

A few weeks ago, I sent out a short survey to about 15 people in the Gamification world. The idea was to get a some simple answers to questions I have pondered over time. I thought it would be fun to get them all to give answers to the exact same questions. Here are the first round of answers!

Massive thanks to the first run of responses - [Scott Schnaars](#), [Marigo Raftopoulos](#), [Michael Wu](#), [Mark Sorrell](#), [Barry Kirk](#), [Erika Webb](#), [Steve Bocska](#), [Jesse Schell](#), [Scott Sinclair](#), [Ivan Kuo](#), [Toby Beresford](#), [Anthony Williams](#)

This survey is now open to anyone - please take a few moments to fill it in!! ([click here](#)). The answers to this will be made public in a few weeks!!

Marigo Raftopoulos, Chief Play Office for Strategic Game Labs

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1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

The use of game mechanics in non-entertainment applications.

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

The use of strategic elements of [game thinking](#), game design and game mechanics for use on non-game environments such as business, education, healthcare, not-for-profit and government applications.

3. What is gamification to you ?

The art and science of engagement.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

Game thinking. We have systems thinking, this is the next big thing.

Andrzej Marczewski, Gamification Evangelist and lover of gamesTwitter: [@daverage](#)Website: <http://www.gamified.uk>**1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?**

The application of game mechanics to non game tasks.

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?The application of gaming metaphors and mechanics to real life tasks to influence behaviour, improve [motivation](#) or enhance engagement. Possibly adding the unusual to the usual to add benefit.**3. What is gamification to you ?**

For me it is about using the psychology that make games work and applying them to things that may not be intrinsically interesting. It can also be about using that psychology to influence the outcome of certain decisions people may make. It is not about sticking badges on stuff.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

Game Behaviour Science

5. What would you rather be?

Dragon

Mark Sorrell, Gamification and Game Design ExpertTwitter: [@sorrell](#)

Website: <http://www.bewareofthesorrell.com>

1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

Adding game-like elements to things that are not games

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

Adding non-game elements to games.

3. What is gamification to you ?

It's been sold as a marketing tool - cheaply adding virtual rewards to activities, thus increasing engagement, value, sales and everything else, ever, for free. This definition is a thing, but that thing is behavioural economics and should be seen and treated as such. Manipulating behaviour through influence around humans' irrational, predictable behavioural tics.

There is also a version of the concept that involves leveraging the power of play This version is only suitable for a small subset of applications - specifically they must be optional and creative. Perhaps it's best summed up by the opposite of play not being work, but obey.

As much of what is desired by businesses is the obedience of their customers rather than enabling their creativity, it's often not of great use. However, if creativity is desired, then play can be a powerful force.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

Behavioural Economics

5. What would you rather be?

I want to be a Lion, but I felt the need to express that through this box, because I really mean it.

Erika Webb, Oracle, Sr. Manager Applications User Experience

Twitter: [@erikanollwebb](#)

Website: <https://blogs.oracle.com/Gamification/>

1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

Something more like the Gamification Wiki description “Gamification typically involves applying game design thinking to non-game applications to make them more fun and engaging. ”

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

The use of game mechanics to increase engagement and use of websites and applications.

3. What is gamification to you ?

Gamification is really just an increasingly transparent version of good principles of usability, such as feedback. It taps into the sense that many have that applications, in particular, are difficult to use and hard to understand at times. By providing more information for the user about their performance and their status, they find applications easier to use and more engaging. Since employee engagement is critical, more engaging applications should increase productivity.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

I’m not sure at this point. We seem to be stuck with it although a lot of people don’t care for the name.

5. What would you rather be?

Dragon

Steve Bocska, Pug Pharm Productions, CEO — Home of Picnic(tm) Customer Engagement Engine: The World’s Only Platform that Creates Community Culture Through Gameplay

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Website: <http://www.pugpharm.com>

1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

How do I think other people are defining it today? Probably something like: “Using points systems, virtual badges, and simple rule sets to manipulate people’s behaviors towards some desired outcome.”

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

It’s too late now, since the term has been hijacked to mean far too many different things. But if I could turn back the clock and write my own entry in Webster’s, I’d write, “Gamification: The application of intrinsically motivating gameplay design principles to non-game situations.”

3. What is gamification to you ?

At Pug Pharm, when we talk about “gamifying,” we are talking about the process of fusing two intrinsically motivating systems to create a new amplified hybrid user experience.

Our test of the integrity of any “gamification” is when the gameplay system is able to stand on it’s own as a fun, engaging user experience.

