

Social Showdown

A card game for the digital age attempting to curb social media addiction.

P3 Project Report

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Declaration

I declare that this written document represents my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented, fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.



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Approval Sheet

Interaction Design Project 3 titled "Social Showdown: Attempting to curb social media addiction with card game" by Yash H. Bharani (Roll number: 22M2244) is approved for partial fulfillments of the requirements for the degree of "Masters in Design" in Interaction Design at Industrial Design Center, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

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Abstract

Social media's pervasive nature raises concerns about its impact on mental health and productivity. This study addresses these issues by adopting strategies to mitigate social media addiction, using ludic design principles to engage users in a playful yet reflective manner. "Social Showdown" was developed through multiple design iterations, informed by feedback and interaction design theories. The game's mechanics reflect real-world social media dynamics, encouraging players to critically assess their digital behaviors. Key elements include personality-based scoring, task-oriented post-cards, reaction-based interactions, and strategic power action cards, promoting self-awareness and mindfulness. Players assume different social media personalities, complete tasks, and collect reactions to earn validation points, simulating social media management. The game's design encourages reflection on social media habits and the value placed on digital interactions. Comprehensive surveys with participants indicated a positive impact, with many reporting increased mindfulness and greater awareness of their social media

usage. These findings suggest that ludic design can effectively address behavioral issues associated with social media addiction.

This project contributes to interaction design research by demonstrating how game-based interventions can promote healthier digital habits. Future work will refine the game's design based on user feedback and explore its long-term impact on social media usage.

Keywords

Interaction Design, Social Media Addiction, Ludic Design, Mindfulness, Game-Based Intervention, User Experience, Behavioral Change.

1. Introduction

Digital Consumption: Rise and Implications

In the last decade, the digitization of human life has seen unprecedented growth, reshaping how we interact, work, learn, and entertain ourselves. As of 2023, the global internet user base has surged to nearly 5 billion, representing more than 60% of the world's population. This significant increase from a decade earlier marks a growing dependency on digital technologies, integrating them into the very fabric of daily life [1].

Social media consumption patterns further evidence the intensification of digital engagement. Data from Statista [2] reveals that the average daily social media usage among internet users worldwide has escalated to 147 minutes per day, a slight increase from 145 minutes in the preceding year. This trend underscores the central role of social media in modern communication and social interaction.

In countries like India, the scenario is particularly pronounced with a substantial portion of internet access being facilitated through mobile phones. Reports suggest that the average Indian smartphone user dedicated about

3.5 hours daily to their device, with even higher figures among younger demographics [3]. This indicates a significant investment in time in digital platforms and is driven largely by the convenience and accessibility of mobile technology.

The World Health Organization's recognition of "Gaming Disorder" as a diagnosable condition in 2018 marks a critical acknowledgement of the potential harm of excessive digital engagement. An estimated 3-4% of gamers are affected by this condition, highlighting the need for awareness and intervention in the face of growing digital addiction [4].

Moreover, the correlation between digital overuse and mental health issues is increasingly evident. A study published in JAMA Pediatrics found a significant association between screen time and the risk of depression and anxiety in adolescents, underscoring the psychological impact of excessive digital consumption [5].

Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable, with a report by the Kaiser Family Foundation [6] revealing that those aged 8-18 spend more than 7.5 hours a day with digital devices, excluding time spent on schoolwork or homework. This extensive digital engagement raises concerns about its impact on physical health, social skills, and academic performance.

The concept of "Digital Overdose" has been increasingly discussed as a modern plague, silently affecting individuals by draining vitality, stealing time, distorting reality, and fragmenting the essence of human connection. This metaphorical plague reflects the broader societal challenge of managing our digital habits to foster healthier interactions with technology.

Social Media: A Boon to Bane



Img 1.1 Source: AI Generated ChatGPT

Social media was intended to (and is still being marketed as:) a tool that revolutionized communication and there is merit to this argument. It served as a platform for cultural exchange, supported social causes, and offered new economic opportunities. Key Contributions of Social Media are:

1. **Community Building:** Reduced isolation by connecting like-minded individuals globally and fostering a sense of belonging and support.
2. **Cultural Exchange and Social Causes:** Enabled diverse cultural sharing and mobilized support for social movements, demonstrating its power in societal change.[7]
3. **Self-Expression and Empowerment:** Democratized content creation, and allowing users to voice opinions and challenge societal norms.
4. **Marketplace and Livelihood:** Transformed into a digital marketplace, providing livelihood opportunities for entrepreneurs and freelancers.
5. **Access to Information:** Enhanced political scrutiny and awareness by making information more accessible.
6. **Emergency Assistance and Disaster Response:** Played a crucial role in emergency assistance and disaster response, facilitating timely communication and coordination.

7. **Educational Resources:** Expanded access to educational materials, promoting personal and professional growth.
8. **Innovation and Collaboration:** Fostered innovation and collaboration by connecting minds across the globe, driving forward collective knowledge and creativity.

Social media's initial promise was profound: a digital landscape to empower the masses, enhance connectivity, and democratize information access. However, the narrative began to shift as the platforms matured. For the corporations behind these digital communities, user engagement emerged as the paramount metric, driving strategies aimed at maximizing time spent within their ecosystems. This pivot has led to the engineering of environments that prioritize short-term dopamine hits over substantive interactions, with several key strategies employed to capture and retain user attention[8]:

1. **Personalized Content Feeds:** Tailoring what users see to keep them scrolling, leveraging data analytics to present irresistibly relevant content.
2. **Visual and Auditory Stimuli:** Utilizing engaging media formats to create a sensory-rich experience, making passive consumption almost reflexive.

3. **Algorithmic Bias:** Prioritizing high-engagement content, thus promoting sensational or divisive material that triggers emotional reactions.
4. **Formation of Habits:** Designing interfaces and experiences that encourage daily, if not hourly, interactions, turning casual use into habitual behavior.
5. **Infinite Content:** Offering an endless stream of content, ensuring users never reach the end of their feeds, and fostering prolonged engagement.
6. **Easy Creation and Sharing:** Lowering barriers to content generation and distribution to increase the volume of interactions and keep the platforms lively.
7. **Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) & Sense of Urgency:** Highlighting time-sensitive content and popular trends to create a sense of urgency and exclusivity.
8. **Cross-Platform Integration and Time-Limited Content:** Encouraging content consumption across different platforms and introducing ephemeral content to create a sense of scarcity and prompt immediate engagement.
9. **Notifications, Tagging, and Mentions:** Keeping users hooked by leveraging social obligations and curiosity through real-time alerts.
10. **Gamification and Variable Rewards Structures:** Implementing game-like elements and unpredictable rewards to stimulate continued use and exploration.

11. Content Serialization and Real-Time Validations:

Encouraging serial content consumption and offering immediate feedback mechanisms, such as likes and comments, to validate user contributions.

These extensive strategies employed by social media platforms have culminated in a series of unintended side effects that reverberate across societal and individual levels. These impacts, ranging from the subtle reshaping of societal norms to profound changes in personal well-being, underscore the complexities of our digital dependencies.

Individual Level Impacts



Img 1.2 Source: [Swati Yadav](#)

1. **Altered Communication Patterns and Loss of Social Skills:** The predominance of digital interactions over face-to-face communication has altered traditional communication patterns, potentially impairing social skills and deepening feelings of isolation.
2. **Consumerism, Materialistic Values, and Excessive Spending:** Social media platforms, laden with advertisements and influencer endorsements, promote consumerism and materialistic values, often leading to excessive spending and financial strain.
3. **Distorted Body Image and Self-esteem:** The pervasive culture of comparison on social media can lead to distorted body image perceptions and negatively affect self-esteem, particularly among adolescents and young adults.
4. **Cyberbullying, Misinformation, and Online Scams:** The anonymity and reach of social media facilitate cyberbullying, the spread of misinformation, and the proliferation of online scams, impacting mental health and contributing to a mistrustful online environment.
5. **Health Hazards:** Prolonged use of social media can lead to health issues, including disrupted sleep patterns, decreased attention spans, bad body posture, and exposure to harmful blue light, which

can impair cognitive functions and reduce overall well-being.

