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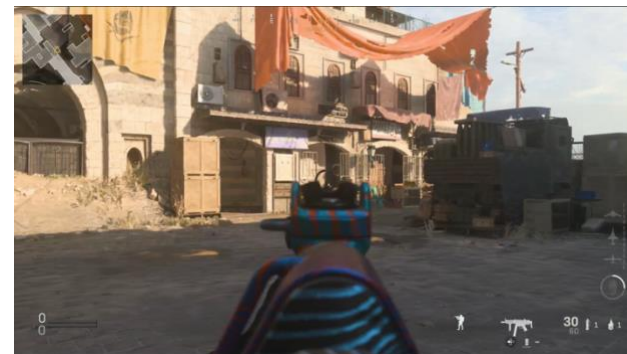
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The Issues of *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare*

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare introduced many new systems and mechanics; some good and some bad. For example, a new way of customizing weapons called the Gunsmith was a good implementation of the game since it made players think about what attachments to put on their weapons since each attachment had pros and cons. On the other hand, *Modern Warfare* had some questionable new mechanics and systems; a new method of map design, and the implementation of skill-based matchmaking. Map design used to be three-lane based; players could choose between three different routes. Now, the designers made their maps, so gunfights weren't based on "who had the better aim" (Geoff, 2019). The multiplayer design director for *Modern Warfare* Geoff Smith said, "the new *Modern Warfare* maps are more about power positions... and being in a realistic setting" (Geoff, 2019). From this statement, I feel the level of realism could have been lowered or implemented slowly into *Modern Warfare*. What makes these new maps unique are the different ways you can push certain buildings and objectives; the number of doors and windows makes this possible. Video 1 shows how in the map "Rammaza" a player can go from the right side of the map and cut through the bottom of the building and cut off the enemy team. If coordinated correctly there can be a teammate on top of that same building to help cut off the enemy team. This might not seem like a power position, but a player that



Video 1

camp that room, has access to the middle of the map, to the left and right “lanes” and can catch players coming from both spawns as shown on video 2.

This new design of maps could be “fixed” or improved by locking some doors. Figure 1 shows a door marked with red that could be locked so players can’t push towards the left side of the map, and not make this power position so overpowered; by being locked, that position is only effective to get players coming from the middle of the map or the “Barber Shop” (Video 2, [0:02-0:04](#)). That same spot can be used in favor of campers. If players don’t want to push out and use that power position to kill enemies as shown on video 2, they could use it to camp as shown on video 3. Maps could’ve been designed with more locked doors and fewer windows; fewer doors make it so there are fewer possibilities of power positions. I understand the designers wanted to change their map design, but I feel they could have implemented it slower, by having smaller maps, with locked doors, and maybe open them with updates so the change is not that drastic when going from three-lane maps to this.



Video 2



Figure 1/ Video 3

The next installment for *Call of Duty*, developed by Treyarch, *Call of Duty: Black Ops – Cold War* released their first alpha to the public this last weekend. From what I played; their maps seemed to go back to three-lanes. Since *Cold War* is developed by another studio, it makes sense for them to stick with three-lanes since it's the design they have always developed on. The maps feature doors, but differently to *Modern Warfare*, there are no interactable doors. Doors are either open or locked; players can go through open doors (Figure 3), and if a door is closed players can't go through them (Figure 2). Compared to *Modern Warfare*, I felt players resorted to less camping in *Cold War*, and the game felt faster paced. The change done in *Cold War* regarding map design proves my point of reducing the number of doors and having three-lane maps, makes games fast-paced, and reduces the number of players camping. *Modern Warfare's* new design can be used as a reference for future titles, so they don't make the same "mistakes" as *Modern Warfare* did. If a future title wants to use this realistic feel, they might want to implement fewer doors and windows. From this alpha, professional players expressed their concerns with skill-based matchmaking, since it was implemented in the alpha and we had to deal with it for the entirety of *Modern Warfare*. *Call of Duty* news sources like Charlie Intel expressed their concerns in Twitter "SBMM does not belong in Call of Duty causal playlists. It only needs to be active in a separate, ranked playlist" (Bhat, 2020).

