

Similarities and Differences Between Digimon and Pokémon



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Pokémon and Digimon - *James Quien*

A look into interesting similarities and key differences between the worlds of Pokémon and Digimon.

Digimon and Pokémon both debuted around the same time in the form of electronic media: Digimon was played on a small electronic device similar to a pocket pet, and Pokémon was released on two game cartridges for the GameBoy. Later on, both series were turned into television series, comics, and video games for various systems. The two industries have been competing since the early 90s with Pokémon accumulating the larger fan base, but it's disputed which franchise was conceived first.

Pokémon and Digimon Worlds

First, Pokémon is short for “pocket monsters,” and Digimon is short for “digital monsters.” While the creatures collectively called Pokémon inhabit the real world and interact with humans on a regular basis (much like animals and plants do in real life), Digimon are composed of data, and their world is a parallel universe to the real world, created from information flow and communicative networks created by humans. In Digimon, humans become “digitized” and travel to the Digital World in order to interact with Digimon. At the end of the series, there is a rift between the real world and Digital World, and Digimon interact with the real world for the first time.

While everyone who lives in the Pokémon world know about and interact with Pokémon, Digimon are relatively unknown except to a select few people—usually children.

In the Pokémon world, Pokémon training is a legitimate profession shared by children and adults alike while the real world in Digimon only goes so far as to see Digimon as a video game played by children, hardly ever seeing them for what they really are.

Pokémon Trainers and the DigiDestined

The main characters encountered in Pokémon and Digimon are the humans. In Pokémon, people who battle, capture, train, and collect Pokémon are called Pokémon trainers.

In Digimon, the children who are united with a Digimon as a partner are considered the DigiDestined.

DigiDestined don't seem to collect Digimon like Pokémon trainers do with Pokémon. Also, it should be noted that not everyone who lives in the Pokémon world are Pokémon trainers, but trainers are the types of characters the audience is most subjected to.

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Traits of Pokémon and Digimon

Pokémon and Digimon come in hundreds of species, types, and sizes. They both draw inspiration from plants, animals, fungi, and humans, etc. in the real world for monster styles.

One of the main differences between Pokémon and Digimon is their communicational skills. Pokémon are known (with very few exceptions) to only be able to speak their own name and variations of it. For instance, Pikachu can say, "Pikachu," "Pi-pika," "Chu," or any other combination of syllables. Team Rocket's Meowth and Mewtwo are two exceptions; they've learned to communicate with humans.

Digimon, however share a large vocabulary and exceptional grammatical skills with humans.

That's not to say Pokémon can't communicate. In one episode, when the Pokémon were separated from their trainers, subtitles were given so that viewers could understand the conversations the Pokémon had with each other. Pokémon can communicate with different species of Pokémon as well—there seems to be no communicational barriers. Charmander and Squirtle can carry on conversations with one another with no effort.

Trainers can even pick up on Pokémon speech if they've known their Pokémon long enough. On several occasions, Ash seems to get the idea of what Pikachu is saying even though it is just saying its name.

Evolution and Digivolution

Pokémon and Digimon also partake in a form of evolution in which weaker species transform into stronger species.

The way in which they evolve is unique though.

Each Pokémon has a set evolution chart (that gets bigger with each additional generation). Once a Pokémon reaches its terminative stage, it cannot evolve any more. And, once they evolve, there is no way to devolve them.

Digimon, on the other hand, can digivolve and de-digivolve any number of times. Given certain circumstances, Digimon can even digivolve into other Digimon that they wouldn't normally digivolve into. For example, Greymon usually digivolves into Metalgreymon. However, under stress, Greymon accidentally digivolved into Skullgreymon.

Pokémon tend to evolve by leveling up through battle, but elemental stones, trading, and holding certain items while trading can influence evolution. Additionally, learning certain attacks or leveling up at certain times of day or in certain places can alter the evolution process.

For Digimon, it seems to be more about mood. Sometimes Digimon experience difficulty digivolving. Sometimes devices called Digivices can be used to speed up the process. Other various items are used throughout the series to influence digivolution.

Digivolution has also been shown to be done by methods similar to fusion where two Digimon merge together to form a stronger Digimon.

There are many similarities and differences in the two franchises. Did one copy off the other? Maybe, but it's more likely they borrowed from each other from time to time. Either way, both are their own entities and have their own strong fan bases. Both provide audiences and players with unique and interesting worlds filled with fun and adventure. Both are exceptional in their own ways.

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