

Research Journal Design Ethnography

Krissy van Deursen
19068433

Pokémon fans in the Netherlands



Assignment Research for Design
Bachelor program User Experience Design, The Hague University of Applied Science

I Orientation: exploring the subculture (week 2¹)

What I know (perform desk research)

Pokémon is not just an animated television series. It originated in Japan, where most anime is originated. This is also why a lot of fans are from Japan, and why there is so much exclusive Pokémon stuff, like merchandise and games, in Japan. This series however became more mainstream in the European and American world. Pokémon can be split into multiple things. You have Pokémon the television series, that got mainstream in The Netherlands due to the amazing success on Disney XD. You also have the range of Nintendo games, which started on the Gameboy but later got onto the DS and Wii too as technology developed. Another huge part of this company are the Pokémon cards. The cards form a game where two or more players can beat each other in a fight with different Pokémon of different strengths and also exchange different cards. The last big thing that has happened in this franchise is the smartphone game called Pokémon go. In 2016 this game was welcomed with open arms by the public and it took over the world. This game was not only loved by the people that were fans of the franchise but also by people that had nothing to do with it. This played a big part in the popularity of the franchise.

The franchise is based on fantasy. It's about different kinds of non-existing animals, also called Pokémon. These animals get caught by humans called Pokémon trainers. In the series you see the daily life and adventures of the trainers, trying to catch all kinds of Pokémon and working together with them.

The fan base of this franchise is a community, so we can call it a subculture. This fan base is quite diverse when it comes to the age range. Because the series has been running on the television since 1997 'til now, I would say the fans are mostly about 6 'til 35 years old. Since most kids start liking it around 6 years old and the first few fans originated in about 1995, it would mean the first fans were born in 1989, so that is thirty years ago. Still I would say the age range is a bit bigger since there were also older kids that liked the series when it started. However this doesn't mean that there aren't any fans of different ages.

For this research however, I am more focusing on the real, hardcore fans. The people that watch the series, play Pokémon go, collect the Pokémon cards and are part of member of a community or club. These people mostly belong to the older generation of fans, so think about the 20+ people.

Reflection

The information does help with empathizing, in the way that it is possible when it comes to a fan base. Since the franchise is based on something that is non-existent and fantasy, it makes it easier to understand why people would still like it on a certain age. I can understand how it can make you escape reality for a minute and maybe awakens some nostalgic feelings for some people.

What I assume

I assume that people in this subculture are deemed a bit more childish than most people, but not in a bad way. I think those people really want to escape the reality and not worry about the real world, and they look for this in this fandom.

What I am curious about

I am really curious about why people of a certain age still like the series, and what makes it so popular in the western world. Is it just from nostalgic feelings that older people still like it or is it some formula that makes it so likeable. I am also really curious about how people bond in this

¹ A week starts with the (first) lesson in that week and end at the start of the (first) lesson in the next week.

community. Is it just liking the same thing or is there a feeling of family between the fans? Is it some safe space to not be judged for the fact that you like Pokémon?

What I did this week

activity	results, relevance, impact	hours spent
Desk research, locating sources	It showed me that I know quite a bit about it already but also gives me surprises. It's pretty relevant since I got to know the basis of where the fans originated.	2 hours
Digesting and interpreting information	It makes you realize you only need the important information and not all information.	1,5 hours
Present information in research journal	It gives you a good overview of what you learned about the subculture you chose.	1 hour
Read chapter interviewing	It shows how you can make an interview as efficient as possible and how to ask the right questions to get the information you need	30 minutes

2 Getting to know the people: basic interviewing (week 3)

Interview schedule first interview

Introduction:

- Welcome them to the interview
- Introduce yourself
- Tell them how long the interview will take
- Ask if you are allowed to use the data they give you and ask for the consent of the audio
- Tell them they can always stop the interview if they feel too uncomfortable.

Questions:

- Could you describe Pokémon for me?
 - o Could you elaborate more on...
- Being a fan of Pokémon
 - o Would you describe yourself as a Pokémon fan?
 - o Since when are you a Pokémon fan?
 - o What makes Pokémon so likeable to you?
 - o Could you explain the part that attracts you to Pokémon so much?
 - o Is this also why Pokémon is more attractive to you than other franchises?
 - o What does Pokémon mean to you?
- Games
 - o There are also different kind of games. Do you play any of them?
 - o Do you think those games are made to make the audience of Pokémon bigger?
 - o Could you explain to me why you think so?
 - o How do those games make the experience for a real fan better?
- Community
 - o You are a part of the Dutch Pokémon community, is that correct?
 - o Since when does this community exist?
 - o Do you organize events with each other?
 - o How do those events look like?
 - o Does the community give you the feeling of belonging somewhere?
 - o Does the community give you another type of feeling?
 - o If so, can you describe that feeling to me?
 - o Would you say the community needs more events or do you think the community is alright now?

End:

Ask the participant if they have any more things to add about Pokémon or if they have something they really want to tell you. Summarize the whole interview and ask if that is indeed what they wanted to say. Thank them and ask them if you are still allowed to use the data.

Transcript first interview

(00:40)

Interviewer: Then I would like to start with the question if you could describe Pokémon for me.

Participant: Pokémon is to a lot of people nostalgia.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant: They grew up with it and they looked at it when they were little and it's still ongoing so, a lot of people get stuck in it and don't come out of it. For me, Pokémon is a way to clear my head from the daily routine.

Interviewer: Yes. So since when did you like Pokémon? Which age?

Participant: I think I was 5, maybe 6?

Interviewer: That's quite soon.

P: Yea I was early, I was early.

I: And what made Pokémon so likeable for you? Anything in the story or?

P: It started out with the story, because you could replace yourself into the headrole player of the story.

I: And could you tell me a bit about the story?

P: It goes about a 10 year old guy, that goes out to catch some Pokémons. He has a dream to become the Pokémon master, but it goes on for now almost 20 years, and still ongoing. But he never succeeds, so he fails. So he learns to never stop dreaming. And that's why some people are comparing themselves with him.

I: Because the moral of the story is...?

P: Yes.

I: Okay. Is that also what attracts you so much then?

P: The point that attracts me so much is I'm a gamer, and the games are like the best rpg's ever made in my opinion. Because they are so big and it looks like you are always doing the same but you can play it like twenty, twenty five times in a row and every gameplay will be different. And even if it feels like the same you can change it for yourself.

(2:44)

(4:50)

Interviewer: Do you think that people really got into Pokémon because of Pokémon go?

P: There are a couple of people in my nearby area that because of Pokémon go they go into Pokémon deeper.

I: But are they also like real fans or just interested in it?

P: Yea what is a definition of a fan? That's a difficult question

I: That is indeed a really good question too. Let's say they really see it as a hobby.

