



## Contextual Relevance in Gamification

### Description

People often say that “Content is King”. I have always maintained that whilst that is true, “Context is Queen”, and we all know who really wears the pants in a relationship!

When you create gamified solutions there is often a risk and even a desire to throw the kitchen sink at the design, deciding on the mechanics you want to include well before you have any idea of what the project will actually require!

Included in this risk is the desire to create things that have no relevance at all to the project, but look pretty! One of the biggest perpetrators of this crime is the “mini game”. Many gamification designers are, at their heart, game designers in some form or another. Our enthusiasm for games can sometimes spill over into the creation of meaningless games that do nothing to address the overall needs of the solution.

Sometimes there is a contrived attempt to shoehorn learning into the game, to make it fit, but often this is half hearted and does not really consider the reasons for its existence in the first place!

This is where contextual relevance becomes important.

You have had a great idea for a mini game booster and have spent hours creating it, stop and think “Does this fit the context of the solution and is it relevant?”

There is nothing wrong with creating a little mini game, but it has to fit the theme of the solution. It has to make sense and have relevance at the point the player gains access to it. If your theme is getting a rocket to the moon, how does a corporate logo based *Candy Crush* clone fit in? What does it achieve? It is fine if it is there just as a little distraction, but be honest about that – don’t then try and shove a quiz question in there when ever you lose a life. It is either there for nothing but fun, or it has a serious purpose – not both!

If you want to create a serious game, to boost learning, then make it properly. Don’t just have a game idea and throw learning content on top – it has to be integrated properly!

I have played many serious games over the last few years and the worst ones are always the ones

where the learning feels as though it has been a secondary requirement (yes they are worse than the ones that are just badly made games in my mind!).

By all means, make games, I do and it is one of the best bits of my job. But, make sure they fit in and have a reason to exist, don't just create them to try and show people that you can – it isn't a competition!

## Gamification Design Lenses

To help you with your designs and to get you all thinking from different perspectives, I have just released a new set of lens cards to help out. Take a look on slideshare – <https://www.slideshare.net/daverage/gamification-design-lenses>

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[Gamification Design Lenses](#) from [Andrzej Marczewski](#)

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