

PSX Philosophy in WING COMMANDER 5

This file is 'Owned' by: Billy Cain

Wing Commander 5 Playstation Philosophy of Design

Introduction

It is our intention to produce two unique versions of Wing Commander 5 (PCCD and Playstation). We are telling the same story to two different audiences, and therefore need to tailor each version of the game to the likes, dislikes, and expectations of each audience. Simply put, it is an issue of breadth vs. depth. The Wing Commander experience on the PC should rely heavily on simulation and strategy. The missions should have a complexity of depth, providing a tactical challenge. The Playstation should rely heavily on fast-paced arcade action. The missions should have a complexity of breadth, providing a skillful challenge.

Audience

- Mass market
- Majority : males 12 - 30 years old
- Instant gratification / Short attention span (shorter version of intro. movie for PSX?)
- Should be able to jump in the game without reading docs
- Should provide an option for a quick-fix of entertainment without a commitment. (easy access to simulator with random gauntlet missions)

Feature List

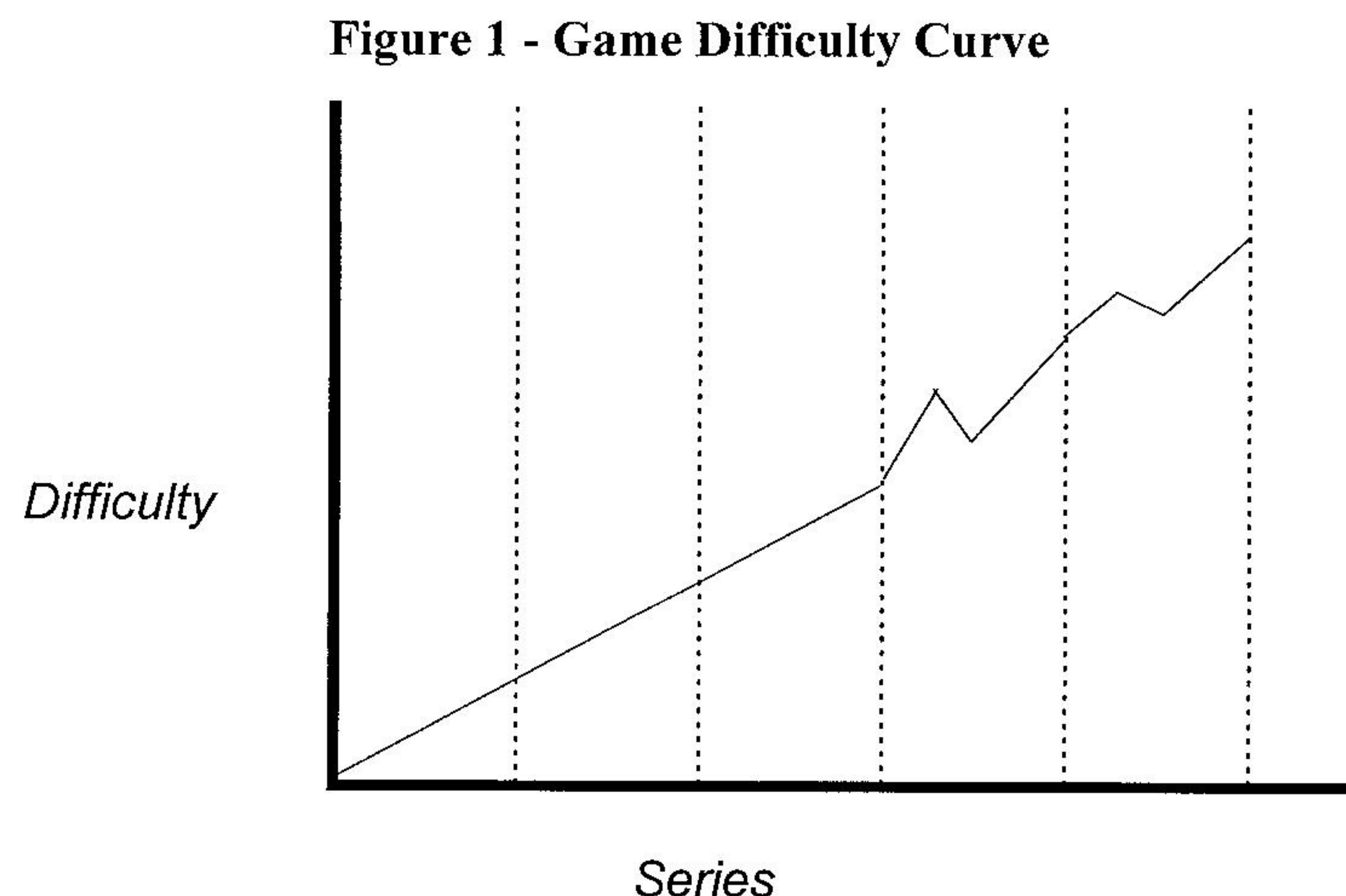
- Dolby Surround Stereo throughout game
- Missions designed specifically for the Playstation
- Simpler Controls
- Gameplay specially designed for Playstation
- Video footage you won't see on the PC!! ??
- New weapons!
- Password and Memory card save
- Supports Analog Joystick
- Supports Mouse Control

