

# Team 2 - AcadeMeet! (FOR FREE! [with ads & battlepass])

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## Project Team Members

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## 1. Executive Summary (Overview)

AcadeMeet is an app inspired by Nintendo's StreetPass for the 3DS, but made personally for college students in collaboration with colleges. It aims to encourage students to socialize more and meet new people on campus. Students with AcadeMeet can connect by simply walking around campus. When students walk by each other, they can visit the other's dorm room in the form of a customizable avatar, play minigames, and become friends via the app.

Additionally, users are rewarded with the in-app currency – Pal Points – every time they meet someone new, participate in campus events, swap information, etc. They can exchange Pal Points for cosmetics. Meeting with more people also moves them up a seasonal reward system called "Missions", which serves as another place to get more cosmetics, and additionally serves as a ranking system between friends. These reward systems serve as an incentive for students to interact more with each other, and keep them engaged with our app.

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## 2. Market Research and Need Justification

### Gaps in the market

A pressing issue that is relevant on many college campuses is the epidemic of loneliness that is felt by about 65% of College students, as said by [campussafetymagazine.com](http://campussafetymagazine.com). A lot of these issues stem from the lack of social interaction and the sudden removal from a direct support system that can come with the transition to college. When going to college the average student is expected to build up a support system through the formation of friendships, however, making friends and talking to people within a new environment is extremely difficult. Our app AcadeMeet is meant to make the process of meeting new people much easier.

## Existing Solutions

Apps such as Discord, GroupMe, Snapchat, and ZeeMee fill the need of making connections between people, but they don't really encourage physical interaction to allow for a natural friendship to form. These apps really act more like social media apps than apps to make connections because they are more about messaging people from a convenient place instead of getting people outside to really meet people in person.

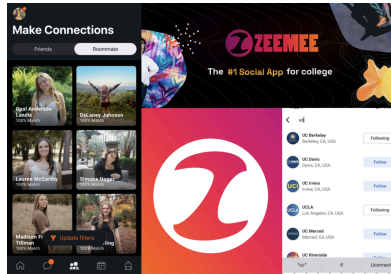


Image From [thesummitpinnacle.com](https://thesummitpinnacle.com)

## Statistical data

Around 65% of college students report feeling lonely in some way.

Loneliness is higher within newer incoming students than students that have been in college for at least one year.

Loneliness can cause multiple mental health issues which can put students at risk on campus.

Many college events often consist of fleeting interactions that don't lead to long term friendship.

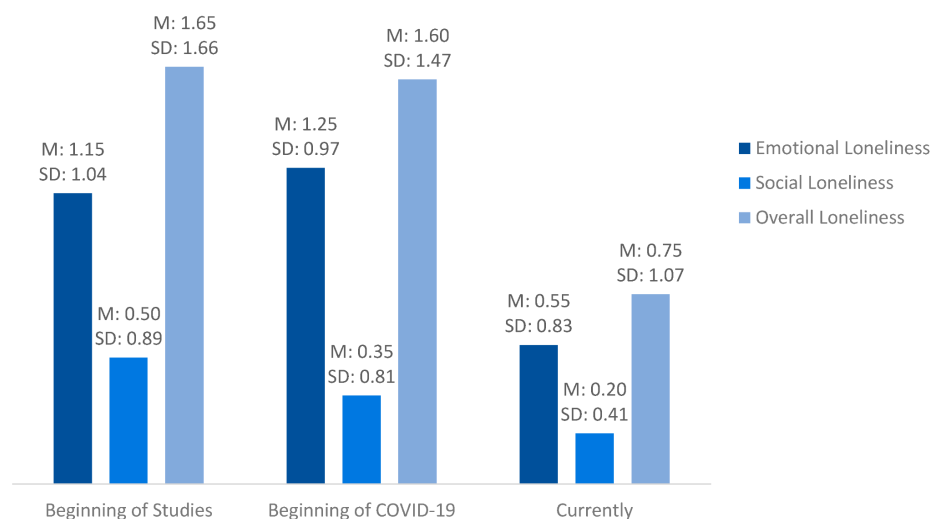


Image From: [mdpi.com](http://mdpi.com)

From the graph we can see that loneliness in students is greatest when they first start college. This loneliness drops off significantly as time goes on but the initial hurdle of finding a friend group is very difficult. Our app is meant to help incoming college students cross that initial hurdle by meeting people through the app.

