

# Immersion Analysis in: Dead by Daylight

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## ABSTRACT

I am going to be writing about how certain aspects of *Dead by Daylight*, make it a very immersive game. I will be talking about: Kinesthetic Involvement, Spatial Involvement, Shared Involvement, Narrative Involvement, Affective Involvement, and finally Ludic Involvement. I will go into detail about the rewards the players receive for completing different tasks through the playable world, and how the player must navigate and plan every single experience, as every playthrough of the game is different. From the way they navigate through, to how they use certain object throughout the world, depending on the killer they may face. The player receives a vast amount of variation when it comes to items and perks, and they must utilise them to assure victory for them, and their teammates. *Dead by Daylight* has dynamic gameplay, re-playability, and co-operation, and this all builds on why it is one of the most immersive games to date.

## INTRODUCTION

The game on which this analysis will be about is *Dead by daylight*. *Dead by daylight* “is an asymmetrical multiplayer (4vs1) horror game where one player takes the role of a savage killer, and the other four players play as survivors, trying to escape the Killer and avoid being caught and killed” (Behaviour Interactive, 2015-2018). The objective for the survivors is to “escape the level through one of two metal gates. To be able to escape, Survivors must repair generators.” (Behaviour Interactive, 2015-2018).



**Figure 1:** This is the main logo and splash screen for *Dead by daylight*.

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The objective for the killer is to “stop the Survivors. This is done by catching them and hanging them from one of the Meat Hooks found in the level.” (Behaviour Interactive, 2015-2018). The player can choose one of four game modes. They can choose between: “Play as survivor”, “Play as killer”, “Survive with friends” and “kill your friends”. The first two options match the player with other random survivors and a killer, compared to the third option which allows the player to survive with their friends. The final option is a private match, where both killer and survivor are friends, and this does not contribute towards the player “rank” (Behaviour Interactive, 2015-2018).



**Figure 2:** *Dead by Daylight* Rank and pip system for online play.

The methodology that I have chosen to go with is Immersion. Immersion is how humans have the urge to explore and interact with the surrounding world. Immersion can include a range of different topics, from “Kinesthetic involvement” to “Ludic Involvement” (Calleja, 2011), and I shall discuss these and more, in greater detail throughout my analysis. I believe that this methodology would be best fitted for *Dead by Daylight* due to the game’s genre. *Dead by Daylight* is one of the leading horror games that are currently available on the market. The game currently holds a “Mostly Positive” game review on Steam, with 123,000 reviews, and is currently in the top 20 most played games throughout the entirety of Steam, as of this paper (SteamPowered, 2018). Horror is “an intense feeling of fear, shock or disgust” (Oxford Dictionary, 2018), to create such feeling, a player needs to feel immersed into the game, so they feel like they’re experiencing what the character in the game would be feeling. A great way to create this immersion is through VR, but as this is a newer piece of technology, less games are currently incorporating this into their games, such as *Dead by Daylight*. So, this paper is going to cover the other areas in which the game excels and makes it one of the best games of this generation. The game includes lots of interaction with the world and with other players, has a deep lore behind its backstory, and has a vast amount of goals and rewards for the player to play towards. The player has lots of different option when it comes to interacting with objects, players, and the killer itself. This vast number of options is why *Dead by Daylight* fits so greatly into the immersive category.



**Figure 3:** *Dead by daylight* backstory, viewed through a character note during a Halloween event, *Blight Event*.

I could have used other methodologies and seen how they work on *Dead by Daylight*. I could have picked one of the following: Ethics in games, Games as Art, Gameplay Aesthetics and many more. The game itself has very good graphics, has very good realism, and has great gameplay features. However, I do not feel like this component define, or emphasise enough of how good, and how immersive this game is.

I could have talked about the law, and the mental factors that also lead from playing, which in general is, a game about murder. The purpose of the game is to murder others to please your “god”, or to survive this killer, in a world in which you cannot remember, nor do you understand. There is a huge psychological path that this leads down, and how this may affect a real-life person if they choose to play the game. However, I feel like this path side tracks too much from what the game brings to its players. There are many papers online that already demonstrate how violence in videos games may affect people, mainly children, and Psychological Science.org has a great paper on this. On this basis, I thought it would be much better to focus on the game, focus on the positive, and focus on the aspects of the game that make it so popular.