P: Then I think they are fans. Because I think, for a lot of people, even Pokémon go is a way to clear their head. They come from the daily stress from work school, that kind of stuff, and then they go 'oh I'm gonna walk 10 miles and clear my head, have some fun with people on the street and then I go home back to reality'.

I: Okay so would you say for a Pokémon fan, being a fan is also a way to clear your head?

P: Yes. Yes. For me it is, I can only speak for myself, but for me it is. For me it is a way to escape the reality sometimes.

I: And how does it help you escape the reality?

P: Because I am busy with something I really like, and I can go all in to it. And the point is yea, you're just doing something you really like and you forget all the world around you at that moment.

I: But why do you think it makes you forget everything, because maybe it is its own world in itself?

P: Yea I think it's an own world. I think especially the games, they are... You're really living what the character in the game is living. So you can go all in it and you can play like you in that world.

I: You can replace them with yourself?

P: Exactly.

I: Okay that's interesting. ... Let's see. Do the games also make the experience of being a Pokémon fan bigger or better in any way?

P: I think the basis of a Pokémon fan. And the other things all around it are just to extra. I think the show and the games are the basis of being a Pokémon fan. Everybody started with or the games or the series.

I: Okay, and do you think the people that started with the series have a bigger nostalgia feeling than the people that started with the games?

P: I don't really get to answer because they are both different things and both have their own real nostalgia.

(7:55)

(13:10)

I: Do you have any speculations on why someone started the Facebook group?

P: Because if you talk about Pokémon. Pokémon is a good... how do you say that in English

I: Say it in Dutch?

P: Ja, een goede manier om samen te komen.

I: A good way to get like, get together in a community?

P: yea, it has a special word but I forgot about it, sorry. It's a good way to get together and to expand your own friend groups and that kind of things. Because it is also, it's always a good thing to talk about.

I: Do you think that some people that were fans of Pokémon felt maybe a bit left out, that's why they started to look for people that like Pokémon?

P: That is a possibility. Because, when you do in normal life, you say "I like Pokémon", especially when you are older, people are looking you out like "He is a dork or he is a nerd" or something. It's a good way to get together as nerds so.... It's a good way to get together and talk about something you like when you have it in common.

I: And does that give you a kind of feeling of belonging somewhere?

P: That's a possibility. I can only talk about myself, but...

I: That's what I want you to do, talk about yourself.

P: Oh okay, I don't have that feeling because I have the feeling that I am accepted in my own world, but... I know, yea. How do you say that in English? Ik kan me goed voorstellen...

I: yea, I can imagine?

P: yes, thank you. I can imagine that some people have the feeling that they are left out in the regular world so they try to find someone that's also of the same interests.

I: Do you also organize events within the Pokémon community?

P: Not in this community, but in bigger communities, international communities. I also start from the Pokémon games tournaments but also from the training cards I play tournaments. I go international, I travel for it so yes, I'm an international Pokémon thing.

I: Okay, interesting. But how do you find those tournaments?

P: Facebook is a great way to communicate international.
(15:52)

(16:50)

I: Do you think the meetups also make an extra experience for the fans?

P: Yea you can learn new people, you can exchange information and.. That kind of stuff. You can talk about something you really like with new people and that's always good.

I: Yes, I agree. So you would say the Pokémon community is really social?

P: Ehm, yea they are social as long it goes about Pokémon and that's the problem, because what you already said earlier, they feel a little bit left out in the normal society, so they know a lot of Pokémon and that's the only thing you can talk about. That's some feeling I get with some people and... They don't have the social skills to present themselves in the normal society so they turn back to Pokémon and as long as you talk about Pokémon with them, they are really social. But, it's not... when it's not about Pokémon, they don't understand that anymore. That's the feeling I get from the community.

I: Okay, and with that, would you say Pokémon kinda acts like a social conversation opener for them?

P: Yea, I think it is. It's a way to interact with other people they like, like they can't in the normal society. So, they need Pokémon to meet new people and that kind of stuff.
(18:43)

(20:55)

I: What do you think is why the people see it as a religious thing like you already said before the interview. Do you have any idea where that maybe comes from?

P: Because it's something they've grown up with. It's like you're little and you go to the church, you grow up with going to the church. So you appreciate going to the church. And if you grew up with Pokémon, you appreciate Pokémon later in your life.

I: Yes, but the thing is, as you maybe see with other franchises. A lot of those don't have it. For example say spongebob, which is a very big franchise.

P: It is. I think it's because spongebob is only for fun. And Pokémon is more for... It has an extra feeling for the most people. And it does something extra with when you grow up with it. I can't explain it, sorry. But it's something, as I already said, you can compare yourself really easy with ash or the protagonist in the game. You really have the feeling you are one with them. You laugh with them, you laugh with them. Because it learns you so much emotion and it gathers you through the journey, I think that's why people see it more like a religion than other franchises.

I: So basically because you are so close to it, and close to the character. It's easier to...

P: I think that's why people love it more.

I: But it's... maybe you can't answer this, which is fine. But you said people love ash because we can relate to him. But why do we love ash? Why... Is there some specific characteristic?

P: Sometimes he is really dumb. And then we can mirror that easy to our own lives, because sometimes it doesn't matter how smart you are, how good schooled you are, sometimes you do something dumb in your life. Then you go oh what am I doing. And that is exactly what ash also does. He had like, I don't know, he had like more than 2000 battles and still makes the same mistake and he still sometimes does. And that's why you can easily relate to him.

I: So, the things he fails in, we can easily relate to things we fail in every day?

P: Yes, and that's also with emotions, bonding with your animals, because they are not really animals but...

I: The Pokémon?

P: Yea, it's bonding, love, affection, but also getting neglected so..

I: And you said bonding with the animals, or Pokémon. Do the Pokémon also stand for something?

P: I think they stand for... Every Pokémon has his own characters, so yea. I think some of the most Pokémon will stand for something. It's like a cute little pikachu. It's more petable than a Onix. I don't know if you know what an Onix is?

I: No...

P: An Onix is a big rock snake. So yea. I think every Pokémon stand for something so yea. I can't really tell you which Pokémon is standing for what, but it's what I said. Some Pokémon are cute, some Pokémon are really strong and bulky. Yea...

(24:55)

Methodological learnings

Good interview skills

Example 1

< I: Yes, I agree. So you would say the Pokémon community is really social?
P: Ehm, yea they are social as long it goes about Pokémon and that's the problem, because what you already said earlier, they feel a little bit left out in the normal society, so they know a lot of Pokémon and that's the only thing you can talk about. That's some feeling I get with some people and... They don't have the social skills to present themselves in the normal society so they turn back to Pokémon and as long as you talk about Pokémon with them, they are really social. But, it's not... when it's not about Pokémon, they don't understand that anymore. That's the feeling I get from the community. >

Explanation

I let the participant talk, and think about the question I just asked. I am not interrupting him halfway through his story, nor trying to help him get to his answer. I am just letting him find his own answer for a while so he can see if he can figure out his answer himself.

