

INCENTIVE SYSTEMS AND GAMIFICATION OF REAL VALUE CREATION. WITH EXAMPLES.

What drives human behaviour?

Our most primal instincts and all of the products of socialization and self-discovery. Its a complex process unpredictable like the weather even if we could understand each process separately. We can affect it a lot but never predict it 100% accurately.

When does the best strategy stops being competition and starts being cooperation?

When some conditions that define the interaction change such as communication, long term interaction or greater incentive for it than for competition. This happens a lot in nature and is as important as competition in the evolution of species.

Why people does so many effort in video games and so little in the real world?

They are very well designed in order to dance with our natural work/reward patterns by creating self-identification with the character, fostering curiosity, Creating progressive difficulty and rewards all the way. Many times, our knowledge of our brains has lead to exploitation of the players in skiner boxes where they no longer enjoy playing but the keep doing it for various reasons. Same happens in real life where most people doesn't enjoy their jobs.

Why don't we see our current world scenario like what it is? (The best incomplete information game ever made, opposite of for example chess, where you have the same true information as your opponent.)

Basically because there is an information war driven by the huge profits that any kind of industry that tries to undermine our self-control brain patterns can make. Every profitable business does so by hijacking our brains into behaviours that benefit them and not us. They feed adictions of all sorts, many times offering us commodity instead of autonomy, or delegation of functions (wich is easy) rather that responsibility by our actions (much harder). Information bubbles are everywhere. If you don't pay attention you may get bored in this precious time of existance. An active and awake attitude is much needed.

BELIEVES

All of this believes that I have pushed me to think on how to create a better society by providing people with better reward systems for real life. Applying the best of videogames in the real world requires some technical problemes to be solved like the one of verification in a complex environment like real life. I have come to share all of this in order to keep it from rotting inside my head, even it's low academic value. Spread the incomplete thoughts people! Don't wait for them to become complete theories!

NATURAL MOTIVATION...

sucks. It is an old neurological pattern that has worked for a long time for our survival but nowadays changes happen so fast and challenges are so new that our species are on an extremely difficult adaptation critical moment.

This implies overcoming some of the programming that we carry product of millions of years of evolution that doesn't currently work. It may make some people rich but at the same time the whole planet is in the verge of ecological and social collapse.

We really need to break from every addiction and think long term and without much physical rewards it is quite impossible. Cooperation doesn't have so many immediate dopamine triggers as depleting natural and social resources as fast as we can. So in order to compensate this let's hack our own brain schemes by making use of all kinds of rewards that we can come up with. Giving people cookies if they are well behaved or trusting everybody will act against their self-interest in behalf of everybody else is not such a big idea as using our strong need for group approval and recognition.

This is an old system that worked for such a long time when you could know everybody that shared resources with you and at the same time could easily kill you, and for this time of global interdependence we cannot rely on old reputation systems like neighbor control so let's use digital and perceived rewards, that have the same effect on our brains like real life goods (food, shelter, sex...), as a growing industry that moves billions a year knows very well.

First some more of my realizations:

-Our survival and security needs are profoundly met when we feel accepted and valued within a human group and this really overcomes fear which fires a lot of dopamine.

-As our societies got bigger and more complex our sense of trust and belonging changed making old school reputation systems obsolete and some of the conditions for cooperation diminished (long term relationships) while others increased (communication).

-As we lose more and more sustained relationships and roots in our immediate environment and while corporate media monopolizes our communications (they usually pick the topics for us to talk about) it seems more smart to compete and try to take the most benefit of every encounter you have with other entities. We are living in a world with the perfect environment for brutal individualism and competition, and many of us see how many well working systems that provided abundant happiness disappear. Enough.

Points I wanted to talk about (I forgot some but you know, it's not going in any science magazine):

- Design achievements that just require measures in a game/platform
- Design achievements that require harder verification
- Different trust options and my election: group intelligence

- Variables that would affect the verification process (classify difficulty of verification and importance)
- Why harder verification? More real value to connect through the same game
- Examples of self regulating processes embedded in the design of just the platform
- Put more weight on the real world and less on the platform (verification meetings, help self evaluate activities face to face and rely less on the digital)
- For a game to make sense lets focus on just one kind of incentives but enable other hacks of the game for other secondary purposes. One kind of interactions (free, valuable for society and the environment, democratic, open, public, amateur, replicable...) and then whatever may find our thing useful.

