
MEDIA & ICT CONSUMPTION TRENDS

“DIGITAL LEARNING GAMES SHOULD PUT FUN FIRST”

The interest in game-based learning keeps on growing. After the education sector, now the business world and our public services are becoming increasingly convinced of the benefits of digital games in the workplace. These games have already been successfully used for courses and training sessions, to transfer knowledge and to stimulate behavioral change.

Recently one of the largest financial institutions in Belgium contacted iMinds to develop an innovative digital game to help employees work together more efficiently. This shows we have been building expertise on the effectiveness and learning effects of the gamification phenomenon for years. In another efforts, we mapped which various motives play a role in deciding to use digital games for companies, schools, training centers and the healthcare sector.

Cost Effectiveness of Educational Games

The main reason for a company to invest in a digital game is cost effectiveness. The total investment for a game, which can be used on a large scale over again and again each year, is much lower than the repeated cost of countless training sessions and their practical hassle. Developing a game is thus more efficient for a company.

Significant Learning Effects

Research also suggests significant learning effects. Within a school environment, an educational game can lead to increased interest or stronger awareness. In the business world, learning progress or changes in behavior are equally desirable. The effectiveness of games is not only evident in knowledge tests, but also in whether employees are applying what they have learned. A game focusing on safety instructions will not just aim for a change in attitude, but also in behavior.

Fun Factor Keeps Users Motivated

Companies should, however, not forget that digital games represent a form of entertainment. A successful game does not only achieve the aspired learning effect, but certainly also creates a fun experience for its users. Thanks to the fun factor, employees will be more motivated to complete the training and eventually show better learning effects. Companies wanting to use digital games to achieve specific training goals are thus best to strive for games that are – first and foremost – fun to play.

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“ Companies invest in games because they are more cost effective than training programs ”

“ Digital games that are fun to play also create higher learning effects ”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Media & ICT Consumption Trends is a partnership between iMinds Research Center Media & ICT (iMinds-MICT) and digital research institute iMinds. The project seeks to provide an overview of academic research in Flemish media and internet consumption, and links insights into transforming audiences to the current challenges for the Flemish media industries. It therefore combines results from original user-driven innovation research with conclusions from international studies and technology trends reports.

Series Editors: Tom Evens, Bart Vanhaelewyn and Lieven De Marez

Hungry for more insights? Check out the other issues in this series at <http://www.mict.be>

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 - (2015-5) **Provide flexible identity management in popular apps**
 - (2015-6) **Digital learning games should put fun first**
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Research Center **Media & ICT (iMinds-MICT)** is affiliated to Ghent University, part of the Flemish digital research center and business incubator iMinds, and forms, together with SMIT and CUO, the research department iMinds-Digital Society. The context and focus of MICT's research is today's digital society and innovation economy, and more specifically the changes and challenges that are imposed by that environment for each of its stakeholders: industry, policy makers and, not the least, end-users.

iMinds is Flanders' digital research center and business incubator, established by the Flemish government in 2004. Building on the expertise of our 850+ top researchers located at 5 Flemish universities, it introduces digital innovation in 6 key markets including Media, ICT and Smart Cities. iMinds collaborates with research partners to convert digital knowhow into real-life products and services that change people's lives for the better. Key asset is an agile, open research mind set and proven methodology.