Most “gamification” projects I’ve seen the past few years have failed this test miserably.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

I would just call it “smart design.” □

5. What would you rather be?

Gordon Ramsay

Scott Sinclair, Gamification Lead Capgemini UK

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Website: <http://about.me/sinclair300584>

1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

The application of game mechanics (badges, points) to influence behaviour in a non-gaming environment

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

The application of game mechanics (badges, points) to influence behaviour in a non-gaming environment

3. What is gamification to you ?

The mechanic of gamification is not new - we have been doing it for years. However, to me, the exciting bit is our ability to 'measure' its impact on behaviours (and tweak the mechanics to get different behaviours).

For example, a hotel reward scheme that only gives me free nights will not drive me to be loyal to them - I will simply collect their points whenever I have to stay there to get a free night. However, a reward scheme that offers me something more than a free night (access to executive clubs, invites to special launches, a different coloured card, express check-in and check-out) drive my loyalty much more because the 'reward' I get for levelling up (and being loyal) are more intrinsically related to my status (not all customers have a platinum coloured card). Now, back to my point - whilst this is a simple form of game mechanics (points, level up, status, access to exclusives etc.) i was never 'really' able to compare myself to other members - and from a hotels point of view recognise that when they offered double points I often stay an extra night (just to get those double points).

So for me, gamification is not gamification - it's a digital way of measuring and influencing behaviours to improve return on investment in existing systems.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

I wouldn't.

5. What would you rather be?

Lion

Michael Wu Ph.D., Chief Scientist at Lithium Technologies Inc.

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Website: <http://lithosphere.lithium.com/t5/Science-of-Social-blog/bg-p/scienceofsocial>

1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

The use of game attributes to drive game-like player behavior in a non-game context with predictability. Where game attributes may be anything that a game designer use to make a game fun and engaging. For example: game mechanics, game dynamics, game design principles, gaming psychology, [player journey](#), narratives, incentives, etc.

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

The use of game attributes to drive game-like player behavior in a non-game context with predictability. Where game attributes may be anything that a game designer use to make a game fun and engaging. For example: game mechanics, game dynamics, game design principles, gaming psychology, player journey, narratives, incentives, etc.

3. What is gamification to you ?

To me, gamification is merely a tool for driving behaviors, which include engagement, interaction, competition, collaboration, awareness, learning, even to the extreme of obsession, and much more. There are many tools for driving behavior, but gamification seem to be one that is very effective, at least in the short term, and can maintain its effectiveness in the long run if done right.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

Behavior Engineering

5. What would you rather be?

Dolphin

Ivan Kuo, Chief Editor of GamificationCo

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Website: <http://gamification.co>

1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

My immediate and easiest thought when asked for an example is to reference Foursquare 1.0 but as for a text description I would expect it to talk about the following:

Points

Badges

Leaderboards

Missions

Social Elements

Rewards

Motivation (Intrinsic and Extrinsic)

and the SAPS model to explain motivating factors.

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

Gamification is the use of game mechanics, game design, and game-thinking in non-game applications to engage users.

3. What is gamification to you ?

Gamification is the successful use of smart design and thinking to transform user experiences into interactive, fun, and addictive events that people will come back to. These experiences are not inherently games - they are experiences designed so well that people are not aware that these functions were anything other than crucial to the design of the product/experience. Good gamification will never have a user ask "why am I doing this or earning these points? Why do I care about a badge?" Instead, good gamification will be getting people to tell their friends they earned a badge because they've successfully used

your product in a way that is also beneficial for your organization's goals.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

It would have to be something to stop people from asking me "Oh you work with video games!". It is hard to think of a "better" word than gamification, especially after funware never took off.

It should just be considered apart of good UX design in the future.

5. What would you rather be?

To make it interesting - i'd rather be Blastoise:

<http://abby10101.files.wordpress.com/2007/06/blastoise.gif>

Scott Schnaars, the GM of EMEA at Badgeville, based in London. Badgeville is the #1 gamification and behavior management platform.

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1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

Gamification is the process of identifying specific business goals and applying game mechanics to help reach those goals. This could be something as simple as encouraging kids to empty the dishwasher by giving them 'allowance points' to something as sophisticated as Samsung Nation creating a unique loyalty program to encourage customers to register products and write reviews. It may also be used across internal programs in large enterprises, driving employee performance, collaboration and productivity.

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

Gamification is the strategy which takes behavior-motivating mechanics from traditional and social games, and applies these mechanics to non-game experiences.

