

The Evolution and Ongoing Decline of



A Data Analysis by William Green

Yu-Gi-Oh is property of Konami
I own nothing
Dataset provided by [YGOProDeck.com](https://ygoprodeck.com)

The Problem



I Tried The Most Ridiculous Card Game

144K views • 5 months ago

Yu-Gi-Oh master duel released two years ago and in that time the game has dropped to roughly 10% of its peak player count.

Video essays calling the game incomprehensible are concerningly frequent.

By all means the game does nothing wrong as far as virtual tcgs go, so the source of the issue might be hiding within the game it's playing

There are three main questions when analyzing the cards to see if common complaints are true.

Is the game:

- Difficult to learn
- Overly complex
- Expensive to play well

The Method

There are 12.6 thousand cards in Yu-Gi-Oh.

New cards are released every year.

Fan site YGOProDeck has a card database with a free queryable API.

With my existing knowledge on the game, and the hard statistics of the cards, I will find my answers.

name	frame	card_type	sub_type	cardmarket	tcgplayer	word_count	adds	banishes	negates	recovers	release
"A" Cell Breeding Device	spell	Spell Card	Continuous	0.19	0.22	16	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
"A" Cell Incubator		Spell Card	Continuous	0.18	0.2	32	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
"A" Cell Recombination Device	spell	Spell Card	Quick-Play	0.09	0.2	66	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
"A" Cell Scatter Burst	spell	Spell Card	Quick-Play	0.15	0.1	22	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
"Infernoble Arms - Almace"	spell	Spell Card	Equip		1.05	91	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	*****
"Infernoble Arms - Durendal"	spell	Spell Card	Equip	0.09	0.14	95	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	*****
"Infernoble Arms - Hauteclere"	spell	Spell Card	Equip	0.1	0.09	91	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
"Infernoble Arms - Joyeuse"	spell	Spell Card	Equip	0.19	0.22	72	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	*****
1st Movement Solo	spell	Spell Card	Normal	6.13	2.4	44	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
3-Hump Lacooda	effect	Effect Monster	Beast	0.1	0.2	22	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
30,000-Year White Turtle	normal	Normal Monster	Aqua		0	11	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
4-Starred Ladybug of Doom	effect	Flip Effect Monster	Insect	0.1	0.01	9	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
	7 spell	Spell Card	Continuous	0.51	0.56	43	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
7 Colored Fish	normal	Normal Monster	Fish	0.1	0.16	12	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
7 Completed	spell	Spell Card	Equip	0.24	0.11	24	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
8-Claws Scorpion	effect	Effect Monster	Insect	0.1	0.19	31	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
A Cat of Ill Omen	effect	Flip Effect Monster	Beast	0.77	1.94	31	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
A Deal with Dark Ruler	spell	Spell Card	Quick-Play	0.19	0.17	36	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
A Feather of the Phoenix	spell	Spell Card	Normal	0.06	0.25	19	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	*****
A Feint Plan	trap	Trap Card	Normal	0.14	0.2	9	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
A Hero Emerges	trap	Trap Card	Normal	0.06	0.09	36	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****
A Hero Lives	spell	Spell Card	Normal	0.13	0.17	23	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	*****

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"1"
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Notes before data analysis:

- No set rotation, every card ever printed can be used provided it is not banned
- No play resource, if a card says you can 'do X' when 'Y happens' or 'There is Z in play', you can usually do that

“Something in your brain clicks, and you just stop. You just say ‘[...]Do what you must, I will trust that you aren’t cheating.’”

- Content Creator MBT Yu-gi-oh, sympathizing with streamer Rarran's misfortune after trying Master Duel



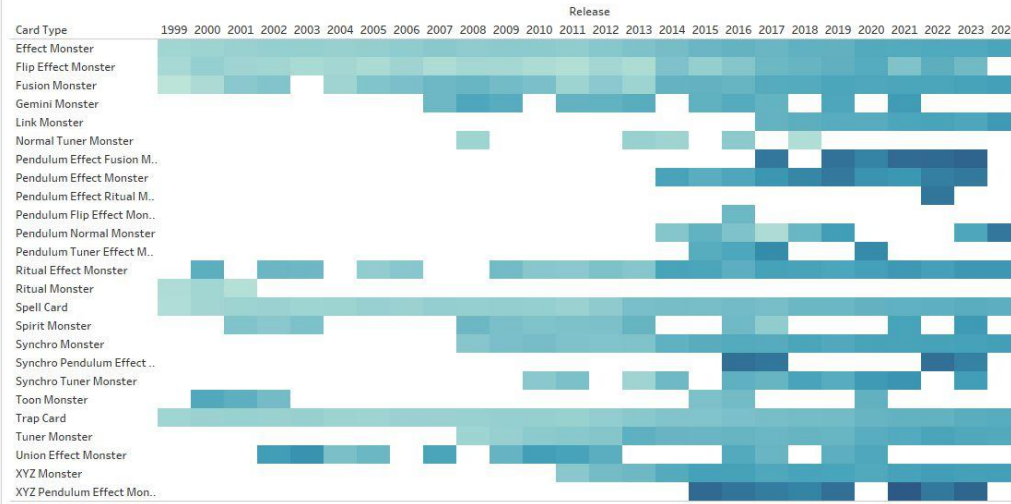
[Plant/Effect]

