THEME 3
Gamification, generating commitment to culture

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THE CRISIS OF PARTICIPATION

At the present time we live surrounded by a generalised crisis in participation in society as a consequence of the economic climate that has prevailed over recent years. In general, people in society feel disillusioned and unmotivated, not just because of economic considerations in themselves, but also as a result of the changes that are taking place in this new scenario.

This crisis in participation can be seen in low levels of commitment in response to proposals made by organisations and institutions in the form of projects, products and services and this has led to a stagnation in consumption that affects the contraction in the markets of various industries and sectors of activity.

As a result of this complex situation really innovative projects are emerging which generate value for society, but which fail to connect with the publics for which they were devised.

Thus, in the cultural sector, for example, we can see how we are consuming less music, visiting cultural spaces such as libraries and museums less often, devoting less time to reading and visiting cinemas and this, together with other problems specific to each subsector has led to concerns for the future of our culture.

The main cause underlying this complex scenario is probably that people are devoting less of their incomes to this kind of activity, but there are also some underlying intangibles related to disillusion and lack of motivation, and it is here that innovation can provide a catalyst to turn the situation around.

It is precisely in this context that, for some years, there has been an industry that has not ceased to grow in market size and which, furthermore, was considered in 2009 to be part of our culture—the video game. This fact leads us to considerations in two directions.

On one hand, it would seem that we are trying to flee from this difficult situation by searching for other kinds of experience based on emotion and amusement. But, on the other hand, and more importantly, we are also prepared to pay for this. That is how the videogame industry has become the largest of the interactive audiovisual leisure industries, even in our country. It has become the main support for entertainment and pastimes, its key mission being to generate business and attract ever more people to play these exciting and amusing games.

With the appearance of new technologies and platforms and the explosion of social networks as a new form of interaction, and in the current context of the generalised crisis in participation in various aspects of society, why not use the same elements that videogames employ—and that people never stop playing with—but to achieve participation in our cultural proposals?

GAME THINKING AND MECHANICS

Gamification, as the term is understood in Spanish, consists of the use of game thinking and mechanics to solve problems in non-game contexts.

The concept arose in the USA towards the end of 2010 but, despite quickly reaching Spain, it would take another couple of years before it became a tendency causing great excitement, being adopted in areas such as customer commitment, employee performance, personal development, learning and innovation.

This new discipline aims to take the best ideas employed in the world of games to encourage desirable behaviours in organisations and institutions, thereby achieving people's participation.

While it is true that, to begin with, gamification was mainly associated with the accumulation of points, medals and positions on classification tables in non-game contexts, it has now generally been accepted as a tendency that aims to use games to solve problems.

In this it is like previous concepts related to games in other contexts such as serious games or advergaming, the question is whether they belong or not to this new sphere.

Above and beyond the various opinions raised by those involved in this new discipline, the market is adopting gamification as the name of the tendency to use games for problem solving regardless of the greater or lesser number of characteristics inherited from the game and video game industries and the solutions achieved.

Whatever the case, the important thing to understand is that gamification is a tool to encourage desired and necessary behaviour towards our proposals to generate participation and

commitment amongst the publics for whom it was devised.

But what is behaviour? Behaviour is how people interact with the medium so some examples of behaviour in the cultural sector could be to consume music, visit cultural spaces such as libraries and museums, devote more time to reading or go to the cinema. Or even to recommend or invite friends to participate in these activities through social networks.

The main idea in gamification is to use elements incorporated in games which entice people to play, and not stop playing, to enthuse and motivate the public at large to adopt these other behaviours that our culture needs.

Gamification consists of using game thinking and mechanics in non-game environments to encourage people's participation

Gamification is certainly a very transversal tool and can be applied in very different environments, from a company's customer loyalty programme to platforms encouraging the sustainable use of energy resources. And why not? So that people make known, consume and participate in our cultural activities.

While the present time is one of great expectation throughout the world for gamification, it is also now that the first applications and results are appearing of applying game techniques in these non-game environments, something that is generally done as a project in innovation.

CAPTURING NEW AUDIENCES

One of the main challenges in the cultural sector is to attract new audiences to the various proposals there may be. Capturing the attention of new audiences and making them participate in the

activities of our libraries and museums by creating experiences based on games is possible and has been demonstrated in the USA with cases such as Find The Future.

Find The Future was the name given to a pioneering experience in the library field to revive the interest of the youngest public in the New York Public Library.

The library created an experience based on games involving various missions combining the virtual world with its own facilities and inviting people to discover history through a hundred words included in its collection.

Find The Future was launched in 2011 as part of the events to mark the library's centenary with an event called Write All Night that took place in the Stephen A. Schwarzman building itself.

Five hundred players explored the building using their laptop computers and mobile phones to follow clues about original works and to collaboratively produce an account of personal histories about the future.