Example 2

< I: ... maybe you can't answer this, which is fine.... >

Explanation

I let the participant feel comfortable by reassuring him that it is fine if he doesn't have an answer for the question I asked. I don't pressure him into actually answering a question he doesn't want to answer or doesn't know an answer to.

Example 3

< P: Oh okay, I don't have that feeling because I have the feeling that I am accepted in my own world, but... I know, yea. How do you say that in English? Ik kan me goed voorstellen...

I: yea, I can imagine?

P: yes, thank you. I can imagine...>

Explanation

I help the participant with finding the words he needs. This also makes the participant feel more comfortable with the fact that it doesn't matter if he doesn't know how to say it or is unsure of the right translation.

Interview skills need improvement

Example 1

<(00:40)

Interviewer: Then I would like to start with the question if you could describe Pokémon for me.>

Explanation

As you can see, I start with the first question very quickly, within 40 seconds I am already starting the interview. I need to improve on giving a longer introduction to make sure the participant knows what it is about. In this case I already had a small conversation with the participant so he knew quite a bit about why the interview was conducted already, so I think that is also why the introduction is so short.

Example 2

< I: Okay that's interesting. ... Let's see. Do the games also make the experience of being a Pokémon fan bigger or better in any way? >

Explanation

I don't really know how to react to answer to make it a flowy conversation. I feel like I need to keep true to my interview questions, and don't go a different route. I need to learn how to let go and just go with the flow.

Example 3

< I: And does that give you a kind of feeling of belonging somewhere?

P: That's a possibility. I can only talk about myself, but...

I: That's what I want you to do, talk about yourself.>

Explanation

I feel like I interrupt the participant a lot of times, not in a really annoying way, but more in a way where I realize I could've let them speak first, and make my point clear afterwards if it didn't go as I planned.

Learnings about the subculture

Copy three excerpts from the interview that stand out because of the quality of the information.

Indicators for quality are: novelty, detailed, personal, insightful.

For each excerpt add an explanation why it is valuable.

excerpt 1

< It started out with the story, because you could replace yourself into the headrole player of the story. >

Explanation

Here you see that the participant already has a connection with the product, Pokémon in this case. The participant tells me, also multiple times

in the interview but this is the first time, that one of the best things about Pokémon is that you can replace the lead role of the story with yourself and kind of experience everything yourself.

excerpt 2

<I: Do you think that some people that were fans of Pokémon felt maybe a bit left out, that's why they started to look for people that like Pokémon?

P: That is a possibility. Because, when you do in normal life, you say "I like Pokémon", especially when you are older, people are looking you out like "He is a dork or he is a nerd" or something. It's a good way to get together as nerds so.... It's a good way to get together and talk about something you like when you have it in common.

I: And does that give you a kind of feeling of belonging somewhere?

P: That's a possibility. I can only talk about myself, but...>

Explanation

Here you learn that Pokémon isn't just something people like, it is a social glue for some people. The Pokémon community is accepting of a lot of people and is a place where everyone can just be themselves, without being judged by the normal society, of what we think is right and wrong. It is a safe place for people that don't feel like they are accepted and it is their way of expressing themselves, of belonging somewhere. It is

excerpt 3

<P: Then I think they are fans. Because I think, for a lot of people, even Pokémon go is a way to clear their head. They come from the daily stress from work school, that kind of stuff, and then they go 'oh I'm gonna walk 10 miles and clear my head, have some fun with people on the street and then I go home back to reality'.

I: Okay so would you say for a Pokémon fan, being a fan is also a way to clear your head?

P: yes. Yes. For me it is, I can only speak for myself, but for me it is. For me it is a way to escape the reality sometimes.>

Explanation

You learn that they don't just see Pokémon as a hobby, but it is a way to really clear their head. It helps them escape reality as some people use mindfulness or yoga for them. It is not just a show that they watch or a game they play, it really helps them get through their day.

What I did this week

Make an overview of your activities

activity	results, relevance, impact	hours spent
Preparing first interview	It's a stability for the actual interview, it calms you a bit	1,5 hour

	because you have the feeling that you do know what you are gonna talk about.	
Conducting first interview	It is your first encounter with the subculture which is really relevant for how people outside the culture may perceive the culture.	1 hour
Making transcript	You really focus on what is actually said while normally you may wouldn't. It is also easier to get information from a transcript instead of a audio.	2,5 hours
Interpreting transcript	It makes you think about what you asked and what the participant told you about themselves and the subculture.	1,5 hours
Present information in research journal	It is a good overview of information you just gathered.	2 hours

3 Getting to know the people: ethnographic interviewing and observation (week 4)

Protocol (interview schedules) second interview (ethnographic interview)

Introduction:

- Thank you for doing the interview with me
 - My name is Krissy
 - I am a student of User Experience Design at the The Hague University of Applied Sciences
 - I have to research a subculture to learn about how to conduct research.
 - I choose the pokemon fandom because I think it is really interesting and I want to know more about the fandom
 - The interview will be an estimated half an hour, maybe a bit longer or shorter.
 - Do I have your consent to record the interview and use the data for my study research
 - You can stop the interview at any time, you can decide to not answer questions if they get too personal or if you feel uncomfortable with them.
1. Could you maybe describe yourself a bit?
 - 1.1 What are strong characteristics of you?
 - 1.2 What are your hobbies or interests?
 - 1.3 Would you call yourself a fan of pokemon?
 - 1.4 How big of a pokemon fan are you in your opinion?
 2. Could you explain pokemon to me?
 - 2.1 Pokemon is a category, could you tell me about what pokemon is?
 - 2.2 What is the story behind the franchise (think of the series mainly)
 - 2.3 What makes the story so special and different to other franchises
 - 2.4 Does it have any special meaning?
 - 2.5 What meaning does it have for you?
 3. How does Pokémon influence your daily life?
 - 3.1 What do you do on a daily basis, what does your basic day look like?
 - 3.2 How much time do you spend on pokemon per day? On average!
 - 3.3 In which parts of your day do you see Pokemon coming back
 - 3.4 Do you know or understand why it influences you in that way.
 - 3.5 Does the meaning pokemon has for you reflect in your day?
 4. Pokemon has a lot of morals to the story.
 - 4.1 Could you give me a few examples of those morals?
 - 4.2 Which moral would be the most important to you?
 - 4.3 Could you explain why this moral is so important to you?
 - 4.4 Is this a moral you always think is important or did it become important through pokemon?
 5. The community;
 - 5.1 Could you tell me something about the community in general?
 - 5.2 Does the community fulfil a certain role in the fandom?
 - 5.3 Does the community mean anything special to you? If so, what?
 - 5.4 Do you use the community in your daily life too?
 - 5.5 Do you think the community is important or can the culture exist without the community?

