# Sega Meganet

Sega Meganet , also known as the Net Work System , was an online service for the Mega Drive in Japan and later Brazil . Utilizing dial @-@ up Internet access , Meganet was Sega 's first online multiplayer gaming service , and functioned on a pay to play basis . The system functioned through the use of a peripheral called the Mega Modem and offered several unique titles that could be downloaded , and a few could be played competitively with friends . In addition , it shared technology and equipment with more serious services such as the Mega Anser , used for banking purposes . Though the system was announced for North America under the rebranded name " Tele @-@ Genesis " , it was never released for that region . Ultimately , the Meganet service would be short @-@ lived , lasting approximately a year before it was discontinued , but would serve as a precursor to the Sega Channel and XBAND services , as well as a predecessor to online gaming services for video game consoles . Retrospective feedback praises the attempt by Sega to introduce online gaming , but criticizes the service for its logistical issues and lack of titles .

## History

Sega 's 16 @-@ bit console , the Sega Genesis ( known as Mega Drive in most areas outside of North America ) was released in Japan on October 29 , 1988 , though the launch was overshadowed by Nintendo 's release of Super Mario Bros. 3 a week earlier . Positive coverage from magazines Famitsu and Beep ! helped to establish a following , but Sega only managed to ship 400 @,@ 000 units in the first year . In order to draw a larger audience , Sega began work on an Internet service , similar to what Nintendo had attempted with the Famicom Tsushin for the NES .
Released in Japan on November 3 , 1990 , at a cost of JP ¥ 12 @,@ 800 ( approximately US $ 100 ) for the equipment , as well as an additional ¥ 800 monthly , access began to the Meganet service by way of the Mega Modem , a peripheral which attaches to the rear EXT 9 @-@ pin port on the rear of the console . From the modem , a cable runs to a dual @-@ port connector , which connects into a telephone line . The Mega Modem also came packaged with a cartridge which allowed for access to the Meganet game library , and approximately six titles were available at launch . It was capable of connection speeds of up to 1200bit / s . Though the service had also been advertised in North America under the name " Tele @-@ Genesis " in publications such as Electronic Gaming Monthly , it was never released for the region .
As another way of attempting to expand the audience for the Mega Drive in Japan , Sega introduced the Mega Anser , a system designed for use with Nagoya Bank in Japan , in 1990 . Packaged as an all @-@ in @-@ one system including a Mega Drive , Mega Modem , Mega Anser cartridge and keypad , the system allowed for transactions such as balance inquiries , transfers , and loan information . It initially retailed at a cost of JP ¥ 34 @,@ 000 including the home console , and a version with an additional printer retailed for ¥ 72 @,@ 800 .
Due to the system 's low number of titles , prohibitively high price , and the Mega Drive 's lack of success in Japan , the Meganet system proved to be a commercial failure . By 1992 , the Mega Modem peripheral could be found in bargain bins at a reduced price , and a remodeled version of the Mega Drive released in 1993 removed the EXT 9 @-@ pin port altogether , preventing the newer model from being connected to the Meganet service .
In 1995 , the Meganet internet service launched in Brazil . Its main focus in the region was e @-@ mail , although by 1996 the service was capable of online multiplayer , along with chat features . Similar to the Mega Anser , a home banking product was also released for the region . Meganet hardware and services were provided through Sega 's distributor in the region , Tectoy .

## Game library

The Meganet service utilized its own library of titles , independent of the Genesis library . Most of these games never received a cartridge release ; however , Columns , Flicky , Fatal Labyrinth , and Teddy Boy Blues each later saw cartridge versions . Several Meganet games would also later

appear in Game no Kanzume vol . 2 , released for the Mega @-@ CD exclusively in Japan . Most games for the service were small , at around 128kB per game , due to the limits of Internet connection speeds at the time . Downloads were estimated to take about five to eight minutes to complete .

All of the Meganet games were available through the Sega Game Library , accessed through the Meganet modem . Due to issues with long @-@ distance charges through the use of telephone lines , as well as seconds of lag time between commands , only two games featured competitive play : Tel @-@ Tel Stadium and Tel @-@ Tel Mahjong , with the remainder of the games available for single players via download . Due to Sega 's reluctance to commit to releasing the service in North America , third @-@ party developers in that region were unwilling to invest in developing games specifically for Meganet . This resulted in a low number of titles created for the service .

= = Reception and legacy = =

Retrospective feedback on the Sega Meganet service is mixed , praising the early initiative to develop online gaming for video consoles , but criticizing its implementation via use of telephone lines and issues with Sega 's lack of developers for the service . Adam Redsell of IGN commented on the basic features of the service , and despite noting that Meganet received only a few games , stated " [ T ] hat 's pretty damn impressive for 1990 " . He also notes the influence of Sega in the development of online gaming , with the Meganet service as their first attempt , and credits the Meganet 's successor , Sega Channel , with helping to spread broadband Internet .

However , the telephone line network which the Meganet ran on has been criticized for its logistical issues in online gaming . According to Electronic Gaming Monthly , " Even though the TeleGenesis modem has been announced , it has yet to appear and the real usefulness of a device that is used only to play games with friends over the phone lines remains questionable ( both have to have the modem , the phone lines must be clear , the phone bills will be a problem if it ? s a long @-@ distance call , etc . ) " The same issues that plagued the Meganet over the use of phone lines for Internet connectivity would later resurface when Catapult Entertainment launched the XBAND service in 1994 .

Ken Horowitz of Sega @-@ 16 took note of Sega 's reluctance to commit to releasing the service in North America as part of the reason for its lack of titles , noting , " Companies were most likely waiting for confirmation of the modem ? s release before they began to commit themselves , and as time has attested , few were waiting to go ahead with development in light of Sega 's ' wait and see ' attitude . " Horowitz went on to criticize this issue as a problem Sega would have again with the Sega 32X in 1994 , stating , " History would repeat itself in the harshest of manners only five years later . Sega 's expectations of third party support for something it showed little enthusiasm for were entirely unrealistic and ultimately meant that no games would be in the pipeline . "