

CometChat UI Kit Integration & Product Evaluation Report

1. Introduction

This assignment was focused on exploring, implementing, and evaluating the CometChat platform from a first-time developer perspective. The task involved creating an account, generating a customizable chat interface using the CometChat UI Kit Builder, integrating the exported code into a React application, and documenting the full onboarding and implementation experience.

As part of the assignment, I interacted with multiple areas of the CometChat ecosystem including the dashboard, UI Kit Builder, integration guides, documentation pages, and the exported project. Throughout the process, I documented usability observations, missing steps, friction points, bugs, and suggestions to help improve onboarding and developer experience.

Technologies used:

- **React** (UI implementation and development environment)
- **CometChat UI Kit Builder** (for generating customizable chat UI components)

Goal of the task:

The primary objective was not just to run the chat UI, but to evaluate the overall product experience from account creation to final working implementation and provide actionable feedback on clarity, usability, onboarding flow, and documentation quality.

Step 1: Sign up & Create an app – Observations

1. Expected vs Actual

• **Expected:**

I expected that after signing up I would first land on the dashboard, and then I would create an app from there.

I expected the “login/sign-up” flow to end once my account was created.

• **Actual:**

The platform immediately asked me to create an application during the account creation flow before showing the dashboard.

The screen itself is clean and minimal, but it feels more like part of account setup than a separate “product” action.

2. Friction Points

- "I wasn't sure whether the app creation step was mandatory right now or if I could skip it and explore the dashboard first."
- "The 'Industry' dropdown doesn't clarify what difference the choice makes will it affect UI kit configuration or analytics?"

3. Bugs

No technical/visual bugs noticed on this screen:

- Form loads correctly.
- Region selection works visually.
- “Continue” button is clearly visible.

4. Missing or unclear steps

No inline message explaining:

- Why I must create an app right now.
- Whether I can create multiple apps later or change these values afterward.
- The form requires selecting an industry but provides no explanation of its purpose.

No hint about naming guidelines for “Application Name”:

- Are special characters allowed? Does the name need to be unique?

5. Suggestions for improvement

Clarify the flow

- Add a short subtitle or banner:
Step 2 of 3 – Create your first CometChat app to start integrating chat into your product.
- Label the top progress dots with text: Account → App Setup → Dashboard

Explain the fields

- Add small helper text under each field:
 - **Application Name:** “You can change this later. Only for your reference.”

- **Industry:** “Used for analytics and suggested configurations.”
- **Region:** “Choose where your app’s data will be hosted for best performance and compliance.”

Documentation link

- Add a small “Learn more about apps & regions” link under the form that goes to a short doc page.
- A tooltip or note explaining how the ‘Industry’ selection impacts the configuration would help users decide.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Application' screen. At the top, it says 'cometchat'. Below that, there's a progress bar with three steps: 'Step 1 of 4'. The main title is 'Create Application' with a subtitle 'Provide a details about your app to help us configure it correctly'. There are three input fields: 'Application Name' containing 'Lakshay CometChat Test', 'Industry' set to 'Sports & Gaming', and 'Region' with options for 'US', 'EU', and 'IN' (which is highlighted with a blue border). At the bottom is a large 'Continue' button.

Onboarding — Product Selection Screen

1. Expected vs Actual

Expected:

I expected product configuration to happen later when I explore the dashboard.

Actual:

The platform asks me to choose features during the onboarding flow before I even access the dashboard.

2. Friction Points

The options were clear and visually structured. No friction.

3. Bugs or Errors

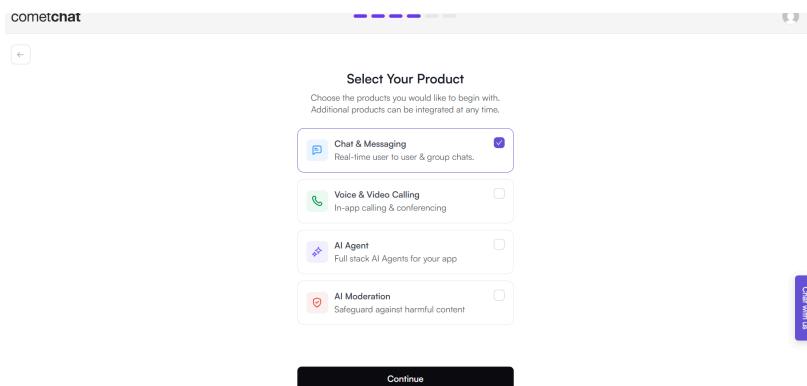
- No visible bugs: UI responds correctly, checkboxes work, hover states are consistent.

