ARTICLE REVIEW

Flow in Games (and Everything Else)

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1 Short Summary

It is noticed that at all points of time it is not possible to satisfy all kinds of people, as the choices and perspective vary from person to person in every aspect. One such area is games; it is noticed that some section of user tends to find the interface more appealing than others. Flow theory in psychology helps in improving interactive experience. A common point of importance today in user-based user-oriented designs is to bring about positive feelings in the user. There are eight major components of flow based on research and personal observation of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi as follows:

★ A challenging activity requiring skill

★ Merging of actions and awareness

★ Clear goals

★ Immediate feedback

★ Concentration on the task at hand

★ A sense of control

★ A loss of self-consciousness

★ An altered sense of time.

In order to maintain a user's flow experience, the activity must balance the challenge of the activity and the players ability to overcome it. Sometimes when the challenge cannot be overcome it can become overwhelming that it can cause anxiety. If the challenge is not engaging enough the user might lose interest. In conclusion, whatever be the scenario and requirement, designers must evaluate the activities presented to the user, based on the four-step methodology.

★ Mix and match the components of Flow.

★ Keep the user's experience within the user's Flow Zone.

★ Offer flexible choices, allowing different users to enjoy the Flow in their own way.

★ Embed choices inside the core activities to ensure the Flow is never interrupted.