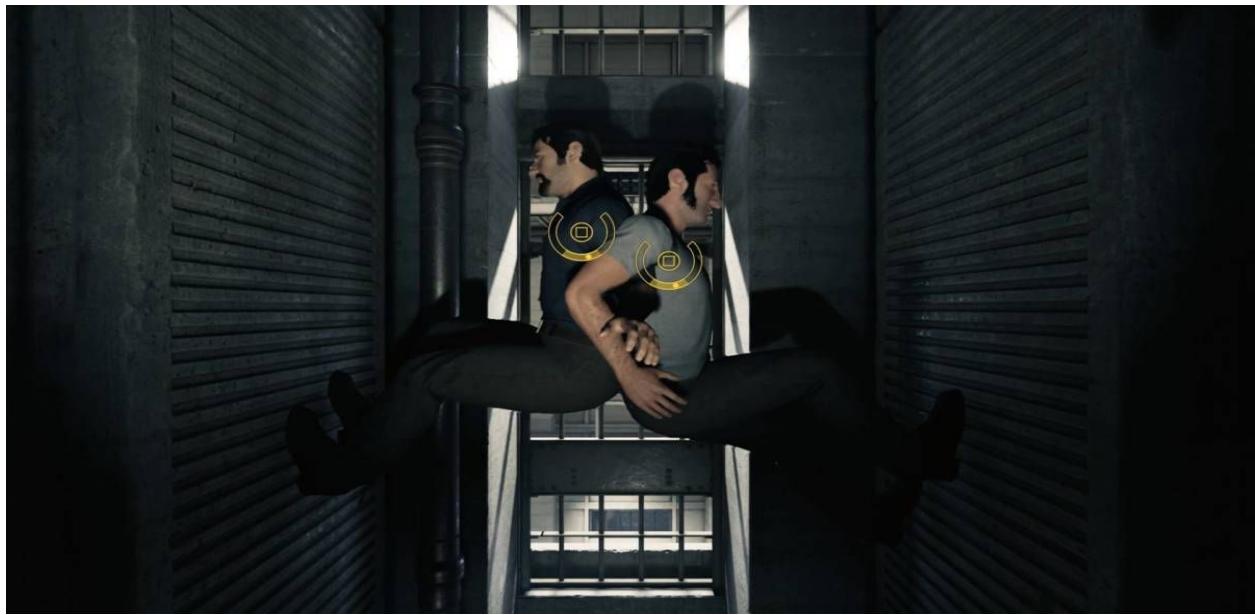


How does a co-op game affect the level design?

- I. Screenshots for comparison
- II. Different objectives
- III. Scaling difficulty
- IV. Item placement

I. Screenshots for comparison

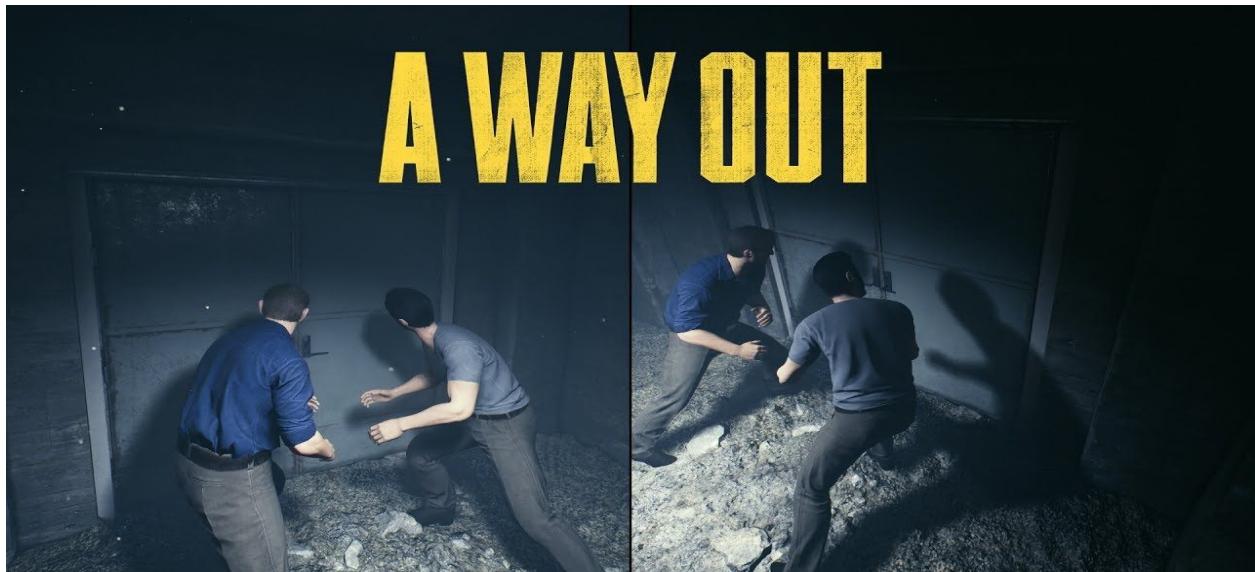
In “*A Way Out*,” both players need to cooperate a lot throughout the game. This screenshot demonstrates one of those scenarios. By pressing the same button at the same time, players climb up the wall to proceed further in the story.



In “*Spider-Man*,” the player is able to maneuver much easier through ventilation systems and other environments due to having a much more flexible protagonist.