6. Are there any questions I left out or things that you really want to tell me about certain things?

So Topics:

1. Information about the interviewee
2. Pokemon
3. Daily life
4. Morals
5. Community
6. Events

Methodological learnings



Good interview skills ethnographic interviewing

Example 1

I: "could you tell me a bit more about the game?"

Explanation

I show my participant that I am interested in what they are telling me at the moment and that I want them to go more into that topic, I encourage them to dig deeper.

Example 2

I: "Do you think this is the same for the whole community?"

Small silence

I: "Or maybe the majority"

Explanation

I let the participant think for a little and try to change the question up a little bit so it may be easier for my participant to answer the question.

Learnings about the subculture

excerpt 1

I: "And does it really have an influence on your daily life?"

P: "It gave me, what I really noticed a lot, it gave me a lot of confidence."

I: "and can you connect that to something maybe?"

P: "Well, I never really had many friends growing up and now I do see through Pokémon.. Yea I wouldn't say popular but... Well, with this group,

whatever you struggle with, you know, autism, ADHD, even a pimple on your nose, we accept you. And that was why the first time I connected with the community, I thought 'finally I can be myself here' "

Explanation

The acceptance of everyone in the community and the family like environment is giving people more growth when it comes to themselves. It can make them more comfortable with the fact that they like a certain something and it can make them more confident with themselves. This is also really important for kids that maybe get bullied sometimes and it is really a beautiful thing to see that everyone is accepting of everyone.

excerpt 2

I: "Do you think this is the same for everyone, or the majority?"

P: "For the majority, yes. I notice that within the Pokémon community, there are quite a lot of people with a mental limitation..."

I: "Could we talk about that a bit more? Why do you think there are a lot of people with a mental limitation?"

P: "Ehm, there is a certain clarity in the game. Everything has a clear start, a clear ending. When it is your turn in the game, you start by getting a card and end with your attack, which is always very clear, also for kids and adults with a mental limitation"

Explanation

There are a lot of people that don't just like the topic but also the social side of the community. This community doesn't consist of just adults that grew up with the game, but also kids. The kids most of the time have parents that also like Pokémon.

But then why are there kids without parents that like the game, really into Pokémon. The games are easy to understand and it has an obvious structure, it is logical and that's why people, mostly kids or people with for example autism are attracted to this game and franchise. That's also part of why Pokémon really is for everyone.

excerpt 3

I: "Did the popularity of Pokémon go also influence the community in a negative way?"

P: "The most negative aspect of the popularity is that the game cards, people who sell them ask way too much money for them. And companies like AliExpress sell fake ones, which can have negative consequences for people who want to play a match."

Explanation

People want a non chaotic, just normal community. Big companies like

amazon or AliExpress sell cards for cheap, make everyone think that they are real while in reality they aren't. This results in kids wanting to join competitions with their cards, but not being allowed to because their cards are fake. This is kind of a bump in the road when it comes to a friendly, not filled with problems, community.

excerpt 4

P: "I spend time on Pokémon every single day. Actually, as a hobby as well as professionally."

I: "Oh okay. And what kind of professional activity if I am allowed to ask?"

P: "I do a lot of things with the card games. You have the cards you can collect, but it is also a game. And you can kind of see the game as playing chess."

Explanation

It is not just a hobby for people, and they just play games with each other. It is a real world with competitions for the card games or digital games, you can also earn or win money with it. There is also a whole market where people sell their Pokémon cards for thousands of euros and it is no hobby anymore. People pay their houses or bills with the money they make from playing these tournaments or

Visiting people in context, collection of visuals

For my observation I mainly went to a prerelease of new Pokémon cards in Leiden. They organize a small, non professional tournament every Wednesday, but when new Pokémon cards get released, they also have some activities. There were four prereleases that day. What they did is you pay to participate in a prerelease, then you get 5 packs of the new Pokémon cards that aren't available in stores yet and they have to make up their own deck. Then they have 3 matches per prerelease to get used to the cards and share the information about what attack which Pokémon can do or better said, what the card actually can do. They aren't playing to win anything, it is just to have fun and get some new Pokémon cards. I also played some Pokémon go with a participant, so I could actually play some myself too. That was more of a laid back activity, a solo activity, and not that social. Still it was interesting to see how someone can enjoy walking around the city/town to catch Pokémon and to learn what the fun behind that was.

Methodological learnings

My visit to the subculture was very positive! The people were very open and welcoming and were having no problems with me asking certain questions about the game or the community. They all loved to hear that I was researching their group. It also showed me how much of a family the community was. Everyone there knew each other, even the people that organized the whole thing. Everyone was chatting to each other and sharing information or discussing new cards.

The other thing I noticed with the Pokémon go is that that isn't really an activity to be social within the community, but more of relaxing for themselves.

Learnings about the subculture



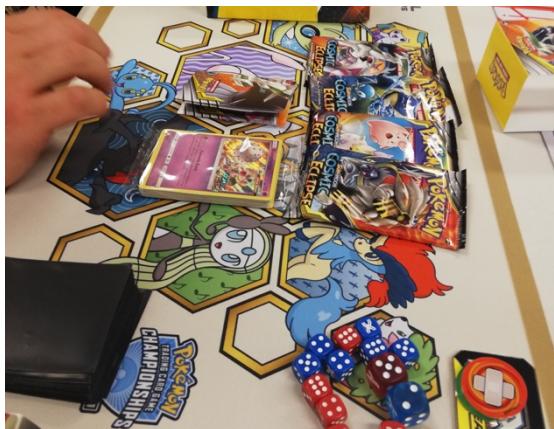
This is an overview of the place where the prerelease was held. Everyone was just chatting to each other in between the matches and having a good time. They were sharing their experiences from the prerelease with everyone.



On this picture you see two people playing the Pokémon game with the new cards. One of the players had never seen one of the cards so the other one was explaining what kind of attack the Pokémon could do.



On this picture you see people talking after one of the games. They are looking at the Pokémon they just got from the new package and showing each other their collection of cards.



Here one of the players was ready to unwrap some of the new cards so these are some of the newest cards available.