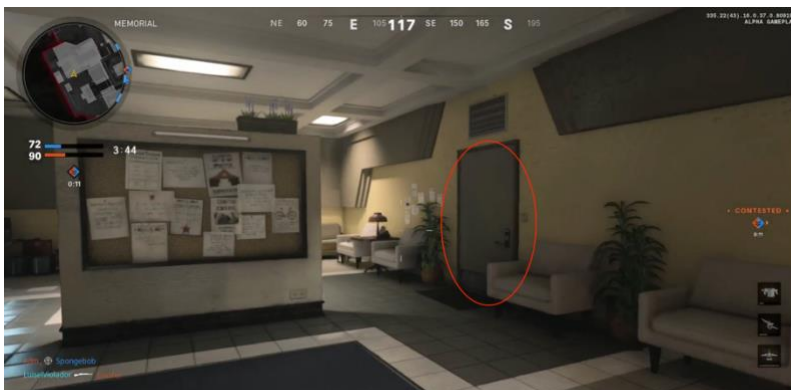


Figure 2

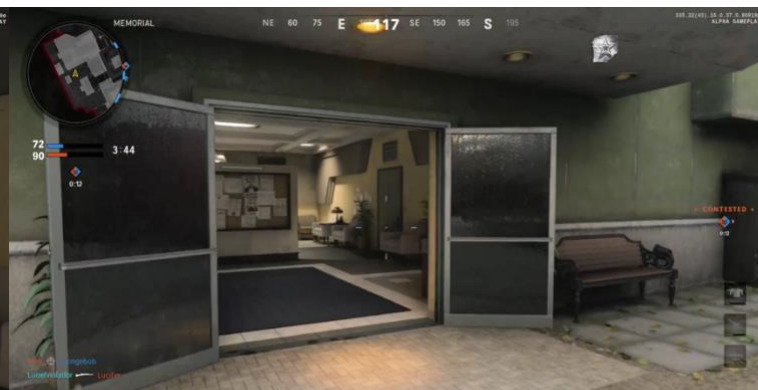


Figure 3

Skill-based matchmaking is a system *Modern Warfare* implemented. The developers say it has always been in the game in some way. They did a reasonable change to their matchmaking system where it puts players together based on their playstyles and statistics. The system works by putting skilled players with skilled players; this might sound like a good implementation, but it's only beneficial to less skilled players since they are not affected by it that much. For skilled players, on the other hand, they always get into matches with "try-hards" this might sound like a fair system but after playing for two hours like as if you were a pro-player, it gets infuriating, since every time you do good the game punishes you by putting you in harder lobbies. This system might be good if there were ranked mode or playlist. For good players that only want to play to have fun, it encourages them to "reverse boost¹". When I'm back home in Panama, I tend to get into harder lobbies in comparison to the US since I'm number five in kills in all platforms and number four in PlayStation (Figure 4); since I'm this high in the leaderboards, I usually don't host when I'm playing with my friends; and some of my friends that have similar statistics to me, reverse boost so our lobbies are not too bad. This shouldn't be something high skilled players have to do to have fun in *Modern Warfare*. As a fix, *Modern Warfare* should implement a ranked playlist so players that want to play competitively, are able to and skilled players that want to play to casually, are able to do so without being "punished" by doing good.

Rank	Player	Region	Kills	Matches Played
1	AllanR-		117,733	3,942
2	Puchiexz		93,449	3,998
3	mattjim19		75,527	5,952
4	horavaldes  		67,337	3,788

Figure 4

¹ Reverse boost is when players kill themselves to lower their skill and get put into easier lobbies.

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare tried to revolutionize the design of maps and implement a system of matchmaking that wasn't that successful. The map design was sort of fixed since *Call of Duty: Black Ops-Cold War* will be going back to the traditional way maps are designed. *Call of Duty* considered the fact that the new maps weren't like by the community as much as they thought the community would appreciate it, so they will be going back to three-lane maps and having opened and closed doors that are not interactable. On the other hand, skill-based matchmaking is going to stay from what was played in the alpha. Apart from players complaining about it for the whole year of *Modern Warfare*, it seems *Call of Duty* does not care what the community thinks about it and is going to implement it in *Cold War*. Skill-based matchmaking is so big of an issue that it started trending on Twitter during the *Cold War* alpha and professional players like Seth "Scump" Abner, uploaded clips to Twitter showing them reverse boosting (Video 4). Although map design can be improved, it would be hard for *Modern Warfare* to change its map design so far into the game. This method of the design served *Call of Duty* as a franchise, so other developers don't make the same "mistake". Skill-based matchmaking, on the other hand, can still be prevented and wouldn't affect the flow of maps and playstyle so much; and can still be tuned down or removed for *Modern Warfare* and future *Call of Duty* titles.



Video 4

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