= Mega Man Battle Network (video game) =

Mega Man Battle Network , known as Battle Network Rockman EXE (????????? ???????? , Batoru Nettow?ku Rokkuman Eguze) in Japan , is a video game developed by Capcom for the Game Boy Advance (GBA) handheld console . It is the first title of the Mega Man Battle Network series of games . It was originally released in Japan as a GBA launch game on March 21 , 2001 and was released later that year in North America and Europe . It was also released via the Wii U Virtual Console in Japan on July 9 , 2014 , in Europe on July 24 , 2014 , and in North America on July 31 , 2014 .

Battle Network takes place during the 21st century in a world where society and everyday life is driven by the internet . Users are able to interact with and virtually explore nearly any electronic device using highly advanced , online avatars called " NetNavis " . The game follows a young boy named Lan Hikari and his NetNavi MegaMan.EXE as they solve a series of crimes instigated by the " WWW (World Three) " organization . Rather than share the platform gameplay of its predecessors , Battle Network is a tactical role @-@ playing game (RPG) in which the player respectively controls Lan in the game 's outside world and MegaMan.EXE in its virtual world . Battles take place in real @-@ time ; special abilities called " Battle Chips " can be accessed to fight off the numerous computer viruses present in the game 's cyberspace environments .

Battle Network was created amidst the success of Nintendo 's portable RPG franchise Pokémon . According to producer Keiji Inafune , the development team wanted Battle Network to identify specifically with younger gamers by creating a setting resembling the real world and a gameplay model that mixes traditional action and RPG elements . Battle Network received positive reviews from critics . Its unconventional combat system was given significant praise and its presentation was well @-@ regarded . However , its storyline was met with mixed opinions . The game was followed by a number of sequels and spin @-@ off titles , as well as other media .

= = Plot = =

Mega Man Battle Network is set in an ambiguous year in the 21st century (" 20XX AD ") in an alternate reality to the original Mega Man series . Within the world of Battle Network , the Net has become humanity 's primary means of communication , commerce , and even crime . Users are able to " jack in " to the Net and other computerized devices , and explore their various aspects using program avatars called " NetNavis (Network Navigators) " as if they were physical locations . The Net and the inner workings of computers are displayed as a virtual world with which computer programs of all varieties , as personified in a humanoid form , can interact . Users often do so by accessing their NetNavis via a " PET (PErsonal information Terminal) " device . The plot of Mega Man Battle Network follows one such pair , Lan Hikari and his NetNavi MegaMan.EXE. Lan is a fifth grader in the town of ACDC . His father , Dr. Yuichiro Hikari , is one of the world 's top scientists and NetNavi researchers . Not long into the story , Lan and MegaMan.EXE take it upon themselves to solve various criminal cases around ACDC involving other Navis and their operators . Some of the confrontations with the various criminals involve desperate , life @-@ threatening situations including a bus rigged to explode , oxygen being cut off at a large party , the entire city 's clean water freezing , and school students being re @-@ educated as mindless slaves . The duo continuously crosses paths with Eugene Chaud , an official " NetBattler " commissioned by the government to investigate crimes on the Net . Chaud and his NetNavi ProtoMan.EXE act as rivals to Lan and MegaMan.EXE.

The protagonists eventually learn that the criminals are all connected to an organization called the " WWW (World Three) " . The WWW intentionally infects computer networks with computer viruses so as to hinder their normal operations and hack vital information . The group is led by Dr. Wily , a former colleague of Lan 's grandfather . While working together , Wily had specialized in robotics while Lan 's grandfather specialized in networks , which eventually led to NetNavis . The government cut Wily 's funding , opting instead to pursue Hikari 's NetNavi project . Wily 's goal throughout the game is to collect four super programs with which the " LifeVirus " may be

constructed . The LifeVirus is a nearly indestructible virus capable of wiping out the Net and all associated devices . The protagonists infiltrate the WWW , but MegaMan.EXE becomes disabled . Chaud arrives and gives Lan a batch file from Dr. Hikari to restore his Navi . After receiving the file " Hub.bat " , Lan questions his father about the name . It is revealed the MegaMan.EXE is actually a unique Navi made by Lan 's father . When Lan 's twin brother , Hub , died at a young age , Dr. Hikari transferred Hub 's consciousness into the NetNavi MegaMan.EXE. This created a special physical and virtual bond between the two brothers . In the end , Lan and MegaMan.EXE manage to defeat Wily , destroy the LifeVirus , and restore peace to ACDC .

