A couple of weeks ago I put out an article that tried to define the [differences between serious games, games and gamification](#). It was received very well, with a few people even asking for permission to use it in PhD course work.

The work I did was based on researching the "average" definitions of each term and then throwing a little of my own opinion in for good measure and I stand by them. I say this, because depending on how you look at them – I'm wrong, in fact most of us in gamification are … depending on how you look at it all….

When you look at the way I set out the definition of gamificaiton, I am essentially saying that it is the use game elements and thinking, devoid of gameplay. Most in the industry would agree with this. However, the same people are more than happy to claim that a venture such as [FoldIt](#) – a game that saw people solving protein folding "puzzles" to help find the cure for AIDS – is an example of gamification. However, according to the definition we have settled on, it is actually a serious game – it has gameplay!

Just recently a shockwave went through the world of gamification, a little bit of excitement in the form of comment made by Snoop Dogg (!). He was quoted as saying that his new game, [Way of the Dogg](#), was the *"the first true gamification of my music"*. Cool, Snoop Dogg mentioned gamification. But wait. He is talking about making a video game, that isn't gamification, That's making a game. Damn, that sends out a confusing message and he is wrong.

Or is he?

If we look at the etymology of the word gamification, it tells us a slightly different tale. Gam, is obviously from Game. The [Oxford Dictionaries](#) site it tells us that -ification is the "forming nouns of action from verbs ending in -fy (such as simplification from simplify)." or gamify in out case. -fy is in turn is defined as

- (added to nouns) forming verbs denoting making or producing: *speechify*
  - denoting transformation or the process of making into: *deify, petrify*

So, taking this literary, gamification is the process of making something into a game, taking

its truest definition. Not taking bits of games and bolting them onto non game processes, but making an actual game. So saying that Way of the Dogg is the gamification of Snoop Dogg's music is completely accurate.

Now then, the truth is that this doesn't matter in the slightest. We have chosen a definition of gamificaiton and we have mostly agreed to stick to it. This is important for gamification as a field of activity, as I have said previously. However, as we head to our high horses to tell people that it is not about making games (myself included), it is important to remember that in reality that is exactly what the word means. To people not in the world of gamification, that is what they will assume based on the word itself.

Personally, I would like to have Gamification be an umbrella term for everything. [Serious games](), games and gameful / playful design. But, that will never officially happen

Take it as a sign that we need to broaden our minds a little and accept that sometimes the solutions to people's problems are not as black and white as adding game elements and throwing psychology at them. Sometimes we just needs to play a little game or two. Also, be a little more understanding (this also goes for me!).

Please wait...