### What made streetpass work

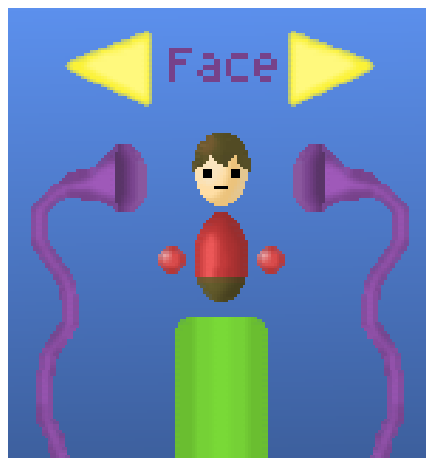
Streetpass worked because it created a sense of community around the use of the 3DS. This was because it provided the user the ability to see other users that they passed while out who also had a 3DS system. It also gave the user the incentive to use the profitability of the device in a way that Nintendo intended. In our app we intend on using the pass feature to show the user someone else who was looking for someone to hang out with by notifying the user when they pass another user with the app installed. Another reason why Streetpass was successful was because it gave perks within games that would enhance the experience such as power ups or game data that the user could challenge. While we do not intend to rope other apps into this service, we do believe that adding small minigames to the app that can be played with users that you have passed would be a good idea. At the very least we intend to add incentive in the form of currency for passing and hanging out with people that you have passed.

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## 3. Product Description

AcadeMeet consists of several core features, including:

1. **Avatar Creator:** Users will be able to customize their own ~30x30 pixel avatar to represent themselves in the app. Avatars may consist of humanoid figures, and could even have potential to be customized as other species (ex. Animals, Aliens, etc...)

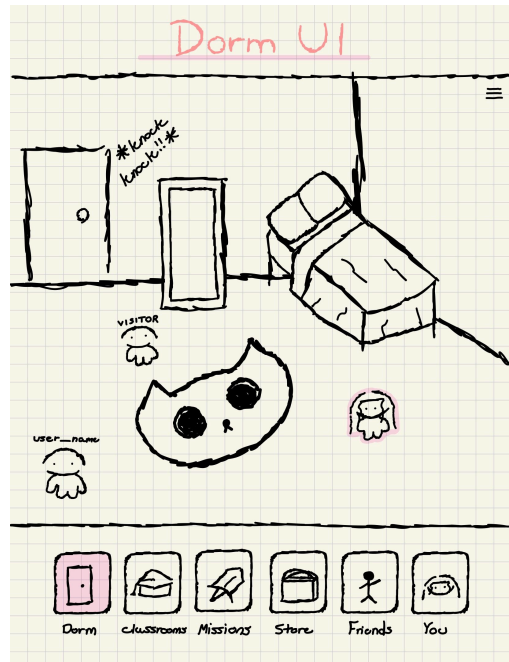


Concept for avatar editor

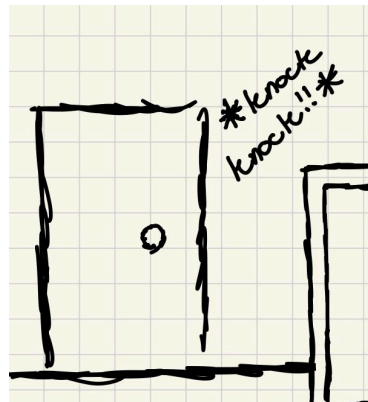


Concept for avatar

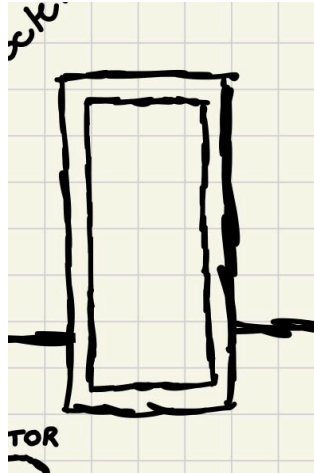
2. **Dorm:** Each player will have their own “Dorm” that they can decorate, once again expressing themselves through customization. If you befriend a person on AcadeMeet, you can place their avatar in your dorm permanently (kind of like MySpace’s Top Friends list).



Concept for Dorm UI



**"Visitors" will knock on your door when you walk by them. Tapping the door will let them into your dorm.**



*Each dorm has a mirror (can be moved and customized). Tapping the mirror customizes your avatar.*



*Visitors have a "VISITOR" nameplate over their head. Tapping on their avatar will open that person's profile.*



