



Don't Love Games? Step Away From the Gamification

Description

Games. I love them. Board games, card games, video games and anything else you can put the word games after. I play them, I write about them, I think about them, I dream about them and from time to time I even try my hand at making them (<http://www.fuzzyd.co.uk/robbers>). So what does this have to do with such a business orientated subject as Gamification. One needs to be a savy expert to be able to speak on such highbrow topics – not a games loving lout?

Well Mr suit, that's where I think you are dead wrong. Jesse Schell in his excellent "The Art of Games Design: A Book of Lenses" asks a simple question. "Do I love my Project". He goes on to state "If the creators of a game do not love it, the game will surely fail". So I ask you. If you do not love games, dream about them and want to play them all day every day – how can you talk about gamification with any conviction, let alone make decisions about it's implementation or design? As horrible as the name may be, gamification contains a key word. Gam(e). Whether you like it or not, implementing gamification is implementing at least some elements that come from games.

Some might say – "Wait a moment Andrzej, it is all about setting rules and then getting others to follow them – then we can shove some badges on to make people come back for more". To those I say "**Step Away From the Gamification**". To be good at something you have to understand it. To be amazing at something you need more, you need to love it with every fibre of your being. If it were that simple then we would not need games designers. We could feed the magic Game Formula into a computer and it would churn out hit game after hit game.

I may be sounding a little preachy and over dramatic here. Of course you can implement gamification if you are not a lover of games, but how do you expect other people to want to engage with these elements if you do not believe in them yourself. If you don't love games how can you expect people to play one that you have created? It is almost cynical. Like rock musicians making bubble gum pop to sell records. You know their heart is not in it and that always shows in the end product.

If you want to get into gamification, play some games. I am not talking about getting addicted (though that helps), but just try a few. Here is a list I once gave someone who asked. It is by no means complete, but it may get you on your way.

Space invaders. A game of such simplicity that you could be forgiven for dismissing it. However, just examine the core concepts. The task is shooting the aliens. The skill is in using your shields, timing your shots and avoiding the bullets. The reward is a high score chase.

Sid Meiers Pirates! An early open world game of sword fights and sailing. There is a brilliant remake of it available in iPad. It has been on pretty much every platform since the commodore 64, showing just how good it is. It takes a simple story, adds resources and action and puts it all into an open world for you to explore.

Sam and Max, Monkey Island, Broken Sword 2 or LA Noire. All are master classes in how to tell a story and bring the player along for the ride.

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City. The second of the 3D GTA games and for me one of the most complete games ever made. You could spend a lifetime just messing about! Exploration, missions and again – fun.

Half Life 2. A solid, well made, well balanced linear single player fps. It has a strong story and great characters. The world it creates becomes very believable in no time at all.

All of these games demonstrate some real core thinking in games, be it creating a world you can lose yourself in or solid story telling.

When you think about gamifying anything, you need to look at it as game design. Is your core mechanic some kind of story. IE are you trying to bring the user through a series of steps to get them to some form of conclusion. Are you looking at making use of a selection of game mechanics to achieve a goal. Are you just wanting to influence the user journey without any direct or in your face gamification.

These concepts and more are seen in the games I mention. It is a very short list and of course, there are thousands I could have chosen from. You will probably disagree with me, but at least you will have had to think about it to disagree.

Category

1. Gamification
2. Gaming
3. Rants
4. Technology

Tags

1. andrzej marczewski
2. engagement
3. game mechanics
4. game theory

5. Gamification
6. gamify
7. motivation
8. technology
9. trophies
10. video games

Date Created

21/05/2012

Author

andrzej-marczewski

default watermark