

I spoke about [rewards and reward schedules](#) a couple of weeks ago, now I want to look at feedback. If I am honest, this will repeat ideas I have mentioned before, but it should give a little more meat and context.

Feedback comes in many forms, not all of them as obvious as we may think. It is also vital to any gamified system that feedback exists. It helps user keep track of how they are progressing, how they are “doing” within the system. One of the complaints about the “real” world is that feedback is often very slow. End of year reviews, report [cards](#), midterm exams. In the game world, we are used to constant and instant feedback. Collect something and you are notified immediately. Complete a level and you are told, gain experience and you are notified. All of this happens straight away, no waiting around months and months to understand how you have done. In call of duty, you don’t have to wait until the end of the month to find out how you have performed in the last 20 matches. You are told constantly during the match and they you are given a summary of achievements at the end.

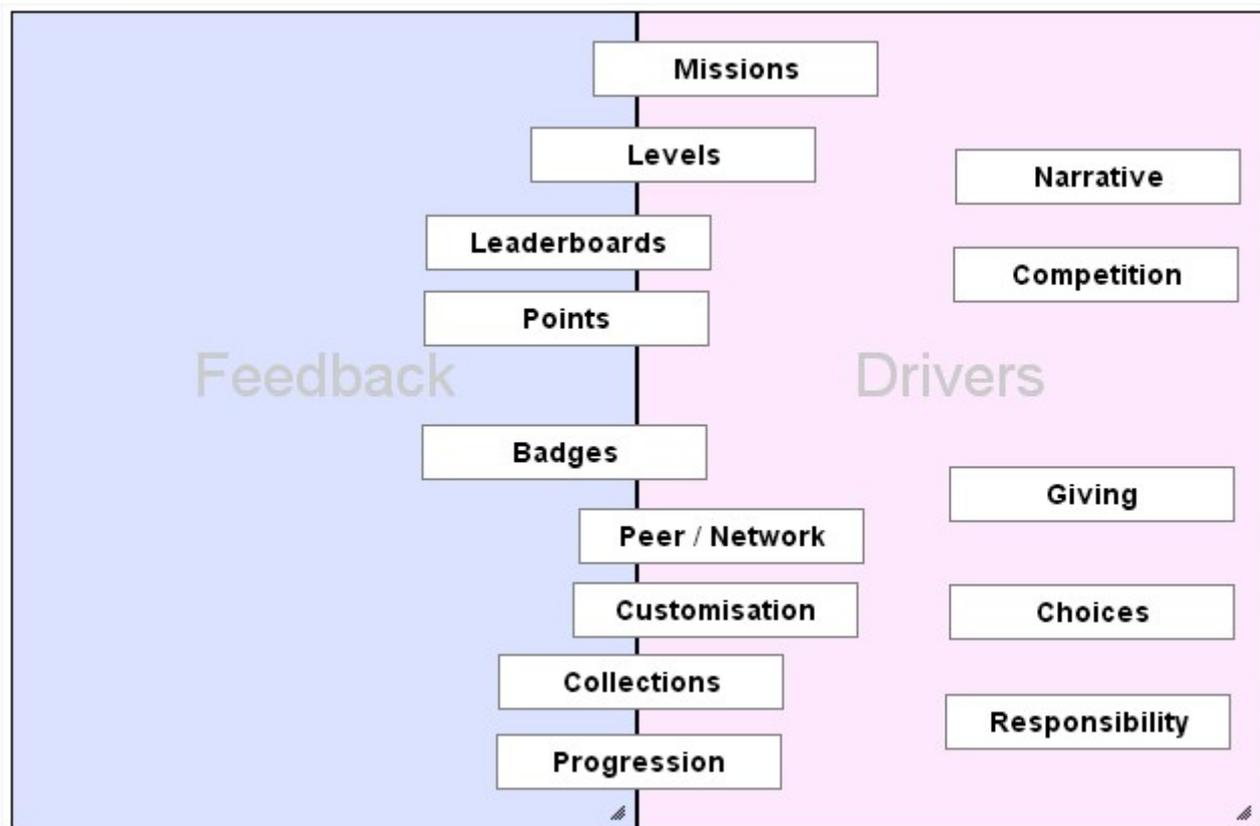
As I say, some forms of feedback are more obvious to us than others. Progress bars, textual or verbal, points and of course our old favourite badgers.. sorry, badges. However, when it comes to things like missions, levels, collections and so on, people assume that these are really there as drivers, rewards for doing something. You get to the next level, by improving your skill - it is a reward as well as an increased challenge.

If we stop thinking of these as drivers and instead as feedback, we see that a lot can be used to provide instant feedback to the user. If you have collected certain achievements, new ones become available. This notifies the user that they have reached a certain stage in their progression and that now more is available - it is feedback. The same is true of levels and missions. As you get better, the system lets you know by opening more things to you.

Below is a quick diagram to illustrate what I am talking about. Notice that there are more drivers than feedback, that may just be lack of imagination on my part - but it serves to demonstrate what I mean. We would traditionally think of missions and badges etc as drivers and rewards or things to strive for. Here I am trying to show that they can fall into both camps.

Click to see it larger!





If we consider more what feedback can be created from our mechanics and elements (more on that soon), we can stop thinking about systems that purely aim to drive people by dangling carrots in front of them, we can start to think how we can use them to make the system more valuable to the user and how they can get even more out of it.

Feel free to have a play with the feedback vs drivers image. I made a tool that lets you add and remove ideas - <http://gamified.uk/characteristics/game%20elements.htm>. I would love to see screenshots of what you think!

Next week, I am hoping to start on the language of gamification, specifically our usage of the term Game Mechanics. For the most part, we are using this term incorrectly so I wanted to get games designers opinions on what [game mechanics](#) really are and what we should call what we are really talking about! Let me know if you have any thoughts on that

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