The interaction of users in a virtual environment through a game system makes it possible to develop new kinds of behaviour

After this event was launched, and since then, Find The Future has been played by people visiting the library but who want to do so in a different way, and through an experience that combines the use of their mobile phones.

INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES 1.0

A large part of the success of gamification as a tool to encourage people to participate resides in transferring the users' interaction to a virtual or imaginary environment with the impact of a game.

It is precisely in a series of books published in the 1980s that we find the creation of these interactive experiences to encourage users to become involved with reading.

The series of books *Choose Your Own Adventure* was created for a young readership and in them the reader can vary the course of the story by making choices that can be simple, sensible, reckless or dangerous, each of which leads to a different outcome.

Narrated in the second person, the protagonist is the reader, this series of books captivated a public that was thought disinclined to reading. It was one of the most popular series of books for children and young readers in the 1980s and 1990s. More than 260 million books were sold and they were translated into more than 40 languages.

With literature, without technology and with something as simple as being able to construct your own story, it was shown that participative experiences make it possible to develop the behaviour of, and even the habit of reading amongst, a public initially thought to be resistant to the idea.

But what will happen if we make use of technology?

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CREATION OF EXPERIENCES

The use of games in non-game settings to stimulate people's involvement is not really anything new. Neither is it technology, but rather the technique of creating a participative game experience in both contexts.

Obviously games appeared in the history of humanity long before the advent of technology and it is true that it is possible to influence people's behaviour or to educate them through games

without technology, but technology is there, and it is there to help us.

Technology means developing more sophisticated, not more complex, game experiences in a way that enables the effectiveness of the experience to be enhanced. Some technologies, such as those found today in mobile telephones, make it possible to suggest new proposals to attract the public's attention and get people involved.

Thus there are campaigns, such as *The Witness* in Germany by Universal for the Street 13 TV station, in which, in essence we find what was achieved in the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books.

Street 13 announced the launch of *The Witness* by inviting people from all over the world to register on a Web site to participate in a game experience in the streets of Berlin on the occasion of the launch of the station in Germany.

The Witness is an interactive cinema project in which the setting of the game is Berlin. Participants had to download an application to their mobile phone and were called to meet at a hotel in the city. Once there someone gave them the key to a room in the hotel which they had to go to.

> **The new technologies make it possible to develop participative game experiences to capture the attention of audiences and to achieve their participation**

Once they were there, and only when they were there, could they reproduce the first scene of the film by scanning the room with their mobile phone. The scene of a crime by the Russian mafia called the player to action leading them to navigate their way to various locations in Berlin and not just reproduce the scenes where the events had occurred on their phones, but to make decisions that affected the course of the story.

The Witness was presented as the first immersive film in which, through augmented reality and GPS, it

was possible to live through a truly transmedia experience, the aim being that people would talk about the launch of Street 13 with a narrative akin to the station's content.

Are you the hero, or the next victim?

PROVIDING READERS WITH MOTIVES

Gamification is a tool that can be used to inspire people to adopt forms of behaviour that are desirable and necessary for given projects. Motivating people does not mean encouraging them to carry on participating, but rather it means giving them motives to participate.

So, if we return to books, for example, we find there are many people who do not have the habit of reading and who need additional motives to seek out knowledge or to adopt reading as a pastime.

By transferring elements of games to reading we can introduce certain components that enable people who do not habitually read as a hobby to do so, to share their progress and viralise books through social networks.

To this end, there are projects and platforms throughout the world that attempt to reinvent the reading of books by using gamification as a base.

This is the case with ReadSocialApp, a book-reading platform that makes it possible to create social communities around books and which enables readers to contact the authors directly to discuss issues raised by the book and to gain a deeper understanding.

This platform adopts components borrowed from videogames to provide feedback as well as instant satisfaction as the reader progresses through the work. Furthermore, it establishes tasks to unlock the work's exclusive content.

Again, the combination of the offline and digital worlds through the Internet and mobile phones makes it possible to create participative experiences in settings with low levels of interaction to gain access to new kinds of users.

SHOW ME YOU ARE MY BEST FAN

Another field in which gamification is being used as a technique for stimulating user commitment is music and the way appreciation of it is enhanced by the artists themselves through communities of their most faithful fans.

Some artists and record labels are employing game thinking and mechanics to encourage people to share news about tours, viralise news about the artist, learn about the latest music videos and share all this content through the social media with the aim of reaching a wider public and selling more copies of their discs.

Universal Music Group's Interscope in the USA was a pioneer in using this technique to increase the commitment of the fans of artists such as LMFAO, Lady Gaga and Robin Thicke and through them, make their musical offerings available to more people.

Universal uses Web sites to support its gamification strategy by asking the fans of these artists to show that they really are their fans by incorporating challenges, generally to viralise content, and demonstrating their achievements through classification tables.

