



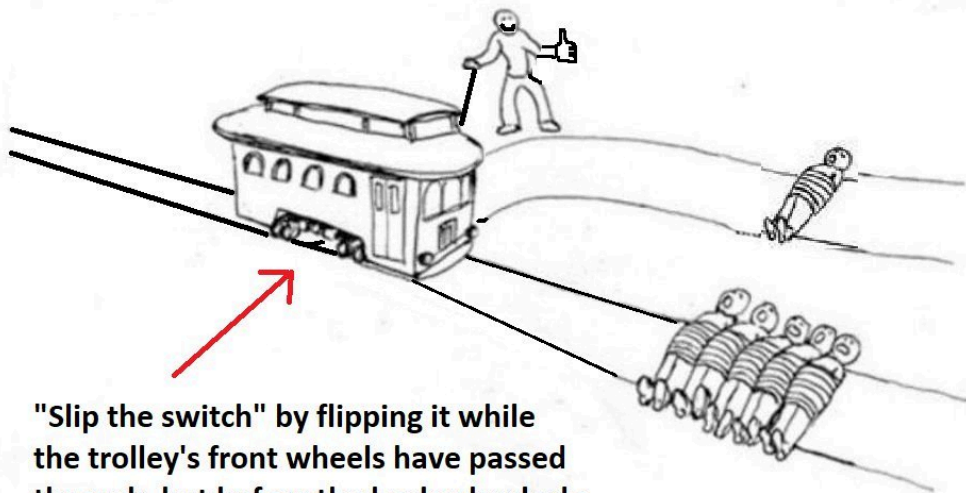
SnoopJ
@SnoopJ@hachyderm.io

thinking about how there's a true solution to the trolley problem and union workers were the ones to point it out

IWW IU 520 (Railroad Workers) PRESENTS:

Hide

TROLLEY PROBLEM SOLUTION



"Slip the switch" by flipping it while the trolley's front wheels have passed through, but before the back wheels do. This will cause a controlled derailment bringing the trolley to a safe halt.

Thank a rail worker today!

ALT

Jan 30, 2026, 01:41 AM · Web

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SnoopJ
@SnoopJ

1d

like, one might be tempted to say "noooo it's a constructed hypothetical that only admits these two options"

but there's something really lovely about a union coming in and being like "ah, no, a different world is possible"

5



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SnoopJ
@SnoopJ

1d*

Glad y'all like the theme, muting this now that it's escaped containment and the tedious "well actually" killjoys have arrived

1



Colorblind Cowboy
@colorblindcowboy@mastodon.art

1d

@SnoopJ This is why I don't like hypotheticals. I have too many questions and constantly look to other solutions.

And people reply "IT'S HYPOTHETICAL" like it's some law of god.

1



Sven Sloodweg, low-spoons mode ("still kinky and horny ...
@joepie91@slightly.tech

2h

@colorblindcowboy @SnoopJ I find that often when people respond like that, what *actually* happened is that they were trying to prove a point based on their own beliefs, were caught out by learning that there are actually *other* ways to look at things that they hadn't considered, and desperately try to re-scope the conversation to the options they *had* considered so that they can continue believing what they believe...

0



Johanna Janiszewski
@JohannaMakesGames@mastodon.gamedev.place

3h

@SnoopJ if life has told me anything, its that it is dangerous to not think further than 2 presented options

0



Dibs
@dtwx@mastodon.social

1d

@SnoopJ I refuse these two options! The correct answer is "doing nothing". Millions of people die everyday without my intervention and I don't feel guilty about it!

0



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Kathmandu

@Kathmandu@stranger.social

🌙 1d

@SnoopJ

Yes! The union answer is a valid solution because it's generalizable!

* The system is run by people who only understand the broad outlines. Front-line workers understand it in more detail.

* The problem is framed by people with an agenda. If you look outside their framework, you can apply relevant knowledge to derail their agenda.

