Creativity Beyond Functionality: An Observational Study of Easter Eggs in Video Games

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Long Live *Software* Easter Eggs!

THEY ARE AS OLD AS SOFTWARE.

credit: Ryan Werber

BENOIT BAUDRY, TIM TOADY, MARTIN MONPERRUS

It's a period of unrest. Rebel developers, striking from continuous deployment servers, have won their first victory. During the battle, rebel spies managed to push an epic commit in the HTML code of https://pro.sony. Pursued by sinister agents, the rebels are hiding in commits, buttons, tooltips, API, HTTP headers, and configuration screens.

What is an easter egg?

“An easter egg must be a **hidden feature** of the game, yet it has to fit the game's atmosphere, and it must be possible for players to **find it**.”

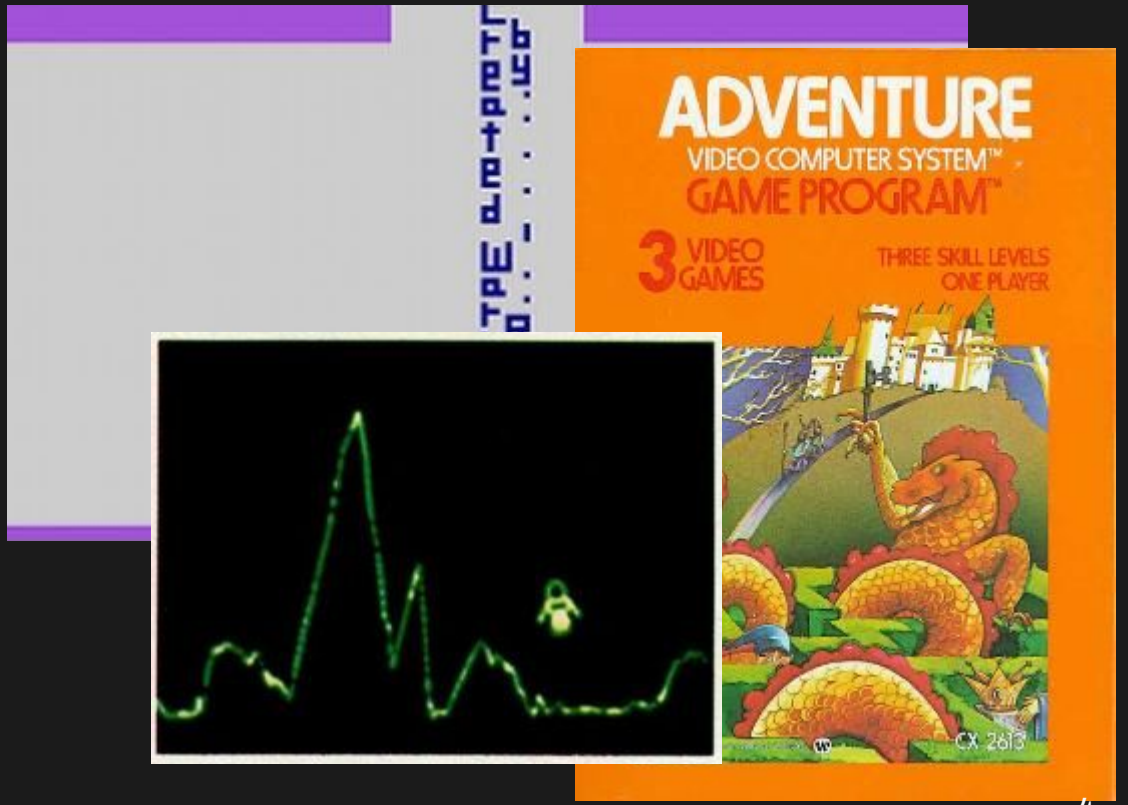
“An easter egg makes sense only **when it executes**, yet it should be **executed only rarely**.”

T. A. Limoncelli, “Operational excellence in april fools’ pranks” Communications of the ACM, vol. 61, no. 3, pp. 54–57, 2018

The First?

Adventure (1980) introduced the phrase ``Easter egg''.

In Moonlander (1973), if the player flies far enough from the moon, they encounter a McDonald's restaurant.



