



JOURNEY MAP

5e Companion Mobile App

Abstract

This report highlights the journey a user takes when navigating through the 5e Companion mobile app, an app used for the game Dungeons & Dragons. This report will provide a persona of the user, the setup of the usability task the participant completed, the journey they went through, and the pain points and recommendations of remedies of those pain points.

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Introduction

5eCompanion is an app designed for people who play Dungeons and Dragons, 5th edition (D&D 5e). This app stores information on character creation for players and encounter creation for dungeon masters (DMs). The app allows D&D players to access information at a moment's notice rather than sifting through books or needing to access a website with information. It allows for people to gather information on the move to use in their at-home games. According to the app description in the App Store for Apple, "whether you're a busy DM or a bold player, the 5e Companion App is the app you should always have by your side¹".

For this usability test on the app, I created a persona, designed the task scenario, and highlighted the process via a journey map for someone who plays D&D.

¹ Pomsztein, V. (2021). 5e Companion (0.7.0) [Mobile app]. App Store. <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/5e-companion-app/id1507254451>

Persona

In order to better understand the user of this app, I interviewed three people who had never used the *5e Companion* app before but have a familiarity with D&D. I asked them what tools they use when creating characters for a D&D campaign (as some of them did not have experience playing 5e specifically but have played previous editions). All of the users use a variety of sources and tools when crafting a character. These tools range from programs such as Microsoft Excel and OneNote, D&D books/PDFs of books, and websites such as *D&D Beyond* and *5etools*. Some users have used phone applications when creating characters, but they did not use *5e Companion* as one of them. The persona Gecky Gary is an amalgamation of the people interviewed.

Gecky Gary



"Roll for initiative!"

Age: 40
Work: WFH Software Engineer at Postmates
Family: Engaged
Location: Los Angeles, CA

Tech-savvy Creative
Shy Driven

Bio

Gary was born in 1980 in rural Nebraska and recently moved to Los Angeles, California. He grew up surrounded by nerd culture and has consumed all he could get his hands on. Video games, anime, Star Wars, and Dungeons and Dragons, he is a man who loves his nerd hobbies (or as he would put it - a way of life). He attends conventions regularly all over the United States and even proposed to his soon-to-be wife dressed as Tuxedo Mask (a popular anime character). He hopes to find people his age who have the same love for D&D as he does and establish a close friend group in his new home of Los Angeles, California.

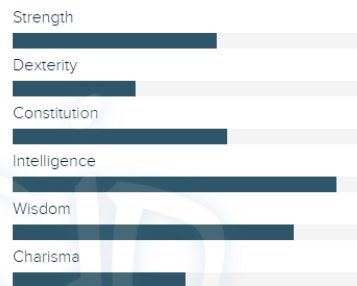
Goals

- Join a semi-regular D&D campaign online with people in a same/similar time zone.
- Finish his sci-fi/fantasy book on highly-intelligent cats who travel the galaxy in search for the perfect warm spot.
- Get married and honeymoon in Japan.
- Attend every Comic Con in the world at least once.

Frustrations

- Busy career doesn't have him participating in many D&D groups as he would like.
- Living in Los Angeles is expensive, so going out is a luxury.
- Difficult to overcome writer's block quickly and easily, so sometimes he is stagnant for weeks.

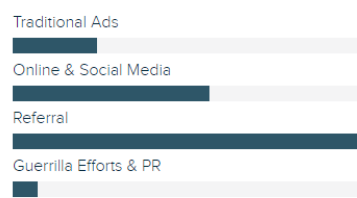
Life Stats



Brands & Influencers



Preferred Resources



Task Scenario

The task selected for this journey map resembles what a first-time user would experience when utilizing this D&D-specific app. This scenario needed to be detailed to encapsulate the variables within creating a D&D character such as the setting the campaign will take place, what the adventuring party already looks like, and which numbers to use for the character stats. These key details usually influence the kinds of decisions a player makes when creating a character.

Task: You are invited to join a new campaign based in a Cyberpunk setting. Create a new level 5 single-class character that would fit in this setting. The party is severely lacking in support classes. Use the standard array (15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8) and fully flesh them out.

