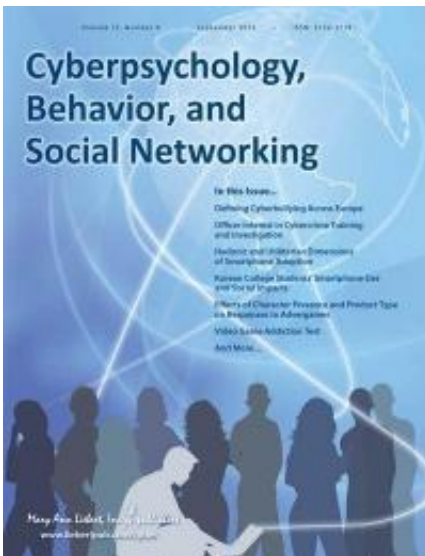


Does moral decision-making in video games mirror the real world?

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Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking is an authoritative peer-reviewed journal published monthly in print and online that explores the psychological and social issues surrounding the Internet and interactive technologies. Credit: © Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

Making moral judgments is increasingly a central element of the plots of popular video games. Do players of online video games perceive the content and characters as real and thus make moral judgments to avoid feeling guilty? Or does immoral behavior such as violence and theft make the game any more or less enjoyable? The article "[Mirrored Morality: An Exploration of Moral Choice in Video Games](#)" published in [Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking](#).

Andrew Weaver and Nicky Lewis, Indiana University, Bloomington, studied how players make moral choices in video games and what effects those choices have on their [emotional responses](#) to the games. In general, players tended to make "moral" decisions and to treat game characters as though they were actual people. Although behaving in antisocial ways was associated with greater guilt, it did not affect player enjoyment.

"Although preliminary, these results point to the utility of games as teaching and educational tools, as well as important tools for the assessment of behavior," says Brenda K. Wiederhold, PhD, MBA, BCIA, Editor-in-Chief of *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and [Social Networking](#)*, from the Interactive Media Institute, San Diego, CA. "These findings indicate how real the virtual world can become when one suspends disbelief and immerses oneself in the scenario."

More information: The article is available free online on the *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* [website](#).

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