Design of an Online Community

Steven Wong

New Jersey City University

Online Community Link: Gamified Experiences (See Appendix A)

<div align="center">Background: Design & Methodology</div>

A recent surge in the race to get gamified educational applications to the market has confused the educator on what is considered sufficient as a replacement or supplement to existing traditional teaching methods. Educators overwhelm with the available choices but have limited outside online support community groups to provide an independent assessment of whether the marketed product is useful as claimed. The gamification education interest continues to soar among educators looking to diversify their teaching strategy to get more students who are on the sideline to become more engaged and motivated.

The Gamified Experiences established to fill in the missing resources that educators were searching for. The designed website fulfills two objectives; one is to provide informationally and support to the online gamified education community. The other is to encourage active gamified educators to contribute and to share their game-based learning stories. However, there is a growing niche that still needs fulfilling, which is to provide a support group to educators who are always looking for ways to communicate with other educators to give them insights on ways the switch is beneficial and worthwhile.

<div align="center">Design Decisions</div>

The focus of our online community is to serve a niche; competing with other upcoming new communities starts to enter the arena creating a crowded landscape. The website designer has the opportunity to differentiate Gamified Experiences from the rest and finding the best solutions to draw its new members (Kraut & Resnick, 2011). The website designer needs to focus on elements to make the relationship with newcomers, keeping them interested and

engaged as they navigate throughout the website, creating a friendly and professional

atmosphere for them to invite guests who in term are likely to become members (Palloff &

Pratt, 2007). The designer went with the approach to keep the website approachable and open

for newcomers to check out before the transition to become a member. Existing members

assigned to newcomers for onboarding and as they become familiar with the inner workings

and comfort level with the platform. This approach may see to limit the number of sign up, and

the growth of the online community, but the objective was to keep the retention rate high.

The website designer was juggling with many elements to consider and reaching out to

existing committee members for advice and comments. The decision point is to narrow down

the focus area of the support group. The first was whether to market-specific vendors that the

community felt was going to be beneficial, avoiding the bias. The committee decides to go with

a selected few who are considered to make inroads with the gamified education communities.

Selected vendors have Q & A on their websites, but the initial review suggesting some

questions remain still open with the generic response from the vendor more could be done in

this area to support the missing piece. The support communities allow members to offer advice

and tips to other customers, assisting vendors with customer support. It creates a channel for

vendors to gathering innovative ideas from the user community and streamlining the process to

get more updates and features implemented (Vision Critical, 2016).

The building or enhancing or maintaining an online community is an everlasting process

that requires a lot of effort, resources, and commitment (Fogelson, 2012). Choosing the right

platform to help with ongoing maintenance and support is a critical decision point on selecting

an appropriate hosting platform. Wenger, White, & Smith (2009) and Fogelson (2012) both

emphasize the use of existing resources within the community to maximize the benefits and create a better utilization rate with the resources within. The decision is to use a current committee member Wix web hosting service that is underutilized.

Alternative Design Approaches

The first approach was to create the online community that had enough resources to cover the interests of all the inclusive members, realizing that is approach was not the best way. We decide to keep the space available as opportunities continue to grow and focus on the area that the online community is interested in. Kraut and Resnick (2011) point out to repurpose the inactive spaces, where the redirect of the idle areas for the blog and the event calendar provides an alternative approach to keep the community occupied when the discussion forum struggles to garner any new recent activities; it is up to the moderator to continually monitor the threads to ensure active involvement among the community. For the discussion forum, we include a time-stamped feature to allow the participants to know the status of the post (Kraut & Resnick, 2011). This redesign method allows new users to find and to join the room more attractive.

Compare & Contrast

The newly designed Gamified Experience site incorporates a few attributes and policies to help increase site activity that was to have a negative impact associated with existing sites when scanning the online community involving educational gamification. Johnson (2013) mentions a flourishing online community should have the following attributes: leadership, vibrant participation, shared values, and responsiveness, which are part of the newly designed.

We decide to limit the number of participants once reach and to recertify membership yearly to ensure that members are actively involved in the online community. Our focus is to have quality over quantity, not like the one saw in the Facebook public group Gamification for Education had so many additional newcomers. Still, the percentage of the recent post low and the dated event calendar signify that the forum is not very active. The Gamified Experience programs the calendar to feature events allowing for member interaction, and decide to feature a blog, lining up guest speakers and members for each month to interact.

<center>Conclusion</center>

The Gamified Experience highlights the design objectives discussed in an online community that is appropriate for its use. The design objectives met to create an interactive and productive experience for the members of the online community. The creation of this online community has a specific purpose of fulfilling a niche support group that was not seen when scanning for the online gamified community during assessment assignment number one.

The use of various technologies, including blog, forum, event calendar, allows ways for the members to become active participants. Having assigned roles create responsibilities to ensure that the community is moving forward as expected and to mitigate issues. Establishing expected etiquettes generate a comfort level within the community, as highlighted by Palloff & Pratt (2007) as effective strategies for the online community of shared responsibility.

Overall, work never stops since the Gamified Experiences is continually upgrading with enhancements to meet the requirements of their member needs while keeping up with the latest change that effects the gamified online community.

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Appendix A

Gamified Experiences Home Page