Societal Level Impacts



Img 1.3 Source: [Swati Yadav](#)

1. **Changing Societal Norms and Homogenization of Culture:** Social media has been instrumental in reshaping societal norms, often promoting a homogenized global culture at the expense of local traditions and diversity. The global reach of these platforms can dilute cultural uniqueness, leading to a convergence of tastes, values, and norms.
2. **Voluntary Digital Surveillance and Privacy Erosion:** The commodification of personal data for targeted content and advertisements has led to a

normalization of privacy erosion, with users often voluntarily surrendering their information under the guise of connectivity (Zuboff, 2019).

3. **Instant Gratification Culture:** The design of social media fosters an expectation for immediate responses and rewards, contributing to a broader societal shift towards valuing instant gratification over delayed satisfaction.
4. **Echo Chambers and Polarization:** Algorithmically curated content feeds contribute to the formation of echo chambers, where users are predominantly exposed to viewpoints similar to their own, exacerbating societal polarization.

1.1 The Psychological Landscape of Digital Addiction

In the digital age, social media platforms have transformed the way individuals interact, perceive themselves, and engage with the broader society. This transformation, while offering unparalleled opportunities for connectivity, has also precipitated a complex array of psychological effects, contributing to the phenomenon of digital addiction.

Social Comparison Theory posits that individuals evaluate their abilities and opinions by comparing themselves to others. In the realm of social media, this theory manifests through constant engagement in comparative behaviors, leading to feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem as users measure their lives against idealized portrayals online. This comparison trap fuels addictive behaviors as users seek validation to assuage these negative self-perceptions.

Social Identity Theory examines how individuals' sense of self is influenced by their group memberships. Social media platforms exacerbate this phenomenon by providing spaces for users to affirm and showcase their

engagements over meaningful, deep communications, thereby affecting users' personality traits.

The principle of **Operant Conditioning**, where behaviors are shaped by rewards or punishments [9], is evident in how social media platforms create addictive patterns. Likes, comments, and shares serve as rewards for user participation, establishing a **compulsion loop**. This loop is reinforced by notifications and the habitual nature of the posting.

Digital addiction is further complicated by **Cognitive Dissonance**, where the knowledge of social media's harmful effects clashes with the compulsive urge to engage. This dissonance is intertwined with **dopamine-driven feedback loops**, wherein the anticipation of social rewards stimulates dopamine release, encouraging repetitive engagement with the platform despite adverse consequences[10].

An **attention bias** towards social media, characterized by a preference for these platforms over other activities or media, often serves as a **coping mechanism** for users. This mechanism, while providing temporary relief from stress or negative emotions, perpetuates the addiction cycle, as it prevents addressing the underlying issues prompting escape into digital realms.

2. Solutions to Address Digital Addiction:

Digital addiction is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach that can encompass diverse creative design strategies across domains. Each strategy plays a crucial role in addressing different aspects of digital addiction, offers distinct advantages and presents unique challenges towards healthier digital habits.

2.1 Psychological Interventions

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):

Tailored to address digital addiction, CBT helps individuals identify and modify dysfunctional thought patterns and behaviors related to their digital device usage. It empowers users to establish healthier habits through structured problem-solving [11].

Pros: Directly addresses underlying thought patterns; evidence-based effectiveness.

Cons: Requires commitment and may not be easily deliverable to all due to lack of expertise.

Mindfulness-Based Interventions:

These programs encourage heightened awareness and presence, aiding individuals in breaking free from compulsive digital behaviors. Techniques include meditation, breathing exercises, and mindfulness practices, which help reduce stress and increase self-regulation [12].

Pros: Enhances self-awareness; promotes emotional regulation and reduction in compulsive behaviors.

Cons: Require sustained practice for significant benefits on behalf of the patient, and a lot of time to inculcate into a sustained habit.

Family Therapy and Support Groups:

Involving family members in the therapeutic process or participating in support groups can provide a supportive environment for addressing digital addiction, facilitating open discussions and sharing strategies for managing digital habits.

Pros: Do not require much expertise to deliver upon

Cons: There is a low scope for impactful design intervention, as it is more dependent on the participation of the community.

2.2 Technological Solutions

Digital Wellbeing Tools:

Applications that monitor screen time, and app usage, and provide insights into digital habits that encourage self-awareness. Features like app limits and bedtime modes can help users manage their digital consumption more effectively.

Pros: Offers tangible data on usage patterns.

Cons: Does not address underlying causes of addiction. Depends on the user's interpretation of what's normal.

Content Blockers and Website Filters:

These tools restrict access to addictive websites or apps, reducing temptation and helping users focus on more productive or fulfilling activities.

Pros: can effectively reduce access to addictive content.

Cons: Can be circumvented or disabled by users. It is a forced-upon solution which does not inherently change the user's thinking.

Gamified Productivity Apps:

Leveraging game mechanics to reward users for minimizing screen time or completing tasks without digital distractions can make the process of reducing digital usage more engaging and rewarding.

Pros: Supports overall well-being; can improve focus and productivity.

Cons: Risk of becoming another form of screen engagement; effectiveness depends on regular use and the individual's willpower.

2.3 Policy and Regulation

Digital Usage Guidelines:

Implementing guidelines for digital device usage in schools, workplaces, and public spaces can encourage more mindful use of technology.

Data Privacy and Transparency Laws:

Regulations that require tech companies to be transparent about their algorithms and data usage practices can help mitigate manipulative practices that contribute to digital addiction.

Age Restrictions and Screen Time Recommendations:

Setting legal age restrictions for social media use and official screen time recommendations can help protect younger users from early exposure to addictive digital platforms

Pros: Has the potential to enforce widespread change; and can hold companies accountable for addictive designs.

Cons: Implementation challenges; potential for stifling innovation or encroaching on privacy.

2.4 Ludic Design Solutions

Incorporating playful design elements that promote offline interaction or physical activity can redirect the urge for digital engagement towards more beneficial activities. It uniquely combines the engaging appeal of gaming with behavioral change strategies, making it an innovative and appealing solution. While it also faces challenges, its capacity to make the process of overcoming digital addiction engaging and rewarding positions it as a particularly promising approach.

App Redesign:

Designing social media apps with user well-being in mind, such as including features that encourage breaks or physical movement, can help counteract the sedentary and addictive nature of digital consumption.

Pros: Can strike the problem at its core.

Cons: These solutions will never be adopted by the capitalist industry without policy creation and strict enforcement. And the judging parameters for its implementation prima facie are vague.

Environmental Design:

Creating spaces that encourage face-to-face interaction and activities away from screens can naturally reduce digital usage. This includes the design of public spaces, workplaces, and homes that prioritize social interaction and physical engagement over digital consumption.

Physical Games:

By engaging individuals in real-world interactions, physical games promote health, social skills, and a direct connection with the environment. These activities provide a refreshing counterbalance to the sedentary and isolated nature of excessive screen time.

Pros: facilitates face-to-face interaction, fostering social bonds, teamwork, and communication skills absent in digital engagements. Beyond entertainment, they can teach valuable skills such as strategy, leadership, and problem-solving.

Cons: can be limited by space, equipment, and the availability of participants, making them less accessible. Some require specific equipment or access to facilities, which can be a barrier.

3. Card Game Design:

3.1 Rationale

In the pursuit of effective strategies to combat digital addiction, our project, "Social Savior," ventures beyond traditional interventions like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and support groups. While these methodologies have proven effective in various contexts, their scope for design innovation remains limited, particularly when aiming to foster a deeper, intrinsic reflection on digital habits. This limitation primarily arises from the structured and often formal nature of CBT and support group interactions, which might not engage all demographics, especially younger audiences, in meaningful discussions about their digital consumption.

Embracing Ludic Design

This decision is grounded in the belief that playful learning can serve as a powerful medium for reflection and behavior change, engaging individuals in critical thinking about their social media usage, without the direct resistance or

defensiveness that might arise from more confrontational interventions.

