

Gamification in Tourism: Analysis of Brazil Quest Game

Cynthia Corrêa^a, and Camila Kitano^a

^aSchool of Arts, Sciences and Humanities
University of Sao Paulo, Brazil
cynthia.correa@outlook.com, ca.kitano@hotmail.com

Abstract

Several Destination Marketing Organisations, such as the Brazilian Tourist Board, have established mobile marketing strategies to attract audiences and following trends. Gamification has gained space to bring customers through advertising and entertainment. The aim of this paper is to analyse the structure of the game Brazil Quest, an application developed to harness the potential of gamification in tourism. The research is based on theories related to destination marketing, gamification, and gaming development, and the analysis of five levels of game design elements. Among the main results, the game Brazil Quest can be classified as an entertainment or a hobby game, able to entertain tourists for a short period of time. However, the focus on tourism is not well developed, undermining the purpose of the game. The positive aspects are related to the project that is well built, with graphics and music that encourage the player to learn more about Brazil.

Keywords: Gamification in tourism; Mobile marketing; Destination Marketing Organisation; EMBRATUR; Brazil.

1 Introduction and Theoretical Background

In travel and tourism sector, different technological resources are widely used to promote destinations around the world, when the business practice seeks to innovate and adapting to the costumer behaviour and experience (Maan, 2013). A diversity of tools with focus on interactive that give rise to valued experiences has been applied to attract new clients, such as applications (apps) for mobile devices, ranging from tour guides to electronic games within the gamification (Kennedy-Eden & Gretzel, 2012; Xu, Tian, Buhalis, & Weber, 2013; Xu, Weber, & Buhalis, 2014; Weber, 2014; Corrêa, 2014). Gamification when applied in tourism, characterised by the intangibility of the sector, can offer an interactive factor with enormous potentiality for marketing. Some Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) have designed their own games as found in Thailand, Capetown, Ireland and China (Xu et al., 2013). Tourism Ireland was the first National Tourism Board to launch a social game on 16 March 2011 called Ireland Town on Facebook network. The insertion of the company Innovation Norway in gamification is another recent example, which offers two games, named Holmenkollen Ski Jump and Trysil Twin Tip, on the official travel guide. Those DMOs, aware of new technological trends, begin to take the gamification as a marketing strategy to call the attention of tourists.

Based on that, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the practice of gamification in tourism, from the analysis of levels of game design elements (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled, & Nacke, 2011) of Brazil Quest game, launched in 2012 by the Brazilian Tourist Board (EMBRATUR) to promote the 12 host cities of 2014 FIFA World Cup, and for motivating the engagement of tourist (Brazil, 2013, online). The idea was to provide information in a fun way, by travelling around the cities and get to know more about a country filled with color and joy, founded on gamification and

Advergaming, seen as strategies to promote a service or a product based on electronic games, to reinforce the image of a particular brand among customers. In conformity with Deterding et al. (2011), the term gamification refers to the use of game design elements in non-game contexts. It is a conception shared by Maan (2013, p. 9), for whom “Gamification has become a modern business practice that uses game mechanics and game design elements to measure, influence and reward target user behaviors.” It takes the essence of the game characteristics like goals, rules, and elements of fun, reward and promotions to solve the real-world business problem. When these game mechanics are applied in the non-gaming context, work as a catalyst for making technology more engaging, and able to influence user behavior and social interaction methods.

Concerning gamification in tourism, Weber (2014) indicates ten pioneering applications for pre, during and after travelling, aiming to create innovative products and services: Location-based augmented reality games, Gamified travel tours for urban and rural environments, Gaming in theme parks, Gamified Immersive Experiences in Cultural Heritage, Gamification and transmedia storytelling, Gamified restaurant experience, Gamification in hospitality, Gamified flying experience, Experiencing virtual cultural heritage, and Gamified virtual travel experience. Besides, Xu et al. (2013) endorse that not all games are developed for tourism purposes; thus, they can be used by tourism industry in general. In travel and tourism, two kinds of games are predominant: (1) online/offline games and (2) location based mobile games, employed to stimulate engagement, and to enhance tourists on site experiences with the destination in a fun and informative manner.

2 Methodology

This is an exploratory and qualitative study based on an analysis of the game Brazil Quest, from an adaptation of five levels of game design elements (Table 1) defined by Deterding et al. (2011). From the point of view of the designer, gamification is built with the aim to be a system that includes elements of games, thus, it is not a full game with all properties. However, gamification essentially presents elements of game design in general, being appropriate for this study.

