Sim City Forever Essay, Research Paper

Amongst the shelves that are packed with the latest computer software, sits a genre of games, that does not get the recognition that it deserves. Simulation games. These games do not give the player level after level of mind-boggling graphics, blood and gore, or even the feeling of accomplishment. Their one purpose is to give the control to the player, that they would normally not get in their everyday lives. By definition a simulation game is a game where the player must take on a role that is different than his or her everyday life.

Within the genre, the software leader is clearly Maxis. Maxis virtually created the realm of simulation gaming. With the release of Sim City, Maxis changed the lives of game players everywhere. The purpose of Sim City was to give control to the player, of a modern city. At the beginning of the game, the player is given three vital options. First, the player must decide what time period he/she wants the games to take place in. The times consist of 1900, 1950, or 2000. No matter where you have started, the game ends at the same point. Second, they must choose a size for their city. The city s size is defined by the amount of squares of building space available. They are then categorized as small, medium, and large. Finally, the player must decide on a name. The name of the city is the one thing that they do not offer choices for. It is completely your choice. The game has already put the player where they want to be, in control. After the startup screen, the player views a blank area known as your city s Terrain. That is where the fun begins. The player s next duty is to start building. Essentially what is happening is that the player is assuming the role of a god-like figure. They are given the control to make decisions such as, laying railroad tracks, placing hospitals, police stations, fire stations, zoning, laying water pipes, placing roads, and perhaps the most important setting taxes. Who would not like to have control of their own little world where they had this much power? After all of the major building decisions have been decided, the player presses the start button and watches the city grow. While playing the game, the player must continue to expand the city, by adding more of the buildings and utilities that they added before the games started. The main objective of the game is to keep you citizens, or SIMS , as they are referred to in the game, happy. Making small mistakes, such as putting a power plant in the middle of a residential area, or raising taxes by one percent, could cause your population to plummet. When you have a low population, that means less SIMS are paying taxes, which in turn means your city makes less money. In the first version of the game, the end would come somewhere around the millennium, when all of the SIMS celebrated the New Year. In later editions, the endings would be more difficult to accomplish.

There are no real comparisons to Sim City, other than games made by Maxis themselves. About every two years, they release a newer version. Two years ago, Sim City 2000 hit the shelves. The only differences were, that the graphics had improved by leaps and bounds, some new buildings, and a new end to the game. Sim City 2000 ended in the year 3000, when everyone got into their Arcos , which are buildings that hold large amounts of people, and flew into space. Sim City 2000 also came with a program that allowed the player to create and design his or her own buildings and Arcos. This year, Maxis once again released a new version of their classic game, Sim City 3000. In this version, the player has more control over certain variables, and once again there is a new ending. No one has reported finishing the game, and seeing the ending, as of yet. Though many have noted that strange buildings and figures are popping up all over their cities. Plans for Sim City 4000 are already underway. The only other comparisons on the market, are the other games put out by Maxis themselves. For instance, there is Sim Earth, a game where the player starts a planet at the beginning of evolution. There is Sim Ant, where the player is an ant in a colony, and must protect the queen. There are various others such as, Sim Copter, Sim Island, Sim Office, Streets of Sim City, and Sim Theme Park. Maxis is also working on a game called The Sims. The Sims gives the player a role as a member of the Sim family, and allows them to live a whole different life, by making choices for the Sim that they are playing. Maxis has pretty much created and defined the way simulation games are played and designed. Although companies have tried with games such as, Civilization, a game where you are an ancient Roman; and Warcraft, where the player is either a troll or a human and must fight a war, none have received the recognition or following that Sim City has.

Throughout the past seven years, Maxis has continued to captivate the game-players imagination. From the beginning with Sim City, to today with Sim City 3000, and the plans for Sim City 4000, Maxis gives their customers, what they want. Simulation gaming, though not the most action oriented game genre, has a loyal following, which continues to grow day by day.