4. Missing or Unclear Steps

- No explanation of consequences:
 - Are these packages included in the free plan?
 - Will the user be charged if they enable everything?
 - Does enabling affect resources, dashboard options, or UI kit generation?
- No definitions or documentation link per feature.
Example improvement: a small “*i* Learn more” tooltip or link under each item.

6. Suggestions for Improvement

- Add tooltips or expandable brief docs:
Included in free plan. Can be enabled/disabled later.
- Improve clarity with small subtitle examples:
 - Chat & Messaging: WhatsApp-style chat
 - Voice & Video Calling: 1:1 & group calls
 - AI Agent: ChatGPT-like bot integration
 - AI Moderation: Automatic content filtering
- Display a banner:
You can modify these selections anytime from the dashboard settings.



Platform Selection – Observations

1. Expected vs Actual

- Expected:
I expected platform selection to happen later while downloading the UI Kit or during integration setup documentation not during onboarding.
Also expected a default option or guidance based on previous steps.
- Actual:
The user is presented with a list of many platforms (React, Flutter, Android, Vue, etc.) and must select one before continuing.

2. Friction Points

- There are many options but no explanation of which one is most commonly used.
- Some options like 'React Router' are unclear — it's not a standalone framework.
- A new user may not yet know which platform they will actually use or how the choice affects the project.

3. Bugs or Errors

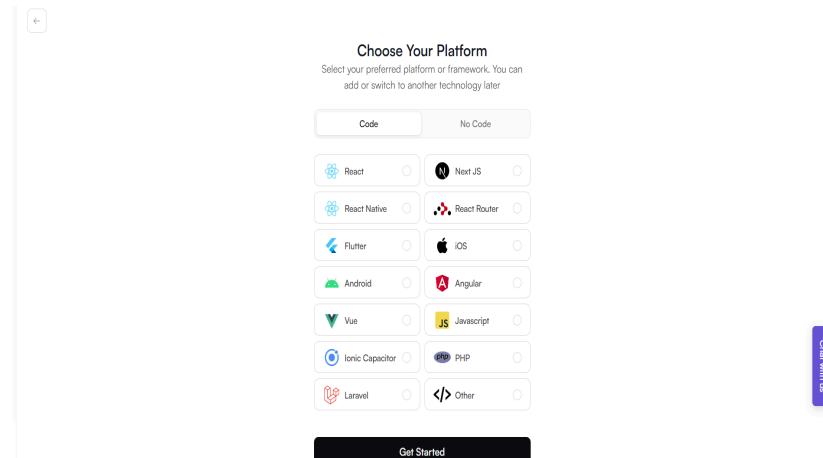
- No functional UI bugs observed.
- All toggles and selection states behave correctly.

4. Missing or Unclear Steps

- Missing guidance for beginners:
If you're unsure, pick the platform you plan to develop with.
- No option for:
Skip / Decide Later
- No preview of what changes based on the selection.

5. Suggestions for Improvement

- A small description or tooltip for each platform (e.g., 'best for web apps', 'mobile apps', etc.) would help beginners decide faster.
- Highlighting the most popular/recommended option like React or Flutter for first-time users would reduce decision hesitation.



2. Dashboard – Observations

1. Expected vs Actual

Expected:

After onboarding, I expected the dashboard to display a structured “Getting Started” flow with clear next steps such as:

- Create or import users
- Test messaging
- Configure authentication
- Download UI Kit or SDK
- Run a sample application

I also expected a progress indicator or checklist showing setup status, similar to Firebase, Supabase, or AWS Amplify onboarding patterns.

Actual:

The dashboard successfully displays high-level product navigation and usage metrics, but lacks a guided first-time setup experience. Important actions such as **Create Users, Run Sample App, and Use UI Kit Builder** are not clearly surfaced.

Instead, the user is presented with multiple menu sections and must figure out the order manually.

The right-side panel includes helpful shortcuts (Docs, API Docs, Sample Apps, Help Center)

2. Friction Points

- No onboarding checklist such as:
 - Create Users
 - Configure Chat Settings
 - Install SDK
 - Send First Message
- UI Kit Builder, sample users, and starter files are not immediately visible from the main dashboard.
- The left navigation menu contains many categories without a recommended starting order.
- The “**View Integration Steps**” button is helpful, but its placement and purpose are not immediately intuitive.

3. Bugs or Errors

No bugs noticed on the dashboard so far.

While accessing the dashboard, the browser console showed multiple error logs such as:
ERR_BLOCKED_BY_CLIENT

These appeared for scripts including:

- px.ads.linkedin.com
- googleads.g.doubleclick.net
- js.partnerstack.com
- insight.min.js

4. Missing or Unclear things

- No clear "Start with UI Kit" entry — which is part of the internship task.
- No quick actions such as:
 - Add a test user
 - Generate sample messages
 - Open UI Kit Builder
 - Run live preview
- Usage analytics are visible, but don't help the first-time setup process.

