

# GAMIFICATION

A BANDWAGON FOR TOMORROW, IF NOT THE DAY AFTER

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44 CLUB, IPA

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## INTRODUCTION

- SO, I HAVE **15 MINUTES** TO EXPLAIN WHAT GAMIFICATION **IS** AND WHY IT'S **RUBBISH**
- THIS IS GOING TO BE A **PROBLEM**, BECAUSE:
  - 15 MINUTES ISN'T **LONG** ENOUGH
    - I'M A GAME DESIGNER! I WANT YOUR ATTENTION **FOREVER**, NOT JUST A LOUSY 15 MINUTES
  - GAMIFICATION ISN'T **ALWAYS** RUBBISH
    - IT'S JUST RUBBISH **MOST** OF THE TIME
- AS **YOU** DEAL WITH DISTILLING **COMPLEX** IDEAS TO THEIR **ESSENCE** THE WHOLE TIME, I'M HOPING YOU'LL CUT ME SOME SLACK HERE...

*GOLDFINGER*



- SHIRLEY EATON AS JILL MASTERSON  
- I GUESS THIS IS BEFORE SHE DIES...

## INTRODUCTION

- OK, GAMIFICATION IS A TERM SEVERAL **DECADES** OLD
  - IT **USED** TO MEAN “TURNING SOMETHING NOT A GAME INTO A GAME”
  - IT **NOW** MEANS “TURNING A GAME INTO SOMETHING NOT A GAME”
- FORMALLY, IT'S PUTTING **GAME DESIGN PATTERNS** TO **NON-GAME** USE
  - IMPLIES YOU CAN GAMIFY IN **DIFFERENT** WAYS
  - IT DOESN'T **HAVE** TO BE JUST POINTSIFICATION
    - TYPICALLY IT **IS**, THOUGH, BECAUSE IT'S NOT UNDERTAKEN BY GAME DESIGNERS...

## SERIOUS GAMES

- GAMIFICATION DIFFERS FROM "SERIOUS GAMES":
  - SERIOUS GAMES WANT A **GAME** AT THE END OF IT
  - GAMIFICATION WANTS SOMETHING **NOT** A GAME
- MOST GAMIFICATION **CAN'T** LEAD TO A GAME
- GAMES ARE **PLAY** YOU CAN **LOSE** AT
- GAMIFIED ACTIVITIES ARE **NOT** PLAY AND YOU **CAN'T** LOSE AT THEM
  - INTERESTINGLY, SERIOUS GAMES **STARTED OUT** USING SIMPLIFIED GAMIFICATION TECHNIQUES BUT **ABANDONED** THEM BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T DELIVER

## REWARDS

- A KEY GAMIFICATION ASPECT IS **REWARDS**
- **INTRINSIC** REWARDS ARE **INHERENT** TO AN ACTIVITY ITSELF
  - EG. FORMULATING A **CUNNING PLAN** IN CHESS
  - PLAY IS **ITSELF** ULTIMATELY AN INTRINSIC REWARD
- **EXTRINSIC** REWARDS ARE **ACQUIRED** FOR DOING AN ACTIVITY
  - EG. PHAT LEWT
- GAMIFICATION **EXCLUSIVELY** USES **EXTRINSIC** REWARDS

## DIFFERENCE

- GAMES TEND TO OFFER EXTRINSIC REWARDS FOR ACTIVITIES THE PLAYER **ALREADY** FINDS FUN
- IN GAMIFICATION, **RECEIPT** OF THE REWARD IS **ITSELF** THE SOURCE OF THE FUN
  - THIS MEANS THE REWARDS DO ACTUALLY HAVE TO BE **WORTH** RECEIVING!
- THEY CAN BE **INTRINSICALLY** VALUABLE
  - A FUN, JAUNTY VICTORY TUNE
- OR **EXTRINSICALLY** VALUABLE
  - POINTS, BADGES

## PROBLEM

- GAMIFICATION IS BASICALLY **BRIBERY**
- IF THE REWARD ISN'T **VALUABLE**, IT'S **NOT A REWARD**
- WARNING: **POINTS** THAT YOU CAN'T TURN INTO GOODS OR SERVICES ARE **NOT VALUABLE!**
- THIS WILL GRADUALLY **DAWN** ON PEOPLE IN **RECEIPT** OF THOSE POINTS
- ONCE PEOPLE **RECOGNISE** THAT POINTS ARE LIKE **GOLD STARS** AT SCHOOL, YOU'RE **STUFFED**
  - "GOLD STARS? SO **THAT'S** WHY HE SHOWED US THAT PICTURE OF SHIRLEY EATON"