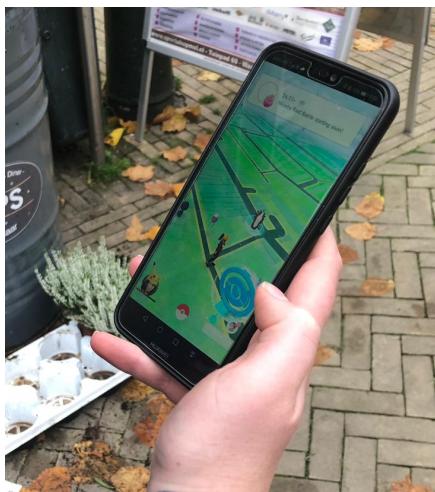
This was the environment the prerelease was held. It was in a game store, so I thought that was also interesting to photograph.



Here are two people in the middle of a game, and one person is writing down/organizing his collection of cards.



This was when I was playing Pokéémon go. We found one of the Pokémons and tried catching it. In the end this Pokéémon was too strong for us to catch so it escaped.



Here we started playing Pokéémon go. We looked at the map and tried to find the next Pokéémon nearby. There were a few close to us so what we had to do was check which Pokémons we didn't have yet.

What I did this week

Make an overview of your activities

activity	results, relevance, impact	hours spent
Making protocol ethnographic interview	It gives you some kind of stability so you know what topics you want to touch on. It gives you a loose structure of the conversation.	1 hour
Conducting ethnographic interview	You can ask about stuff you are more interested about and what you didn't hear in the first interview.	2 hours

Interpreting ethnographic interview		1 hour
Visit to the subculture, capturing visuals	It gives you the immersion in the subculture, you really experience the environment and you can feel what it is like.	3,5 hours
Interpreting visuals		1 hour
Present information in research journal	You get a good overview of what you learned.	2 hours

4 Adding data (week 5)

Impression and questions

Question 1: How does the community help people in their life?

Question 2: How come Pokémon is so important to some people?

Question 3: What attracts all ages so much?

Question 4: Why do people spend so much time on it?

Question 5: <question>

Themes further research (via empirical data and desk research)

Theme 1: The community helps people in a deep way.

Description

The community isn't just there so you can easily find each other and play games together, but it is also a social activity. They find new friends or learn how to be more open, more social. They meet new people and they start friendships. They get more confidence because of being accepted in the community. Because they know everyone likes the same thing, Pokémon, it is easier to contact each other for people that are more introverted or have problems.

Data

- It made one participant feel more confident because she could be herself.
- One guy I talked to told me a kid, who had trouble making contact, came to the tournaments and actually made his first real friend there.
- It is easier to make friends with people that have the same big interest.
- The community is so accepting that everyone feels welcome and not judged for once.
- Everyone feels like family.
- No one judges each other.

Theme 2: It is something for all ages and all people

Description

For a lot of people Pokémon is seen as childish and only for kids. Not a lot of people realize that there are also adults really liking the franchise. It is also not for a certain group of people but basically everyone can like the franchise, no matter your age, your heritage, your childhood.

Data

- There were a lot of people from different ages at the prerelease.
- A lot of kids were there with their parents, their parents also playing the card game.
- There are people that are way more social but also people that are introverted.
- Adults are more prone to liking Pokémon because they grew up with it, kids like it because of their parents or because of seeing it on the tv.
- It is fun for kids to watch but it also has some good morals that all age groups can learn from.

Theme 3: It's not just a hobby, it's a business**Description**

You can get the cards you play with for fairly cheap, just the normal price. Now, there are also cards worth over hundred euros, maybe even more, and these get sold. It is not just kids that collect cards and trade them anymore, it is also grown ups selling the cards to get more money.

Data

- People sell the cards with high worth to get around.
- There are businesses and stores that have a whole career based on selling/trading those cards.

What I did this week

Make an overview of your activities

activity	results, relevance, impact	hours spent
Formulation impressions and questions	It makes you think about what you want to know more of.	1 Hour
Desk research:		1 Hour
Empirical research:		1 Hour
Presenting data for three themes in research journal		1,5 Hours

5 User Insights (week 6)

Use the information from the lesson to get from themes to insights. It is a strength if a user insight is backed by both interviewing, observation and desk research. If in your case a specific method did not contribute, please leave it blank.

User insight I: The community is one big family.

Everyone in the community is accepted and no one cares where you are from or if you have some weird quirks. They are also really open to help you.

Data from interviewing

“I see that in Pokémon, there are a lot more grown ups than you think.”

“Well, I never really had many friends growing up and now I do see through Pokémon.. Yea I wouldn’t say popular but... Well, with this group, whatever you struggle with, you know, autism, ADHD, even a pimple on your nose, we accept you. And that was why the first time I connected with the community, I thought ‘finally I can be myself here’ “

“I found real friendships here. One of my good friends I know since 2012, through Pokémon.”

Data from observation

“We all know each other here and we always meet up when there is something new happening”

They all acted like they were literally family. Everyone knew each other, everyone was nice to each other. No one was left out and even I was accepted into the group to just tag along and see what kind of stuff they did. They were really open to me and were open to explain stuff or tell me information about the community.

Data from desk research

The Facebook group

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PokemonVLNL/>) accepts everyone. When people need help or have a question they can just post it and then people will immediately answer or ask them if they can message them to talk about it.

They help each other with searching sites or games or a lot of things.

User insight 2: Pokémon can be a real business.

For, most importantly, the card game but also for Pokémon go, there is a big business where you can actually earn quite a lot of money. This isn't for everyone but just for the people that really put time into Pokémon.

Data from interviewing

“People ask a lot more for the cards than they are actually worth”

Data from observation

“There are tournaments where you can win money when you win the tournament.”

“Some people want to collect all the cards with high worth, but we just sell them to make a bit more money, because some cards can easily be worth 150 euros.”

Data from desk research

There is a site about Pokémon cards

(<https://www.comc.com/Cards/Pokemon,pl>) where you can see for how much they sell certain cards.

At <https://www.cardmarket.com/en/> you can check how much your card is worth which will also result in people selling it for a higher price.

People also sell their accounts on Pokémon go to earn some money.

User insight 3: Many people like it because it is easy to understand and relatable.

A lot of people like Pokémon purely because they can relate to everything in the series and franchise, because you can also replace yourself with the main character it is easier to relate. It is also very easy for everyone to understand the story and games.

Data from interviewing

“The Pokémon kind of resemble animals.”

“You’re really living what the character in the game is living. So you can go all in it and you can play like you in that world.”

“Sometimes he is really dumb. And then we can mirror that easy to our own lives, because sometimes it doesn’t matter how smart you are, how good schooled you are, sometimes you do something dumb in your life. Then you go oh what am I doing. And that is exactly what ash also does. He had like, I don’t know, he had like more than 2000 battles and still makes the same mistake and he still sometimes does. And that’s why you can easily relate to him.”

“Ehm, there is a certain clarity in the game. Everything has a clear start, a clear ending. When it is your turn in the game, you start by getting a card and end with your attack, which is always very clear, also for kids and adults with a mental limitation”

Data from observation

“It is very easy because there is a system in the game. You grab a card, you attack and your turn is done.”

