OAE – Organizational Architect and Engineer Journal

Gamification

Carlos J. Costa

Published on: Dec 24, 2019

DOI: 10.21428/544e68e8.3da5a135

Gamification consists of using game elements, in order to reach non-game purposes.

The most common triad, used in gamified experiences or products are points, badges and leaderboards. Those are widespread game elements because they are very effective and easy to apply, but those are just essential gamification elements.

Points are the easiest way to reward a player for completing an action or a series of steps. This technique is helpful to motivate people who like to achieve points or to have a sense of progress. Points may encourage people to take action and to do things in exchange for accomplishment. Sometimes, points are also related to other rewards. Points may be converted into currency to obtain some goods (virtual or even physical) or unlock content.

A specific number of points can reward every mission or action that a system designer wants to include on his gamified design. The system designer must choose the number of points carefully depending on the difficulty of a mission or action. If a player receives more points for an easy mission, he may be demotivated. On the other hand, if a player puts in much effort in a task and gets a reduced number of points he may be discouraged. After that, the system designer can create a scheme of points where he can analyse all the missions and decide how many points, the players need to achieve to change level. Points may be related to other game mechanics, such as leaderboards, levels or virtual economies.

Badges are a visual representation of some accomplishment. They may contribute to encourage and recognise specific behaviours. Badges may also be used to reward reaching a milestone or even reward someone who is far behind. Often, these badges are permanent. They may yet be included in a hall of fame. Players with the same badges can feel connected. Other players can see what behaviours are recognized in that gamified process. There are two types of badges: invisible and visible. If a badge is visible, then the players will know what sort of behaviour or action they need to take so they obtain it. If the badge is invisible, it is a surprise and it only rewards those who naturally have a particular behaviour or take a specific action.

A system designer can start designing the badges after he knows what behaviours he wants to acknowledge. It is better when he uses a limited number of badges because in this way, they will be more appreciated and valued. Points can accompany badges. It is essential to create compelling visuals for these badges, correlated with the story of the gamified experience. Also, badges can have levels. It may be possible to have several badges on the same behaviour. For example, if the user has a badge for learning he could give the following badges: “start learner”, “progressing well”, and “advanced learner” and so on.

The accumulation of points is usually displayed on a leaderboard. Leaderboards make the performance of every player available to others and are useful to maintain competition among players.

If they are used in the right situation, a leaderboard can be powerful motivators. There is more than one way to make a leaderboard. If there is a large number of users, the system designer could choose to show just certain parts of the leader board. For example, if the system designer does not want to encourage a tough competitive behaviour, or he has players with different abilities, he could display just two people above and beneath the player to show him where he is and to encourage him to keep playing. If the designer wants them to be very competitive, he could choose to show just the top ten people in the game. This lets the players know that if they are not in the first ten, they do not matter.