Today I got on my computer and played BeamNG.Drive. It’s more of a tech demo than a game, but still a game. It’s a driving game that’s used to show off a physics engine built by the developers. I believe it’s aiming for accurate simulation with softbody damage, as well as performance effects when you damage your engine, wheels, etc. It also simulates engine/brake/oil temperature, fuel level, tire pressure and temperature, suspension and much more. There’s no story, progress, or anything to unlock, although you can do various races to earn medals. It’s just a fun way to pass the time.

However, the choices you make in the game greatly affect how the game plays. There is deep customization for all the vehicles in the game. For example, if you choose a sedan, there are various preset configurations that try to mimic real life. The base model will give you the slowest engine, smallest wheels, least grippy tires, and fewer electronic features. The highest trim on the other hand will give you a faster engine, grippier tires, stiffer suspension, and traction control and anti-lock brakes. Not to mention, you can individually choose parts to create any combination you like.

In turn, these choices affect how the car drives and handles in game. For instance, if I’m playing a drag race, I want a rear-wheel drive car with a big supercharged engine, wide rear wheels, and sticky drag tires. I just need to go as fast as I can in a straight line for ¼ mile, so I don’t need to worry about how well my car handles otherwise. However, if I’m going to race on a technical track, my needs completely change. I need a car with a moderately quick engine, stiff suspension, race tires, race brakes, and the interior of the car removed for weight reduction. The choices I make in car tuning greatly affect how the race turns out. If my car has an engine that’s too powerful, I won’t be able to control the car no matter what else I choose. However, if I choose a moderate engine but don’t select the proper tires or suspension, the car won’t corner and I’ll end up crashing. There is an immense amount of choices in the game. You can build a rock crawler, a tow pig, and anything in between.

I love playing this game because in real-life, I love cars, so this game gives me the opportunity to do things with cars that I normally can’t. Even though the game has no set objective, the satisfaction you get when you build the perfect car is what keeps me playing. It’s also fun to just strap some rockets to a bus or see the physics engine at work with some crazy crashes. I would honestly love to develop a game similar to this, or even contribute to it with a mod.