

Why Pokemon Go Is a No-Go for Me and My House

By now everyone has heard of the new craze and fad sweeping the nation with the new “Pokémon Go” app that recently flooded countless smartphones. You may be asking, what is Pokémon Go? Well, first let’s talk about the game’s origins and we will go from there.

According to VOX, Pokémon is a Nintendo franchise that launched in the 1990s. In its world, “trainers” travel the world to catch varied monsters called Pokémon—rats, dragons, sword-like creatures, and more—and use these critters to fight each other. The trainer’s goal is to “catch ‘em all,” as the franchise’s slogan suggests, and become a Pokémon master by defeating prestigious trainers known as gym leaders and Elite Four.

The word “Pokémon” is a contraction of two Japanese words, “poketto” and “monsut,” or “pocket monsters” in English. So what does the term “monster” mean? According to Webster’s dictionary, it defines the term “monster” as “a strange or horrible imaginary creature.” Pokémon was created by Nintendo in Japan in 1996. It was a role-playing game involving cards, similar to the popular game “Dungeons and Dragons.”

The cards had pictures of different Pokémon (monsters) on them, more than 150 or so. The Pokémon are supposed to be monsters that have special powers and share the world with humans. The idea of the game is to have the children learn how to collect as many Pokémon as possible, train them and use them against other people’s Pokémon by invoking the various abilities of each Pokémon creature. Pokémon can evolve and pass through various levels, 100 being the highest. Colored energy cards are sometimes used to aid the Pokemon.

Now back to Pokémon Go. Again according to a report from VOX, unlike previous Pokémon games, it's not for Nintendo's handheld consoles; it's a free download for Android and iOS devices. It also doesn't play at all like previous Pokémon games: Although the goal is still to catch 'em all, Pokémon Go is an augmented reality game. It mixes real-world elements with the game. Pokémon Go uses your phone's GPS and clock to decide which Pokémon appear in the game. If you're at the park, more bug and grass types appear. If you're by a lake, more water types appear. If it's night, more nocturnal ghost and fairy types do. So Pokémon won't just come to you; players have to traverse the real world to catch 'em all.

Sounds harmless right? Not so fast! New reports are now coming in of the practical dangers of this game such as a recent report out of Baltimore where Multiple people were robbed playing the Pokémon Go game last week, according to the Baltimore County Police Department. And then there is personal security concerns that have surfaced as a new report indicated that players that have logged into the game using their Google account may have given the app permission to go through all of their Google data, including emails and website history. Software architect Adam Reeve even said the following regarding this game:

"This is probably just the result of epic carelessness," expressed software architect Adam Reeve. "But I don't know anything about [developer] Niantic's security policies. I don't know how well they will guard this awesome new power they've granted themselves, and frankly, I don't trust them at all."

And then finally there is the spiritual side of this game. As believers do we really want our children messing with games dealing with pocket monsters using special powers, and what about our teens who are able to drive? Do we really need more distractions for them while they are behind the wheel? The

bottom line is once again a new fad has come to town and as always the masses are flocking to it, not regarding any consequences. I realize many will not agree with these assessments but as for me and my house, Pokémon Go is a “No-Go” at my house.

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