It is easy to understand because even kids play the game there.

Data from desk research

-

What I did this week

Make an overview of your activities

activity	results, relevance, impact	hours spent
Make the user insights and argument them.	You know where to look at when designing for the group.	4 hours.
?		
?		
?		

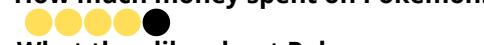
6 Ethnographic Description (week 7 /8)

The ethnographic description



Mark, 30

Education: MBO Psychology
Job: Truckdriver
Relationship status: Married

Pokemon fan since: 1998
Reason for being a fan: The tv-show
How much money spent on Pokemon: 

What they like about Pokemon:
It helps to relax and escape the reality of the world and everything he has gone through.

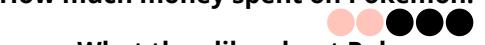
Favourite thing about the community:
The feeling of belonging to a family without being judged.





Abby, 26

Education: VWO
Job: Drugstore employee
Relationship status: Single

Pokemon fan since: 2016
Reason for being a fan: Pokemon go
How much money spent on Pokemon: 

What they like about Pokemon:
It helps her being active (Pokemon go) and it is a good way to relax.

Favourite thing about the community:
The help everyone offers when asking questions in a Facebook group.



Final reflection

I learned that Pokémon isn't just a franchise that people like for fun. It can actually change people's life. People learn to be more social or more themselves because of the community. They have people that are just like them and they accept everyone. It is also a big money source that people profit of.

I think that contributes to me being a good designer because now I know what is really important to the people in the community. For them it is important to be in contact with each other for example, so you can also put that in the design.

What I did this week

Make an overview of your activities

activity	results, relevance, impact	hours spent
Make the ethnographic description	Gives you an overview of your users.	3 Hours
Prepare presentation		2 Hours

Complete research journal	Ties everything together.	6 Hours
---------------------------	---------------------------	---------

Appendix a: Collection of 30 pictures (week 4)



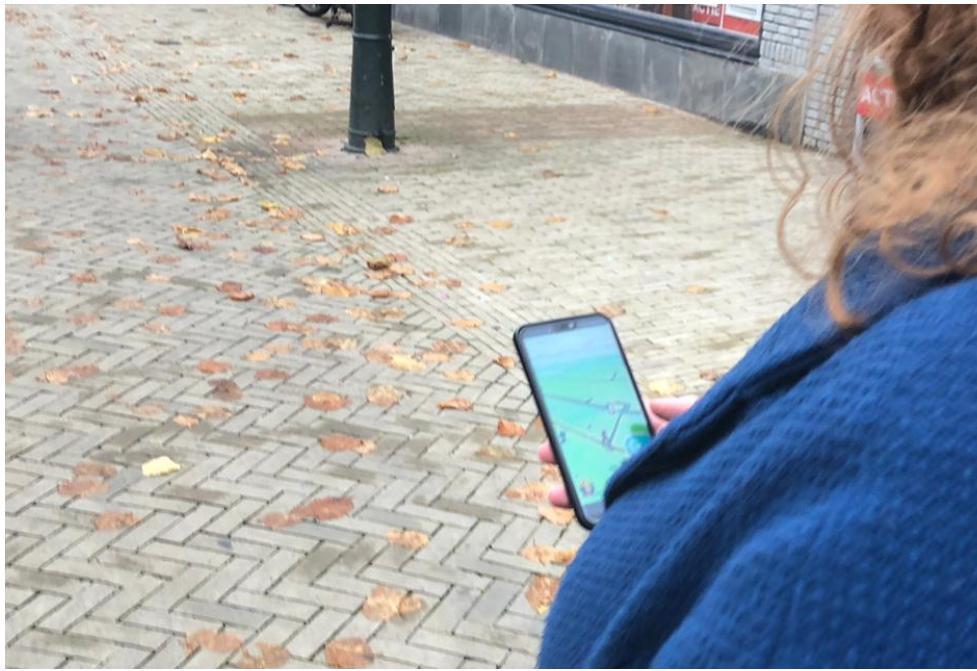
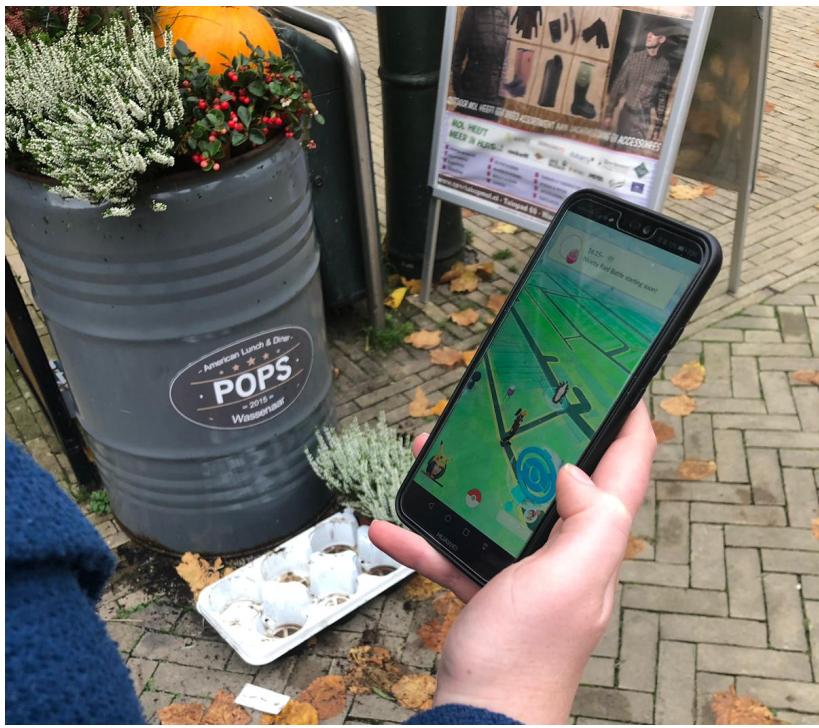