🔍 0



ElfDestruct

@ElfDestruct@vivaldi.net

🌐 1d

@SnoopJ The Kobayashi Maru solution should always be a valid choice!

🔍 0



Owl Eyes

@d1@autistics.life

🌐 1d

@SnoopJ yay!

🔍 0



Klaus Frank

@agowa338@chaos.social

🌐 1d

@SnoopJ

Isn't that the same thing all of the "drift the trolley across both tracks to hit everyone" are suggesting?

🔍 3



SnoopJ

@SnoopJ

🌐 1d

@agowa338 only in a world where manga physics apply

🔍 1



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Klaus Frank

@agowa338@chaos.social

1d

@SnoopJ

On the other hand, they're bound to the tracks so close to the switching point that derailing it right there could also cause it to tip over and land on all of them...

0



Simon Brooke

@simon_brooke@mastodon.scot

1d

@agowa338 @SnoopJ That depends on

1. the speed and weight of the trolley;
2. the separation of the tracks;
3. the articulation of the bogies.

If it's running at the speed of, say, the new Ontario light rail line, no one will get hurt because it's running too slow to fall over and will just stop in a short distance. If it's a Shinkansen, you've got problems.

But the unionised workers on the ground know which it is and can act appropriately

#Syndicalism

1



Klaus Frank

@agowa338@chaos.social

1d

@simon_brooke @SnoopJ

If you want to over analyse it you could also have the issue that the track does not allow being changed once a part of the train passed over it until it fully cleared again...

0



Becca

@bweller@mstdn.social

1d

@agowa338 an ideal solution if it takes out people who pose trolley problems



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@SnoopJ

1 1d



Klaus Frank

@agowa338@chaos.social

@bweller @SnoopJ

As if the people proposing it would be chained to the track.

They're standing where the picture is being taken from...

1 1d



Becca

@bweller@mstdn.social

@agowa338 we're gonna need a bigger train

@SnoopJ

0 1d



crouton

@crouton@aus.social

@SnoopJ what i love most about this is the smile and the thumbs up on the guy operating the switch

1 1d



SnoopJ

@SnoopJ

@crouton their union card says "don't panic" on the back, I bet

1 1d



Union Whore

@unionwhore@ni.hil.ist

@SnoopJ @crouton Actually it has the preamble of the IWW on the back:

"The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace as long as hunger and want are



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found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. ..."

0



SearingTruth

@SearingTruth@infosec.exchange

1d

@SnoopJ

"Which came first?

Working people or rich masters?"

SearingTruth

0



sidereal

@sidereal@kolektiva.social

1d

@SnoopJ And we know it works, too, because this is how old-timey train robbers got it done in the steam era

0



Neil E. Hodges

@tk@f.kawa-kun.com

1d

@SnoopJ

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My camera shoots fascists

@Mikal@sfba.social

1d

@SnoopJ

I love this. Lateral thinking, in this case by very practically minded people who understand the real world mechanics, allows for the rejection of a problem set up by someone who has some hidden agenda.

If presented with two bad choices, pick the third.

1



Hippo 🍉

@badrihippo@fosstodon.org

1d

@Mikal I couldn't resist!

(I can share the SVG source if anyone wants to remix. The font is Almendra)

@SnoopJ

Hide

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ZenHeathen

@ZenHeathen@beige.party

🌐 1d

[@SnoopJ](#) The real solution to the trolley problem is to understand that it's not a problem, in the sense that it's presented.

You are given two options, both of which suck. But **you** didn't set this situation up. This situation is **the system**, and you are being told you're responsible for the outcome. You are not. Since only your hand is close enough to the lever, you can make a difference, but the fact that the problem exists in the first place, and therefore any outcome, is the responsibility of The System, not you. The System tries to make you think it's about you, that it's your fault this is happening, that whoever dies, it's on you. It is not. Don't believe what The System is telling you. You may be forced to live within it, but its evil outcomes are not truly your responsibility. The right answer is that, whatever you choose to do with that lever, proceed to work to dismantle The System that put those people on the track and sent the trolley toward them in the first place.

