

P1: User Research

CPSC 481

TA: Timothy Auyung

Esther Chung, Sunah Kim, Kevin Lee, Jeffrey Tong, Tyler Chow

Project Description

Our project idea is to create a semi-anonymous matching service for gamers. Multiplayer games have their own match making systems which matches users with other random users over the anonymity of the internet. We intend to improve that match making system by having the users complete a profile stating their most played games, how frequent and how long they usually play, their “gaming schedule”, etc. Not only that our service would automatically match users on their similar aspects, it gives the users the freedom to find people on their own, by filtering people based on certain criteria.

We intend our system to be used by people who play multiplayer video games but doesn’t have friends who play the same game as them. These users would wish to develop friendships online opposed to only play with random people online every time they play. We intend our system to be used by matching people who want to play right away and by matching people with offline people based on their profiles. The first “mode” is for people who instantly want to play while the second “mode” is for people who wishes to develop long lasting friendships.

Stakeholders

Experienced users who play multiplayer games:

These users have experience in playing games where they need other players to play. Thus, they will have previous experience of in game or out of game programs that help to match different players into teams. They may feel the need for finding people who are have the similar rank (experience level) as themselves to play a game. They will have more knowledge on the games that they play regularly and will looking for specific people to play games with. They may also be part of game communities, forums, etc. Which also connects them to new people in the game community. May also be looking for new friends with same interests in games.

Normal users who have trouble finding people to play games with:

They will not have as much experience and may not be as invested into games as an experienced gamer. But since they are not regular players they may not know many people who play a specific game they want to play and may just use in game team making mechanism in order to be matched with random people to play with. May also be just looking for new friends with same interests

in games.

Users who are looking to try new games:

Since they are starting off in a new game, they will not have much information on game mechanics and people who play the game. Thus, they will need a way to find people to play with. They may be experienced in using apps that give information on games or find information on the website that reviews the new games that they want to play.

Users who never played games but want to start:

These users will have very little background knowledge on games and programs, communities, people related to games. They may want recommendations and reviews on games in order to find one that interests them. These users will have no experience using programs where they can find new people to play with.

Streamers/content creators (Youtube):

If they are content creators related to games, they will have lots of information and experience using programs regarding games. They will be similar to the experienced gamer.

Game companies:

They will have lots of information about the gaming community and what gamers are looking for. Some game companies will be interested in the product since it will get more people to be invested in their games, especially if they are a multiplayer game company.

Advertisers:

They will be interested in the product if the product has a lot of traffic (many people use it) thus they can use it as a platform for their advertisements. Depending on what they advertise they will have a lot or very little knowledge on games and game programs that help people to find other players to play with. If they are trying to advertise specifically to gamers, they will have more information on the topic compared to any advertisers who are aiming for a general population.

Research Methods

The two research methods that we used was a survey and character profiles. We decided to use the survey method because it is very effective in targeting a large group of people in a short time span. Since we only had a little over a week to conduct these research methods, we decided that a survey could be very effective in learning what features may be useful in our project and to learn more about our users. Surveys also provide many unique perspectives from people all around the world. What we learned was that most of our users are between the ages of 20 and 25 and that there is an equal distribution of genders. Most of users play many different types of games varying ranging from mobile games to computer games. They play games almost every day of the week and play around 2 to 5 hours on average. Most of the responses say they mainly play games on the computer and that they either have no trouble finding people to play with, or a lot of trouble. The responses favored message chat, a way to add friends and to be matched with users of similar skill level as features they would like in the application.

The second research method we used was character profiles. We used this method because a lot of our friends play games and we could base some of the profiles off of them, and use the survey responses as a part as well. This would help us easily develop these profiles and we could get a general idea on our potential user base. Understanding our different types of customers will help us develop new and more ideas to target them and use our application. Some of the profiles we developed were a 23 year old female named Naomi who like to play instruments. She often likes to play multiplayer party games such as Overcooked, Mario Party, and Mario Kart. She likes to have a good time with friends and has an easy time finding friends to play with. However she still wants to find new people and make new friends but wants an easy way to contact them with no hassle and to block unfriendly users. Another user with a different personality would be Jason Wang, he is a 26 year old male student who is a serious and hardcore gamer. He has a low tolerance with silliness and prioritizes winning. This means he like competitive games with a robust player base like League of Legends, Dota 2, and CSGO. He would like to find other competitive players of similar skill levels that will take the game seriously and be able to connect in real life. So from developing these profiles we learned that there are mainly two audiences we should try to target, the casual gamer trying to find new people to play with and the serious gamer who wants to win and find equally competitive people.

The responses we received from the questionnaire can be found at:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Ncx7qQBUEMO6OhAmcMoMSN6FKiK4nPQdp0LNrMdPf_Q/edit?fbclid=IwAR29MdX7f7G1KzzC2TS1FlvHRakfFE_q7_9U1yiecMmUCyOXS09BoIDScus#responses

The character profiles can be found at:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bB8U_Avjb9zCaJ3jfhblixKPU9DxOg0Rpg41lm5KCPC/edit?usp=sharing

Reflection

The two research methods that we chose – survey and character profiles – were very quick and efficient to carry out for the scope of the project. The survey research method garnered more responses than we were expecting; we were able to gather 45 responses for the survey within a week. Because the survey covered the questions that we wanted to know about the stakeholders, it was easy to see what kinds of users there were and get the rough structure of what the system should be. By doing the character profiles based on the survey responses, we were able to visualize the little details about the users which were not too clear just by looking at the survey responses. Although the profiles were fictional, they helped us to think what people would want to do/achieve with our system from a user's perspective.

