

## Gamification in UX

Gamification is the use of game design principles in non-game contexts. It is used to engage users and can be a useful tool for learning or creating habits. Studies show gamification has a positive effect on individuals. Properly used, gamification can make engaging and meaningful user experiences.



## A Look at the Octalysis Framework

Understanding how and why people are motivated is key to developing good user experiences. Good implementation of gamification is built on activating our core drives with an understanding of human psychology. The Octalysis Framework, developed by Yu-kai Chou, identifies eight core drives that motivate humans to engage in activities. Without one of these drives, a person won't be interested in engaging.

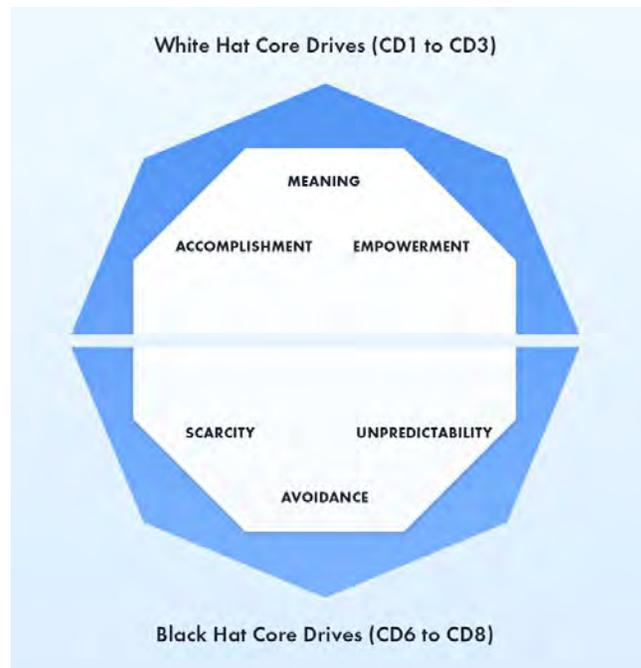


## The Eight Core Drives

- **1 Epic Meaning and Calling**
  - Humans want to feel that they are part of something important and engaged in something that is bigger than themselves. An example of gamification in action utilizing this drive is Wikipedia, where people spend time writing articles without any compensation.
- **2 Development and Accomplishment**
  - This drive is about the internal drive to progress, develop skills, face and overcome challenges and generate a feeling of accomplishment. An important part of this drive is that there be some element of struggle, otherwise the winnings (for example, a trophy or badge) is not meaningful and can even be demotivating.
- **3 Empowerment of Creativity and Feedback**
  - Users want to be involved in a creative process, receive feedback, and make changes where needed. Minecraft is an example where this drive has made a game very successful.
- **4 Ownership and Possession**
  - The drive to own and possess is what encourages people to work and earn money, as well as collect things with sentimental value. In Pokemon players are incentivized to hunt and collect Pokemon as well as earn coins to purchase items for their avatar or to use in Pokemon hunting.
- **Social Influence and Relatedness**
  - Concern for what others think, say, or do will make people change their behaviour. Relatedness creates emotional associations and feelings of nostalgia. Prime examples of this drive in use is social media, but sites that have reviews as a core feature are also playing on this drive.
- **Scarcity and Impatience**
  - If there is great difficulty in obtaining something or it's not immediately available, this creates a want for that item. This drive is most often activated in sales techniques.
- **Unpredictability and Curiosity**
  - People are driven to find out what happens next, and by the chase. Gambling is fueled by unpredictability.
- **Loss and Avoidance**
  - Studies show that humans are more likely to act on avoidance of loss rather than making gains. The fear of losing something or avoiding unpleasantness is a strong drive.

The Octalysis diagram is in the shape of an octagon because of the way these eight drives can be further grouped according to the psychology behind the drive.

The first division is the White Hat vs Black Hat, which divides the octagon horizontally, as shown in this diagram :



The top half contains the White Hat drives. These are meaning, accomplishment, and empowerment. These drives make the user feel empowered and in control but lack urgency.

The bottom half are the Black Hat core drives : scarcity, avoidance, unpredictability. These drives promote a feeling of urgency but result in a feeling of loss of control.

The two halves balance each other out, but for long term engagement a product needs to have a greater balance of White Hat core drives. If a product has a greater balance of Black Hat drives, users will get burnt out and quit.

The Octalysis diagram can be divided again vertically down the center, into right and left sections that correspond with Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivations.



