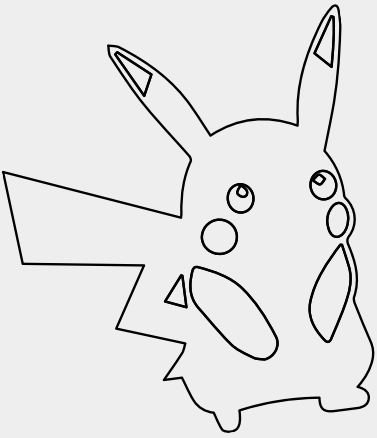





CALL For CHAPTERS



Gotta Study 'Em All 30 Years of Pokémon

Edited by Samuli Laato , Elina Koskinen , and Piotr Siuda 

THIS VOLUME PROPOSAL IS TO BE SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW TO **BLOOMSBURY** AS THE EDITORS RECEIVED INITIAL POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMISSIONING EDITORS. SUBJECT TO THEIR FINAL DECISION, THIS BOOK WILL GO AHEAD AS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED BELOW.

Today, the Pokémon franchise is considered the world's most valuable media franchise of all time (Statista, 2021; The editors of TIME, 2024). According to Statista, the lifetime revenue of Pokémon franchise products in 2021 exceeded 105 billion USD, far ahead of competitors such as Star Wars, the Marvel Cinematic Universe, or The Wizarding World. Much of these sales come from merchandise, which surpassed 90 billion USD in lifetime revenue in 2024 (Astle, 2024). The longevity and persistent global cultural and economic relevance make the Pokémon franchise an intriguing phenomenon that can teach us not only about successful cross-media franchises, but also about us humans and what appeals to us.

The Pokémon franchise was launched in February 1996 in Japan with the release of *Pokémon Red* and *Green* for the GameBoy console, after which it was quickly expanded with an animated TV series, movies, a trading card game, various merchandise, and new games in the series. From the start, Pokémon was never “only a game” or “just a TV show”, but a true cross-media franchise that harnessed multiple channels to build a strong, engaging brand. Pervasive elements such as link cable trading brought players together, as did regularly hosted *Pokémon Trading Card Game* tournaments. From the early days of 1996 to 1999, the Pokémon franchise kept some elements constant while it experimented with others. For example, the Pokémon video games evolved with various new functions, such as the 2009-released *PokéWalker* device that let players take their favorite creatures for walks or the 2016-released location-based game *Pokémon GO*, which transformed the entire physical world into a Pokémon experience.

At the same time, new merchandise, new spin-off games, new anime series seasons, and new trading card game sets, among others, were released at a regular pace. While the original Pokémon games had 151 pokémon creatures for players to discover, the latest Pokémon video games for Nintendo Switch, Scarlet and Violet, have already raised this number to over 1000. (Laato and Rauti, 2021)

In terms of longevity of the franchise, Pokémon has not been in a state of constant boom for the entire 30 years of the franchise's history. The 'Pokémon craze' of 1996-2000, which has been well documented in previous research (see e.g., The editors of TIME, 2024; Tobin, 2004; West, 2008), soon diluted into 'just a prominent media brand'. However, there has been some resurgence every now and then, such as an almost similar level of global craze at the launch of Pokémon GO in 2016 (see e.g., Alha et al., 2019). However, the Pokémon GO phenomenon as well, only lasted for a brief moment, and after a few months, the monthly player numbers of Pokémon GO had dropped by over 80% (Saed, 2016). Despite these ups and downs, throughout the years, Pokémon has maintained steady popularity, with, for example, all of the nine generations of main series games that have ever launched selling double-digit millions (Statista, 2024). This prevalence has enormous cultural, economic, and educational significance. Scholars have argued that there are many things we could learn from the Pokémon franchise, such as how to engage people in wildlife conservation efforts (Balmford et al., 2002; Dorward et al., 2017) or how nostalgia engages people (Laato et al., 2021). Pokémon games such as Pokémon GO have also been used in research as vehicles to understand, e.g., human behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic (Laato et al., 2024) as well as how family members engage in shared play (Koskinen and Meriläinen, 2021).