Indoor game

This decision is underpinned by a multifaceted rationale, emphasizing the unique advantages that indoor games offer:

- **Controlled Environment:** Indoor games offer a distraction-free setting conducive to focused engagement and deep reflection on digital habits.
- **Reflection and Mindfulness:** These games encourage players to think critically and mindfully about their relationship with digital devices and social media.
- **Social Interaction:** Facilitates face-to-face social bonding and communication, countering the isolating effects of excessive digital device use.
- **Accessibility:** Easily accessible to a wide audience, requiring minimal resources and adaptable to various indoor settings.
- **Inclusivity:** Can be designed to cater to diverse groups, including different ages, abilities, and interests, ensuring broad participation.
- **Educational Potential:** Leverages the natural engagement of play for educational purposes,

embedding messages about digital wellness in an enjoyable format.

- **Minimal Preparation:** Requires little to no preparation, making it easy for individuals or groups to start playing and learning.

Following are the categories of indoor games that can act as a basis for designing a ludic activity for this purpose.

1. Board Games:

Examples: Monopoly, Catan, Risk, Ludo, Battleship

Pros:

- Foster strategic thinking and planning.
- Encourage family and friend gatherings, promoting social interaction.

Cons:

- Setup and playtime can be lengthy, possibly deterring regular engagement.
- Limited replay value without purchasing expansions or new games.



Img 3.1 People playing board Games, AI Generated, Chat GPT

2. Puzzle Games:

Examples: Jigsaw puzzles, Sudoku, Crossword puzzles

Pros:

- Enhance cognitive skills like problem-solving and spatial reasoning.
- Can be a meditative, stress-reducing activity.

Cons:

- Often solitary activities, missing opportunities for social bonding.
- Repetitive nature might not appeal, limiting engagement.



Img 3.2 A person playing Puzzle Game, AI Generated, ChatGPT

3. Tabletop Role-Playing Games (RPGs):

Examples: Dungeons & Dragons, Pathfinder, Mafia

Pros:

- Creative storytelling fosters imagination and empathy.
- Strong social component, building teamwork and communication skills.

Cons:

- Requires a committed group and significant preparation time.
- The learning curve can be steep for newcomers, posing a barrier to entry.



Img 3.3 Source: AI Generated, ChatGPT

4. Physical Activity Games:

Examples: Twister, Indoor mini-golf, table tennis

Pros:

- Promote physical activity and can be inclusive of all age groups.
- Offer a fun break from sedentary screen time, improving physical health.

Cons:

- Space and physical ability limitations may restrict participation.
- Setup and storage requirements can be cumbersome for frequent play.



Img 3.4 Source: AI Generated, ChatGPT

5. Toy-based games:

Examples: Jenga, tables-tumbler,

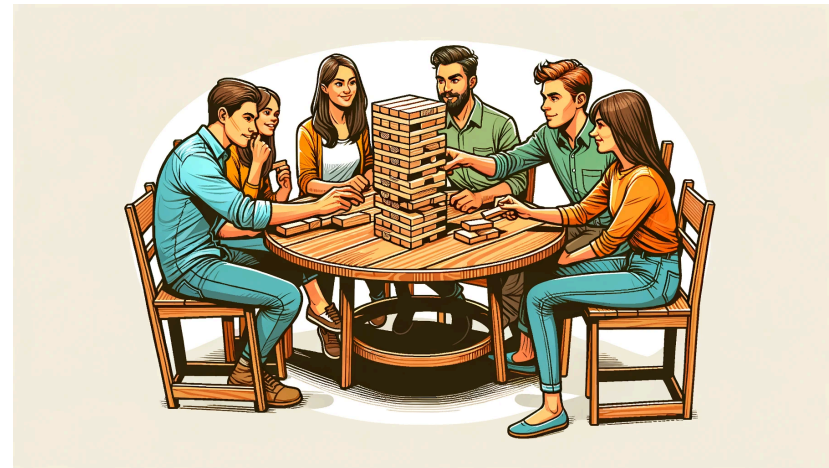
Pros:

- The need for careful, deliberate actions encourages players to be fully present, fostering mindfulness and reducing stress.
- easy to transport and can be played in various settings.

Cons:

- Requires fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination etc. through precise movements and strategy.
- These games are not easily accessible to a wide range of ages and abilities, and also not affordable to a larger audience.

- They are prone to damage. Their built quality can greatly impact their appeal.



Img 3.5 Source: AI Generated, ChatGPT

Card Games

Given the varied landscape of indoor games, card games emerge as a particularly effective tool for combating digital addiction, striking a balance between accessibility, engagement, and educational potential.

Examples: Uno, Exploding Kittens, custom-designed mindfulness and reflection card games

Pros:

- *Versatility and Accessibility:* Card games are easy to learn and quick to set up, making them accessible to a wide audience with minimal barriers to entry.
- *Social Interaction:* They naturally encourage social gathering and interaction, fostering communication and bonding without digital mediation.
- *Cognitive Engagement:* Playing card games can improve cognitive abilities such as memory, strategy, and critical thinking.
- *Cost-Effective:* Most card games are more affordable than board games and do not require additional expansions to maintain replay value.
- *Portable and Flexible:* Cards are easy to transport and can be played in a variety of settings, from homes to cafes or parks, making them a versatile option for encouraging social interaction outside of digital realms.

Cons:

- *Variability in Engagement:* The simplicity of some card games might not captivate all players, potentially limiting long-term engagement for certain individuals.



Img 3.6 Source: AI Generated, ChatGPT

3.2 Game Ideation

Finding the scope of a game in social media:

We identified and argued that the primary motivation of anyone enrolling on social media is the urge to get social validation. Yuval Noah Harari has also argued in the book “Sapiens” that the human habit of gossiping, which was instrumental in forming close-knit communities, and helped humans evolve and thrive, has now been amplified because of social media which is now the primary tool for

this habit's manifestation. These naturalist viewpoints suggest that the primary motivations behind human engagement with social media are deeply rooted in our evolutionary past, fulfilling innate desires for communication, social cohesion, self-expression, and status.

Because of this, social media has become a platform where actions such as posting, commenting, and sharing are primarily driven by the desire for social validation. Users engage in various activities, seeking likes, comments, shares, and followers as metrics of their social worth. This transactional nature of engagement, where every action is performed with the expectation of receiving social validation in return, forms the central pivot point around which the entire social media process can be gamified.



Img 3.7 Source: AI Generated, ChatGPT

Why Social Validation?

The decision to focus on social validation as the core mechanic for "Social Showdown" is based on several factors:

Relatability:

Social validation is a universally understood and experienced aspect of social media. It resonates with players' real-life experiences, making the game more engaging and meaningful.

Immediate Feedback:

The pursuit of likes, comments, and followers provides an immediate feedback loop, which is essential for maintaining player engagement and excitement.

Simplicity and Depth:

The mechanics around social validation are straightforward yet offer depth in strategy. Players can easily grasp the concept but can also engage in complex strategies to maximize their validation points.

Reflective Potential:

By gamifying social validation, players are encouraged to reflect on their own behaviors and the broader implications

of seeking validation online. This aligns with the project's goal to promote mindfulness and critical thinking about social media use.

Balance of Fun and Education:

The game strikes a balance between being entertaining and educational. While players have fun competing for validation points, they also gain insights into the dynamics of social media interactions.

3.3 Target Audience:

1. Primary Target Audience:

Young Adults (Ages 18-25)

Characteristics:

- Highly active on social media platforms for both academic and personal purposes.
- Tend to be tech-savvy and open to digital trends.
- Often experience the pressures of social validation and online presence.
- Prone to exploring new and innovative forms of entertainment.

Motivations:

- Seek engaging and entertaining experiences.
- Enjoy collaborative and competitive games.
- Interested in self-improvement and reflective activities.
- Appreciate games that are socially relevant and relatable.

