

ABSTRACT

Title: Morality systems and emergent gameplay:

Can morality systems as a game mechanic help create emergent gameplay?

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The evolution of games as a medium has led to the creation of many new game mechanics that define what the player will do during the play experience. One of the most notable game mechanics that has become widely used is known as the morality system. This game mechanic allows the player to make choices during moral dilemmas which may have consequences for the rest of the game. The concept of emergent gameplay is also a relatively new addition to video game design theory and is concerned with the interaction between relatively simple rules that lead to complex and dynamic gameplay. This paper questions if it is possible to create emergent gameplay in video games that use the morality system as a game mechanic.

The research contained in this paper involves the analysis of four video games that utilise the morality system in order to determine if emergent gameplay stemming from this game mechanic is possible. The findings have shown that emergent gameplay is only possible when the morality system is able to influence many elements of the game and is not confined to predefined examples of moral decisions such as menu screens and dialogue systems. The research shows that the linking of the morality system to other game mechanics increases the possibility for dynamic interactions between relatively simple rules that can sometimes create emergent gameplay. This may aid in the development of games that can push the creative limits of the medium. The research concludes with some recommendations for further study.