Overall, due to the pervasive nature of the Pokémon franchise and its 30 years of global cultural impact, there are numerous research opportunities regarding Pokémon, and also using Pokémon products to understand broader issues such as human behavior. As the Pokémon franchise turns 30 years old in February 2026, in this book, we are looking to gather original scientific studies that in some way or another, explain the popularity, prevalence, and success of the Pokémon franchise.

REFERENCES

1. Alha, K., Koskinen, E., Paavilainen, J., & Hamari, J. (2019). Why do people play location-based augmented reality games: a study on Pokémon GO. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 93, 114-122.
2. Astle, A. (2024). The Pokémon Company caught \$10.8 billion from merch and licensed goods last year. *PocketGamer.biz*. <https://www.pocketgamer.biz/the-pokemon-company-caught-108-billion-from-merch-and-licensed-goods-last-year/>
3. Balmford, A., Clegg, L., Coulson, T., & Taylor, J. (2002). Why conservationists should heed Pokémon. *Science*, 295(5564), 2367-2367.
4. Dorward, L. J., Mittermeier, J. C., Sandbrook, C., & Spooner, F. (2017). Pokémon Go: Benefits, costs, and lessons for the conservation movement. *Conservation Letters*, 10(1), 160-165.
5. Koskinen, E., & Meriläinen, M. (2021). Social playfulness—Memorable family co-play experiences with Pokémon GO. In *Transforming Society and Organizations through Gamification: From the Sustainable Development Goals to Inclusive Workplaces* (pp. 247-270). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
6. Laato, S., & Rauti, S. (2021). Central Themes of the Pokémon Franchise and why they Appeal to Humans. In *Proceedings of the 54th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS)* (pp. 1-10).
7. Laato, S., Rauti, S., Islam, A. N., & Sutinen, E. (2021). Why playing augmented reality games feels meaningful to players? The roles of imagination and social experience. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 121, 106816.
8. Laato, S., Kordyaka, B., & Hamari, J. (2024). A Review of Studies on Location-Based Live-Service Games during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Players' Behavior and Reluctance to Return to the Pre-pandemic State. In Siuda, P., Majewski, J., & Chmielewski, K. (Eds.) *Gaming and Gamers in Times of Pandemic*, 155, Bloomsbury Academic.
9. Saed, S. (2016). Pokémon GO daily user numbers dropped over 80 percent since launch. *GamingBolt*. <https://gamingbolt.com/pokemon-go-daily-user-numbers-dropped-over-80-percent-since-launch>
10. Statista (2024). Best-selling Pokémon games worldwide as of March 2024, by units sold. ONLINE, available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1072224/pokemon-unit-sales-worldwide/>
11. Statista (2021). Revenue of the highest-grossing media franchises worldwide as of August 2021. Statista. (ONLINE, available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1257650/media-franchises-revenue/>)
12. The Editors of TIME. (2024). *TIME Pokémon Special Edition*. TIME USA, LLC.
13. Tobin, J. (Ed.). (2004). *Pikachu's global adventure: The rise and fall of Pokémon*. Duke University Press.
14. West, M. I. (Ed.). (2008). *The Japanification of children's popular culture: from godzilla to miyazaki*. Scarecrow Press.

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

As stated in the Introduction, the purpose of this book is to provide an academic overview of what has enabled Pokémon to stay relevant in the highly competitive entertainment franchise market throughout the past three decades, and what elements in the franchise are critical for people's engagement with it. With this approach, the book offers an up-to-date perspective on various elements of the Pokémon franchise and explains its longevity, cultural relevance, and financial success.

