

The Settlers of Catan has a number of rules, so many that it is enough to fill a small booklet. Often times, the more rules contained in a game, the more restricted player actions could be. For example, if we compare Ninja and Joust, we see that although both are in the physics game series, Joust has less rules, allowing players to create interesting play whereas Ninja restricted players' movement so much they are usually not even going out of the circle of arena. Even though the Settlers of Catan has many rules that restricted players' actions to a basis where players are constrained to only certain choices per turn, many creative emergent plays could still arise from these restrictions.

During our last play, the action of bidding naturally arose from trading. When one player was saying I want to trade one wood for one sheep, two other players responded. Then all of a sudden, the bidding just started, even without any action from the first player. No rules specifically said we could or could not bid on the trade, so players went for it. During many playtests held in Game Center, I got a feeling of play testers being uncontrollable monsters. They will try everything, creatively or not, that is not written in the rulebook or, in video games' case, not as program intended to work. As delicate as rules are written in Catan, surprise will still happen.

During a more recent play of Catan, the action of pact naturally arose. When one player was trying to move the stone, I was begging her not to put on places that are adjacent to mine. She thought about it for a second and said: "Fine, but I want one third of your wheat productions for the next ten turns." I said sure without thinking on the intension to later break it. However, I did not break it. Even though no rules in the rule book specifies the rules of making a pact, the pact happens, in a natural and creative way.

That was the only two experience in my life playing the Settlers of Catan, and emergent play happened every time, in different format. So, it's safe to assume that such emergent plays happen a whole lot in the game of Catan. Emergent plays could be used as an excellent tool for designing games. Joust became so popular mostly because it's remodability and players could all create their favorite version out of the basic version. I guess this CPR was just a combination of my observations from the two times I played Catan. I just really wanted to write about it.