

# Call of Duty Companion App

<b>Teammate</b>	Miguel Juteau ( <i>until Concept Development</i> )
<b>Timeline</b>	Sept - Nov 2020
<b>Role</b>	Researcher, Video Editor, Concept Artist
<b>Client</b>	Activision
<b>Background</b>	Completed as Senior project at Santa Monica College

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# Timeline

Activision  
Kickoff  
**09/09/2020**

Interview 2  
Participants  
**10/07/2020**

Activision Change  
Statement  
**09/27/2020**

Practice Midterm  
Presentation  
**10/14/2020**

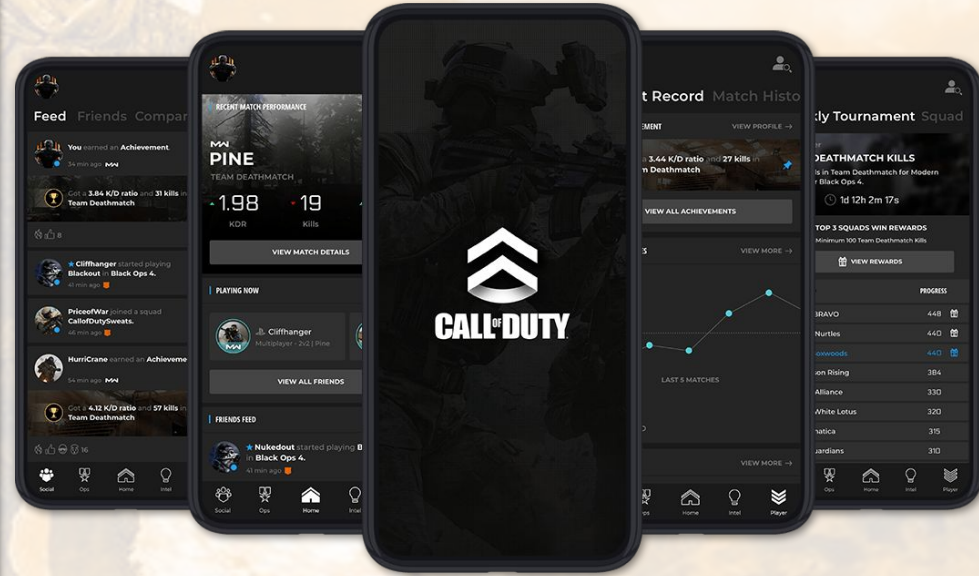
Midterm  
Presentation  
**10/21/2020**

**SINGAPORE**  
09:00 SGT



# Project Challenge

Call of Duty is more fun with friends, so how can the Call of Duty companion app create social features to keep players engaged with the game and each other?





How might we use the companion app to promote the regiment system and create stronger bonds between players?

# Stakeholder Interview



**Alex - Senior UI Designer**

BFA in Industrial Design from California College of Arts. Interested in architecture, branding, and advertising.



**Mark - Director**

Grew up playing video games, came from Texas, works with a team on the design and function of the app.



**Drew - Senior UX Designer**

Worked with Hilton Hotels, Fender Musical Instruments, and LA Weekly. Came from Arizona. Doesn't like overcomplicating things.

## Key takeaways:

- Be sure not to allow the reward system to be easily exploitable
- They're working on a loadout editor, but it will require work from the dev team
- Think about what kind of achievements players want to see on the app

# Product Review

I played the new CoD since it came out so I had a solid understanding of the game when we began. I ended up being the person that classmates went to for further clarification on game mechanics, and even gave an in-class demonstration of the game.

**Sep** **23**  
I just massively upgraded my PC! Took me the entire evening till late at night but I'm able to play CoD at ~120fps at high settings now, it's incredible. I played multiplayer, trying to complete the final challenges for the FAL weapon for the golden skin. The challenge was to get kills while my weapon was mounted - something I normally rarely do. During this challenge, I learned how effective weapon mounting is, particularly if you can predict where enemies are going to come from next. And I got the golden skin.

