



MyUK: Engaging youth with Parliament and politics

A very informal evaluation paper

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Introduction: Evaluating MyUK

This is a *very* informal evaluation report. In large part, it simply reports some of the key metrics we've tracked since launching MyUK on 8 September 2011.

The stats, indicators and analyses included here cover the period from launch to 30 March 2012.

This report isn't exhaustive or deeply analytical – and many the results included here are pretty raw. It isn't intended to be conclusive. The intention is simply to let others share some of our experience so far in the creation and performance of this particular digital learning project.

If it proves useful at all in helping others create fun/useful/engaging stuff, then great.

About MyUK

You can find MyUK at www.createmyuk.org

Our brief for the project was to focus on 13-15 year olds, use digital platforms, and to increase awareness about ways in which Parliament shapes everyday society.

We developed a concept that made use of popular digital mechanics to help our young audience explore the process of lawmaking, one where Parliament plays a central role.

Over 10 months in 2010-11, working with games studio Preloaded -- we created MyUK, an online game that lets players explore how UK laws originate, how they're made and the impact they have on society.

In a sentence, MyUK gives you the chance to create a country to call your own.

Budget £140K

A few statistics and basic analysis

*Source: Google Analytics – 8 September 2011 – 30 March 2012

Here are a few headlines from Google Analytics:

- 60,000 plays by 40,000 unique visitors
- Average play time is over 15 minutes
- 20% players complete an entire 5 year term (approx 30 min)

Some stats analysis from our games studio Preloaded:

- Time of day skews earlier, reflecting its educational (vs entertainment) positioning and perhaps indicating its use in schools
- Host location and traffic – the fact it exists on its own dedicated URL decreases reach of product, but allows for more educational, content-deep product.
- Traffic shape is less ‘peak and long-tail’ typical with high-traffic games, and instead is a more gentle steady stream of traffic, resulting from regular visitors from search engines and referral links from Parliament
- Facebook connects is 3.71% (of total unique visitors), which compares favourably to Preloaded’s other games. Generally, simple social-broadcasting via FB and Twitter are low impact

See **Appendix 1** for a much fuller Google Analytics report, including monthly plays and the most popular game content.

Referrals

Top referrers:

	Source	Visits
1	Parliament.uk	20,294
2	Facebook.com	2,078
3	t.co	1,620
4	Wired.co.uk	575
5	Preloaded.com	275
6	Youtube.com	171
7	Londonist.com	164
8	m.facebook.com	143
9	Mrhellon.blogspot.com	64
10	Freewebs.com	53

Who's playing?

*Based on players who engaged with Facebook – the following stats have come from our MyUK administration page for the Facebook plug-in.

13-17	25.9%

18-24	35.2%

25-34	20.1%

35-44	11.6%

45+	2.3%

Gender ratio: Male 70 / 30 Female



Press and web

[MyUK lets you play at being Prime Minister](#), *Wired*

[Could you run the country?](#), *First News* (most read children's publication in UK)

There has been some great reaction from young people to the game:

<http://www.firstnews.co.uk/bored/my-uk-i11096>

We've also seen links where teachers are recommending it:

<http://mrhellon.blogspot.co.uk/2012/02/parliament-game.html>

Awards

MyUK's been recognised by the following award bodies:

Silver winner, best learning game, E-learning Awards

Shortlist, secondary digital content, 2012 BETT Awards

Finalist, corporate social responsibility (community), 2012 Peer Awards

Post-launch user testing research results

Central Foundation School for Girls

Testing date: 6 July 2011

We carried out qualitative evaluation with 18 students post-launch and asked them to describe what they learned about Parliament and lawmaking.

The observation notes are reported here as they were first written up, and should be taken with a pinch of salt. We aren't professional analysts. The purpose of the evaluation was both to test learning, but also look for elements of the game to tweak.

See **Appendix 2** for some of the actual comments that the students made.

Look and feel

- More options needed/wanted on the avatar task. For example headscarf/religious headdress.
- Whole body option for the avatar as opposed to head and shoulders.
- All students picked their options and customised it themselves. Those that tried the randomise function still made amendments.
- Some students made avatars to look like themselves some to look like an 'MP' or Prime Minister.
- The customisation tasks over all were enjoyed – they added an element of creativeness and personalisation to the game.
- They suggested there should be a 'back' option for the party name generator.

Content: Bills and feedback screens

- There was mixed reactions to the bills: some read and chose the bills according to their interest, some picked randomly and didn't really understand that there was a difference or care about the difference.
- They understood the ideas were made-up and a bit silly but on the whole they liked that approach and thought it was entertaining.

- Bills they liked the ideas of included: Chill Bill, Pavement Rage Bill, Unfair birthday bill and the student Bill (?)
- Bills they disliked included: Cannonball bill and the toy town bill – they were considered to silly and irrelevant to real life.
- They noticed that with different bills the games were in a different order or one game would be missing but did not understand why.
- They noticed, and the majority were able to figure out, the controversy rating related to difficulty and that to the idea of the bill. Also, this had no effect on which bills they chose to play.
- They thought the newspaper screens were funny.
- Some students felt they newspaper screens showed them opinions and gained an understanding that not everyone will be happy with a law that is passed. There were some students however, that did not pick up on this – mainly because they had not read the feedback screens. There were a couple that had not understood but were of the lower ability in the group.

Content: Help and Did You Know? Screens

- Most students found the game instructions clear and understood what they were meant to do to play the game.
- No one used the help section unless they asked and told about it – even then they only used it ‘a bit’.
- Those who had looked at the help section said it was ‘a little’ helpful but a bit confusing as it didn’t explain enough. (maybe as some of the text/content is still missing due to game build)
- No one used the Did You Know? Section.

Game Play

- Without exception all students enjoyed the game. They found it fun and easy to engage with and play.
- Their matching game was the least popular – it was considered a little hard and boring. It wasn’t always clear to the students what they were supposed to do for it. They did not understand the link to the consulting/building a bill element.
- Their typing game was favoured by most, although many liked the zxc game also. They understood the link between making laws and debating and picked up that both the commons and the lords were involved.
- Some used the amendment function but none understood what it was or figured out what it was – that needs to be clearer.
- No one used the Whip or knew what that was either.
- Some students also commented that by using cheats they would not learn as much.

- The teacher felt a vocabulary sheet or worksheet to use with the game would help draw out learning.

Parliamentary Knowledge

- Learning points the students picked up on included:
 - Bills are discussed
 - Making a law includes lots of people, not just the PM
 - Bills are not always successful
 - Bills go to both the Lords and the Commons
 - Bills change the law as well as make new ones
 - You need to persuade people to make a new law
 - Laws effect people
 - Media tells people about laws and their effects

Facebook functionality

- Most students said they would use the game through Facebook and noticed the button on the first page.
- They liked the element of competition you could have through Facebook.
- Those that said they wouldn't the main reason was because they don't use Facebook anyway.

Miscellaneous

- All students said they would play the game again and recommend it to their friends.
- No one reached the end of the game.
- No one in the first group used the scroll bar or realised there were more bills than on the first screen.