Engagement Strategies:

- Use contemporary and relatable social media scenarios.
- Incorporate humor and current trends to maintain interest.
- Ensure accessibility and ease of understanding to cater to varying levels of gaming experience.
- Design game mechanics that encourage group play and interaction.

2. Secondary Target Audience:

Young Professionals (Ages 25-30)

Characteristics:

- Balance between professional responsibilities and social media engagement.
- Often aware of the implications of social media on productivity and mental health.

- Appreciate intellectually stimulating and strategic games.

Motivations:

- Seek mindful and reflective experiences to balance their digital lives.
- Interested in games that offer both relaxation and intellectual challenge.
- Value the educational aspect of games that provide insights into social media behavior.

Engagement Strategies:

- Incorporate strategic elements that challenge their analytical skills.
- Use real-world social media scenarios that reflect professional and personal life balance.
- Design for quick and engaging gameplay sessions suitable for busy schedules.

3.4 Concept Development:

Core mechanics and features:

Key pointers of the game mechanics is as follows:

Quantification of Social Validation

"Social Showdown " quantifies social validation using reactions such as likes, comments, shares and follower counts. Players collect these points based on their actions, such as posting content, mimicking real-world social media dynamics other players elicit a response. The quantification of reactions thus highlights the fact that at its core, everyone on social media is there to collect social validation and one should be mindful of this fact and not be too emotional on anything they see on those platforms.

Platform-Specific Personas

Each player receives a personality card, reflecting the distinct persona of different social media platforms. This mechanic encourages players to adapt their strategies according to their assigned platform, illustrating that users should conform to their personalities, and preferred behaviors and be mindful of the way their personality is being perceived based on their social media usage.

Action-Reaction Dynamics

The game's core mechanics revolve around the action-reaction dynamic, where players' posts prompt reactions from others. This simulates social media interactions and highlights the reciprocal nature of online engagement. The rules will be set in such a way that the

users will be incentivised to be a creator rather than the consumer on these social media platforms.

Strategic Use of powers

Power action and special reactions such as collaboration, ignore, digital-detox, account disabled, ,data breach etc. will introduce strategic elements, offering temporary boosts or challenges to opponents. At the same time, they will incentivise good habits, and warn players against the threats that they pose to themselves when on social media. These will thus add depth to gameplay, encouraging players to think critically about their actions and their impact on the game and real-world social media use.

4. Social Showdown

Social Showdown is an interactive strategy game where players compete to dominate the social media landscape. Build your influence, engage followers, and outwit opponents in this dynamic physical-digital battleground. With real-time challenges and strategic decision-making, Social Showdown tests your ability to navigate the ever-changing world of online influence.



Img 4.1 Box Design for Card Game

4.1 Basic Game Mechanics

The game involves a group of players who, in their turn, engage in activities designed to generate social validation points. These activities can include making a post on their timeline or performing a special action, or both aimed at generating social validation points that add to their tally. Each post and action elicits reactions, which can be positive or negative, from the other players, creating a transactional exchange of social validation points during each turn. This dynamic interaction mimics the social media environment where every action has a reaction, fostering competition and strategy among players.

Players will also assume different social media personalities, each with unique scoring multipliers that influence their strategy. As players navigate the game, they balance self-promotion through posts with strategic maneuvers using special actions and powers. The accumulation of reactions and validation points throughout the game reflects the ongoing pursuit of social approval and status in a digital context.

4.2 Evolution of the game

Pilot Study Feedbacks and Iterations



Img 4.2.1 Phase one testing

Social Media Platforms:

For this game I wanted to have the dynamics of 6 different platforms amongst many that are popular in India. These 6 platforms are:



Facebook: A versatile platform where users can connect with friends, join groups, and share diverse content, making it a hub for community engagement and multimedia sharing.



Instagram: A visually-driven platform that emphasizes photo and video sharing, allowing users to showcase their creativity and connect through captivating visual stories.



LinkedIn: A professional networking site focused on career development, where users can build their professional brand, connect with industry peers, and explore job opportunities.



YouTube: A video-sharing platform that enables users to upload, watch, and interact with videos, fostering a vibrant community of content creators and viewers.

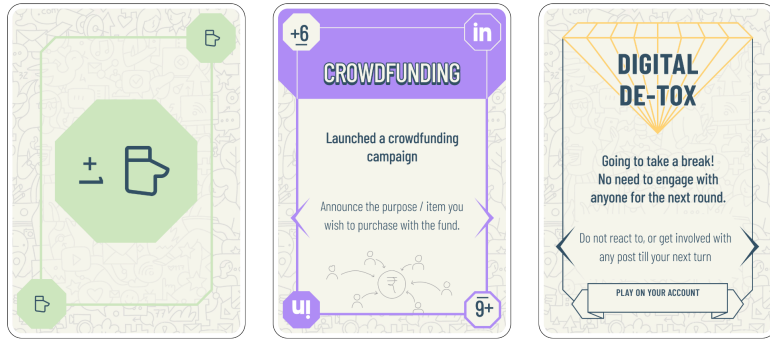


Snapchat: A multimedia messaging app known for its ephemeral content and creative filters, providing a fun and spontaneous way for users to communicate and share moments.



Twitter: A microblogging platform that facilitates real-time conversations and news updates, allowing users to share brief, impactful messages and engage with a global audience.

Ratio of Reaction cards, Post-cards and Power Cards.



Img 4.2.2 Reaction Cards (136), Post-cards(42) and Power Cards(18)

The design process of "Social Showdown" involved a meticulous balance of card types to ensure a smooth and engaging gameplay experience. One of the critical aspects of this balance was determining the optimal ratio of reaction cards, post-cards, and power-up cards. Through iterative playtesting and analysis, we identified the appropriate distribution to support the game mechanics effectively.

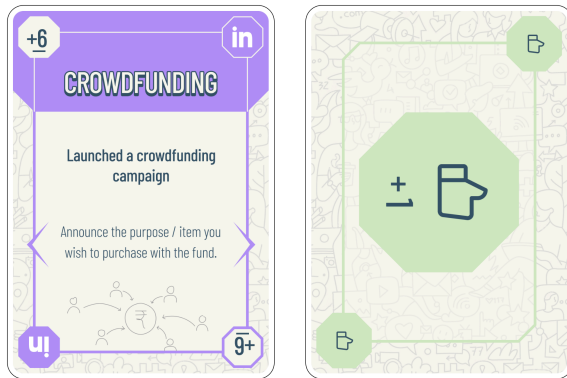
Initially, it became apparent that reaction cards needed to outnumber post-cards significantly. Reaction cards, being central to the game's transactional nature of social validation, are required more frequently as players respond to each other's posts. To quantify this need, multiple

playtests were conducted with different player configurations (3, 4, and 5 players). Through this process, we discovered that a post cards to reaction cards ratio of approximately 1:2.5 was optimal.

Further, the decision was made to render reaction cards non-reusable once collected. And after the concept of a "Bank" was introduced, which increased their consumption rate during gameplay. This distribution ensures that players consistently have sufficient reactions to engage with each other's posts. We also determined that it would be fun sometimes when the players were out of reaction cards and hence they lose one of their post-cards.

Within the reaction cards, a 3:1 ratio of positive to negative reactions was established, reflecting diverse social media interactions. This includes 96 positive reaction cards, 24 negative reaction cards, and 12 special reaction cards with unique effects.

Score on the post cards, & reaction cards



SCORE +6

SCORE +1

Img 4.2.3 Post Card scores (+6, +8, +10 & +12) and reaction cards (+1, +2, +3 & +4, -1, -2, -3 & -4)

The next critical step was defining the scores on the reaction and post-cards. The objective was to ensure that scores from post-cards formed a significant portion of the total score, thereby emphasizing the importance of personality cards in the final outcome. Given that reaction cards were 2-3 times more abundant than post-cards, the scoring values were calibrated accordingly.

