



## Gamification in the Context of Enterprise Social Media

# Bachelorarbeit

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Motivation and Relevance

Over the last few decades, the internet has been continuously evolving. Since the development of the Web 2.0, in which people are producing and sharing content rather than only consuming information (Tim O'Reilly, 2005), social media such as Facebook, Twitter or even Wikipedia have become increasingly important (Krüger, et al., 2013).

At the same time, organizations need to compete continuously in a constantly changing business environment. Therefore, enterprises are facing the challenge to adapt the trends of Web 2.0 applications. The resulting term Enterprise 2.0, which first appeared in 2006 by McAfee, describes the use of social software especially in the business context. Particularly in times of internationalization, communication and collaboration in digital networking platforms are increasingly important within companies (Stieglitz and Meske, 2012). This phenomenon is called Enterprise Social Media (ESM), which includes blogs, microblogs, Social Networking Sites (SNS), communities and wikis (Treem and Leonardi, 2012). As ESM is aiming to improve the communication, collaboration as well as knowledge and information sharing (Kim and Kane, 2015), organizations have to take care that these applications are practically useful. Since the introduction of ESM is often problematic and the acceptance as well as the use of the employees is not given directly, approaches to promote these aspects in this context have been developed (Schubert, et al., 2014).

Additionally, companies have always been looking for ways to motivate their employees in order to work more efficient, aiming to increase the productivity and stimulate innovation (Stieglitz, 2015). Since it is natural that people like to play and this is part of their personality and culture, the concept of Gamification has emerged in this context within the last years (Buckley, 2015). Gamification is defined as the implementation of game elements in contexts, in which gaming is unusual (Deterding, et al., 2011). In the context of business, the objective of Gamification is to motivate people's action or engagement (Lounis, et al., 2014). Especially with regard to ESM, Gamification is one possible approach to stimulate behavior in order to improve the use of ESM (Schubert, et al., 2014), specifically with the emergence of fun and enjoyment (Robson, et al., 2015). However, with the implementation and use of Gamification in the context of ESM, many difficulties can occur (Stieglitz, 2015). Mainly, organizations are challenged to evaluate how to implement game elements within ESM successfully and how to overcome the occurring difficulties. Since the employees or users are the main actors in this context, it is therefore important to find out how Gamification can affect the users' sharing behavior.

Kane (2015) stated that Gamification is an important area in the research field of information systems (IS). However, it is still a relatively new field of research in which it has not yet been answered which positives and negatives effects Gamification in ESM has on the employees. As a consequence, companies are struggling to get justified facts and information concerning the level of added value which can be created (Stieglitz, 2015). To fill the research gap with respect to the quite young research field, this bachelor thesis starts here with developing research questions which will be answered by several research methods.

## 1.2 Objective, Research Questions and Structure

As mentioned before, the implementation and use of Gamification within ESM has many difficulties and challenges for organizations. To implement Gamification successfully in this context, these difficulties need to be identified to be able to minimize and overcome them. The most important actors in this context are the employees using these applications. Therefore, it is important to understand how they react to Gamification in the context of ESM and how Gamification influences their sharing behavior. The objective of the entire research is to be able to present how to overcome these difficulties of Gamification and therefore to improve the sharing behavior of users within ESM. In order to research these aspects and thus to be able to make statements about whether Gamification in ESM is useful, the following research questions were developed:

*RQ1: What are the difficulties of Gamification in an intra-organizational Enterprise Social Media context?*

*RQ2: How is Gamification impacting the intra-organizational Enterprise Social Media sharing behavior of users?*

In chapter 1.1, the relevance and motivation of the research had already been presented. Before answering both research questions, the theoretical foundation of the key variables will be defined in chapter 2 in order to gain a better understanding of the entire research. In this context, ESM is first explained in chapter 2.1. It will be presented how ESM evolved over time, which applications it can include and how it can change the communication and collaboration within an enterprise. In chapter 2.2, the term Gamification will be explained clearly, it will be shown which game elements exist and how they can be used. These two key variables which are the foundation of this research are then combined in chapter 2.3 to show how Gamification can be implemented in ESM. To answer the first research question, a literature review based on Webster and Watson (2002) will be conducted in chapter 3. This helps to get a basic understanding of Gamification in the context of ESM and shows the current state of research with respect to the difficulties in this context. On the basis of the results, an impact model will then be created to develop hypotheses regarding the sharing behavior of users in chapter 3.3. With the help of three semi-structured interviews and a following qualitative content analysis

according to Mayring (2014), presented in chapter 4, these hypotheses can later be confirmed or rejected. The related second research question regarding the sharing behavior influenced by Gamification within ESM will be answered. In chapter 5, the results of the qualitative content analysis of the interviews and the results of the literature analysis will be compared, discussed and interpreted. Additionally, organizations can then be given recommendations on how to overcome the difficulties of Gamification and thus to improve the user's sharing behavior. Chapter 6 will complement the entire research by concluding the results and giving an outlook for further research.

To narrow the scope of the research, some limitations have to be made. The focus will be on intra-organizational ESM and only researches from 2008 to 2019 will be considered.

