

"Pokemon Go" users injure themselves, bond over Charmander in the park

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"Pokemon Go" is displayed on a cellphone in Los Angeles on July 8, 2016. Just days after being made available in the U.S., the mobile game has jumped to become the top-grossing app in the App Store. And players have reported wiping out in a variety of ways as they wander the real world, eyes glued to their smartphone screens, in search of digital monsters. Photo: AP Photo/Richard Vogel

There's a hot new app sweeping the nation. "Pokemon Go" is a new take on the iconic Japanese video game and cartoon series first made popular in the 1990s. People are getting into it — really into it.

The game, made by Niantic and the Pokemon Company, was released late on July 6. It allows players to capture Pokemon characters in real-world locations. The app makes the little monsters appear on your smartphone screen, through the camera, as you walk through your neighborhood — making it seem as if they are right in front of you. The game quickly shot to the top of the charts for Apple's free apps and has gathered at least 100,000 downloads on Google's Play store. It also quickly led to an unexpected side effect: a number of reported Pokemon-related injuries.

To Catch Them Safely Is My Real Test

"Pokemon Go' put me in the ER last night," read one post on the popular social networking site, Reddit. "Pokemon Go" has its own dedicated page there.

"Not even 30 minutes after the release last night, I slipped and fell down a ditch," said the Reddit user, who broke a foot bone. "I told all the doctors I was walking my dog lol... Watch where you're going, folks!"

Others posted that they also had near misses or minor scrapes from chasing Pokemon a little too enthusiastically. Some have reported problems while looking for Pokemon and driving.

It should go without saying: do not play "Pokemon Go" and drive.

A medical school in Arizona even sent out an e-mail to its students saying it had "been invaded by Pokemon." The e-mail reminded students to capture Pokemon characters carefully.

"Please approach them with caution and remember to look up from your phone to avoid tripping or running into something," the message said. A spokeswoman from the school confirmed the message was official.

Searching Far And Wide But Not Illegally

The "Pokemon Go" app itself includes a warning in the loading screen asking players to pay attention to their surroundings. But it's clear that some people are getting so excited that they forget to follow that advice.

Niantic partnered with the Pokemon Company to create the game. Niantic has some basic rules for its other game, "Ingress."

"Pay attention to your surroundings; you never know what beautiful or interesting things you'll see while playing the game," the company advises. Niantic has also reminded "Ingress" players to respect real-world rules. For example, a point of interest may show up on someone's private property, but it's important to avoid trespassing. It's a good reminder for "Pokemon Go" players and any virtual reality game the future may bring, too.

It's You And Me, I Know It's My Destiny

"Pokemon Go" may be causing some difficulties, but it's also having some positive effects.

One Reddit user reported using a "lure" — an item that helps draw Pokemon to a particular place — and found it also drew several players from the area.

"A couple people in at my local park put down some lures close together," the original poster said. "About 30 random people grouped up to catch pokemon (sic)!"

Quiz

- 1 Which of the following details BEST supports the article's central idea?
 - (A) The game quickly shot to the top of the charts for Apple's free apps and has gathered at least 100,000 downloads on Google's Play store.
 - (B) Others posted that they also had near misses or minor scrapes from chasing Pokemon a little too enthusiastically.
 - (C) Niantic partnered with the Pokemon Company to create the game. Niantic has some basic rules for its other game, "Ingress."
 - (D) "A couple people in at my local park put down some lures close together," the original poster said.

- 2 Which answer choice BEST summarizes the introduction [paragraphs 1-2]?
 - (A) "Pokemon Go" is a new game that is causing many people to become distracted.
 - (B) "Pokemon Go" is an app that is responsible for many people becoming injured.
 - (C) "Pokemon Go" is a popular new app that lets players capture Pokemon characters in real locations.
 - (D) "Pokemon Go" is a game that is designed to let people meet other people in new places while playing.

- 3 According to the article, how are people reacting to the new "Pokemon Go" app?
 - (A) People are so eager to catch Pokemon characters that they are not being as careful as they should.
 - (B) People are getting into trouble for breaking real-world laws while playing "Pokemon Go."
 - (C) People are upset that the game requires players to use their smart phones to catch Pokemon characters.
 - (D) People loved the new app at first, but are now becoming less interested in "Pokemon Go."

- 4 The author mainly explains the precautions people should take while playing "Pokemon Go" by:
 - (A) providing detailed information on the safest way to play "Pokemon Go"
 - (B) providing examples of problems caused by playing "Pokemon Go"
 - (C) warning players not to continue playing "Pokemon Go"
 - (D) warning players of legal consequences of playing "Pokemon Go"