

The Impact of Roles on Decision-making in RPGs

Ignacio X. Domínguez (ignacioxd@ncsu.edu)
Rogelio E. Cardona-Rivera (recardon@ncsu.edu)
David L. Roberts (robertsd@csc.ncsu.edu)

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Abstract

Our goal is to determine if a player's sense of role in a role-playing game (RPG) is a determining factor in the actions that they take in the game. Interactive narrative designers strive to provide players with narrative agency, or the ability to determine the outcome of an unfolding narrative through the player's decisions and choices. However, the amount of interactive narrative content that must be authored to support agency is exponential in the amount of ways the player can direct the development of the unfolding narrative. For broad, compelling experiences, this authoring becomes intractable.

We are interested in understanding how players' roles in games can be leveraged to identify a smaller set of actions that will be consistent with their sense of agency, while limiting the burden on authors to provide content consistent with all possible ways a story could play out. If players' desired actions could be identified *a priori*, a designer need only provide content for that subset of actions without sacrificing player agency.

In this work, we present a methodology for studying the impact of roles on decision-making in RPGs via a series of studies that can a) be used to control for the diverse influences on player choices, b) elicit tacit knowledge between the relationships of narrative roles and action choices, and c) identify the relationship between a player's sense of her role in the game, and the effect on the actions she takes to further an interactive narrative's development.