

## Commentary

# Sorry Darwin: New Video Game Proves Adaptation Is Ubiquitous – Not Evolution



(/author/robert-j-marks-ii) By Robert J. Marks II (/author/robert-j-marks-ii) | May 2,

2017 | 3:39 PM EDT

A new video game, *Darwin's Demons* (<https://youtu.be/iKBMYOvcDj4>), claims to demonstrate Darwinian evolution. But *Darwin's Demons* only adapt. And there is a difference between undirected Darwinian evolution and designed adaptation. The name *Darwin's Demons* is scientism's seductive labeling intended to imply otherwise.



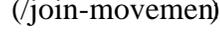
Darwin's Demons (Youtube Screenshot)

Adaptation differs significantly from Darwinian evolution. Humans have unquestionably adapted to discoveries in medicine, sanitation practices and improved nutrition. We are healthier and live longer than we did a few centuries ago. Marvel's *X-Men* celebrate new human super powers obtained through Darwinian evolution. Some who mock ID say ID proponents should quit believing in the fairy tale of a designer. In extrapolating adaptation to Darwinian evolution, perhaps these critics should quit believing in comic books.

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I just finished watching a YouTube video about a smart solar panel that turns itself to always face the sun. At night, the panel folds itself up and tucks away. Like a mattress in the bed of a pickup truck traveling on Interstate 35, the large flat solar panels need to be secured against the forces of wind. So the smart solar panel detects strong wind and retreats to its safe compartmental home when there is wind danger. Such built-in adaptation is a characteristic of good engineering design. Some of us are old enough to remember the sound of a duck choking on a kazoo when phone and fax modems initialized. The sound was the fax machine adapting its operation to its connection using a primitive neural network.

I broke my wrist a few years back and couldn't use a keyboard. Rather than attempt one-armed typing, I purchased *Dragon Naturally Speaking* speech recognition software which I still use on occasion. Even after I regained function of my wrist, the hands-off software still came in handy because I can speak quickly but still look at my fingers when I type. Every time I open the program, *Dragon* asks my permission to look at my old documents and emails to assist in better correlating of my recent utterances with what I write. *Dragon* is adapting and is more accurate for me than it used to be. But I have no expectation that the software will ever evolve to the point where it alone begins to respond to my email or even composes a complete sentence.

Like *Darwin's Demons*, *Dragon* is not evolving – it's adapting exactly as its designers intended. And there will be no adaptation beyond the intended use. Don't wait for it to do something for which it was not programmed to do. As currently written, the program will give little strategy in winning at *Super Mario Brothers* or offering investment advice.

Adaptation is common in engineering. Adaptive designs are robust and able to perform in a wide variety of scenarios.

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Adaptation is also ubiquitous in nature. When I first heard about the beaks of the Galapagos finches changing in accordance to environment and food sources variation, I remember thinking that finch beaks were well designed. They adapted. Likewise, people who lose their sight often develop higher sensitivity to sound and touch. Like New York lawyers removing their suit jackets when transitioning from air conditioning to the outside heat, snakes shed their skins to adapt to increasing size. Some mammals grow heavier coats of fur in preparation for winter. Salamanders in caves quit wasting resources on maintaining their never-used eyes. In some cases, like changes in finch beaks, adaptation is heralded as manifestation of Darwinian evolution. Such is the claim of *Darwin's Demons*.

What's the difference between evolution and adaptation? Darwinian evolution requires creation of specified complexity where there was none. Computer programs, including video games like *Darwin's Demons*, are incapable of being creative (<https://youtu.be/Cm0s7ag3SEc>). Adaptation, on the other hand, uses available pre-programmed resources to improve and ultimately optimize performance.

I recall pumping quarters into an arcade machine to play *Space Invaders* in the late 1970s. The game has the same motif as *Darwin's Demons* except the graphics and processing for *Space Invaders* is cruder. When a level is mastered in *Space Invaders*, the next level is designed to be more difficult. Levels ultimately become so difficult that the player eventually loses. In *Darwin's Demons*, higher levels of play are determined by adaptation to the players' performance and an increased skill of the *Demons*. In *Space Invaders*, there is no adaptation because the difficulty increase at higher levels is simply scheduled. The writer of *Darwin's Demons* software may show the effects of

adaptation – but none of the purported creativity of evolution is present.

The current crop of *Darwin's Demons* will gain consciousness and take over the

internet only in a comic book.

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Many things in nature are sub optimal, imperfect solutions that work well enough. An advantage needs to be significant enough that it creates an advantage in reproduction otherwise it serves no purpose at all. Evolution is a competition of generations, not individuals.

DI implies perfectly designed and specialized creations, something we don't see in nature at all.

Why do golden retrieves have bad hips? (For that matter why do human's have bad backs?)  
Why do male black widow spiders hang around to be eaten after reproduction?

The answer is that bad hips and backs don't affect reproduction much at all and being eaten after reproduction doesn't prevent reproduction in spiders.

DI doesn't work as an explanation because it doesn't offer a useful model for predicting or explaining the variation of species.

Evolution is believed in science because it is the only explanation that fits all the natural evidence we've discovered.

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**DerrickWildcat** • 6 days ago

"In some cases, like changes in finch beaks, adaptation is heralded as manifestation of Darwinian evolution."

it's adaptation and natural selection to the point of speciation...and that is evolution.

Intelligent Design is disingenuous.

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**pete** • 6 days ago

Evolution is Revolution against God. I have yet to see anything in creation which does not have a design, vastly intricate at that. I have yet to see something which popped out of nothing, and yet to see something moving without a mover. I pity all those poor souls who have zero hope for eternal life and cannot say "Thank you" to our benevolent, magnificent God for giving us the overwhelming beauty of creation and the love which is possible between His creatures. I prefer my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to behave and live like precious children of God, rather the descendants of monkeys with no soul or morals or hope for eternal life. I suspect school teachers prefer kids guided by the moral law rather than instinct.

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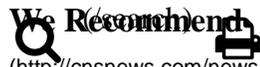
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