

HAVE A GOLD STAR

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM GAMIFICATION

25TH JANUARY, 2012
LONDON BUSINESS SCHOOL

PROF. RICHARD A. BARTLE
UNIVERSITY OF **ESSEX**

INTRODUCTION

- THE DISCUSSION ABOUT WHAT I SHOULD **TALK** ABOUT TODAY WENT SOMETHING LIKE **THIS**:
- **“ANYTHING YOU LIKE!”**
 - SO, THAT’S **MAPS OF EUROPE IN 1869?**
- **“ER, ANYTHING **GAMES**-RELATED YOU LIKE!”**
 - YAY! MY **ANTIQUE** PLAYING CARDS COLLECTION!
- **“ER, ANYTHING THE **AUDIENCE** WILL LIKE!”**
 - OK: HOW TO USE GAMES TO CONVEY **MESSAGES**
- **“LOOK, JUST TALK ABOUT **GAMIFICATION**”**
 - WHY DIDN’T YOU **SAY** THAT IN THE **FIRST** PLACE?

INTRODUCTION

- SO, 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 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**
 - YOU **REWARD** SOMEONE FOR DOING SOMETHING THAT YOU **WANT** THEM TO DO
- 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**

NEXT UP

- IF RECEIPT OF **EXTRINSIC** REWARDS IS TAKEN FOR **GRANTED**, IT CAN UNDERMINE **INTRINSIC** REWARDS
 - GOOGLE “OVERJUSTIFICATION EFFECT”
- THIS LEADS TO A **DISASSOCIATION** WITH THE CONTENT
 - WOW’S TORTURE QUEST
- **IRREGULARITY** CAN HELP OVERCOME THIS
 - IT ALSO LETS YOU **ADD** MORE GAMEPLAY **WITHOUT** IMPLYING A GAME

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 NEED TO **REALISE** 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?”

CONCLUSION

- GAMIFICATION WILL **NOT** BE UBIQUITOUS FIVE YEARS FROM NOW
 - THE MORE IT **HAPPENS**, THE LESS **EFFECTIVE** IT BECOMES
- **GOOD NEWS FOR GAME DESIGNERS:**
 - NON-GAMERS WILL HAVE BEEN **TRAINED** AND **MAY** WANT TO PLAY SOME ACTUAL **GAMES**
- **ALSO OK NEWS FOR GAMIFIERS**
 - **BEFORE** THIS HAPPENS, THERE'S **POTS** OF MONEY TO BE MADE!