**Sep** **27**  
I played a squad round today over with my classmate over facetime. I was on PC and she was on a playstation. It's seriously SO much more fun with friends. We barely got that far and did miserably but it was hilarious nonetheless. I got shot at before I even landed, and was in the gulag while she looked around for some guns. I won the gulag battle but just as I arrived she got killed. Unfortunately, she lost her gulag battle but I was able to revive her with money. Upon return she comically dove straight into the ground without pulling up her parachute, and I revived her. Then we walked a bit and a team jumped us, I got one of them before we both died. It was objectively disastrous, but I never felt the annoyance I'd feel if I were by myself or with randoms, it was all in good fun.

**Oct** **7**  
This weekend I played multiplayer with my normal game group over discord. There was a new map, along with a new battle pass. I've been trying to finish a challenge where I get 3 knife kills from behind in 15 matches, and it was pretty difficult to do because I didn't know the new map that well, so I played normally. Ignoring all the challenges and achievements for a moment I actually had more fun than I was grinding out for achievements, I feel like mission goals are kind of fabricated          gameplay          length sometimes.



# Secondary Research

## Sense of Community, Social Identity and Social Support Among Players of Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs): A Qualitative Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

The majority of research examining massively multiplayer online game (MMOG)-based social relationships has used quantitative methodologies. The present study used qualitative semi-structured interviews with 22 Australian World of Warcraft (WoW) players to examine their experiences of MMOG-based social relationships. Interview transcripts underwent thematic analysis and revealed that participants reported experiencing an MMOG-based sense of community (a sense of belonging within the gaming or WoW community), discussed a number of different MMOG-based social identities (such as gamer, WoW player and guild or group member) and stated that they derived social support (a perception that one is cared for and may access resources from others within a group) from their relationships with other players. The findings of this study confirm that MMOG players can form gaming communities. Almost all participants accessed or provided in-game social support, and some gave or received broader emotional support. Players also identified as gamers and guild members. Fewer participants identified as WoW players. Findings indicated that changes to the game environment influence these relationships and further exploration of players' experiences could determine the optimal game features to enhance positive connections with fellow players. Copyright © 2015 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

**Key words:** MMOGs; online games; cyberpsychology; sense of community; social identity; social support; qualitative

'Virtual world' is a catch-all term for a variety of persistent, multi-user, virtual environments in which users are represented by avatars, 3D representations of the user, which mediate their interactions with the virtual environment and other users. Some virtual worlds, such as Second Life, are open-ended virtual environments in which user action and interaction is not directed by the creators, but instead is entirely determined by the users

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I read about how MMORPG gamers were able to create community for themselves, and how the guild systems assisted them in doing so.

*The findings of this study confirm that MMOG players can form gaming communities. Almost all participants accessed or provided in-game social support, and some gave or received broader emotional support.*



