



COMPANION APP

# RECRUITMENT ROADMAP

CASE STUDY

**TEAM MEMBERS**

CHASE NGUYEN  
MARCELO LAYERA

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

- 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS
- 3. PROJECT CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION
- 4. CHANGE STATEMENT
- 5. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW
- 6. PRODUCT REVIEW
- 7. SECONDARY RESEARCH
- 8. COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS
- 9. HEURISTIC REVIEW
- 10. NETOGRAPHY
- 11. DOMAIN EXPERT INTERVIEWS
- 12. TARGET AUDIENCE INTERVIEWS
- 13. CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT
- 14. PRESENTATION VIDEO
- 15. RESULTS
- 16. REFLECTION
- 17. APPENDIX



# PROJECT CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION

---

## TASK

To create engaging social features for Activision's Call of Duty. The game is more fun with friends but finding new ones can be difficult and they're rarely complete strangers.

## ROLE

The majority of the project was collaborative for our two-person team—my teammate was Chase Nguyen. We planned the pitch together and then I made the video, for which Chase created many of the visual assets.

## CONCEPT

To provide a ***recruitment roadmap*** for active players to follow when inviting their friends to join, with the companion app providing the pathway and toolset.

## CHANGE STATEMENT

---

**How can active players introduce their friends to COD, in order to create a positive and memorable first-time experience?**

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW: Companion App Design Team

---

📄 stakeholder\_one\_sheet

**Mark Burmeister** team director  
**Drew Gallo** senior UX designer  
**Alex BenBassat** lead UI designer  
**Ida Hashemi** project manager  
**Manuel Hernandez** junior UX/UI designer

The steep learning curve is a challenge when it comes to expanding the active user base. Social aspects of the app provide a clear opportunity to leverage experienced users. Players play with people they know in real life, sometimes friends of friends. Quality matchings are rarely with strangers. Active users are more interested in their stats than are casual or new gamers. They are more likely to be motivated by rewards as well.



*Difficult game for beginners. Easier for new players to do with friends.*



*Focus is on existing players since the companion app is for actives.*



*Randos are unicorns.*

# PRODUCT REVIEW: First-time Player

---

## NEW SONY CONSOLE

- I purchased a PS4 in order to immerse myself in the world of COD Warzone.
- The COD onboarding experience was frustrating and I soon learned the importance of adjusting controller sensitivity.
- I thought a console would eliminate friction, but the huge update patches erased that.



## DYING EARLY & OFTEN

- Early on I was cutting my cord prematurely and dying on impact. Other times I was sniped before I hit the ground.
- Even when I landed on a rooftop, I still managed to fall off and die.
- I never made it out of the gulag alive during my initial COD Warzone play sessions.



## FINALLY I DO THE KILLING

- Success meant sneaking around and trying to avoid shootouts.
- I still died, but eventually I fought my way out of the gulag.
- Unfortunately that was the only way I killed anyone else. It didn't take long for other players to hunt me down after parachuting into a small ring of less than 25 other opponents.



## SECONDARY RESEARCH

 secondary\_research

My initial research revolved around encouragement of prosocial behavior. I discovered a paper on a statistical phenomenon called the *faithfulness-boost effect* which highlights the value of loyal teammates. We referenced the paper as we developed our concept.

### FAITHFULNESS BOOST EFFECT

- Team play is associated with a long-run skill improvement.
- Playing loyally with the same teammate significantly accelerates short- run skill acquisition.

#### RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Faithfulness-boost effect: Loyal teammate selection correlates with skill acquisition improvement in online games**

Gustavo Landfried<sup>1,2</sup>, Diego Fernández Slezak<sup>1,2\*</sup>, Esteban Mocskos<sup>1,3\*</sup>

1 Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Ciencias Exactas y Naturales, Departamento de Computación, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2 CONICET-Universidad de Buenos Aires, Instituto de Investigación en Ciencias de la Computación (ICC), Buenos Aires, Argentina, 3 CONICET, Centro de Simulación Computacional p/Aplic Tecnológicas (CSC), Buenos Aires, Argentina

\* dfslezak@dc.uba.ar (DFS); emocskos@dc.uba.ar (EM)

# COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

## SUMMARY

The COD Warzone Companion App (CA) is packed with common CA features but lacks some that can be found in other companion apps. Missing features to explore (text chat isn't under consideration for technical reasons):

