

Welcome to my first post holiday blog. Lots going on, not least of which I have now got a draft of my book! You can register your interest in buying it here -> [Sign up for notifications about Even Ninja Monkeys Like to Play](#). I am looking at ways to apply a discount for people who sign up ☐

Now to business.

Today, two interesting things came to my attention about the state of gamification. The first was Gartner's Hype Cycle. For those that don't know, Gartner predict how technology will be adopted over time in a cycle of 5 phases. Below is the description of each taken from their [website](#)

1. **Technology Trigger:** A potential technology breakthrough kicks things off. Early proof-of-concept stories and media interest trigger significant publicity. Often no usable products exist and commercial viability is unproven.
2. **Peak of Inflated Expectations:** Early publicity produces a number of success stories — often accompanied by scores of failures. Some companies take action; many do not.
3. **Trough of Disillusionment:** Interest wanes as experiments and implementations fail to deliver. Producers of the technology shake out or fail. Investments continue only if the surviving providers improve their products to the satisfaction of early adopters.
4. **Slope of Enlightenment:** More instances of how the technology can benefit the enterprise start to crystallize and become more widely understood. Second and third-generation products appear from technology providers. More enterprises fund pilots; conservative companies remain cautious.
5. **Plateau of Productivity:** Mainstream adoption starts to take off. Criteria for assessing provider viability are more clearly defined. The technology's broad market applicability and relevance are clearly paying off.

Last year, gamification was heading into the Trough of disillusionment with a predicted 5-10 years before it reached the Plateau of Productivity. I have often stated I am not a massive fan of the hype cycle. I tend to feel it is a self fulfilling prophecy of bullshit - enough decision makers read it to force it to come true.



Gartner Hype Cycle

2014

However, it is interesting to see that in 2015, they have removed gamification completely.



Gartner Hype Cycle

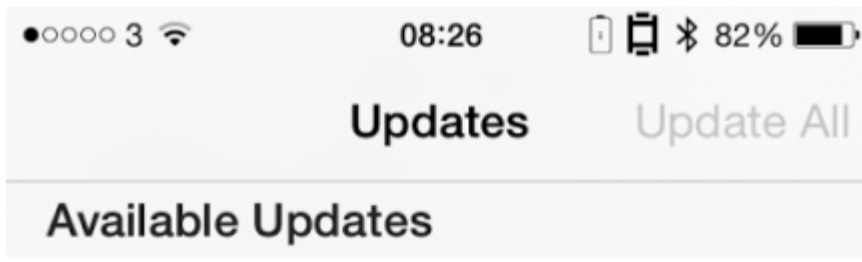
2015

The likelihood is that they just need to save space on the diagram as it is another few years before it moves to their next phase.

What does that mean for gamification? Well, my hope is that it offers us some breathing space without them trying to [redefine gamification](#) or even speak about it in any way!

Another interesting thing that I saw just today, was that Swarm has added yet more gamification back into its product. Last year Foursquare split out the check-in features of its popular app and created a new app that just focused on check-ins - Swarm. Foursquare became a recommendation app instead. The split saw the removal of all of the gamification elements that people were supposedly bored of in Foursqaure; Badges, Leaderboards and Mayorships. Many saw this as a huge nail in the coffin of gamification - others a nail in the coffin of Foursqaure.

Well, this year they have been slowly adding gamification back into Swarm! For me, they are still meaningless for the most part (I became mayor of Trevone last week after my fist check-in since 2013 for instance!), but it turns out that people obviously liked the gamified elements. Today's update on iOS added back Leaderboards!



Swarm by Foursquare
Version 3.0, 28.4 MB
20 Aug, 2015



Wait for it... Wait for it...

• The leaderboard is back! Compete with your friends to see who's having the most interesting week. Every check-in will earn you coins. You'll get more coins when you check in with friends, become the Mayor, extend streaks... and more! Finish near the top of your leaderboard to earn sweet prizes. Remember, taunting your friends is encouraged... "O'Doyle Rules!"

Leaderboards are Back in

Swarm!

I have always had mixed feelings about Foursquare's use of gamification. Many think it is everything wrong with gamification. Points, badges and leaderboards just stuck on something with no context. What makes it interesting for me is that for such a trivial use of gamification, it certainly had an impact - it changes millions of people's behaviour. Think about it for a moment. Before Foursquare, it was not normal to go somewhere and then take your phone out to tell people you were there. Foursquare used gamification to encourage you to earn badges by doing just that, but added an easy way to do it - the Check-in button. Changing the behaviour of millions is not a failure to me. What they did was stopped working on it and never really found the next phase of [engagement](#). They wanted to be a recommendation engine, but lost faith in the tool they already had.

Can we conclude anything from Gartner forgetting about gamification and Swarm

remembering it? Yes - maybe we are finally at a point where gamification is just another tool in our kit and soon we will have to stop trying to justify its use!

Now - go register your interest in my book

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