

Casual games #1

2015/04/11

This article will list the casual games I enjoyed but didn't think were good enough to get a separate spotlight / review. It will only include games that are at least somewhat good. For all these games you can assume I played the Android version unless I explicitly specify otherwise. I will also include when I reviewed them and which version I played as not every game will be the same on every platform and stay the same over time (feel free to let me know if a game heavily improved or got discontinued). The default sorting of the table will show how close the game was to getting a separate spotlight (higher is better). If you want to try any of the games, click on the version links (this will lead you to their store page).

Some more notes about my preferences:

- I have no objection to a game costing money or having ad's, as long as I feel it's a fair price / not too irritating for the amount of enjoyment I got.
- I generally have not tried the social networking / multiplayer features unless it's explicitly mentioned.
- You can see these as multiple spotlight's at once as I won't go too in-depth for each game. Note: Some of these games have a huge following / their own wiki's dedicated to them.

Here they are:

Name	Review month	Review
One Finger Death Punch  Android (3.8)	2015-02	This game got extremely close to getting a separate post. The only reason it didn't, is because the advertising is really *obnoxious*. For instance, you pretty much have to see an ad after every single fight (which generally last between 10 and 60 seconds). Aside from that pretty much everything in their shop is very over priced. The only thing worth buying is the ODFP membership which gives you quite a bit of value if you log on the next 30 days (it cost me 3 euro's at the time). Having said that, the gameplay is excellent. You literally can play the game with one finger (or two fingers) as your ninja stands in the middle of each level and defends from the threats coming from left and right. Click left to hit to the left, click right to hit to the right. This gameplay is spiced up by lots of speedy action and all kinds of different enemies, items and abilities. All pretty fun. The only disappointing thing to me was that there sometimes was some lag (which is horrible in this type of game) and that the boss fights were pretty lackluster. All in all I played this for roughly a month pretty regularly. There's also a stamina system which I didn't have too much trouble with as you can almost play endlessly due to the stamina you gain from 'friends', level ups and achievements. Note: This wasn't made by the same people that made the PC version (I might spotlight / review that version).

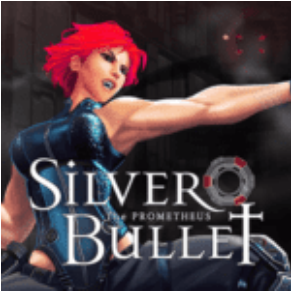
Name	Review month	Review
The Battle of Polytopia  Android (Myriad) iOS (1.6)	2016-12	Polytopia is basically a simplified version of Civilization with a neat minimalist Minecraftesque graphical style set in a virtual world. It's good enough that I'd recommend you try it yourself. The main reason I didn't make it into a separate article is that after two runs I had seen all the content the game had to offer and was pretty much done with it. However, if you are someone that enjoys replaying a game to beat an increasingly difficult AI or if you like optimizing the development of your civilization to maximize the score you can reach then the game will stay interesting much longer. There are a number of different tribes you can play, but those don't seem to change much other than the starting tech. It also has multiple game modes, but once again these don't currently add much variety. There are also no achievements and while there is multiplayer, it is only pass and play. What the game does have is a randomly generated map, tile improvements, combat, wonders and a tech tree of about 30 techs to research. The techs you can research have a lot of influence on what you can do, both with your cities and units, so that part is really well done. You are also forced to choose between spending coins on research, units or improvements, which is a nice way of forcing tough choices. In-game purchases seem to be limited to some additional factions you can unlock, which is fair and nicely done. I might return to this game in the future if it's expanded on.

Name	Review month	Review
Robocide  Android (1.16.3) iOS	2016-04	This is a bit like Clash Royale in that you also fight your opponent one on one in a small arena. There are a few big differences though: First of all, you don't actually fight your opponent real-time, instead you fight a pre-made defense they set up. Secondly, you fight with two titans (chosen at the start of the battle & there are about 10 robots to choose from) and lots of small robots (with no special abilities). Thirdly there are a large number of different set up arena's (and the pre-made defense can be customized, so there's much more diversity in the map). Another difference with Clash Royale is that there's a campaign mode, in which you fight the AI in specific custom levels (there are about 50 of these). Each campaign level rewards you with common or rarer equipment pieces which can be used to upgrade your titans / robots. All in all, this game feels much more balanced then Clash Royale as unlocking & upgrading the robots / titans doesn't take extremely long. Also you can play for a decent amount of time at once (you have limited energy, but that recharges pretty quickly). It's weaknesses are that even though the titans abilities are very interesting & diverse, the campaign & arena battles do become boring pretty quickly (mostly as you are only fighting AI & the campaign levels are never any different). Secondly the game play itself becomes boring; you can only do two things: Place down a titan / use it's abilities and direct your robot army. This game kept me playing quite a bit longer then Castle Clash though; mostly due to the achievements which are generally well thought out & the much quicker feeling of advancement. There are also alliances (which are pretty useless except for the temporary boosts for you / your alliance) & there's a 'how long can you survive' mode which is also fun to try a few times.

