The standard approach to dialogue in video games is something akin to a script in a play, only it branches depending on the player’s choices. The problem is that while this can be highly dramatic, it is also expensive to create and strict in its structure of movement through dialogue nodes (visible below). Compared to the standard level of interactivity in a game, these sorts of dialogue segments can act as speedbumps.

The solution to this problem is to simply make the dialogue system more game-like (ludic). It should consist of procedures rather than choices. This increases engagement through nuanced interactivity.

How should the player “talk” procedurally?

- Independent agents, perceive and make decisions about dialogue in real time.
- Instead of a strict tree-like structure, there is a dialogue space, divided into focus space and depth space, oriented around topics.
- Focus shows the comparative importance of a topic, depth its dramatic progression.

This new design could handle wandering conversations with uncivil turn-taking, which take place over a long period of time. The demo project LAST CALL makes use of these features. It is a 15-minute conversation where the player convinces their rogue superior officer to retaliate a nuclear strike from the USSR with a launch of their own.