**Interview Report**

I connected with Cosmin and Nithin Ramesh over WhatsApp to discuss their understanding of “Battleship” game and their experiences as I was aware of their fondness towards strategy games and to my luck, they were familiar with the game.

**Interviewee 1:**

Cosmin

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Game Designer

Wooga GmbH. 03/22/25

Berlin, Germany.

**Divya Surendran:** How to play the game? What are the requirements in order to play or make any moves in the game?

**Cosmin:** I've played this game more than 20 years ago, but as far as I remember, the rules are simple. Each player has a board of ~10x10 units and a set of 5 ships. While keeping the board secret from each other, players would have to place the ships on their board. Ships would vary in size from 5 to 2 and they can only be placed vertically or horizontally, not diagonally. Players will then take turns while trying to hit the enemy ships by guessing the positions, mentioning A5, B7 etc. (columns and rows). Players are required to declare if a shot was a hit or a miss, or if the boat was destroyed. Turns change after each shot, no matter if it was a hit or miss.

**DS:** What are the strategies that can be used to play against the second player?

**C:** A good strategy would be to try to aim all over the board, especially at the beginning, as a 'scouting' strategy, since it's a higher chance of finding enemy boats rather than starting from a corner and focusing on a single area.

I would focus first on finding all boats rather than finding the first one and destroying it. I'm saying this because the game has no additional rules where I would benefit from destroying the ships.

Knowing that the size of the boat varies from 5 to 2, I would focus my shots no closer than 4-3 tiles in the beginning, since I think it's a good radius not to miss the ships.

At the same time, I would not risk placing adjacent boats as that would be easier for my opponent to destroy them as soon as a single hit is confirmed on my side.

**DS:** Challenges you faced. For example: since we cannot see the second player’s position, was it difficult to predict their moves?

**C:** As I mentioned before, knowing that I cannot see the other board, it just made me come up with a strategy so I wouldn't consider it a difficult challenge. And after all, it is well balanced as both players have to face the same rules.

**DS:** What can be improved in the game for better user experience?

**C:** The only problem related to user experience which I faced was that the board was not magnetic and there were times when the tokens would fall. I guess that this is not applied when it comes to your idea about a software version of it :P

**DS:** What features would you like to add if this game was released on video gaming platforms?

**C:** Depending on the target audience, the game could be considered good if you think of it as a simple game for kids. It could still be improved with more variables, as maybe each player would have a single use of a bigger projectile which would affect an area of 3x3 in the shape of '+'. If you want shorter rounds, maybe you can change the rule of changing turns, as if you hit a ship, you can fire again until you miss.

Another idea would be for 1 boat to be moved once per turn by 1 tile, never crossing previously hit areas. In this way, there's going to be slightly more dynamic gameplay while also decreasing the size of the available area, so at some point this moving boat would still be destroyed.

**DS:** Who in your best of knowledge is the target audience for this game?

**C:** With the basic rules, the original ones, I think it's a perfect game for kids like 5-7 years old. Adding more complexity could make the game fun even for older kids.

**DS:** Thank you for your time, Cosmin.

**C:** Thanks for reminding me of this forgotten game ha-ha.

Divya Surendran 3/26/25.

**Interviewee 2:**

Gabreil Postole

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Customer Care Coordinator

Wooga GmbH. 03/22/25

Berlin, Germany.

**DS:** How to play the game? What are the requirements in order to play or make any moves in the game?

**Gabriel Postole:** Well, it’s obviously a simple concept. There are two stages.

a) Both players place their battleships on the map.

b) You take shots at existing positions on the map where you think the other player has placed their battleships.

You have to place your battleships and then the two players take turns launching “canon shots” on each other’s map.

You can have 3 / 5 battle ships of different sizes, and the winner is the player who destroys the opponent’s battleships before losing all their own battleships

**DS:** What are the strategies that can be used to play against the second player?

**GP:** I think it will depend on the size of your map. I don’t remember how big our map was, maybe 10x10 ? Maybe 8x8 :D

One player might start from the center and then try to target squares in an X pattern. Extremities are usually avoided in the initial stages.

