

What I hate:

-Poor level design. If you need to place an impenetrable barrier, then you need to make it high enough that the player couldn't jump or climb over it (Ren, I love you dearly, but lazy roadblocks suck). If you're going to leave out details in indoor areas, make sure you leave locked/broken doors around to create the illusion that those missing details are present (Halo was the ultimate fail on that point). Booby-trapping supplies is acceptable, but don't rely on just that for cheap scares (I'm looking at you, Doom 3). Make sure the placement of objects makes real-world sense (i.e. most of Half-Life 1's crates and boxes were in storage rooms, its weapons in armories, and so on). Terrain holes also fall under this category, as do overdrawn collision boxes, invisible walls in the middle of nowhere, ridiculous object placement, and so on.

-Stupid AI. I'm standing next to explosive barrels, and the AI isn't shooting them. What is wrong with this picture? Also, AI sidekicks who run across your line of fire. Nothing sucks like having your friends turn on you because one of them got careless.

-Cheating AI. I don't care if it's for the sake of difficulty, the AI should not be able to do things that the player cannot (exception: dedicated non-human bosses). For a particularly egregious example, the AI in Homeworld: Cataclysm sometimes sends its production ships off the playable map to where the player cannot follow. Every time this happens, the game is broken because the current level cannot be beaten until all enemies are destroyed. On a similar note, RTS AIs should also not be able to build when they are out of money.

-crap gear/ubergear. ALL of the weapons in a game should have a purpose. If they don't, then stop placing them in the game world beyond the training level(s). It is fine to have certain weapons be weak against certain foes, but it is not ok to have one weapon that is nigh-on useless as soon as you find another, superior weapon. Doom 3's pistol is a good example of this- you use it in two situations, and two only: before you have a better gun, and when your better gun runs out of ammo. Its shots are weak and pathetic, taking two or three headshots to put even the most basic baddies down. This is bad weapon balancing. Again, we can use Half-Life 1 as an example of how things should be done- the pistol and the assault rifle share ammunition and do the same damage per shot. The pistol is more accurate while the assault rifle has a high rate of fire- thus, both weapons are useful in different situations.

-Things That Don't React(tm). If you place an object in my game world, and I can't destroy it or at the very least move it, a mistake has been made. This does not need to apply to huge objects, such as dumpsters and wrecked trucks and the like, but if I run across a park bench I can't tip or a tire swing I can't push around, I'm not happy with the environment. In System Shock 2, dating to 1998, almost every small object (chairs or smaller) can be pushed around or picked up, and some can even be consumed- you can't tell me newer games don't have the technology to do that (hell, SS1 had interactive objects and that's from the earliest days of 3D gaming).

-Indestructible vehicles. Halo loses here, big time. There is absolutely no way in hell you can justify having vehicles that can be driven around yet not destroyed. For that matter, it is even

worse when weapons fire directed at the tires or treads or back seat applies to the driver instead of the vehicle. I'm sorry but whatever the reason may be, that's just bad game design.

-Super-linear gameplay. Linear is one thing- having a player complete objectives in a given order (I'm a fan of non-linear games, myself)- but when there aren't multiple ways to go about completing those objectives there is a problem. For example, in an RPG, where a given quest forces a stealth character to complete a sidequest using brute force alone (with no alternate path that allows the use of stealth), that is poor design.

-"Doom 3" lighting. Darkness is spooky; pitch black is lame. Light does not just shine in a straight line from the source, it reflects and refracts- but even in rooms with bright lighting, Doom 3 had such dark shadows that you couldn't see what might be lurking in the corner. With all the shiny metal surfaces, that wouldn't happen. Remember- even a handheld flashlight can flood a room with light, even if the beam is tightly focused. Bad lighting equals poor level design.

Perhaps this is one of the worst:

-Things the game doesn't tell you until it's too late for the information to be useful. For example, if the only way to get past X enemy is with Y weapon with Z (amount of ammo) which you may or may not have because the game didn't clue you in ahead of time. This happened to me playing SiN Episode 1; one boss enemy can be put down rather quickly using the pistol's alt-fire, and takes up almost all your other ammo if you don't have that one type of shell. The game only informs you that you'll be needing this ammo for this enemy when you start the fight, and- surprise surprise- there aren't any spare rounds stashed in the arena. In other words, you're supposed to save up your pistol's alt-fire ammo even though you didn't know you'd be needing it for that purpose (it also happens to be quite handy for one-shotting other tough baddies, and you can only carry 8 shots). If you don't have at least most of your max load of everything else, you're boned for that fight and need to restart from an earlier save. That annoys the shit outta me.

I could go on, but that's more than enough.

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