



Defining Game Mechanics in a Gamification Context

Description

Ok. I've approached game mechanics a [few times](#), but the conversation still persists and the misuse of terms gets worse and worse! I wanted to put together a little glossary with contextual examples, based on my research – so feel free to disagree.

Mechanic: *A distinct set of rules that dictate the outcome of specific interactions within the game.*

- Game Example: Digging blocks is the core mechanic. Crafting is another mechanic.
- Gamification Example: The drag and drop mechanism in timeline sort challenge. The timer is also a mechanic as is the act of turning over cards in the memory match game.

Dynamic. *The emergent outcomes of player and system interactions with game mechanics.*

- Game Example: Building a fortress in Minecraft with friends.
- Gamification Example: Pooling knowledge in the social chat area to help each other complete the challenges.

Aesthetic/Immersion: *The feelings and emotions the game evokes in the player.*

- Game Example: The feeling of loss and sadness when a character dies in The Walking Dead.
- Gamification Example: The feeling of fiero / epic win when finally cracking that extra tough challenge.

Element: *Parts of the games and concepts not described as mechanics, dynamics, aesthetics etc.*

- Game Example: The customisation of a player avatar in Minecraft. Boss battles in Street Fighter 2.
- Gamification Example: Customisable player images and avatars. Final extra hard challenges in a module.

Feedback Loop: *The way the game communicates with the player to encourage more interaction with the game.*

- Game Example: Trophies for achieving specific goals. Points for shooting the bad guys.
- Gamification Example: Progress awarded for reading a document.

Function: *The core workings of a mechanic that takes an input, processes it and has an output.*

- Game Example: The way that the trajectory of a bullet is calculated in real time after it is fired.
- Gamification Example: The way that progress is calculated after an activity such as a correct answer in a challenge.

Parameter: *A variable value that is assigned to functions within parameters that can change the outcome of the function/mechanic.*

- Game Example: How many points a kill is worth. How many points are needed to move up a level.
- Gamification Example: The time allotted to complete the game. The points given for each challenge.

As I say, this is my opinion based on the last 5 or 6 years of my research and involvement in the gamification industry. What do you agree with, what do you disagree with?

More Guitar Stuff

As you have noticed, I have picked up the guitar once more and am hitting YouTube. This week is a review of the Donner Viper volume pedal. It is a bit long, so the lesson is to try and keep it below 6 minutes!!

Category

1. Gamification
2. Education
3. Gaming

Tags

1. aesthetics
2. donner volume
3. dynamics
4. game mechanics
5. mda
6. mechanics

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