Gamification not only tries to create amusing and moving experiences but also to use elements of games to stimulate players, as may be the case through perceived status whereby people throughout the world compete to show these artists that they are their best fans to improve their positioning while increasing appreciation of the music.

GENERATING INTERACTION THROUGH THE SECOND SCREEN

The adoption of technology and the social media in our lives has changed certain of our habits when consuming content through mass media such as television. In fact, it is well known that people are increasingly combining time devoted to television with access to the Internet via devices such as mobile phones and tablets.

These changes in behaviour are affecting the impact of content generated through television such as films, series or programmes in terms of television audience levels.

This has given rise to the concept of the 'second screen' understood as the place where interaction is produced, mainly social interaction, concerning the content generated through television.

Thus, producers are becoming obliged to create new formats for this second screen with the aim of maximising the attention of users and hence the profitability of the content generated for this platform.

Despite various attempts being made in the social networks to capture this kind of interaction by television viewers while they are watching TV, some of the efforts are already employing gamification in this second screen to lead users again to the content being transmitted at the time.

Specifically, in Spain we have seen some uses of this technique such as the project by Canal + on the occasion of the launching of the second series of *Game of Thrones.*

Canal + launched a multimedia application for mobile phones to interact with viewers of the series, mainly young people, digital natives and accustomed to the immediacy and interaction of the Internet.

With this application the station created an interactive space based on challenges to demonstrate that you were watching the series and sharing what was happening in it at the time with friends, as well as offering exclusive prizes, such a trip to Dubrovnik, where a large part of the series had been shot.

In this way *Game of Thrones* reached people it would not have reached through traditional methods, creating new followers for the series, increasing interest in it and loyalty towards it. It is an example of how the second screen, in combination with gamification, can be used as a strategy for cheaper and more effective communication, advertising and interaction.

CULTURAL LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

Putting aside the cultural interest that might be generated by an exhibition or a museum, it is certainly the case that one of the great challenges faced by such cultural spaces, in addition to capturing new publics, is maintaining the frequency of visits.

It is very often the case that museums keep their content fresh and up to date with exhibitions that rotate in time as a way, not just of attracting visitors but of encouraging visitors to return again and again.

In this respect, marketing that adopts gaming techniques can be employed to build highly participative loyalty programmes that recognise their most constant and loyal users and which attempt to convert anyone who comes along at least once into this kind of visitor.

One of the pioneers of this at the international level is the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) which has combined the concept of loyalty programmes with gaming techniques. DMA Friends is a free program that enables people to win badges and points that

are used to unlock special rewards when visiting the museum.

The basic principle is that every time a person visits the museum, or interacts with the exhibits, points are accumulated that can be used to redeem special prizes. But the DMA additionally recognises the function of the program's users in viralising the museum's offerings and attracting new visitors to the museum through its current visitors' network of contacts.

GAMING AS A VIRALISATION TOOL

Gaming as a communication and viralisation tool has been used in numerous settings, especially in the company environment where it has produced good results by generating expectation around the launch of products.

It has also been used for some cinema productions, but in such cases it has been used to generate transmedia experiences that enable the viralisation of this expectation via the Internet and social media.

> **The application of game techniques enables very participative fidelity pro-grammes to be devised that will maintain the frequency of visits to cultural venues**

One of the most representative recent cases was the campaign organised around the premiere of the Batman film *The Dark Knight Rises*. The campaign consisted of inviting users, via a Web site, to participate in a game experience that involved access to exclusive reports from the police department to find the 'anonymous vigilante' Batman. Participants were offered the opportunity to start their own investigation, an investigation that was integrated into the film's narrative itself.

Users of the Web site played the role of police officers in the city of Gotham and they were asked

to send photographs of scenes they found elsewhere in which there were indications that Batman had been there.

And all this in order to be able to unlock and view one of the film's trailers and viralise it via the Internet before the premiere.

In this way the creation of game experiences can be used to create settings for interaction that contribute to user participation in order to enhance the impact of film premieres.

MAIN CHALLENGES FOR GAMIFICATION

Despite the fact that highly participative applications are being achieved and gamification may become a tool to encourage the participation of audiences in the cultural sector, certain challenges remain in the use of this kind of technique.

One of the obstacles remaining to be resolved in gamification is that some of the challenges of participation, such as going to the cinema or to museums on a regular basis, do not tend to have, or must not have, an ending.

In a game the long-term aims are generally clear. Players know that, having achieved these aims they have fulfilled their task in the game, such as rescuing a princess, winning a war or becoming a Formula 1 world champion. At any given moment players know that the experience of the game has a final objective and that they must overcome all the obstacles in their way to achieve that objective.

In contrast with this, in the cultural world, and with the exception of certain settings such as a grand launch campaign or the reading of books, the aim is to maintain the users' long-term commitment in the absence of a foreseen ending or a clear final aim.