Table 1. Levels of Game Design Elements

Level	Description	Example
<i>Game interface design patterns</i>	Common, successful interaction design components and design solutions for a known problem in a context	Leaderboard, level
<i>Game design patterns and mechanics</i>	Commonly reoccurring parts of the design of a game that concern gameplay	Time constraint, limited resources, turns
<i>Game design principles</i>	Evaluative guidelines to approach a design problem or analyse a given design solution	Enduring play, clear goals
<i>Game models</i>	Conceptual models of the components of games or game experience	Challenge, fantasy, curiosity
<i>Game design methods</i>	Game design-specific practices and processes	Playcentric design, value conscious game design

For the analysis of Brazil Quest, the game was played on a smart phone with Android operating system. During the execution, some failures were frequent, for example, the game restarted, and problems with the Internet connection and crashes also occurred.

3 Gamification in Tourism - A Brazilian Case

The game Brazil Quest was elaborated with the goal of diversifying the marketing promotion of the country through new technologies (Brazil, 2013, online). By the way, the development of stronger relationships in tourism sector using the Internet and apps is one of the strategies of *Aquarela Marketing Plan 2020*, endorsed by EMBRATUR, responsible for promoting and support Brazilian products and services in the international market (Brazil, 2009). The game has been inspired by the host cities of 2014 FIFA World Cup, whose images of some tourist attractions are presented passively as a background of the game, along the path traversed by the main character, Yep, an alien that used to live in a sad planet, but had the chance to know a different place: Brazil. Afterward, the player should guide Yep to a range of Brazilian cities capturing orbs and making him happier, despite obstacles left by villains who wish to ruin all the fun. The aim was to allocate a notion of happiness to the game, for transmitting the idea that Brazilians are happy and have a rich culture.

- Game interface design patterns: Related to common design components to offer successful interaction and solutions for a known problem in a context, Brazil Quest game has a ranking of scores that allows the competition among players to be a Leaderboard. The players have the task to overcome obstacles and accumulate points or orbs to advance in the game. Phases are represented by Brazilian cities that are named and described briefly in the topic City facts. The whole scenario is composed by landscapes of each city and major tourist attractions appear as the background without identifying names and location. Three different levels (normal, hard and race) are included in each stage corresponding to a Brazilian city and there is also a mission to be completed to win a tourist attraction.
- Game design patterns and mechanics: Brazil Quest does not offer a time constraint, but the player has to beat obstacles and gets orbs to make the main character, Yep, happy to be able to finish the turns. Each phase is characterised by the amount of obstacles that must overcome in addition to try to capture extra items, as stars, to complete the respective mission. If the numbers of points are not reached, it will be necessary to repeat the phase. Furthermore, in the race, the character Yep must run a race against the enemy, if the enemy comes in the first place; the character loses momentum and energy, being necessary to repeat the level. The idea is well designed and arouses curiosity to unlock the next phases. However, the game gets tiring, as there are not many differences in the dynamics of the game, characters and sets, or in the platform runner, making the game Brazil Quest monotonous.
- Game design principles: The proposal takes into account the increase of content produced for mobile devices and for being a strategy to reach audiences of all ages. The goal of the game is to help Yep by travelling around the 12 host cities of 2014 FIFA World Cup. The company IMG Crossmedia Studio was responsible for the entire creation of plot, art, characters, animation, and the development of the

game for Android and iOS operating systems (IMG Crossmedia Studio, 2013). The platform executed is the runner style, where the character moves in a setting that changes the background in each new phase, it can also be understood as Total Plan, where the character is shown in a scene in its entirety, showing the complete scenario (Pimenta, Contim, & Oliveira, 2006). Each city has a unique setting, with emphasis on the major tourist attractions and other not very popular. To help in the setting, differentiated soundtracks for each city, characteristic of the local culture, make the game more fun and attractive, are placed. Despite the attractive visual, the player does not have much opportunity to interact with the scene, once it is required to pay attention to the game so that the character can capture orbs, keeping him away from objects and overcome obstacles along the way to complete missions. On the other hand, the game Brazil Quest gathers components that draw attention to the game. It features an opening video in 3D that shows the trajectory of the character Yep to get to Brazil, there is besides the issue of the graphics, although simple, are well made.