There are many good ideas and intentions out there that don't find the proper space for developing, usually because there is no material compensation for taking them into practice, while there's an enormous pressure to gather resources, be it for survival or for addiction to any kind of stuff.

We just have to recognize and translate all this paths that lead to a better world, at least the minimum consensus where a majority of us could agree upon, that are blocked by current power structures. In order to do so we need a change on behaviours and a change of mind in relation to value.

We need to use appropriate tools that empower us and doesn't serve somebody else like for example current money systems, big enterprises or in many cases some big chunks of states, despite the redistribution they make (which is not sufficient nor can be expected to grow from their current designs).

In order to surpass this flaws in the designing of systems we have to recognize the difficulties on putting ideas into practice. All of the last examples believe in some great ideals that they try to achieve but in reality both three are prey for corruption and degeneration flowing from hierarchical power structures and bad or inexistent control systems that rely on good faith of the people in power or in other broken means of control like journalism today.

It's not hard to find great ideas on the internet that could be revolutionary without being hard to understand, and to make them gain support from almost everybody if there were room in the conquered minds, without much difficulty if it wasn't by the lack of means for transitioning into that from an individualistic and unequal society.

Great ideas, bad strategies, worse tools. It would be sad if we let go that 'better world that we know it's possible' just because our lack of coherent tools that match our current values and that serve our interests.

Advertisement has accustomed us not to analyze the profound consequences of a broken design, that can seem ok in the surface but if the rules are dissected it's obvious who is benefited by the design. Most amazing examples of this are our state currencies (I should say central banks ones), or the gambling industry. Many of us don't fall into

gambling because we see that in the long run it's easier to lose than to win and it's utterly unfair (it promotes accumulation of wealth by arbitrary means or even worse, by discrimination based on abilities such as in poker, like soccer), but we fail to see that many of our videogames, our social relationships (cults in varying degrees) and our economic relationships are often as unsupported by our values as casinos. It's worth paying attention to that.

Now let me exemplify how can we create better value systems by explaining a bit some of the previous and present most popular ones.

First let's talk about old style reputation stored in human brains and shared in small communities where everybody almost knew each other. There everybody kept an idea about how much did every person contributed to the community wellbeing (many times this perception was good but as always many tried to hack this process too and there were built awful religions or other kind of privileges or entitlements like disproportionate private property rights).

This control systems weren't too bad in keeping some sort of equality (we are living in the most unequal world of all) but they also promoted a lot of 'society over individual' like scenarios. For many people this was very oppressive too as the values of the group dominated over the individuals, and they were not always good values, as we can see evolution has to come up with enough diversity to choose one successful result from many mistakes.

Then we roughly transitioned to the opposite scenario where every community values are smashed by the values of powerful individuals. This has led to many broken monetary systems like today's where the total control over the economy is in the hands of a few bankers and their corporate puppets. Money is the key and lock of our collective chains in this masked slavery where we work to earn green papers (while some can just print them out of thin air) in order to survive or live. And then this injustice pollutes every aspect of our societies because money can hijack our minds through our oldest parts of the brain and make us forget our thoughts and their children, values.

The whole point on designing new currencies and thinking on how to leave the virtual reality for our games is to regain the working social values that can transform society into something better, without much dialectical effort. A new set of rules can change our perception of the world dramatically, and just having more than one way to visualize value in a given situation is enough for that issue to enter our conscious attention, so let's make new value systems for our real world so we can start thinking on our current ones with a little more depth and simplicity than the one we see often in popular political discourses.

We have needs, let's find the best current available solutions to them, and for the case of the urgent need for cooperation on a global scale we should build new accountable systems that bypass the old ones. This need is made of other smaller needs like the need for shared vision, the need for taking care of the planet, the need to provide basic resources in order to free the mind, the need to coordinate and

to engage meaningfully with our peers, the need for spreading useful skills, the need to know each other, the need to practice non-violence... it's an endless list and these are my own priorities, but everybody could enrich this long list. Let's focus on one group of these needs where videogame dynamics can provide a lot of value: the need to be active creators of our own culture. And a culture can't be more well defined than by what does a group of people do, what do they engage into on their freetime. So my first idea was to build a tool with all the principles above mentioned applied which can ease the process of proposing, organizing and participating into meaningful activities without the need for a central authority provider of culture. (What an abstract thing that is by the way)

If you agree with most of the above you may be interested in what's coming. I will try to make some examples for the augmented reality games side of this *new game rules* paradigm focusing on people's actions outside of the game, in the real world, which can be input for the game or provide with recognition and value, in a virtual environment that promotes motivation, quality and cooperation.