- Non-combat collaborative activities
- Rewarding users for creating custom content
- Mini games for play when updating COD
- Allow users to add tips and tutorials

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS: Companion App				
	CLIENT	DIRECT	DIRECT	DIRECT
Companion App Name	COD: Warzone	Destiny 2 CA	Battlefront CA	CA for Fortnite
Industry	Video Game	Video Game	Video Game	Video Game
Studio or Developer	Activision	Bungie, Inc	Electronic Arts	Gnejs Developer
Official CA	✓	✓	✓	✗
Price	Free	Free	Free	Free (ad supported)
CA url	<a href="#">links to external site</a>	<a href="#">links to external site</a>	<a href="#">links to external site</a>	<a href="#">links to external site</a>
Google Play Rating	4.7 (189K)	4.4 (256K)	4.1 (96K)	N/A (Apple Only)
Apple Store Rating	4.8 (133K)	4.8 (77.2K)	4.5 (8.2K)	4.7 (3.5K)
CA Mini game	✗	✗	✓	✗
Track stats/progress	✓	✓	✓	✓
Earn in-game credits	✓	✓	✓	✗
Includes game news	✓	✓	✓	✓
Friends online status	✓	✓	✓	✗
Manage guild or clan	✓	✓	✗	✗
Social: text chat	✗	✓	✗	✗
Notes	Edit loadouts. Squad tournaments. Store gifting (new). Rewards (open app weekly). Extensive guide & Maps.	Clan create, manage and text chat. Access forums. Manage equipment vault.	Highly interactive with primary game. The App features a card game called <i>Base Command</i> . Cards can be found in game. Game allows players to earn...	Fan made (no official companion app). Includes a user made guide.

# HEURISTIC REVIEW

Our heuristic analysis revealed usability issues and an app targeted towards core players.

## HOME PAGE

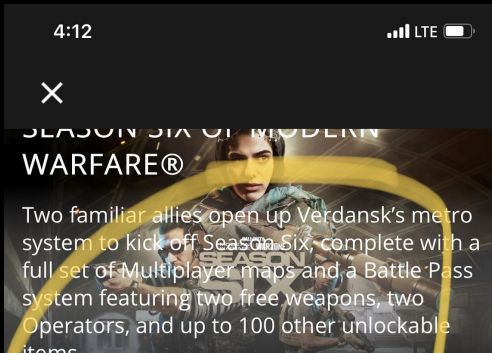
- No company logo or tagline
- Some menu items are unclear
- Nav bar can be overlooked
- Poor visual hierarchy
- Crowded with content

## NAVIGATION

- Nav has small icons and labels
- Side menu easy to read
- Text only buttons easy to miss
- Player search, no global search
- Text difficult to read

## CONTENT QUALITY

- Large headings with little padding
- Mostly targeted to core users
- Expert level jargon
- Overall serious tone



## VISUAL DESIGN

- Consistent color and type
- Overuse of emphasis
- On brand for FPS
- Small touch targets

## FEATURES AND FUNCTIONALITY

- Heat maps are a highlight
- Automatic squads
- Extensive guide information
- Detailed main map

# NETNOGRAPHY

We searched forums and social media to better understand COD players. Some of our findings spoke to unmet player needs, while others were about social and personal motivations.

You KNOW you be playing too much WZ when you think the team in the next street is doing a recon 🤔

Positive social interactions with randoms.

When your Warzone friends have lives outside of Warzone and you're stuck playing solos or with randoms...

Leadership skills. Pain points.

I bought my son a PS4 and put warzone on it so he plays with me and his grandpa a lot and he loves it

Multi-generational gaming.

Getting paired with noobs, no mics, and guys who quit consistently. SBMM has got to go, as it's screwing up the system

Behavior. Matchmaking process.

 the struggles of finding who u just played with

Matchmaking. Positive social experiences.

[CROSSPLAY] For the casual gamers who aren't sweat obsessed

Banter. Encouragement.

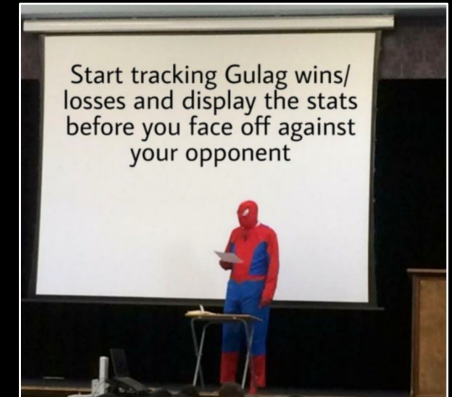
Is it just me or has the game got ridiculously difficult lately?

