

# Better Itemization

## 1 Introduction

Games are fun because of learning, goes one theory [1]. We might suppose this includes exploration — defined as learning *what is there*. But *why* do people explore? Some are intrinsically motivated [4]. But *most* are extrinsically motivated, by the idea of reinforcement via reward. That usually means items they can equip usually, in role-playing games. Hooray, gloves of flight. (Why *gloves* though?)

Unfortunately, items in games are too often rubbish. There are too few of them. Or they are many but random, or +1 versions with different textures, or clutter that cannot be used or sold meaningfully, or once you’ve seen a few, well, you’ve “seen ’em all”. That’s it. Okay, so that’s not going to motivate people.

- This makes for too little motivation to explore.
- People explore to find interesting shit.
- There is too often a dearth of interesting shit to find.

So what can be done about it?

Some random comments are like this: “Good itemization is where every item serves a meaningful in-game purpose instead of just being vendortrash.

+1 swords are purposeless when +3 swords exist, but at least there wasn't clear wasted dev effort in creating them since they're just a number. The saddest of bad itemization is when a dev clearly put work into creating an item or system that ultimately serves no actual purpose except to be vendortrash." [2]. Also this: "Sword+1 was the worst mistake gygax made" [3]. This doc is a test of RPG Vault pdf embed. I'll writing the rest later . . .

## References

- [1] Raph Koster. *A theory of fun for game design*. Scottsdale, Paraglyph, 2005. [10.5555/1207478](#). 1
- [2] (ANONYMOUS) "Norfleet". RE: What is good itemization to you? *RPGHQ*. <https://rpghq.org/forums/viewtopic.php?p=82927-what-is-good-itemization-to-you#p82927>, April 2024. [10.1037/H0061626](#). 2
- [3] (ANONYMOUS) "Rusty Shackelford". RE: What is good itemization to you? *RPGHQ*. <https://rpghq.org/forums/viewtopic.php?p=167144-what-is-good-itemization-to-you#p167144>, April 2024. 2
- [4] Edward Tolman. Cognitive maps in rats and men. *Psychological Review*, 55 (4):189–208, March 1947. [10.1037/H0061626](#). 1