The First Cheat Code

The text game Colossal Cave Adventure (1976) introduced the first cheat code: **xyzzy**.

It was used to skip sections of the game.

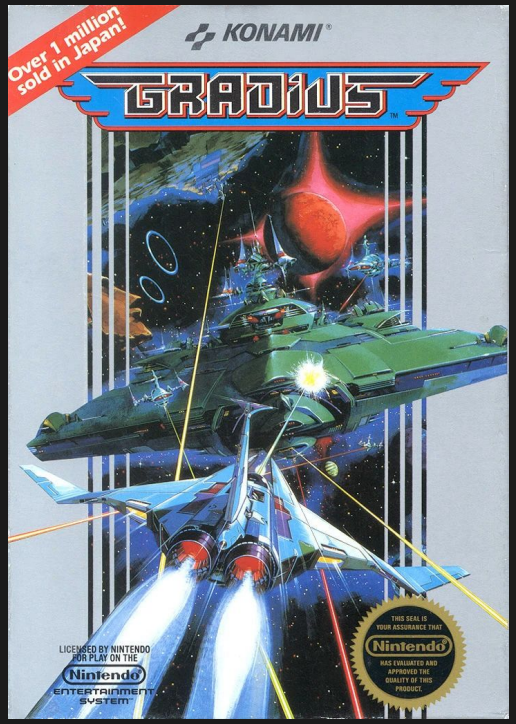
The First Arcade!

Starship 1 (1977), one of the earliest arcade games that had an Easter egg, a simple message **“`Hi Ron!`”**, was unknown until 2017.

The First Famous?

Some Easter Eggs are not intentional, like the KONAMI CODE for the game Gradius (1985).

The developer used the code to test the game quickly and forgot to remove the code before release to the Nintendo Entertainment System.



KONAMI CODE?

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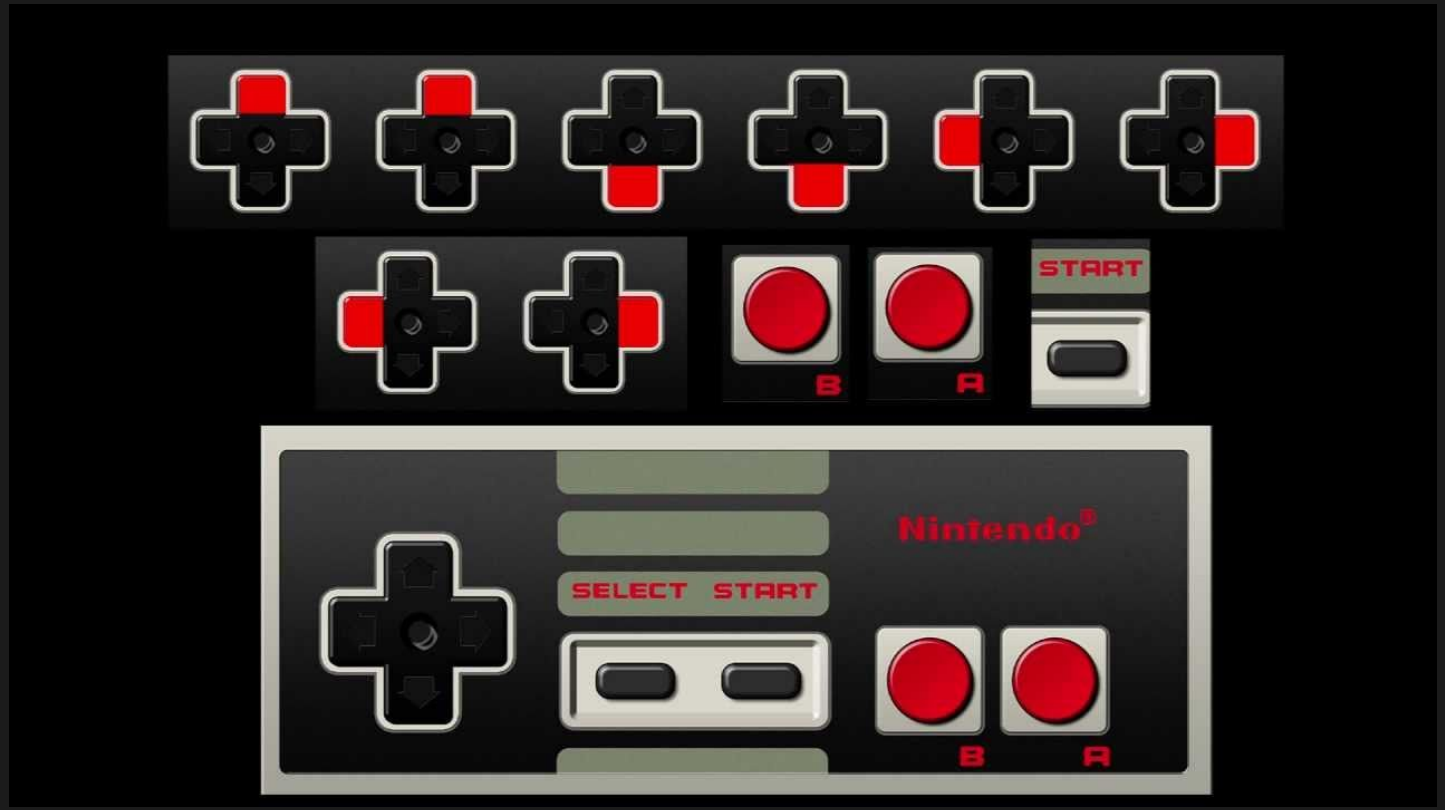


