

Chapter 1


Let's All Play Together: Motivations of Different Gamification User Types

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ABSTRACT

Gamification is recognized as the next big thing in marketing by using game design elements in a non-game context. Producing desirable experiences and motivating users to remain engaged in an activity is one of the strengths of gamification. The introduction of digital social networks has become the biggest change regarding digital technology, also leading to the evolution and popularity of gamification. Although it is possible to design games, serious games, or gamified systems without knowing who the target users are, it is more likely to create a more engaging experience when these users are identified first. Taking this into consideration, this chapter will look to identify and present the motivations of individuals when using gamification systems. Identifying the motivations behind gamification usage and acknowledging the interaction between them will help organizations understand their audience and create more engaging experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Gamification has a strong practical impact due to its wide adoption and powerful market growth worldwide (Schöbel, Janson & Söllner, 2020), producing desirable experiences and motivating users to engage in an activity. Digital games are fun, engaging, and popular, leading many organizations (including schools, retail companies and health-care organizations) to consider the use of games to train individuals, engage online customers and connect a global workforce (Dickey, 2005). Games are popular

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because they are offering pleasure (Zicherman & Linder, 2010) but are considered unproductive, with no or limited valuable outcome. On the other hand, gamification aims to engage users in solving real-world problems and entails value-adding activities and outcomes (Lombriser & Van der Valk, 2011). Hence the element of pleasure in gamification might not be enough to create similar engagement levels as games. The rapid development of digital capabilities and the increased coverage of the internet (da Silva Brito et al., 2018) are propelling the growth of the gaming industry, and even more so the mobile game industry (Kim et al., 2010).

The popularity of video games is empowered by the development of technologies, such as smart mobile devices and internet accessibility, catering for mobile experiences and vibrant on-site communication (Xu, Buhalis & Weber, 2017). The introduction of the first wave of smartphones back in 2006-2007, and the availability of broadband connections, helped mobile gaming to evolve dramatically (Feijoo et al., 2012), and become a multi-billion-dollar media industry overcoming traditional entertainment (such as movie and music) industries, reporting more profits than both of them combined (Bowman, Kowert & Cohen, 2015). The evolution of mobile and portable devices such as laptops, tablet and smart phones offer significant computational power, storage, and portability. Connecting people all over the world with the introduction of digital social network has become the biggest change regarding digital technology (Sooksatit, 2016).

This led to the evolution and popularity of the phenomenon of Gamification. Kirsh (2014, p. 63) defined gamification as “using game-based mechanics aesthetics and game thinking to engage people, motivate action, promote learning and solve problems”. Da Silva Brito et al (2018) added to that the importance of motives towards the engagement of the phenomenon in peoples’ lives defining gamification as the use of technologies engaged in promoting intrinsic motivations by using diverse characteristics of games in other domains outside the entertainment industry, such as education, marketing, public administration, politics and health. This trend derived from the popularity of games and their intrinsic ability for call to action to solve problems or enable learning in different fields and in people’s lives (da Silva Brito, 2018). Considering the success gaming industry has in the society and everyday lives as a form of leisure, and the evolution of information and communication technologies and mobile devices, it becomes clear that gamification will continue to grow (Kapp, 2012).

Surprisingly, more than half of all organizations attempts to utilize gamification are predicted to fail due to the poor understanding of the gamification design process (Morschheuser et al., 2018). Organizations seem to focus on the obvious game mechanics, such as points, badges and leader boards, rather than the subtler and more important game design elements, like balancing competition and collaboration, or defining a meaningful game economy. It is important to recognize that even though people like games, not everyone likes the same kind or style of games. Although it is possible to design games, serious games or gamified systems without knowing who the target users are, it is more likely to create a more engaging experience when these users are identified first. Taking this into consideration, this chapter will look to identify and present motivations of individuals when using gamification systems. Identifying motivations behind gamification usage will help organizations understand their audience and create more engaging experiences.

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