Post-cards were assigned scores in the range of 6-12 points. This higher scoring range ensured that the personality cards, which multiply post scores, would have a substantial impact on the final score. On the other hand,

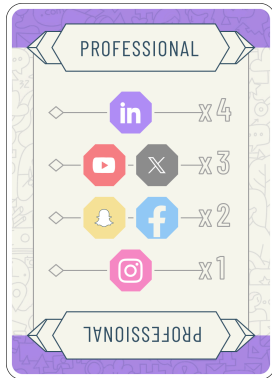
reaction cards, more abundant and frequently used, were assigned lower absolute values ranging between 1-4 points. This distribution created a balanced scoring system where both post and reaction cards played crucial roles, but post-cards had a higher impact on the final score.

Through low-fed playtests, this scoring balance was fine-tuned to create an engaging and competitive gameplay experience, where strategic use of post and reaction cards, combined with the multipliers from personality cards, determined the ultimate winner.

Personalities:

Each player adopts a unique personality that shapes their strategy and success across different social media platforms. The game ensures balanced gameplay by assigning specific weightages to each platform based on the personality type, reflecting their real-world dynamics.

1. Professional

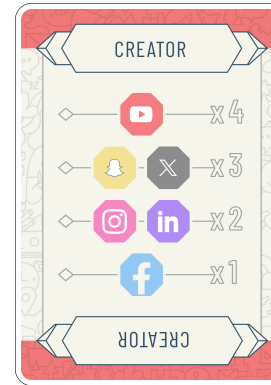


Platform Weightages:

LinkedIn x4; Twitter, YouTube x3; Snapchat, Facebook x2; Instagram x1.

Explanation: Professionals thrive on LinkedIn, the premier platform for career networking and professional development. They also benefit significantly from Twitter and YouTube, which allow them to share professional insights and thought leadership content. While Facebook and Snapchat offer some value, Instagram's emphasis on visual content is less aligned with professional goals.

2. Creator

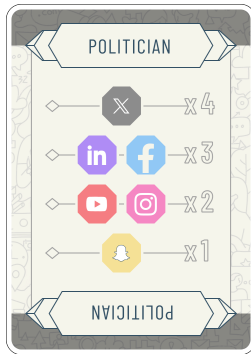


Platform Weightages:

YouTube x4; Snapchat, Twitter x3; Instagram, LinkedIn x2; Facebook x1.

Explanation: Creators excel on YouTube, where they can share and showcase their original content. Snapchat and Twitter are also crucial for creators, providing quick and engaging ways to reach their audience. Instagram and LinkedIn offer additional avenues for visual and professional content, respectively. Facebook, though useful, is less focused on original content creation.

3. Politician

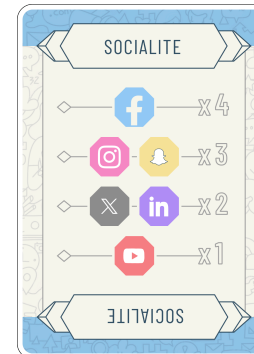


Platform Weightages:

Twitter x4; Facebook, LinkedIn x3; YouTube, Instagram x2; Snapchat x1.

Explanation: Politicians dominate on Twitter, the key platform for real-time communication and public engagement. Facebook and LinkedIn provide robust spaces for in-depth discussions and professional networking. YouTube and Instagram help politicians reach a broader audience through video messages and visual outreach, while Snapchat's ephemeral nature makes it less impactful for political discourse.

4. Socialite

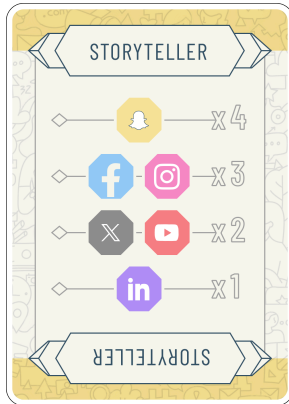


Platform Weightages:

Facebook x4; Instagram, Snapchat x3; LinkedIn, Twitter x2; YouTube x1.

Explanation: Socialites flourish on Facebook, a central hub for social interaction and community building. Instagram and Snapchat are essential for sharing personal moments and visual content. LinkedIn and Twitter offer valuable tools for maintaining broader social networks, while YouTube's focus on video content is less about direct social interaction.

5. Storyteller

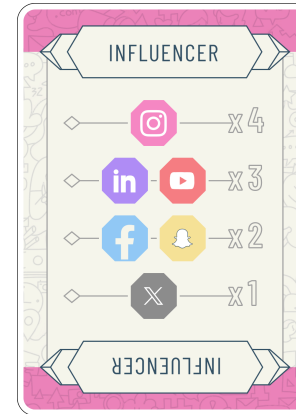


Platform Weightages:

Snapchat x4; Facebook, Instagram x3; YouTube, Twitter x2; LinkedIn x1.

Explanation: Storytellers are best suited for Snapchat, the ideal platform for ephemeral, engaging stories. Facebook and Instagram also serve as great platforms for sharing stories through posts and visuals. YouTube and Twitter allow for video storytelling and concise updates, whereas LinkedIn's professional nature offers limited storytelling utility.

6. Influencer



Platform Weightages:

Instagram x4; LinkedIn, YouTube x3; Facebook, Snapchat x2; Twitter x1.

Explanation: Influencers shine on Instagram, the core platform for influencer marketing and visual content. LinkedIn and YouTube are also crucial, providing spaces for professional influence and video content. Facebook and Snapchat help influencers maintain their reach across different demographics, while Twitter's text-focused nature offers less visual influence.

Importance of Personality in Gameplay

Each personality in "Social Showdown" influences how players interact with different social media platforms. The chosen personality guides the player's strategy, determining which platforms to focus on to maximize their influence and success. For instance, a Professional will leverage LinkedIn to advance their career goals, while a Creator will focus on producing engaging content for YouTube.

Relevance of personalities

Understanding these personalities and their associated platforms within the game encourages players to reflect on their real-life social media usage. It highlights the importance of aligning one's online behavior with their personal or professional goals, nudging players to be mindful for an effective use of social media. This awareness helps players harness the full potential of each platform, fostering a more intentional and strategic approach to their digital presence.

4.3 The Final Game



Img 4.3.1 Packaging Design for Card Game

Objectives

become the social media master by earning the most validation points through strategic posting and reacting. Players assume different social media personalities and engage in various activities, such as making posts and responding to others, to accumulate validation points. The game aims to provide an entertaining and reflective experience, encouraging players to consider their social

media habits and the value they place on digital interactions.

Components

Rule Cards



Img 4.3.2 Two Rule cards out of six

Personality Cards

Each player gets one of the following cards.

Post-Cards

Qualities of the post cards:

- **Platform Association:** Each post card is tied to a specific social media platform
- **Balanced Scoring:** The scores on post-cards are designed to ensure a balanced distribution of points across different platforms.
- **Engaging Tasks:** Each post card includes a task that players must complete. These tasks are crafted to be easy to understand with minimal wording and are executable within the timeframe of a player's turn. They are deliberately kept engaging and fun, enhancing the overall gaming experience.



Img 4.3.3 Three cards out of 27 cards

Types of tasks

The post-card tasks correspond to the platform they are accompanying, adding thematic consistency and realism to the gameplay. These tasks on post-cards can be broadly classified into 3 types:

Declaration tasks: Involve players making up and declaring statements. These tasks are quick and easy to execute, relying on the player's creativity to make their declarations interesting and engaging for others.

Gallery show tasks: Require players to find and show specific photos from their phone galleries. Although these tasks take a bit more time, they are crucial because social media is a highly visual medium. These tasks cater to our brain's rewired need for visual stimuli, ensuring the game reflects the true nature of social media interactions.

Tasks involving others: Require the participation of other players, adding another layer of dynamics to the game. Players must select other participants, which can lead to biases and emotional responses. While these tasks enhance player interaction and can create fun moments, they also challenge players to maintain objectivity and strategic thinking to win the game.

Dual Post-Cards

They can be played on either of the platforms. They are also balanced in their number across platforms and the total score.



Img 4.3.4 Three cards out of 11 cards

Wild Post-Cards

They can be played across any platform.