Cheating. Churn.

[PC] Lonely in Verdansk

Parent gamers.

Memes are commonly used to express player frustrations and wishes.



## DOMAIN EXPERT INTERVIEWS: Geoff Moore and Brandon Caiting

---

### GEOFF MOORE

*Senior Manager Product Creative at Homer*

### BRANDON CAITING

*Game Designer at Riot Games*

#### SUGGESTIONS

- Discover nearby players on same network, like Tinder or Grindr.
- E-sports betting on COD with in game currency or money.
- Elite challenge mode that suggests playing style, constraints or objectives.
- Self-betting with loot boxes.



*Don't make it [CA] parasitic. Let it be interesting by itself.*



*Call of Duty has great FPS mechanics and top notch visuals and audio.*



*Incentivization is no substitute for having its own core purpose.*

# TARGET AUDIENCE INTERVIEWS

---

We conducted four remote interviews with online gamers; each of us taking the lead with two subjects. While some of our subjects made new friends through online gaming, none were from COD. They typically played with people they knew or from their extended networks.

## SANDRA

- Female, 18-25
- Doesn't identify as a gamer.
- Enjoys talking to randoms.
- Likes monopoly and competition.



*"I comforted and helped a Minecraft friend work through a suicidal episode"*

## FELIX

- Male, 26-35
- Identifies as a gamer.
- Doesn't want to play with strangers.
- Likes co-op with friends that live out-of-area.



*"I find it frustrating when players enter negative blame spirals over performance"*

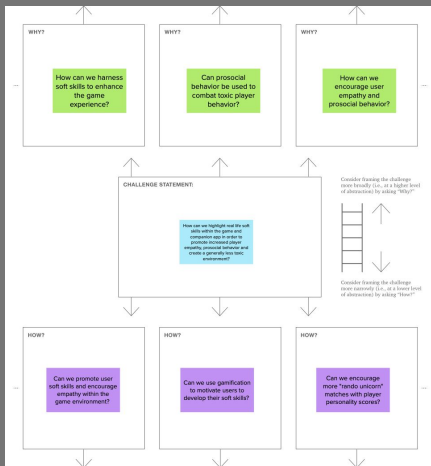
# CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

abstraction\_laddering

## COMBAT TOXICITY

### ABSTRACTION LADDERING

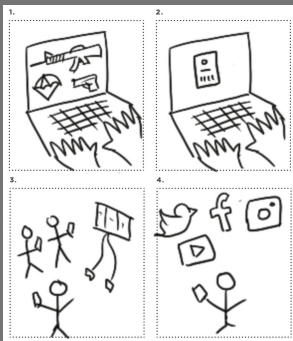
- I used a laddering exercise to help explore how I might encourage prosocial behavior.
- Use personality scores for matchmaking.



## LOCAL MATCHMAKING

### STORYBOARD

- After teaming up with Chase, we started looking at Couch Co-op with local players.
- Although we moved away from the concept of matchmaking between strangers, we came up with the idea of a Welcome Kit which we began testing.



## RECRUITMENT ROADMAP

### LO FI PROTOTYPE

- We mocked up the Welcome Kit.
- We used the mock-up to gauge reaction to the concept.
- After sharing the Welcome Kit we learned that we would need to emphasize that the Roadmap is the main concept, while the Kit is secondary—a tool.



# PRESENTATION VIDEO

---

Click below to watch our 2 minute pitch video on YouTube.



