Gamification

Gamification is the application of game-design elements and game principles in non-game context or it can also be defined as a set of activities and processes to solve problems by using or applying the characteristics of game elements. That is - gamification is the application of lessons from the gaming domain to change behaviors in non-game situations.[1]

Gamification can work due to it tapping into the motivational drivers of human behaviour - positive/negative reinforcement and emotions. The principles central to gamification are the MDE framework - mechanics, dynamics and emotions - adapted from game design literature. The types of people involved are - players, designers, spectators and observers. Mechanics are the decisions that designers make to specify the goals and the boundaries of the situation to be gamified. There are three different types of mechanics - setup, rule and progression mechanics. Which are all tremendously important for games and gamified experiences. Setup mechanics shape the environment of the experience. Rule mechanics shape the concept or goal of the gamified experience to be pursued. Whereas progression mechanics dictate the reinforcements present in the experience - this increases the likelikhood that certain behaviors will be repeated in the future. [1]

Dynamics are the types of player behavior that emerge as the players partake in the gamified experience. This is difficult to predict and therefore can lead to unintended behaviours. Emotions in the MDE framework are the mental affective states and reactions evoked among individual players. As with games the emotions evoked should be fun-oriented and positive. [1]

There are many examples of gamification at work for example American Idol - a prime example of how to increase engagement through gamification. American Idol takes place in front of a live studio audience and TV boradcasted. The contestants compete to acquire the votes of the spectators. It evokes all the effects of the MDE framework of gamification,firstly; mechanically its designed to for an average of 10 weeks the contestants take turns performing based on a certain weekly theme provided. The ultimate goal of American Idol is to be the finalist - after being voted on by spectators and as a reward acquiring a lucrative recording contract and fame. The idol leverages the contestant’s desire to win and the spectator’s desire to see their favourites succeed. The idol is great at causing a number of emotional responses for its contestants - through their success/failure as can be seen by displays of joy and sorrow during the show. The spectators can also be affected by this. [1]

References

1. K.R, Robson, “Is it all a game? Understanding the principles of gamification”. *Business Horizons.* Vol 58, issue 4, pg 411-420, Available:

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