5. Outdated or Unclear Documentation Flow

- There is a **Documentation** button, but the dashboard does not guide what part of documentation to follow based on platform selection earlier.
- It requires the user to navigate and find the correct page manually.

6. Suggestions for Improvement

Improvement Area	Recommended Change
Onboarding clarity	Add a guided checklist (similar to Firebase/AWS)
Highlight next step	Show a banner like: Next Step → Download UI Kit for React
Context reminders	Show selected platform and product summary at top
Visibility	Add "UI Kit Builder" as a visible dashboard card

Overall Impression

The dashboard is clean and professional, but not beginner-friendly. Because there are many menu items and no guided path, new users may feel unsure about what to do next especially during their first-time integration

3. UI Kit Builder (Configuration + Download)

1. Expected vs Actual

Expected:

I expected UI Kit Builder to be found directly from the sidebar or from a dedicated section in the dashboard.

I expected the UI Kit Builder to open with a minimal setup view and provide step-by-step guided configuration.

Actual:

UI Kit Builder is found under the integration steps page rather than appearing as a standalone menu item or clearly highlighted primary action.

The builder opens fully pre-configured with a complete chat interface preview, multiple customization controls on both sides, and no onboarding tooltip or guidance.

2. Friction Points

- **Information overload:**
The screen presents many integration methods at once. For a new user, it isn't immediately clear which method is best.
- **Repeating choices:**
The platform selector at the top repeats the earlier platform selection step. This feels redundant and could confuse the user.
- **Hidden CTA:**
The most important action **Launch UI Kit Builder** is not visually dominant compared to the rest of the features on the page.
- Customization options are clearly grouped and visually easy to understand.

3. Bugs or Errors

- No UI/functional errors observed on this screen.
- However, the console errors observed earlier still persist, making it unclear whether any internal scripts fail here.
- The preview UI updates instantly and behaves smoothly.

4. Missing or Unclear Steps

- No indication whether selecting UI Kit Builder now affects anything permanently.
- No messaging like:
You can switch integration approaches anytime.
- No guidance explaining differences like:

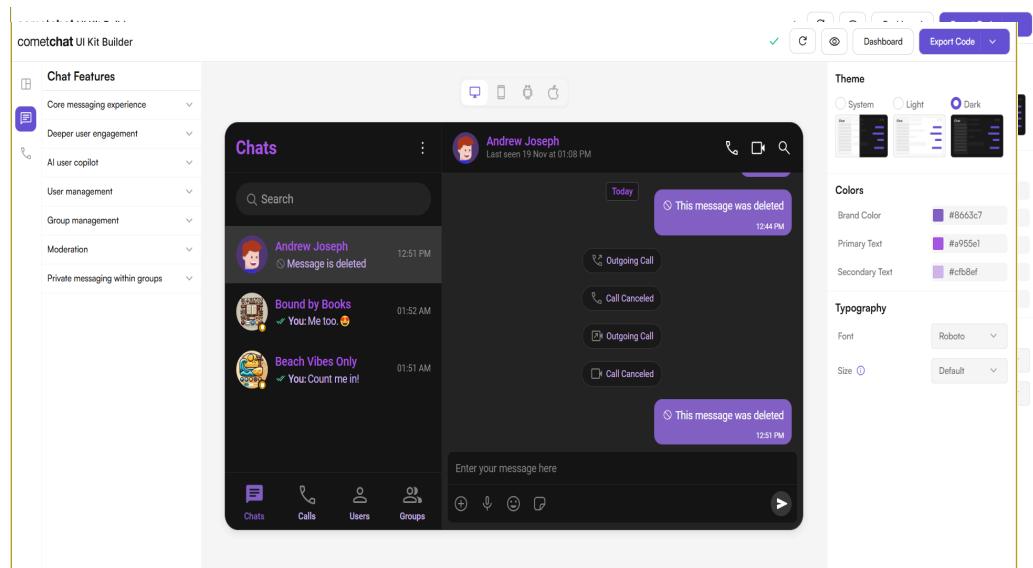
Option	Best for
UI Kit Builder	Fastest setup, prebuilt UI
UI Components	Custom UI with built-in logic
SDK Only	Full flexibility and custom design

- No clear indicator of which toggles are essential vs optional.
- There is a undo option but no 'Reset to default' button near color editing.

- UI does not visually show what component is affected when a setting is toggled until user manually locates changes.

5. Suggestions for Improvement

- Add a sidebar menu shortcut for UI Kit Builder for quick access.
- Highlight 'Start with UI Kit Builder' as the main CTA right after dashboard onboarding.
- A tooltip or guided prompt suggesting the UI Kit would make first-time setup easier.
- Add a guided onboarding mode like 'Step 1: Layout → Step 2: Theme → Step 3: Features'.
- Show a tooltip or highlight around elements affected by any toggle change.



