

The interference of Punishment, Advancement and Replayability in roguelike design

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The goal

The goal of this analysis is:

- ▶ Fun...
- ▶ ...or rather, elimination of unfun...
- ▶ ...created by design elements interfering with each other.

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3 core elements of the genre

Three elements common in roguelikes.

- ▶ Punishment - a component of Difficulty,
- ▶ Advancement - e.g. levelling up, loot etc.,
- ▶ Replayability.

Let's take a closer look at the importance of those 3.

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Punishment

Without difficult problems to solve, there are no decisions and the game becomes a story.

Difficulty has two components:

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- ▶ Punishment - the stakes.

Roguelikes usually punish immediately via permadeath.

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Advancement

Levelling up your character or gear is always fun:

- ▶ Roguelikes
- ▶ Quake, Doom, Duke Nukem
- ▶ WoW and other MMOs
- ▶ ChoreWars

Replayability

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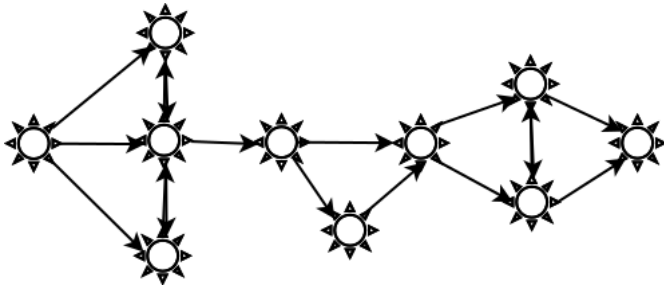
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Common structure of roguelike content

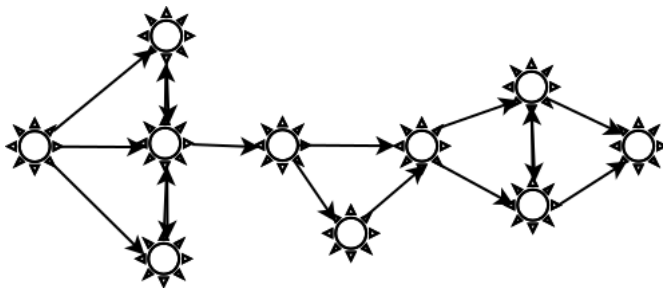
New content clusters accessible sequentially.



Examples: ADOM, DCSS

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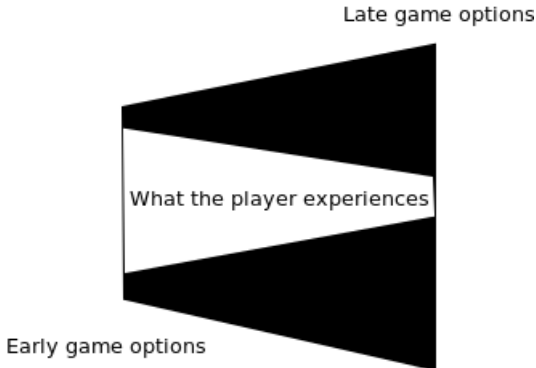
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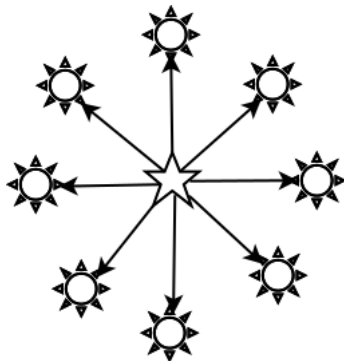
Replayability Compromised

A good game teaches everything it has to offer before the player stops playing.it. - paraphrase of Raph Koster's definition of a good game



A Flawed Solution

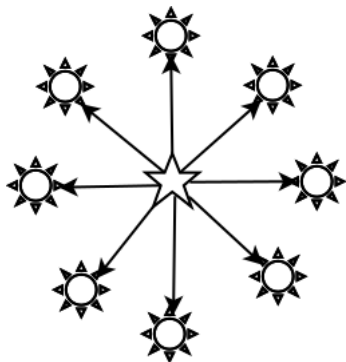
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A Hardcore Sandbox

All (or most) of the content accessible from the beginning.
Negative effects of punishment reduced.

What about advancement?

- ▶ challenge scaling, e.g. Elder Scrolls: Oblivion,
- ▶ delayed advancement, e.g. Cosmic Commando, Nightmare Tyrant,
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Smaller content breadth gap

Make early game more varied than late game to account for the effects of punishment.

- ▶ more content in the early game, e.g. ToME 4,
- ▶ more ways to approach the start, e.g. DoomRL.
- ▶ small breadth of content, e.g. many 7DRLs.

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The end

Thank you for your attention.
Please consider whether your roguelike is up to PAR.