

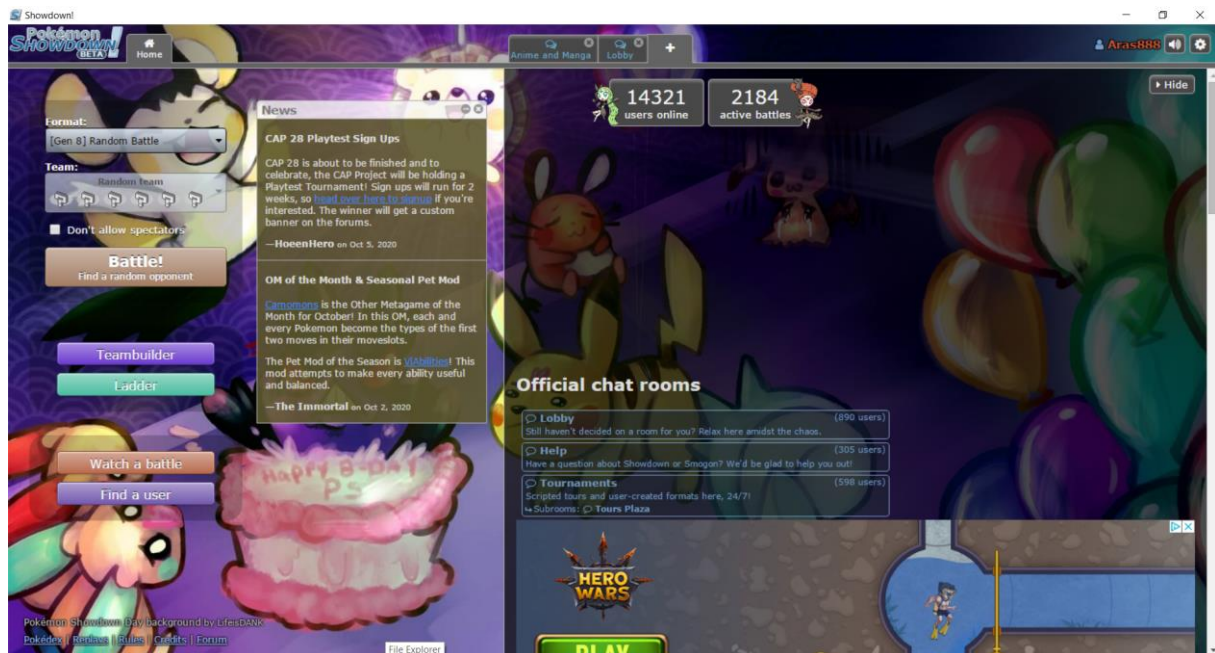
Pokémon Showdown

Introduction

Pokémon showdown is an online game where you play Pokémon against other players. It was made as a way to play competitive Pokémon without the lengthy process of catching and training the Pokémon necessary to compete. Because of this the game is designed for a competitive community which already understands the complex mechanics it allows players to edit and the different formats which the game provides. This may sound confusing and that's the point, it is confusing and inaccessible to new players. Despite this the game has established a smaller casual player base which does not know how to use much of the functionality of the game such as the teambuilder, registered accounts and/or the save system. In order for the game to improve the user experience it should focus on making the game more accessible to new/casual players.

Target Users

The games target users are fans of the Pokémon franchise whether they play the game competitively or not. Anybody who wants to play the game against other people online is wanted. The people who fall into this group tend to be male and between the age of 14 and 29.



Personas

Persona 1- Competitive player

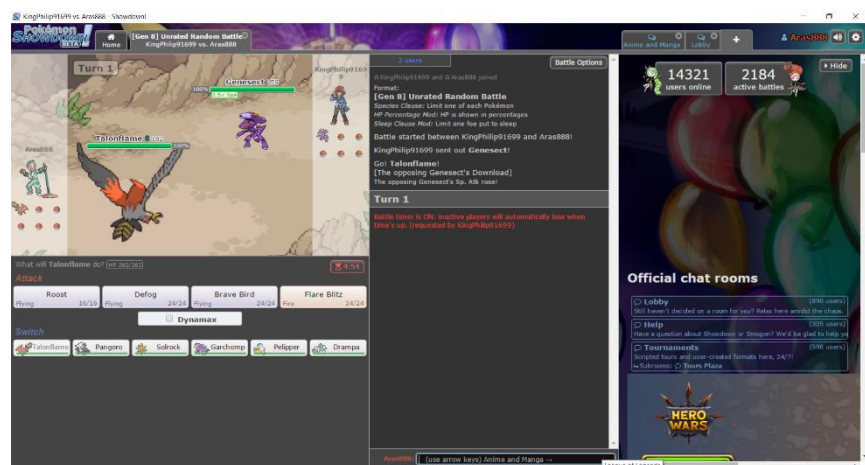
- plays the game often (10 hours a week average)
- average age 18-29
- finds the user interface is good (average 7 /10)
- finds it easy to make a team (average 8 /10)
- finds it easy to make a registered account (average 8/10)
- comfortable with the chat system (probably biased)

This persona was most prominent in the surveys which if probably due to sampling bias as we got all our responses from the main showdown chat room by posting the link to it there. This means that people less familiar with the chat system are highly unlikely to see the survey. Beside this we see from the data that they are almost all between the age of 18-29 and that they have no issue with the with the different functionalities although their opinion of the overall user interface is more divided presumably due to the aesthetic.

Persona 2- Casual player

- plays an hour a week or less
- unlike competitive players some of them can be younger
- finds the GUI very confusing
- does not have an issue with making a team
- finds it difficult to make a registered account
- finds the chat system confusing

Casual players tend to be somewhat younger although about half of them fall into the 18-29 age range the other half fall into either the 14-17 or even the 5-13 age group. This group seems to be ok with the team creation system but has a lot of trouble with the other functionalities such as the save system, chat system, registered account creation and the overall GUI is also confusing to them.



Analysis

From the data we can see that competitive players are mostly satisfied with the functionality although they did request some quality of life additions like a friends list within the game. The most critical feedback came from the casual players who did not understand much of the functionality. They had issues with account creation, the chat system and the overall GUI. Adding a friends list for the competitive players would be a good change that would improve the user experience for the already established players but the developers might want to focus on making their GUI clearer. Currently the only way to get help with things like making an account or for explanations of the chat system is to go to the Pokémon showdown forums. The issue with that is you can't ask questions on the forum unless you already have a registered account and the forums are only accessible on the website not within the application. In order to fix these issues the developers could create a tutorial which explains the basic functionalities to the user when they first create a registered account and to then make it much clearer how to make a registered account. This could be done by adding a how to section for how to make a registered account on the homepage if you are not logged into a registered account. Lastly in order to clear up their overall GUI I think they should change the colour scheme because the game uses a very light blue, different shades of grey and white for its whole GUI. These three colours do not have high contrast with one another and can be made worse depending on the background (which changes regularly unless you set your own). This would make GUI much clearer and less imposing to new and casual users.

Conclusion

Pokémon showdown was originally designed for functionality not user friendliness. This has led to the game having issues with new users as it simply isn't designed to accommodate them. This can be fixed with some simple additions and changes to the game in order to make it friendlier to unfamiliar users. The final big issue is one of aesthetics, specifically the colour palette, which makes the GUI generally unclear and harder for unfamiliar users. Lastly the game is missing some quality of life features such as a friends list which would be appreciated by the already established player base. Overall I'd say that Pokémon showdown's user experience design is quite lacklustre and I think it's largely due to the game's original purpose and the fact that it is still in beta (although it has been for years) which means that functionality is still the developers' priority.