## ANALYSIS

### Kinesthetic Involvement

*Dead by Daylight* has lots of different kinesthetic involvements, for both the survivors and for the killers. Kinesthetic involvement is how the player controls the characters, and how they move through the world environment. The player navigates the world using a 3<sup>rd</sup> person camera, compared to the killer that is in the 1<sup>st</sup> person view. All sets of characters in the game can navigate throughout the world, however, the killers have a higher speed compared to the survivors. This means that in a straight race, the killer will always catch up to a survivor when they have been found, so to counter this, the survivor has been given more movement options. Alongside the normal walk, survivors can sprint, crouch, have sprint bursts when hit and with certain perks, and can crawl when hit to the ground. However, some of these movements come with some drawbacks. When a player chooses to crouch, they are much harder to spot by the killer, but with this, they gain a much lower movement speed. If the player doesn't move for a long period of time, crows shall start flying over their head, to alert the killer to their position. These crows will leave over time, once the player has started to move again (Behaviour Interactive, 2018). The crows are both a visible indication for the killers, and can also be a sound indication, if it reaches level 3. So, to stay hidden the survivor must stay moving, never staying in the same area for a long period of time.

Stillness Crow	Time the Survivor is inactive	Noise Indicator?
1	60 seconds	No
2	75 seconds	No
3	90 seconds	Yes

**Figure 4:** *Dead by daylight* Crow spawning rates with noise indication.

Stillness Crow	Time the Survivor is active
3	immediately (interaction) / 5 seconds (leaving the area)
2	15 seconds
1	30 seconds

**Figure 5:** *Dead by daylight* Crow de-spawning rates.

The fastest way to move through the world is to sprint, and this is what the killer will do, as they don't have to hide from anyone, however this is different for survivors. Survivors need to pick between being quick and being slow and stealthy. If they pick the first option and choose to sprint around the map, they're going to create lots of "Scratches". These are marks that are left throughout the world, following your movement. They're not visible to the survivor's, but they appear as bright red marks through the killer's perspective, as seen in Figure 6, and last approximately 10 seconds.



**Figure 6:** *Dead by daylight* Killers 1<sup>st</sup> person POV, and red scratch marks.

The final piece of movement that the player can do is crawling. Crawling is a state that can only be achieved when hit down by the killer, so it is not an ideal position to be in, however, it does have its benefits. This includes the fact that you're laying down. You can crawl along the crowd and hide within tall ears of grass to avoid the killer. Therefore, increasing your chance of survival. From this state, you can also start to heal yourself, to make it easier for your teammates to pick you up, however, you cannot fully complete this action by yourself. It also has some disadvantages, these include the incredibly slow movement speed, alongside other movements, crows will appear above you if you fail to move after a period. You can also not complete any of the objectives around the map, the only objective that you can complete, is the surviving one. Crawling survivors to have the ability to still escape with their lives via the hatch or an exit gate, if they can successfully make it to one, as Jake Tomkinson demonstrates very well in his YouTube video (Jake Tomkinson, 2017). Probably most notably as well, if you're in this state for too long, your character will die, and you shall lose.

Other than the normal movement, there are lots of different objects throughout the world that can be interacted with to alter the players movement. One object in the map that changes movement are "lockers". "Survivors can enter empty lockers" (Behaviour Interactive, 2015-2018), as shown in Figure 8. There can only be one survivor per locker, and if another tries to enter, they get rejected with a surprised animation. The survivors can use lockers as a place to hide from the killers, once again however, if the survivor stays in there for too long, crows shall start circling the locker. The survivor can enter the locker in both the walking, and sprinting movement speed state, however one will enter the locker quietly, and the other shall make a loud sound and give the killer a notification, respectively.





