

USING “GAME-BASED LEARNING” IN WEBINARS

Case study

by

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What?

Gamification is the use of game elements in non game contexts. Such a context could be Webinar to increase the interaction of your participants. Don't be scared, it is not expensive or very hard to do! I will guide you through it step by step by showing one example of a gamified Webinar that I once did.

The Webinar had the topic "Serious Gaming - and what Gender has to do with it" and had a duration of 60 minutes.

Why?

While designing a gamified system, you have to find the right composition of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. While you are intrinsically motivated, you enjoy the activity itself. When you are extrinsically motivated, you do the activity because you are keen on the outcome of the activity, for instance you are rewarded by money. In a lot of activities, you are motivated intrinsically and extrinsically at the same time. There is no right or wrong for the ideal balance of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, it also depends on the activity itself, the target group and the use case (in which environment your target group is doing the activity). Extrinsic rewards work quite well if you need to motivate your audience for a short period of time, while intrinsic motivation should be existent for long term projects.

How?

The Webinar of the case study had a duration of 60 minutes. This is how the Agenda looked like:

Duration	Item
10	Welcome
5	Story and Rules of the Game
5	Team selection
30	Input and Questions to the audience
10	Ceremony & Q & A

I integrated some game elements into my Webinar to make it more engaging: Story, Teams, Competition, Points, Leaderboard, Easter Egg.

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The Story and Teams

Stories are a beautiful way to make your learning content more interesting. Combining stories with facts creates pictures in our head and let us remember the facts way better than just listening to a list of facts. My story for the Webinar was the following:

“Welcome to the year 2059! Artificial intelligence became powerful, the robots separated themselves from the humans. First there was war between humans and robots... but then we made peace. The humans came up with a “Game of Kings and Queens”: The winner of this game will rule the world for the next seven years. Tonight is the night, the first ruler game will take place right now right here! Please type in the chat if you want to join team “humans” or team “robots”.



Source: <https://news.filehippo.com/2013/09/robots-with-artificial-muscles/>

My audience was surprised, didn't expect this kind of Webinar and were hooked. At the end, we had around 40 humans playing against 80 robots (i did not really count, as you can imagine there was a lot of activity in the chat, but my estimation was that more people wanted to play someone or something else - so the robots).

Competition, Points & Leaderboard

Normally I am not a big fan of including these game elements into my gamified designs. Quite often “Gamification Experts” throw in a number of points and hope that the system should be more motivating. If the points are meaningless to the audience, they don't lead to a higher motivation. Here comes the trick: You have to make the points meaningful. In this Webinar the points were connected to the story and had an impact on the end of the story - will the humans or the robots

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rule the world for the next seven years? Of course, if the audience is not hooked by the story, then the points are still meaningless. So think of an interesting story and activate your moderation skills while presenting it - and the audience will be hooked.

Extrinsic rewards work quite well at the beginning of projects or at events with a short duration. That's why they can work well in Webinars. Also competing against other individuals or teams can serve as a motivator that puts people under positive stress (if not exaggerated or overtaxed) in a short term.

From time to time, I asked questions to the audience. For instance: "Guess how much was the winning price of the Dota International Tournament in 2018". The audience had to type in the chat their guess as well as to which team they belong, for instance: "robots - 1.000.000€". The team that first guessed the right answer (or was at least close if you have time constraints) gains a point. The points can be noted by a co-moderator if you are lucky enough to get support. Ideally, you make the points visible on a live leaderboard, this depends on the presentation tool you are using. If you are using normal slides, then your co-moderator can post the leaderboard into the chat from time to time.

At the end, there were two different endings of the story - either the robots or the humans won the "Game of Kings and Queens" and then received a winning picture from their species as final screen of the Webinar.

Easter Egg

An easter egg is a game element that you find in a lot of entertainment games. It is a hidden element or message by the developers. It can be a greeting from the developers, a trophy or even a room with an easter egg in the middle. The first easter egg in a game was done by Warren Robinett in 1979 in the game adventure. Now it is a common thing to hide easter eggs even in AAA titles like GTA. I also placed an easter egg here, did you already find it?

Why did I place an easter egg in the Webinar? Well I told them at the beginning that I will hide an Easter egg, whoever finds it has to write down her/his team and the slide number, for instance "humans - easter egg slide 7". This kept the attention of the hooked users and created a bit of excitement among them. It is always nice to surprise your audience or let them explore your system - the easter egg is just the simplest way to stimulate this kind of activity.

Conclusion

The outcome of this effort was that some of the audience mentioned that it was one of the best webinars they ever participated in. It was something different, something they did not expect and it hooked them for 1 hour. Yes, it is a little bit of more preparation time for you - but definitely worth it when you want to try out something new and experiment a little bit with your style. It is really not that hard to do - have fun and dare it!

By the way: At the end, the humans won ;)

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Source: <https://dky>