Export Experience (Download Code)

1. Expected vs Actual

Expected:

After clicking Export Code, I expected:

- A short loading animation
- Automatic download
- Optional instructions on next steps

Actual:

The export worked smoothly and triggered a confirmation popup with messaging and a documentation link. The modal provides a clear success message and an important note about re-exporting if changes are made later.

2. Friction Points

The export process was simple and straightforward with no confusion.

3. Suggestions for Improvement

- Add a visible download progress animation or spinner — improves feedback.
- Add a ‘Next Step → Setup Instructions’ button instead of only ‘Go to UI Kit Docs’.

4. Bugs

No bugs experienced during export.

4. Documentation

1. Expected vs Actual

Expected:

I expected the documentation to present a clear onboarding flow, including: setup prerequisites, step-by-step instructions, UI Kit usage, credential configuration, and troubleshooting notes. The expectation was that the guide would cover everything required to run the exported UI without assumptions.

Actual:

The documentation provides multiple sections and resources, but the flow feels scattered. There are many links (docs, video, UI Kit docs, API reference), and it is not immediately clear which one is required for the exported UI Kit. The information exists, but the navigation is not linear or beginner-friendly.

2. Friction Points

- No clear labeling such as "**Start Here**" or "**UI Kit Setup Guide**".
- The search bar gives relevant results, but requires knowing correct terms (example: searching “sample users”, “UI Kit export”, “.env config”, etc. provides inconsistent results).
- UI Kit Builder documentation is separate from Normal SDK docs, but this separation is not communicated clearly.
- Some documentation assumes prior knowledge of CometChat concepts (UID, region, role-based access).
- There is no direct link explaining how the exported structure maps to documentation sections.

3. Missing or Unclear Steps

- No instructions on where to place API credentials in exported UI Kit project.
- No explanation about the sample UIDs shown on login screen or how to create new users.

No troubleshooting guide addressing common errors such as:

Root element not found

Missing theme context

Unauthenticated user

Network / API auth failure

- No mention about re-export requirements after modifying UI Kit settings even though UI Kit modal mentions it.
- Missing a code example demonstrating how to modify behavior after export (customization beyond builder UI).

4. Suggestions for Improvement

- Add a dedicated step-by-step onboarding flow specifically for UI Kit exports, such as:

Step 1: Export UI Kit

Step 2: Add credentials

Step 3: Run the project

Step 4: Customize and re-export

Step 5: Deploy

- Add a Quick Start Checklist inside docs and exported folder:

✓ npm install

✓ Add App ID + Region + Auth Key

✓ Select demo user or create UID

✓ Chat UI loads

- Add documentation explaining the warning messages that show during runtime and how to fix them.
- Add a tutorial explaining how to create users, test real messaging, and enable calling after the UI loads.
- Add a tooltip or section “**How to use sample users**” with UID mapping.

5. UI Kit Implementation

1. Expected vs Actual

Expected:

I expected the exported UI Kit to run without warnings and load the full chat UI immediately after npm start.

Actual:

The project successfully launched, showing a sign-in screen with sample demo users. However, the console shows multiple warnings related to missing keys and theme configuration.

2. Friction Points Observed

- There was no onboarding hint explaining which demo UID to click or whether login required configuration beforehand.
- Error messages appear in console but no visible UI feedback is provided in the browser.
- A first-time user must go back to documentation manually.

3. Errors & Warnings in Console

Warning 1: Missing key prop

Warning: Each child in a list should have a unique "key" prop.

This suggests exported UI contains a list rendered without unique keys a standard React rule.

While not breaking functionality, it appears unpolished and may confuse new developers.

Warning 2: Theme configuration missing value

This may indicate:

- The theme initializer didn't detect the expected data-theme attribute.
- Default styling mode fallback is being triggered.

This does not stop the UI from displaying but creates uncertainty.

4. Missing or Unclear Steps

No On-Screen Prompt to Use Sample Users

- Although the login page shows demo users, there is no tooltip or onboarding message saying:

Click one of the sample users to log in.

A first-time user may assume they must manually create accounts first.

Documentation Link Not Provided Inside the Running App

- After export, the app runs but offers no CTA like:

Need help? View setup documentation.

A small link would prevent confusion.

UID Instructions Missing

- The UI Kit login screen shows a UID input field, but does not explain where UIDs come from or how to create one.
- There is no link saying “Create new user in dashboard” or “Use sample UIDs below.”

5. Suggestions for improvement

- Auto-generated code should already include proper key props to avoid React warnings.
- The project could validate missing root theme configuration and show an in-UI alert instead of silent console logs.
- On first load, a tooltip or message like ‘Select a sample user to continue’ would help first-time users.

