

Rhythm Games

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Osu!

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1996 was when the world's first influential Rhythm game came out. PaRappa the Rapper featured a rapping dog in a martial arts styled classroom and had you click the correct buttons to the beat. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5Pm7BL-hyo> [Start at 2:10]) About a year later, Konami (Creators of Yu-Gi-Oh) took influence from Sony's PaRappa the Rapper and made their own version of a rhythm game named Beatmania and released it in Japanese arcades. Beatmania made Rhythm games spiral up in popularity within the Japan marketplace increasing the popularity of it's genre.

A few decades later (not including all the actual rhythm games made in between those decades), Nintendo took inspiration of the Rhythm game genre and created a game called Osu! Tatakae! Ouendan. (haha you know where im going with this) Osu! Tatakae! Ouendan (Commonly referred to as Ouendan), was released as a Japanese exclusive for the Nintendo DS (a handheld portable console made by Nintendo). Ouendan was a level based game that featured a squadron of males cheering on characters ingame that were facing a problem. To play the game, you were to click circles with your stylus pen/finger with the correct timing.

It was a beautiful sunny day when osu!'s future creator, Dean Herbert, moved to Japan. Dean was curious about Ouendan and attempted to make a port/simulator onto PC. He spent 16 hours coding his own version of what he called "Ouentest". Soon, in July 2007 Herbert released Ouentest as a public beta.

(<http://web.archive.org/web/20071011215306/http://osu.ppy.sh:80/index.php?p=about> old osu! site) On Ouentest's first release, it was released under the name osu!. Osu! Back then plays the same as it plays today but had less features. Osu! Only included the game itself and an automatic updater instead of it's current multiple game modes like Taiko, Mania and Catch the Beat.

The Taiko gamemode features the player playing the Taiko (A chinese drum) using usually the Z ,X, C and V keys on your keyboard. Taiko, which was originally based of the game Taiko: Drum Masters which had you use a Taiko drum commonly found at arcades to hit the drum's rim or center piece based on what color appeared. If a blue circle appears you hit the rim, if a red appears you hit the middle. Sometimes, Taiko has you do a drum roll where you just have to alternate hitting both the rim and center as fast as you can.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKgHenKe6S0> Taiko Gameplay)

Mania is gamemode based solely off of Beatmania. Osu! Mania played and looked very similar to Beatmania. It had the same design and gameplay features that had you press specific buttons to the right timing, it's sorta like playing a piano!

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTdjom8QDNM> Mania gameplay)

Catch the Beat (Commonly referred to as CTB) was based off the game EZ2Catch and features a character holding a plate and having the player control the character to catch fruits falling from the sky. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeshLRwRetk> CTB Gameplay)

Many small things like AR OD or CS can determine how difficult a beatmap (A song mapped by a player) is. AR is Approach rate. The higher the AR the faster the circles will appear on the map. (AR 10, appears incredibly fast, AR 5, appears slow) AR 8-9 is what people usually map beatmaps on today. CS is Circle Size. This can determine the size of how the circles appear on the map. The higher the CS the smaller the circle. OD determines your overall difficulty with how accurate you have to be. I.e if the OD is set at 0, you could hit a circle 79.5ms early and still hit a perfect. If OD is at 10, you would have to hit less than 19.5ms to hit a perfect. HP Drain determines how fast your HP goes throughout the song. If your HP Drain is at 10 you'd lose HP much faster than having it at HP Drain 1.

When 2007 came along, Dean implemented a few new mods to osu! These mods can increase/decrease the difficulty of beatmaps by adjusting the AR OD CS or speed in general. The mods that were implemented were; Easy, NoFail and Halftime (The mods that decrease beatmap difficulty) Hardrock, SuddenDeath/Perfect, Doubletime/Nightcore, Hidden and Flashlight (The mods that increase difficulty) Relax, AutoPilot, SpunOut and Auto/Cinema (Extra mods)

Using the Easy mod reduces the beatmap's overall AR CS and OD and will also give you 2 other chances if you fail. The NoFail mod doesn't do anything to your overall AR OD or CS but whenever your health reaches Zero, you don't fail the song immediately. Halftime effects the song speed and just halves the song speed. (There are mods for CTB Mania and Taiko too but I won't include them. Takes too long xppp)

Hardrock will higher the CS and flip the beatmap. Sudden Death makes you fail if you miss as note while Perfect forces you to hit 300s only. Hitting a 100 50 or just missing in general will make you fail. Using doubletime increases the speed of the song to 1.5x it's speed. Nightcore does the same but it increases the song's pitch too. Hidden removes the approach circles for the whole song. It can be used as a training technique to train your ears to click to the beat. Flashlight darkens the whole screen but a small area around your cursor. While using Flashlight you would need to heavily rely on your memory of the beatmap.

The Extra mods don't increase or decrease beatmap difficulty but it does add a few new features. The Relax mod allows you to move your cursor without clicking the circles as it does that automatically. Using the Relax mod is really good for warmups or just aim training in general. Autopilot is quite similar to Relax, but instead of only moving the cursors, you only need to click to the beat instead. Autopilot is good for training your streaming speeds or endurance if you play stream based beatmaps. Spunout automatically spins spinners for you. Using auto will show you an automated replay of the map done by osu!'s bot. Using the cinema map will only show the background video and audio. You could literally watch videos off osu! with the Cinema mod.

When 2008 came along Bancho and Multiplayer was introduced. Bancho allowed players to spectate others and extended osu!'s chat features. Multiplayer had player-hosted

lobbies and allowed others to compete against each other without much of a struggle. Multiplayer introduced the community to a whole new side of osu!. With the multiplayer update, people hosted tournaments for prizes like 3 months of an osu! supporter tag (more in game features) to real money.

The rhythm genre of gaming has come a long way and provided us with many different experiences and many different challenges from 1996 up until now. From the first, Parappa the Rapper, to one of the most popular rhythm games, osu!, has grown and will hopefully keep growing our community and add a various amount sub-genres for rhythm games. I wish for the best within the rhythm game genre. Shall we make the wish come true.