↩️ 3



Risotto Bias

@risottobias@toot.risottobias.org

🌐 1d

[@ZenHeathen](#) [@SnoopJ](#) right - that decision isn't a vacuum, there's infrastructure (a whole damn railway) built up before this moment.

maybe you face harsh consequences for slipping the switch, maybe you don't have a union and your risk tolerance that day with your kids means you can't - either way, if you see a trolley switch being built into someone else's /future/, do something about it before they're forced to make that choice.

get them the support to change the infrastructure around them :)

↩️ 0



**** Fish Id Wardrobe**

@fishidwardrobe@mastodon.me.uk

🌐 28m

[@ZenHeathen](#) [@SnoopJ](#)

original artist unknown, sorry.



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William Oldwin

@willegible@mastodon.ie

23h

[@ZenHeathen](#) [@SnoopJ](#) This is really reminiscent of Bernard Williams. He had a lot to say about morality, almost all of it negative, but he particularly detested the inescapability and ubiquity of the obligation it imposes on everybody. Morality says that if you're at that lever you are **obligated** to choose who to save. It's on you. Williams called bullshit.

0



Scott Michaud

@scottmichaud@mastodon.gamedev.place

1d

[@SnoopJ](#) "There is one person on board the trolley" the question giver says, grinning ear-to-ear.

1



SnoopJ

@SnoopJ

1d

[@scottmichaud](#) they might get a bruise, but I'll take it!

Relatedly, in looking this image up again, I saw someone frame the trolley problem as "you are ON a trolley..." which is an impressive level of misunderstanding of both the problem and how switches work

2 1 0



Scott Michaud

@scottmichaud@mastodon.gamedev.place

1d

@SnoopJ Or they played Star Fox 64.

1 1 0



SnoopJ

@SnoopJ

1d

@scottmichaud a level well loved by score runners for its many shootable objects!

1 1 0



Scott Michaud

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1d

@SnoopJ Oh hey it turns 29 in a couple months. Neat.

0 1 0



Morgan

@raphaelmorgan@disabled.social

8h

@SnoopJ @scottmichaud that's how they did it on The Good Place lol, they were inside the trolley and the switch was too 🤔

0 1 0



Kierkegaans

@Kierkegaans@beige.party

1d..*

@SnoopJ you're gonna have to answer to the trolley company

(freely after dr strangelove)

0 1 0



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LEX/NØVA



@lexinova@cyberplace.social

1d

@SnoopJ the best answer is the one where you make it go on both to kill everyone #troll

1



TrimTab



@TrimTab@mastodon.social

20h

@lexinova @SnoopJ

No, this is not trolling. It is the the legit answer if the people on the track are Billionaires. 👍

0



Space Catitude



@TerryHancock@realsocial.life

1d

@SnoopJ

What I particularly love about this is that it completely works as a metaphor as well:

The true solution when you face a "trolley problem" in real life is to study more detail to find additional options. Because no real world situation is ever this binary.

2



Graham Downs

@GrahamDowns@mastodon.africa

1d

@TerryHancock @SnoopJ I think that's why the hypothetical thought experiment has such urgency built into it. Decide now! Flip the switch or not. Push the fat man or not. Tick tock. Tick tock.

A similar tactic to that used by phishers. And the response is the same: "Nothing is that urgent. Stop. Breathe. Think."

1



Roger Moore

@VATVSLPR@c.im

19h

@GrahamDowns @TerryHancock @SnoopJ

Of course sometimes people really do have to make snap



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decisions. One of the ways we can improve our quick decision making is to consider possible cases in detail in advance so we're ready when they come up. That said, we should be more generous judging people forced to make quick decisions.



Graham Downs

@GrahamDowns@mastodon.africa

16h

[@TerryHancock](#) [@SnoopJ](#) [@VATVSLPR](#) that's true.

