

No Dice

Project Brief

Project Pitch

No Dice enhances board games for everyone, whether you are a board game enthusiast or a brand new player. Like other tactile hobbies, board games have fallen out of relevancy with the rise of smart technologies and video games. No Dice acts as a space to connect the board game community, who have long been limited to physical discourse, digitally.

No Dice is an iOS app that serves as the ultimate board game companion. It allows players to keep track of what games they have played, along with personal reviews and stories that they can attach to each game based on their personal experiences. After viewing their own board game history and reviews, users can also check out what their friends have been playing and compare their board game collections. In addition to keeping up with friends, users can also view game information at a glance, giving them the opportunity to learn about board games before deciding to purchase them. Finally, No Dice is perfect for people who might be missing a few pieces in their collection, as the app offers a dice rolling simulator for players to use at any time.

Board game discussions have long been limited to online forums, like BoardGameGeek or Reddit. That's why No Dice is designed to be a dedicated mobile space where people can connect with their friends about board games. With No Dice's key features, board game enjoyers now have a space to connect with each other and learn more about the games they love.

Definition, Justification, & Exploratory Research

Product Definition

Purpose Statement: No Dice creates a better board gaming experience, for experienced players and beginners alike.

Product Overview: No Dice creates a digital space for sharing experiences with friends, providing auxiliary digital resources, and giving players the opportunity to catalog and expand their game collection.

Problem and Solution

Problem Statement: A problem facing the board game hobby and its community is that there lacks a specialized digital space for discourse about the topic. Aside from general online message boards, like Reddit, most discussion pertaining to board games takes place on blogs or social media. Even then, most of this interaction is through major accounts and personalities.

Solution: No Dice solves this problem by giving individuals a space to connect with others directly, while also keeping a personalized catalog of what makes each game special and enjoyable to them. No Dice also gives users recommendations on what to play next based on game details, popularity, and what their friends have been enjoying if they are stumped on what game to learn next.

Research

An application/service that has served as a large source of inspiration for this project is Goodreads. As another tactile hobby, reading lacked an online space for casual social connections about users' specific reviews and taste in books. The format allows users to leave specific anecdotes of their personal experiences and connections in each book that they have read, and I feel that board games can have a similar effect on people. What may seem like a one-dimensional gaming experience can lead to many different personal connections, stories, and memories when playing a board game, and I think

being able to save and share those memories would be amazing. Obviously board games differ greatly from books, and unlike reading, board games are perceived quite differently based on how many and which people you play with. That being said, reviews on No Dice will be adjusted with more information, not to clog up the interface, but to be as transparent as possible when describing your experience. The expanded information will include game details, like difficulty, genre, number of players, duration, and more.

Link to Goodreads website: <https://www.goodreads.com/>

Another product that inspired No Dice is D&D Beyond. During the spring and summer of 2020, I used D&D Beyond to play Dungeons & Dragons with my sister and cousins. The product gave us a similar feeling to playing together in the same room, but from a zoom call between England, California, and Georgia. The app and website provides players digital resources such as character sheets, rule manuals, and a digital dice roller that make it so you can play from anywhere without needing any physical supplies. This experience let me enjoy our game seamlessly, without needing to buy a ton of different products to get my foot in the door. No Dice seeks to provide the same level of ease and accessibility to users, allowing them to access game rules and a dice simulator from the app. While digitizing an entire board game is beyond the scope of what No Dice provides its users, the digital resources serve to help players who may want to learn games ahead of time, share the rules with friends before a session, or may have missing dice, pieces, or manuals for their games.

Link for D&D Beyond: <https://www.dndbeyond.com/>

Technology and Platform

No Dice is an iOS app designed with SwiftUI using the program XCode that is set to be published on the app store. No Dice will have an accompanying website for information on the product, but its core functionality will be contained to the app. Designing this product as an app gives users increased accessibility to the content in the app and will help connect users between devices. With the different features detailed in the next part, having a singular app will allow users to use all of No Dice's functions without having to exit the page.

Product Features

No Dice will feature user reviews of games, a board game catalog with game rules, a dice rolling simulator, and a friend system.

User Reviews: For each game on the app, users can add their own reviews that will be attached to their profile. These reviews will have a personalized text entry, along with a rating score, a difficulty score for how hard the game was to learn and play, and roughly how long it took them to play.

Game Catalog: No Dice will have a vast majority of board games as a part of its catalog. The list will be updated as users request to add games that aren't included and as new games get released. To start, the app will feature board games popular in North America and Europe. Users will also be able to add games from the catalog to their collection if they frequent or own the game.

