

TP Competitive Analysis

Perform a competitive analysis (as we learned in class) on at least two other systems similar to the one you plan to develop in the file competitive_analysis.txt, or .doc, or .pdf. If your idea is so unique that no other systems exist, find at least two systems that share a property with your planned project (for example, if you're developing a platformer game, find two other platformer games). Include at least five features in your feature table. In the summary, describe how the analysis influenced your ideas for the term project.

Describe the planned project

1. Briefly describe the project you're planning to work on. What is the goal of the game? What are its main features?

The project I am planning to work on is an interactive virtual cat game. The goal of this game is to give a user the ability to simulate taking care of pets. This is done through having responsibilities such as feeding and interacting with the cats. This type of project has minigames within the game in order to raise hunger or happiness levels in the cats. Other main features include creating unique cat objects or being introduced to cat characters that exist within the game. I want to be able to use web scraping that in order to have the virtual cats that you can play as be actual cats available for adoption in a local animal shelter. The motivation for this game is to entertain cat lovers and also advertise cats up for adoption.

Evaluate the competition

2. Identify similar projects that already exist. For each competitor project, write a few sentences that describe what the project provides to the user and what makes the project unique.

Tamagotchi: One of the first virtual pet games, released in 1996. This handheld plastic egg game with three buttons prompts a user to take care of a virtual alien pet, keeping track of its hunger, health, happiness etc. The player must keep take constant care of the pet or else it may die of unhealthy conditions, hunger, old age, etc. The pet grows older over time and in newer versions of this game, the pets have the ability to marry and have younger generations. The functionality of this game is very limited because there are only a few buttons on a tiny digital screen and no amazing animations. A good thing about this game is that it is mobile and there are minigames within the game to keep the user engaged.

Features:

- *mobile

- *requires lots of attention from player

- *grow over time, develop relationships

- *features feeding and minigames

Neko Atsume: This is a cat collector video game only available through a mobile app. In this project, a user downloads the application and is introduced to the Neko Atsume world. The game starts with a demo that shows the user how to play- the user uses pre-given fish (currency) to purchase a items (food and toys) that will attract cats to their yard. The user must exit the app and come back after some time in order to wait for cats to appear. This could be a benefit or drawback, the user cannot waste too much time on the game at one time. There is not much interaction/functionality beyond purchasing items, taking photos of the cats, and searching through the catbook. The draw to this game is that it has very adorable animations and it provides a therapeutic break. It is cute and personalizable.

Features:

- *only on mobile
- *uses currency to purchase items
- *adorable animation
- *user must exit the app for cats to arrive

Nintendogs+cats: This video game is only available for the 3DS system. Immediately, this is a drawback because it is not accessible for all people to play. Nintendogs is another virtual pet care game where the user owns a few dogs at a time and takes care of them. The dogs do not age over time, but they must be fed and washed, washing is done through a mini-washing game. There is also the option to take dogs out for a walk where you can go to a park and play with the dog there. You can fetch with a ball, frisbee, and other interactive activities. The dogs can also be customized with specific names and they can wear different outfits. There is a variety of dog breeds available. Another part to this game is participating in dog competitions. The player has to train the dogs and take them out to competitions to win things. You can also customize the setting of your home. The cats are an addition to this game, where you can do many of the same things. What is unique about this game is that it is interactive because of the DS features. Players develop a connection to their dogs because as you get to know them better, they get to like the player more.

Features:

- *interactive through touch screen, camera, microphone
- *fosters “relationship” between pets and player
- *variety of breeds, customizable names
- *changeable scenery, home and walks
- *mini games, purchasing items

Identify Dimensions for Comparison

3. Come up with a list of at least five attributes or features that you want to compare between the competitor projects. These dimensions should be user focused (i.e., something that the user can

directly observe or experience). For each dimension (rank ordered from most to least important), provide both the dimension name and why the dimension is important.

Animation Quality: This is an important attribute because how adorable the pets are contributes to how likely people will be to play this game. If there are poor, unattractive graphics, it is less likely that people will want to play and use the game more and more. Good animations will make people happy when playing.

Interaction Level: This consists of how much the player can actually do with or for the pet. Low interaction level will be if you can't do anything for the pet which elicits an immediate response from them. High interaction would be if you can take them on a walk for example or play mini games.

Customizability: This means you can change the setting the game takes place in and/or you can customize your pet name or appearance. This is important or else you are stuck playing in the same location as the same character the entire time.

Time Dedication: Games can range from require constant attention, to requiring very little to no commitment to playing them. A game with large time dedication means the player must constantly be checking and updating the game, or else something will go terribly wrong or the pet will leave or die. A low dedication game would likely be one where the player can check on it at any time and the pets will be happy to play. This is likely the difference between a game with an internal timer (plot line or growth) and a mini-games based version where you can start from anywhere at any time.

Accessibility: This refers to how much of the population has access to this game. For example does it only run on a certain device? Only as a mobile app? Is it available offline? This is important to consider because if more people can have access to it, the more likely it will be popular.

Generate a Comparison Table

4. Create a table where each row is associated with a competitor and each column is associated with a dimension. Fill in the table based on how well each competitor fulfills each dimension. This can be a numerical ranking (1-10) or a more qualitative ranking (bad, average, good).

	Animation Quality	Interaction Level	Customizability	Time Dedication	Accessibility
Tamagotchi	Minimal	Average	Least	Too much	Must purchase device
Neko Atsume	Adorable	Least	Average	Average	Mobile App
Nintendogs+Cats	Great	Most	Most	Average	Nintendo 3DS only

Summarize your findings

5. Using the results from your comparison, provide a summary of your findings. You should concentrate on the features that your project will need to be competitive, and any identified gaps that your project can take advantage of.

After comparing these three virtual pet games, I can see some of the limitations that each of them have. Tamagotchi is interactive and creates a sense of purpose for the player, but it requires too much time from the player to keep functioning and alive. This is not appealing to players because then they will experience disappointment if their beloved pet dies or leaves them. Neko Atsume is great for its adorable animations but a drawback is that the game is not very interactive. The player doesn't get to directly play with the pets but rather can only take photos. Also, not much happens on the screen unless the player leaves after sometime so this may be a source of annoyance. Lastly, Nintendogs+cats, has adorable animations and great interaction and customization, however it is only available for the 3DS. This is unfair to users who want to play even if they don't own a Nintendo 3DS.

After reaching this level of understanding, I have made a plan of features that my project must include in order to be competitive and to take advantage of the gaps that these currently existing games have created. My virtual cat game will be interactive so that users can physically walk around and play as their cat of choice. More interaction will occur from walking into different rooms, looking at different objects, and playing minigames. The animations of cats that I use must be adorable and appealing. I will alter the customizability of my game from only being the same generic cat to being actual cats available for adoption. I want to make this game available online so anyone can play it, not being limited by the need for a device or to download an app. Lastly, I want to make my game one that increases in time as the player is using it so that there can be some reward for playing or feeding and doing games.