I had a minister once who used to say, "There as nothing so prepared as an off the cuff response."

Obviously he was talking about something else, but I guess that translates here: "There is nothing so prepared as a snap decision."

It makes sense to at least give some thought to what you might do if you were ever so unlucky as to find yourself in a position like this, so that if it were to happen, you at least have some idea on which to base your decision. Even if you can never FULLY prepare yourself for something like this.



Roger Moore

@VATVSLPR@c.im

15h

[@GrahamDowns](#) [@TerryHancock](#) [@SnoopJ](#)

It's more about being able to make decisions effortlessly than quickly. The idea is to know what to do in a plausible but unfamiliar situation so we don't get overwhelmed by the moment. It's used for all kinds of training, not just ethical questions. It's why people like firefighters and soldiers train so much; they want to be able to respond correctly even when they're under enormous stress.



Graham Downs

@GrahamDowns@mastodon.africa

6h

[@TerryHancock](#) [@SnoopJ](#) [@VATVSLPR](#) yeah, I also thought about something like learning to use a firearm and preparing yourself for the possibility of having to point it at another human being and pull the trigger. All sorts of things like that. Preparing yourself for situations that you hope will never come up, and if you're lucky will



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never come up, but if they DO come up, you need to be able to react... Effortlessly, as you say. :-)

0



Mieli Luukinen

@SurrealPartisan@kolektiva.social

21h

[@TerryHancock](#) [@SnoopJ](#) the first part I saw of this toot, and the whole discussion, was the last sentence. I immediately associated it with the argument "nothing in nature is binary" in gender discourse. After the rest of the toot made its way to my brain, I concluded: "trolley problem" would be such a fabulous gender for a person to have. I will have to consider adding it next to the one I just announced.

0



Senil

@senil@gts.social.senil.me

1d

[@SnoopJ](#) how do we know this wouldn't happen, though?

Hide

2



philipp

@eingemaischt@chaos.social

1d

[@senil](#) [@SnoopJ](#) the first thing that came to my mind. "Kill'em all approach".

Tbf, this is not possible with a shirt trolley, but with a longer railway waggon....



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Habrok

@Habrok42@chaos.social

🌙 1d

[@senil](#) [@SnoopJ](#) This is also a valid solution: "If you cause the death of someone, at least leave no witnesses."

🔍 0



disorderlyf

@disorderlyf@todon.eu

🌙 1d

[@SnoopJ](#) The Metaphor Problem: You need to be able to describe abstract concepts to uneducated persons, so you use a metaphor to explain it. But then some of those people take the metaphor literally and try to figure out how to resolve it as if it were a literal situation. It's not yet been determined if this is avoidable, since doing so would require a metaphor that applies down to the most minute details possible.

🔍 2



Kathmandu

@Kathmandu@stranger.social

🌙 1d

[@disorderlyf](#)

The solution given here is a concrete example of the general approach (find the aspects of the system that you know more about than the bosses do; use those aspects to subvert their plans), same as the trolley is an example of a more general class of problem.

[@SnoopJ](#)

🔍 0



Roger Moore

@VATVSLPR@c.im

🌙 20h

[@disorderlyf](#) [@SnoopJ](#)

The problem is that the metaphor adds extra details that complicate the basic moral question. Either those details are important, in which case you can't fault people for considering them, or they are unimportant, in which case the metaphor is flawed for including them.



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Dan Piponi

@dpiponi@mathstodon.xyz

🌐 1d

@SnoopJ The Kobayashi Maru approach

⏪ 1 ⏮ ☆ 📖 ⋮



SnoopJ

@SnoopJ

🌐 1d

@dpiponi yes! simply reject the premise of the test 🤘

⏪ 2 ⏮ ☆ 📖 ⋮



Third Foundation

@rayckeith@techhub.social

🌐 1d

@SnoopJ @dpiponi

really like the moment in The Good Place where Michael says, "I think I just found the solution to the trolley problem." -- (a moment



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