## A DARK PATH

- REGULARITY: "PULL THIS HANDLE **20** TIMES AND WE'LL **GIVE** YOU **£1**"
  - EMPLOYMENT, **VANILLA** GAMIFICATION
- IRREGULARITY: "PULL THIS HANDLE AND THERE'S A **5%** CHANCE OF **WINNING** **£1**"
  - GAMBLING, **ADVANCED** GAMIFICATION
- THIS IS STARTING TO LOOK LIKE A VARIABLE RATIO **REINFORCEMENT** SCHEDULE
  - **OPERANT** CONDITIONING
  - **VERY** INTERESTING IF YOU HAVE STUFF TO SELL!

## ESCHEWED

- GAME DESIGNERS STUDIOUSLY **AVOID** OPERANT CONDITIONING (FOR EXTRINSIC REWARDS)
  - ITS **NOT FUN**
    - FUN IS **INTRINSIC**, NOT EXTRINSIC
  - ITS AN ADMISSION OF **FAILURE**
    - IT MEANS THE GAMEPLAY IS TOO **WEAK** ON ITS OWN
  - ITS ONLY USABLE ON **NAIVE** PLAYERS
    - ONCE THEY'VE **LEARNED** THE PATTERN, THEY **AVOID** IT
  - ITS **IMMORAL**
    - IT CAN LEAD TO **PSYCHOLOGICAL** PROBLEMS FOR SOME PEOPLE

## GAMIFIERS

- WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR **GAMIFIERS**?
  - THEY DON'T **EXPECT** IT TO BE FUN **ANYWAY**
  - THEY READILY **ACKNOWLEDGE** THAT THEIR CONTENT ISN'T COMPELLING
    - IT'S PRECISELY **WHY** THEY'RE GAMIFYING IT!
  - THEY MAY ACCRUE AN **AWARENESS** THAT THIS IS A **BUBBLE** THAT WILL EVENTUALLY **BURST**
  - THEY SHOULD EXPECT TO BE **SUED** IF THEY **DELIBERATELY** TRY TO **ADDICT** PEOPLE
- THEY'RE NOT **GAME** DESIGNERS...

## RESULT

- IF **TOO MUCH** GAMIFICATION GOES ON:
  - PEOPLE WILL REALISE THAT **WORTHLESS** EXTRINSIC REWARDS **ARE** WORTHLESS
    - “YAY. ANOTHER BADGE. WHOOPEE”.
  - PEOPLE WILL EVENTUALLY **RECOGNISE** AND **AVOID** EXTRINSIC OPERANT CONDITIONING TROPES
    - “I`M NOT PLAYING **THIS**, IT`S JUST LIKE **THAT**”
  - PEOPLE WILL **MOVE ON** FROM GAMIFICATION – IF THEY WERE EVER **INTO** IT IN THE FIRST PLACE
    - “DO I REALLY **CARE** IF I LOSE THE MAYORSHIP OF MY LOCAL STARBUCKS?”

UPBEAT!

- I WAS ASKED TO PUT IN A SLIDE TO EXPLAIN HOW GAMIFICATION **CAN** WORK, SO HERE GOES
- IT CAN WORK IF YOU CREATE A **BESPOKE** SOLUTION FOR YOUR **PARTICULAR** PROBLEM
- OR, IN **LAY** TERMS:

**-HIRE A GAME  
DESIGNER**

## CONCLUSION

- **NON-BESPOKE** GAMIFICATION WILL **NOT** BE UBIQUITOUS FIVE YEARS FROM NOW
  - THE MORE IT **HAPPENS**, THE LESS **EFFECTIVE** IT BECOMES
- **UNLESS** ITS REWARDS ARE **TANGIBLE**, IN WHICH CASE IT'S JUST LIKE **PAYING** PEOPLE
  - SALES PERSON OF THE MONTH
  - AIR MILES, SUPERMARKET POINTS
- **IMPORTANT** NOTE: **BEFORE** THIS HAPPENS, THERE'S **POTS** OF MONEY TO BE MADE HERE!