- Game models: The game challenge is to complete different missions present in each phase and to capture as many orbs, which are the points and a mode of getting the energy or happiness to keep playing it. Regarding to the game experience, the game can hold the attention for a short period of time, due to the absence of many challenges on the platform. When the character absorbs orbs, gets happier and stronger, and therefore accumulates more points. At each point accumulated, the player can exchange for souvenirs in the souvenir box and share every achievement on Facebook, as shown in the game. However, the connection with the Internet is not available, making it impossible to share the activities via social network. According to the description of the game available on Google Play and iTunes stores, Yep is an alien living in a distant, cold and sad planet, but after an unusual event, he had the opportunity to visit Brazil and be happy. These components such as challenge, fantasy and curiosity represent the game's components or game experience of Brazil Quest.
- Game design methods: The game was developed to attract the attention of international tourists interested in visiting Brazil during the 2014 FIFA World Cup. In this sense, all playcentric design was built with an emphasis on the tourist attractions of the 12 host cities. The fact of knowing places and to learn about them through gamification, besides adding knowledge, is a fun way to learn. Brazil Quest provides brief descriptions of the cities only in English. For each city three different levels of difficulty are available, with each new stage, new attractions are shown passively like a background. The soundtrack also relates to the local culture, encouraging tourists to unlock phases to discover the following scenarios and songs. It is basically a hobby game, to entertain, and no major challenges for the player.

4 Conclusions

The development of electronic games with an emphasis on tourism in Brazil just has started with the launch of the game Brazil Quest, a game entertainment. Note the lack of maintenance of the game, which has technical flaws that hinder the interaction among players, and also become impossible to share information via social network.

Within the potential of gamification, it could exist a better manner to explore the information around specific attractions of each city, not only of the city as a whole, or else have a practical way to redirect player to access more detailed information on the Internet. At the end of the game, the player cannot explore the Brazilian locations interactively. In this mode, the game wastes exploratory feature, one of the crucial factors cited by Xu et al. (2013) in a game of tourism. Despite this, the game features a well elaborated design. The visual is attractive and the soundtrack awakens the senses of the player. In summary, the use of gamification as a marketing strategy for tourism in Brazil is valid to diversify the promotion based on technology, given the difficulty of measuring the effects of the game on tourists' decision making. Nonetheless, more research is needed to understand the motivation of tourists and their expectations for gamification in tourism. Partnerships among game developers, marketers and researchers to identify the demand of new consumers are indispensable to the success of gamification in the Brazilian tourism mobile market.

References

- Brazil (2009). Ministério do Turismo. *Plano Aquarela 2020. Marketing Turístico Internacional do Brasil*. Brasília, DF, BRA.
- Brazil. [26/09/2013]. Brasil Quest também no Facebook. *Blog Aquarela 2020 - EMBRATUR*. Retrieved from <http://aquarela2020.wordpress.com/2013/09/26/brasil-quest-tambem-no-facebook/>.
- Corrêa, C. (2014). Mobile Marketing of the Brazilian Tourist Board: Case study of Brazil Mobile application. *e-Review of Tourism Research* (5): 1-6.
- Deterding, S., Dixon, D., Khaled, R., & Nacke, L. (2011). From game design elements to gamefulness: Defining "Gamification". In: Proceedings of the 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference: Envisioning Future Media Environments. Tampere, Finland, September 28-30: 9-15.
- IMG Crossmedia Studio. (2013). Projeto Brasil Quest. Retrieved from <http://img.tv/projeto?u=brasilquest>.
- Kennedy-Eden, H., & Gretzel, U. (2012). A taxonomy of mobile applications in tourism. *e-Review of Tourism Research* 10(2): 47-50.
- Maan, Jitendra. (2013). Social Business Transformation through Gamification. *International Journal of Managing Information Technology* 5(3): 9-16.
- Pimenta, M., Contim, T., & Oliveira, V. C. (2006). *Gestão de Projetos no Desenvolvimento de Jogos Eletrônicos Interativos*. São Paulo. Retrieved from http://gdpi.googlecode.com/files/TF7-M_GameDevelopment_Marco-Thiago-Valter.pdf
- Xu, F., Weber, J., & Buhalis, D. (2014). "Gamification in Tourism". Zheng Xiang & Iis Tussyadiah (Eds.), *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2014*. In: Proceedings of the International Conference. Dublin, Ireland, January 21-24.
- Xu, F., Tian, F., Buhalis, D., & Weber, J. (2013). "Marketing Tourism via Electronic Games: Understanding the Motivation of Tourist Players". In: 5th International Conference on Games and Virtual Worlds for Serious Applications. Poole, United Kingdom, September 11-13.
- Weber, J. (2014). *Gaming and Gamification in Tourism – Best Practice Report*. Digital Tourism Think Tank: 1-14.

Acknowledgements

The National Council for Scientific and Technological Development, CNPq-Brazil (Project Number: 485384/2013-2), supports this paper.