Lydia The Pack Mule—Morality in Video Games

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Out of all the characters I've terrorised in my lengthy and violent Skyrim campaign, perhaps the greatest victims were my loyal companions. Sacrificing companions for better loot or running away to let them fend off enemies by themselves was just another day in Tamriel. So when I actually felt a pang of guilt while Fus Ro Dah-ing Lydia off a hill for the umpteenth time, I had stumbled upon a defining concept of modern gaming: morality.

Morality in video games has had more than its fair share of publicity, with everyone from soccer moms to politicians questioning the ethics of developers that they believe are desensitising a whole generation with their violent games. While these allegations are reactionary and dumb, they have led developers to experiment with a player's perspective of right and wrong and accountability of actions, leading to what is now the moral choice, a staple in most games. The moral choice in video games has become so revolutionary that Peter Rauch, an MIT graduate, wrote his thesis on it.

Video games as a medium have always been defined by player control over events. But most games had predetermined stories where the player's role was to just drive the plot forward rather than change it. Implementing morality gave the player more control to influence the story through their own choices and was considered a huge step forward. But morality itself is a complex and constantly evolving concept, leading developers to make some lackluster mechanics.

A good example is Infamous. You'd think that having godlike electricity powers would make for interesting moral dilemmas about the consequences of what you do. Nope! In the morality system of Infamous, you're either Jesus or you're Hitler, there's no in-between. Another example of bad morality are the quick-timed event choices you get in most game endings these days. In Far Cry 3's ending, you have to suddenly make a choice that's clearly forked into "good" and "bad", completely ignoring that you were a mass-murdering maniac for most of the game. Regarding this, Rauch writes, "Games right now seem to be stuck in a place where the consequences of player actions are entirely predictable, and take effect either immediately or at the very end of the game."

RPG games like the Elder Scrolls and Witcher series on the other hand, have got it right. The choices made in these games are mostly morally ambiguous, neither black nor white. The games don't force emotions or morals down your throats and your actions are defined by what you think is necessary and how that makes you feel afterwards- no emotional manipulation necessary. The Witcher series especially is terrific since the various choices you make in-game aren't as simple as being good or bad, and the even the smallest decisions can lead to a tangible change in the world around you in ways you might not expect- the most realistic depiction of morality as you can get.

Ironically enough, a study led by Matthew Grizzard, an assistant professor at the University of Buffalo's Communications Department has found that playing violent games can actually lead to the players' experiencing a heightened sense of moral sensitivity. So the next time you're playing as a raging lunatic, it's probably making you a better person. Just

THE POWER SUPPLY UNIT

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SHEIKH SHEFATH SAADMAN

"Does a PSU really matter? Do I really need a branded PSU in my system?"

Oh lord.

A power supply unit (PSU) is the single most important *yet neglected* component in a gaming PC. The habit of disregarding such a key component started from the time computer casings came free with cheap low quality PSUs which apparently were made to "do the job." This stands true for PCs that don't quite excel in the performance department. If you're running one of those PSUs in a gaming PC, then you are doing nothing but digging your own grave.

Reasons why you should consider a branded PSU:

Efficiency: Power supply efficiency is defined as the amount of power actually provided to the internal components, divided by the amount of power drawn at the wall. A 50% efficient PSU that's tasked with providing 50W of power to a system will draw 100W from the grid. The extra 50W is lost. So in theory a 90% efficient PSU would draw 56W, hence saving you bills and keeping it all cool under the hood.

Failsafes: Good PSUs are usually equipped with a lot of failsafe technologies the likes of Over Current Protection (OCP), Over Voltage Protection (OVP), Under Voltage Protection (UVP), Short Circuit Protection (SCP), Over Power Protection

(OPP), Over Temperature Protection (OTP), Surge & Inrush Protection (SIP) &No Load Operation (NLO). Tl;dr: this means your PSU will keep your PC parts healthy and safe from the evils of unstable electricity.

Upgrading: For PCs equipped with high-end external graphics cards, a good PSU is an absolute requirement. PSUs have certain rails called the 12V rails, these rails power the CPU and GPU simultaneously. Generic Chinese PSUs have low 12V rails, hence they are incapable of outputting their rated power. These are not recommended, as they can, and most probably will burn your GPU.

Before you buy:

Thermaltake makes decent PSUs, just make sure you don't go for Thermaltake Litepowers for builds with high-end GPUs. Thermaltake Smart and Toughpower are both capable PSUs with varying wattage capable of handling any gaming PC with ease. Corsair's CX line up is also good as well as the high-end HX and AX.

InWin recently introduced some units and as far as the reviews go, these are capable PSUs. Avoid all Gigabyte units, as they are more often than not very unreliable.

Cheap generic PSUs like Delux and Value Top are no different from generic Chinese PSUs, so steer clear. If you're going to power your PC that costs above 50,000tk with a cheap 500tk PSU, don't blame the manufacturers. It's you who's being a Taylor Swift.

DR. GEEK SAYS

Use a regular gamepad for games which only support Xbox controllers:

x360ce is an emulator for your gamepad. After you run it, it'll want to create two files. Let it, but remember the location. On the interface that appears, check if your buttons and wheels are working right. If not, then press the drop down menu beside the button (the one not working correctly) on-screen and hit record. Then press that button on the gamepad or the button you now want to assign. After you're done, click save. Copy the two files that were created before, to the game folder.

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