Piano Hero: An Ethical Outlook

In an attempt to take an ethical look at Piano Hero, one must know the basics about the program. Piano Hero is the first piano-simulation video game to ever be created for mass consumption. The object of the game is much like any other Guitar Hero or Rock Band game, where the player’s goal is to obtain the highest score and proficiency possible by hitting as many notes as they can. But before one can enjoy Piano Hero, they must know the ethical issues we took into account while developing the game.

To begin, we found that the biggest areas of concern are the issues of copyright and privacy. For Piano Hero, a solely music-based game, we were required to dissect songs down to individual notes and chords. The problem was, that unfortunately in the music world today pretty much every song is copyrighted to the artist. Therefore, it made any song we wanted to use pretty much untouchable without consent of the artist. So, to legally use songs we are now using free versions of the songs and in the most severe situations, recording them ourselves with our limited piano skills. The issue of privacy is, that with our code is that anyone can take any song, copyright or no, and add it in themselves. This is a problem, because there are people out there, that do not have the upstanding moral fiber of we three gentlemen, that would take advantage of this and break the law.
Other ethical issues include the experience of Piano Hero and the safety hazards involved. The general public will love this game, making their quality of life sky rocket. However, there is that community of game developers whose quality of life will go down, because everybody will be playing piano hero and have no need to buy any other games. Piano Hero may be the greatest game ever made yes, but there are some dangers to it. Players may experience carpel tunnel from just rocking out too hard, and temporary blindness from the sheer beauty of the graphics and gameplay. Making people, especially teenagers, wallow in playing Piano Hero will be another ethical issue.

The fun of playing Piano Hero will attract people to keep going. Although each song only lasts for around three or four minutes, it is hard for people to stop playing the next one, but easy for them to forget about the time. This issue is more serious and common on teenagers and children, because usually they do not have great abilities for self-control. It is just kids’ nature to favor playing games, like playing Piano Hero. There are also lots of examples showing children wallow in playing games and neglect their studies, but most game design companies do not care much about this, and they still treat children as their major potential customs. So while designing Piano Hero, it may be quite necessary to think about this problem.

All in all, there are some ethical issues to Piano Hero, some very serious some not so much, but the important thing in the end though solving these issues and enjoying the awesome power of Piano Hero!