

COVIDOPOLY MOBILE VER.

UX DESIGNER @ COVIDOPOLY

REMOTE / JUNE 2020 - SEPTEMBER 2020

CHALLENGE

When COVID-19 pandemic led the world into a shutdown, two Googlers Benji Bear and Andrew Savage decided to build Covidopoly, an online version of the game Monopoly Deal with an entertaining pop culture twist and bring friends together. However, it was only available for desktop use. As a part of the UX team, I was tasked *to design and adapt the game for mobile application use as well as refresh its visual design.*

ROLE : UX DESIGNER

- Created wireframes and interactive prototypes to hand-off design to developers.
- Conducted A/B testing and interviews for new designs.

GAME BOARD DESIGN

Most of the design work was situated at the game board page of the application as this was the primary area where users spent most of their time. Design choices of the entire app were dependent on how the game board was designed.

Portrait Orientation

We conducted a *competitive analysis* to see how other card/board games were designed for mobile use. From our findings, not only did portrait orientation allow for easier one handed use, but it also provided a better layout that could fit information more efficiently.

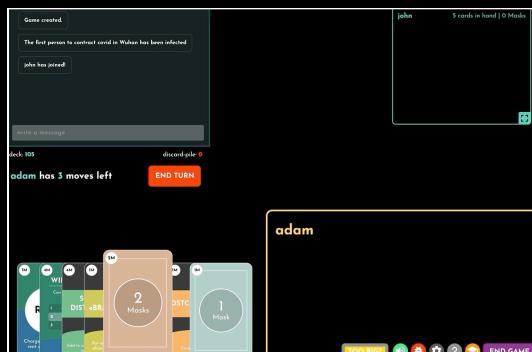
Responsiveness

User research revealed that Covidopoly has users from all around the world with different devices. We had to make sure that the game can adjust to different screen sizes. To provide better responsiveness, I decided to change the opponent card area to be shown in a vertical scroll rather than the original horizontal flow on desktop.

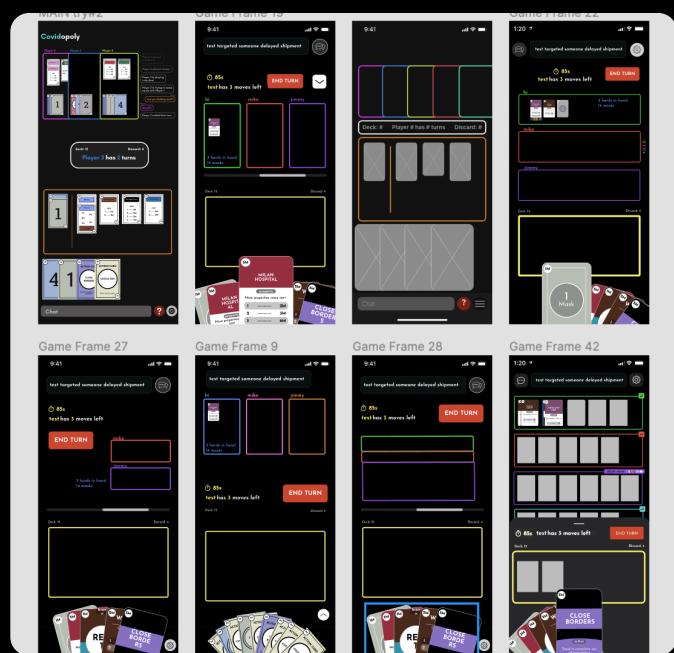
Design Constraints

Porting the game to mobile application meant some functionalities such as mouse hovering had to be adapted. I incorporated different gestures to provide an alternative.

Figure 4a: Initial Brainstorming Stage - Behind the Scenes



Original desktop design



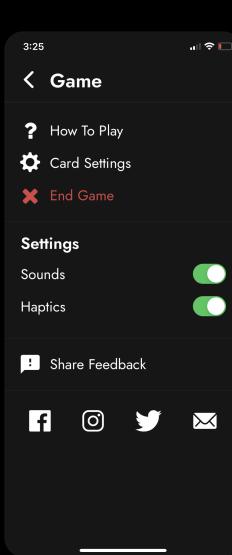
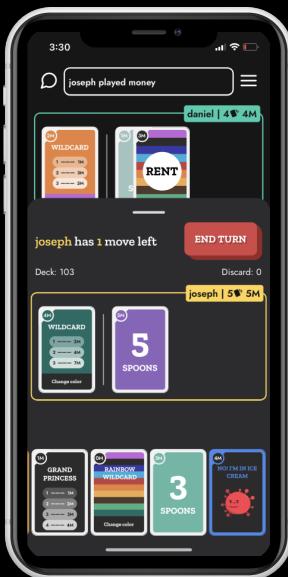
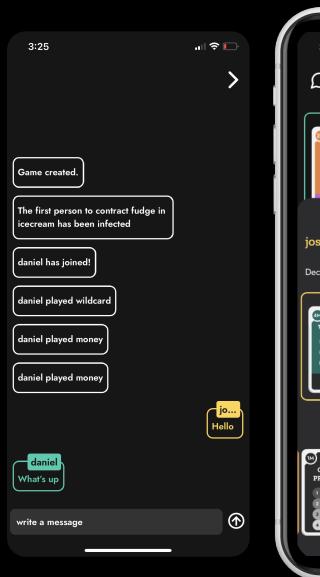
Initial lo-fi prototypes to test different layouts



