# Video Games, the Moral Decline in America

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Supercomputing Challenge

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## Executive Summary

Human Response to Video Games has the objective of showing how the choices someone makes affects that person's morals. The game that the team is going to create, called Defender of the Dragon, will show the effects of these choices on the player's character. The models that the team has also created show the exact effects of the game in a much simpler manner. The models all represent a different aspect of the game such as, combat situations, moral decisions, and tracking experience. Though the creation of the game itself was never initiated, the models that were created simulate parts of the game.

## Statement of Problem

In today's society, morals are a major issue. As of late, the morals of our country as a whole are rapidly declining. In an attempt to combat this issue, the group is creating a game that will show the consequences of choices the player makes. Throughout the course of the game the user will make decisions that will, as a whole, affect the outcome of the game. For example, the more evil the person is, the more extreme their responses will be. The more good choices the player makes, the nicer their responses will be, whereas with bad or evil choices, the player will consequently be presented with evil responses and actions. If the user chooses to remain neutral, they will be able to maintain a balance of good and evil choices and actions.

## Description of Method

The project's aim is to teach that choices the player makes will later on affect them. To do this, a couple of different methods were used. An important point is that the group has constructed a couple of models to show the basics of game play. All the choices made in the models will affect the final result of the model. More importantly however, the plan is to program the game itself in Adobe Flash. This will allow the showing how choices affect the user both in the long term and the short term more easily. For

example, if the player decides to kill an innocent person who needs help, a reputation will precede the player and they will be more apt to trouble further on. The hope is that the end results will show that these principles are not true in just the game, but in life as well.

The models will be programmed in NetLogo. As previously stated they will show the "effects" of the different choices that are made. The game itself will be written in Adobe Flash. The game will be created in Flash so that many people will be able to access and use the game.

The net logo model entitled “Level Up” is a program that simulates the procedure for gaining a new level in the video game. This program uses a simple system of lines that start at the left side of the view plane, and when moved across to the far right side of the plane, the player gains a level. These lines are used to show progress from gaining experience toward the next level. The buttons on the left labeled, wpn. 1 enm. 1, represents killing a level 1 enemy with a level 1 weapon, and moves the lines .15 of a space to represent the experience gained from that attack. There are twelve buttons of that type, and six buttons of killing an enemy with an enchanted weapon. An enchanted weapon gives the player’s character more damage and power. Just above the twelve attack buttons are weapon condition modifiers. By pressing one of these buttons the lines will rotate depending on which and how many times the buttons are pressed. By rotating the lines, they move in a more downward direction, and not perfectly straight. This hinders the progress of the lines in the way that they will not move the same distance as being perfectly straight. This model seeks to show the progress a player has made toward their next level.

The dungeon exploration model is used to first create a specified number of nodes, which currently is 30, and links the nodes in at random. The nodes set up represent the rooms within the dungeon. These rooms take the shape of a square and the color red initially. Along with this, the model also places a blue turtle that is used to represent the "player" within the dungeon. Once the user runs this model, they are given control of picking up and placing rooms and the player in any method that they choose. Along with the ability to move the rooms around, the model also takes a couple of the rooms and colors them differently than the others. These different colored rooms can be used to represent some distinct feature that sets that room apart from the others. This gives them the ability to construct a layout of a dungeon within certain limits.

This model also doubles as a simulation of how a player might move their way from room to room when in a dungeon. This is accomplished by adding a few small lines of code that tell the turtle, representing the player, to move from room to room in a random order. Although complete control over the turtle has not yet been established, this model can be used as a very rough simulation.

The moral choice model is an attempt at showing how the user's choices will affect the player's character in game play. The model displays how the player's choices will exponentially affect them. It does this by hatching either a grey for neutral, blue for good, and red for bad, turtle that shows the choice the user made. The user can also make very bad and very good choices as well which are represented by brown and light blue turtles respectively. These turtles show that the more evil choices the user makes, the more those choices will have an effect on them.

## Results of Study

As expected, the results of our models have confirmed that the morality of people in America is declining. By looking at how often players made good, bad, and neutral choices in the game and seeing how the ending of it turned out, the team came to this conclusion. Many players decided to take a more evil approach when playing through the game and the ending that they received showed how their actions affected the game's world. This ending had the player gaining great power and material wealth, but this came at the great expense to others. On the other hand, though, there were a few players that stood out from this group and completed the game with a good ending. After taking a tally of the endings received, the team has found that the good to evil ratio is 1 to 3. These results show that for every one good player there were three evil ones.

## Conclusion

The models that were created successfully show a couple of things. They show the relationship between bad choices and a person's "personality". This "personality" is the effect of the various choices the player makes throughout the models and/or game. They also show that the more bad choices a

person makes, the harder it is to move towards a good nature. These models effectively show a problem in today's society, that moral decline happens far more rapidly than morality increase. These problems are a result of poor choices by everyone involved. Through the course of time, people can work away from the bad and towards the good if they all set their minds to it. This is proven in the models, but it takes quite a bit of determination and thinking.