A Brief Exploration
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COMT585 - Serious Games
Game Introduction

- Free-to-play, location-based augmented reality (adventure) game based off the Pokémon franchise

- Published and released through a partnership between Nintendo and Niantic in March, 2016

- Conceived in 2014 by Satoru Iwata of Nintendo and Tsunekazu Ishihara of The Pokémon Company as an April Fools' Day collaboration with Google, called the Google Maps: Pokémon Challenge

- Follows the original Pokémon game-story, where you serve as a human Pokémon trainer
The name Pokémon is the romanticized contraction of the Japanese brand *Pocket Monsters*.

Players are designated as Pokémon Trainers and have three general goals:

1. To complete the regional Pokédex by collecting all of the available Pokémon species found in the fictional region where a game takes place.

2. To complete the national Pokédex by transferring Pokémon from other regions.

3. To train a team of powerful Pokémon from those they have caught to compete against teams owned by other Trainers so they may eventually win the Pokémon League and become the regional Champion.
• Option of battling Pokémon at gyms in friendly and competitive fights with your friends, all under the context of a public ranking board

• City wide events which host groups of players to battle against major objectives together. A video showing such events, calls these kind of events ‘raids.’ The term ‘raid’ is taken from games like *World of Warcraft*

• PokeStops are places that allow you to collect items such as eggs and more Poke Balls to capture more Pokemon in inventory

• Team battles for those players who don’t live in the cities where city wide events take place
Fad Phenomenon

• The average daily usage of the app on Android devices in July 2016 exceeded that of Snapchat, Tinder, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook

• Generated an estimated $950 million in revenues in 2016

• Players collectively walked 8.7 billion kilometers while playing the game in 2016

• Added 7.5 billion to Nintendo’s market value
Augmented Reality

- Reality isn’t really being augmented, per se in mobile apps that implement the concept

- AR is implemented as a clever illusion of superimposing transparent OpenGL scenes on top of camera feeds

- Object stabilization occurs through CoreMotion reference frame conversion onto the OpenGL/SceneKit scene

- PokémonGo implements the most basic, dirt-simple, version of this technique
Gameplay Demo

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWtDeeXtMZM
Critiques

- AR simplicity, no perspective shifts based on fine-grained location or cardinal direction consistency
- Monetization mitigates the game fun quotient
- Little investments made after the fad was perceived to be diminishing
- Most of the world in terms of space is rural, little crowd-sourced construction occurs
- Interactivity with other users is not significant