= = Gameplay = =

Unlike the previous action @-@ platformer entries of the Mega Man franchise , Mega Man Battle Network is a real @-@ time tactical RPG . To progress through the game the player must alternately navigate the outside world as Lan Hikari and the Net as MegaMan.EXE , each containing certain tasks that must be completed to allow advancement in the other . Controlling Lan , the player may travel around the world map , interact with non @-@ player characters , check email , purchase items , initiate Net missions , or speak with MegaMan.EXE through his PET . In contrast with traditional Mega Man entries in which battle and movement through the levels happen in the same setting , Battle Network 's combat occurs only through by battling computer viruses within the Net . This cyber world is represented by a series of branching pathways and nodes , where MegaMan.EXE can travel to both new and previously visited locations , find and purchase items , and fight viruses . Battles do not generally appear on the field screen of the Net but are usually set as random encounters . The battlefield itself is made up of 18 tiles divided into two groups of nine , one group being space in which MegaMan.EXE may freely move and the other group being space inhabited by enemies . Akin to other Mega Man games , MegaMan.EXE possesses an arm cannon called the " Mega Buster " . The player can transition among the nine provided tiles and fire the Mega Buster at enemies from across the screen . The objective of each battle is to delete all the viruses by reducing their hit points (HP) to zero . If MegaMan.EXE 's own health depletes , a game over occurs . Certain power @-@ up programs can be found that upgrade MegaMan.EXE 's HP , defense , or Mega Buster power .

The Mega Buster is quite weak on its own , so in order to delete viruses more efficiently , the player must access special abilities called " Battle Chips " . These are minor programs that contain data that the Navi can utilize to perform more powerful attacks , summon other Navis for help , or execute supportive actions such as restoring HP or destroying tiles on the enemies ' side of the battlefield . Battle Chips are uploaded to MegaMan.EXE by Lan 's PET in a process called " Customization . " Each turn in battle presents the player with five random chips from which to choose , though the player is limited to chips of the same variety or chips with the same alphabetic code . Once the " Battle Gauge " (or " Custom Gauge ") at the top of the screen fills during battle , another random set of chips can be chosen from a general pool called the " folder " . At any given time , the player may only have exactly 30 chips in the folder from which the Customization process may draw . The player is only allowed to carry up to ten of the same kind of chip and up to five Navi @-@ summon chips in the folder . However , a player may possess any number of other chips in inactive reserve , called the " sack " , which may be moved to the active folder outside of battle . Every chip and enemy is aligned to one of five elements : Neutral , Fire , Water , Electric , and Wood . If MegaMan.EXE hits an enemy with an attack aligned to an element they are weak against , the attack will do double damage .

Battle Network features a very limited multiplayer option . Up to two players may connect with each other using a Game Link Cable and then give or trade Battle Chips . Players may also engage in battles with one another . The " test battle " mode has no stakes whereas the " real battle " mode allows the winning player to take a battle chip from the loser .

= = Development and release = =

Mega Man Battle Network was developed by Capcom Production Studio 2 amidst the success of Nintendo 's portable RPG franchise Pokémon . Rather than extend upon the traditional action @-@ platform formula for the Mega Man series as they had done with the 3D Mega Man Legends , Capcom followed Nintendo 's example on the latter 's then @-@ newest handheld console , the GBA . While creating Battle Network , director Masahiro Yasuma found difficulty in blending action attributes with " the kind of fun you get from a Pokémon game " in order to make it enjoyable , new , and fresh . Yasuma recalled that production was further challenged because no effective precursor of its type had been made before . Producer Keiji Inafune stated that the development team wanted to add a " real world " feel to the Mega Man series by placing the protagonist of Battle Network in a location where the internet is prevalent . With the release of the portable GBA , the team felt that they should target modern gamers , specifically children , as an audience for the new series . The developers thought such a theme would be both successful and relevant because these younger gamers grew up with and utilized such technology on a daily basis . To ensure the game 's popularity , Capcom marketed Battle Network alongside an afternoon anime adaptation , emphasized head @-@ to @-@ head matches between players , and provided fans with exclusive content via special events .

Inafune credited himself for redesigning the protagonist Mega Man as MegaMan.EXE for the Battle Network series , though he recounted the character designers were reluctant to hand over the responsibility to him and even altered his illustrations afterwards . The character 's initial concept art went through a large number of changes before it was finalized to a much simpler design , so that even very young fans could easily draw it . Yuji Ishihara acted as a primary character artist for the game . Each of the game 's boss characters was designed so that their bodies would exude a certain motif ; for example , StoneMan.EXE was meant to look like a huge castle made from stone masonry . Some bosses resembled their original Mega Man series counterparts while others were a large departure from these more humanoid appearances . Ishihara explained that the artists chose size and shape variety among the characters to " provide a little bit of surprise and excitement " to fans familiar with their classic forms . The musical score for Battle Network was composed by Akari Kaida , who would later work on the fifth installment of the series . All 22 musical tracks for Mega Man Battle Network were included on the Rockman EXE 1 ~ 3 Game Music Collection , released in Japan by Suleputer on December 18 , 2002 .