**Figure 7:** *Dead by daylight 2* survivors crawling in the downed state, close to an exit gate



**Figure 8:** *Dead by daylight* Survivors 3<sup>rd</sup> person POV of entering a locker quietly.

The final type of movement that I am going to mention here, is the survivor's and killer's ability to jump over vaulting areas. Throughout the world, there are windows and vaults, that all characters can jump through. This allows them to take a shortcut, at the expense of losing some movement speed, and for the survivor, making them more vulnerable for attack for a short period of time. Same as the lockers, if the survivors use this world object whilst in a sprinting state, a notification shall be given to the killer. If a survivor uses a vault too many times in a row, within a short period of time, the faulting area shall be blocked off, therefore stopping them being abused. The vaults are used during chases, to allow the survivors more time to escape. It gives them some leeway in terms of "juking" and avoiding the killer's deadly hits. Ussylis has a great video on their channel, showcasing great ways to utilize the vaults in the game, to defend yourself from the killers (Ussylis, 2017).

## Spatial Involvement

The next involvement that I am going to be talking about is Spatial Involvement. Spatial involvement is talking about the world, how the player learns it, and can use things around them. Dead by daylight, as of this paper (13<sup>th</sup> December 2018), has 12 Realms and 26 maps (Behaviour Interactive, 2018). A realm is a location in which a map can take place, and maps are certain variations of those realms. Difference may include slight shape changes, main building may be different, and include different layouts, but the style, aesthetic and location, is still the same. Maps can range from the iconic movie franchise location of “Haddonfield”, with 0 variations, to the game created “Autohaven Wreckers”, which currently has 5 different variations (Behaviour Interactive, 2018). The maps have different types of building, with a variety of heights, and outside obstacles. Some maps are more indoors, compared to other that are more outside with obstacles, and others that are outside, within lots of grass.



**Figure 9:** *Dead by daylight* Autohaven wreckers, 3<sup>rd</sup> variation called “Gas heaven”

Another thing that players must learn about maps, is their variation of obstacles. These may include vaulting locations, locker locations, generators and exit gates. OhTofu has a great video on YouTube, where he goes into detail about how to use, what he calls “tiles” (OhTofu, 2018). Each map has sets of tiles, that include “pallets” and “vaults”. The locations of these through the maps are random. This random nature also effects the main buildings. It can decide if certain doorways are blocked, which windows are opened and closed for faulting, if a pallet should spawn in a certain location, etc. It is important for the player to learn the main areas where these changes could come into place, as quick thinking is essential when it comes to escaping the killer during a chase. If you walk past the main building during the start of the game, it may be good to take note of the nearest exits, pallets etc. So, if you happen to be caught by the killer, you will have a head start at escaping, if you know how to maneuver around the building, you’re currently in.



**Figure 10:** *Dead by daylight* Vault location within a main building.

There are two more very important features of *Dead by Daylight*, that have a random nature to them. This is the generator and the exit gate spawning locations. Every map will have 2 exit gates, and these become active once 5/7 of the generators on the map have been repaired. The survivors however must be tactical when repairing the generators, and they need to learn patterns and teamwork skills. A common practice within the game is to “99” a generator. This means, a survivor will repair a generator too 99%, and then they will leave it, and walk to another location. This means they have the chance to complete another generator, or complete another action, before alerting the killer to their location. However, this is very risky, as there is a chance that the killer will come to the generator, hit it, and therefore start the generators regression. Another thing that is key for survivors, and not so much for the killer, is memory. Survivors will constantly be moving between these generators, and to be quick, they need to remember where they’re. Along with that, it means that survivors can plan which ones to complete, to make sure they don’t complete too many in the same location. Spreading the generators out means that the killer will have to move more, making it much easier for the survivors. Killers, however, can see the hooks through walls from across the map, along with generators, but they’re still random, and therefore should be remembered to ensure efficiency when killing the survivors.





