EVEN NINJA MONKEYS LIKE TO PLAY

Gamification, Game Thinking and Motivational Design

A chapter from the full book

EEEE USER JOURNEY

I have been on a journey of learning for a long time now and it is my time to be the Master. Here you will find a journey of several phases explained: Enrol, Enthuse, Engage and End Game/Expert. I am well and truly out of the Enthuse and Engage phases. My End Game? My *Master* will find out soon.

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The Player Journey is a concept that I came across from the wonderful Amy Jo Kim. She talks about the player journey in terms of three main phases. Onboarding, Habit Building and Mastery [65]
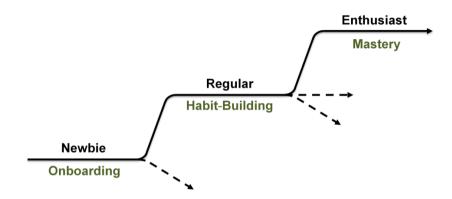

Figure 1 Amy Jo Kim's Player Journey

Over time, these are the main phases a player goes through whilst engaged with a game. They begin the path as a Newbie, orienting to the system they are entering. During the habit-building phase, they start to integrate the system into their specific situation or circumstances.

Eventually they reach a level where there is no longer an increasing challenge and they will have mastered the material or system.

The same is true for users going through a gamified system. Users enter the system and have to learn how to use it. Then they actually need to start using it day to day and finally, once they have mastered the system they will probably need something more.

As gamification and games are not quite the same and based on some of my experiences, I created a slight variation, called the EEEE User Journey.
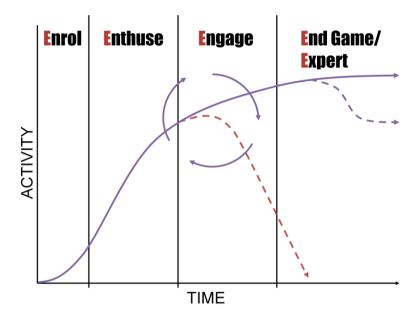

Figure 2 EEEE User Journey

Figure 2 EEEE User Journey shows the relative activity over time. You can see that after an initial burst of enthusiasm, activity begins to level out. In fact, during the last phase, it may drop – but it will continue.

Enrol

Once a user has taken the first step and has decided to use the system, they have enrolled. This could be as simple reading some information and clicking a link in an email. From this point, they begin to use the system.

They usually start with a short period of activity whilst they learn the ropes. When considering your strategy, this is where points and rewards are of most use. They can be used to recognise the activities of the user, to pat them on the back and encourage them. Rewards should be relatively frequent, but relate directly to their activities, keeping in mind that they act as important feedback for the user at this stage.

Enthuse

Once they are over the initial learning curve, you may see them begin to "play" enthusiastically with the system – trying out everything that they can. Take a simple gamified website, where you are rewarded for commenting, liking etc. The Enthuse phase will see these users adding many comments, liking content and pushing the boundaries of the system rules. This burst of activity will begin to level off though.

Engage

Once the enthusiasm of a new joiner has slowed, they need to enter the engage phase. This is where they begin to use the system in a way more akin to your initial design intent. Due to decreasing motivation and novelty, this is a big drop out phase. If you have no plan beyond point giving, engagement is unlikely for any length of time. You should consider this as a cycle that can potentially continue for a long time. The Engage phase is where Activity Loops (explained in the next chapter) will be used a great deal.

During this phase, you must start to reduce your reliance on rewards. The intrinsic motivations need to be encouraged, converting users from Player type users into intrinsic type users. Later I will go into detail about the types of game mechanics and ideas that are used to do this.
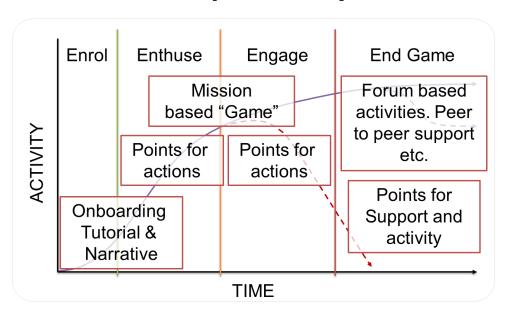
It is worth noting that the *enthuse* phase and the engage phase may not require separate strategies.

End Game / Expert

A system will go two ways over time. There may be a finite end. So for example, if you are running a short campaign to raise awareness of a new product – it will end at a defined time. The End Game should give the user some feeling of satisfaction that whatever they did was worth it. A nice example of this is how Sweden handles blood donors. Once their blood is used, they receive a text telling them how it was used! [66]

The other way the system could go is continued usage. Once your user has become an expert, they stay in the system because they want to. You have given them some reason to "love it". Akin to the Mastery phase of Amy's Journey, this is where they have become intrinsically motivated to stay and will continue to use the system at their own pace. It is in this phase that they may start to evangelise to others, passing on their expertise and helping them on their journeys.

Example Journey

The End

If you enjoyed this chapter, find out more about the full book at

http://www.gamified.uk/even-ninja-monkeys-like-to-play/

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