Name	Review month	Review
Hungry Shark Evolution  Android (1.1.0) iOS (2.8.0)	2014-12	Fun action game in which you control a shark and eat things in the ocean (not just fish). You get to become incrementally powerful and there's a nice number of sharks to upgrade to. I played it casually, playing for free, for a few weeks and got up to the Great White Shark. By that point you can beat most of the stuff in the ocean and it becomes pretty grindy (or expensive) towards the even higher tiers of sharks. If you are going to play it I'd recommend not getting any upgrades on sharks, but saving coins for the next shark tier (weirdly that that seems to work better). I'd also recommended buying the items that give extra gold percentage. And do the missions for each shark as they give nice rewards. The reason this didn't make the cut is the amount of grinding to proceed and that it gets pretty repetitive after a while (unless you want to pay quite a bit). Still, being able to grow from a small shark to a huge shark and eat half the ocean was fun! Note: multiplayer seems to be purely a points race (only tried that once, then didn't bother with it anymore).

Name	Review month	Review
Marvel Puzzle Quest  Android R66 iOS R66 PC R66	2014-12	If you enjoy a tile-matching video game you'll probably enjoy this game. You get to build a team of heroes and / or villains from the Marvel universe and use them in matches in which you do battles by matching tiles. You fight with a team of three superheroes and you activate their superpowers by collecting a certain number of a specific colour. The gameplay is divided between story missions (which are really not that interesting story wise) and player events in which you compete with / against other players. However both are basically matches against the AI as you can't control your team against another player (which is one of the main weak points in my opinion). The second main weak point is that to really play competitively you'd have to either spend lots of money or invest a huge amount of time (or both, levelling rarer characters is very hard). I'd really recommend against that as the game is to grindy / cheater prone right now. However, I do enjoy logging in once in a while for the collecting of the different heroes / relaxing gameplay. Tip: Don't use gold on anything but adding more hero slots as you'll always be in need of more of those (I'm up to 25 or so, playing for free).

Name	Review month	Review
Prime World Defenders  Android 1.7.4 iOS 1.7.4 PC	2015-03	This tower defense game simply didn't feel fun enough to me to really spotlight separately. I played it to the end on Heroic, but it was a bit too repetitive and for one level (level 17) I had to grind for almost a week before I could beat it. That was not fun. Initially it intrigued me with it's upgrade mechanic for the towers as you can only upgrade your towers to rank 2 or 3 by merging them with another tower of the same kind (twice for level 3). Also, you can level up your individual towers by forging them with other towers (of which you have duplicate's). And they distinguish between multiple tiers of towers (purple's / unique's being the best). Tip: Use the stars you get on the 20-gold pack with 3 unique's, it's worth until you have a few purple's that can go up to rank 3. There is a decent amount of diversity in terms of levels, towers and enemies, which is good (there's also a Heroic mode and Survival mode). However, you pretty much have to grind until you have some maximum level purple towers or you won't beat some levels. This is probably a consequence of their upgrade system, but this made me dislike the game. I would have preferred to feel like what I'm doing matters more as simply using my towers smartly isn't sufficient to beat levels. Monetization is done decently, it's not too annoying and you get sufficient amounts of in-game currency to make steady progress for free. Prices however, are pretty ridiculous (as they often are). Graphics wise it's a great looking game.

Name	Review month	Review
Silver Bullet: Prometheus  Android 2.2.12 iOS 2.1.00 PC	2017-02	Game play wise this game pretty much feels like a combination of Diablo and Resident Evil. You play as Kali, the legendary 'Goddess of Death' that is an agent for a demon hunting organization. The game is extremely action heavy as most missions involve shooting lots of enemies with your two silver guns (and grenades). It has 46 missions right now (each mission can be played in a few minutes which is why it's in the casual games category) and while I initially thought the level design was boring / average at best, the last 20 levels or so get much more interesting in terms of gameplay, bosses and level design. A nice touch is that the targeting is automated / very easy and that your guns can target separate enemies (which looks pretty cool). The dialogue and story starts off extremely generic Resident Evil style and while the dialogue doesn't get any better, the latter part of the story line does have enough twists and crazy stuff happening that I ended up enjoying the B-movie extremeness of it all. Kali powers up by picking up randomly dropped "Demon Souls" that can be used to improve her stats and by picking up clips that extend her max ammo capacity. Difficulty wise it's pretty tough for the last 10 levels or so (at normal difficulty). I had to grind for a bit (about an hour to get to level 60) by replaying previous levels (I can recommend level 23 for this) before I could finish the game and I still had to use about 15-20 revival crosses on the last boss (note: last boss requires specific strategies). Replay wise there are a lot of hidden achievements and an endless dungeon. The game is so simplistic though that I was pretty much done with it after finishing it and had no interest in playing further. All in all I can't recommend it at it's current price (5 euro's).

