TECHNICAL SUMMARY: GAMIFICATION IN THE EVENTS INDUSTRY WORKSHOP

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BACKGROUND

The Research Councils UK Digital Economy Theme is supporting research to rapidly realise the transformational impact of digital technologies on aspects of community life, cultural experiences, future society, and the economy. To achieve this RCUK have brought together a unique community of researchers (from diverse disciplines including social science, engineering, computer science, the arts and medical research) and users (people, business, government) to study, understand and find solutions to real problems.

In an increasingly global economy, as new and established companies and individuals use digital technologies to innovate, markets can change rapidly and business models are being adapted or created in response the opportunities and challenges the digitisation poses. Within this context, the NEMODE Network+ (New Economic Models in the Digital Economy) has been established to promote and enable research in this domain and develop an internationally leading community which produces evidence based knowledge to address big questions such as what are the new economic models and in what contexts are different models appropriate.

As part of this initiative, NEMODE has supported a number of workshops across the UK bringing together representatives of academic, industry and policy communities to engage in debate and advance knowledge. The Gamification in the Events Industry Workshop is another such event in this series and was organised by Professor Kiran Fernandes at the University of Durham.

INTRODUCTION

The digital games market is an enormous and fast-growing industry with extraordinary impact, particularly on young people and increasingly on other segments of the population. Global industry revenues were estimated at around $65bn in 2011, with the UK as a major player, ranking third internationally behind the US and Japan. In the UK revenues from digital games (at over £3bn) exceed those from DVD, music and movie box office. Further, digital games provide an important indicator of the business direction of the broader media industries: a recently commissioned ESRC/IPO report highlights that "the singularity of the digitally native games sector contrasts with the relatively traditional music and television sectors and may point the way to the future."[1]

One aspect of gaming is its capacity to engage and absorb players' interest and attention, and this underpins a growing interest in game playing and gamification in areas beyond simply gaming for games' sake – for example as an educational tool and in business environments to drive important metrics. For example, according to a recent Gartner Research Report[2] it is estimated that by 2015, more than 50 percent of organizations that manage innovation processes will gamify those processes and that by 2014 over 70 percent of Global 2000 organizations will have at least one "gamified" application. The business community is just starting to realize the potential of gamification to motivate increased levels of engagement amongst customers and employees.

One area, which has a lot of potential for the use of games but is relatively unexplored, is the conferences/events industry. The conference and events market is estimated to be worth £18.8 billion to the UK economy, including spend at venues and in the wider destination by delegates and organizers. To build upon UK's leading position in both the digital games and the conference and events sector, an international workshop on the full potential of digital games in this industry was organised. The workshop included presentations of cutting edge research from selected researchers from academia and industry as well as an active discussion session exploring how the events industry might exploit these researches and further build on them through new business models.

[1] Searle, N. (2011). Changing Business Models in the Creative Industries: The Cases of Television, Computer Games and Music. Computer Games and Music (August 5, 2011). Newport, Wales: Intellectual Property Office.
[2] Gartner. (2011). Analysts Explore the Role of Enterprise Architects in Gamification at Gartner Enterprise Architecture Summit 2011, May 9-10, London, and June 22-23 in San Diego [Online]. Available: http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/1629214 [Accessed 11 December, 2013].

The workshop was held on 5th December 2013 at Prince Philip House, 3 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5DG and, attending the workshop were representatives of the events and gaming industries and a number of academics and researchers from across the disciplines (see below). These people came together to share their knowledge and learning in order to build understanding in this area and to recommend some practical next steps. The breakfast workshop was hosted by Lord Stephen Carter and Chaired by Professor Kiran Fernandes of Durham University Business School.

Agenda

08.30 – 09.00   Breakfast

09.00 – 09.10   Welcome: Lord Stephen Carter

09.10 – 09.30   Context and agenda for the day: Professor Kiran Fernandes

09.30 – 09.50   Presentation from Industry: Nick Brown (TIGA)

09.50 – 11.00   Question time and debate: Professor Kiran Fernandes

11.00 – 12.00   NEMOG Project: Professor Peter Cowling

12.00   Close: Professor Kiran Fernandes

This event is one in a series of roundtable discussions organised by NEMODE on important themes in the Digital Economy. For details on future activities visit www.nemode.ac.uk.

