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Yakumono's Blog

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luigiblood

Everything datamined about GB/A NSO so far.

So I spoke recently of a datamine I made from the GBA NSO 1.1.0 update that added Metroid Fusion, and due to my lack of communication skills, I did not really put all of the information that should be known, so let's talk about it a bit better, and while I'm at it, talk about Link Cable support in general in those apps.

Link cable is already working!

First of all, Link cable support is already there and fully working for both GB and GBA NSO. That's how multiplayer (both local and online) works for all the games, they did not hack the games to add online support, instead it's just a smart way of doing it:

The link cable is a way to exchange data in an instant over the wire between at least two Game Boys. The problem is that this data is fully expected to be received by the systems in an instant, there's no way to introduce lag here, meaning if you actually send link cable

data over the network (even wireless local), things can go sour really quick and slow down emulation because it really needs this data to go on.

To make multiplayer work better, they most likely resorted to emulating all the players' GB/As on every Switch. As in like, if you play with 4 players online on GBA NSO, all 4 players's Switch would have 4 GBAs being emulated at the same time, all synced beforehand with each player's data to ensure that everything stays, well, in sync, and only manages the player's controller inputs. You just don't see the 3 other players' GBA but they're there. **This allows much more stable online (as in giving more latency when needed without lagging behind).**

So when I see people getting surprised that Pokémon exchanges worked when other people modded the apps to include different games, it's just that the link cable emulation already worked, it's literally required for multiplayer to begin with, it does not do anything special or different than other games' use of the link cable!

Link cable instructions!

Most people definitely don't notice this (because you guys don't like to check menus!), but when you play multiplayer (local or online), when you press ZL+ZR, you can see this menu.



The middle option, "Starting Linked Play" is where the instructions are, and they are very detailed, on every aspect, from Multiplayer to maybe other features such as Ghost Data exchange for Mario Kart Super Circuit. **This feature was available since launch for both GB and GBA NSO!**



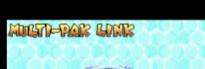
■ Multiplayer Step 1

All players select MULTIPLAYER from the title screen.



Step 2

Select MULTI-PAK LINK.



Step 3

Wait for other players to join while this screen displays.

Back

For GBA, if you are not the first player, you can even press - to go in Single Pak mode and actually play games as if you were playing without the cartridge! The instructions even change if you do this!

I think this is a really cool feature, and very detailed.

Datamine time.

Now that we're on the same page in terms of features, let's talk about everything I found for these apps when I looked into them.

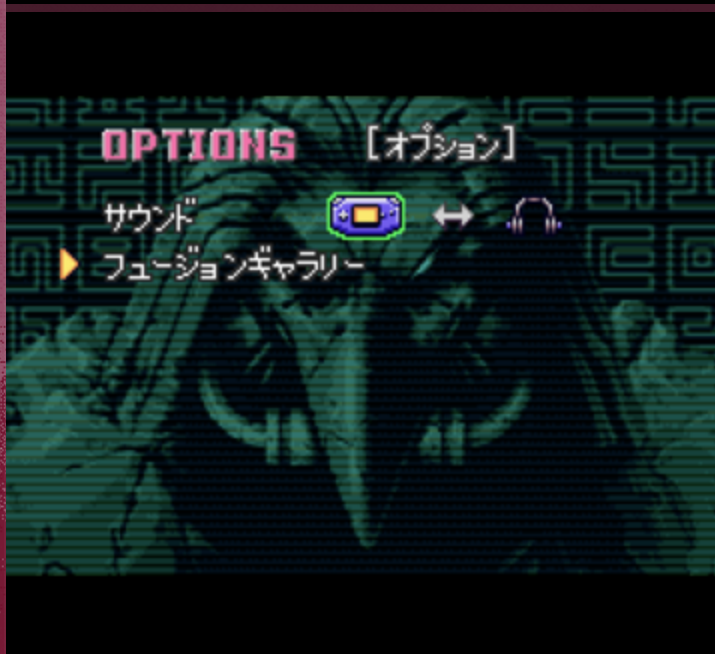
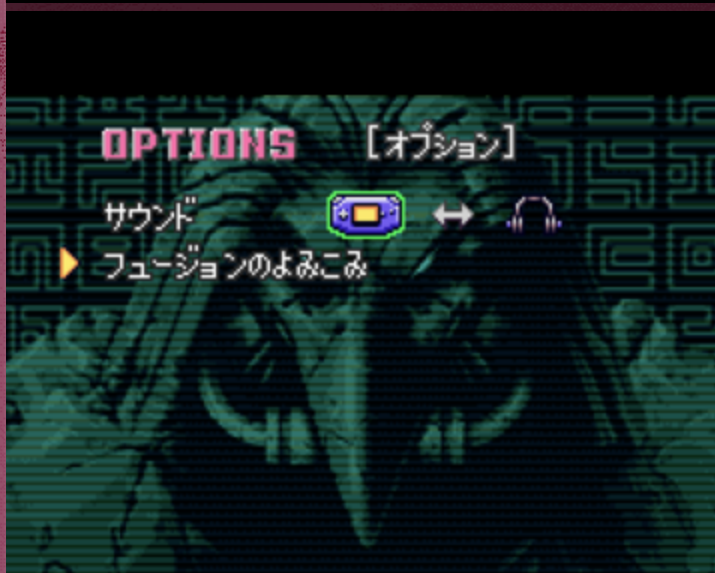
One of the first things I noticed is how the game database file works.

```
"titles": {
  "A-7279_p": {
    "code": "A-7279_p",
    "compatible_titles": [
      "A-7279_p",
      "SinglePak"
    ],
    "connect_guides": [
      "/titles/A-7279_p/CONNE
    ]
  }
}
```