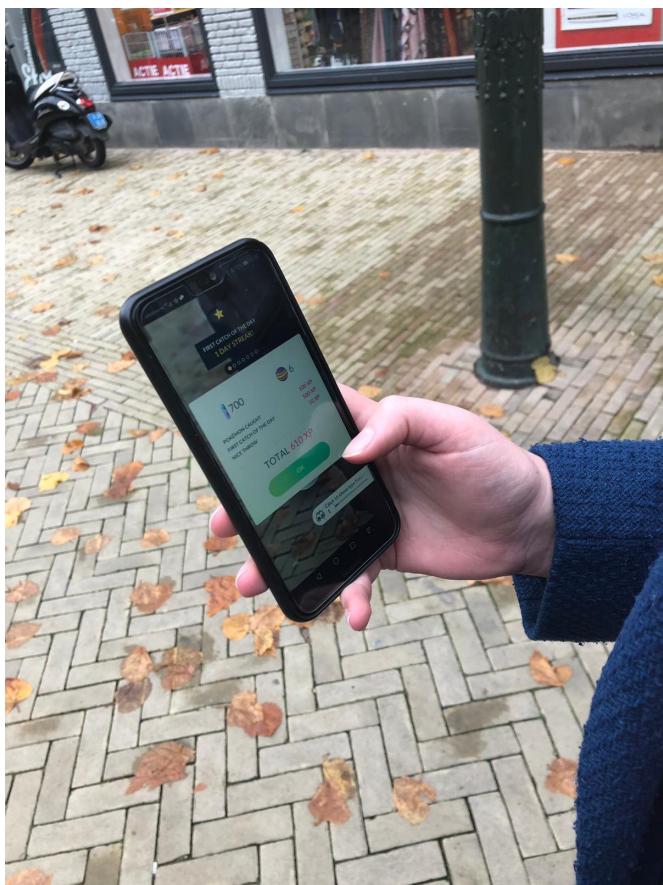


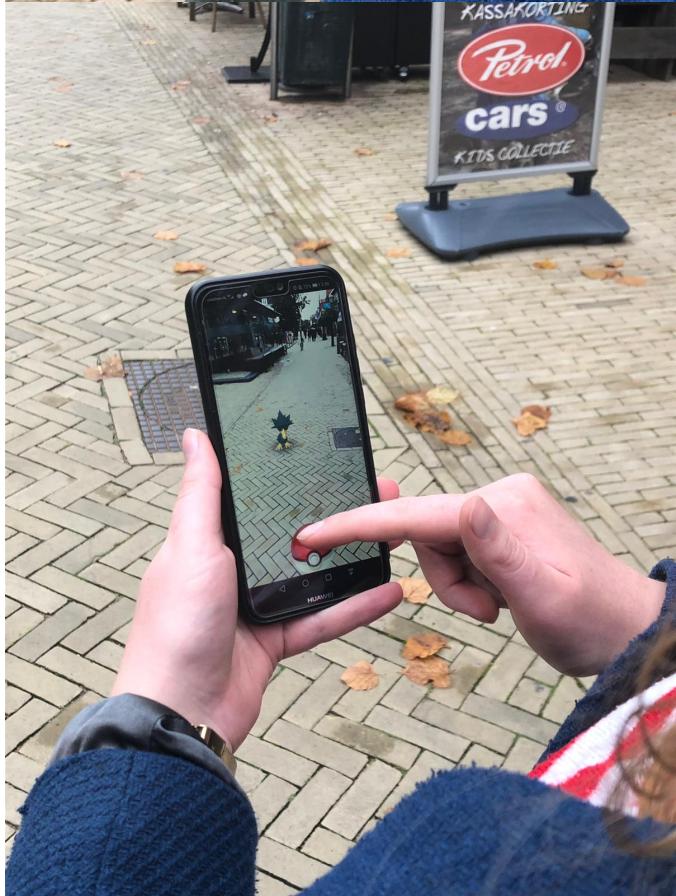


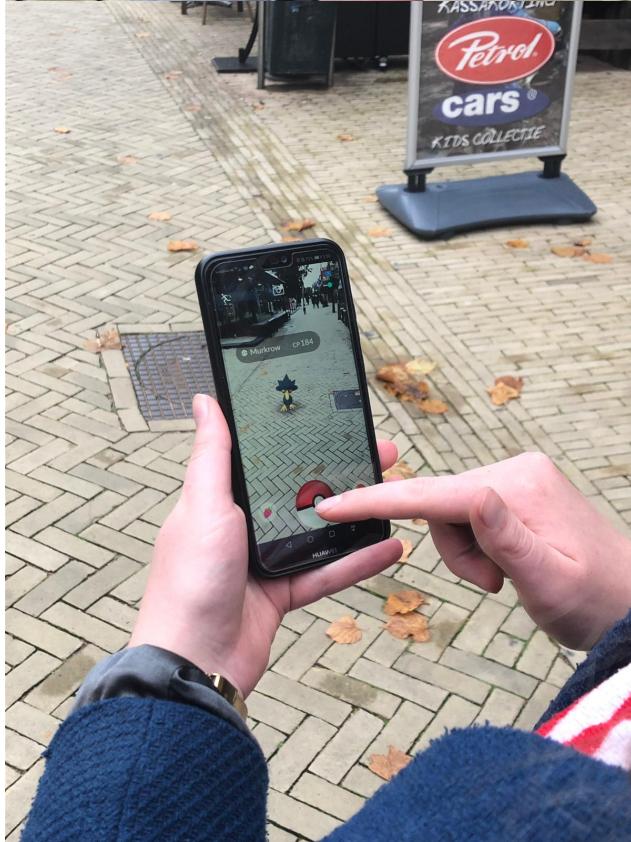
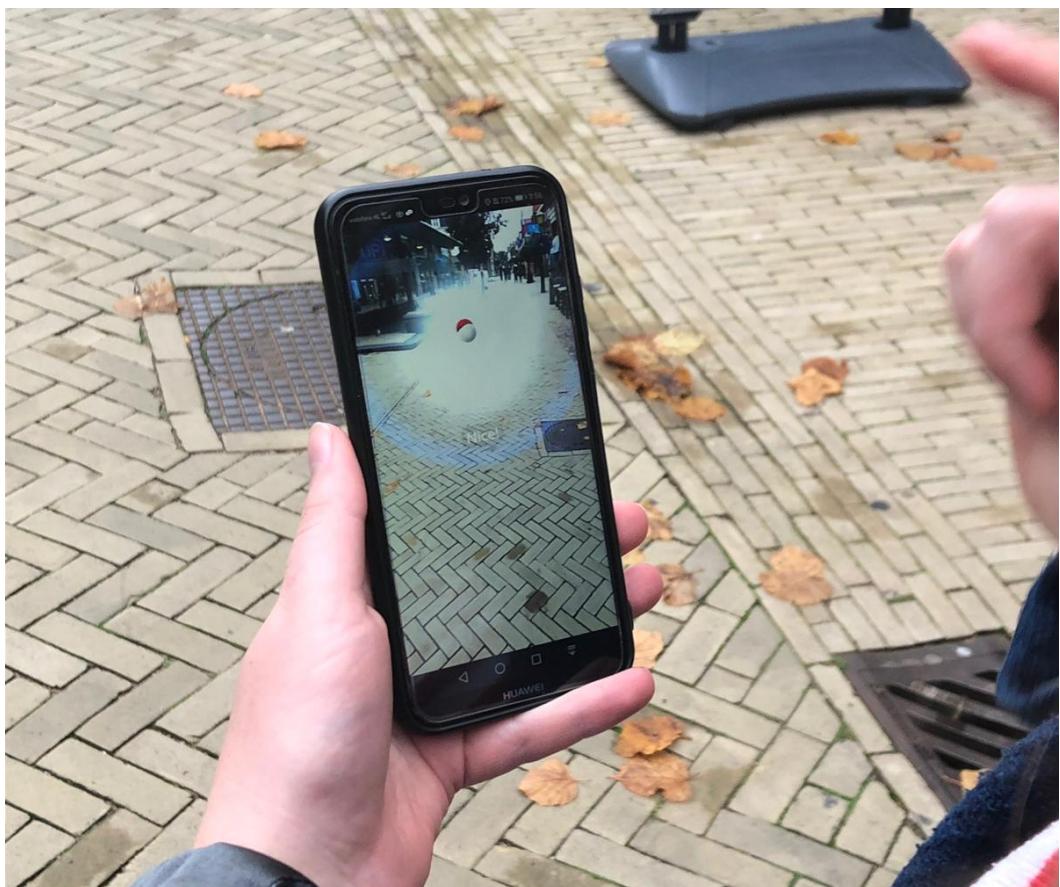


