Call for Papers

Special Issue on

*Theoretical Perspectives and Applications of Gamification in Business Contexts*

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During the last decade, games have become an established vein of entertainment, consumer culture, and essentially, a common part of people’s daily lives (Mäyrä, Karvinen, & Ermi, 2016). In the United States alone 59% of the population plays computer games while revenues of the computer games industry exceed US $15 billion (ESA, 2014). However, in addition to the increased penetration of games, also the ways in which people play and employ games have become more varied. There are more different kinds of games available for a multitude of different platforms, mediated through different technologies that cater for differing gaming needs (Hamari & Keronen, 2017) and which use a wide variety of business models (Hamari et al., 2017).

As a result, today, our reality and lives are increasingly game-like, not only because video games have become a pervasive part of our lives, but perhaps most prominently also because activities, systems and services that are not traditionally perceived as game-like are increasingly gamified.

*Gamification* refers to designing products, services and organizational practices to afford similar experiences as games do, and consequently, attempt to create value and affect people’s behavior (Huotari & Hamari, 2017). In recent years, popularity of gamification has skyrocketed and manifested in growing numbers of gamified applications, as well as a rapidly increasing amount of research (Blohm & Leimeister, 2013; Deterding, 2015; Marchand & Hennig-Thurau, 2013; Terlutter & Capella, 2013).

Beyond HCI and game research areas, however, gamification has thus far remained a relatively small vein of literature in the areas of business, marketing, and organization studies. In these areas, organizations apply gamification primarily to motivate two stakeholder groups: employees and consumers (Bittner & Shipper, 2014; Conaway & Garay, 2014; Hofacker et al., 2016)

While generally gamification is regarded as a highly potential technology, predictions about the diffusion of gamification have varied from extremely positive outlooks (e.g. Gartner, 2011; IEEE, 2014) to less optimistic ones (Gartner, 2012). In the academic realm, several studies in various contexts have shown that gamification can be an
effective approach to increase motivation and engage users or participants in a given activity (Seaborn & Fels, 2015). However, it has also been predicted that a majority of gamification implementations are doomed to fail due to poor understanding of how to successfully design gamification (Morschheuser, Werder, Hamari, & Abe, 2017). This dearth in comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon continues to inhibit organizations from adopting and designing effective gamification approaches.

Organizations use gamification in intra-organizational settings primarily to motivate and engage employees to adapt to job tasks or to develop skills (Vesa, Hamari, Harviainen, & Warmelink, 2017). Research has studied the transformation of work processes into a game-like experience and identified the outcomes of gamification in the workplace on both the organizational and individual employee level. As such, studies support the beneficial effect of gamification such as improved job satisfaction and enhanced employee productivity (Oprescu, Jones, & Katsikitis, 2014), but also point to unintended side-effects such as a decrease of employees’ intrinsic motivation (Thom, Millen, & DiMicco, 2012), the potential to cheating (Carignan & Lawler Kennedy, 2013; Makanawala, Godara, Goldwasser, & Le, 2013) and short-term engagement (Farzan et al., 2008). Due to short timeframes in studies around gamification, there may be novelty effects in the attraction of gamification. Therefore, more research is warranted that explores the short-and long-term effects of gamification on customer behaviors and on financial outcomes.

Firms implement customer-geared gamification elements to enhance customer experiences and to encourage product adoption (Müller-Stewens, Schalger, Häubl, & Herrmann, 2017) and value-creating behaviors such as boost consumption, strengthen loyalty, deeper engagement, or positive word-of-mouth (Leclerq, Hammedi, & Poncin, 2017). While research has shown effects of gamification predominantly on short-term behaviors (Harwood & Garry, 2015) or behavioral intentions (Bittner & Shipper, 2014), more research is warranted that explores the short-and long-term effects of gamification on customer attitudinal and behavioral outcomes as well as on an organization’s financial and operational outcomes. It is of great interest to business practitioners, therefore, to answer how gamification should be implemented in a sustainable and profitable way. While research has focused mainly on exploring the game mechanics that drive participation, more research is needed that focuses on the mechanics and the underlying processes how firms, employees and customer may derive value from gamification.

This Special Issue calls for papers that explore the phenomenon in general, regarding both the firm, the employee and the customer perspective. Research is needed regarding the underlying mechanisms and drivers for the successful use of gamification in business settings. We call for research across disciplines from engineering, social science and humanities and welcome research from information systems, marketing, strategic management, human resources, organizational behavior and other fields. The objectives of this special issue are to publish findings and exchange knowledge on gamification and its application in business contexts. We seek studies that explore gamification application targeted to any stakeholder group across all industry sectors.

Theoretical, empirical, experimental, and case study research contributions are welcome. All contributions should clearly address the practical and theoretical implications of the research reported.
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND DEADLINES

When preparing your submission, please check the JBR website for guidelines on style and paper length: http://www.elsevier.com/journals/journal-of-business-research/0148-2963/guide-for-authors.

Manuscript submission for the review process will be done in the Elsevier Editorial system at the following website: http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-business-research/

**Submission deadline:** 15 Nov 2017
First revisions due: 15 March 2018
Final revisions due: 15 October 2018
**Expected publication date:** JBR makes articles available as soon as they are accepted

This an open call. However, interested authors can OPTIONALLY submit a first 10-page version to the gamification-track at the 51st Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS-51):

Submission of 10-page version to HICSS-51  15 Jun 2017
Deadline for HICSS-51 fast-track papers  15 Feb 2018

http://hicss.hawaii.edu/program/hicss51-fasttrack/

http://gamification-research.org/2017/03/hicss2018/

Selected papers accepted to the Gamification mini-track will be fast-tracked into the Gamification special issue of JBR. Attending the conference and/or submitting a manuscript to JBR for publication consideration are independent activities; authors are welcome to engage in one or both of these activities.

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**Bibliography**