**Figure 11:** *Dead by daylight* Exit location.

### Shared Involvement

Shared involvement is the players can interact with each other within the game world. In *Dead by Daylight*, there is no voice chat, and the only text chat is available before, and after the game, so how do the players interact with each other during the game? Well, there are several built in features to the game that makes interactions easier. Firstly, the game has implemented two different animations for hand gestures. This includes pointing, and waving. The pointing animation is usually used to identify or tell another player what to do. This can be from pointing towards a generator, towards the killer, or even pointing towards a downed team mate to suggest healing them. The waving animation is more using to get somebodies attention. This is used to encourage another survivor to come and help on a generator, or to help with healing a team mate. This is a very small feature of the game, and the players within the community prefer to use the most common universal method of crouching up and down very quickly. This can indicate nearly everything on the game, from healing, to come here, to even thank you and sorry.



**Figure 12:** *Dead by daylight* Pointing animation.

Before the game starts, the players have a text channel to communicate, here they can discuss tactics, and even plan what “Items” to bring into the world (Behaviour Interactive, 2018). Items include toolboxes, to repair faster, medical kits, to heal yourself and others faster, flashlight, to blind the killer, and much more. When in the world, these items can be used, and they can also be dropped onto the floor, meaning you can share them between the other survivors. Item can also be gained during the game, whilst searching through “Chests”. A random item will be given to the player, without any addons. The player must escape the level, whilst holding the item to keep the item. The items have wear, which will go down over use, so players must be careful when using them to make sure they don’t break and get lost forever. Whilst players are working on objects in the game, they shall receive skill checks. They are triggered randomly, and they’re started with a sound notification. The player then has to quickly react to make sure they continue to repair the generator, and to not alert the killer with a failed skilled check, and the generator “exploding”.

The most common way the survivors interact is through repairing generators together and saving each other from death. Starting with the generators, some of them have space for more than one survivor to repair it at a time. This will increase the speed of which it repairs, but it shall also increase the sound generated. Certain perks, including “Leader” (Behaviour Interactive, 2015-2018), allow survivors to gain additional speed buffs, when they’re close to other survivors. Away from the safety of cleaning, some survivors may need assistance when it comes to getting off the “meat hooks”. Other survivors can see the hooked survivor’s “aura” from across the map, this means that the player will be highlighted till they’re down. The survivor’s then have the option to “rescue” their teammates, and then proceed to heal them, with or without a medical kit. Helping your teammates is very important, as more survivors on the map, means that there is a bigger chance of escaping. The survivor who saves the other, shall also receive a points reward. However, this comes at great risk. If the player decides to go and save others, they’re leaving themselves more vulnerable to the killer, and saving others could lead to your own death. So, timing and planning is essential when it comes to rescuing other players.



**Figure 13:** *Dead by daylight* Rescuing survivor’s animation.

## Narrative Involvement

Narrative Involvement is when the game has a detailed back story, that can evolve as the game is played. *Dead by Daylight* has a vastly huge lore, that ranges from survivor and killer backstories, to map and entity explanations. “The Entity is an omnipotent non-player character in *Dead by Daylight*”. The entity is the “nightmare” that created the realms, “it is rarely seen, except for when it manifests to claim its sacrificed Survivors.” (Behaviour Interactive, 2018). It is the character in the game that in general, is a mystery. The characters no of the entity, but not what it is. The entity is what provides the players with items, perks, and the thing that captures the survivors in the first place and placed them in the trails and around the “Campfire”. You can learn about the entity’s lore in different ways. You can search it up online, and use the official website, and there are also notes on it throughout the game. During events, the game usually releases new details about the backstory, and why this entire thing is happening, what the entity wants etc. The entity it also the thing that blocks off the vaults, like mentioned previously in this paper. This entire thing is a trial, a trial of life and death, and the entity wants the fight to be fair.

The backstory of the killer’s and survivors are much easier to find. When you’re selecting which character to use in the menu, you can view the perks associated with the character, and you can also hear about their story leading up to them joining the “trials”, as seen in Figure 14. This explains why each killer does what it does, the reasoning behind its dark nature. For the survivors, the perks can be explained through the backstory, you can see why they may excel in certain aspects of the trial, including leadership and engineering skills.



