

**ACADEMIC ESSAY**

PRJ3 Trends: Opinion and Expression

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## **Believability on Video Games Narrative**

What made video games become part of our culture are all these elements that come from other arts: music, photography, and of course, narrative. The fact that video games were now able to tell a story made the public be more open to the idea of playing them, making video games become more accessible to all age groups. After proving that narrative makes a game more appealing and engaging, developers started to experiment to create more credible story lines and non-playable characters. Since the big advancements researchers have been doing in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) field, this became a controversial tool. Does AI make a better storyline? Could AI be a replacement for human-written content? Can AI create believable game narratives and non-playable characters?

This essay is against the idea of using AI generated narrative content, positioning on the side of human-written narrative content makes video games more believable because it is written from the world of the game, it has a long memory to create successful narrative lines, and it generates deep and human-like non-playable characters (NPCs).

### **Connection with the game world**

Humans write stories that are created with intention and a focus, always having the inspiration from the environment where the game is set. These narratives integrate with the game lore, providing players with a deep and immersive experience. Even if it is a dystopian future, a magical fantasy dimension, or a historical-based setting, human written narrative content comes from the world of the game, connecting the story-line with everything that surrounds the player avatar , making players feel more connected and engaged (Kalbiyev, 2022). Players believe that human generated content is more coherent towards the perception of the avatar, has more relevance to the plot, shows human-like responses on NPCs and the

main character, and fits better the world where the game is being developed; creating a more believable context.

### **Long memory for narrative lines**

One of the unique qualities that human written narrative has is the long lasting memory: this allows the writers to create a constant and complex storyline that relates to the players, creating an emotional connection that AI could never as the longest memory that nowadays has been reached is twenty-five thousand words. AI generated content lacks depth and coherence compared to human-written narratives that have the power to create complex and emotionally resonant story arcs. These long lasting narrative lines improve the overall believability of video games by leaving an impact on the players, increasing a sense of attachment to the virtual worlds they explore (Maul, 2003). Memory helps the video game become more human-like, remembering choices and actions made by the player, events happening in the world, relationships and connections to NPCs, and more.

### **Deep NPCs**

Lastly, human-written narrative content has the ability to generate deep and human-like NPCs. In order to create a believable character writers focus on appearance, behavior, personality, goals, emotions and social relations (Michael Sangyeob Lee & Heeter, 2015). A big factor to make the player feel more immersed in the world of the game, to believe in the NPCs personality, and in the fact that their actions matter to the development of the plot is the spontaneous interactions that these NPCs have, the comments they give about the actions the player makes, or choices made, reinforces the personality and believability of the characters (Norén, 2020).

NPCs that exhibit human-like qualities, conducted by coherent and deep narratives, contribute to the realism and believability of video games, making the virtual scenario feel more alive and affected to player actions. Creates a duty feeling around the plot, around the NPCs that the player meets in the game, enforcing the emotional factor of a narrative.

Some examples of games that have been highly praised because of the realism created as an outcome of the deep NPCs and plot is Baldur's Gate, a Dungeons and Dragons based video game where players have found a new world. The last game of the saga, Baldur's Gate III has recently been proposed as Game of The Year 2023 because of the deep insight that is offered to the player, the complex interaction with the environment and the beautiful relationships that are developed between the player and the NPCs.

### **Counterargument**

Some people may argue that AI is a very important addition to narrative content, as it implements an automatic factor that human-written content cannot perform. AI is open to an automatically generated response, creating a dynamic rhythm, allowing the player to have more diverse conversations with NPCs, having more freedom when it comes the moment to create an out-of-the-topic response . Some game developers have been adding these to their games, as for example Ubisoft, with their latest game that came out; the world famous saga Assassin's Creed. They explained that this is a way to create realistic and spontaneous NPCs, with more diverse interactions, alleviating the work of the writers. This is just a shabby attempt to create a fun and dynamic flow as it is offered by board games like Dungeons and Dragons, games where the only elements are the human imagination and the player's immersion (Rameshkumar & Bailey, 2020).

## **Conclusion**

Everything considered, human-written content is still an important factor for game developers, as the technologies we have are not as complex as human minds. Human-written narratives are fully immersed in the game context, have long-lasting storylive connections, and have the ability of developing complex and human-like NPCs. The power of human narratives remains a needed element in creating a better experience.

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