One nice strategy that feels rewarding is to copy the opponent’s moves. For example, if they attack square D4, it might be an indication that is where they have a battleship placed 😅

**DS:** What can be improved in the game for better user experience?

**GP:** A lot can be gamified about this little game. For example, in the candy crush you start with a simple map, but then the map has different shapes that change the complexity. You could also have special Trap squares on the map that “reflect damage” for example.

Or if you want to add even more you could add power ups, i.e.: “deflect one hit” - if a hit comes towards your battleships, deflect it to another random site on the map.

**DS:** What features would you like to add if this game was released on video gaming platforms?

**GP:** I feel this was a bit already answered above :)

**DS:** Who in your best of knowledge is the target audience for this game?

**GP:** It’s hard to say. It would probably be a mix between “young” who would try everything once.

“Nostalgic players” who will want to relive the past experiences.

“Older players” who are fans of games with simple rules (words with friends, solitaire).

**DS:** Thank you for your time.

**GP:** Thanks for reaching out.

Divya Surendran 3/26/25.

**User Stories**

I have listed some of the requirements and their acceptance criteria below that could alter the users’ experiences for the better based on the user stories.

**User Story 1:** As a player, I want to experience new mechanics like power-ups or traps on specific grids. These could include deflecting damage or redirecting hits.

**Acceptance Criteria:**

* Power-ups or traps appear randomly on the map.
* Power-ups or traps can be triggered by landing a specific grid.

**User Story 2:** As a player, I want multiplayer support for more than two players. The game should allow team play or free-for-all modes with matchmaking (in case I am playing alone) and invites.

**Acceptance Criteria:**

* Players can create teams and invite/join friends, or matchmaking teams, or play individually.

**User Story 3:** As a red player, I want the grid to change color automatically based on hits or misses. This will help me track the blue player’s pattern and the free slots.

**Acceptance Criteria:**

* The grid changes color automatically when the red player hits the blue player’s ship.
* The grid changes to a different color automatically when a miss occurs, making it clear which positions have been tried and failed.

**User Story 4:** As a player, I want different map shapes or obstacles for variety. The game could include traps or special squares that alter the flow of the game.

**Acceptance Criteria:**

* The game includes different map shapes to offer variety and challenge. For example: hexagonal, irregular grids, etc.
* Obstacles or special squares are placed randomly across the map. For example: random pop-up traps.

**User Story 5:** I want to be able to select the game’s difficulty level. For example, an option to play with different grid sizes. Higher levels or larger grid sizes should be advanced to challenge me.

**Acceptance Criteria:**

* The map shapes and sizes can be made available as options at the beginning of each game, allowing players to choose their preferred style.
* The game’s difficulty level should be increased gradually to maintain balance and to prevent overwhelming the players.

**User Story 6:** As a red player, I want a mode that allows me to continue my turn as long as I keep hitting the blue player's ships consecutively.

**Acceptance Criteria:**

* The red player can continue taking turns as long as each move results in a hit on the blue player's ship.
* If the red player's shot misses, the turn ends, and the blue player takes their turn.
* The game will display a visual cue and automatically extend turns indicating that the red player can continue their turn due to consecutive hits.
* This mode could be made optional and can be made selectable at the start of the game.

**User Story 7:** As a player, I want the ability to move one boat by one tile each turn, without crossing areas that have already been hit, to make the game more dynamic and gradually limit the available space until the boat is eventually destroyed.

**Acceptance Criteria:**

* The boat can be moved one tile per turn after each successful hit or miss.
* The boat can be prevented from moving into previously hit areas.
* The boat can be considered to be sunk once it is cornered by the edges and once there are no available grids to move to like ‘Checkmate’ in the chess game.