The Japanese version of Battle Network was first announced in August 2000 as one of four games set to be released for the recently unveiled GBA . A demo of the game was promoted at Nintendo Space World that month , where it was displayed on only two out of the 140 playable consoles . The game was displayed on five kiosks at the Tokyo Game Show the following month . According to series planners Masakazu Eguchi and Masahiro Yasuma , this beta build of the game involved the player fighting a malevolent WoodMan.EXE within the school 's electronic blackboard . Battle Network was officially released in Japan as a GBA launch title on March 21 , 2001 . A television advertisement of the game featured the song " Neo Venus " by Japanese rock band Janne Da Arc . The English localization of Battle Network was announced on May 17 , 2001 , just prior to the Electronic Entertainment Expo . The game was released in North America and Europe on October 31 and November 30 respectively . Ubisoft published Mega Man Battle Network in PAL regions as part of a seven @-@ GBA game licensing agreement with Capcom . < Its first sequel , Mega Man Battle Network 2 , was announced before the Japan World Hobby Fair in June 2001 . Attendees to the fair were able to download chip data for the character Bass.EXE into their original Battle Network cartridges .

As stated , in an inside @-@ Games Interview , by the game developers , the game was initially conceptualized with the intention of being a horror game .

= = Reception and legacy = =

Mega Man Battle Network has been generally well @-@ received , holding aggregates score of 80 % on GameRankings and 79 out of 100 on Metacritic . The graphics of Battle Network were overall favored by reviewers . IGN 's Craig Harris , GameSpy contributor James Fudge , and Kristian

Brogger of Game Informer were all impressed by the game 's crisp , colorful style and futuristic locales . As far as the sound was concerned , Justin Speer of GameSpot opined that the music appropriately matched the rich visuals . Brogger otherwise accepted the sound as " enough [...] to get by " , but that nothing would be missed if it were turned off . Harris comparably stated that " the standard Japanese tunage could have been given a bit more variety " . The reviewers gave mixed opinions of the game 's storyline . Though Brogger called it " engrossing " , Harris recognized the plot as the game 's one major fault , describing it as " kiddy " and disliking the consistent use of computer terminology for character names . Speer similarly summarized , " If there 's something that might hold you back from enjoying the game , it 's the lighthearted and somewhat goofy story . However , the game doesn 't take itself too seriously , so neither should you . "

The battle system of Battle Network was a positive stand @-@ out aspect for many critics . In his Battle Network series decade retrospective , 1UP.com 's Jeremy Parish felt the first game suffered from terrible plotting , unbalanced play design , and unattractive and annoying environment navigation . Still , Parish perceived the game 's combat mechanics to be its sole reason for success , marrying the original Mega Man action qualities with an RPG structure and requiring " a combination of sharp thinking and quick reflexes " on the player 's part . Speer found battle within the game to rightfully capture the spirit of Mega Man as its " most original and compelling feature " . Harris likewise regarded the battle interface to be well @-@ designed , a refreshing change from traditional Japanese RPGs , what gives the game its charm , and a very appreciative addition to the game 's limited multiplayer mode . Fudge summarized the combat as " very easy to learn , but difficult to master -- and yet very satisfying " . He admitted that the random encounters can occasionally be overwhelming . Brogger considered the gameplay both deep and simple to pick up on , but thought the menu system to be " clunky " at times and its battles to be repetitive .

Mega Man Battle Network entered Japanese sales charts at number 12 , selling approximately 43 @,@ 048 units during its first week . A total of 224 @,@ 837 units were sold in Japan during 2001 , with the game being listed by Dengeki Online as the 50th best @-@ selling video game in the region for that year . The success of Mega Man Battle Network led to several sequels and spin @-@ offs on other consoles , mobile phones , and arcade ; an anime series ; and numerous pieces of merchandise . A successor series called Mega Man Star Force began in 2006 after the Capcom decided to stop developing new Battle Network titles . Rockman EXE Operate Shooting Star , a remake of the first Battle Network game for the Nintendo DS , was released in 2009 and integrated elements from the Star Force series .