✔ During your Main Phase: You can take 1 "Rikka" monster from your Deck, except "Rikka Petal", and either add it to your hand or send it to the GY, also you cannot Special Summon for the rest of this turn, except Plant monsters. During your opponent's End Phase, while this card is in your GY, if you control no monster, you can

With knowledge that a card's power is within what they say you can do:

- Cards average word count has been steadily increasing, and with it the speed and complexity of the game.
- New types of cards keep being created, and new mechanics attached to them
- New cards need to be made stronger than old ones, aka: Power Creep

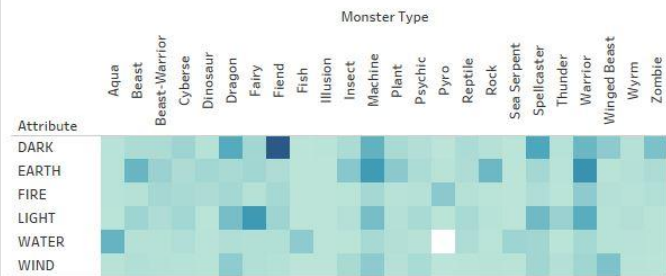
Average Word Count Across the Years Among the Card Types



Game Complexity

- Yugioh has few keywords in the effects; two cards with similar effects may read completely differently
- Powerful effects that resemble each other are being printed more and more frequently.
- Monster types and elemental attributes don't have much say in how they play together.

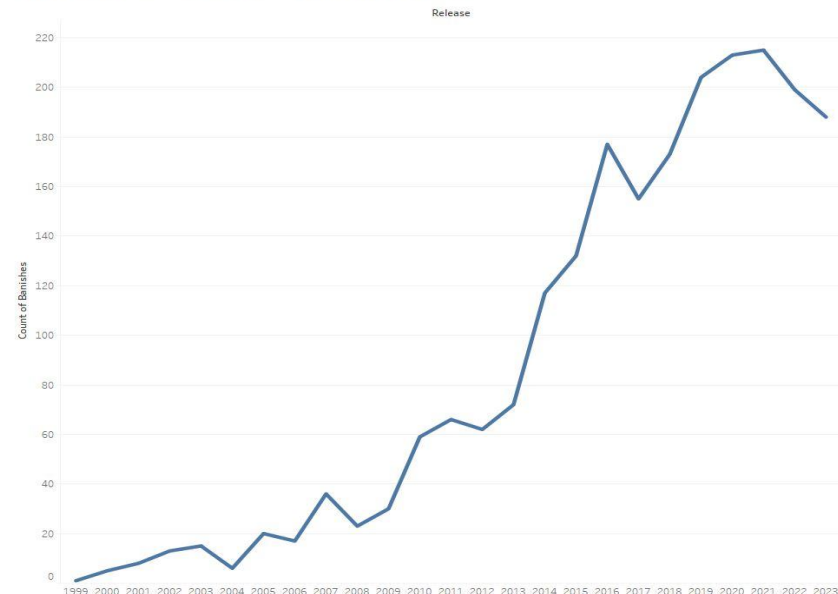
Concentrations Of Monsters By Type and Attribute



