



## Gamification: You May Already Be Using It!

### Description

Right, so back to gamification.

I thought I would take a quick look at a couple of gamification techniques you may already be using on your website or blog, but not realise that's what it is!

### Exploration and Engagement

First up, that little box that slides out of the corner of the page and says "RECOMMENDED FOR YOU". On WordPress there is a great plugin called "The Slide" by SimpleReach. It is there to try and keep you on the site a bit longer – to increase your **engagement** – and is actually very good at doing it. It shows you another story on the site that is related in some way to the one you have just been reading thus, encouraging you to look a bit deeper into the site. In gamification terms, it would be called **Exploration**. You are giving the reader a simple signpost to help them explore the site and discover new content. You are **influencing** their behaviour. On this blog I noticed that rather than people just staying on the one page, they averaged three pages per visit.

### Points mean Motivation

Another very simple addition to any blog or site, that I hope you are using if you run a blog, is Disqus. Disqus is a commenting system that allows your users to leave comments on your site, discuss articles with other Disqus users and more. It is the more part that is interesting. They have a few plugins that you can add to your site. One is a Top Commenter's box. If you look at this page, you should see it in the side bar. It shows people, at a glance, who is posting most comments on your pages. From a user standpoint, it puts their activity front and centre on the site, which will hopefully encourage or **motivate** them to comment more to move up the leader board. This kind of competition is one of the core principles of Gamification. It also shows you their activity on other Disqus forms, which is another reason for them to leave comments with you. The more people who see the comments they are making on other sites, the more chance there is they can spread their own influence.

## Pride and ego.

One of the reasons many people comment is to be heard. It is a simple part of human nature to want your opinion heard and respected. Sites like Facebook know this very well hence the creation of the Like button. If you write a comment, you want to know that people have read it and understood it. Sadly, people are lazy. This means you are less likely to have responses to standard comments. However, people will happily click a little thumb up button or a like button to say, "I read your comment and I agree". The more likes a comment gets, the more **pride** they will feel in it, thus encouraging them to comment more often. Again, Disqus allows you to do this very easily (no, this is not an advert for Disqus — other good commenting systems are available!).

## Epic Meaning and quality validation

Another great feature to add to a site, is the ability to review articles or indeed reviews. On my [games review website Yet Another Review Site](#), before the comments box are two extra bits. The first is a simple scale of 1 to 10 that can be selected, the other is a drop down that says "I agree, I don't care, I disagree". When a user selects these they are added to the "User Score" that is displayed with reviews. It also shows how many people agree or disagree with the reviewer You can do this in a simple way with any articles on a blog. Some will allow you to thumbs down as well as thumbs up an article or a comment.

This has two benefits. Obviously, if a writer is getting lots of people agreeing with them and giving them thumbs up, they are going to be encouraged to write again. Conversely, if they are getting lots of people disagree or mark them down they will hopefully go away and consider how to improve. Or give up... The fact is, you want good content on your site. If people are negatively reviewing a writer over and over again, there may be a reason! This will help validate the quality of the content.

These are just a few simple real world examples of Gamification. It doesn't always need to be complicated. I use all of these methods on my own sites with varying success.

Give them a go, the worst that can happen is you wasted a bit of time learning a new skill!

### Category

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