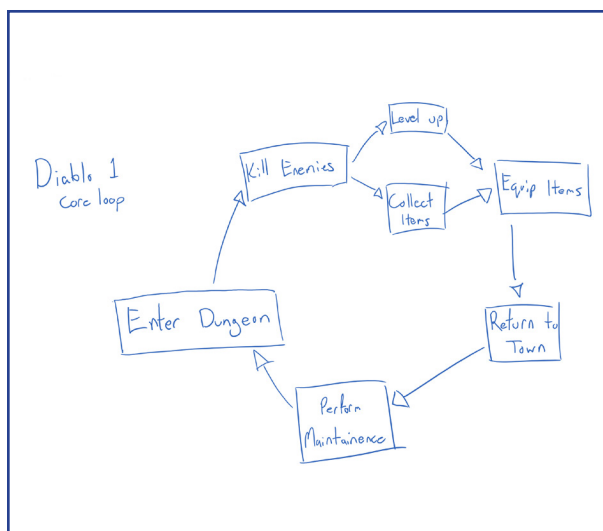
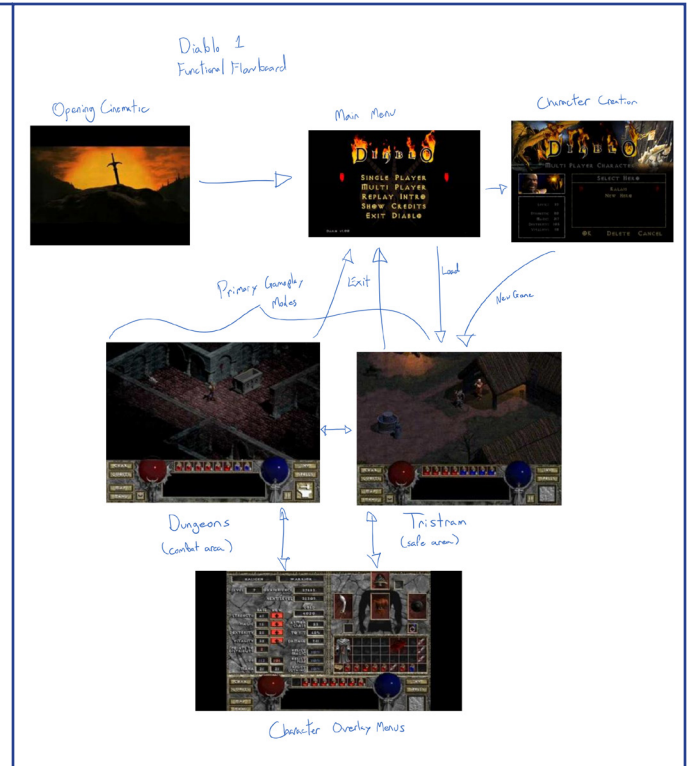


Critique 2 - Diablo and Jazzpunk

Diablo

In Diablo, the game is structured around two primary gameplay modes – Tristram and the Dungeons. The player begins the game in the Tristram gameplay mode, which is when the player is in the town of Tristram. Here, players can walk around and talk to the game’s NPCs to buy and repair equipment, learn spells, buy potions, get healed, and get quests. This is the safe zone of the game, no combat is allowed, even between other players in a multiplayer game. The other primary gameplay mode is the Dungeons, where the player does battle to progress in the game. Here, the player must navigate the procedurally generated maze while fighting monsters to gain experience, as well as collecting items. Switching between these modes involves entering the dungeons from entry points within the town. As you get further into the dungeons, more entry points will unlock. For example, there may be 3 or 4 levels of the church Labyrinth, but the 5th level will be the 1st level of the Catacombs, which will unlock a new entry point in town. The player can also find and purchase Scrolls of Town Portal, which can create a one-time use portal back to town. To customize their character, the player is given several menus split up into two panes on the left and right of the screen. If both panes are open, the main gameplay mode is completely covered from the screen, so this could arguably be described as another gameplay mode. It’s clear however that the decision to split these panes was a deliberate attempt to not force the player to leave the primary gameplay mode. For example, the player is able to manage their inventory while still being able to move around and attack. Gameplay also does not pause while these menus are displayed, so the player must always be ready to fight if not in town. This aspect helps create the separation between the safety of town and the danger of the dungeons.



In the core loop of Diablo, the player cycles between entering the dungeon to level up and collect items, and returning to town to perform character maintenance. Collecting items and leveling up must be done in tandem, as the items will increase statistical requirements that can only be met by leveling up. Character maintenance involves turning in and receiving quests, learning new spells, repairing and purchasing gear, buying potions, and healing up. The smart depth comes in how the player chooses to equip and build their character, as well as how far to push into the dungeon before returning to town. It’s entirely possible to rush through the mazes to the end of the game, but without fighting monsters and leveling up, the player will have no chances against the high level opponents deeper in the dungeon. While this aspect of pushing

your chances can create interesting moments of tension, it can also become frustrating for players who never want to retreat. It also does not work well with the game's death mechanics, which require you to find your previous corpse to recover items lost upon death. The player might find that their corpse lies in an area laden with monsters which were already too tough to fight with your gear, and now you have to face them without it. Later entries in the Diablo series addressed these issues, but often at the expense of losing the risk-reward gameplay.

Jazzpunk



The gameplay in Jazzpunk is structured in a less standard way. The primary gameplay mode is the player in a first person view exploring one of the mission areas. These areas are free roaming and non-linear, with sub-modes peppered throughout. Completing the mission area involves finding all the necessary tasks within the mission area and completing them within their unique sub-modes. For example, one of the first tasks you find in the first mission area is when you pick up a weapon called "the Degausser". The player enters a first person shooter mode where they must degauss (shoot down) pigeons in the area. A wide variety of these sub-modes are found in Jazzpunk. Once a mission area is complete, they get a transitional cutscene and are transported to a subway station, where they will be briefed on the next mission. This structure forms the game's core loop. While the variety in gameplay modes creates an interesting experience, it lacks forms of smart depth due to their sparse and self-contained nature. Players do not spend a lot of time in one particular mode, and they have no effect on each other

