

Hong Kong holds first 'PokeWalk'

August 6 2016



Participants use their smartphones as they play Pokemon Go during a "PokeWalk" in Hong Kong, on August 6, 2016

Hundreds gathered in Hong Kong to live out their childhood dream of catching Pokemon in the wild in what was billed as the city's first Pokemon Go walk Saturday.

The gaming app landed in late July in Hong Kong and saw residents more glued to their phones than ever, searching for the cyber creatures in locations ranging from public parks to the government headquarters.

The app, which uses satellite locations, graphics and camera capabilities to overlay cartoon monsters on real-world settings, has prompted warnings from governmental departments and even from the Chinese People's Liberation Army garrisoned in the city.

But this did not stop hundreds of Pokemon faithful from gathering in the financial district of Central Saturday to catch the cyber creatures en masse.

"We grew up with Pokemon and this has been something in our lives since we were very young," Vince Siu co-founder of Press Start, which organised what is billed as the city's first "PokeWalk", told AFP.

Another player also agreed it was nice to see people of different ages out in the streets reconnecting with others and their childhoods.

"I think the community aspect of it is nice, we all grew up with Pokemon," Sarah Masters, 19, said.

"It's nice how people can come together and do something like this," the university student added.

Around 200 players attended the event, according to AFP reporters at the scene.

Players filled up the sidewalks and screamed with excitement when rare Pokemon creatures appeared on their phones, as they were watched over by a handful of police officers and organisers who led the crowds and reminded participants to be careful when crossing roads.

In Indonesia last month a French player was stopped and questioned for several hours after the app led him into a military base.

On the other side of the world, two youngsters were so preoccupied with catching the cartoon monsters that they wandered across the US-Canada border.

Some Pokemon Go players were even robbed after being lured to isolated locations in hopes of catching the virtual creatures, according to US reports. Other distracted players have been blamed for causing traffic accidents.

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