

Tagline:

Welcome to the *Longest Rainy Sunday!* Since the earliest era of video games, there has always been a universally adored constant: Japan's most famous Italian plumber - Mario. No matter the technology, gamers across the world have flocked to purchase and play a wide variety of games that feature Nintendo's posterboy: the basic Mario platformer, Super Mario 64, Super Smash Bros, Super Mario Galaxy, or even the recent Switch-based Super Mario Odyssey. What makes these games so endearing? What can one learn from playing the various games? Lets find out.

Podcast outline

Introduction:

With more than 600 million units sold, the Mario franchise is the most successful video game franchise of all time. The games in the franchise include a variety of different platforming games, as well as racing games and sports games. One game in particular that has seemed to transcend time, having been released in 1996, is Super Mario 64. The premise of the game is like most games in the franchise, Bowser (the villain) kidnaps princess peach, and Mario (the protagonist) has to save her. The difference, however, lies in the mechanics and design of the game, offering players endless opportunities to explore beautiful landscapes and multiple ways of progressing through the story.

Yono: Description of SM64. What makes it different from other Mario games. Talk about how the whole game takes place entirely in a castle, but the addition of painting as portals greatly increase the scope of the game. The game invites creativity.

- Andrew/Yono should do this one
- I can add something about movement / 3D?
- 3D, how the game is actually played. How there are levels in the castle, and stars need to be collected in order achieve higher doors to play

Yono: So one way you can play through is taking time to explore. Finding a hidden portal or a secret stage in maps both new and old is truly exciting, and there are plenty of them. And there are so many ways that players can find ways to succeed - one player beat the final stage without touching the joystick, with his most recent accomplishment being beating a level without jumping.

How one plays is dictated by what they want to get out of the game - do you want to play to finish the game, or play to explore the intricacies?

This mindset lays out a sort of spectrum of Mario 64 players, from the speedrunners to the completionists.

Speedrunning is a category of gameplay that displays true mastery of a game. As the name might imply, a speedrunner is someone who attempts to finish the game or get to a goal

Now this is a very competitive way to play the game, and many try to beat the Mario 64 record of finishing in 6:30, but for those who do not want the pressure or constraint of time, they can play a radically different way.

Talk about casual 100% playthrough.

You have to find all the levels through pictures and paths. The stars you collect in M64 give a little sense of directionality, but in general the path you take both outside the levels and inside are up to you. Many levels have multiple stars to obtain, so you have to explore each level meticulously in order to complete tasks to find them all. involving a lot of probing and telescoping.

While these are popular ways to play Mario 64, most players do not fall at these extremes of the spectrum.

In my experience with the game I was a casual player. This was one of my favorite games as a child, and my experience with the game came in a dark part of my life.

- Andrew personal experience

Played it as a child. It was my favorite game as a child after being diagnosed with cancer. Even after being in the same room for weeks, playing the game made me feel as if I was exploring the world. From climbing snowy mountains to diving into an underwater world, Super Mario 64 helped me escape from my problems. My goal in the game was to find all the stars and explore/find all the levels I could, and it was a really tough task. You are pretty much on your own in the game, with little help. By progressing through the game by myself, and taking the time to find all the tasks to complete in each level, I gained a sense of independence I could not have from anywhere else.

- Just as one can play through Mario 64 as fast as possible to get to the end, or spend time combing through each level to grind out each objective, people carry on through their lives on a spectrum from speedrunning to 100 percenting.
- No matter where you fall on the spectrum, tackling the obstacles to get to the end is indicative of a challenge mindset, where a player is looking at the obstacles in front of them and figuring out the best way to achieve their goals.
- Jane McGonigal writes in SuperBetter that this mindset of picking how to play is called fun framing. This consists of looking at the obstacles ahead of you and figuring out the most fulfilling way to get to your goal.
- Goal oriented people may “run through life”, getting to where they want to go as fast and as efficient as possible - as a premedical student might do on their

journey to become a doctor: having hard and set steps to achieve their goal, while others may take time to explore before finding their calling / destination.

- All told, this is basically asking the question: is life more about the destination or the journey.

- Is your goal to get to your destination, or is it to savor every detail and explore on your journey to a goal.

The ultimate takeaway here is that the game ensures everyone gains something. It doesn't matter if you've never seen Mario before, or if you've played for thousands of hours, by the time you're through, Nintendo will make sure that you will learn something and will have developed a skill set. Whether through exploration, speedrunning, meticulously chasing stars, or probing for the next step in a difficult stage, players of Mario 64 improve in various metrics. A recent article published by Business Insider found that Super Mario 64 players have increased memory retention, strategic thinking, and fine Motor Skills. Players aren't just smarter though, they're also more socially aware, and tend to be more successful in life.

Yono: Quarantine playing: In isolation, Super Mario 64 provides players with an opportunity to play a game that they can spend hours on. And since players have so many ways to succeed while improving their thinking, Super Mario 64 is yet another example of a game perfect for long hours in a static world.

Links:

<https://www.polygon.com/2019/3/4/18250581/super-mario-64-no-joystick-bowser>

<https://www.vg247.com/2020/09/18/super-mario-64-ultimate-guide/>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/playing-nintendo-as-a-kid-makes-you-smarter-2018-6>

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