Chapter 14
Towards a Gamification Design Process for Building Engaging MOOCs

Aikaterini Kalogeraki
Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus

ABSTRACT

MOOCs offer a model of massive, free and personalized education and they are considered by many educators and researchers as a potential alternative to global education and providing massive open lifelong learning, indispensable in the “Information Society” we live in today. Nevertheless research conducted have observed a large dropout rate among MOOCs, mainly because courses are massively open and centered around learners with different ages, experiences, skills and motivations. The author believes that it is vital to introduce Gamification elements in order to commitment the learners for completing the courses, with willingness and pleasure. In this chapter will be presented the theoretical background of Gamification elements that can be combined with the principles of UX, guidelines for the design interface of MOOCs and their involvement of learning theories and game-based theory. It will also include a design proposal for the interface of MOOCs that will engaged UX with elements of Gamification.

INTRODUCTION

Even though MOOCs are a descendant of distance education, they differ in regard to the scope of services that they offer. Since the acronym indicates that the aim is a Massive Open Online Courses give everybody the opportunity to learn at any time of their lives, from anywhere on the planet. More specifically, the Canadian teacher Dave Cormier describes MOOCs as a new kind of education and defines it as a lesson with a start and end date, which is open to all, with no barriers to entry, without cost and without educational criteria. (Morrison, 2014)

Offering a model of massively, free and personalized education, as well as, use of organized web based collaborative tools is what makes them unique, in combination with the requirements of the “Information Society” we live in today. (Bruce et al., 2014) The main characteristics of MOOCs are therefore

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-9743-0.ch014
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based on the idea by means of which we provide free education from renowned teachers and prestigious universities with a simple connection to the network, seen by many educators and researchers a potential alternative to global education that will provide massive open lifelong learning. This is evident when look at the number of enrolled learners in Coursera, of which 61.5 percent originates from outside the United States. (Lane & Kinser, 2012)

Nevertheless research conducted have observed a large dropout rate among MOOCs, around 90% (Reece, 2013). The problem arises mainly because the courses are massively open and centred around learners along different ages, experiences, skills and motivations. (Grünewald et al., 2013)

In the field of digital marketing to rapidly gained and traction consumers (Zichermann & Linder, 2010), as well as in various workplaces to create engaging workplaces (Reeves & Read, 2013) or facilitate mass-collaboration (McGonigal, 2011) have created numerous “gamified” applications. This design approach integrates successfully Gamification techniques using video game elements in non-game services and applications (rather than full-fledged games), giving to the operation system a service layer of reward and reputation systems with points, badges, levels and leader boards to improve user experience and user engagement services.

Consequently the author believes that it is vital to introduce Gamification elements in MOOCs, in order to commitment the learners for completing the courses, with willingness and pleasure. In this chapter will develop the theoretical background of Gamification elements that can be combined with the principles of UX, guidelines for the design interface of MOOCs and their involvement of theories of learning and game-based theory. It will also include a design proposal for the interface of MOOCs that will engaged UX with elements of Gamification. The design guidelines and the framework are supported by several studies and are based on literate review that combines elements of Gamification to generate an interactive gamify educational interface.

BACKGROUND

UCD and UX Reduced Cognitive Load

MOOCs are based on active participation of hundreds learners, who will communicate with the software and will interact with the computer through an interface. If learners have previous related experiences and perceptions, they will be able to orient themselves in the environment of MOOCs and will know how to navigate and attend by choosing the most appropriate way.

This is called User Experience-UX and usually people use the expression in this case “user friendly”. Essentially they referred that the user has prior experience to use easily a device, a functional etc. (Buley, 2013) For example users-learners, often click on buttons or links without looking at their content, but perceived by their shape, their color, their position, what is going to appear on screen. (Johnson, 2010)

The UX of learners who attend courses in MOOCs is difficult to predict, due to targeted at mass population who are of different ages, experiences, skills and motivations. (Grünewald et al., 2013) As a result, it has reduced the quality of MOOCs, because within the definition of quality of electronic distance education, include the quality of instructional design which encompasses the quality of the educational interface. It is interesting the view of researchers for the first MOOCs who had high-quality content, but observed high dropout rates, confusion, disappointment and failure of learners and they accuse for that the low design quality of the interfaces. (Conole, 2014; Legon, 2014)