Affective Adaptation Design for Better Gaming Experiences

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Abstract : Affective adaptation is a novel way for game designers to add an extra layer of engagement to their productions. When player's emotions factor in game design, endless possibilities for creative gameplay emerge. Whilst gaining popularity, existing affective game research mostly runs controlled experiments carried in restrictive settings and relies on one or more specialist devices for measuring a player's emotional state. These conditions, albeit effective, are not necessarily realistic. Moreover, the simplified narrative and intrusive wearables may not be suitable for the average player. This exploratory study investigates delivering an immersive affective experience in the wild with minimal requirements in an attempt for the average developer to reach the average player. A puzzle game is created with a rich narrative and creative mechanics. It employs both explicit and implicit adaptation and only requires a web camera. Participants played the game on their own machines in various settings. Whilst it was rated feasible, very engaging, and enjoyable, it remains questionable whether a fully immersive experience was delivered due to the limited sample size.