Content is not enough: Using motivational techniques to improve participation and learning in mobile apps.

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Message + Media = Meaning
Message + Media + ? = Meaning
How do you motivate people to use the stairs more than the escalators?
Framing

PERSUASION / MEMORY / COMPREHENSION

The way in which issues and data are stated can alter our judgement and affect decisions.

How are you presenting choices in your system? What are the available options? An implied story makes the most desirable choice more obvious, especially for new or difficult concepts. For example, framing donations as costing “less than a cup of coffee a day” encourages people to rationalize a monthly pledge.

See also: Conceptual Metaphor, Story, Loss Aversion

Limited Duration

PERSUASION

Given a choice between action and inaction, a limited time to respond increases the likelihood that people will participate.

While commonly used to promote purchasing behaviors, limited durations can also be used to shape day-to-day behaviors. Set limited times when certain actions can be taken. Make rewards available at specific times or have options that disappear if no action is taken within a specific period of time.

See also: Periodic Events, Loss Aversion, Reputation, Status, Achievements, Feedback Loops, Scarcity, Self-Expression

Humor Effect

MEMORY / ATTENTION / PERSUASION

Humorous items are more easily remembered and enjoyed!

Why so serious? Almost any text is an opportunity to add humor. But don’t stop there; think about interactions and how they can be made humorous. Just as humor is injected into conversation, we can easily add humor to hover actions, button clicks, three-step processes and other user actions. In learning contexts, use humor to ease new knowledge acquisition and retention.

See also: Affect Heuristic, Peak-End Rule, Surprise, Delighters
Collecting

Where there is interest, people like to amass units that add to or complete a set.

Is there an opportunity to collect something on your site? Coupons, badges, words, pieces of a larger whole—the options are limitless. It’s best if these items link to one’s reputation and reinforce the content of your service. Business applications may benefit from performance-based collectibles that correlate with speed, frequency, quantity, effectiveness and other desirable metrics.

See also: Chunking, Set Completion, Achievements, Autonomy, Variable Rewards, Scarcity, Self-Expression

Status

We constantly assess how interactions either enhance or diminish our standing relative to others and our personal best.

Are you providing feedback loops and measures to let people know how they are doing? Status is personal—an assessment of our standing relative to others (income, performance). Status can also be public (scoring, recognition, etc.). However, studies show that a threat response kicks in when our status seems jeopardized; take care to measure only those things linked to desired behaviors. Also use status to reinforce new skills.

See also: Competition, Reputation, Appropriate Challenges, Feedback Loops, Need for Achievement

Appropriate Challenges

We delight in challenges, especially ones that strike a balance between overwhelming and boring.

Easy is overrated. Turn some tasks into challenges. Research shows we are happiest when faced with something challenging (but not too overwhelming). The "challenge" can be designed into a system or created by reflecting someone's personal best (or average) performance in an area. A designed challenge can be heavily constructed (game design) or merely suggest an intriguing, unsolved problem.

See also: Curiosity, Status, Surprise, Set Completion, Competition, Reputation, Feedback Loops
GAMING!
More than 10 million people in the UK spend at least 20 hours per week playing games.

In a country with a strong gamer culture the average young person will spend 10,000 hours playing games before they are 21.

The UK games industry is now worth more than the pop music industry.
Competing in Quest Challenges gains the player points which can be compared to others playing on the walls.

Introducing the element of competition increases the chance of people going further and completing the 2-3 hour circuit of the Walls.
More points helps the player gain a higher status level – Apprentice, Journeyman, Master.

Introducing status allows people to assess their level compared to their peer group.
Completing multiple Quest Challenges unlocks Guild Shields.

Virtual rewards are collectable and research shows people like to amass units that add to or complete a set.
Completing sequential Quest Challenges unlocks extra games hidden within the app.

More tangible rewards help motivate people to complete the entire app. These rewards are intended to extend the experience after the visit.
The Shoveler is a water bird with a large beak or bill adapted for feeding in shallow water and mud.

Well done – around 1250 shovellers breed in Britain each year.

Paul has scored 60 points

Continue
75% said they learnt ‘very much’ about the local area and wildlife

56% said the app enhanced their experience of visiting Rainham

83% said they liked the game element

100% said they would recommend the app to a friend

Research carried out by Havering London Borough
Bugs Count ID Guide

Guide to common groups of bugs

Quest help us find six key species

Gallery of beautiful bugs

This guide supports the OPAL Bugs Count survey

Species Quest

Small Tortoiseshell (Aglais urticae)

Wingspan: 45-60mm

What we want to find out
Is this butterfly doing better in urban or rural areas? It was once common in gardens but numbers have fallen in recent years.

ID tips

blue dots
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