3. What is gamification to you ?

At Badgeville, leveraging game mechanics is a critical part to influencing behavior. Ultimately, our customers — from NBC to Samsung to Oracle - want to increase revenue and business objectives by influencing their customer and employee behaviors. Gamification is one way to do this, but there are many other ways to change the way that people behave. Reputation Mechanics and Social Mechanics are related ways to influence employee and customer behaviors for years into the future. By looking at the experience that is right for your business, you can craft an experience for your customers and employees that is unique and long lasting. It is smart gamification at it's finest and not simply tied to simple rewards for simple behaviors.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

Behavior Lifecycle Management (BLM)

5. What would you rather be?

I live in the greatest city on the planet (London) working for one of the hottest companies on the planet (Badgeville.) I'm pretty content being me right now.

Jesse Schell

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Website: <http://schellgames.com>

1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

Gamification *n.* blah blah blah.

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

Gamification *n.* A stupid term invented by ninnies to describe half-assed attempts to make boring things more interesting.

3. What is gamification to you ?

Gamification is the beginning of a larger revolution in the nature of design — a revolution

where designs are made to be pleasing above all else. As this revolution matures, the term “gamification” will gradually set aside, as the world starts to understand that it is just one small piece of something much larger.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

I prefer Sebastian Deterding’s term: Motivational Design.

5. What would you rather be?

Dragon

Barry Kirk, Sr Director of Digital Strategy at Bunchball and loyalty industry practitioner

Twitter: [@barrykirk](https://twitter.com/barrykirk)

Website: <http://www.bunchball.com>

1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

“The application of game mechanics to non-game experiences.” I would hope NOT to see that definition suggest that gamification is about adding a game to something or about making something more fun. I don’t believe gamification is about either of those things, or at least not without a very sophisticated explanation of what “fun” might mean.

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

Making a non-game experience worthy of a human being’s sustained engagement, usage and loyalty by making it more compelling (more social, competitive, collaborative, mastery building, goal seeking — but not necessarily more fun) through the skillful integration of game thinking directly into that core experience.

3. What is gamification to you ?

I come out of the loyalty marketing world, so to me gamification is really an evolution of techniques that have been applied with great skill and effectiveness by loyalty marketers

and motivation experts for decades, albeit in a limited way. What gamification as an emergent practice does is place a whole host of new game mechanics and dynamics into the hands of experience designers. I do not believe its a tool of manipulation (unless manipulation is your goal!), but rather an effort to allow experience design to reflect a growing understanding from fields like behavioral psychology and neuroscience of what makes for a compelling human experience that can also drive stronger results for business.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

I wouldn't change the name. Gamification is now a well-known term in the business world and one that no longer requires a lengthy explanation when you walk into meetings to discuss it with major brands and large enterprises. A year ago it was always necessary to spend the first meeting with a new client explaining what gamification is and is not — now its much more common to find that gamification is already identified as an enterprise-wide initiative. Once a concept has name recognition and adoption, a smart marketer doesn't choose that moment to start re-naming it.

5. What would you rather be?

Jesse Schell

Toby Beresford, founder of Leaderboarded.com

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Website: <http://www.leaderboarded.com>

1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

The use of game mechanics in non-game contexts

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

borrowing techniques from video games

3. What is gamification to you ?

Gamification creates greater engagement through the use of game design mechanics perfected in games over the years. That might mean making a piece of software more enjoyable to learn or it might mean nudging people into a more beneficial pattern of behaviour.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

g10n ☐

5. What would you rather be?

I'm happy as I am

Anthony Williams, Fuzzlr

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Website: <http://fuzzlr.com>

1. What description would you expect to see of gamification in a dictionary?

From Wikipedia (call me lazy): Gamification is the use of game design techniques, game thinking and game mechanics to enhance non-game contexts.

2. If you could write the dictionary entry for Gamification, what would you write?

The application of game elements/game design techniques in a non-game context to create game-like player behaviour.

3. What is gamification to you ?

Creating compelling experiences by adding game and play elements, ranging from more subtle experiences (progress bars for profile completion, number of followers/friends, etc) to full-on game-like experiences including things like customisable avatars and story-telling elements.

4. If you could choose a different name for gamification, what would it be?

What are we trying to achieve with “gamification”? I believe we’re trying to create better experiences - more compelling, engaging, pleasurable (the same goal as game design). Can you come up with a word that encompasses that?

5. What would you rather be?

Alex Mercer from Prototype

Please wait...