The right side are the core drives that we are intrinsically motivated by because the behaviour is personally rewarding. These are empowerment, social influence, and unpredictability. We will engage in something for the experience or act of it, rather than the promise of a reward. Some examples of this are social engagement and creative endeavours.

The left side holds the core drives that we are extrinsically motivated by. Extrinsic motivations are reward based or avoidance based. Some examples of this are earning money or getting good grades. The core drives within the extrinsic half are accomplishment, ownership, and scarcity.

Understanding how these two types of motivations work together is important. Like everything, balance is key. Beginning with intrinsic motivations and appealing to curiosity is a good way to get a user engaged before beginning to implement the extrinsic core drives.

## The Core Drives at Work within the Activity App

Before beginning to design within the Activity App system, I thought it would be important to identify the ways in which these core drives are being activated.

- **1 Epic Meaning and Calling**

- In general, Apple has a cult of personality that people have already bought in to. But there is also the desire to belong to the culture of the fit and healthy. The Apple Watch is marketed in collaboration with Nike, which also has a strong brand recognition and following.



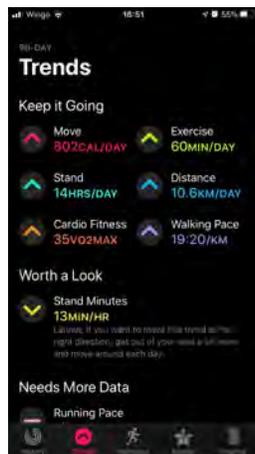
- **2 Development and Accomplishment**

- Users have daily, monthly, and weekly challenges and goals, as well as Limited Edition challenges. The algorithm seems to set monthly goals which can be achieved by adding a little extra effort each day so that users are challenged but still feel accomplished.



- **3 Empowerment of Creativity and Feedback**

- The new additions of Trends helps in this regard, as well as the feature to congratulate and encourage friends.



- **4 Ownership and Possession**

- The Activity App encourages collecting awards and has an easy and enjoyable way to view both the collected and potential awards. The feature to see the award for a challenge before it is accomplished is especially interesting.



- **Social Influence and Relatedness**

- Users can connect with other friends with Apple Watches to view each other's activity, receive alerts for workout accomplishments, send messages, and challenge each other.



- **Scarcity and Impatience**

- Activity seems to do a good job of setting challenges that are just slightly beyond reach. The daily goals can be accomplished in a day but some, like the stand goal, take at least 12 hours to complete. The monthly challenges are based on data from past months, so they are either built to encourage (and easy to accomplish) or challenge (and feel just beyond reach).



- **Unpredictability and Curiosity**

- Each month there is a different unknown challenge for which a user can win an award. Depending on past data, this challenge is usually something that is just slightly out of the users normal daily habits and challenges them to go a further and do little extra.



- **Loss and Avoidance**

- When each of the three rings is closed, the app alerts the user and displays an animation congratulating the user. Once the user has closed all rings, there is an animation with all three rings closing. Once they've gotten used to these daily accomplishments, users don't want to lose out on the opportunity to close a ring or achieve a goal. There are many users who strive for "perfect months" and users can receive awards for perfect stand weeks and perfect week of exercising by closing the corresponding rings.



## Seeing These Drives in Action - A Look at Comments and Topics from Apple Watch Wearers on Reddit

After my own first hand experience at how motivating and addicting the reward system on the Apple Watch could be, I was curious about a random selection of people's responses. Reddit (a platform which taps into the core drives of social influence, empowerment, and meaning) is known for it's dedicated user base where people feel free to share things they might not share face to face. I spent some time looking through the subreddit /r/AppleWatch and /r/AppleWatchFitness to see how people spoke about their interaction and daily experiences with the Activity app.

Below are some screenshots from this research.

**Anyone else complete the heart challenge and not get the badge?**  
submitted 3 days ago by [DaniculousM](#)

I've closed my exercise ring every day in February, including from the 6th-14th and I didn't get the badge! My watch and phone are t up to date. I've tried restarting both. I'm not sure what else to do. I have a series 3 and haven't had any issues thus far. Recommendations?

