

According to Enterbrain, RPG Tsukūru Dante 98, released on December 17, 1992, was the first software of the RPG Maker series, although there were a few versions of RPG making software by ASCII preceding it, dating back to 1988. This, along with its follow-up RPG Tsukūru Dante 98 II, was made for NEC PC-9801, and games created with these programs can be played on a Windows computer with emulators called Dante for Windows and D2win, respectively. RPG Maker was a product that came from various programs that ASCII Corporation had included in ASCII along with other users' code submitted to it, which the company decided to expand and publish into the standalone game-making toolkit

In 2000, RPG Maker was released for the Sony PlayStation, however, only a limited number of copies were made for releases outside of Japan. The software allowed user-made characters, and monsters through Anime Maker, which was separate from the RPG Maker, which required saving to an external memory card. However, there was a limit to how many user-made sprites and monsters could be used in RPG Maker. Also, in Anime Maker, the user could create larger sprites for a theater-type visual novel in which the player could animate and control characters, but these sprites were much larger and unusable in RPG Maker.

The RPG Maker interface was user-friendly, and battles were front-view style only. Item, Monster, Skill/Magic, and Dungeons had a small limit cap, as did the effects of any given Item, Magic, or Skill (9,999). Items were all inclusive; Weapons and Armors were created in the Items interface. The types of items were as follows: None (used for Key Items), Weapon, Armor, Key (up to eight sub types), Magic (for binding Magic created in the Magic interface to an item), Healing, and Food (which raises stats and EXP, or experience points in which this software is the only one of the series to do so natively).

Events were a separate save file from the System file and are referred to as Scenario files. This is how the user could make multiple parts to one game, provided the user had enough memory cards and card space to create the files.