Maintaining the player's concentration and tension or recourse to a made-to-measure content strategy

may be key ways of bolstering gamification's effectiveness in our proposals.

On the other hand, and despite the fact that play is something innate in human beings, it is true that there are certain people who show a measure of apathy when faced with a fictitious environment generated by game mechanics.

In general, and for most of the applications, the percentage of such people is small, but it must be borne in mind because we are not interested in these people failing to participate because they can see that it is only a game and that there is no extrinsic high-value recompense in it for them.

That is why game-based experiences should be created that bear in mind the future player's scope and profile in function of the application's setting. Consequently, it would not be the same to use this kind of technique to capture new segments of the public as it would be to promote a more adult public's commitment to visit museums.

Some large projects within this new discipline provide users with options that deactivate this layer of game throughout the whole process, making it an optional extra and they have done so with spectacular results.

> **In the cultural environment, maintaining the players' concentration and tension is key for attaining their long-term commitment**

Trial and error in this kind of project, above all at the present time when the discipline is taking shape, is something that must be accepted. Finding the solution or magic potion for a cultural proposal will not be the result of investing large quantities of money in the conception or modelling of these game experiences, but of introducing the minimum amount of gamification that can feasibly produce results, from which point there will be a process of evaluation and continuous improvement.

The creation of game experiences passes through the phases of conception and design, but more important still is the attempt to find viable solutions to the challenges posed.

For this reason continuous attention to the project in the medium and long terms is very important for improving the system itself and for nourishing the user's experience, and this means investing time and effort systematically in the initiative.

GAMIFICATION, GENERATING COMMITMENT TO CULTURE

In a complex and changing context for culture's various subsectors on account of the general crisis in participation, and one that is not affecting just this sphere, the tools for generating commitment need to be specially considered.

Gamification can be seen as the tool for introducing game thinking and mechanics to non-game settings precisely to this end: the generation of people's commitment when faced with tasks they consider boring or which they are reluctant to participate in.

Gamification is a tendency that is certainly being used to generate customer loyalty, increase the performance of employees in organisations, create applications that improve personal development, involve people in the learning process and generate further innovation.

In these settings gamification is proving itself to be an innovative technique with which results are being achieved on the basis of increasing people's participation.

If we consider the main challenges facing culture we find that a large part of the lost commitment is precisely here: people do not actively participate in our proposals.

The use of gamification in the cultural sector represents an opportunity for changing this

tendency and achieving in this sector results that it is producing in other settings.

Implementing the best ideas to be found in games and videogames so that, instead of playing and never stopping playing, people participate instead in the cultural offerings of our museums, cinemas, libraries, theatres and books, seems like a good opportunity that should not be missed, even more so when we see cases in this field where they have been implemented and have met with success.

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that designing this kind of experience is not usually either easy or direct, and neither is it in the field of game design. In the field of game design there are only a few that manage to generate commitment to their games, and the same thing will happen with gamification projects in the field of culture.

Some critical aspects need to be borne in mind, such as what kind of player the users of our culture

Gamification encourages people's participation in tasks that might be considered boring, or which people might be reluctant to participate in

are and what behaviours can be aligned with them to generate this desire to participate in our cultural proposals, consume them and act as ambassadors for them.

Once all this has been borne in mind the moment has come to get down to work: let us use game thinking and mechanics to reinvent our cultural proposals and thereby stimulate the commitment of our public.

NEWS AND WEB SITES OF INTEREST

Europa Press: "Los videojuegos ya son cultura en España" . http://www.europapress.es/tecnologia/videojuegos-00447/noticia-videojuegos-ya-son-cultura-espana-20090330223332.html

Fundeu: *Ludificación*, mejor que *gamificación* como traducción de *gamification*. http://www.fundeu.es/recomendacion/ludificacion-mejor-que-gamificacion-como-traduccion-de-gamification-1390/

NYPL: Find the Future. http://exhibitions.nypl.org/100/digital_fun/play_the_game

CYOA: Choose your own adventure. http://www.cyoa.com

Visual News: The Witness, a First Interactive Film with Augmented Reality. http://www.visualnews.com/2011/03/15/the-first-interactive-film-with-augmented-reality/

Read Social App: A revolutionary way to read. http://readsocialapp.com

Dallas Museum of Art: DMA Friends. http://www.dm-art.org/visit/dma-friends

Badge Culture: Promoviendo la participación ciudadana con la cultura. https://sites.google.com/site/badgeculturepublico/elproyecto

Game Marketing: http://www.gamkt.com

Game On! Lab: http://www.gameonlab.com

TWEETERS

http://twitter.com/gzicherm
http://twitter.com/mherger
http://twitter.com/daverage
http://twitter.com/gamkt
http://twitter.com/badgeculture