# Competitive Analysis

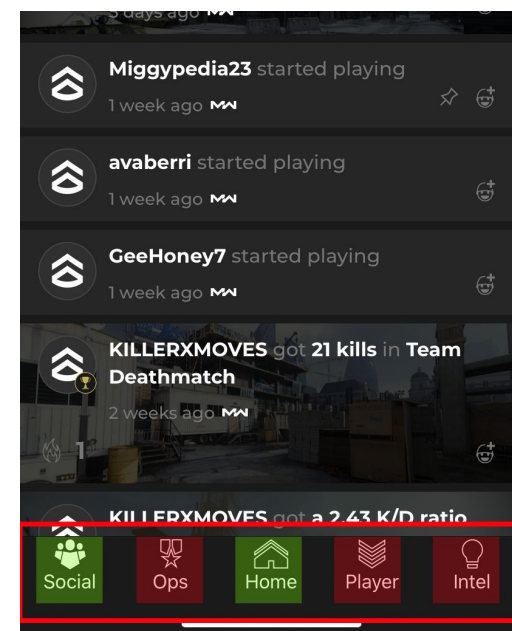
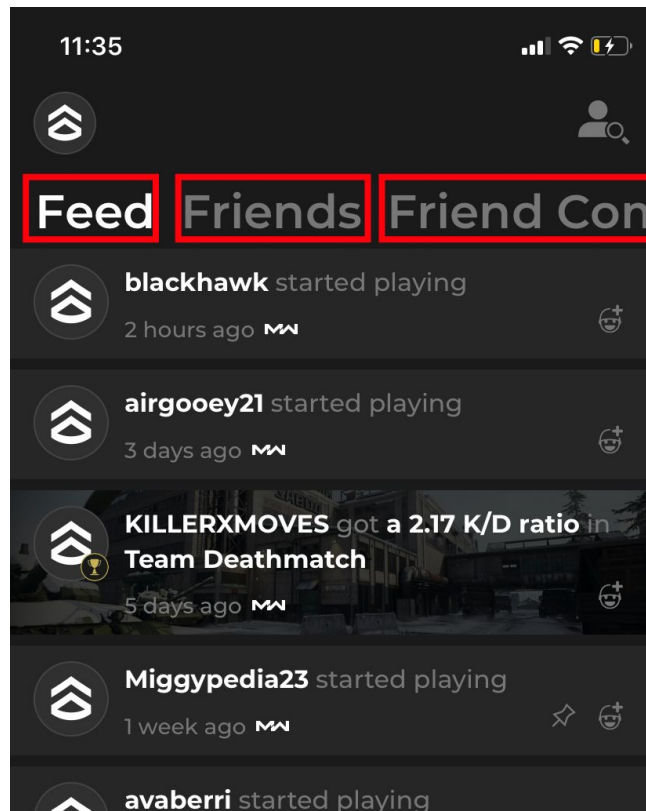
Other Companion Apps. / Services that focus on community / Social Interactions	Modern Warfare Companion App	Voice change: VoiceMod	Voice change: WaveChat	Blitz.gg	Summoner's Companion for LoL	League of Legends	Nintendo
<b>Positioning</b>							
<b>Price point</b>		FREE	FREE	FREE/PREMIUM	FREE	FREE	\$3.99 a month, \$20 a year
<b>Target audience</b>		Male Gamers  Trollers - trolling culture	content creators users looking for anonymity	Beginners not sure on how to strengthen their characters.  Pro players who are looking into more data they could use to better their game.			kids who can't be trusted on the internet, and hardcore splatoon players
<b>Marketing strategy</b>		The product is marketed towards trolling culture geared towards male gamers looking into changing their voices.	Product is marketed towards content creators looking to creating with anonymity.				
<b>Features List</b>	Heavy Statistics Feature - Friends - weekly/alltime stats - Data comparisons - Global Leaderboard - Friends activity feed  Ops Section - Squad - Tournaments info - Weekly Results  Home - Store > Item Suggestions - Recent news  Player - More Stats about yourself, your game, game history - Battle Pass Section - Store for items  Intel - Guides (basic skills, movement,	<b>Real time voice changer</b>  Tons of voices and effects.  <b>Super Easy integration in less than a minute</b> you can use Voicemod with your favourite communication software.  Game compatible  <b>Free and Premium Version</b>	60 second recording of voice that can be edited and shared on social media  Freedom to be creative with not just filters but also add visual to be posted.  Social Sharing  Audio Filters  Free	Automatic Runes and Build that import into game  Real time insights of recognizing your champion and applying counters in your lane.	Match history, ranked statistics and detailed information about every summoner  * Real-time ingame tracker: Spy your enemies!  * Free to play rotation, news and sales (notifications and widgets included)  * Champion guides and counterpicks  * Encyclopedia with all champs, items and reformed runes	Feed Section - Streams, News, Videos Tournament  - Feed, Schedules, Videos  - Chat Feature that connects from Game to the app  - Friends Tab  - Game History  <b>- Easy access to adding friends</b>  <b>- Easy match players look up and add</b>  <b>- Easy chat access</b>	<b>General</b> -Voice Chat <b>Splatoon</b> -current stages -current loadout -event schedule -shop rotation -battle stats -weapon stats -match history <b>Super Smash Bros</b> -videos and images showcase -event info <b>Animal Crossing</b> -Scan Design -See online friends -Send in-game messages
<b>Strengths</b>	Game Stats Friends' Stats	Variety of voice effects that can be used for a variety of situations	Great support for tutorials and tutorials  Great and aesthetically pleasing UI	AI Powered  <b>Real Time changes/suggestions</b>	Real time information  <b>Good for beginners trying to get better with their performance or getting to know the game.</b>	Very easy to connect with teammates post match.	
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Lacks interaction between friends</b>  <b>Lack accessible communication</b>	Geared or marketed towards entertaining types of content.	60 seconds limited time to use the product at a time  Only for recording and not towards live voice changes.	Separate Chat community hosted on Discord  Positioned for		Lacks informational features about the game	the content sharing isn't really fleshed out - can't even sort it

