

Enda Joseph Gallen.

Master of Science, Interactive Digital Media.

**Narrative Expression, Player Agency & Collaborative Storytelling in
Video Games**

Supervisor: Charlene Putney.

2016

Abstract

This paper explores narrative styles, player agency and player expression in video games. In his keynote speech at PAX Australia 2015, Warren Spector, veteran game designer, spoke about how too often storytelling in games limits player interactivity. There is a desire to see video games make more of the player experience and what is unique to the medium. Spector broke games into low, medium and high narrative expressions. This paper examines several different game titles under each expression level as case studies. The goal of this paper is to explore and distill some of the techniques and tools used by some developers in crafting video game narrative, in order to create a lens through which future developers could develop their game stories, and also to ask: what in narrative is unique to gaming?