The First Hidden Character?

The first Mortal Kombat (1992) had the first hidden character: **Reptile**.

The steps to get the character were so convoluted that most players did not believe it was possible.

The First "The Joke is on You!"

In the game Hexen (1995), if you use the first Doom cheat codes the character will either die or lose everything.

We need data...

The Easter Egg Archive

Search for Easter Eggs

ENHANCED BY Google Go

Software

Video Game Easter Eggs

4443 Total Eggs below

'Splosion Man (1)
.hack//G.U. vol. 1//Rebirth (1)
.hack//Infection (1)
101st Airborne In Normandy (1)
1080°: Avalanche (4)
3-D Ultra Pinball Creep Night (1)
3D Lemmings (1)
3D Pinball for Windows (3)
4th Coming, The (1)
4x4 Evolution (1)
5 Days a Stranger (1)
5th Element (1)
7 days a skeptic (1)
7th Guest (1)
A10 Cuba (1)
Abe's Exoddus (1)

Re
Top 25 Vi
Easter Eg
Worst 25
Game Eas

Diablo 2 Easter Egg - Secret Cow Level

You need these things to activate the Cow Level

1. Diablo dead on chosen difficulty level
2. "Horadric Cube" - Obtained from storyline quests
3. "Wirt's Leg" - Looted from Tristram
4. "Tome of Town Portal" - Bought from vendors / Looted from creatures

Then do the following.

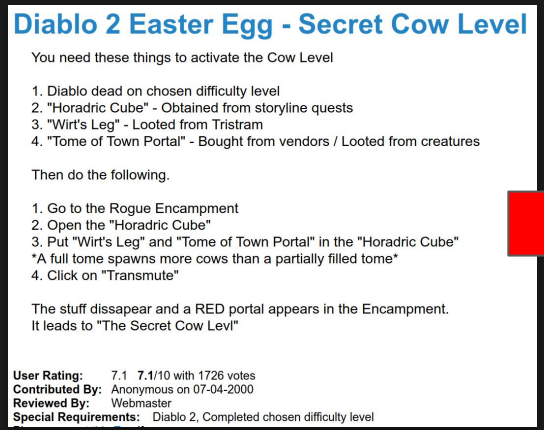
1. Go to the Rogue Encampment
2. Open the "Horadric Cube"
3. Put "Wirt's Leg" and "Tome of Town Portal" in the "Horadric Cube"
A full tome spawns more cows than a partially filled tome
4. Click on "Transmute"

The stuff dissapear and a RED portal appears in the Encampment.
It leads to "The Secret Cow Levl"

User Rating: 7.1 **7.1**/10 with 1726 votes
Contributed By: Anonymous on 07-04-2000
Reviewed By: Webmaster
Special Requirements: Diablo 2, Completed chosen difficulty level

Problem: how to categorize 4K+ Easter Eggs?