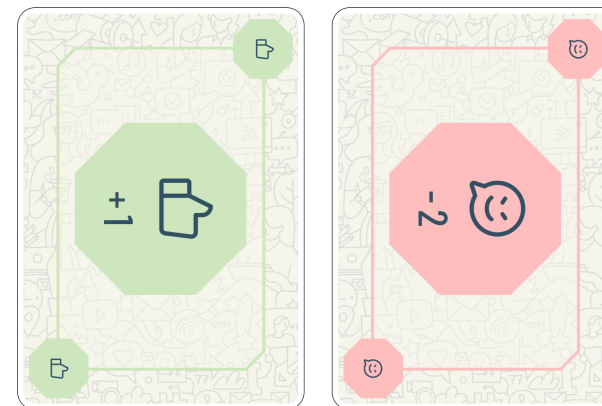


Img 4.3.5 Three wild cards out of 4 cards

Reaction Cards

Positive or Negative: Reaction cards come in two types: positive and negative. Positive (green ones) reactions contribute to a player's social validation points, while negative reactions (red ones) reduce points.

Versatile use: Players can play them during their own turn to award themselves the reaction, adding the points to their bank. Alternatively, they can play reaction cards during another player's turn to respond to a post, affecting the social validation points of that post.



Img 4.3.6 Positive and negative reaction cards

Special Reaction Cards

Types: There are four types of special reaction cards: Collaborate, Report, Just Ignore, and Copyright Claim.

Usage: Special reaction cards are played in response to a post. When a special reaction card is played, no other special reaction cards can be played on that same post, ensuring a unique impact.

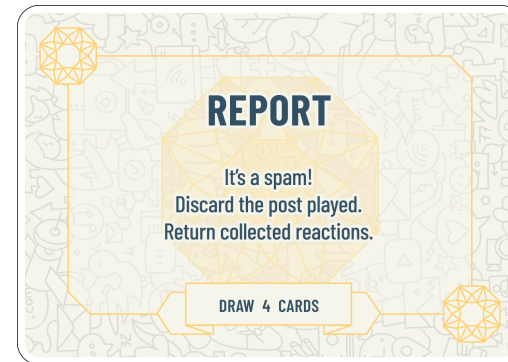
Effects:

Collaborate: When a player plays the Collaborate card, other players must pay an additional reaction card to the collaborator. This encourages cooperative interaction and adds a layer of strategy in choosing alliances.



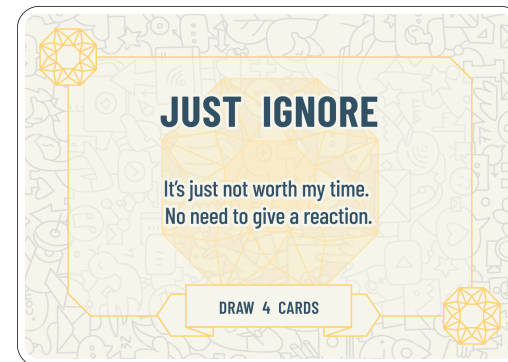
Img 4.3.7 One card out of 7 cards

Report: Playing the Report card discards the post, and the player who made the post does not collect any reactions. This card can be used to strategically nullify high-scoring posts and disrupt opponents' plans.



Img 4.3.8 One card out of 7 cards

Just Ignore: The Just Ignore card allows the player to avoid paying any reaction card. This provides a defensive strategy to conserve valuable reaction cards for later use.



Img 4.3.9 One card out of 7 cards

Copyright Claim: When the Copyright Claim card is played, all collected reactions for that post go to the player who

played the Copyright Claim card. This can significantly shift the balance of points, making it a powerful strategic move.



Img 4.3.10 One card out of 7 cards

Power Action Cards

Power cards in "Social Showdown" can be played only during a player's turn and their usage and discard instructions are specified on the card itself. These cards introduce strategic depth and variety to the game. Below is a detailed list of power cards, their effects, and the rationale behind their inclusion, particularly in promoting mindful social media behaviors.

1. Data Breach



Img 4.3.11 Data Breach card

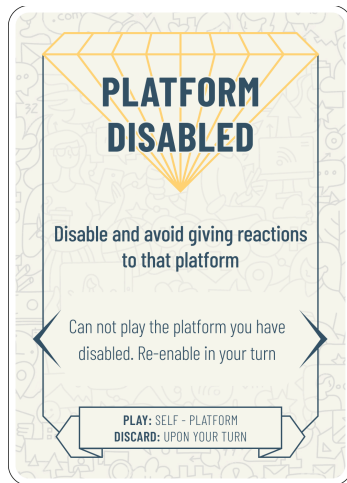
Effect: Forces any other player to reveal their personality card for the remainder of the game.

In-Play: Play this card during your turn against any player. Discard immediately after use.

Rationale: This card introduces transparency and vulnerability, reflecting real-world data privacy concerns. It nudges players to consider the implications of data breaches and the importance of protecting personal information.

Number in deck: 1

2. Platform Disabled



Img 4.3.12 Platform Disabled Card

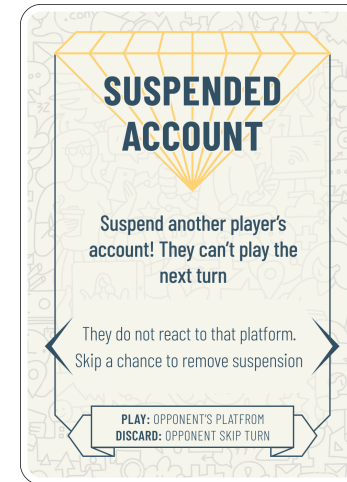
Effect: Disable an account to avoid giving reactions to that platform. The disabled platform cannot be played until it's deactivated.

In-Play: Play this card during your turn to disable any player's platform. The disabled platform can be reactivated during your next turns if you choose to re-activate it again. After which you can play the post of that platform in the upcoming turns.

Rationale: This card teaches players that taking a break from certain platforms can be beneficial, promoting digital detox and reducing constant engagement pressures.

Number in deck: 2

3. Suspended Account



Img 4.3.13 Suspended Account Card

Effect: Disable another player's account, causing them to skip their next turn and not react to any posts.

In-Play: Play this card during your turn against any player. The affected player will skip their next turn and cannot react to posts.

Rationale: This card introduces depth in strategy of the players to defeat each other. Also makes them aware that any-body on social media can make your

account get suspended so as not to get too attached to social media platforms.

Number in deck: 3

4. Block



Img 4.3.14 Block Card

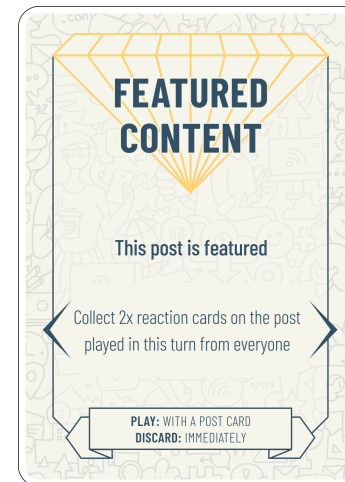
Effect: Block a player you do not want to interact with or react to each other.

In-Play: Play this card during your turn to block any player. The block can be removed during your subsequent turns if you choose.

Rationale: Highlights the power of blocking to maintain personal boundaries and mental health, encouraging players to curate their interactions and protect themselves from unwanted engagements. Also frustrates the opponent, and makes them realize how toxic social media can be!

Number in deck: 2

5. Featured Content



Img 4.3.15 Featured Content Card

Effect: All players must give 2x reaction cards for this post.

In-Play: Play this card during your turn along with a post-card. Discard after use.

Rationale: This card emphasizes the impact of highly engaging content, similar to viral posts on social media, encouraging players to consider the types of content that generate widespread engagement.

Number in deck: 2

6. There is a Cat



Img 4.3.16 There is a Cat Card

Effect: Play alongside a post-card. No negative reactions are allowed on the post played in this turn.

In-Play: Play this card during your turn in conjunction with a post-card. Discard after use.