We are therefore now looking for new academic perspectives on what has made Pokémon the most valuable media franchise in human history. We particularly welcome contributions that investigate Pokémon through a variety of lenses, including—but not limited to—media studies, cultural studies, psychology, education, game studies, design research, and economics. Possible topics include:

- _____ Fan cultures and participatory practices.
- _____ AR and pervasive elements in the Pokémon franchise, and the Pokémon GO phenomenon.
- _____ Educational applications and cognitive psychology.
- _____ Globalization and local adaptations.
- _____ Pokémon aesthetics and worldbuilding.
- _____ Comparative analysis with other transmedia franchises.
- _____ Cultural meanings of Pokémon in Japanese and non-Japanese contexts.
- _____ Algorithmic recommendation and franchise longevity.
- _____ Pokémon as an educational and therapeutic tool.
- _____ Intersection of nostalgia, affect, and consumer loyalty.
- _____ The motivational pull of Pokémon.
- _____ The biophilia hypothesis and the potential role of primal instincts in the success of Pokémon.
- _____ What sets Pokémon apart from its competitors.
- _____ Socialization, social play, and barter in the Pokémon franchise.
- _____ Intergenerational experiences of the Pokémon franchise.



Editors' bios:

SAMULI LAATO

(PhD; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4285-0073>), works as a University Lecturer at Turku School of Economics, University of Turku, Finland. He is among the world's most active Pokémon researchers with, according to Scopus, 28 peer-reviewed publications where the word "Pokémon" appears in the title, abstract or keywords. He has published several peer-reviewed studies related to the Pokémon franchise in leading outlets such as the ACM CHI and CHI Play conferences, and *Computers in Human Behavior* and *Telematics & Informatics*. In addition to his scholarly pursuits, he has a strong personal interest in the Pokémon franchise, and is familiar with Pokémon trading cards, most commercial Pokémon games and the Pokémon anime.

ELINA KOSKINEN

(PhD; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4082-6582>), is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre of Excellence in Game Culture Studies and Game Research Lab at Tampere University, Finland. She has done research on various topics within game studies, such as free-to-play games, location-based games and ethics & game design. Her dissertation examined memorable player experiences with *Pokémon GO*, but her Pokémon journey started already in the dawn of the millenium along with the anime, different collectible cards, Gameboy Color games and any Jigglypuff merchandise she was able to get her hands on.

PIOTR SIUDA

(PhD; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1644-5915>), Associate Professor at the Faculty of Cultural Studies, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz. His research spans internet studies and game studies. He authored articles in numerous top-tier journals such as *Social Media + Society*, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, *Games and Culture*, or *International Journal of Cultural Studies*. He is a member of The Association of Internet Researchers and the Polish Society for Social Communication. He is also an Associate Editor for the SAGE *Journal of Creative Communications*. His full academic profile can be found on his website: <http://piotrsiuda.com>.

TENTATIVE PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Deadline for initial proposals (Extended Abstracts):

June 30, 2025

Notification of acceptance: July 20, 2025

Confirmation of publisher's interest: August, 2025 (tentative)

First drafts due: October 15, 2025

Editor comments: November 1, 2025

Final drafts due: December 31, 2025

Please note that the dates of "Notification of acceptance"; "First drafts due"; "Editor comments"; "Final drafts due" may change due to the publishing process—the authors will be informed in case of any changes happening.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Prospective authors should submit a short chapter proposal as a Word document to pokemon30yearsbook@gmail.com.

The proposal should contain:

_____ The name and contact information of the author(s), along with a brief bio.

_____ The title of the proposed chapter.

_____ Extended abstract of approximately 800–1200 words excluding references. The abstract should indicate the consistency, rigor, and relevance of the work.

Paper submissions should articulate the issue or research question to be discussed, the methodological or critical framework used, and indicate the findings or conclusions and/or the relevance to the general volume. Papers can present any research, analysis, or theoretical framing but should be written so that the importance of the work can be indicated. Please note that empirical chapters should include the research question and data to be analyzed.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please use the latest edition of the [Chicago \(author-date\)](#) citation style.

Your submission should include all contributors' names, affiliations, email addresses, postal addresses, and 12 pt. double-spaced Times New Roman.

Please note that chapters not adhering to the guidelines will be returned to the author(s) for revision.