

**STORYTELLING QUALITY WITHOUT A STORY:  
LEGO WORLDS CASE STUDY**

Dario D'Ambra

# THE METHODOLOGY

Imbalance between narrative needs and in-game actions. (Usually)

# THE METHODOLOGY

The range of things a game can tell is directly dependent on the number of verbs the player can use.

*Chris Crawford*

# THE METHODOLOGY

Comparison between what a game can tell with what it actually tells.

Basically to compare gameplay verbs with story verbs

# THE GAME

- Third person
- Open world
- Many worlds
- The worlds are editable

**GAMEPLAY**

## Unordered verb list that can be performed in-game:

- Move
- Fight
- Terraform
- Build
- Copy (clone)
- Paint
- "Discover"(scan)
- Generate
- Talk
- Travel
- Ride/Drive
- Shoot pictures

**STORY**

**BECOME A  
MASTER  
BUILDER**

# CHALLENGES

What do you do when you don't have a story?  
You go on!

# CHALLENGES

Understanding the relevant verbs gameplay wise.

Criteria used:

- **Order in which are presented in the game.** (Usually the core mechanics - the more important - are presented at the beginning).
- **Frequency of use.** (But this changes according to the kind of player!).
- **Are they required to complete game tasks?**

# CHALLENGES

List of gameplay verbs ordered by relevance:

1. Move
2. Talk
3. "Discover"(scan)
4. Generate
5. Paint
6. Build
7. Terraform
8. Copy (clone)
9. Shoot pictures
10. Travel
11. Ride/Drive
12. Fight

# CHALLENGES

Understanding and define the story. Criteria used:

- Story of the main character.
- Main story arc.
- The story has to have a structure.

# CHALLENGES

According to these criteria...

**BECOME A MASTER BUILDER** is not a story, but rather a narrative frame.

# CONCLUSIONS

Does *Lego Worlds* have a good quality storytelling?  
In a certain way.

# CONCLUSIONS

Imbalance between narrative needs and in-game actions.

My expectations:

**Narrative  
Imbalance**

**Balance**

**Gameplay  
Imbalance**

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Story and gameplay  
separation

Gameplay and story are  
blended together

Frustration?

# CONCLUSIONS

My conclusions:

**Narrative  
Imbalance**

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Story and gameplay  
separation

**Balance**

Gameplay and story are  
blended together

**Gameplay  
Imbalance**

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Emergent  
narrative

# CONCLUSIONS

Seems to make sense if you look at games like:

- The Sims
- Minecraft
- Ultima Online

# WHAT TO DO NEXT?

Due to the short time span, the methodology requires further research.

- Study also the other categories
- Create a taxonomy?

# THANK YOU

I'm also a game developer! Follow me if you're interested in praying mantises couples dynamics!

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