

Virtual fishing to get reel in Japan

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Japanese toymaker Tomy unveils a new fishing simulation game "Virtual Masters Real" which shakes the rod and emits a sound from the reel mimicking the drag when a fish bites at a toy exhibition in Tokyo on January 25, 2011. Tomy will put it on the market in July.

Good news for busy, urban anglers: Japanese toymaker Tomy will release an augmented reality fishing rod allowing users to feel a bite and reel in a heavy fish regardless of their location.

"Virtual Masters Real" -- a palm-sized rod with an antenna-like tip equipped with a reeling handle and small screen -- will go on sale in Japan in July for 6,279 yen (\$76), Tomy said on Tuesday.

The rod's camera uses special technology to augment any location shown on the screen with "fishing opportunities", potentially giving offices,

streets and shopping malls the refined air of a relaxing day by the lakeside.

Or, depending on the size of the [fish](#), users could find themselves haunted by a virtual obsession to rival Captain Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick.

A whirring sound accompanies the simulated casting of the line, as well as a satisfying "plunk" when the sinker hits the water, the company said.

The harder the user casts out, the further the line flies on the screen. A bite on the line is conveyed by a vibrating reel with the "weight" on the line changing in accordance with the size of the fish, it said.

If the fish is successfully hooked, the reel will shake as users work to reel in the virtual beast. The line will go limp if the fish is allowed to escape.

Tomy has set a sales target of 300,000 units for the first year of sales as it looks to cash in on the rising popularity of outdoor leisure activities, including fishing, in [Japan](#), the company said.

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