The easiest case would be one where one person is incentivized to meet others face to face in order to do some meaningful activity for that community. This could be easily verified as long as the meeting is public, accessible, free and therefore we can trust that the people that participate will self-verify each other that the thing was real, and any try to fake it could be easily dismantled if only one person there has a higher moral condition and reports the intended fake, starting a process where for the thing to be proven needs more proofs than the regular ones. For the person reporting, she/he has to act on good faith because if they are proven wrong they will be punished for boycotting a legit event, so this will rarely occur if we provide hard to hack methods of verifications. They could look something like this (from basic to only if necessary):

- Once the event has started which is defined by the event hour, the organizer can act as a verifying person checking-in the assistants with a mobile phone physical contact (which requires effectively that the people are there). As long as one attendant is checked by the organizer, they can check others and this process becomes decentralized as time goes by, guaranteeing that the mobile phones are on the defined area of the event. If somebody finds suspicious check-ins of people that then leaves or other intents of cheating they can claim a harder verification, and if enough percentage do so the following verifications may be required.
- If the above measure is not sufficient there can be a second check at the end, where everybody verifies that the people checking at the end were there the whole event, or it doesn't count as participation. When large number of people it's easier to fake assistance but we could give less points for that, meaning we encourage people diversifying into small groups rather than participating in mass events (which are easier to participate if you think about it).
- Random people are asked to take pictures during the event just for verification purposes (and rewarded with points). Then the pictures are sent together to a random number of people using the app that didn't attend the event to grant that it is the same thing and that it is really being done.

- We cannot identify a user easily so there must be an artificial intelligence that joins data together in order to guess how credible a person is by measuring the amount of reports that the events where this person was have had. This way a cheater may not know that he/she is being tracked but the game knows without a lot of confusion as long as people attend an unique and distinct set of events.
- We can incentivize people to attend events that are not of their interest in order to break bubbles and to merge groups so there is no spreading of fakery inside a given closed collective, and more if we have more reports on that kind of interests or if the organizer trust (that only the game knows) is low. This missions would be very challenging and you will be able to do them if you level up.
- There can be a moderator human being group that can mediate in conflicts trying to discover who is right. Maybe not resolving every dispute, and thus we should act in innocent precondition for everyone, but avoiding future conflicts by attending themselves ‘suspicious of cheat’ activities. This group could be made of well trusted members of our communities. Members that have been proven dedicated to the quality of our events and activities. We could add this question and generate private data on what people are the most trusted (probably the ones more exposed also and thus the hard working organizers).

As you can see the main guarantee that one event was done is that it requires more than one person to meet in person, and if only one honorable person attends it, it can be exposed a group of cheaters (as long as the majority of users are into keeping good track of points), making a smart choice not to cheat. Contrary, what happens in hierarchical power structures is that if only one person cheats it’s enough to spread corruption among that level of power and below.

How could this same set of guarantees be applied to achievements that one can do on his/her own? Well, many of them may require a necessary proof as they may be making a public something that will remain public in order that others (random) could agree upon. There may be different qualities of the proofs provided. Videos where you are exposed (your voice, your face, your youtube channel) are very strong proofs and hard to fake. But a picture can easily be faked and much more a comment about a book you’ve just read. This means that we can only provide rewards to users as far as the quality of the proof is.

This would exclude many of the valuable things that human beings can do that cannot be verified accurately. And if that is the case there is no point on rewarding something so easily fakeable, as long as social reputation measures. A solution for this invisible tasks could be a private feed where you can enjoy your achievements even if nobody has been able to prove them, as far as you are truthful to yourself. It would be an individual choice to be true with themselves in order to visualize what they have achieved in life in one place, but not anymore a game with human interaction and common shared value systems. So in order to design achievements for the easily proven actions that could be beneficial to human kind I suggest we focus on those achievements that cannot leave doubts.

