bit.ly/electro585

Jake Bernstein
5 March 2015
Introduction

“How is energy generated? How much does it cost? How does it affect the environment?”

“ElectroCity was developed to increase public awareness – particularly among students – of the basic "common knowledge" of these topics. That is, the general terms and concepts of the industry and the dilemmas that go along with them.”
Introduction ...

“ElectroCity is proudly brought to you by Genesis Energy. **Genesis Energy is a leading generator and retailer of energy in New Zealand.** It generates electricity from a range of sources including gas, coal, wind and water.”
Q: Does the game have a political agenda or bias?

A: ElectroCity was developed by gamers with a love of SimCity, Civilization, the Sims and other popular 'civic simulation' computer games, rather than a political think-tank! The goal has been to represent reality as best we can, in a simplified and fun world.
So... Nuclear?
So... Nuclear?
Introduction...

• Released in May 2007
• Web Game but also limited version available for Mac/PC download
Characters

Yes, you.
You control the Information Age.
Welcome to your world.
Gameplay

• Choose how to allocate resources in order to satisfy citizens and create a sustainable state!
• Divided into 150 discrete periods of time
• User can make policy and implementation decisions that impact the population ...
Gameplay

• Project Implementation
  – Energy
    • Non-renewable energy
    • Renewables
  – Tourism/Happiness
    • Airports, Beaches, Stadiums, etc.

• Policies
  – Energy efficiency: subsidize energy efficient bulbs.
  – Local “Body” Rates (aka Tax)
Gameplay

• Emergent Gameplay:
  – How to make player feel they have unlimited options with limited actions!
  – The key to innovative games!

• ElectroCity
  – Feels unlimited ... until you play 10 times and most options lead to similar outcomes
  – Diminishing benefit of replay
Goals

• Central Goal: Teach kids the basics of energy management

• Scoring: “Not a win or lose game” but ... Highest overall score “wins”
  – Energy Management
  – Population
  – Environment
  – Popularity
CONGRATULATIONS!
The city of kmml has survived for 150 turns under your rule and people still want to live there. Incredible! Now it's time to retire and bask in your glory.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT    YOUR POPULARITY    YOUR POPULATION    YOUR ENVIRONMENT

A-     A+     B+     A+

You did a great job of managing your city's energy demands. Well done!

OVERALL SCORE: 91 / A-

NOW SHOW OFF YOUR TOWN!
click “SAVE & SHOW OFF” to save your town and go to a screen where you can give your town a description and publish it for everybody to view!

SAVE AND SHOW OFF
Game Design Choices

• Simple, but well designed game world
• Limited graphics/visual interactions places focus on feature set and learnings
• Feedback is provided after every turn—but through a very simplistic model
Room for Improvement

• Goals/Achievement: Allow other goal tasks than simply “achieve highest score”
  – Build a city with 50,000 people that has a perfect energy score
  – Make the most money

• Sandbox mode?
  – Company promotes the game as if very flexible... but not really
As a serious game...

• Not replayable

• Player learns ...
  – importance of resource management
  – the difficulty of balancing happiness + environment in a large community
  – Specifics about energy types? *Not really*

• Successful! In getting target age group interested!
Demo!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lo4-JTW_e3c