

Writing in the Digital Age  
Signature Assignment

# What Makes the Game Among Us so Popular?



Jenny Kuang

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Jessica Ngo

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A Purple Crewmate  
and Pet

### What Makes the Game Among Us So Popular?

Among Us this, Among Us that. It's what everyone is talking about these days. Two years after being released, the average number of players for this game suddenly increased by more than a thousand percent over the past three months according to an ongoing analysis chart of the player count on Steam. With the pandemic preventing much social interaction, this game suddenly exploded. The general idea is that there are crewmates trying to complete tasks, survive, and identify the imposter(s) in the group. The role of an imposter is to kill all the crewmates while trying not to get caught doing something suspicious. The simplicity of this game probably causes people to wonder what made it so popular. Among Us' popularity will definitely last for a long period of time due to it being suitable for people of all types and ages, the latest version of social deduction type games, and a game with plans for future updates.

When it was first released by Innersloth in 2018, only a few hundred players played this game. Additionally, the game worked a lot differently than how it is known today. According to the articles, "Among Us: How a 2-Year Old Game Blew Up the Internet" and "The History of Among Us - 2020's Surprise Hit," the initial concept of Among Us was that everyone played together in one room, which didn't make it much different from the older games it was based on such as *Mafia* or *Werewolf*. Eventually, it was adapted into being the online



multiplayer game that we know today. Among Us' popularity started growing as people adjusted to the quarantine lifestyle since it is a great way for people to socialize while social distancing. It was also given more attention from streamers who play this game for people to watch on platforms like Twitch.

This is a great game for all kinds of people. Even those who don't consider themselves gamers are getting into the game. A *New York Times* article agrees by stating that "It's not just teenagers who are bonding over the game. Adults who can no longer hit a bar or swing by a party after work are also finding community through Among Us" (Lorenz). It is becoming a new form of social interaction during these times where we need to socially distance. Unlike games such as League of Legends or Fortnite, where learning all the aspects of the game will take some time, Among Us is "...simple, cartoony and easy enough for a five-year-old to play on an iPhone" (Lorenz). Usually, people with skills and a great amount of experience can enjoy games like League and Fortnite, and beginning to learn them can be quite confusing. The simplicity and straightforwardness of Among Us offers an enjoyable first impression and requires little time to learn which is another attribute to its success.

Furthermore, Among Us is the latest digital interpretation of old social deduction games like *Mafia*, *Werewolf*, and more. It's a great illustration of the rule: "MAYA...People gravitate to products that are bold, yet instantly comprehensible -- *"Most Advanced Yet Acceptable."* (Thompson 47) The MAYA rule describes how people tend to buy products that are innovative and challenging but are still partially familiar to them. People who have played those older games feel the nostalgia from them when playing Among Us, yet it's a new adaptation to those games in a digital and socially distant platform. These



improvements in products we have grown familiar with are what excites people to use them. The feeling of nostalgia and the innovation of Among Us are both important aspects because "...humans seek familiarity...it makes them feel safe...people are charged by the thrill of a challenge..." (Thompson 49) This most likely explains why this game is quite easy to grasp when it is first played and why people continue to enjoy playing it. Our daily lives are relying more on technology every day and connecting two familiar things to make something new is what makes Among Us so popular today.

