

= Marvel Trading Card Game =

Marvel Trading Card Game is a video game for the Nintendo DS , PC , and PlayStation Portable . It was developed by Vicious Cycle Software and 1st Playable Productions and published by Konami . The game is based on Upper Deck Entertainment 's Marvel Comics @-@ based collectible card game , and was released across all three platforms in several regions in 2007 .

Marvel Trading Card Game is a virtual card game in which the player chooses to be either a superhero or supervillain in single @-@ player mode . Multiplayer modes are also available . The game follows the rules laid out in Upper Deck 's VS System , used in card games across several franchises including Marvel , DC Comics , and Hellboy .

The game received mixed reviews from critics . It was considered faithful to the physical version , but reviewers commented that it was not accessible to players who weren 't already fans of collectible card games . The handheld versions were criticized for presenting a visual format inappropriate for small screens .

= = Gameplay = =

Marvel Trading Card Game is a collectible card game with similarities to other card games , like Magic : The Gathering . The game was designed to portray the VS System rules exactly the same as the physical version , created by baseball card manufacturer Upper Deck Entertainment . Players start each match with a premade deck of cards , from which they draw a number of cards to form a hand . Cards in the hand can be subsequently put into play , and each card represents a character or ability that is played against similar cards possessed by the opponent .

Matches are formatted into segmented turns during which players can act . Each turn a player draws two cards to add to their hand , and cards in a hand can be put onto the playing field . The playing field is made of up individual rows where cards can be placed ; there are six rows for each player . Cards are played by spending " resource points " which act as a form of energy . The more powerful a card is , the more resource points are required to play it . Resource points are gained by specifically assigning any card in the hand to a resource row , and only one card can be made into a resource each turn . More powerful cards , such as Magneto , require a higher available pool of resources and so can only be played in later turns in a match . Once put into play from the player 's hand , a card can be used to provide a benefit to the player or to attack the opponent . Types of cards include characters , such as Onslaught and Namor ; each character has an attack and defense rating that represents how much damage they can inflict and sustain . Other cards include locations and equipment , which can be used to boost the statistics and abilities of characters , and " plot twists " which encompass a wide range of effects , such as forcing an opponent to forfeit some of the cards in their hand . Each player has a life bar that is depleted with each successful attack by an opponent , and a player loses the match when their life bar is empty .

Whenever a card in play is activated or otherwise used , such as resources , it is referred to as " tapped " and is generally unavailable for further use until the next turn . Unlike Magic , however , characters can attack and defend in the same turn , unless they are " stunned " in combat . Damage is calculated by adding the difference between an attacking character 's attack and the defending character 's defense , plus the resource cost of the card . Any damage not absorbed by a defending character is applied to the player 's life total . The location of a card on the playing field can affect its statistics ; in order to attack , characters further away from the opponent must possess a projectile weapon or the ability to fly , for instance . Adjacent characters with a matching team affiliation within the Marvel universe can also reinforce one another 's attack and defense , such as the Spider Friends and X @-@ Men . Cards activating an ability can be countered by the opponent , and these abilities and counters combine to form a " chain " that dictates the order in which their effects are applied .

= = = Single @-@ player = = =

Marvel Trading Card Game 's single @-@ player mode allows the player to choose one of two different campaigns ; one for heroes and one for villains . Both campaigns are based around the Sentinels . Each campaign contains six chapters , with each chapter represented by a series of card matches . The chapters are different for heroes and villains with the exception of the final chapter . Some matches have additional requirements for victory beyond reducing an opponent 's health to zero . Completing missions awards the player booster packs and virtual money that can be used to purchase additional cards in the in @-@ game card shop .

= = Multiplayer = =

Each version of the game offers multiplayer support . The PC version allows players to play over the internet or a local area network . Players can trade cards among one another and participate in matches and tournaments , some of which were sponsored by Konami . PSP owners can play Marvel Trading Card Game with the console 's local wireless " ad @-@ hoc " mode or online against other PSP and PC players . The DS version can be used for both local- and internet @-@ based two @-@ player games , but is incompatible for tournament use . Cards earned in the single @-@ player campaign cannot be used in multiplayer games , but they were available for purchase with actual money in an online store until Konami suspended the service .

= = Development = =

In August 2005 , video game publisher Konami acquired an exclusive license to make games based on Upper Deck 's Marvel collectible card game . Konami had published previous titles based on card games , such as the Yu @-@ Gi @-@ Oh ! series . Marvel Trading Card Game was formally announced at the Electronic Entertainment Expo ( E3 ) video game convention in May 2006 . Konami explained that the game would use Upper Deck 's " VS System " rules and would be available for the DS , PSP , and PC consoles . It was to have both single @-@ player and multiplayer modes for all three systems , and the PC and PSP versions would be cross @-@ compatible . Konami promised that it would host online tournaments , complete with prizes . The PSP and PC versions were developed by Vicious Cycle Software , and the DS version was outsourced to New York @-@ based designer 1st Playable Productions .