There are three tips for constructing a task for the user to complete. One of the tasks is to “make the task realistic”². This scenario of being invited into a group with an already established party and the party needing a support class is a common situation, and any long-time player of Dungeons of Dragons would have encountered it at some point. The number of details for this scenario were necessary in order to make the task realistic for D&D players.

The user was asked to do a think-aloud, a UX technique that allows the user to speak out loud what they are thinking as they are navigating through the task in order to better understand what they are perceiving internally. A benefit to using this method is that the designer and/or research will “usually learn *why* users guess wrong about some parts of the UI and why they find others easy to use³”. In order to set up this think-aloud procedure, the researcher set up a Zoom meeting where the user was able to share their screen directly onto Zoom. The meeting was recorded and follow-up questions related to the experience were asked. The follow-up questions were: “What are your overall thoughts on the app?”, “Did you experience any frustrations or struggles when using the app?”, and “If you could improve one thing about this app, what would it be and why?”



² McCloskey, M. (2012, January 12). Turn user goals into task scenarios for usability testing. NN/g Nielsen Norman Group. <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/task-scenarios-usability-testing/>

³ Nielson, J. (2012, January 15). Thinking aloud: The #1 usability tool. NN/g Nielsen Norman Group. <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/thinking-aloud-the-1-usability-tool/>

Journey Map

This journey map follows the experience the user had when navigating through the *5e Companion* phone app to create a new character. The journey is separated into four phases:

Phase 1 – Character basics page.

Phase 2 – Character background page.

Phase 3 – Skills & Equipment page.

Phase 4 – Customize the character.

Overall, the user took roughly 13 minutes to complete the task of creating a new character through this app. The specific user goals, user actions, touchpoints, experience, pain points, and recommendations are all presented in detail in the journey map. The quotes reflect the state the user was in at each phase. The journey map could be found at the end of this report.

Because this app serves as an encyclopedia of sorts for D&D information, there are few touchpoints that the user experienced. Touchpoints “represents a specific interaction between a customer and an organization⁴” and although Dungeons and Dragons is a game under the company Wizards of the Coast⁵, WotC are not the makers of the app. The only touchpoints the user experienced involved going into the “Settings” option to customize the color palette or to look for more information.

However, the user did experience three pain points with one pain point being severe enough to modify his phone to find a remedy to the problem. These pain points are highlighted in detail below with recommendations on how to remedy them.

⁴ Salazar, K. (2016, December 4). How channels, devices, and touchpoints impact the customer journey. NN/g Nielsen Norman Group. <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/channels-devices-touchpoints/>

⁵ Dungeons & Dragons. (2021). D&D official homepage. Dungeons & Dragons. <https://dnd.wizards.com/>

Recommendations

Pain Point 1 - Unresponsive “Show Tutorial” button.

- **Recommendation:** Have a notification or indication when an option does not work.

The user tapped on the Show Tutorial button several times before he figured out that he needed to exit the app and reopen it in order to start the tutorial. If an option is available, then make it active immediately. If it requires a special action, then notify the user of that action rather than having them guess.

Pain Point 2 - Inability to deselect skills and select different ones.

- **Recommendation:** Have an error message stating that this character can only have X number of skills and allow the user to make that mistake and fix it.

The user tapped on the skills he wanted several times and thought the problem was with his phone. He proceeded to deconstruct his phone to try to make it work, then ultimately deduced that he had to unselect the already selected skill to choose a new one. To reduce the likelihood of the user going through great lengths and to possibly be more frustrated when it was the app’s problem, have an error message and allow the user to fix it through the app.

Pain Point 3 – Ability modifiers were too high due to mistype of stats.

- **Recommendation:** Either remove the placeholder number in the stats or when the user taps on that field, highlight the text in it so that it could be overwritten.

When the user was inputting his stats, he put 14 and 15 before the “8” placeholder number, making that stat 148 and 158, respectively. This caused a major problem in the end of the character creation when the user was confused about why their stats were wrong. Although he was able to quickly remedy it, preventing it in the future is ideal. This prevention can be either having a blank field or having the text in the field highlighted upon selection so the user can delete it with ease.