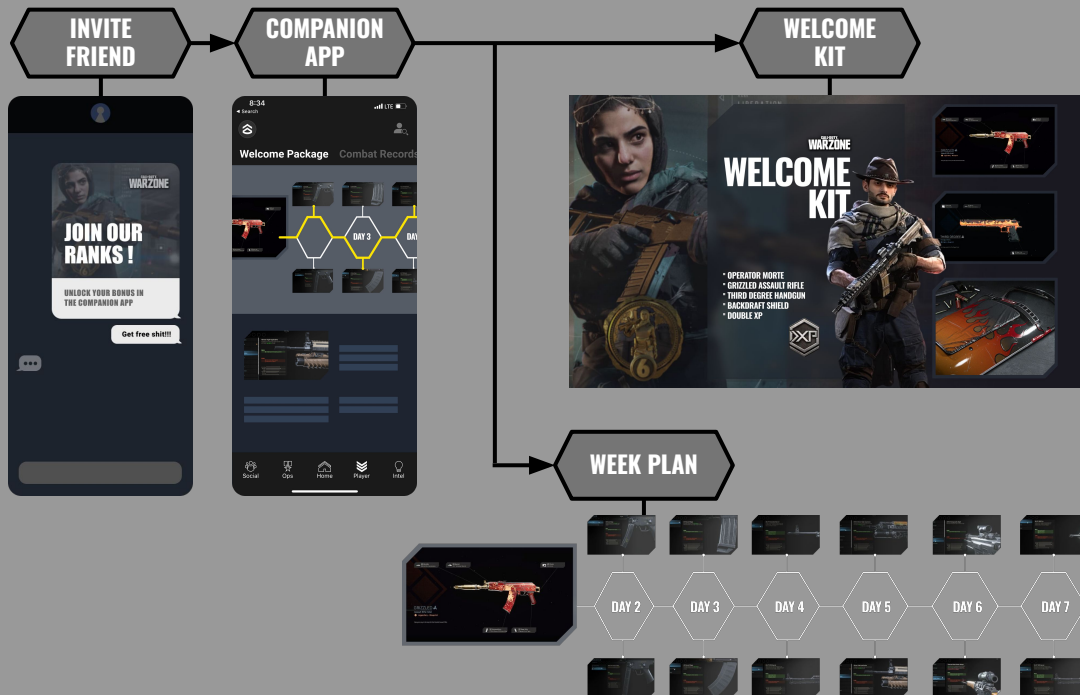
# RESULTS

## CONCEPT DESIGN

- A roadmap for active players to recruit new players.
- Multimodal experience.
- Familiar metaphors and visual design language.

## PROPOSED METRICS

- Invites convert to sign-ups.
- Companion App downloads.
- Welcome Kit downloads.
- Participation and completion.



# REFLECTION

---

I wonder if we might add another layer to the experience. The nurturing and cooperative nature of our idea appeals to basic social needs, but the reward section that follows is simplistic. While the user indiscriminately receives items from a welcome kit, the items are tied to skill development as prescribed by the structure and competitive nature of COD.

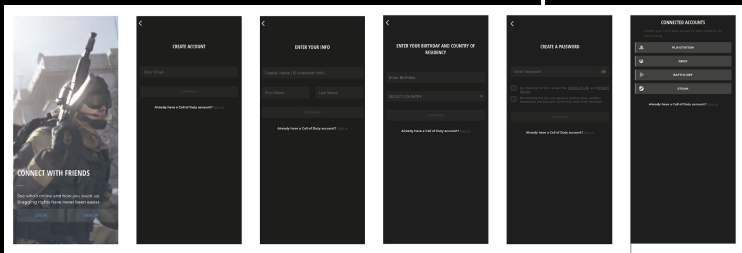
## NEXT STEPS

- Additional social component stage at week end, such as non-competitive groupings and/or mentorship.
- Boot camp section inside Companion App that ties recruitment to other new player content.
- Socially shareable anniversary bonus after one year.
- Incentivization for recruiters.

## FEEDBACK

We received validation from Activision—they shared that the team had held internal discussions regarding incentivized onboarding. The team also provided some actionable suggestions such as adding a mechanism to draw players back to the week plan if they don't follow through with daily interaction and game play.

\_\_\_\_\_



**CA SIGN-UP TESTING**

## STORYBOARD SCRIPT

**VIDEO SCRIPT**

Scene 1:

- A few friends in a living room are having a get together and they are playing COD.
- More people show up and immediately was attracted to what's going on in the game on the tv. (These are non players)
- Conflict arise: Curiosity was sparked.

Scene 2:

- After seeing all the action sequences, one friend wanted to jump in, (the one playing doesn't want to give the new player his controller since he doesn't want his K/D ratio to be affected.)
- The host of the party has the companion app and invite this new player to sign up because he gets a "welcome kit" (gift bundle) to get him started in the game. (the player downloads the app) The host quickly entices the new player that the kit includes good weapons, armor, skins, etc... to help the new player start.

Scene 3:

- Show the problems of the slow signing up process.
- Show the difficulty of starting the game by yourself.
- Show the benefit of in person gaming with friends.

