

Failed Gamification Implementations in Practice: Case Analysis and Future Insights*

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Abstract

The purpose of the article was to investigate seven case-studies of wrong implementations of gamification in companies. Examples included: Microsoft Ribbon Hero, Volkswagen Fun Theory, Google News Badges, Nike + Challenges, Foursquare's Project, Yahoo Answers Points and DevHub Coding Website. We analyzed the reasons of their failure and tried to generalize the findings to create a comprehensive matrix of mistakes that one should avoid while introducing gamification into the project. The article fills the gap in literature concerning failures in gamification. There are very few publications discussing this issue and we believe that added new observations into this research matter. The research method employed in the paper was based on critical analysis of gamification projects and finding mistakes in the implementation process. As a conclusion, we found out that the main problems of failed gamifications included: improper design of the game mechanics, ignoring different types of player personalities, and finally, insufficient alignment of the content with real-world goals of players. The conclusion of the paper is that different people enter the game for different reasons, but every player has a specific goal, and this goal must be achieved by the gamified project.

Keywords: Gamification, failed implementations, case analysis, user motivation, game design, player types.