Game Experience

- WOW factor
 - ◆ deluge of audio/visual effects
 - ◆ push pixels / use much of the screen
 - ◆ surround sound
 - ◆ examples : weapon and explosion effects to take advantage of hardware
- Entertainment factor
 - ◆ something is always moving on the screen
 - ◆ automation of required actions (auto-pilot, landing)
 - ◆ react when player leaves game unattended (funny comms or PA announcements)
 - ◆ easter eggs (secrets embedded in the missions)
- Simplicity
 - ◆ fewer buttons and controls
 - ◆ intuitive interface
 - ◆ simple weapons interface (2 fire buttons; pre-determined, static loadout)
 - ◆ easy to read HUD displays

Mission / Series Difficulty

The figure below illustrates the difficulty curve for the game. After a steady increase early in the game, the difficulty should rise and fall. New challenges should be presented, followed by a simpler mission, only to move on to more challenges. However, each series should always end on a high-point, analogous to a 'boss' in a Mario style game.



Player Accomplishment / Bragging Rights

Players should receive progress reports after each mission. Statistics such as accuracy, kill percentage, and objective completion will be made available, in addition to an overall score for the mission. There will also be an overall game score (ranking).

Good performance in a series should result in a 'prize'. Each series should bring a sense of completion and accomplishment. The cinematics should complement the mission action, with praise or constructive criticism at the end of a series..

Losing Paths

Regardless of any elements added to make Wing 5 PSX a 'platform' game, the Wing Commander experience should always draw the player into the fiction, incorporating the ideas of success and failure into the story. Therefore, regardless of missions won or lost, the game is always playable until either a winning or losing endgame is seen.

Play Balance

- objectives simplified, but replaced with more action (number of ships and action spheres)
- lower hit points on enemies (easy to kill with a few good shots)
- more missiles available to player
- more afterburner fuel available to player
- NO ability to change action areas in nav map (level of complexity is not needed). Upon completing an action area, auto pilot will kick in and take player to the next area. If an objective is failed, or the player flees from the action, the mission is a failure, and the player will be returned home.

Simplicity of Interface

Many of the complexities in the PC design might be considered superfluous and inappropriate for the platform version. Therefore, much of the interface will be streamlined in favor of a well thought out set of defaults. Some examples include :

Auto-pilot

Upon completing or failing the objectives in an action area, the auto-pilot will automatically take the player to the next area. In the case of failure, the mission is lost and the player is taken home. If the player tries to flee an area, there will first be a warning to return to the mission. If the player continues to flee, the mission will be lost, and the player returned home. Requiring the player to engage auto-pilot and worry about where to go is a break in the entertainment. Our goal is to always keep the player entertained.

Landing

When the player is returned home after completing or failing the mission, an automatic debriefing and landing will take over. Requiring the player to ask for landing clearance is interaction for the sake of interaction. While this might fit the simulation model of the PC, it is another break in the entertainment on the PSX.

Navigation

The player will not have the ability to change and select nav points. This level of complexity is a tactical feature which is beyond the scope of our arcade/entertainment model.

Weapon loadout

Customizable loadouts with the ability to change gun and missile configurations will be streamlined to a default static loadout. Again, the level of complexity is inappropriate for the type of entertainment which the PSX version is providing.