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Toward Meaningful Engagement: A Framework for Design and Research of Gamified Information Systems

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Abstract

Gamification, an emerging idea for using game-design elements and principles to make everyday tasks more engaging, is permeating many different types of information systems. Excitement surrounding gamification results from its many potential organizational benefits. However, few research and design guidelines exist regarding gamified information systems. We therefore write this commentary to call upon information systems scholars to investigate the design and use of gamified information systems from a variety of disciplinary perspectives and theories, including behavioral economics, psychology, social psychology, information systems, etc. We first explicate the idea of gamified information systems, provide real-world examples of successful and unsuccessful systems, and, based on a synthesis of the available literature, present a taxonomy of gamification design elements. We then develop a framework for research and design: its main theme is to create meaningful engagement for users, that is, gamified information systems should be designed to address the dual goals of instrumental and experiential outcomes. Using this framework, we develop a set of design principles and research questions, using a running case to illustrate some of our ideas. We conclude with a summary of opportunities for IS researchers to extend our knowledge of gamified information systems, and, at the same time, advance existing theories.

Keywords: Gamified systems, instrumental, experiential outcomes, design, persuasive technologies, hedonic systems, intrinsically motivating systems, task–technology fit