

Preface

We did not intend this book to be a manual or to provide a complete examination of all elements of gamification. Clearly, given the pace with which research has been developing in this nascent area, a comprehensive overview within the confines of publication schedules would be an ambitious and ultimately unachievable task. Instead, we have elected to focus our attention on two areas (namely, business and education) and provide an overview for the scientific and business community on the work that has been conducted as well as providing direction for further research. We included a small number of salient use cases for insight into practical use and application of gamification approaches.

While the world appears to be drifting towards hyper-competitiveness, we hear of people feeling ‘trapped’ in many jobs from the high-powered through to the mundane. Facing the ‘electronic whip’, we can see that many people are yearning for greater meaning within their lives. In some cases, people just want to enjoy their jobs more. They want to move away from their regular work processes (e.g. efficiencies and effectiveness in meeting corporate goals) towards something more meaningful and personal to them; something that will get them motivated, provide a sense of accomplishment, and which will help them to smile at work each day.

Meanwhile, our educational philosophies have changed little over several thousand years. Students are still treated as minds to be shaped, despite the overwhelming evidence that we should be encouraging them to seek and explore. What stops a student from learning? While towering geniuses often speak fondly of their love for learning, a love of learning is infrequently encouraged and we hear few students express a desire to spend more time learning.

Gamification has been positioned as one approach, tool, or set of techniques which may change how various activities are undertaken so that those involved begin to experience more fun, enjoyment, and pleasure in their tasks. The term became popular in 2010 and dominates especially areas with human interaction and focus on the quality of the experience since then. And the hype is still progressing today as people continue to investigate how the appropriate theories can be implemented

and further developed. There are now many definitions of ‘gamification’; yet, some are concise (fun, play, passion) or too specific with strong reference to gaming mechanisms. Thus, we propose a simple, comprehensive definition unrestricted in its application, environment, or discipline:

Gamification is a designed behaviour shift through playful experiences

Saying that, we should not get between you and your exploration of this book and learning more about gamification and its value for education and business. Enjoy. And keep us informed about your thoughts about how you use gamification now and it will develop in the future.

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