5 comments | share | save | hide | give award | report | crosspost | pin

6 comments

sorted by: **best**

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[-] [Brapple205](#) 4 points 3 days ago  
Check the activity app. I didn't get a notification that I got the badge but it is showing up.  
permlink | embed | save | report | give award | reply

[-] [DaniculousM](#) (S) 1 point 3 days ago  
Yeah, no dice.  
permlink | embed | save | report | give award | reply

[-] [HarpyEagle29](#) 2 points 3 days ago  
I received the "Heart Month Challenge" badge on the 14th, but I have had it happen before, such as when I went for the "Ring in the New Year Challenge" badge in January, that it took almost a week and some change to show up that I earned the badge and completed the challenge, not sure if that's what's happening here, some badges for me show up quicker than others, but can also take a few days as well after I've completed the challenge.

**What happens if both people max out points (600/day) on a 7 day sharing challenge?**  
submitted 2 days ago by [jehauinger](#)

3 comments | share | save | hide | give award | report | crosspost | pin

all 3 comments

sorted by: **best**

save | content policy | formatting help

[-] [SStaryou](#) 5 points 2 days ago  
You both get the award for winning the competition.  
permlink | embed | save | report | give award | reply

[-] [luftrace](#) 2 points 2 days ago  
Me and my friend nearly killed our selves trying this! But yep, ends in a draw, you both get the winners medal.  
permlink | embed | save | report | give award | reply

[-] [pavel\\_vishnyakov](#) [Biker](#) 4 points 2 days ago  
You'll end up in a draw and Activity app will suggest a rematch  
permlink | embed | save | report | give award | reply

You know it's a habit when you don't realize it for 7 days. 🏆 (1 redc



submitted 3 days ago by jayeffkay

**15 comments** share save hide give award report crosspost point



- [-] [ryan1k13](#) 4 points 2 days ago  
Thought this was an image of a Ninja Turtle.  
permalink embed save report give award reply
- [-] [PrincessPistilina](#) 2 points 2 days ago  
Woohool!  
I'm on my 15 day streak. My daily goal is 800 calories. It's taken me so long to finally get here. It might not seem like 7-15 day streak is a lot, but it is for some people. It took a lot to make it happen. And it gets easier when it becomes a daily habit. Just like laziness can turn into habit quick, so does fitness. Today I broke my running record too and if I keep it up, I'll rock my February challenge too, which I didn't think I could do. It's a difficult one.  
On a superficial note, my stomach keeps looking better and ever. More toned and flatter. After starting last year eating everything I wanted and neglecting my diet and fitness the first few months of 2019, I made the decision to be harder on myself and beat laziness and extreme self indulgence.  
Thanks Apple Watch 🍏  
permalink embed save report give award reply
- [-] [Babypleasdon1gooooo](#) 1 point 2 days ago  
How dare you  
permalink embed save report give award reply
- [-] [jayefkay](#) [S] 1 point 2 days ago  
Hey believe it or not this is how mine started. I bet myself I couldn't work out every day for a week, then a month... then this badge started showing up and I kept kicking the can down the road.  
After 12 months I asked myself "is today the day I'm going to be lazy enough to let it end?"  
Turns out that's a pretty powerful motivator. I've done stupid shit like wake up at 2:30 in the morning to get a workout in before travelling the whole day but it's worth it to me to stay consistent. 1000 days in, I think only breaking my watch or falling asleep on accident will end my streak  
Keep up the good work!  
permalink embed save report give award reply
- [-] [pak-green](#) 2 points 2 days ago  
Please accept that sharing request.  
permalink embed save report give award reply
- [-] [Conz\\_](#) 2 points 2 days ago  
Wow this is such a low key flex 🍏  
permalink embed save report give award reply
- [-] [jayefkay](#) [S] 1 point 2 days ago  
Lol I was really excited about day 1000 but started a new job this past week so of course was even busier with that. Was telling a coworker about activity badge when it dinged on me that I probably missed the deal

## I'm not trying for the February Challenge this month and I have mixed feelings about it ( self.AppleWatchFitness )

submitted 12 hours ago by [sjskarksfan12](#)

This will be the first month since I got the watch in October that I'm not trying to complete the month challenge. My challenge this month was going 190.5, which meant at the beginning I had to walk/run over 6 miles a day. To me that seemed undoable, and I was traveling at the beginning of the month. I have mixed reactions about it too. This will be the first badge I don't get but I didn't want to beat myself up over it. Also I had a 29,000 move goal last month that I really pushed to get.

Does anyone feel this way during the month challenges. You want to succeed but you feel like the challenge is too hard and you might feel a little bad you didn't complete it?

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