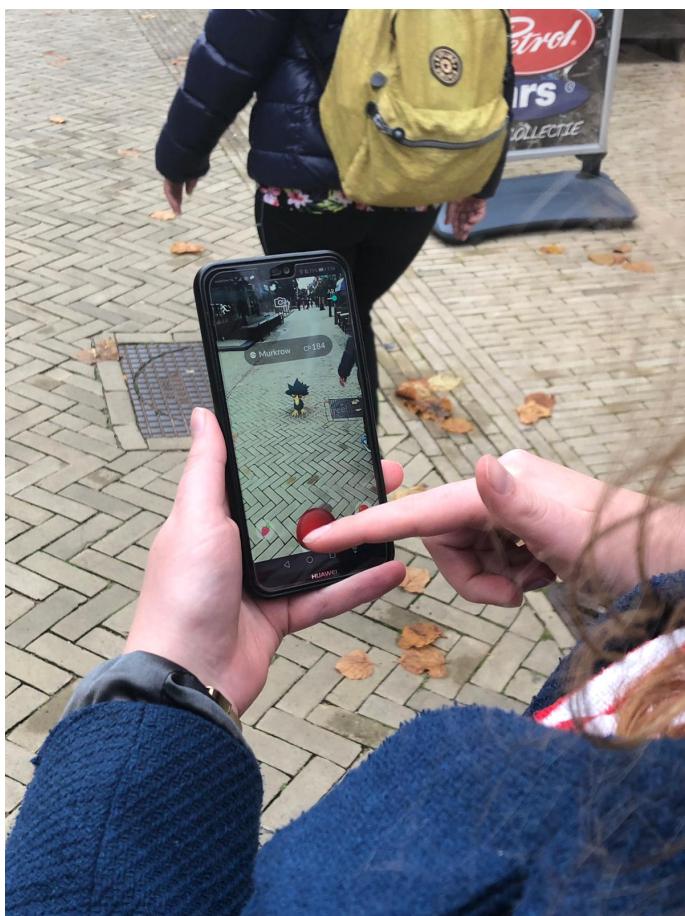


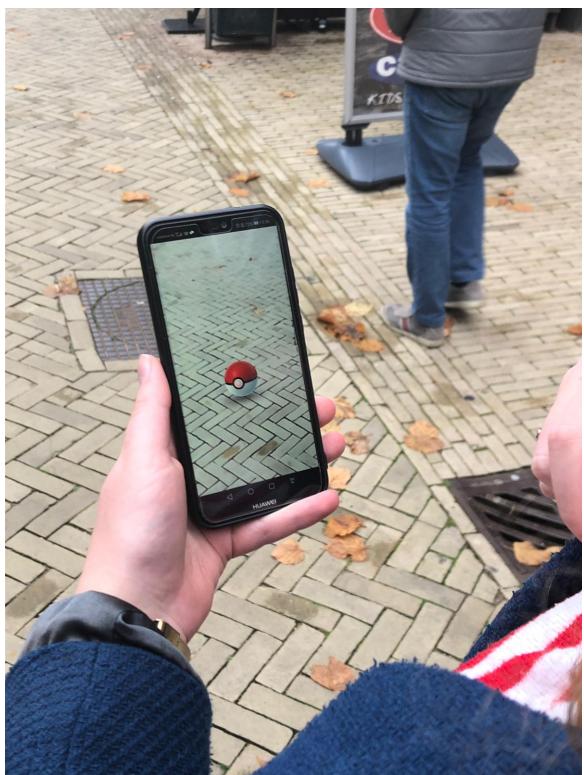
















Appendix b: Second batch of data (week 5)

At my observation I was talking to one of the organizers of the prerelease and he told me he had met a boy at one of the tournaments that had trouble making friends in his life. After playing the little games with the cards for a few hours he actually made a friend, which is now his best friend. They both like playing Pokémon so that is a common interest they really clicked on.

At my observation there was this very nice man talking to me about the new cards and he told me he and his wife collect those together. He sells the ones that are worth a lot of money so he can get around in his daily life. He collects the other ones just for the sake of collecting, but the expensive ones he sells. Not for a business but for an extra income.

Sites about cards: <https://www.comc.com/Cards/Pokemon.pl>

<https://www.cardmarket.com/en/>

While interviewing the second person, they told me they also struggle with autism and mental illnesses and she told me how she is more confident and more open about all kinds of stuff, purely because of the Pokémon community really accepted her for who she is and she didn't have to worry about it.

She also told me she plays the card game professionally. She travels all around the country to play the tournaments to earn some money or new cards with it. It is actually her job to organize some of those game days and to play those games. A lot of people know her in the Pokémon community.

People sell their accounts on Pokémon go for money:

“Sell your account

Pokémon Go isn't just about spending money — you can also earn some by playing.

To get to the top of the game without the effort, you can buy a Pokémon account at a higher level. Accounts at levels 19, 20 and 21 are [listed on Ebay](#) for as much as \$600.

If you want an account at level 5 or level 10, [some sellers](#) will customize an account for you to buy ready to go.

One enterprising person went meta, creating a standalone marketplace for Pokémon Go — www.poketree.com — for which [they're asking \\$599](#).

Or maybe you want to start your own thing. For a cool \$2,999, you can buy PokemonGoAmerica.com [on eBay](#). “

I also found a lot of my information on <https://www.facebook.com/groups/PokemonVLNL/>