Scene 4:

(additional considerations / future possibilities)

- Social squads not competition-based, for conversion purposes to incentivize more hosts to give out these welcome kits.
- What if kits can be sent out virtually to help spread the word of mouth for Cod.
- What if it's a feature of conventions that can send out squad kits to players to experience the game.
- What if your squad can put together items that they are willing to give away and there might be incentives for the squad as a whole.

REVISED SCRIPT	
Script	Visuals
Do you remember how difficult it was the first time you played COD?	Camera on screen and pressing start. <a href="https://youtu.be/5Gm4nR9rJ3s?list=PL7t7">https://youtu.be/5Gm4nR9rJ3s?list=PL7t7</a>
Did you feel alone? Confused? Dead within seconds?	Video Clip: Death by Parachute <a href="https://youtu.be/0u0MEUvZ7tk&amp;list=PL7t7">https://youtu.be/0u0MEUvZ7tk&amp;list=PL7t7</a>
For that reason, one of our interview participants, Victor, doesn't like playing games alone because he feels like he should be doing something else instead.	<b>SHOW</b> Photo of 'Victor'?  <b>TEXT</b> I don't like playing alone because I feel like I should be doing something else instead.
Especially for COD being iterated on a yearly cycle.	<a href="https://i.ytimg.com/vivE0uKzr3Akag/maxresdefault.jpg">https://i.ytimg.com/vivE0uKzr3Akag/maxresdefault.jpg</a>  N/A (Bd) Something like this? <a href="https://www.chicagot.com/magazines/features/ann-velazquez-on-the">https://www.chicagot.com/magazines/features/ann-velazquez-on-the</a> <a href="https://imgur.com/a/wlp-content/uploads/2015/06/02/02.jpg">https://imgur.com/a/wlp-content/uploads/2015/06/02/02.jpg</a>
he says "the continuous release of features intimidates me and I don't know where to start."	he says "the continuous release of features intimidates me and I don't know where to start."
For Victor, the idea of COD is almost... DEAD ON ARRIVAL.	Dramatic high impact drop text onto screen
But, he has friends who are active COD players...	<a href="http://www.pixels.com/videos/two-milo-having-fun-playing-with-video-game-coms-04-701016/">http://www.pixels.com/videos/two-milo-having-fun-playing-with-video-game-coms-04-701016/</a>
So, how can an active player recruit Victor into the game?	Same as above
Research in online games points to skill acquisition benefits of learning a new game	Pan across the white paper. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211014">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211014</a>

Script	Visuals
Do you remember how difficult it was the first time you played COD?	Camera on start screen and pressing start. <a href="https://youtu.be/3uYt_e0R8_U4?list=DLT771">https://youtu.be/3uYt_e0R8_U4?list=DLT771</a>
Did you feel alone? Confused? Died within seconds?	Video clip: Death by Parachute <a href="https://youtu.be/3uMEV7Zt4M?list=DLT771">https://youtu.be/3uMEV7Zt4M?list=DLT771</a>
For that reason, one of our interview participants, Victor, doesn't like playing games because he feels like he should be doing something else instead.	<b>SHOW</b> Photo of "Victor" <b>TEXT</b> "I don't like playing alone because I feel like I should be doing something else instead."
Especially for COD being iterated on a yearly cycle.	<a href="https://itdm.com/en/Video/2018/04/magnum-effect-3/">https://itdm.com/en/Video/2018/04/magnum-effect-3/</a> N/A (but) something like this <a href="https://www.chrisatic.com/magnumeffect3/valley-of-gods/">https://www.chrisatic.com/magnumeffect3/valley-of-gods/</a> <a href="https://magnum-on-palms-content/uploads/2/1500K-Clip-of-Valley-gods">https://magnum-on-palms-content/uploads/2/1500K-Clip-of-Valley-gods</a>
he says "The continuous release of features irritates me and I don't know where to start."	he says "The continuous release of features irritates me and I don't know where to start."
For Victor, the idea of COD is almost... DEAD ON ARRIVAL.	Dramatic high impact drop text on screen
BUT, his friends who are active COD players...	<a href="https://www.pexels.com/video/two-men-having-fun-playing-with-a-video-game-console-121018/">https://www.pexels.com/video/two-men-having-fun-playing-with-a-video-game-console-121018/</a>
So, how can an active player react? Victor into the game?	Same as above
Research in online games points to skill acquisition benefits of learning a new game	Pen across the white paper: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211054">https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211054</a>