Game Critique: 
Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego

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COMP585 – SERIOUS GAMES
Overview and History

- Creators: Gary Carlston, Dane Bigham
- Company: Broderbund Software
- Category: “Edutainment”
- Educational Goals: Geography and History
- Platform: Basically anything besides mobile. Originally released for Apple II.

Timeline Highlights:
- 1985: Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?
- 1986: Where in the U.S.A. is Carmen Sandiego?
- 2012: Carmen Sandiego on Facebook*

*Note: However, this game has primarily been played via CD-ROM.
Main Goal: Capture Carmen Sandiego
Sub-goals: Capture her cohorts
Story Plot:
  - User is investigator for A.C.M.E. Detective Agency and trying to capture Carmen
Formula:
  - User alerted that crime has occurred
  - User solves clues and tracks criminal over multiple countries
    - Along the way build a profile of the criminal
  - Capture criminal, receive next case
  - Game ends when Carmen is captured
Game Design

- Game world is representative of the real world. Creates cultural environment.
  - Backgrounds
  - Cultural Music
    - http://www.folkways.si.edu/where-in-the-world-is-carmen-sandiego/music/playlist/smithsonian
- Clues
  - Create meaningful and educational game play
    - Learn about geography/countries with goal of finding criminals
  - Include literary techniques
  - Contains cultural and historical information about particular countries
- Feedback is immediate
  - Cute animation if user travels to correct country
Characters

- User
- Carmen Sandiego
  - Awesome female supervillain; mysterious, illusive
- A.C.M.E. Chief
  - Narrator of the game; outlines the beginning and ending of each case
  - Motivational
- Villains
  - Lack personality but have pun-ny names
- Pedestrians
  - Characters that the user interacts with the most but is the least developed
  - Appears to be the same figures on rotation in different countries with different prompts
  - Make it seem as though the natives of each country are American ex-pats
User Interaction Explanation
Issue of Geography Covered
Success at Home and in the Classroom

- **Gender Neutrality**
  - Interesting to both male and female players; narrowed gender gap
  - Users never prompted to choose gender or avatar
  - Absence of elements that stereotypically separate female and male games (dolls/cosmetics vs guns/violence)

- **Integration into Classrooms**
  - Pacified society’s aversion to classroom technology; included paper Atlas
  - Effective in actually teaching geography

- Synergistic relationship between school and home added to Carmen’s success
Youtube Demo of Carmen

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-q8Hd-NLIY