Name	Review month	Review
Clash Royale  Android 1.2.0 iOS 1.2.0	2016-02	This is a real-time multiplayer game in which you can duel other people one on one. In a duel you play in a small one screen arena in which you play your cards (units / buildings / spells) to fight with. The goal is to use those to destroy the opponents three castles. There is a time limit & whoever destroys the most buildings within the time limit wins. This is kept fresh because each player pre-selects a deck (8 cards) to play with. Four of these are available at any given time and once you use one another one replaces it. Each card has a cost & your energy recharges during the duel; so there's a lot of tactical decision making going on (i.e. do I save up to play multiple cards at once?). All in all, this was pretty fun. So why is this on this list? Multiple reasons. First of all, there are different arena's, but every arena is only graphically different. Secondly, there's only one game mode, duelling one on one. Thirdly, you can upgrade your cards, which is a nice mechanic, but to get them to a decent level you have to grind for a long time (or spend lots of money). And finally at the time of writing this, there was no real reason to continue playing once you had all your chests slot filled (you can unlock chests, but those take 3-24 hours to unlock and you only have 4 slots in which to place chests).

Name	Review month	Review
Card Crawl  Android 2.1 iOS 2.1	2015-11	This is a pretty simple card game in which the goal is to survive exploring a dungeon. The dungeon is simulated by having a dungeon master deal four cards (which can be swords, shields, health, coins, monsters and special abilities) each turn. Once you manage to survive 54 cards, you win the dungeon. The concept is very nicely done and the art looks good. However, the game play is a bit too boring for my taste. After 3-4 games (15 minutes or so) I had the feeling I'd seen it all and there was no real way to do better except from grinding (and the special abilities are not that interesting). There are a number of extra options, but most seem to change cosmetics. The daily dungeon sounds somewhat interesting, but initially it was blocked by a pay wall; now it needs you to watch a video (which didn't work for me). Anyway, I can only recommend this for a few minutes until there's a bit more diversity.

Name	Review month	Review
Galaga Wars  Android 2.1.2.475 iOS 2.0.1	2016-12	If you want a good shoot 'em up go for Skyforce instead of Super Galaga. Mechanically and graphically the game is fine (it plays fluidly for instance). It's just not interesting enough. The enemies are pretty generic and the boss fights so far are pretty similar (the same boss is reused continually). Another mistake I think they made with this game is how it handles power-ups. Most are so powerful that you can blast through waves effortlessly while it lasts. And without one the game is quite hard, so you are mostly trying to survive until you can get your next power-up. You can slowly upgrade their power & duration between runs, but that doesn't seem very helpful and sadly there's nothing else to permanently improve your chances. Because of this and because there's nothing else to do in the game grinding seems mostly pointless. The game has 11 stages which run identical each time you play. You can warp to a later stage directly, but this does require unlocking it first and paying some grindable currency each time you warp. There are also other ships, but these are only unlockable by paying for them and as far as I can tell they only have different power-ups. Finally the game has a bit too much advertising; next to the option to buy ships and watch videos to warp / keep playing there are also random ads that pop up sometimes.

Name	Review month	Review
OPUS: The Day We Found Earth  Android 1.1.0 iOS 1.1.0 PC	2015-11	This is a game I came in expecting to enjoy. I saw it was about space exploration and that it was being compared with Monument Valley. However, the game play simply is not interesting / too repetitive; you move a telescope to a set of coordinates and that's basically all there is to it. The spaceship does unlock slowly giving you access to more information / things to interact with on the ship, but those are interesting for a minute or so. Another thing is that the initial story line didn't grip me enough to continue past the pay wall (which is at 10 planets). Probably partly because the dialogue seems to be aimed to be understandable for small children & it feels like the game moves at a snail pace. On the positive side: The art is very pretty (with a cutesy main character), so this might be for you if you enjoy nice art & don't mind puzzle games that move very slowly along.

Name	Review month	Review
Godus  Android 0.0.16 iOS 1.8 PC	2014-12	Another god game of the creator of the classic Populous in which you play the god over a tribe. I've added this to this casual category as right now I feel it is mostly that. The main reason being is that a lot of things in the game cost a number of hours (or even days) to complete. I've played for about two weeks now and am only now done with the first world (the second world plays identical to the first so I'm done with the game). This slow pacing and the limited amount of stuff that happens / can happen is what I feel makes it not interesting enough right now (it does look great though). For instance: There is an opposing faction but right now it pretty much just sits and does nothing. Also, you only can build 3-4 type's of buildings and most of the extra spells / shrine's are not needed for the basic game play. I did enjoy sculpting my first world (naturally you can raise / lower the land), discovering new technologies and working towards the specific objectives the game sets for you. However, once you get all technologies and have done some objectives, it just becomes more of the same. Note: A nifty feature is that there are hidden buildings under the mountains and you can excavate those for extra bonus. I'd definitely recommend excavating those. Finally, the monetization: It's not very bad as what you buy speeds up progress, but prices are way too high for what you can get in a few hours.