Game Rules: For select games where resources are available, users will be able to access pdf's of the rules within the app. All games will feature a brief overview of core gameplay and themes.

Dice Rolling Simulator: The app will have a simulated dice roller, customizable with the number of dice, the number of sides on the dice, and will have dice that are signature to certain games that have unorthodox sides (Like Betrayal at the House on Hill and Dead of Winter).

Friend System: Users will be able to add friends. They will then be able to see their reviews and board game collection as well as interact with their posts through liking and commenting.

Competitive Advantage Report (CAR)

Market Justification

Like previously mentioned, the board game hobby and its community have been largely left behind by the rise in popularity of social media and smartphones. No Dice provides users with a space to connect with others and learn about board games. No Dice's competitive advantage is that there isn't a space dedicated to allowing users to connect about board games, and adding the other features, such as the board game catalog and dice rolling simulator, push No Dice to the top. Putting this space and these resources together into a single package allows people to easily improve their board gaming experience, whether they are a new player who wants to learn more about the space or an experienced player looking to compare and collaborate with friends.

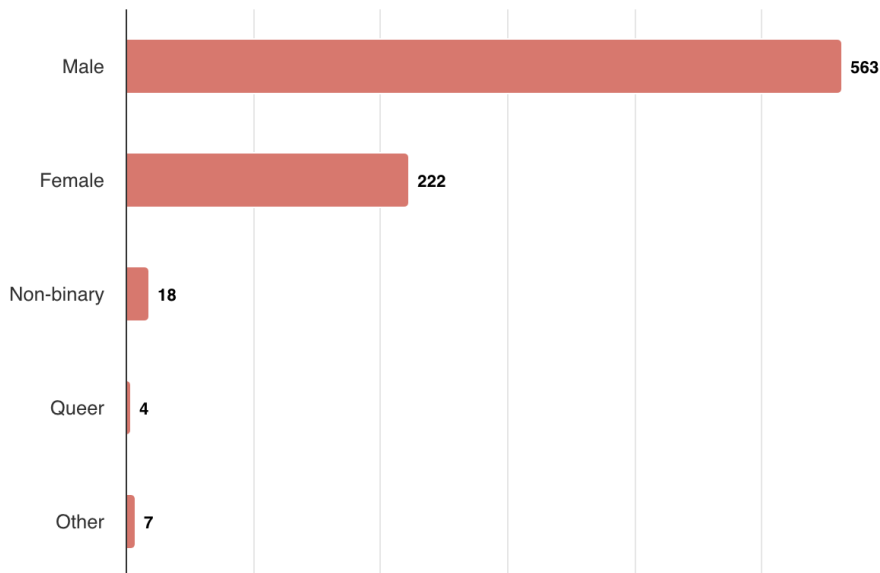
Board Gaming is a niche hobby, but its community is very dedicated. There are many message boards on other sites, and even an online "Tabletop Simulator" that has digitized many of the most popular board games for online play, but neither of these allow users to connect in the same manner as No Dice. The focus of No Dice is on the connections between players, the players' connections to the games in their catalogs, and giving users access to resources to make their board game experience better.

Consumer Research

When looking into the demographics of board gamers, a few things jumped out that surprised me.

According to Marketsplash, the board game industry is growing about 13.27% per year and is expected to reach a market size of \$40 billion by 2028. Additionally, North America, and more specifically the United States, generate the most revenue in the board game industry. Their study also shows that board games are becoming increasingly enjoyable to Generation Z and less enjoyable for the Silent Generation. According to the report, the majority of board game players are male, approximately 69%.

Board Game Players(gender)



The age group that consists of the most players is from age 18-34, accounting for about 44% of the total market. Just behind them is the age group from 35-54, which accounts for 41% of the market.

About 81% of players play games irregularly, but with the same group, and about 43% play with a group at regularly scheduled sessions.

Using this data, the target customer is a mid-twenties male in the United States. This customer has at least a high school education and a small board game hobby. He plays irregularly with a small group of similar individuals, and they live near these people either in a small/medium city or in a suburban area. The customer's income is not critically important to their board game hobby, as there are many options to play board games at stores where you pay for a daily pass rather than purchasing the games themselves. The customer wants to play more games, especially with their group, but they don't know what to play or how to expand their collection.

Data came predominantly from this website using data collected and posted in 2023: <https://marketsplash.com/board-game-statistics/>

User Personas

Persona 1: Michael Catan

Demographics:

- Gender: Male
- Age: 22
- Occupation: Student
- Location: Athens, GA
- Marital Status: Single

Background: Michael likes to play board games with some of his friends from college. About once a week, they go to a local game store and play a couple different games, some old and some new. He uses No Dice to look at new games and share funny stories and anecdotes with friends.

