

= Pokémon Channel =

Pokémon Channel , released in Japan as Pokémon Channel ~ Together with Pikachu ! ~ ( ????????? ? ????????? ? ? , Pokemon Channeru ~ Pikach? to Issho ! ~ ) , is a 2003 video game in the Pokémon series for the GameCube , developed by Ambrella and published by Nintendo and The Pokémon Company . The player 's goal is to help Professor Oak refine and promote his TV network through watching broadcasts with a Pikachu . The game contains elements of the adventure , digital pet , and simulation genres . The player can explore full 3D environments , have Pikachu converse with other Pokémon , and collect various items .

The game was developed rather quickly as a sequel to the Nintendo 64 title Hey You , Pikachu ! and to promote the Nintendo e @-@ Reader accessory , and uses a novel 3D texturing effect . It was first showcased at Electronic Entertainment Expo ( E3 ) 2003 and later through a month @-@ long series of promotional events in Sapporo , Hokkaido , Japan . It was released on July 18 , 2003 , in Japan , December 1 in North America , and April 2 , 2004 , in Europe . In Japan , the game sold 66 @,@ 373 copies in its first year . It received mixed reviews , which generally criticized its low level of interactivity and repetitive sound effects , though its collecting aspects and visuals were somewhat better received .

= = Gameplay = =

Pokémon Channel is difficult to categorize into a genre , as it incorporates elements of adventure , simulation , and digital pet games . The graphics are in 3D , the perspective is first @-@ person , and the player navigates and selects things with a cursor . The game centers on watching television programs with a Pikachu , a mouse @-@ like Pokémon . The player , who lives in a house , can channel @-@ surf freely among the various channels of a television network created by the elderly Professor Oak , as well as explore one room of the house and several outdoor areas . Pikachu sometimes displays emotional reactions while watching , such as happiness or anger . The game takes place over a few days , with unique plot events on each . The GameCube 's inner clock tracks time such that every in @-@ game day lasts at least as long as one real @-@ time day .

While several channels are available , only a few are essential to the completion of the game . The player saves the game by reporting on recent accomplishments to Oak at Prof. Oak Report , watches episodes of an anime series at Pichu Bros. , and listens to plot @-@ advancing news coverage from a Psyduck at Pokémon News Flash ( PNF ) . On a channel called Shop ' n Squirtle , the player uses the game 's currency , " Poké " , to purchase bus passes to travel among the game 's locations , as well as non @-@ essential items like Pokémon dolls , new television sets in various styles , and other decorations , all delivered by a Delibird ( a bird @-@ like Pokémon that carries various items in its satchel ) . Extraneous channels include the trivia @-@ based game show Quiz Wobbuffet , where the player earns Poké , the art exhibition program Smeargle 's Art Study , where Smeargle gives opinions on art that can be created in a paint @-@ by @-@ numbers style in the player 's house , and the exercise program Smoochum Shape @-@ Up .

The main collectibles available in Pokémon Channel are trading cards that display various Pokémon . The trading cards , known in game as Nice Cards , exist in three forms : Single , which simply show a picture ; Motion , which are holographic ; and Platinum , which are holographic and play the respective Pokémon 's cries . The collectibles can be found by having Pikachu speak with other Pokémon and help them with tasks , or by ordering from Shop ' n Squirtle . There is a virtual Pokémon Mini console hidden under the player 's bed that plays six games : Snorlax 's Lunch Time ( exclusive to Pokémon Channel ) and five others previously released for the real @-@ life Pokémon Mini . The games are simple and mainly based on rhythm .

= = Plot = =

The game opens with a group of Magnemite ? magnet @-@ like Pokémon with levitation abilities ? delivering a television to the player 's house . Upon turning the television on , Professor Oak

appears to request the player 's help : he is creating a new television network for Trainers and their Pokémon to enjoy together , and he wants the player to serve as a beta tester . He has them watch an episode of an anime called Pichu Bros. and then introduces the game 's basic features before leaving them alone . The player then hears Pokémon cries from outside , which turn out to belong to a Pikachu and two other creatures : the reptilian Treecko and the avian Torchic . While the others run off , the Pikachu stays and the player adopts it . Oak decides to allow Pikachu to be a second beta tester .