The competitive analysis I did with my classmate, Miguel Juteau looked at what features, strengths, and weaknesses, the other companion apps had.

# Heuristics Evaluation

The most interesting aspects of the app are hidden in sub menus ->

Text heavy screens make scanning difficult ->



^ Some of the labels are not clear and the iconography does not help.

# Netography

The netography helped us identify the anxieties of different types of players.

Is there just nobody that uses the voice chat app? self.NintendoSwitch

Submitted 1 year ago by 12345burrito

So I first got the online service about a month ago right around New Years. Since then, I've tried out the voice chat a few times on mario kart 8 deluxe. However, each time I tried using it there was almost nobody that I could chat with. I'd say out of all the times I tried using the app I think I've found like one other person that had their mic on and was willing to chat. I know that it's been over a year now that people have been hating this app, so perhaps everyone just ditched it a while back ago. Idk, am I just using it at bad times or is there just genuinely no one that uses the app?

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**Players who prefer to not talk to strangers because of their toxic and immature nature.**

”

**If we're pushing to make esports more mainstream, it needs to represent the community. The industry has a diverse fan base, and you'll get so much more out of them if you meet them where they are.**

**Users who are looking for games/players/communities that reflect who they are.**

# Expert Interviews



**Grayson Howe**

Ex Internal Communications Strategist of  
Riot Games



**Geoff Moore**

Ex Product Manager of Riot Games



**Brandon Cating**

Game Designer at Riot Games

## Key takeaways:

- This COD companion app is probably "solving" a problem only the Activision board is having.
- Don't make it parasitic. Let it be interesting by itself. I can perform actions in the game to make my experience in the app better and vice versa.
- Not many users will care about editing/customizing their loadouts.

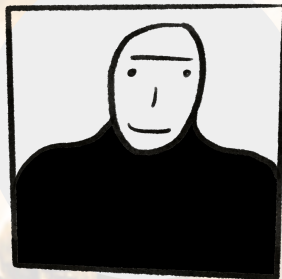


# Audience Interviews



**Tomoya One**

Chiefly plays games on his iPad, and didn't really start playing "action games" until he lived in America. Before that he played games that



**Lucian**

Goes to smash bros tournaments with his friends. He's pretty casual compared to his friends.



**Jake**

He plays multiplayer games whenever his friends are on, otherwise, he just plays singleplayer games.

## Key takeaways:

- People play the games that their friends are playing.
- The app's "squads" features was very confusing
- They don't care all too much about their stats.

# Concept Development (script)

In my presentation for activision:

- I highlighted my discoveries in the study on MMORPG player communities
- explained how guilds assisted in creating those communities
- Explained how we could also use guilds to create strong communities within CoD
- Made further suggestions to the app

## Activision Presentation Script

A 2014 study on World of Warcraft players found that the majority of them were able to form strong social connections in the game.

Interviews from the participants revealed that they had

a sense of **Community** by finding common ground with other players on things such as the way played or a yearning for the "good old days" of the game.

