

Exploratory Research

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What is Congo.ai?

Congo.ai is a real-time, location-based mobile application designed to connect people based on immediate needs and available skills. The platform addresses the problem of missed opportunities for meaningful connection and collaboration by matching users who are physically proximate and can help each other right now. Unlike traditional networking platforms that rely on long-term relationship building, **Congo.ai** focuses on solving immediate, situational problems through spontaneous, low-friction interactions.

Meet the Client

Andrew MacDonald | Founder of Congo.ai



- 20+ years in Software and Management including 3 Tech Startups.
- Coaching and Advising new Founders and Entrepreneurs about their journeys ahead.
- Worked with Startups in Software, Social, Crypto, Mobile, Medical, Health & Wellness, Shipping, Food, Apparel and Real Estate.

Inspiration

Congo.ai was inspired by a real-world missed connection: after a last-minute emergency canceled a 1:1 meeting, Andrew and the business contact he was supposed to meet unknowingly spent over two hours sitting in the same airport Starbucks. Neither realized the other was right there. This experience highlighted a fundamental gap in how people discover and connect with others who are nearby and could provide immediate value. Rather than letting such opportunities go to waste, **Congo.ai** enables people in the same location to discover and leverage these serendipitous moments.

Target Market

Initial Target:
The initial target market is the **University of Georgia (UGA)** campus as a pilot location. This focused approach allows for controlled testing and iteration before broader expansion. Use cases within this market include finding study partners, getting help with technical concepts, resume assistance, finding photographers for clubs and events, and other immediate student needs.

Expansion Strategy:
Universities are positioned as potential early adopters for the future release. The platform offers both consumer-level social discovery and institutional utility for knowledge sharing, peer assistance, and networking. This creates pathways for adoption through both organic user growth and institutional partnerships.

User Roles:
The platform will include students, faculty, and staff in the MVP. Role-based guardrails include default role separation, manual opt-in for faculty and staff, and anonymous visibility across roles without explicit consent. Institutional email verification provides trust and safety.

Competitors

Platform	Real-Time	Location-Based	Skill/Need Matching
Tinder/Bumble	Yes	Yes	No
LinkedIn	No	No	Yes
Meetup	No	Limited	No
Nextdoor	No	Yes	Limited
Congo.ai	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**

Platform Specific Analysis:

- **Tinder/Bumble:**
  - **Has:** Real-time geolocation, simple swipe interactions
  - **Lacks:** Professional or situational intents, skill or need-based matching
- **LinkedIn:**
  - **Has**: Professional identity, skill tagging, experience showcasing
  - **Lacks**: Real-time interaction, proximity awareness, support for spontaneous opportunities

Congo.ai Differentiation:

- **Problem discovery focus:** Users seek solutions, not just profiles
- **Ephemeral matches:** Connections disappear when the moment ends unless both users choose to save
- **Institutional verification** through UGA email with role awareness
- **Required intent signaling:** Users must state what they need help with
- **No social pressure** of saved matches, ghosting dynamics, or long contact lists

Vision

Congo.ai positions itself as both a problem-solving/skills-matching tool and a social connection facilitator. The platform matches people to people based on what they need, what they can offer, and where they are right now. This dual positioning means users approach the app to solve specific problems (finding a study partner, getting help with software, locating a photographer) while simultaneously creating opportunities for meaningful human connection.

It is not a social media platform, but rather a system where Person A's need is fulfilled by Person B's ability to help.

Key Features and Inputs:

- User profile with skills, interests, and needs
- Location-based matching using geolocation radius filtering
- Availability status (Available, Idle, Away)
- Opt-in visibility controls
- Skills and needs selection
- Real-time match display
- Intent-based matching: users explicitly state what they need help with and what they're willing to help with right now

Primary Output: Real-time matches with nearby users who are relevant at that moment, enabling immediate problem-solving and connection opportunities.

Sources

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