Sample of apps part of competitive analysis

Figure 4b: Main Game Page Components

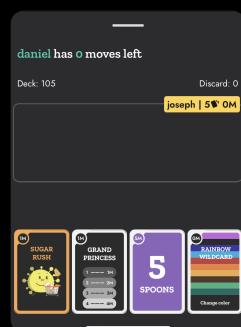
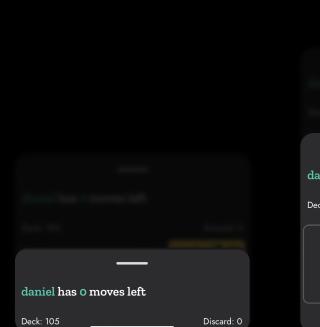
Breakdown and explanation of the game board user interface in the final functional iOS application.



Rather than cramming all features into one page or removing features, we split the game board into three sections: chat, play area, and settings.

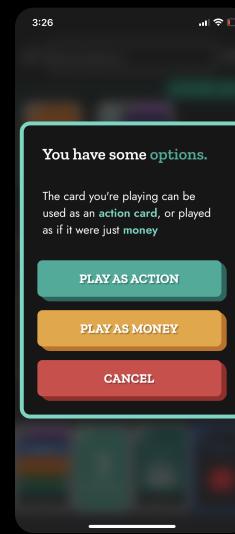
Users can easily navigate through these sections using the top nav bar, which also provides preview of the latest chat message.

To provide a smoother experience, users can also swipe left and right to get to certain sections without having to reach all the way to the top.



We noticed users don't always need to view their own cards and sometimes prioritize looking at their opponents' cards. In order to save space, we placed the user's cards and deck into a minimizable drawer.

Users can drag it to three different levels of visibility to their needs.



Modal design had been updated to fit the overall visual design of the application.

It was hard to see the exact details of the cards as they were small. Tapping on a card opens a card modal which reveals more information in a larger frame. This was the alternative to 'hover to reveal/enlarge' feature on desktop.

Blurred background is not only aesthetic, but also makes it less distracting for the users.

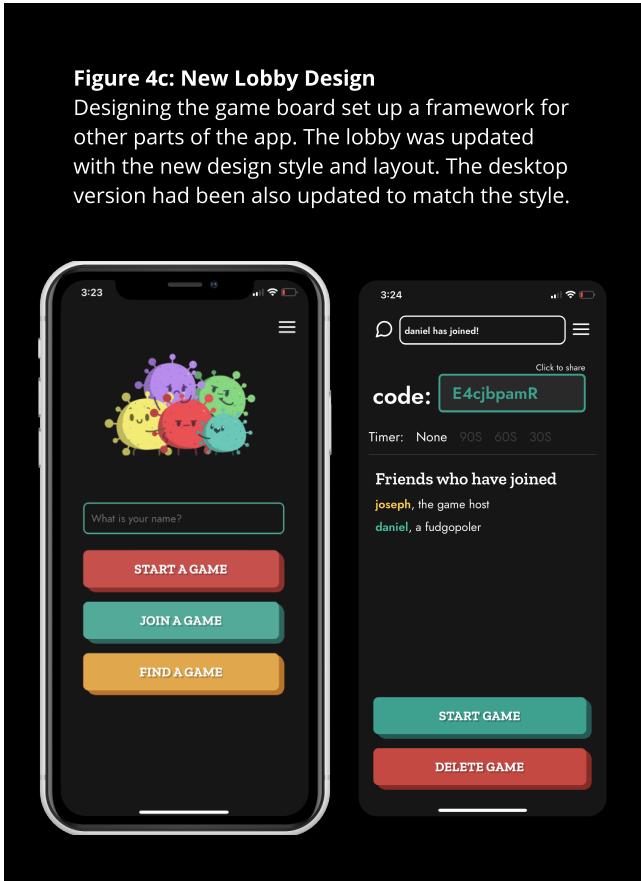


Figure 4c: New Lobby Design

Designing the game board set up a framework for other parts of the app. The lobby was updated with the new design style and layout. The desktop version had been also updated to match the style.

BUSINESS MODEL

Covidopoly is a free-to-play game; however, it is costly to host and maintain the server. It is currently self-funded by the founders as there is no revenue model.

I explored different ways of how Covidopoly could be monetized without restraining the gaming experience. Adding ads was precluded as screen space was already limited, and such incorporation would be distracting while playing. I introduced **in-app purchases such as avatars, themes, and special features**, which would enhance the user experience without putting any players at a disadvantage. This can be accessed thoroughly the profile page (Figure 4d).

OUTCOME

With the mobile application completed, beta testing of the app resulted in 95% positive reviews and is going under review for submission to the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. (There will be some theme changes due to the stores' strict COVID related policies.) It was a great opportunity to expand my experience in UX design into the gaming field and think about problems from the business end. New features such as the profile page and marketplace will continue to be developed!

Figure 4d: Profile Page Design

This is the high-fidelity prototype of the profile page, which is currently being developed. Users can view their achievements and change their avatars. Not only does it boost user engagement and group activities, but it also provides a gateway for a separate in-app purchase marketplace where users can unlock more features.