

Exploits in Fighting Games

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What Is an Exploit?

An exploit is typically defined as the use of a bug, a glitch, or an unintended effect of an intended mechanic in order to gain an advantage in a manner not intended by the game's designers.

They are a widespread source for debate in the gaming community. Developers often have problems dealing with these vulnerabilities, as those who discover an exploit have an incentive not to inform the developers in order to continue benefiting from it.

Types of Exploits (1):

Duping: Duplicating items or money.

Lag: Some games may let players intentionally cause themselves to lag in order to gain an advantage over enemies

Geometry: Taking advantage of the game world and/or its physics. These exploits are often used to reach inaccessible areas or take unintended shortcuts.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Imk560Qn-sU>

Types of Exploits (2):

Twinking: Taking advantage of design flaws in a game's inventory system in order to equip a low level character with much higher level items or skills.

Movement Speed: These exploits usually allow the player to move faster than intended,

Safe Zones: Places where a player can attack with no risk of being attacked back. This is often an exploit in the game's terrain.

<https://youtu.be/FcFGGdqRRhw?t=39>

Types of Exploits (3):

Game Mechanics: Taking advantage of the systems that make up the gameplay. A game mechanics exploit is working as designed, but at the same time is not working as intended.

Cheesing: Performing repeated, usually considered cheap, attack moves in such a way that doesn't allow the enemy to respond or fight back.

Exploits in Fighting Games

In Street Fighter II the term cheesing was coined to refer to cheap play, specifically the act of keeping your opponent locked down against the side of the playstage .

Most commonly, cheesing refers to the repeated use of techniques that are considered spammy or annoying.

Some moves became specially known for producing excess cheese:

<https://youtu.be/Al6Uz--D570?t=115>

Exploits in Fighting Games

The popular title “Super Smash Bros. Melee” features a series of exploits based on game mechanics that have shaped how the game is played competitively.

Wavedashing is a classic example of a mechanics exploit:

https://youtu.be/_EcPgWGiEhk?t=6

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Some exploits are not based on gameplay at all, but take advantage of a game's memory or menus to produce favorable results.

Unlocking all characters quickly in Super Smash Bros Ultimate:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnX0EmcpqAg>

Exploits in Fighting Games

Some exploits give specific characters unnecessarily powerful tools that players can use to dominate a match without much thought.

The “Instant Air Fireball” is a troublesome exploit that appears in a series of fighting games: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=istRJgg15Xc>

Are Exploits Forms of Cheating?

While some argue that all exploits are cheats and should not be allowed or supported, others disagree.

The majority believe that it depends on the exploit. Thus, exploits are a matter of widespread debate which depends on the genre and the game itself. Factors often considered are the magnitude of the resulting advantage, the effect it has on subsequent gameplay, community views on the exploit, etc. For instance, one exploit may be banned in competitive play while allowed otherwise.

Some also claim that all exploits should be allowed in all contexts of the game, for the reason that the exploits are inherently part of the game, regardless of the designers' intentions.

Are Exploits Forms of Cheating (Examples)

Exploits can create unfair strategies such as an infinite combo:

https://youtu.be/rmdpBiI_6Ko?t=5

This results in some banned techniques:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QciuRXj5Q8E>

As well as banned characters due to “Meta threats”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TduQP5wnJiQ>

Some glitches actually make gameplay impossible:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VSBjqSV40Uw>

Can Exploits be Good?

Sometimes exploits are consolidated into the final version of the game and even future games in the franchise intentionally. Some exploits add to the “skill cap” of a game by allowing for additional abilities that are notoriously difficult to master.

Furthermore, they often add to the game culture and community by promoting discussion and competitive play. They also could potentially bolster publicity on the game through the resulting discussions and added further methods for skillful play.

Crossups, cancelling, and combos are all examples of mechanics that were once exploits.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z92MxCndZa4>