How can games enhance MOOCs?

Adaptation of MMOG game design patterns to enhance community building, collaboration, and implementation intention of MOOC users

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Research Problem

Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) appear to suffer from:
1) a “lack of a sense of community and ineffective social interactions and collaboration” (Zheng et al., 2015);
2) Users implementation behaviour gap possibly caused by design characteristics of the MOOC programs:

Data from Reich (2014) reveal a complex scenario:

Users who state to “intend to earn a certificate” show a higher completion rate compared to those who declare to intend to only “browse the MOOC”.

BUT: even of those users who declare to intend to complete the course, the majority fails to do so.

Assumption

Massive Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs) have a successful history of large online gaming communities, benefiting from a strong sense of community, social interaction, and collaboration among large groups of gamers. Similar to MOOCs, they are directed to a massive audience.

We expect that selected game design patterns (GDP) from MMOGs can have an impact on MOOC users by supporting them in promoting a sense of community building, collaboration and on the implementation intention behavior.

Research Questions

Q1 Which are the GDPs of MMOGs that can have effects on the variables (1: community building and collaboration; 2: implementation intention) if transferred in MOOC environments?
Q2 How can these selected patterns be described and classified according to their characteristics?
Q3 How can MOOCs be designed to implement the GDPs identified in MMOGs?
Q4 What are the effects that the selected GDPs have on community building and collaboration (variable 1)?
Q5 What are the effects that the selected GDPs have on implementation intention behaviors (variable 2)?
Q6 Which are the effects that variable 1 (community building and collaboration) has on variable 2 (implementation intention) and vice versa? Which factors (if any) mediate these effects?

Relevance to the Field

✓ Generating knowledge about the applicability of successful mechanisms from the field of MMOGs to the field of MOOCs;
✓ Understanding effects of GDP on the two variables of this PhD project will be highly important and will have a practical significant impact for both MOOC designers and providers, as well as MOOC users. MOOC designers and providers will gain insights from the findings of this project about improved design principles for MOOCs, including game mechanics. MOOC learners will directly benefit from the improved MOOC design.