Audience Analysis

Genre: Our game fits into the popular Side Scrolling Platformer genre; it will be both similar to platform games of old, such as the classic Mario Bros. and new-wave platformers such as Rayman Origins, with its own unique twist to differentiate it from others and keep the target market interested.

The recent development and return of refined 2D side scrolling games on both PCs and consoles (including Limbo, Super Meat Boy, Dust and Terraria) has signalled a return of the huge market that this genre once had, so our game should have a mass appeal to many fans of platformer games.

Although the game isn't a full console release, the gaming audience now have a wider recognition for the platforming game market due to the popularity of web and mobile games, most of which are 2D games like ours.

Age Group: Whilst our main target is those over 15 years old, with an average player age of around 30 years old, our target market is very wide, ranging from lovers of old school platformers to the new wave of sidescrolling fans. Some aspects of the game may be violent or offensive, however, and the references we're incorporating into our game will mostly please people who have been gaming for a long time, so our market is essentially anyone above the age of fifteen with a keen love of gaming.

Technology Abilities: Basic computer knowledge is, naturally, required to play our game. This isn't a worry, however, as most of the target audience should have had some experience with computer games before.

2D side scroller games usually have straightforward, easy to learn controls, too, so it won't be too difficult for newcomers to get to grips with the game. As the game progresses, different key combinations (tools the robot will find) will be unlocked at a steady pace to allow the player to gradually learn the new additional commands, allowing for a smooth difficulty curve throughout.

Constraints: Players who are too serious and do not accept the tongue-in-cheek humor that the game provides may not enjoy it, but we're looking to please everyone. The game features single player gameplay, however, so those looking for a multiplayer title might look past our game.

Audience Type: We're appealing to casual, hardcore and retro gamers alike; knowledge of games is not essential but useful to help understand many humorous references throughout. People who are light-hearted will enjoy the fun, humorous and over-the-top platforming experience that are game provides, but other players may find it unfunny or perhaps offensive, though we'll try to combat this.

Analysis of the Target Platform (HTML5)

Why HTML5?: HTML5 is our target platform because it has good enough programming capabilities to produce a well-made 2D/2.5D game for both web browsers and mobile devices. It also makes it easier to implement on to a webpage since the code is almost the same as regular javascript.

A great tool that can be used to implement HTML5 games is Tubuloo, which allows easy testing and easy production of games, also allowing the user to make the games as complex as they want it to be, depending on their own programming skill. The implementation of graphics and drawing capabilities in HTML5 are great, allowing for a lot of different sprites to be implemented into the games as sprite maps and such, as well as implement it easily on their webpage.

Canvas: The main reason HTML5 has become a great games development system is due to the canvas tags; these allow the developer to create games and other interactive forms for the users. HTML5 uses canvas for the drawing plane and users can add a whole variety of images and other objects into the area that can each be individually programmed. This allows developers to create characters as well as many other useful things.

Tubuloo: Tubuloo is a great program for developers to use to make games; the games that you can create using Tubuloo are basically dependent on your programming skill - you can create a lot of simple games using this program but if you put a lot more effort and time into your work, then you can produce some seriously nice looking and complex games. The program allows levels, characters and other gameplay elements to be easily interacted with, which can be programmed very easily.

Competitor Analysis

Competitors: Competitors in the side scrolling platformer genre include Nintendo, who are still making very popular games, including New Super Mario Bros., Paper Mario and Donkey Kong Country, which also feature 3D graphics that make it stand out from the archaic SNES and Megadrive era.

The Xbox Live Arcade, the PlayStation Network and the PC platform Steam have become a new market for downloadable 2D platformer games, with some really unique and great releases, even recently, including the over-the-top Hell Yeah! and the brilliant retro-inspired platformer Fez.

Our main web-based competitors include such sites as '2DPlay' and 'MoFunZone' that host tonnes of games online, available to the public. Other competitors also include various indie game developers that are using technology that isn't too different from what we're doing.

Keeping an eye on these competitors is key, but for now, we're very safe making a 2D sidescrolling platformer as the genre hasn't become too overcrowded and there's still room for many more unique takes on the platforming formula; it's a genre that stretches back to the very start of gaming, so we have a lot of competitors in the gaming world - both old and new.

Comparisons throughout History: Beginning with single screen titles in the early 80s, platformers have always been a fun and interesting genre of games. The genre really exploded onto the gaming scene with the release of the original Super Mario Bros. in 1985, which spawned the most iconic game character of all time. Games such as Metroid, Mega Man and Sonic continued this on with early consoles bringing us Samus Aran, Mega Man and Sonic the Hedgehog, who are all very recognisable in the gaming world.

Since then many other developers have created memorable and lovable characters whilst also adding their own twist to the platforming genre; with the move to 3D gaming environments, platformers became ever more prominent and games like Spyro, Gex and Crash Bandicoot - which all released in the mid 90s - are still remembered and loved today.

Along with the creation of iconic characters, all of these games lured the player in with a strong but simple plot line - a quest given to the character at the start of the game provided the player with a want to see their beloved character achieving victory, be that saving a princess or collecting chaos emeralds; these ploys have always kept players interested to the end.

Taking all of this into consideration, our game's main character will be critical to the games success, so we will strive to create an iconic and likeable character.

Art Style and Comparisons: A more cartoon-like art style has been seen to be the most popular over the years although recently games such as Trine have seen success using more detailed graphics and environments.

Whilst modern cartoon-styled looking games are generally aimed more towards casual and younger players, as to not be taken too seriously, we think that it suits our game well, since it's a funny and silly styled game, much like most apps today, a prime example of which being the extremely popular Angry Birds.

Mario, a gaming icon who hasn't really evolved much compared to other games over the years, for example, is the star of one of the best and most memorable 2D platformer games. Mario maintained an obvious cartoon like style over the years and still keeps some of its good old retro looks, so players can relate with the style.

Metal Slug features characters which are still obviously cartoonish, but the use of more detailed realistic backgrounds adds a whole new element to a simple 2D platformer. The characters and sprites in Metal Slug have an almost cel-shaded effect to them which helps to add detail, but in turn makes them look cartoonish and unrealistic due to the thick black lines bordering them.

Metroid is another classic in the games industry, which was made so due to the fact it tried to be realistic in the futuristic science fiction genre. Metroid was another game which was limited by how complex and detailed the characters could be, therefore limiting the realism of the game. This was made better by the use of the more realistic backgrounds unlike Mario and Sonic which had basic cartoonish backgrounds.

As this game is intended to be developed in HTML5 and for use on multiple platforms including mobile devices and on the web, a graphic style akin to the earlier games of the genre would be the best choice for us, but we're going to try and emulate a style that merges all of the brilliant visuals of the mentioned games.

In Conclusion...

Whilst we've got some stiff competition out there - since there are so many good sidescrolling platformer games - the market shouldn't be too tough to crack, since it has a very wide appeal. Hopefully, by developing this game in HTML5, we will be able to create a fun, unique experience that can stand tall aside our competitors' games.