Number of Cards Made Per Year That Add A Card From Deck To Hand



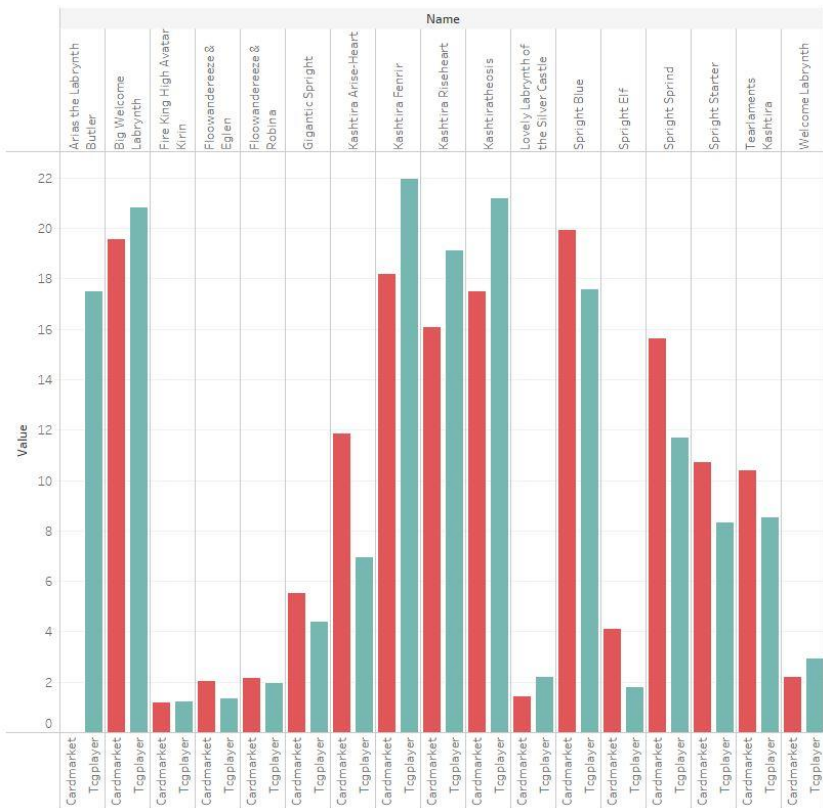
Cards Made Per Year That Interact With The Banishment



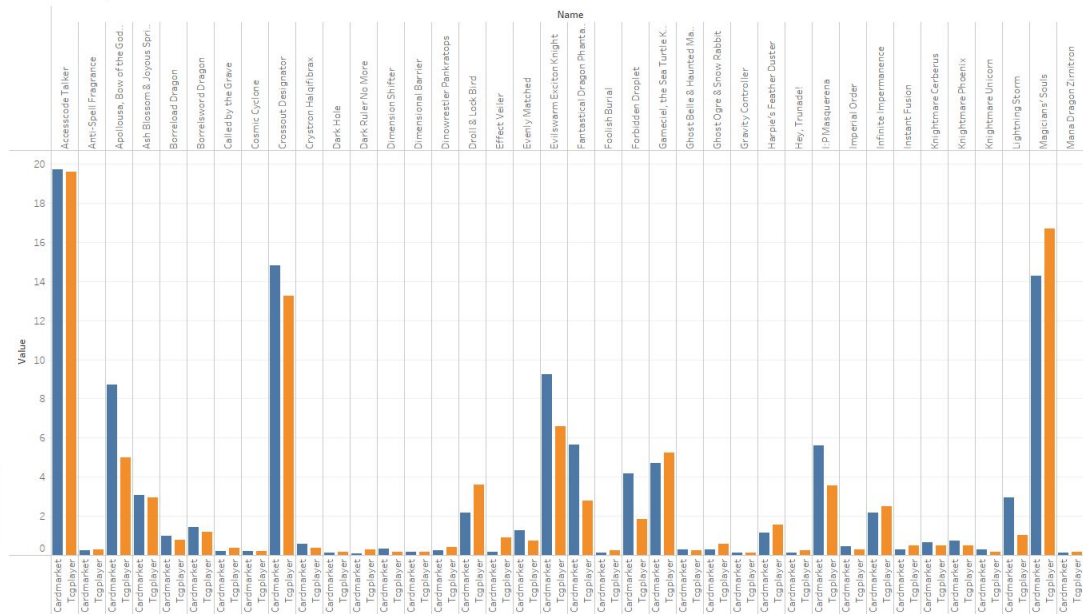
Expenses

- Most powerful options often have a high price tag from rarity and demand
- Staple cards, cards that can conceivably be played in anything, may not have recent printings and come with high costs.

Highest Priced Cards From Currently Powerful Decks



Prices of Staple Cards



Possible Solutions

Konami is aware of these issues

The Forbidden and Limited List updates regularly, but a failing concept due to power creep allowing cards to leave it

Alternative formats:

- Speed Duel, a format with simplified rules and a curated card pool from the wider game
- Rush Duel, a format with so many changes to the rules it could be considered a different game. Has not been imported yet.

Set Rotation:

- A standard set by other TCGs, older card 'set' are disallowed in tournaments as new sets release.
- A contentious topic for Yu-Gi-Oh, some enjoy that every card printed can be played.
- Konami takes advantage of the lack by regularly giving old favourite decks new cards
- Retaining an official "Unlimited" format along side the rotating one could be the best of both worlds