Rationale: Promotes positive engagement, reflecting the often light-hearted and positive nature of viral content involving pets, which can improve online interactions. Also makes players realize the simply stupid nature of social media conformity.

Number in deck: 3

7. Close Friends



Img 4.3.17 Close Friend Card

Effect: Select 2 close friends (1 if 3 are playing).
Collect 2x reaction cards from the close friends on this post.

In-Play: Play this card during your turn in conjunction with a post-card. Select the close friends, then discard after use.

Rationale: Emphasizes on the message that in the name of making close friends you are obliged to consume more content of the close friends which is ultimately not a value addition to your social media game.

Number in deck: 1

8. Digital Detox



Img 4.3.18 Digital Detox Card

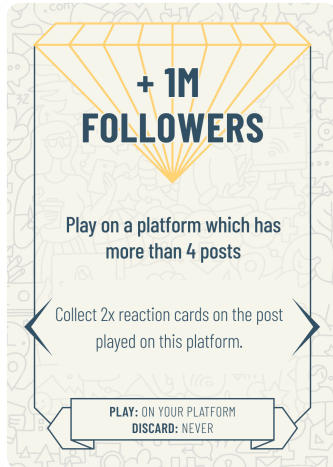
Effect: Do not engage with anyone for the next round, avoiding reactions or involvement with posts until your next turn.

In-Play: Play this card during your turn. Discard after your next turn.

Rationale: Directly promotes the concept of a digital detox, encouraging players to take breaks from constant online engagement, reflecting the real-world benefits of unplugging from social media for mental well-being.

Number in deck: 4

9. +1M Followers (Rejected)



Img 4.3.19 +1M Followers Card

Effect: Play on a platform with more than 4 posts.

Collect 2x reaction cards on the post played on this platform.

In-Play: Play this card during your turn on a platform with more than 4 posts. Do not discard it.

Rejection Reason: Rejected for being confusing to track, despite its aim to reflect the exponential growth potential in social media with increased followers.

10. Account Hack (Rejected)



Img 4.3.20 Account Hack Card

Effect: Hijack another player's entire platform and add it to your timeline.

In-Play: Play this card during your turn against any player. Discard immediately after use.

Rejection Reason: Found to be too powerful and disruptive, compromising game balance. It highlighted the extreme consequences of hacking, aligning with the game's educational objectives about cybersecurity.

Game Setup

Setting up "Social Showdown" is straightforward simple:

1. **Gather 3 to 6 friends and sit in a circle.** Ensure there is enough space in front of each player to lay down and manage their cards comfortably.
2. **Distribute Personality Cards:** Shuffle the personality cards thoroughly. Each player receives one personality card, which they should keep secret from the other players.
3. **Distribute Playing Cards:** Shuffle the remaining cards, which include post cards, reaction cards, special reaction cards, and power-up cards. Deal 8 cards to each player from this shuffled deck.
4. **Prepare the Central Deck:** Place the remaining deck in the center of the play area within easy reach of all players. This central deck will be used for drawing additional cards during the game.

Playing your turn

Here's how you play your turn:

1. Post-Card:

You can play at most one post-card from your hand. This card represents a social media activity that you perform to earn reactions from other players.

2. Self-Love Option:

If you do not wish to play a post-card, you can play a reaction card to yourself, adding it to your bank. This is referred to as "self-love," and it allows you to gain social validation points directly.

3. Power Card:

You can also play at most one power card during your turn. Power cards provide strategic advantages and can significantly impact the game dynamics.

If you are playing a reaction card to your bank, Play the power card that does not require a post-card to be played alongside it.

4. Drawing Cards:

At the end of your turn, draw 2 cards from the central deck to replenish your hand. This keeps the game moving and ensures you have options for future turns.

Special Cases:

No Post or Reaction Card to Play? If you do not have a post or reaction card to play during your turn, simply draw 2 cards from the central deck. Your turn then ends, and play passes to the next player.

Reacting to others

Here's how you react to a post played by another player:

1. Default Reaction:

By default, every player must give one reaction card per post played by another player unless specified otherwise by the post or a power card.

No Reaction Cards: If you do not have a reaction card to give, you must pay a post-card from your hand to the player who made the post. They add this post card to their hand.

No Reaction or Post Cards: If you do not have a reaction card or a post-card to give, the player who made the post can choose a post-card from your timeline and add it to their timeline directly.

2. Special Reactions:

A player can choose to play a special reaction card instead of a regular reaction. Special reactions can only be played by one player per post. If a special reaction is played, all other players must give a regular reaction card only.

Scoring

To calculate your final score, sum up the total points from your reaction cards and the adjusted scores from your post cards. The player with the highest total score at the end wins the game. Here's how the scoring works:

Reaction Cards:

Each reaction card has a face value, typically ranging between 1 and 4 points. At the end of the game, add up the face values of all the reaction cards in your bank to determine your total reaction score.

Post-Cards:

The scores from post-cards are more significant and are determined by the platform-specific multipliers indicated on your personality card. Each post-card has a base score ranging from 6 to 12 points.

Multiply the base score of each post-card by the factor specified on your personality card for that platform.

End Game

Trigger:

The game ends when the last card from the central deck is drawn. This triggers the final rounds of play.

Final Rounds:

After the last card is drawn, each player gets one final turn to play any remaining cards in their hand.

Once all players have taken their final turn, they must discard any remaining cards in their hands.

Calculating the Winner:

Add up all the social validation points accumulated by each player. This includes the face value of collected reaction cards and the adjusted scores from post-cards.

5. Evaluation

Many playtests were informally organized amongst friends and family in the 3, 4, and 5 player configuration modes in the current game's edition, which I am calling the "first edition." Each game took about an hour to complete. While no formal demographic assignment was conducted.





Following were the findings from the playtesting of the "First Edition Game"

5.1 Dominant Strategy

Definition:

Ensuring no single strategy overwhelmingly leads to victory, promoting diverse and dynamic gameplay.[13]

Dominant Strategy:

The primary dominant strategy in "Social Showdown" is to play objectively, avoiding reactions based on personal emotions, sentiments, or closeness to other players. This encourages players to focus on the game's mechanics and strategies rather than personal biases, which aligns with the intended message of promoting objective decision-making in social media interactions.

Another key strategy is to minimize the expenditure of reaction cards while maximizing post and content production. Players are encouraged to leverage their personality cards effectively by creating high-impact posts that benefit from their specific multipliers. This approach emphasizes the importance of strategic content creation over reactive engagement in real life.

Observations:

The game fostered playful interactions, with frequent playful fights and emerging rivalries within each playgroup. This behavior illustrated how quickly players could lose their objectivity, taking personal revenge on others, which mirrors the toxic nature of social media and highlights the ease with which mindfulness can be lost in such crude simulation of social media.

5.2 Balance

Definition:

The balance between elements of chance and player skill in determining the outcome.[14]

Balance by design:

A deliberate effort has been made to balance the scores across each platform, ensuring that no single personality card inherently increases the chances of winning. This balance prevents any player from gaining an undue advantage simply based on their assigned personality.

Luck plays a role in the initial draw and the randomness of card draws throughout the game. However, skill is paramount in strategic decision-making, such as when to play post-cards, how to use power cards effectively, and how to react to opponents' moves. This combination ensures that while luck can influence the game, skilled players who plan and adapt their strategies will generally perform better.

I tried to ensure the same with the power cards though one power card i.e. Account Hack was found to be too powerful in the game so I have decided to remove it.

Observations:

The game seemed to be fairly balanced though more playtests will be required to confirm this.

5.3 Discoverability

Definition

The ease with which players can understand the game mechanics and objectives through exploration and play. [14]

1. Rule Cards:

To clarify the basic rules, six rule cards are provided. These cards are written in simple language, divided into sections, and can be easily passed around during gameplay, ensuring accessibility and quick reference.

Observations:

Still players found that the rules were intimidating at first read. But it was evident that participants with low social media exposure found the game a bit difficult to comprehend in their first round. In contrast, younger

participants who were more familiar with social media found it intuitive, as it closely mirrored real-life social media interactions.