After completing a few tasks , the player returns to Oak 's channel , and the Professor remarks that Pikachu has behaved remarkably well . The overexcited Pikachu uses its Thunderbolt attack on the television and destroys it . Unfazed , Oak has the Magnemite deliver a " retro " television while the player and Pikachu wait for a replacement of the original . When the replacement arrives the next morning , the Professor remarks that the player 's viewership has brought life to the network and helped spawn new shows . The player then finds a bus stop and visits Viridian Forest , a location that first appeared in Pokémon Red and Blue .

The third day opens with Pikachu asleep in the cupboard and Oak expressing pleasure at the Pokémon 's growing attachment to the player . On the fourth day , Pikachu invites its friends back over . Little else occurs on these two days besides visits to the snowy Mt . Snowfall and the tropical Cobalt Coast , although Oak does continue to laud the player 's investment in the network , which has become a huge success .

On the morning of the fifth day , the Pokémon News Flash reports on a breaking news story : a disc containing the unaired fifth episode of Pichu Bros. was dropped and lost by the delivery Magnemite on their way to the show 's broadcasting studio . After obtaining a lamp from a friendly Duskull in the front lawn , the player takes a bus back to Mt . Snowfall , where the disc was presumed lost . Eastward are the Ruins of Truth , where the stubborn Ghost @-@ type Pokémon Gengar blocks the player 's path until it is scared away by the lamp . Inside the Ruins , Pikachu gets stuck inside a statue of the bat @-@ like Pokémon Golbat . Upon being shaken free , the missing disc pops out . The player hands it back to Magnemite , who is waiting sheepishly outside , and heads home to watch the last episode , along with a video called Meowth 's Party .

Oak informs the player that every program produced for his network has been aired , thanking the player and Pikachu for their time , and announces the impending arrival of a gift for them . The gift , which arrives the following morning , is a " Star Projector " , a device for viewing images flashed across the sky . That night , Professor Oak notices that a Pokémon has arrived at the player 's house ? the rare and legendary Jirachi ? which leaves him in shock . The player , Pikachu , and Jirachi then visit Camp Starlight , the locale for which the Projector is intended . Using it , they project the entire series of Pichu Bros. and Meowth 's Party onto the sky for the universe to see , and the story ends . This event also allows players of the PAL version ( i.a. Europe and Australia ) to download a Jirachi to a copy of Pokémon Ruby or Sapphire via the Nintendo GameCube ? Game Boy Advance link cable .

= = Development and release = =

Pokémon Channel was developed by Nintendo subsidiary Ambrella and published by Nintendo and The Pokémon Company . It was created both to serve as a spiritual successor to Hey You , Pikachu ! ? a similar digital pet @-@ type game wherein the player plays with a Pikachu ? and to promote the Nintendo e @-@ Reader peripheral device . The game included three e @-@ Reader @-@ compatible cards , but not the e @-@ Reader device itself . When scanned , the cards upload new templates for the player to paint and for Smeargle to critique .

The game uses the visual effect of applying pre @-@ rendered video footage to a polygon , specifically the game 's pre @-@ recorded shows on the television . IGN writer Anoop Gantayat praised this effect 's implementation , although he did note some minor graphical issues visible in the transition from distanced to full @-@ screen viewing . Also unusual for the Pokémon video game series , the Pokémon 's voices are borrowed from the anime and sound like their names .

