
“We should get achievements for being Awesome.”

Just Press Play is about recognizing the fun things, the important things, the things that happen in college life that are worth noting - and sharing.

Just Press Play adds a game layer to our undergraduates' daily life. We invite students in RIT's School of Interactive Games and Media to engage in a playful way with their educational environments and experiences.

With the generous support of Microsoft Research Connections, we're working to make the platform available to other educational institutions.

Designing A Game Layer for Student Success
Liz's foursquare Badges

These are the core badges dreamt up by the members of the foursquare team, for things like regular workouts at your gym or being a local at your neighborhood coffee shop.

Newbie  
June 19, 2009

Adventurer  
January 08, 2010

Explorer  
January 22, 2010

Superstar  
March 06, 2010

Bender  
May 02, 2010

Crunked  
December 21, 2009

Local  
January 12, 2010

Super User  
January 23, 2010

Player Please!  

School Night  
May 17, 2010

Far Far Away  
March 06, 2010

Brooklyn 4 Life

Stats for Liz L. from the last month

+ Tweet these stats! (and allow others to see this page)
+ Tweet these stats! (and keep this page private)

DAYS CHECKED IN  NUMBER OF CHECKINS  AVG CHECKINS WHEN OUT  % OF CHECKINS AT NEW PLACES

29  104  3.6  21%

NEW PLACES DISCOVERED

22

DISTRIBUTION BY DAY OF WEEK

DISTRIBUTION BY DAY

TOP FRIENDS

Eric Ellis (6X)

elouise oyzon (4X)

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FRIENDS YOU'VE CHECKED IN WITH

6
“We are beginning to see ourselves not just from the inside, as an actor doing something on a daily basis, but from the outside—understanding what we look like to the world around us and developing a kind of hybrid identity.”

– Aram Simmreich
Project Goals

• Provide students with a clearer sense of their accomplishments in various areas (academic, social, and creative) of their college experience, and provide them with tools to reflect on their range and balance of activities.

• Increase students’ awareness of activities and opportunities outside of their academic coursework, from wellness to collaboration to knowledge of the campus and city, and inspire them to sample a range of experiences.

• Enable students to maintain and share a record of their activities.

• Provide students with a sense of fantasy, whimsy and playful abstraction in dealing with the stress and growth associated with the transformational nature of undergraduate education.
Timeline

- Summer 2010: Idea pitched to MSR
- Fall 2010: Seed funding
- Spring 2011: Initial design, full funding proposal
- Summer 2011: Funding received, development begun
- October 2011: Launched
- Spring 2012: Qualitative assessment
- Summer 2012: Major Redesign
- Fall 2012: Relaunched
Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is a theory of motivation. It is concerned with the psychological processes that support and sustain intrinsically motivated behavior. SDT has been researched and practiced by a network of researchers and scholars from many countries. Deci and Ryan are professors in the Department of Psychology at the University of Rochester, where they direct a pre- and post-doctoral training program focused on the development and testing of SDT.
It’s the autonomy, stupid.
“My point is that the ‘fun’, the pleasure of these elements does not come from some extrinsic reward value of those elements, but chiefly from the experience of competence they give rise to.”

Sebastian Deterding
What behaviors did we want to reward and encourage?

What feelings of competence could we engender?

What did we want our students to remember and reflect on?
Highlights

Enter the Dungeon

- It is pitch black. You are likely to be eaten by a grue.
- Go to a professor’s office hours
- Submit the code on the card they give you
So, what happened?
Notable Successes in v1

• Collaborative Activities
  – “Undying” Achievements
  – Flash Mob Achievements
  – Scavenger Hunt Achievements

• Faculty/Staff Interaction
  – Playful
  – Challenging
Undying: The Return (GDD 2011-12)

Winter fun and games are over, and no one was left out in the cold.

- If 90% of the students in the Winter 2011-12 GSD 2 class pass the course, all players get this achievement.

Get This Achievement

This achievement will be automatically assigned to you when you complete the requirements.

Who's Got This?

You haven't unlocked this achievement yet.
UX Challenges

• Confusion over quadrants
• Levels and progression
• Code entry problems
• Content freshness, timing & communication
Technical Challenges

• Data recording problems
• RFID problems
• System reliability
• API/security problems
Summer 2012 Redesign
Two-Day Design Retreat

• One-hour weekly meetings were insufficient
• Needed extended deep-dive discussions on both content and technology
• Required participation by all team members for all aspects of redesign discussion
• Content design impacts technology design (and vice versa)
TOTAL POINTS

Flocking vs Hockey

F+H

F+H2

F+H3

F+H4

LEVEL A - MAKER
LEVEL B - EXPLORER
LEVEL C - LEARNER
LEVEL A - SOCIALIZER

MAKE
SOCIALIZE

EXPLORE

A

B

C

D

DOES THIS HAVE MEANING?
TO SELF?
TO OTHERS?
**Make**
- Creation
- Validation
- Marketing
- Scale
- Expansion
- A/B Testing
- Maker

**Explore**
- Socialize
- Physical + Virtual
- Summer 2012

**Total Points**
- 5/5
- 23/12

**inea 3**
- Alpha 2

**Idea**
- Event:
  - Newsletter
  - Twitter (link)
  - Facebook page
  - Long form
  - Posts

- Does this have potential to sell? Is some?
USER
250

ACHIEVEMENT
30 - Went to a hockey game - yes
30-3-31 - 3 games - no
30-10-32 - 10 games - no
30-50-33 - 50 games - no

USER_ACHIEVE_LOG
uid aid timestamp
250 30
250 36
250 30
250 31
250 30
250 30
Front End

Want to a hockey game: 😊

LEVEL A - MAKER
LEVEL C - LEARNER
LEVEL A - SOCIALIZER
LEVEL B - EXPLORER
New Technical Infrastructure

• Switch from LAMP (Linux-Apache-MySQL-PHP) to .NET MVC architecture

• Entirely new data model to reflect redesigned content and problems from v1
New Game Mechanics

- Replaced dual-axis quadrants with discrete achievement categories
- Removed all leveling mechanics
- Replaced RFID tag with unique QR codes for students, scanned in by admins with mobile devices
- Improved collectible cards, with associated card game
- More inviting player UI/UX
Ongoing Challenges

- Maintaining and updating content is time-consuming
- Communication with players is critical, but difficult to accomplish
What’s Next?
Better User Experience: Organizing/Sorting Achievements

CLASSIFYING

WHEN? / HOW LONG
WHERE?
DIFFICULTY ("EPIC"?)
POPULARITY
DATE

UI* [CLUSTERS OF RELATED]
TIME-SENSITIVE
("going soon")
Better User Experience:
Improved Feature Set

"Add This" widget (Liz/Chris)
Achievement discovery (Weez/Liz)
Motivation venues (David)
Furby integration (Chris)
JSON feeds (Chris)
Mobile Apps (Joe)
Front page (Weez)
Commenting UI (Weez)
Library checks (Chris)
Conclusions

• Done well, adding game-inspired mechanics to the non-curricular student experience can be powerfully effective.

• To accomplish that, however, requires three components:
  – Solid technical infrastructure
  – Thoughtful, contextual content development
  – Consistent, widespread marketing