**Social Identity** by developing a sense of purpose as a character type, or as a guild member and **Social Support** through assistance with in-game help and even offline advice (such as for school and relationships).

This last aspect especially included people who had social anxiety or were otherwise isolated outside the game.

This may be a surprise to some, but as someone who put many hours into MMORPGs it makes perfect sense.

Because nearly all MMORPG players are part of a **guild** or a **clan**.

These are groups of players that form together to help each other on raids and trading and whatnot, but they're also so much more than that.

The social atmosphere created in guilds is incredibly valuable, and not easily found anywhere else online.

When players become regulars in a guild, they begin to recognize the humans behind the screen, and they make friends. Real friends. Friends who give each other life advice and emotional support.

And I don't see why this can't occur in Call of Duty as well.

We know CoD does have a similar feature - the regiments, but I've found it to be severely underutilized, and here's what more we could do.

When I interviewed regular Modern Warfare players about the companion app, they found the app's "squads" system to be rather confusing.

*Are they set up by Activision?*

*I found our team, despite only having 3 in our squad trying we're in 4th place.*

*I don't actually know who these people are, did they just put us together?*

*Could I change who I'm in the squad with? Could I make my own?*

I propose that we allow regiments to replace it entirely. That way players would have actually have to opt into it, and they'd have a better understanding of what it actually is.

We could also use the companion app to suggest, based on their skill level and time zone, regiments to players, and suggest players to regiments.

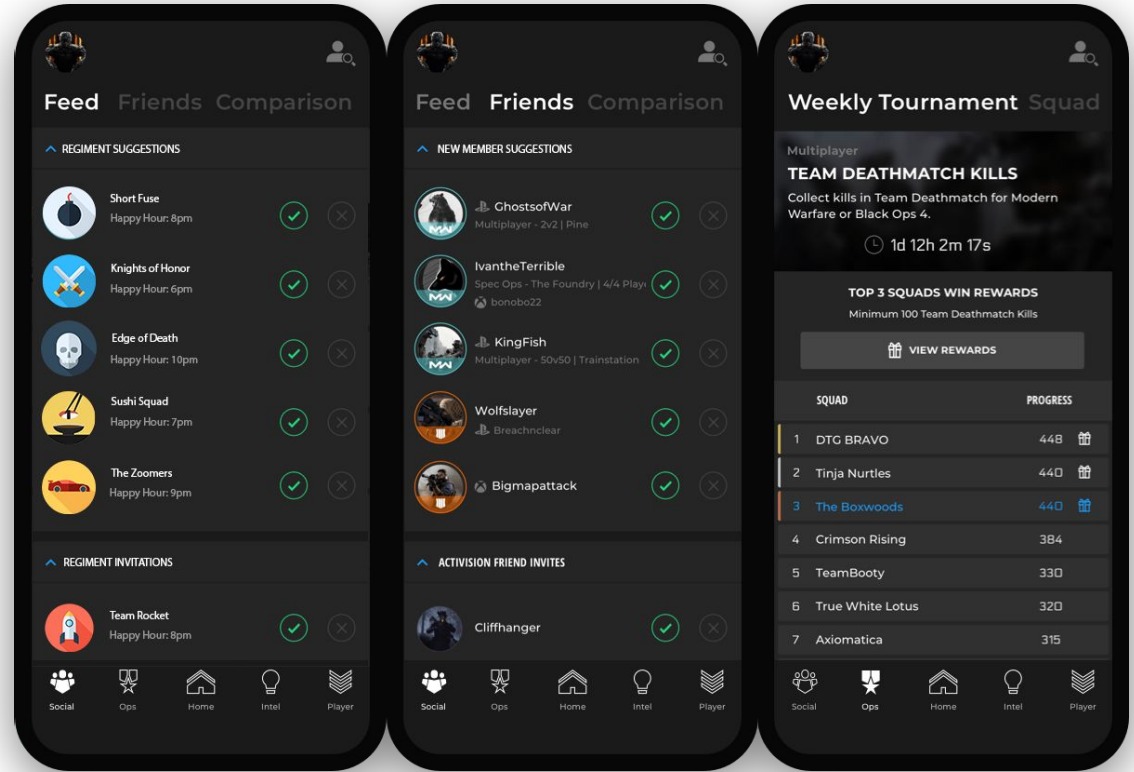
There could even be custom regiment emblems to be applied on stickers and sprays to display regiment pride.