From the beginning of development , Vicious Cycle wanted players on all three consoles to be able to play against each other online . This option was ultimately not implemented for the DS . Lead designer Dave Ellis said " ... development time and platform limitations didn ' t permit our DS developers to pursue that option , so the DS version was ultimately limited to Wi @-@ Fi and online play with other DS players . " The PSP and PC versions allow players to use the same matchmaking system , and the game 's code is linked so that if one platform is patched , the other must be as well . Players with a PC can download and use the online component of the game for free .

The plot in the single @-@ player mode of Marvel Trading Card Game was composed by Marvel writer John Layman , and the cutscenes were drawn by comic artists like Keron Grant and Pat Olliffe . Early in the development process , the design team had considered portraying the player 's avatar as a character within the game 's story , but this idea was eventually discarded , and the game does not explain the player 's role . The plot , which revolves around the group of robotic enemies of the X @-@ Men known as Sentinels , was created because in real life , competitive play in the Marvel card game community was focused on Sentinel decks around the time of Marvel Trading Card Game 's development . Around 300 separate decks were created by the design team for the single @-@ player mode , and AI opponents use a more challenging deck if they are played against more than once .

The game contains over 1 @, @ 100 cards , and includes cards from select expansion sets in the physical version , like the Avengers and the Fantastic Four . PC and PSP owners can download the X @-@ Men expansion set online for free . Over four hundred characters are represented , with over a hundred as specific entries in the story mode . Artwork for cards was provided by artists such as Alex Garner and Adam Kubert . Whenever a player completes a chapter in the story mode , they

are awarded a five @-@ card booster pack . The game includes a deck editor that allows players to create and modify decks as they see fit .

Marvel Trading Card Game was released for the PSP on February 27 , 2007 in North America , June 8 in Europe , and July 6 in Australia . The DS version was released on May 22 in North America , July 25 in Europe , and on August 3 in Australia . The PC version was released on June 8 in Europe and July 3 in North America , and included a limited edition .

= = = Online community = = =

Online matchmaking and the card store were opened in tandem with the PSP version 's North American release . PC players used the same services when their version was released . The matchmaking service , the website , store , and other online features were maintained by Agora Games , a gaming company that specializes in online communities . Konami offered players sanctioned tournaments and downloadable card packs . On March 12 , 2008 , Konami announced that it was closing down the website 's forums and the online store . Matchmaking and online play would continue to be available to the public , but all cards would be made available for free to all accounts .

" As we pass our one year anniversary , Konami has decided to transition the site to a free service . All cards in all accounts will be made available , and we will continue the service as long as there is a strong desire for it from the community . "

= = Reception = =

Reception of Marvel Trading Card Game across all three platforms was mixed . The game was compared to other collectible card games such as Pokémon , Magic , and Munchkin . Reviewers were pleased with the game 's representation of the VS System rules , but felt that it was less accessible to players who weren 't familiar with the physical version . Several reviews referred to the gameplay as addictive ; IGN 's Hilary Goldstein said " I have to admit , I am somewhat addicted to the Marvel Trading Card Game . It 's not a great game by any measure , but it does an excellent job of tapping into the collector 's mentality of comic @-@ book fans . "

The game 's difficulty , especially the complexity of the VS System ruleset , was described as a potential barrier for gamers . PALGN said " Even though there are a handful of in @-@ game tutorials , they aren 't entirely utilised efficiently as they 're basically just a big slab of text making the game less friendly towards a wider audience . " GamesRadar 's Eric Bratcher said " If you aren 't familiar with the source , get ready for a very steep learning curve . " One X @-@ Play reviewer commented that the game 's tutorial " might go down in history as the worst in @-@ game tutorial ever created , " and another said that gamers who would be most interested in the video game would already be avid players of the physical version .

On the handheld versions , many reviewers complained that Marvel Trading Card Game 's layout made it difficult to play , as there wasn 't enough room on the small screens for the playing field of a match . IGN referred to the presentation and visuals as " abysmal " . GameSpot described the game 's portrayal of plot twist chains as " an alien tax return " . The text on individual cards on the PSP version was considered difficult to read , but the DS format of holding the console sideways to play was praised .

Reviewers praised the gameplay options available to players , although GameZone described the story mode as " bland " and IGN called it " too long for its own good " . Multiplayer gameplay was well received . GameSpot called the multiplayer " surprisingly solid " and Pocket Gamer described the choice of online modes as " a raft of pleasing multiplayer options . " IGN said of the PSP version " Though MTCG 's single @-@ player is fairly deep and enjoyable , the focus is on multiplayer ... It 's only through the infrastructure online mode that you can access the aspects of MTCG that make it worth the \$ 30 purchase . "