## **2 Theoretical Foundation**

The following theoretical foundations are designed to get a better understanding of different phenomena that will be used in further research. These are used to expand the existing knowledge of the used key variables and definitions to support the following research methods and to be able to answer the research questions.

### **2.1 Enterprise Social Media**

Over the past few decades the internet has been constantly changing. Tim O'Reilly (2005) defined a new decade of the Internet which is called Web 2.0. According to O'Reilly (2005), with the change of Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 the internet was changing to a platform in which people not only consume data, but also provide own data and content with the consequence of creating network effects. This give users the opportunity to generate content with different media, such as video cameras or smartphones or just textual content, to share it with others which means that users are no longer only consumers (O' Reilly, 2005). They are now so-called prosumers who produce and consume content at the same time (von Kortzfleisch, et al., 2008). Wigand, Wood and Mande (2010) conclude that Web 2.0. is more a social phenomenon and not only a technology. That is why it can be defined as "a broad range of websites that encourage interaction and collaborative work" (Wigand, et al., 2010, p. 3). As this research focus on the social aspect of Web 2.0, the tools and technologies of social media have to be defined which occurred during the change of Web 1.0 to Web 2.0. Based on this, one of the definitions of social media is that it is "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). These applications are especially blogs, wikis, SNS, communities and microblogging (Treem and Leonardi, 2012). Current and well-known examples for some of these public social media tools are Facebook as a social network or Twitter as a microblogging platform (Wehner, et al., 2017)

## 6 Conclusion and Outlook

Due to this thesis, it can be stated that Gamification in the ESM context can be combined successfully. It turns out that people can respond positively to game elements in business environments. It should be noted that there is a lot of literature regarding Gamification and ESM separately. However, the combination of Gamification and ESM is still less researched. Nevertheless, the research shows that there are different Gamification approaches and various gamified ESM applications currently available. The aim of the entire research was to identify the difficulties which occur by implementing Gamification in the ESM context. It explicitly addressed the impact of Gamification on users' sharing behavior. The objective was to evaluate whether the integration of Gamification in the ESM context is useful for enterprises and creates added value. After a literature review to identify the difficulties, interviews were conducted to find out how Gamification affects users' sharing and behavior.

The findings of the entire research show that Gamification in the context of ESM is controversial. It demonstrates that the main difficulty for organizations is to increase the motivation and acceptance of employees to use these systems. Aspects like rewards, anonymity, privacy, data protection, competition and transparency influence the motivation and acceptance of using Gamification elements. It can be accepted by users in a different way. The results show that these aspects are in turn dependent on the individual preferences and needs of the users. However, it should be prevented that the use of Gamification leads to strong competitive situation, that many users can perceive as unfavorable.

It became clear that users were only motivated by applications which use Gamification elements in a professional context. Gamification does not motivate to increase social communication within ESM, as this is a procedure that is taken for granted in everyday work, especially in times of digitalization. Nevertheless, if Gamification is used in a business context within ESM, it can be determined that the sharing behavior may be significantly improved. Implementing game elements could motivate employees to use ESM and therefore increase the quantity of content. Nonetheless, the quality can definitely suffer by Gamification, but it is shown that this effect can be overcome by different approaches and recommendations. The identification of the difficulties by a literature review and the analysis of the interviews can help organizations to integrate Gamification in the context of ESM more successful. The outlined recommendations may also help companies to overcome the highlighted challenges.

To sum up, it can be emphasized that Gamification can have a motivating effect if a compromise is found in the previous mentioned aspects that lead to the acceptance and motivation of different personalities. Additionally, Gamification can only increase the motivation if the context of ESM is a professional one. Although Gamification can entail some difficulties, if companies deal with employee's preferences and needs as well as involve them in the implementation process of Gamification. As a consequence, Gamification can have a high motivating effect and can improve the sharing behavior regarding higher quantity and content

quality. In the long run, it can lead to an increasing collaboration within the enterprise which will enforce a higher level of ideas and innovations in a more efficient way.

Since, as described, this is a new field of research, it is important that further investigations in this field continue. It is essential not only to describe the general effects of Gamification on ESM, but also shed a light on the different perspectives. Therefore, researches from the perspective of users and from the perspective of enterprises should be carried out separately. As research has shown that the various aspects are often linked to the motivation and the acceptance of Gamification. Therefore, it makes sense to explore the individual aspects such as rewards or privacy separately. Further, research should consider the different impacts of various elements. This makes it easier for companies to adapt the elements in such a way that the users accept Gamification to a greater extent. On the organizational perspective, it can be interesting in further research to include the costs of implementing Gamification and to develop ways in which the outcomes of the enterprises by Gamification can be measured. Subsequently, it will be possible to elaborate clear facts if the implementation of Gamification within an ESM context in a business environment can be profitable.

Concluding, in the next few years social interaction within companies will become more and more important due to the digital transformation. Furthermore, companies will increasingly be exposed to competitive pressure and need to find ways to make work more efficient and to motivate their employees. Gamification in ESM is a promising opportunity for future, but it can only be successful if the requests, demands and needs of the employees are included in the implementation process. The task of the companies is therefore to define a clear framework for the use of Gamification in the context of ESM.