Goals: To stay connected with his board game friends online.

Behaviors: Active Social Media User, Plays Games 4-5 Times per Month

Values: Playing games with friends, Connecting with friends online

Expectations: To easily be able to see his friends' reviews and view game information.

Persona 2: Fran Scrabble

Demographics:

- Gender: Female
- Age: 28
- Occupation: Barista
- Location: Athens, GA
- Marital Status: Married

Background: Fran is a barista at a local coffee shop, and on the weekends she hangs out with friends. She uses No Dice to keep in touch with what her

friends have been playing, to revisit games she played that she really enjoyed, and to learn about new games before playing them.

Goals: To learn about a board game before playing with friends

Behaviors: Semi-Active Social Media User, Plays Games 1-2 Times per Month

Values: Relationships with friends, Having the weekend off

Expectations: To find board game information easily at a glance, only needing to read what is necessary.

Product Comparison

The largest competitor in the space currently is BoardGameGeek. Their primary platform is on Web Browser, but they do have a couple of apps on the app store as well. These apps include BoardGameGeek, BGG Catalog, BGG Board Games Information, and Gamehood BGG Reference. The BoardGameGeek website and app are both in dire need of a visual update and serve as catalog and forum for board games.

Though BoardGameGeek is one of the first results when looking for board game reviewing sites, they have significantly fewer users across their catalog of mobile apps when compared to their website. In addition, they split most of their functionality between the four apps listed above, and each one limits the user in some way. Each app feels like an attempt to enter the mobile space from a different approach to attract users, but they are still not gaining much traction in the mobile space. Their BGG Catalog app is just a list of games, and the BGG Board Games Information is the same list with slightly more information provided about each game. Once again these apps have low reviews and users, having 110 and 610 reviews respectively. The final app mentioned above, Gamehood by BGG Reference, lets users view games, navigate to Amazon pages to order games, and save games to their account. While this app boasts the best visual appeal and functionality, it only has 106 reviews and still lacks connection between users.

The BoardGameGeek website would be the closest comparison to No Dice, as the site offers users a place to look at the game library and add games to their account. While this functionality is very similar to No Dice, it lacks the social aspect and does not focus on connecting like minded users. In addition, since BoardGameGeek's largest user base is on their website and not a mobile app, people are more interested in using the service as a source of information rather than a space to connect online with others.

Most other board game services online have similar databases of resources, but lack the user-to-user connection. This is what makes No Dice different from its competitors. No Dice allows users to add friends and view their game reviews and collections. With the added functionality of the No Dice game catalog, recommendations, and dice rolling simulator, No Dice gives users the same access to game information as other services, but secures a competitive advantage by giving users a single space for both social connections pertaining to board games as well as digital resources.

Competitor Research: BoardGameGeek

Description: BoardGameGeek is an online resource and community that aims to be the definitive source for board game and card game content.

Target Market: Advanced board game players with a large amount of experience playing a variety of different board games.

Popularity: The website is far more popular than the app version, which is designed for iPad. It has 55 reviews on the iOS app store.

Price: Free to sign up for an account

Revenue: \$15-\$25 million

Keywords: Board Games, Board Game Reviews, Board Game Geeks, Board Game Forum, Board Game Catalog

Appearance: The appearance of the app and the website is reminiscent of forums from the 1990's and early 2000's. Overall, the visual theme of their service appears very dated.

Features: Primary features include different forums, game lists, a game library, and a “What’s Hot?” list for new games.

Distribution Methods: Website and Apps. They also seem to have a largely inactive YouTube Channel

Recent Reviews: Recent reviews of their app claims that it is easier to use than the website, but there are many bugs and overall the experience is still very clunky.

Age: Founded in 2000

Competitor Research: Gamefound.com

Description: Gamefound is a crowdfunding site to raise funding for the production and distribution of new board games.

Target Market: Board Game Enthusiasts and Board Game Makers/Publishers.

Popularity: 2 Million visits monthly on their website.

Price: Free. Since it is a crowdfunding website, monetization is largely donation driven.

Revenue: \$28 Million

Keywords: Board Games, New Board Games, Board Game Kickstarter, Crowdfunding Board Games

Appearance: More sleek than BoardGameGeek, but still not phenomenal. Most information contained on the homepage with links to other areas of the website.

Features: Showcases new and upcoming games in search of funding. Lets you track donations and gives donors benefits for the games they donate to.

Distribution Methods: Web browser only (no app component)

Recent Reviews: Reviews are generally positive. They upkeep the site well and keep their rotation of game kickstarters modern and relevant.

Age: Founded in 2015