The Method



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OpenAI
GPT-4

Categ.	Conf.	Reas.
['Hidden Audio']	[0.7]	['The easter egg involves a hidden …

Which categories of Easter Eggs

OpenAI

The Method

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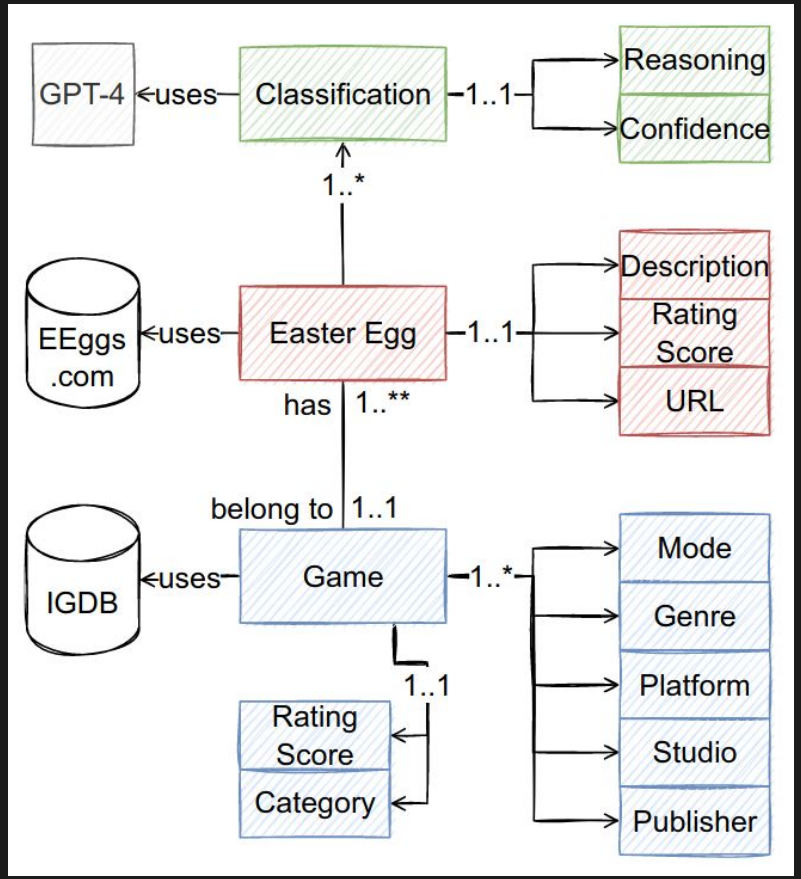
Categ.	Description
Hidden Audio	Hidden sound bites, music tracks, or dialogues.


GPT-4
uses
Classification
1..1
Reasoning
Confidence
1..*
EEggs .com
uses
Easter Egg
1..1
Description
Rating Score
URL
has
1..**
belong to
1..1
IGDB
uses
Game
1..*
Mode
Genre
Platform
Studio
Publisher
1..1
Rating Score
Category

IGDB

Search

Diablo

Edit

1996-12-30 (27 years ago)

Full Release

Blizzard North

8.4
498 user ratings

N/A
0 critic ratings

WANT 67

PLAYING 10

PLAYED 442

Genre: Role-playing (RPG), Strategy

Platforms: Mac, PC (Microsoft Windows), PlayStation

Diablo is an isometric strategy RPG and one of the most well-known examples of the action-RPG subgenre. Although some of the game mechanics resemble a typical RPG, all actions are done in real-time ju... Read more

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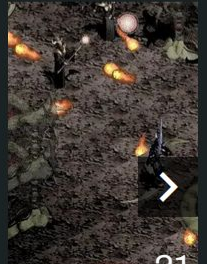

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So now what?

Is Easter Egg a feature?

Easter Eggs in Games VS Software

Which other things can we see in the data?

Will the magazine even consider this paper?

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