MEANINGFUL PLAY 2012
October 18-20, 2012, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA

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Poster Information

Title	**Quandary: Building Capability in Ethical Decision Making**
Presenter(s)	Scot Osterweil, Marina Bers and Peter Stidwill
Session	Conference Reception, Game Exhibition, and Poster Session
Time	Thursday, October 18, 7:00p-10:00p
Location	East Lansing Technology Innovation Center
Format	Poster Presentation
Description	Children, particularly middle-schoolers, need opportunities to engage with ethical issues and develop skills to deal with them. These skills, including perspective-taking and ethical decision-making, will better prepare players when they encounter difficult issues in their day-to-day lives.

The Learning Games Network, with funding from a private family foundation, is working with experts from Tufts University to create Quandary, a free game that addresses these challenges. The goal of the game is to provide players with foundational skills in age-appropriate ethical thinking. Players are encouraged to recognize ethical issues and better understand conflicting values, helping empower them to act ethically in their own lives. Quandary reflects real-world issues where there is no easy answer.

Leveraging a graphic novel style that invokes a world where preindustrial technology meets fantastical science fiction, players aged 8-14 shape the future of a new society as they lead a human settlement on recently colonized Planet Braxos. Players face a series of age-appropriate moral dilemmas, negotiate differences of opinion within the colony, and apply logical thinking to recommend appropriate solutions. Quandary provides a framework for how to approach ethical decision-making; it doesn't tell players what to think. The game is designed to spark discussions, supported by supplementary material both in and out of the classroom.

This poster will explore the design challenges, solutions and early test results for the game, which will have launched in late August. For example, how do you create a playful space where learners can investigate how a complex community with different perspectives reacts to dilemmas in their world? How do you inspire and facilitate reflection on ethical decision-making? And how successful has Quandary been so far in achieving these goals? |

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