**Figure 14:** *Dead by daylight* The Trapper backstory + perks

## AFFECTIVE INVOLVEMENT

Affective involvement is the emotions the game produces whilst you play. *Dead by Daylight* is a hugely immersive game. From its incredible sound, to its camera and time fear factor. One of the main features of the game is the interaction between the killer and the survivors, and other than physically running and hitting, the game does an amazing job of building tension through audio. Every single killer in the game has a “Heartbeat”. This heart beat can be heard when you’re close to the killer. The closer you’re, the louder that audio will be, and the quicker the heart rate will appear. Once you hear this heartbeat, that is your indication to look out and hide, as the killer could potentially be coming towards you. Killers have different heartbeats, for example, The Shape has a very small heartbeat, which gets bigger and bigger the higher up he gets in his stalking level. This means that he could come right up behind you without you even hearing him. That is why good map knowledge is essential. You need to quickly learn which killer you’re coming up against, so you know how to play the map, and how to play against them. There are a lot of perks and item addons in the game too, all in which can affect how the survivors hear the heartbeat. This can include a bigger radius, a smaller radius, no radius, to even sound check for the direction of the killer.

Alongside the heartbeat, some killers come with a “Lullaby”. This lullaby is louder than the heartbeat and gives the players a sense of which direction the killer is coming from. It masks the sound of the heartbeat a little but is mainly used to build even more tension in the world. Once the killer has found a survivor, chase music shall be played, intense fast paced music. This ensures the survivor that they’re indeed being chased and that they can no longer hide, it is now time to run. The music builds into the immersion greatly and can even lead to the survivors making small mistakes when they need to think fast, which is great, as it builds into the real tension and panic a person would feel if they were being chased down by a killer.

Another factor that greatly contributes to the immersion is the fact that there is “no escape”. If you feel like you cannot open an exit gate, you cannot just wait, there is no time limit for the game to end. You must try, try and try again, till you either die or you escape. There is a fence that is placed around the entire map, to ensure all participants of the trial cannot escape, unless they win, and even then, they just return to the campfire. The slogan of the game is “Death is not an escape”, reassuring the fact that no matter what, you cannot escape the entity and its game.



**Figure 15:** *Dead by daylight* Campfire

## LUDIC INVOLVEMENT

The final point I will be making is about ludic involvement. Ludic involvement is the pursuit of goals within the game, and the players ability to make choices to change outcomes. *Dead by Daylight* has a variety of different rewards for the players, both killer's and survivors. At the end of each trial, the player is rewarded with "Bloodpoints" (Behaviour Interactive, 2015-2018), which are rewarded depending on how well the player did within the game. This may include generators completing, heals completed, survivors rescued, time spent near the killer, evading the killer, hooking the survivor, hitting a survivor, and escaping the trial. These will all result in points; these points also contribute towards the games rank system. It will look at how well you did within the game, and decide if you should stay the same rank, or lose or gain "pips". These pips will be used to increase your rank. The higher your rank, the more pips requires to rank up. The higher up you get, the harder the killers will be, but also you shall be matched will equally better and therefore more competitive survivors.



**Figure 16:** *Dead by daylight* Ranks and scoring post-match.

The points gained from the trials, Bloodpoints, are taken out of the trial and kept by the characters. They can then be used to spend on "Bloodwebs". These Bloodwebs are how the entity rewards the players with new perks, items, addons, and offerings. Offerings are burned before the trial, and the entity rewards the players with a bonus, this may include more chests, starting the trial next to somebody, or even starting further away from the killer.





**Figure 17:** *Dead by daylight* Bloodweb system.

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, I think *Dead by Daylight* is one of the best games on the market, and this is due to its incredibly immersive experience. The game has incredible sound generation, that adapts to its environment, and makes the player feel like they're experiencing a life or death situation. There are hundreds of different combinations when it comes to perks and items, addons and offerings. Meaning that no game will ever be the same. The player has to make so many decisions, and in a very quick time. They must decide which objectives to complete first, which direction to run, where to hide...who to save. All of this built together with the vast reward system and shared involvement of other players, lead to an experience like no other.

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