2. Play Cards:

Each post-card, special reaction card, power card includes usage instructions directly on the card. This design choice enhances discoverability by providing immediate, in-context guidance on how each card should be used.

Observations:

Few cards were found to be vague and difficult to comprehend by the players. One of them was a +1M Followers power up card. It was later decided to drop this card.

5.4 Replayability

Definition

Designing the game so it remains interesting and engaging over multiple sessions.[13]

Variety of Cards:

The game features a wide range of post-cards, reaction cards, special reaction cards, and power cards. This variety ensures that each game session is different, as players encounter new scenarios and strategic possibilities.

Dynamic Interactions:

The interactions between players, driven by the strategic use of cards, vary in each game. The need to adapt to different opponents' strategies and personalities keeps the game fresh and engaging.

Observation

Players remained engaged throughout the game, expressing delight in discovering new post cards and interpreting them in unique ways. This consistent engagement is a strong indicator of the game's ability to captivate players' interest and maintain their focus over

extended periods. The overall gameplay was intriguing enough to motivate players to play the game again.

5.5 Complexity

Definition

The level of intricacy in game mechanics and rules, which should challenge players without overwhelming them.[14]

The basic interactions mimic the real life mechanics of social media. This gives us the affordance to make a complex game that maps one to one with real life.

Observations

Players employed a variety of strategies, from focusing on content creation to strategic use of power cards. The game's design successfully encouraged diverse approaches, keeping the gameplay fresh and competitive.

5.6 Aesthetics and Theme

Integration

Definition

Ensuring that the game's theme is seamlessly integrated into its mechanics and components.[15]

The use of post-cards to simulate social media activities and reaction cards to represent likes, comments, and other forms of engagement ensures that the game mirrors real-world social media interactions.

Observations

Reaction Cards

Visually, the reaction cards were not easily distinguishable from the corners when held, necessitating a redesign for better visibility. There were no issues with card readability, though minimizing content on the cards could further enhance clarity and ease of play.

5.7 Scalability and affordability

Definition

The game's ability to accommodate different numbers of players with all economic backgrounds without compromising gameplay quality.[15]

Observation

The game is designed for 3-6 players to play in indoor settings. The game requires only 220 regular sized durable cards in a box which (if comparatively priced in the Indian market as of 2024) should cost around ₹200.

5.8 Game mechanics review.

Rejected Cards:

Several post cards were found to be less engaging or problematic:

- 1. Go Live:** Players struggled to come up with interesting tasks.
- 2. Create Lens:** This task was too time-consuming, requiring photo editing, leading to its removal.
- 3. Photo Post:** Requires players to find a photo relevant to the theme and show to the audience. In this category, usually people do not possess photos with the theme “food photo”, “photo with an animal” and “food photo”. As it was found challenging for players to find relevant photos, these cards were dropped.
- 4. Viral Challenge:** Players had difficulty generating funny or interesting answers for viral challenges.
- 5. Make Reel / Make Shorts:** Finding suitable videos took too long, making these tasks impractical.

5.9 Some changes for future versions

scores was minimal, suggesting a need to revisit and possibly reduce the scoring of post-cards for better balance.

Special Reaction Cards

The initial inclusion of a draw-4 cards clause in special reaction cards aimed to prevent players from running out of cards. However, this led to confusion as players used special reactions to accumulate more cards than necessary. This clause will therefore be removed in the second edition.

Reaction Cards:

It was observed that players rarely lacked reaction cards, indicating an excess in the deck. There were some interesting twists in the game when a player is out of reaction, which was liked very much by the players. I would like to conduct playtests with fewer reaction cards in the future.

Scoring:

The process of totaling scores was particularly interesting and suspenseful, adding to the game's excitement. However, the contribution of reaction cards to the final

6 Conclusion

"Social Showdown" represents a thoughtful and innovative approach to addressing social media addiction through the medium of a card game. This report has detailed the conceptualization, design, and testing processes that brought this game to life, highlighting key aspects such as player engagement, strategic depth, theme integration, and the balance of luck versus skill.

Through extensive playtesting, we observed high levels of player engagement and a genuine interest in replaying the game. The mechanics fostered dynamic interactions, including cooperation, competition, and negotiation, which reflected the real-world dynamics of social media. The challenges and playful conflicts among players provided valuable insights into the game's effectiveness in simulating social media environments and the ease with which objectivity can be lost.

The game mechanics, from the balanced scoring system to the variety of tasks on post cards, were continuously refined based on player feedback. Adjustments to the card types, scoring, and overall balance were made to ensure a fair and enjoyable experience for all players. Special attention was given to the learnability curve, ensuring that

the game remains accessible to new players while offering strategic depth for experienced ones.

Our evaluation identified areas for further improvement, such as the design of reaction cards and the balance of reaction card quantities. The feedback on less engaging post cards led to their removal or modification, enhancing the overall gameplay experience. The importance of minimizing content on the cards to improve readability and ease of use was also emphasized.

In conclusion, "Social Showdown" successfully integrates the theme of social media into its gameplay, providing both entertainment and a critical reflection on social media behaviors. The game's design promotes mindfulness and strategic thinking, encouraging players to consider the impact of their digital interactions. Moving forward, continuous iterations and testing will ensure that "Social Showdown" evolves to meet the needs and preferences of its players, ultimately contributing to healthier social media habits and increased awareness of digital wellness.

7 Further scope in this project

The development of "Social Showdown" has laid a strong foundation for a game that addresses social media addiction through engaging and reflective gameplay. However, there are several areas where future work can enhance and expand the project, ensuring it remains relevant, impactful, and enjoyable for players.

1. Refinement of Game Mechanics

1.1 Balancing Reaction Cards

Further testing and adjustments to the quantity and impact of reaction cards will help achieve the desired balance, ensuring that players do not have an overabundance of reaction cards and that their contribution to the final score is meaningful.

1.2 Scoring Adjustments

Revisiting the scoring system for post-cards to ensure that reaction cards play a more significant role in the final scores. This includes potentially reducing the scores on post-cards to create a more balanced point distribution.

1.3 Task Complexity

Simplifying or modifying tasks that were found to be too time-consuming or challenging, ensuring that all tasks are engaging yet easy to execute within the game's timeframe.

2. Card Design Enhancements

2.1 Improving Visibility

Redesigning reaction cards to ensure they are easily distinguishable when held in hand. This may involve adjusting the card layout or adding distinctive visual cues.

2.2 Minimizing Content

Further minimizing the content on cards to enhance readability and ease of use during gameplay, making the game more accessible to all players.

3 Expanding Game Content

3.1 New Post-Cards and Power Cards

Introducing new post cards and power cards to keep the game fresh and engaging. These new cards can reflect emerging social media trends and behaviors, ensuring the game stays current.

3.2 Thematic Expansions

Developing expansion packs with new themes and scenarios that explore different aspects of social media, such as influencer culture, digital detox, or cyberbullying awareness.

4. Enhanced Scope

4.1 Integration with Educational Programs

Collaborating with educators and mental health professionals to integrate "Social Showdown" into educational and therapeutic programs. This could involve creating tailored versions of the game that address specific issues related to social media use.

4.2 Digital Version

Developing a digital version of the game that can be played online or as a mobile app. This digital adaptation could include interactive features, tutorials, and real-time feedback to enhance the learning experience.

5. Broadening Audience Reach

5.1 Diverse Demographic Testing

Conducting more extensive playtests with diverse demographic groups to gather a wider range of feedback and ensure the game appeals to a broad audience.

5.2 Marketing and Outreach

Implementing marketing strategies to reach a wider audience, including social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, and participation in game conventions and educational workshops.

6. Research and Feedback Loop

6.1 Continuous Feedback Collection

Establishing a system for continuous feedback collection from players, allowing for ongoing improvements and updates to the game.

6.2 Impact Studies

Conducting formal studies to measure the impact of the game on players' awareness and behaviors regarding social media use. This research can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the game as an educational tool.

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