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My group has decided that we are going to re-create an old 80's arcade game for a mobile phone. In my research to find which game to re-create, I've come to realize that most of the arcade and video games of the era were fun for the same reasons.

First, the controls are not very complicated. There is usually a joystick or directional pad for movement (left, right, up or forward, down or backwards, and diagonal) and usually one (sometimes two) "action" buttons. Because of the simplistic controls, anyone can just walk up to the arcade game, or pick up a controller and play the game. This was very important in the 1980's since video games were only starting to emerge, and they needed to quickly entertain their audience in order to survive.

What was really unique to most of the 1980's video and arcade games that is not present in modern video and computer games is that the player can never "beat" a game. These games basically go on forever, and just increase the difficulty as the levels progress. This makes the game very hard to master, but since it is relatively easy in the beginning so the player wants to continue to play it to get better and better. The majority of these games have both one and two player modes, which gives the players the ability to challenge and compete with each other as well as making it a group activity.

I played over fifty 80's arcade and video games in the last week, and I've realized that I can't distinguish why one game is fun, and then why another game is fun. During this era of video games, every game created was fun for the same reasons; they are easy in the beginning, but there is always an opportunity to improve and demonstrate a player's mastery of the game.

For instance, Pong, one of the simplest games in existence, is fun because it is mostly a two player game, although there is a single player mode in which the player plays against the computer, in which you bounce a ball back and forth across the screen until someone misses it. It is a simple concept that everyone understands and can play; however, it is addicting and leaves a lot of room for the players to master the control of the paddle.

Space Invaders, a much more complex game that involves a fleet of aliens moving back and forth across the screen and down towards your turret, is another example of an 80's arcade game with the same concepts. I personally own an arcade version of Space Invaders in my house, and I've been playing it since I was about five years old. I still can't get past the third fleet of aliens; however, someone who has never played it before can walk up to it, and enjoy the simplicity of the game, and the ease of the first level.

These are all games that anyone can play, they are addictive, and there is always another, even harder level to strive for, and that is why, twenty-five years later, I still love to play them.