



Why do we use game related words in gamification?

Description

And, is it ok?

The quickest answer is ease and lack of maturity.

It is easy to borrow words from games like quests, missions, achievements, trophies, player and the like. It is easier than finding gamification or more “businessy” alternatives. The reason for this? Gamification has not yet matured enough to have its own set of metaphors to use. Instead we use ones from games.

Is this ok?

It all depends who you ask. Many in gamification, especially the newest members of the movement, don't like it. It feels as though it cheapens the amazing things that can be achieved with gamification. It makes us all think of the bad times, where points, badges and leaderboards were all that was out there.

Some like to use terms like “player” to emphasise the major differences between gamification and typical old school approaches to business solutions.

Some dare not even mention gamification in a meeting – people hate the term so much they would not even get a chance to say player to them.

Really it all comes down to the situation. Games and gamification are different. They are not interchangeable terms – the same can be said of the terms used in games. Just think how much time I spent talking about what [game mechanics](#) are and are not!

My advice is this. If you can't explain to a client what the benefits of gamification are without feeling the need to avoid the word “gamification”, maybe you should consider not selling them gamification. The terms you use to describe it should be relevant and in context. Easier said than done, I know, but worth thinking about.

Category

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Author

andrzej-marczewski

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