The game was first announced at E3 2003 , where IGN staff noted that the game 's demo appeared

to be early in development due to its choppy frame rate . Pokémon Channel was released on July 18 , 2003 , in Japan , December 1 in North America , and April 2 , 2004 , in Europe . The game was showcased on its Japanese release date at the Sapporo , Hokkaido , location of Pokémon Fest 2003 ( ?????????2003 , Pokemon Festa 2003 ) , a series of promotional events that extended across Japan and lasted about a month . Attendees could play the game at GameCube kiosks .

= = Reception = =

Pokémon Channel has scores of 51 % and 55 % on the review aggregators GameRankings and Metacritic , respectively , both indicating a mixed or average reception . Reviewers felt that the game would only suit existing Pokémon fans and young children : staff at 1UP.com summarized that " the various diversions here are cute , slickly produced , and entertaining , assuming you really , really dig Pokémon " , and that even fans would be bored if over the age of five . Justin Leeper of Game Informer claimed that fans would enjoy it but " everyone else will be turned off , pun intended " . Author Tokyo Drifter of GamePro guessed that the game had been " tailored for die @-@ hard fans " and would please no one else . IGN 's Mary Jane Irwin stated that its intuitive interface , copious instructions , and " mindless entertainment " would keep young players entertained . Nintendo Power 's review called the game " hours of fun for Pokémon fans . "

Reviewers complained about the game 's low level of interactivity due to most of the gameplay time being spent watching television with Pikachu . Summarizing the gameplay in general as " weak " , GameSpot 's Ricardo Torres argued that the game 's promising ideas were fundamentally deadened by " the gimmick of having to ' virtually ' watch television programs " and the long stretches of time this entails . Leeper claimed that Pikachu " will be content much longer than you will " and decried the channels ' non @-@ interactive nature while praising the unlockable status of a few . Darryl Vassar of GameSpy went even further and claimed that there was " no gameplay " . He gave the game only one star out of five as a result , despite calling the animation quality and Pokémon voices " decent " . Tokyo Drifter found its low interactivity and slow pace to be the two biggest barriers for Pokémon fan enjoyment , and gave the game a 3 @.@ 0 on a five @-@ point scale . Irwin stated that the player would desire more interactivity and condemned the programs overall , with the exception of Pichu Bros , which she called " the only worthwhile programming " .

The game 's 3D graphics received lukewarm opinions . Torres called them " decent but unspectacular " and " bland " . His praise focused on the animations of the Pokémon with " distinct animations that suit their personalities " , especially that of Pikachu . Irwin echoed these opinions . Vassar stated that the Pokémon animations were better than those in the then @-@ upcoming GameCube title Pokémon Colosseum and found the environments passable , if boring and overly limited . Tokyo Drifter found the environments " bright and colorful " while wholeheartedly praising the smooth and " adorable " Pokémon animations .

The sound and music were negatively received . Torres focused on their repetitiveness , stating that some of the music within the programs was catchy but " it starts to grate after some of the mandatory repeated viewings you 'll have to endure " , and that the paucity of sound effects " puts the weight of the audio burden on the Pokémon voices , which , while accurate , are naturally repetitive " . Irwin and Vassar gave special focus to the repetitiveness of the voices . Tokyo Drifter gave little opinion on the voices but found the lack of voice acting for Oak to be disappointing .

Critics praised the large number of collectible items and Pokémon in the game . Torres noted the game 's many items to collect and Pokémon for Pikachu to meet , and praised the game 's increased replay value as a result . Tokyo Drifter thought similarly , calling the collecting aspects " a prominent part of the gaming experience " . Irwin found the collecting aspects a nice way to pass time and called the incorporation of the virtual Pokémon Mini " a nice diversion " .

Within three days of its Japanese release , Pokémon Channel sold 12 @,@ 581 copies , making it the thirteenth best @-@ selling game among all platforms during its release week ( July 14 to July 20 ) . By August 17 , 2003 , its Japanese sales totaled 38 @,@ 617 copies . The title had sold 66 @,@ 373 copies in Japan by December 28 of the same year .