



Gamification gone bad

Description

To move on I want to look at how you can easily get Gamification very wrong. When it goes bad, it goes really bad. What you think makes something entertaining and engaging can actually have the exact opposite effect. This is especially true with online learning materials, or e-learning.

Just because you add pretty graphics and you've added some animations doesn't mean you've created a good gamified piece of e-learning. If what you've added actually makes it harder to complete the e-learning module then you failed.

Gamification is about adding to the experience of the user, it's about motivating and engaging with the user. If what you're adding actually creates a barrier between you, your user and what you've been trying to achieve then you need to reconsider your strategy.

In recent times, I've seen a trend towards adding superfluous animations, extra bits of pseudo-points, rewards, collection and leader boards. This is then proclaimed to be a gamified experience. What actually happens is, you start with a module that should take about 10 minutes to go through, but because of the extra "gamified" elements actually takes closer to 40 minutes.

Remember if you're adding points, these points need to mean something. If you're going to have some kind of leader board it needs to actually have a multiplayer aspect so that other members of the company can see each other scores. Also, keep in mind, within a company most people are very busy. If they have to take some kind of course online, it needs to be efficient and as quick as possible to get it's point across. Having to watch animations between each question is going to frustrate people. Cute "fun" graphics will patronise them. Keep it simple and to the point.

Most importantly there needs to be some kind of reason to add all of this to your learning materials. Gamification for the sake of Gamification is wrong. It should always add an extra layer of engagement. If adding what you are adding prevents the user from achieving their goals simply and efficiently then they will not respond to it and you have failed.

Now a shameless plug. I've spoken about what Gamification is and how to start to make use of it at

great length. I want to move on a bit now to ideas that are more advanced and more examples of real world usage. As such, I have put together a little eBook on Amazon (iBooks soon) called [Gamification: A Simple Introduction](#). It is based on my blogs, with extra bits and a few updates. It is only about 6500 words and is a cheeky 77p (99c). You can get it from [Amazon now](#). Be warned it is pretty simple stuff!

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