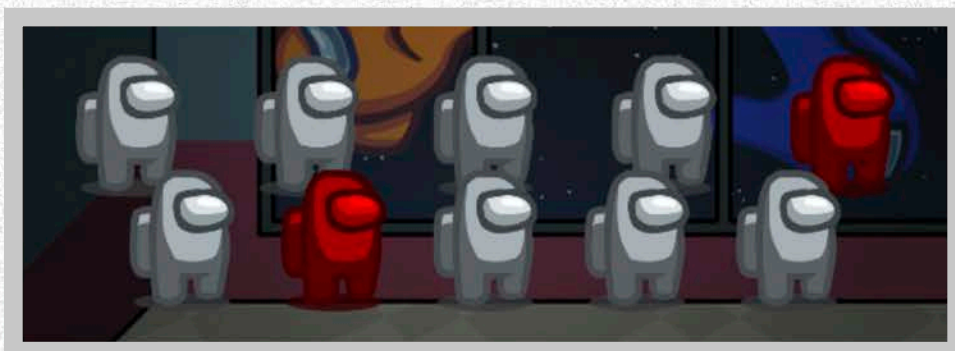
As future updates are released for Among Us, its popularity is likely to reach greater heights. Innersloth has mentioned some of their plans to take the game further and even "decided to cancel Among Us 2 and instead put all our focus into improving Among Us 1," as stated on their development log. Seeing as this game is still in its early stages, the anticipation of future updates is sure to create and continue the hype around it. In hopes of allowing as many people as possible to enjoy this game, they decided to improve Among Us 1 to its fullest extent so it can support a larger number of players. For a simple game, a lot can be added to improve the gaming experience and enjoyment of it. Some of the changes or improvements that Innersloth planned for include "...servers... colorblind system...friends/account system...a new stage...LOTS of other things planned too." (Innersloth) Additions such as the colorblind system, which would utilize symbols in addition to the colors for certain crewmate tasks, and improved servers would allow for a larger variety of people to play and gain a better experience out of it. Even adding a friend or account system could make for a much greater experience as people can connect with others online, especially during our pandemic situation, and play with



them again in the future. It shows itself as a casual game where online interaction with other players is necessary to achieve victory.

Some might say that the game's popularity will decrease after quarantine as we adapt back to normal life because the game's popularity mainly grew from the global pandemic situation. It is definitely true that Among Us' spotlight was formed from having to socially distance ourselves with others; however, a game that has connected people who are far apart and helped create new connections during these lonely times won't just suddenly fade. As an example, "Ricky Hayberg, 36, writer and host of Internet Today, a culture and tech YouTube channel, said he's developed stronger friendships with people he met through playing Among Us over the past two months than those he's known offline for years" (Lorenz) Hayberg claiming that he developed stronger friendships through this game tells us that it's a great form of socializing even after quarantine. The fact that it's a social deduction game means you'll need to figure out whether people are acting suspicious or lying to you which is a great way to get to know someone on another level.

To sum it up, Among Us' popularity topped the charts in a matter of days and there are no plans to let it die down either. Being a socially interactive, simple, and fun game, people are sure to keep playing it for a long time. Additionally, the plans for its future are also going to create more excitement in playing it. There is a lot of potential for Among Us to stay a trending game for a long period of time.



Screenshot of the Image Shown When Creating a Game Lobby



### Works Cited

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Wesley Fenlon is a writer and editor on topics of video games and technology and loves playing some video games himself. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Georgia. The article, published under PC Gamer, is aimed at an audience of people who have an interest in gaming and tech and want an opinion of whether the specific technology is worth investing their time and money into. The basics of how to play the game are explained and the history and popularity of the game are also covered in this article which seems to entail that it is for anyone interested to read. Seeing as this site has recurring writers, it is most likely a reliable source of information in terms of video games. The purpose in which he is writing this article is to explain why the popularity of this game suddenly shot up after two years of its release. It seems to be reviewed positively as well which probably means he's had an enjoyable experience with the game. This article was published on September 24th, 2020 which is about a month ago in the midst of the game's hype. This source provides a lot of useful information since it explains popularity created from the features of the game itself and popularity created from the situation that caused its sudden rise.

D'Argenio, Angelo M. "Among Us: How a 2-Year-Old Game Blew Up the Internet." *GameCrate*, Newegg Inc, 1 Oct. 2020, <https://gamecrate.com/among-us-how-2-year-old-game-blew-internet/26276>. Accessed 28 Oct. 2020

Angelo M. D'Argenio is a professional gamer, a professor in game design, a game-centric comedian, as well as an editor and writer. He studied at Rutgers University with a lot of technological experience in various fields. "Among Us: How a 2-Year-Old Game Blew Up the Internet" is a game review article. Its audience are people who aren't looking for game and tech reviews and information on future releases. This specific article of Among Us explains the general rules of the game, the history behind it, and possible reasons for its sudden rise. It's a site that publishes articles, reviewing all sorts of games and tech, by recurring writers. The writer speaks quite positively about the game explaining certain aspects of Among Us that make it revolutionary compared to older, similar games. This article was published on October 1st, which makes it a very recent and reliable source with the continuing popularity of the game. It holds a lot of relevance to my paper since it directly states reasons for a sudden rise in this game's popularity and provides statistical evidence as well.



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