Again there are systems that we can trust and should make use of and also, we could leave space for harder to prove ones by accounting only with a percentage of their true value (if the proofs were 100% objective) and maybe discouraging them a bit but anyway, making them possible to integrate. Here are some ways:

- Challenge requires you to make a unique public creation.
- Challenge involves that many unpredictable amount of people can see by themselves that it was done (a circus demonstration on the street).
- Challenge needs to be testified by only one person and then we would take into account the estimated accuracy of that person (we could keep track of misinformation and non consensus about quality of proofs, the trust).
- Challenge has to be done with the cooperation of more than five random people so it can be easily verified taking into account those peoples histories of past criteria and possible misvaluations.

I missed to mention that a layer of evaluation upon the evaluations themselves would be needed if we want to measure how a person criteria deviates from the average criteria of the group (the interconnected world in this case) and how much we trust them.

If the people that verified your good actions get dismissed for cheating it should automatically decrease the trustability of your verified actions by them, so when somebody is proven faking it can have strong consequences for everyone's points involved with him/her.

I think this is a good resume. Now let's go with examples:

For my envisioned platform of event crafting and collective agenda there could be private points to foster cooperation and not competition, except with oneself (if you want leaderboards or competition of some sort we could have it less personal if it can be accounted area wide instead of person wide, and anyway you will get it, people can screenshot their profiles if they cannot resist the need for extra recognition):

1. For every activity that you participate into you could receive 10 to 50 points, depending on the number of other people attending, and the duration of the activity. The less people and the more time, the best. (Or maybe we can encourage not too long activities and make the max points be reached in say, two hours and then not more).
2. For every activity that you organize you could earn from 100 to 1000 points depending on the number of participants, the quality of the activity (if it meets the expectations of the assistants), the duration and also the type of activity that it is (let's encourage what matters the most for society and let that be decided by the game community itself), and the new people and interests that you reach (helping people not getting stuck on one kind of thing). It would be preferred to gather a whole bunch of people that you never saw before than a all of your friends.

3. For every little task that helps the good functioning of the game/platform you could earn 1 point with a max points per day of 10 for each kind of task available. Let's not encourage any repetitive anything.

And also private achievements:

1. Participate in 10 events.
2. Participate in 50 events.
3. Participate in 100 events.
4. Participate in 500 events.
5. ...
6. Participate in 3 events in one week.
7. ...
8. Participate in events with more than 10 different interests (Let's say that any event can only choose one big category and then be more accurate with handcrafted tags and here we are counting the main categories in order to incentivize diversity of behaviours).
9. Participate in events this week with more than 10 different interests.
10. Participate in an event with more than 50 people attending (Oh, attending, not every attendant will be on the game in order to check so at the end one question every checked in user will have to answer is how many people do they think were there and then we have a pretty decent mean with extra points if the typical deviation between them was small).
11. Participate in an event with more than 1000 assistants.
12. ...
13. Organize a lot of stuff and very diverse like achievements.
14. ...
15. Help keep the platform accurate (volunteer badges) and detect missuses (detective like badges).
16. Have a forum account (where users can help cocreate the game and resolve problems derived from it. They will be asked to give their username on the game in order to have this automatically done).
17. Organize an horizontal classroom.
18. Organize a playfight.
19. Organize a tree planting.
20. Organize a cryptocurrency workshop.
21. Organize an (insert whatever trendy/stereotypical good action here).
22. ...
23. Complete x number of missions (go to something you wouldn't normally do)
24. ...

This can be trully endless. The cool point would be to have a liquid democratic process in paralell where community can decide from the game what new achievements are made and what it's their real difficulty/value asking them things like: Was this too easy for you? Do you think that were a lot of points?. And we can design everything so that the users crave more points and everytime they have a chance to earn easy points by answering questions like that they will be willing to stop, think carefully and answer their most accurate truth (because they know that there are systems to benefit who does so, trust/fear artificial intelligence).

This is the really cool part, we can not only use the group intelligence to verify stuff, we can also let it create the game itself by deciding if the points and the achievements are ok and crating more of them that create a perfect learning curve that is accesible, engaging, meaningfull and challenging enough. I have watched some videos on this regard (videogame designing) that I can share with you here: <https://pad.disroot.org/p/hpyIEl7zV9>

In the case of other kind of reward systems that try to embrace larger actions (beyond community organized events) this same process of co-creation has to be implemented because developers will always miss something that thousands of players won't.