



Gamification: you got to play to win

Description

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A lovely chat with some new friends brought about an interesting thought. Can you really write games or **gamify** things if you don't play games?

I have rambled at length about my views on [gamification](#). I have explained what I think the basics of game theory boil down to. A task with some kind of reward or incentive offered for completion. This can be an obvious reward, such as a badge, or it may just be the enjoyment the task brings. It is all easy stuff to understand. However, the kicker is – understanding is not enough. As with so many things in this world, theory is not enough. I know the theory of nuclear fusion, it doesn't mean I can build a reactor in my back garden!

The same is true of games and gamification. You could know all about **game theory**, about **game mechanics** and badges and the stats behind it all, but if you don't actually play games, how can you expect people to be engaged with your interpretation of it all. You have to "get it" to be able to really be in a position to make "it" work.

It's why you can't get a driving licence, just by getting 100% on your driving theory test. They expect you to be able to actually physically drive a car as well. It is why knowing the scales, chords and structure of the Blues, doesn't mean you will be able to play them. You have to feel the Blues, you have to get it.

Would you trust a music critic who never listened to music, a film reviewer who never watched a film? Would you trust a plumber to fix your car or a mechanic to build your extension? Of course not. So why should anyone trust a non gamer to make their most important processes feel and behave more like a game?

So, if you want to talk, with authority on gamification – you have to play games in my mind. I am not talking about being addicted to **Call of Duty or World of Warcraft**, but you have to have a passion for games and most importantly what makes them fun. As many have said, it is not all about putting badges on sites and offering experience points. Quite often that will play a role, but you can give so

much more to the user if you actually understand how games work and what makes them fun – and the best way to do that?

Go play some games. Have fun damit and then read all the theory of how to apply the mechanics that you found fun to your real world situation.

Category

1. Gamification
2. Gaming
3. Technology

Tags

1. Economics
2. game theory
3. Gamification
4. Recreation
5. Social Sciences
6. video games
7. World of Warcraft

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