However, there were problems with our chosen research methods. For the survey method, the questions were derived purely by us and the responses were confined to just those questions. Even if a user had patterns/personalities/habits that would affect the way that he/she used the system, we would not have been aware of them because the survey questions would not be able to cover all these. Also, there were a couple of joke responses among them and it was impossible to verify whether any of the "serious" responses were accurate. For the character profiling, it added even more ambiguity to

researching the users because they were created based on our imagination. Of course, these characters were created using the survey responses, but they were pretty much just barebones because we had to make a lot of assumptions due to the survey focusing on what the users wanted rather than who the users were.

Overall, our two research methods were very efficient in terms of time and effort to carry out. The survey method gave us a wide view of all the different types of potential users, and the character profiling method refined these views and put us into the perspective of the users. However, they left us with inaccuracy and ambiguity, and did not provide us with full details of the demographics of the potential users. In the future, we should triangulate our survey and character profiles with another research method like interviews, so that we can ensure more accurate information on the potential users.

Task Descriptions

Task Description 1

Jakob, who wants to compete in an upcoming League of Legends tournament with two of his friends, is looking for 2 more teammates to join his team. His friends and himself are three players but they need 2 more players to fill in the roles of Support and Top. To join the team, Jakob requires the players to be a certain rank and be willing to use voice chat.

He accesses the system (either through an application or a webpage), and puts up a posting for his team in the League of Legends category. In the posting, he specifies that he is looking players for a tournament, and specifies the requirements of the players looking to join.

Jakob checks the system a day later and is notified that 4 players are interested in joining. He examines each players profile for their ranks and reputation. After consulting with the other team members, he accepts 2 players. Jakob sends the players his contact information, and they switch to an external platform to communicate further.

After the tournament, Jakob is pleased with his new teammates and gives them good reviews on their profiles.

Task type: Typical User, typical routine task

Task Description 2

Jenny wants to play the new video game Apex Legends but she doesn't know anyone who plays the game. Since this game is designed with parties of three, Jenny would like to find one or two other people to play with casually. This is her first time using the system.

Since she wants to play Apex Legends, she navigates to the Apex Legends category and looks at postings other people have made for the game. After browsing a couple posts, she finds one that she likes. In order to contact the poster she needs to set up her profile. Since she really wants to play, she quickly sets up her profile and indicates some of her preferences. Then she contacts the poster.

The poster replies within 20 minutes, and they exchange in-game usernames and party up in the game. After the play session, Jenny sends a friend request to the other player, with the intention of maybe playing with them again sometime.

Task type: First time user, Typical task

Task Description 3

Jason Wang, an extremely competitive player, wants to compete in CS:GO tournaments seriously. He wants to find a group of people who share his competitive nature and drive to win, and also around his skill level.

He browses the CS:GO category on the system and responds to many postings and eventually settles on playing with one group of players.

They play a couple games, but Jason gets into a disagreement with all the other players, and decides to find another group.

However, in the middle of contacting another group, someone from the previous group is harassing Jason through the message feature. Jason reads the messages, then blocks him and reports the messages to our system. He then resumes contacting the second group.

Task type: Uncommon user, uncommon task

Task Description 4

Olivia is a 22 years old female student who likes interacting with people. When hangs out with her group of close friends, they usually play “social” games such as board games or Mario kart, etc. that require physical presence of people. When she was in high school, it was very easy to set up a time to meet with her friends and play games; she and her friends went to the same high school, and they would just go to a friend’s house to hang out about 3-4 times a week after classes. However, as she became a university student, and some of her friends moved away to other cities, their schedules started to not line up very well.

She still wants to play social games with her friends, but she now has a hard time finding people to play those games with. She is reluctant to use match-making apps such as Tinder because those are for dating, not to find multiple friends to play games with. She discovers that there is a system for finding friends specifically for playing games with, and sees that there is actually quite a large pool of people near where she lives who are willing to meet up and play social games with. But she is still wary of making friends online and meeting them in person, so she makes sure to go through the profile and tries to “creep” them on other social sites before personally messaging them. After the background

checks, she messages a few people who she thinks are worthwhile to become friends with. She tries to get to know them through messaging for a few weeks, and once she feels comfortable enough, she gathers up the courage and ask them to come play games with her in person. She finds lifelong friends through the system successfully, but because she has found these friends to play games with, she rarely logs back into the system after; basically, she uses the system to expand her social circle.

Task type: Uncommon user, common task

Task Description 5

Maranda is from Australia, who likes outdoor activities. She doesn't play games because she has other priorities and she doesn't have friends who plays games regularly. She is against spending the whole day on the computer because she thinks that it is too unproductive.

Her coworkers suddenly get hyped about League of Legends, and convince her to play with them. However, they have troubles finding a person for the support position. Each person creates an account on the system first, skipping any of the profile fields that would give out personal information. They create a party on the system and put up a call for a support. Since most of the coworkers are casual players and she is very new to the game, they filter out the people on the system to find a casual, chill person to play with.

However, Maranda gets tired of playing the game soon after, and she tells her coworkers that she wants to leave the party. She deletes her account from the system so she does not get unnecessary notifications from the system.

Task type: Uncommon user, common task

Task Description 6

Adrianne wants to have separate groups for gaming and social lives. She doesn't want to reveal that she is a game nerd to her offline friends, but she still wants to play games with people. She thinks that her offline friends do not understand the hobbies that she has; she thinks they are too "normal."

In order to build a social network of online friends who are comfortable to join up and jump into a casual game on short notice, she creates an account on the system, and puts up fake information on the gender and location fields. Because she has not put the actual information on these, she gets party suggestions with people who live far away. This frustrates her because she wants to play with people on the same server (otherwise, her game lags). She thinks the system is not good enough and deletes her account.

Task type: Common user, common task