

Chapter 10

PLAYER:

A European Challenge Game to Discover Young Entrepreneurs

Pedro Neves

*University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,
Portugal*

Ricardo Rodrigues Nunes

*University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,
Portugal*

Jorge Lima

*University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,
Portugal*

Paulo Martins

*University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,
Portugal*

Hugo Paredes

*University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,
Portugal*

João Varajão

*University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,
Portugal*

Leonel Morgado

*University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,
Portugal*

Ramiro Gonçalves

*University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,
Portugal*

Benjamim Fonseca

*University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro,
Portugal*

Robert Sanders

European BIC Network, Belgium

Vera Barracho

*European BIC Network, Belgium
University of Maribor / IRP, Slovenia*

Matej Rus

University of Maribor / IRP, Slovenia

Martin Rahe

*Escuela de Alta Dirección y Administración,
Spain*

Andre Mostert

University of East London, United Kingdom

João Carvalho

*Centro de Inovação Empresarial da Beira
Interior, Portugal*

Isabel Duarte

*Centro de Inovação Empresarial da Beira
Interior, Portugal*

ABSTRACT

Serious games are playing an increasing role as educational tools and the last decade witnessed a growing number of proposals in this field. One of the major challenges of the current European societies is to foster an entrepreneurial interest in young people, and the European Commission has been promoting projects that pursue this objective. This chapter presents one such project, PLAYER, in which an educational game was implemented in Facebook with the aim of promoting entrepreneurship by guiding young people in the definition of a business proposal. The game encompasses 4 stages that include the basic description of the business idea, the characterization of its strategies, the filling of a funding quiz, the SWOT analysis, and finally the production of a detailed business plan, for those players to be able to reach the final stage of the game.

INTRODUCTION

We have come to take for granted the success of companies such as Youtube, Google and Facebook, that grew exponentially from a small team of young entrepreneurs. However, without any knowledge of Marketing or Economics, the average entrepreneur is likely to fail. PLAYER – Play and Learn As Young Entrepreneur – is a “Serious Game” sponsored by the EU that seeks to motivate and educate young people to become wise entrepreneurs. The game is divided into 4 stages of growing difficulty, gradually introducing entrepreneurial concepts, and aims to help prepare participants to start their own business. In the first two stages, participants create their own profile and compile a portfolio that seeks to explain the idea at a conceptual level, using multimedia documents alone. There is an option to compile an additional portfolio which will not be publicly exhibited, where sensitive critical points of a user’s strategy may be revealed to a jury of professionals, or simply use it to include links to additional web documents. Portraying market conditions, the user is faced with uncertainty of the number and the score of votes he/she will attract. This is the phase where lobbying and networking takes place to introduce general public with the business idea. While the user waits for his portfolio to gather votes from other users in the social app

/ contest, he may entertain himself by voting on other portfolios or exploring business strategies and gauging their success with the Sink-or-Swim minigame. As one fits together pieces to describe one’s strategy, and connects them with verbs that may indicate one’s mindset, the entire conceptual map will float or drown with an undulating water animation to indicate the likelihood of the company’s success. It is also possible to request assistance from other users or earn virtual currency points – “entrepreneuros” – by completing tasks for them, giving the hardest-working players an edge. This can be done in the optional Classified advertisement section, which works as a competence marketplace. Soon thereafter a funding quiz must be taken to assess the level of investment required to start their company up, the user’s self-confidence and attitude towards risk. Based on it, a recommendation will be made saying which type of investor to contact, or, eventually, advising the user to rethink his answers. This is to represent financial consultations that would happen in this phase in real life situation. An Executive Summary is then compiled based on information provided in the previous stages, and displayed for the user to complete it with more details on his SWOT Analysis and submit it for evaluation by a jury of experts. While waiting for evaluation, a user may try to get the jury’s attention faster by completing weekly challenges,

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