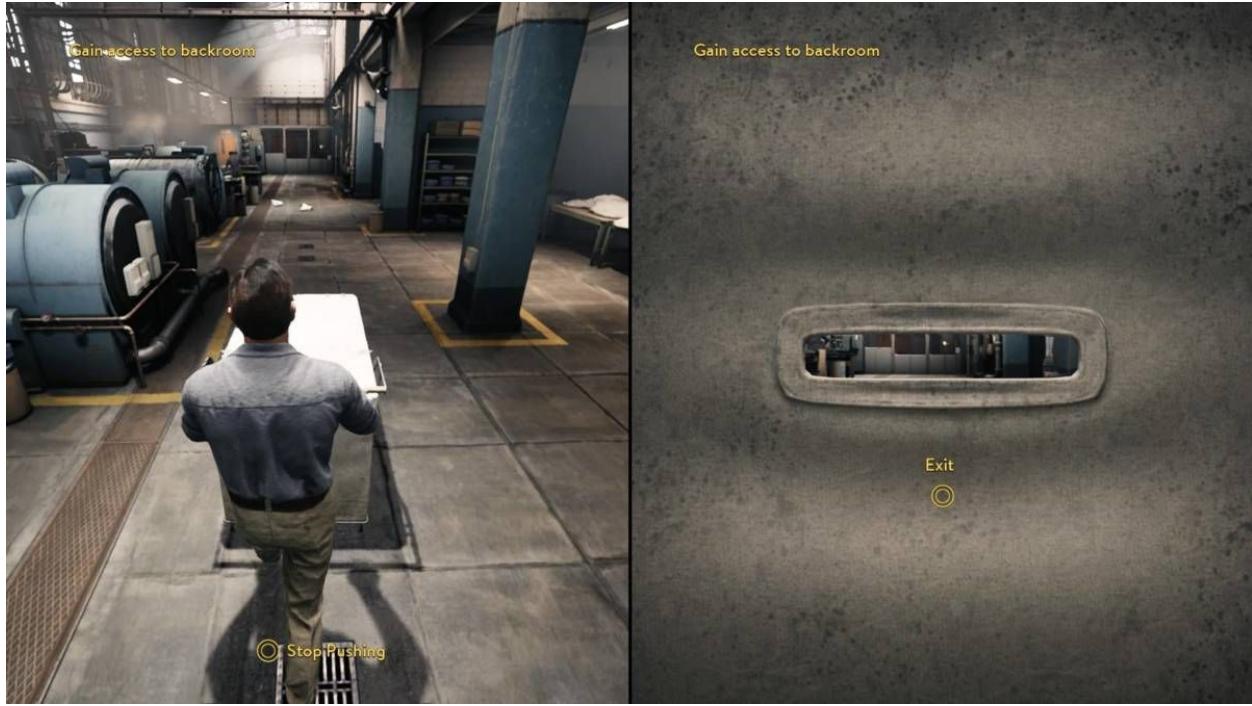
This example demonstrates that sometimes developers force players to cooperate even if it's not necessary. Both Leo and Vincent can kick the door open by themselves; however, it is much easier when both of them apply their whole body weight at the same time.



In most single-player games, opening a door isn't something too exciting as can been seen in this example from "*Alan Wake*".



In this screenshot, both Leo and Vincent play different roles. One is there to move the laundry from point A to point B; the other is patiently waiting for the right moment to exit.



In one of the missions in “*Red Dead Redemption 2*,” the player has to enter a wagon that is operated by a non-playable character (NPC).



In this screenshot, Vincent has to keep watch and Leo is the one traversing the level in order to complete a mission objective - retrieving a tool.



In “Assassin’s Creed,” the player doesn’t have anyone else to rely on so he has to be even more careful when completing the missions.



II. Different objectives

Single-player games and co-op games have different objectives. For example, in “*Gears of War 4*,” a co-op game, one of the decisions can be to choose who is going to take a second floor and who is going to take a first floor. The person on the second floor has a better vantage point; however, the person on the first floor can easily sneak on an enemy in control of a turret gun.

In “*Spider-Man*,” the same situation has to be handled by one player who ultimately decides which floor to clear out first. In most cases, it will be a higher floor that needs to be taken care of first because they (*higher floors*) tend to have snipers and other enemies who are good at range and who can easily stop the player should he enter their view.

Another example is when players encounter bosses in “*Gears of War 4*.” One player has to distract the boss and the other uses that short window of time to deal some damage, and vice versa.

In “*Spider-Man*,” boss battles usually involve the player somehow trapping or stunning the boss and then dealing some damage to him. This process repeats itself a few times before the boss is finally defeated.

III. Scaling difficulty

A co-op game like “*Gears of War 4*” would be much more difficult to complete if there was only one player. Even when a non-playable character (NPC) takes control of a role meant for a human, the player can feel a huge difference in how much time and effort it takes to complete the same level. However, “*Spider-Man*” is meant to be played only by one player. So if the mission is difficult, it is usually a boss fight or a mission involving a huge number of enemies.

IV. Item placement

In co-op games items placed throughout a level can be seen either only by one player or both. In “*Gears of War 4*,” players have to communicate with each other to figure out who is in a dire need of ammo and who is not. They also need to understand who is better at which weapon because then they can go through a level much faster. However, sometimes one of the players is too far from a desired weapon and has to go all the way to the other player to retrieve it. Some developers came up with a clever solution to this problem. For example, in “*Diablo 3*,” when an item meant for player one is picked up by player two, the item automatically goes to player one’s inventory. And some games, in order to avoid competition between players, provide the same items located at the same location to both players so that the other can’t take the other player’s loot.