Every game (on both GB and GBA NSO) keeps track of which game they're compatible with in terms of link cable support. Currently, every game either just lists itself, or include "SinglePak" to mean that they're games that can work with the Single-Pak multiplayer mode where only one player can have the cartridge, while the others can actually play multiplayer without needing the cartridge, since they do actually support this in GBA NSO it is definitely important keep track of.

This can get interesting once the compatible titles start to include different games, such as, as I recently found...

GAME BOY



Metroid Fusion's compatibility with Metroid: Zero Mission.

Within the Japanese app of GBA NSO, in the 1.1.0 update that includes the addition of Metroid Fusion, these 3 screenshots, in this order, are included and are named accordingly for the use of the link cable functionality instructions. Now, there's no instructions to be found here, only these screenshots which are clearly left over.

If I had to guess the instructions, the first screenshot might be the GBA logo screen where you might have to press Start + Select to enable the Multi boot mode so that Metroid: Zero Mission can send over a program over the link cable.

The second screenshot tells you to access the option menu in Metroid: Zero Mission, and select the **"Metroid Fusion Link"** option (as it is named in the English version), and then proceed as instructed...

And the third screenshot shows a successful link where the option becomes **"Metroid Fusion Gallery"**.

These are instructions from the Metroid Fusion side, hence why they are included alongside Metroid Fusion, but I bet Metroid: Zero Mission might get similar instructions as well.

It is definitely obvious that Metroid: Zero Mission would eventually be part of the library, for me it's just a given, I doubt that it would be soon however.

What I find interesting with this is how they're seriously considering link cable features for games... even for games where the only bonus is just a gallery and literally nothing else. And I dunno about you, but that is honestly interesting.

This are for link cable instructions for a single player game. What about the link cable features between Golden Sun and Golden Sun: The Lost Age, where you can transfer cleared save data between them, such as characters' names, levels, Djinn's, stats, items, and so on. You could transfer them with a password... except you have three types of passwords that can transfer more or less things... **between 16 characters long... to a whopping 260 characters long!**

I don't know about you, but it would be great if you didn't have to do this and just use the link cable feature to start with, don't you think?

Also, The Legend of Zelda Oracle of Ages and Seasons has a feature where if you link one to the other, the plot would be actually connected, like, this is a real feature where actual story changes do happen if you do it. You don't need to do the games in a specific order either. You could also input a password, but doing via link cable

could be also faster. If they allow you to do this on your own, it can be legit nice. (And it can get even better if they hack the games to enable GBA Mode... while keeping the GBC colors intact.)

This is the kind of thing I'm excited to see when I do these kinds of finds, this kind of detail that I appreciate in terms of features that I do think are worth it, because I consider if you could do that back then on real hardware... then you should be able to do it with emulation now.

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