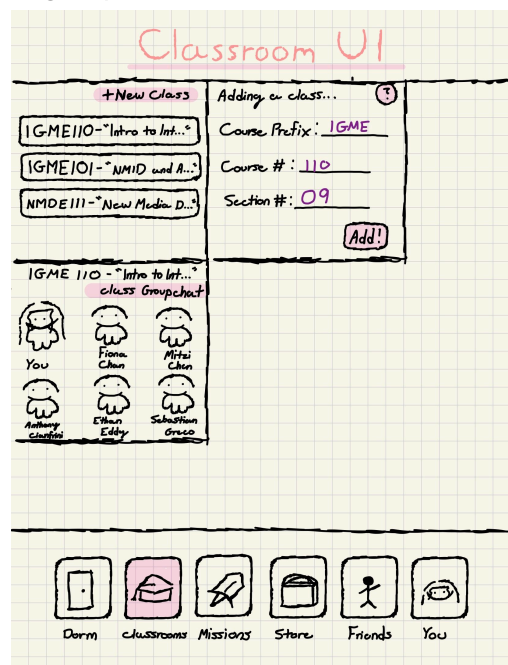
*You have the capability to place friends in your dorm. Their avatar will appear with their username/display name over their head. Clicking on them will allow you to DM them (it's like a way to pin your friends).*

3. **"Streetpass" Feature:** When a user walks by another user with the AcadeMeet app, their avatar will "visit" the user's dorm, and vice versa. Tapping the avatar in the dorm will allow

the user to view their profile, and potentially other social media links they wish to share. If a person has Visiting DMs toggled on, you may also be allowed to DM that person, creating an easier way to befriend people.

This sort of functionality is one of the most difficult to implement to our app, as there're concerns of privacy risks and battery drainage. Right now the most likely option to implement this feature would be through a company server that can occasionally grab location data from the user, in order to determine when users have passed each other. Other options to consider may include:

- Bluetooth (could cause privacy concerns)
  - NFC (the chips found in phones are way too short range)
  - Use college wifi (would have to integrate the app with all partnering colleges, could also be a privacy concern)
4. **Class Communication:** Users have the ability to add their courses to AcadeMeet. This lets them see other students in their class, as well as letting the user send messages to individual users or the class group chat.



Concept for Classroom UI



List of classes appear. You have the ability to change a class's display name (for yourself) to make locating classes easier.



Adding a class... ?

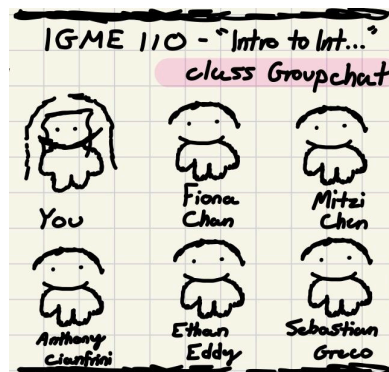
Course Prefix: IGME

Course #: 110

Section #: 09

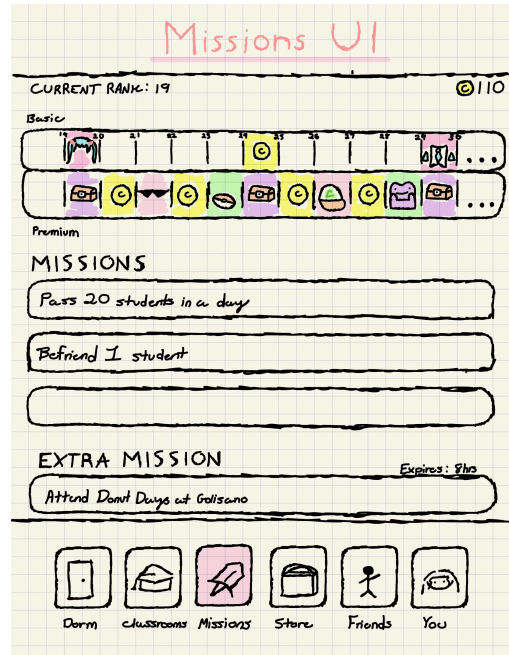
Add!

When adding a class, you'll input your Course Prefix, Course #, and Section #. Students that input the same things will be connected in a classroom. A help button is available.



Classrooms will show all the people in the class. Tapping on a person will allow you to DM them. There's also a class group chat where everyone can talk.

5. **In-Game Currency (Pal Points):** Users can earn Pal Points five different ways: Walking by a student (30), attending an event (50), befriending someone on AcadeMeet (100), through Missions (various amounts), and by watching ads (20 per ad, limited to 5 ads per day). Pal Points can be used to purchase cosmetics for the user's avatar and dorm.
6. **Missions:** AcadeMeet offers Missions to encourage users to go out and meet with others. The app will provide you 3 missions at a time, with one extra mission that's specific to the user (whether it involves a school event or a class). The extra mission resets daily. Every time you complete a mission, you rise up in rank. A free and premium version are available, with the premium version offering more prizes for each rank. The prizes will change seasonally, with potential for collaboration.



### Concept for Missions UI

7. **Minigames:** Similar to Streetpass, walking by people can have you play a variety of minigames. One of the ideas we had was to have an Angry Birds style game, where you can shoot the avatars of people you meet out of a cannon to take down structures. Completing, or “winning” minigames will let you use a vending machine to unlock prizes. These prizes may include those from previous Missions seasons that you haven’t obtained.