Conclusion

5e Companion is an app designed for people who want to create characters and encounters quickly and easily on their mobile device. This usability test was conducted with someone with extensive experience with D&D and although he encountered a few pain points, he overall stated that it was “not bad. It’s a pretty simple app. It does its job.” Other people who are similar to him in his knowledge might find equal uses out of it, while those who might not have as much knowledge might have difficulties. Overall, this app can serve as an additional resource for any D&D campaign.

Appendix A - Journey Map Image

	CHARACTER BASICS	CHARACTER BACKGROUND	SKILLS AND EQUIPMENT	CUSTOMIZATION
	Fill out the character basics page.	Fill out the character background page.	Fill out skills & equipment page.	Check character and adjust where needed.
User goals	Choose race, class, level, HP, and stats.	Choose background, alignment, and fill out necessary information on personality, ideals, bonds, flaws, and about.	Choose skills, languages, and equipment.	Look over character stats for accuracy, add feats if needed, adjust spells if needed.
User actions	<p>Upon creating a new character sheet, Gary was able to find and choose an appropriate race and input his level.</p> <p>He took a few seconds to select a class, not selecting one at first.</p> <p>When looking at the list, he says "what's a blood hunter?" and was able to select it and tap on "Class details" to look at the information about this class.</p> <p>He wanted to "check this app out" and exited the character creation page.</p> <p>He goes back to the character basics page, makes a new name, and selects "Mystic" as a class. When a list of types of mystics appeared, he stated "I don't know what that is". He then proceeded to change his class to "Cleric".</p> <p>He ended this page by inputting the standard array numbers (15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8) into where he wanted. He proceeded to the next page.</p>	<p>Gary selected the background drop-down menu and selected "Spy".</p> <p>He then selected "neutral good" from the alignment drop-down menu.</p> <p>He then filled in the open fields with the necessary information (personality traits, ideals, bonds, flaws, and about). He proceeded to the next page.</p>	<p>Gary wanted to change his two skills that were preselected for him. When he tried, he was unable to. He thought it was his phone that was the problem and changed his phone (took off parts of it) to try to change the skills in the app. "I'm taking off the screen protector because chances are it's just a dirty screen protector."</p> <p>He figured out that he needed to deselect the already highlighted skills before he was able to select different ones.</p> <p>After figuring this out and being annoyed, he continued with the process by inputting his language and adjusting his equipment. He proceeded to the final page.</p>	<p>Gary checked over his character and encountered a problem with his ability modifiers being too high.</p> <p>To remedy this, he selected "Edit Character Basics" and found out that he inputted 148 for Str and 158 for Wis. He fixed it and moved on.</p>
Touchpoints	Go to "Settings" to find more information.	No touchpoint.	Adjusted phone rather than look in the app for help.	Go to "Settings" to customize the color palette.
Experience	<p>The diagram shows a path of user experience. It starts with a pink 'annoyance' icon and a speech bubble: "Oh, is that where you sign in?" "I don't know what that is?". The path curves up to a yellow 'serenity' icon and a speech bubble: "Boom! Next.". It then curves down to another pink 'annoyance' icon and a speech bubble: "It's not intuitive I didn't realize you had to unselect it.". Finally, it curves up to a blue 'surprise' icon and a speech bubble: "What the hell happened?! Why is my strength +48?! Why is my wisdom +56?!".</p>			
Pain Points	He wanted more information and tried to enable the "Show Tutorial" by frantically tapping the option. It did not do anything until he figured out that he needed to exit the app and open it again.	No pain points.	He wanted to change his skills but didn't know how. It was to the point where he took off his screen protector because he thought it was his phone itself.	From observation, he did not delete the placeholder "8" that was in those two fields and instead, inputted "14" and "15" before it.
Recommendations	When presented with an option, it should automatically be available. If it is not available (or the user needs to do something specific), then a notification should pop up instructing the user to do so.	Keep as is.	Consider having the ability to select a skill with an error message stating that they could only have X amount of skills. Allow the user to make a mistake and adjust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the open field blank. When the user selects the field, highlight the number so when a new number is inputted, it overwrites the placeholder number.