A real dream of mine would be that in-game, when players are in the menus and not in a squad, they're visually shown to be in a lobby with their regiment, where they can voice chat, add friends, and create squads.

I see a lot of opportunities here, and when you encourage players to build their own communities, you never know what might come from it.

# Concept Development (screens)

For the presentation video, I edited together some simple concept screen to help bring the idea to life.



Regiment  
Suggestions

Member  
Suggestions

Tournament  
Screen

# Concept Development (lobby)



I then concluded with concept art of my ideal lobby.





# Results

## **Quantitative Success:**

- Demonstrating that a larger percentage of players are joining regiments.
- People are playing more often, and for longer sessions.

## **Qualitative Success:**

- Players are making friends within the CoD Community
  - Players are finding less toxicity
  - Minority players are feeling welcome

# Reflections

## **What worked:**

The idea of focusing on strengthening regiments by suggesting new players was a strong one.

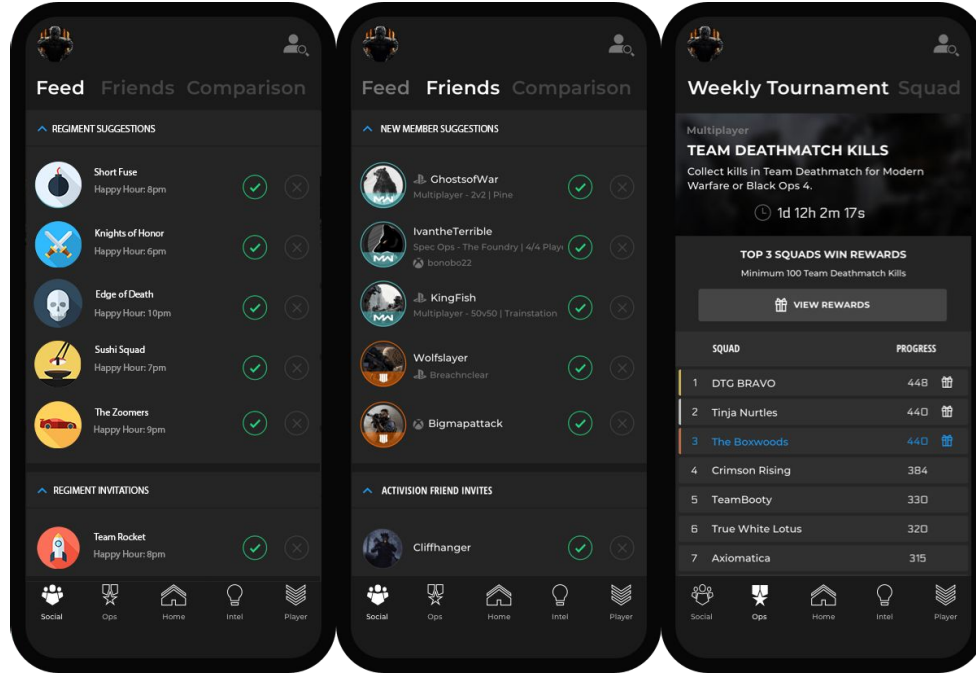
## **What didn't:**

Unfortunately changing the lobby would require work from the dev team, and they're currently tied up with different projects.

## **How I'll move forward:**

I'm going to be teaming up with members of other groups that had a similar idea, and we're going to work on improving the regiment system together!

# Appendix



	pitchford_omzee_interviews
	Copy of Interview Guide - Juteau&Pitchford
	Copy of netography: COD MW WZ
	interview guide_omzee
	pitchford_omzee.interview
	Research report (game community)
	Stakeholder Questions