KEY MESSAGES

- Multiple definitions of gamification recognised, but predominantly focus on the broad activity of applying game mechanics to non-game activities to drive user/player behaviour
- This diversity is a cause of problems in getting a coherent body of work together, but also reflects the divergence of ways it has been used.
- Games have been demonstrated as a powerful resource in education, such as for the unobtrusive assimilation of facts
- Gamification is a relatively new discipline and its applications in a business environment have only recently come to be explored, and with mixed success, from Jane McGonigal's thesis that if we were to embrace what is innate to games then the world would be a better place to a quote often attributed to Kathy Sierra[3] that "Gamification is the high fructose corn syrup of engagement".
- In a business context, gamification can be used across functions and to achieve a variety of goals by encouraging greater and novel modes of engagement, participation, sharing and interaction often within a community context. Engagement and participation enabled through gamification has the potential to build lasting relationships and impact fundamental business objectives.
- In particular, in the events industry, gamification can help bring together people with a common interest to create something for themselves and the communities and industries they represent
- The key mechanisms of gamification include:
  - Points scoring
  - Use of leader boards
  - Collecting things
  - Badges and achievements
  - Progress meters and charts
  - But, above all, make it enjoyable and meaningful
- Currently, there appears not to be a high level of cross-fertilisation between the events and gaming industries, or gamers/game developers and industry more broadly. One explanation for this may lie in the relative novelty of the gaming industry with an introspective focus on 'pure gaming'.

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[3] See for instance, http://thedailybunch.com/post/5099642590/gamification-is-the-high-fructose-corn-syrup-of

- Delegates struggled to find instances of good practice of gamification applied in the events industry, suggesting that there are significant opportunities for competitive advantage to be gained for the first movers in this space. There is huge potential to incorporate gamification to: improve employee performance & engagement; identify new ideas for events by understanding areas of interest and behaviours; get feedback (let's abandon paper evaluation forms!); attract more delegates; improve interaction and peer-to-peer relationships / conversations; and, create online communities.
- There can be quite negative resonances associated with the word 'game' and, if gamification is to be more widely incorporated into business practices, that baggage needs to be left behind. For industry to adopt gamification, it faces two challenges: to distance itself both from negative connotations and from the idea of leisure time activity. This means eroding the boundaries between 'fun' and 'serious'.
- Any gaming mechanics must have customer value as priority - what will encourage and enable customer engagement? How can novel forms of engagement and new customer insights be used to inform product and service development?
- Gamification via an online platform can be used to bring disparate brand communities together - e.g FundForum communities clustered around geo-specific event locations - how can gamification be used to bring all these people together online for added value networking and knowledge sharing that is otherwise limited by geography?

NEXT STEPS

- Focus groups for Business Process Elicitation – A focus group involving experts from the events sector is being organized on 11th February 2014 at The University of York. The aim of this workshop is to elicit the key value based processes in the events sector and to map possible gamification tools that can support these business functions.
- Resident Gamer Scheme – Informa is keen to explore the possibility of hosting a 'resident gamer'. The aim of such an industry funded scheme would be to engage the games companies in future business development activities.
- NEMOG User group – the NEMOG project will aim to make the 'event sector' one of its user groups. This will get the events sector engaged with the NEMOG project in a number of ways: tools and techniques developed for the events sector, workshops that focus on games in the event sector, etc.
- Explore a 'learn-by-doing' project in-house with a volunteer event: along the lines of pilot strategy and implementation supported by an advisory board consisting of brand executives, academics and gaming specialists, led by independent 3rd party.

DELEGATES

Delegates at the event included:

Jenny Adams	**Dr Richard Adams**	**Professor Charles Baden-Fuller**	**Rosie Bernard**
ICBI	Exeter University	Cass Business School	PTI Europe
Lara Boro	**Alex Bridges**	**Nick Brown**	**Dr Ignazio Cabras**
Top Right Group	Wavecast Pro	Boss Level	York University
Lord Stephen Carter	**Debra Chipman**	**Helen Coetzee**	**Alastair Cotton**
Informa	IIR USA	Coetzee Associates	Gemini International
Professor Peter Cowling	**Elizabeth Cutler**	**Sam Devlin**	**Nick Goumagias**
York University	IBC USA	York University	Northumbria University
Susanna Kempe	**Professor Mark Learmonth**	**Colette Leong-Son**	**Liu Liu**
Flying Trumpets	Durham University Business School	Informa	Lancaster University
Alex Martinez	**Professor Roger Maull**	**Alex Moilliet**	**Dr Alberto Nucciarelli**
Procurement Leaders	Exeter University	Informa	Cass Business School
Rosalind Oxley	**Isobel Peck**	**Alistair Scott**	**Professor Nicola Spence**
Informa	Informa	Broadgate Mainland	Science City York
Dr Patrick Stacey	**Professor Georgios Theodoropoulos**	**Mari Thynne**	**Rachi Weerasinghe**
Lancaster University	Durham University	Lancaster University	Gartner Consulting
Joe Willcox	**Ryan Thomas**	**Drew Field**	
DataCenterDynamics	Informa	TIGA	

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FURTHER READING

Kapp, K.M. (2012). *The gamification of learning and instruction: game-based methods and strategies for training and education,* San Francisco, CA, Pfeiffer.

McGonigal, J. (2011). *Reality is broken: Why games make us better and how they can change the world*, Penguin. com.

Paharia, R. (2013). *Loyalty 3.0: How to revolutionize Customer and employee Engagement with Big Data and Gamification,* New York, NY, McGraw Hill.

Salen, K. & Zimmerman, E. (2004). *Rules of play: Game design fundamentals,* Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.

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