

# The Importance of Making Your Mechanics Work Together

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# “The Unicorn in the Garden”

- Watch how many special, unique mechanics you have
  - One is novel and exciting.
  - A herd of them will eat your game.
- Depending on how special and novel your mechanic is, people might think you’re a crazy person.
  - “Moral: Don't count your boobies until they are hatched.”

# Mechanical Interplay

- A definition

- **in·ter·play**

- n.*

- Reciprocal action and reaction; interaction.

- intr.v.* **in·ter·played, in·ter·play·ing, in·ter·plays**

- To act or react on each other; interact.

- Mechanics do not exist in a vacuum. They interact with each other as much as players interact with them.

# Balancing Acts

- A single mechanic should be balanced against itself.
  - “Put X in, get Y out.”
- Mechanics must be balanced against each other.
  - A source of resources should have a sink or series of sinks that require that resource.
  - Failure to do that causes breaks to appear.
    - These then get into the realm of hotfixes. That is a bad place to be.

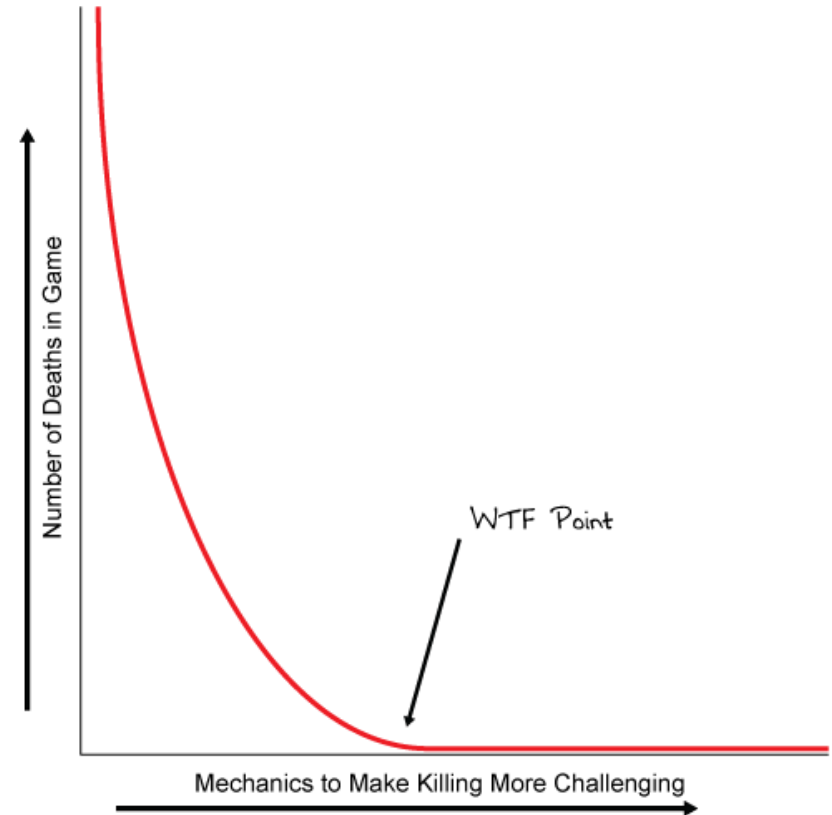


# Death Mechanics: A Short-Lived Case Study

**Expected**



**Actual**



WTF Point (Wishful Thinking Fallout Point) – Point at which actually seeing anyone die in game is pure wishful thinking and the game must be able to withstand the lack of that resource drain.

# So How Do I Avoid That?

- Use mechanics you know work well together.
- Use mechanics *that fit your game*.
- Playtest, playtest, playtest.



# But What About New Mechanics?

- Playtest.
- Think about how they interact with the game as a whole.
- Some games are more sensitive to interplay than others.
  - High concept roleplaying: generally more forgiving.
  - SIK games: a mechanic that fails interplay can break the game irrevocably.



# The Game as Garden

- New mechanics are unicorns.
  - They'll get a lot of attention because they're novel.
    - More than one divides your attention
    - Care needs to be given to each.
  - Letting them run herd over your game will trample everything if you're not careful.
  - When writing, build in enough time to properly tend your garden and its inhabitants.



# So How Do I Do it?

- You don't have to reinvent the wheel.
  - “Do I absolutely need a mechanic for this?”
  - Look to see what already exists and has been proven to work.
- Build in time to playtest.
  - Test your new mechanics in a variety of ways.
  - Try to break your own mechanic. If you can, fix it.
- Map out mechanical interactions.
  - What does each mechanic cost and generate? Where do the costs come from? Where does the generated resource go?
- Try new things.
  - Try the wild new idea. Make it fit your game to the T. Test it. If it breaks, you can possibly at least let it limp along on schtick.

- You want your mechanics, and thus your game, to come together like this:



Questions, Comments, Complaints?