to the database so far. To tie the site together the pixel fonts from the logo are used for headings throughout the site. Andale Mono, is native to almost every Mac, and the CSS uses Consolas as a backup for PCs that which are may not have Andale installed.
Playing History Home Page

The homepage attempts to explain the project, promote visitors to explore the repository, and explain how they can contribute to the project by rating and reviewing games.

Top Row Content: Basic Site Use
At the top of the page Users can read about the overall goal of the project in the left top corner, moving to the right each of the top boxes call out the most important current site features, searching for games, and signing up to rate and review games.

Featured Item: What to Expect
In the left column users see a specific featured game below the site explanation. This offers both a engaging visual, and a demonstration of the sort of individual games one can find in the directory.

Tag Cloud: Navigation and Activity
Much of the homepage is dominated by the tag cloud, which is currently one of the most direct points of entry to the collection. As the repository grows and searches become more fruitful their may be a better option for this chunk of screen space.
Playing History Home Page

The browse page serves as the primary interface between the homepage and individual game pages. Searches and tags all link into this interface. Its principle value is helping users chose individual games.

Search Results

Because the page is primarily a means to drill down to specific games the results take up a majority of the page. Titles, with brief descriptions, tags and thumbnails are arranged to make it as easy as possible to make snap decisions on which results might be valuable.

Ratings and Reviews

The ratings and reviews in the right column offer another way to discover games, underline the importance of the community of reviewers to the projects success, and demonstrate site activity.

News Feed

The News feed occupies a small role on the page. Its presence on the page helps present the site as active, and offers another way for users to stay informed about the project.
Playing History Game Page

The item page has two primary functions. First to help a user evaluate a game against their needs and second, to provide a space for user contributions.

Game Data
The game data occupies the primary focus of the page. I broke it into two chunks, content: what the games about, and Classroom details: information relevant for use in classrooms. There is room for improvement in some of the data display.

Game Image
The large game image gives the page a bit of interest while also giving a visual impression of what the game is and how it works.

Rating and Review
The rest of the page pulls in user reviews and ratings and offers logged in users the ability to review games. The general flow of the page from top to bottom moves from least involved and brief, checking game details, to most involved and detailed, in user reviews and comments.