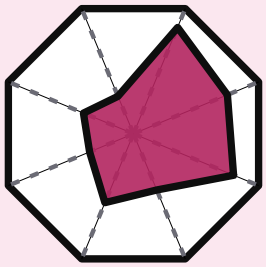
Model

Octalysis

A framework that arranges in an octagon eight drives that move people, from giving meaning to what you do to not wanting to lose what you have.



Origin

Chou (2015)

What problem it addresses

It helps design and review products by looking at what really motivates people to use them, beyond points and badges, and to tell motivation that makes people want to come back from motivation that pressures them.

Components

Meaning
Feeling part of something bigger than yourself.

Accomplishment
Moving forward, overcoming challenges and mastering something.

Creativity
Trying your own combinations and seeing what comes out.

Ownership
Having, collecting and improving something you feel is yours.

Social influence
What other people do, say or expect of you.

Scarcity
Wanting something because it is hard to get or you have to wait.

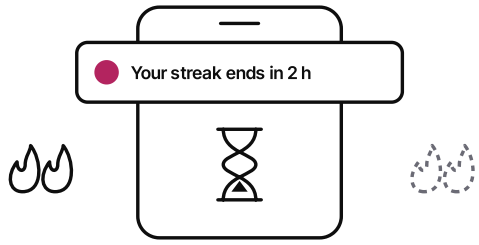
Unpredictability
Wanting to know what will happen next.

Avoiding loss
Not wanting to lose what you already have, or for something bad to happen.

An example

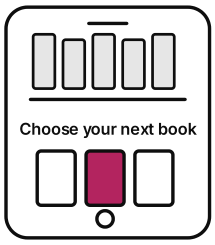
A reading app wants people to come back every day. It can rely on different drives.

Bottom drives



A notification says your streak will be lost in two hours. **You come back in a hurry.**

Top drives



You see the books you have already read and choose the next one. **You come back because you want to.**

Both designs bring people back. The framework helps you see which drive each one uses and how the person using it will feel.

How it works

1 

At the top, the "white hat": meaning, accomplishment and creativity make people feel capable and in control.

2 

At the bottom, the "black hat": scarcity, surprise and loss create urgency, but can leave anxiety behind.

3 

On the right, the intrinsic; on the left, the extrinsic: the framework asks you to balance both sides.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Go through each element of your product and ask which drive it triggers. If almost everything falls at the bottom, rethink it.

✗ Avoid

Making scarcity, surprise and fear of loss the main engine: they bring people back, but they wear them out.

Don't fall for it

The octagon score is the team's opinion, not a measurement. Check it with the people who use the product.

13 of 78



Explain why they use it — Don't explain it

What the research says

Publications that used Octalysis and explained why they chose it or how they applied it. None had tested it with data (Weber, Grönewald and Ludwig, 2022).

●●○ **Debated evidence.** It is a framework born from practice: useful for reviewing a design, but without independent validation, and the score for each drive depends heavily on who assigns it.

Connections

Used in

- Behavioral design

Related to

- Gamification
- MDA: mechanics, dynamics and aesthetics
- Deceptive patterns (dark patterns)
- Self-determination theory
- Bartle's player types

Authors and works

2015	**Yu-kai Chou**	Proposed the framework and explained it in the book Actionable Gamification. He had first published it on his blog in 2012. He makes clear that "left brain and right brain" is only a label, not neuroscience.
2022	**Philip Weber, Laura Grönewald and Thomas Ludwig**	Reviewed 78 publications that used it. They noted that no one had validated it with data and that its scoring is highly subjective.

Sources

Original sources

- Chou, Y. (2015). Actionable gamification: Beyond points, badges, and leaderboards. Octalysis Media.

Academic reviews

- Weber, P., Grönewald, L., & Ludwig, T. (2022). Reflection on the Octalysis framework as a design and evaluation tool. In Proceedings of the 6th International GamiFIN Conference (GamiFIN 2022) (pp. 75–84). CEUR Workshop Proceedings, vol. 3147. View source (https://ceur-ws.org/Vol-3147/paper8.pdf)

Last reviewed: October 27, 2026

Atlas público de diseño, de Adriana Ojeda. Texto e ilustraciones bajo licencia CC BY 4.0.