Our minigame mechanic can also open an opportunity for premium currency, or as we have called them, “AcaDiamonds”. This currency may serve a similar functionality to “Play Coins” on the 3DS, where you can use them to play minigames without having to walk by someone. You may trade 1,000 Pal Points for 1 AcaDiamond, or purchase them with real money. Although we don’t want to take away the fun of going around campus finding new people, this may be a function to consider for the sake of financial viability.

The UI features pixel art assets, really driving home that this is a gamified experience and is meant to make meeting people more fun and enjoyable. The terms used throughout the game, such as “Dorm” and “Classroom”, are meant to bring relatability and more of a personal touch to the app. Our rewards system is also meant to entice people. Kids like rewards systems. They get excited by the rewards systems. Therefore students are more likely to be enticed by the app and keep using it.

The overall goal of the UX is to gamify the experience of meeting new people and making friends in college. To accomplish this, the Missions are used to encourage people to get out and meet one another, as they’re rewarded for doing so. Moving up in the rankings and gaining Pal Points also makes the user feel more achieved, encouraging them to continue using the app and go outside. Novelty is also something that boosts the user experience. The Nintendo 3DS Streetpass made people excited to bring their 3DS outside to find more Miis. Our app offers a similar feel.



Although AcadeMeet features some similarities with other apps, it brings many features to the table that keep it unique. For instance, allowing users to customize their own avatars and dorms creates a unique way for users to express themselves, and their interests; rather than filling out a Q&A that other social app models use (ex. ZeeMee). The “Streetpass” aspect of our app also allows users to have a closer connection to the people they’re meeting. Apps like Zeemee will show you people attending your school, but that’s really it. AcadeMeet gives you an idea of people you pass by frequently, signifying similar schedules. It also makes you feel more connected to a person, since you had a sort of interaction in real life, rather than just clicking on someone’s profile.

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## 4. Possible Issues and Counterarguments

A possible objection to the need for this product is whether this app has a use, given the existence of other social media platforms. Unlike other social media platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, and Discord, AcadeMeet is location-based and specifically tailored to the college campus experience. While other apps require students to already know or add someone, AcadeMeet encourages spontaneous encounters and interactions. The app offers a unique concept that existing social media apps don’t provide.

Some technical challenges that could arise for AcadeMeet, such as having passive Bluetooth/location-based connections enabled, could drain battery life or cause privacy and security issues. To address this, the app would need to optimize background processes and allow users to control what information is shared.

In addition to optimizing location features, AcadeMeet takes steps to protect user privacy. Students must register with a verified college email, ensuring that only members of the campus community can join. The app also lets users control what personal details they share and adjust visibility settings. Users will also be able to toggle whether they can receive direct messages and block others if needed.

To address issues such as cyberbullying or malicious intent, AcadeMeet will include a filtering system to block offensive language and a report feature. Reports can be reviewed by moderators and may also redirect students to their college’s official reporting resources if they wish to escalate the issue.

On the financial side, developing and maintaining servers, avatars, and in-game economies can be costly. There is also an uncertainty about whether users will be willing to pay for premium features. However, AcadeMeet’s monetization model is designed to remain sustainable without requiring all users to pay. The ‘freemium’ business model is how we will sustain our app. Students will be able to choose a premium version of the rewards system for extra cosmetics and bonus items. A free version will also be available, ensuring everyone can enjoy the full experience. Our

app will also have advertisements that users can choose to watch if they want rewards, such as Pal Points (in-game currency).

To add more flexibility, AcadeMeet may introduce AcaDiamonds, a special in-game currency. Users can buy AcaDiamonds with real money, trade in 1,000 Pal Points for 1 AcaDiamond, earn them by completing daily missions, or unlocking them through the reward system (both free and paid). One AcaDiamond is awarded per daily mission, and they can be spent to access certain minigames (costing 10 AcaDiamonds each). Completing these minigames may reward players with items they missed from previous seasons of the reward system.

Even if more objections arise, AcadeMeet remains relevant because it fills a gap in the market for a location-based, campus-focused social app that encourages spontaneous in-person interactions.

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## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Many people find it difficult to build a community and make connections amidst the busy college life. AcadeMeet can help bridge that gap in a fun and interactive way for college students.

It provides a natural way for others to meet one another as well as encourage students to meet in person through campus events.

Whether someone is too nervous to make the first move or just wants to meet new people, this app can give the first push into making life long friendships.

We hope Rochester Institute of Technology may consider supporting us in the development and integration of this app into the campus and take the first step into building a more social and inviting community.

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## 6. Appendix

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