Lauren Suna
Katharine Kittredge
Pippi to Ripley 5
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Abstract: We All Live in a Pokémon World

"Gotta Catch Them All!" This phrase that started out to capture the childhood essence of going on an adventure exploring your neighborhood, grew into a cultural phenomenon and one of the most influential video game franchise of all time. With a history spanning over twenty years, Pokémon has become more than a game series, television show, movies, toys, and a card game. Pokémon has become an accepting community that people can turn to when they have nowhere else to go. (top licensee even though it is a young brand)

On February 27th, 1996, the first Pokémon games, Pokémon Red and Green versions, were released in Japan. Two years later, the games, under the names Red and Blue version, were released in the United States alongside the anime's English dub. Within a year of its release in the U.S., the Pokemon craze, also known as Pokemania, began alongside the games being known as a popular Nintendo franchise. Pokémon became such a monumental success among the portable gaming world due to its multiplayer capabilities that was designed to enable a community of passionate fans to grow (Assuncao, Brown, Workman 2017). Through the Game Boy's Game Link Cable, players could either trade Pokémon or battle each other between two different game cartridges (Bulbapedia).

As technology furthered developed, so did the Pokémon series. With the implementation of innovative online capabilities through Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection introduced in the fourth generation Pokémon games, Diamond and Pearl, in 2006, a new meaning of connectivity could form with people from all over the world (Hilliard, 2018). For example, players now could trade Pokémon and battle with players from all over the world through the Global Trade Center and Battle Tower Wi-Fi Room (serebii.net). With the release of Pokémon Diamond and Pearl coinciding with the release of YouTube as well as other online communities, a global community started to form among people who made and consumed Pokémon fan content. As a result, the Pokémon community has become a collection of related communities of people connecting using YouTube, competitive websites, romHacks, Tumblr Blogs, and more. If a fan could not make a community with the people around them, they now have access to a whole online community and can make their own chosen family.

Outlined in the paper, *Media: A Catalyst for Resilience in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth*, the author states that new media specifically can help queer people cope using multiple mechanisms such as Escapism (S.L. Craig & McInroy, 2015). Even though Pokemon started out as a means to escape the hardships of life for many Queer youth, the community reclaimed and reimagined the games to form their own relationship with a series that is ostensibly non-queer. This process of reimaging a non-queer game to combat the lack of queer representation in games is known as Queer Remediation, which was coined by Edmond Chang. in Edmond Chang's Queer remediation. In addition to looking at the acceptance and formation of the fan community, this paper will dive deep at how the developers have embraced this community into improving the design of the Pokémon experience. Through evaluating the game's history, the fan community, Queer Game theories, and how the developers have evolved with the community, this paper will show what it truly means to be part of the community who strives to be the best like no one ever was.