

## Lonely hearts seek virtual girlfriends at Hong Kong fair

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Tens of thousands are expected to attend the annual Hong Kong event, one of the biggest of its kind in Asia

Virtual reality games usually promise shoot 'em up adventures but in Hong Kong Friday lovelorn tech fans donned headsets to go on imaginary dates.

The city's annual Ani-Com and Games fair sees thousands queue to try

out the latest consoles or buy up comic book collectibles, often dressed up as their favourite characters.

But for those who had spent too long alone in their rooms, a new VR smartphone app offered some romantic solace.

Users can choose between four female models and spend a vacation with them in either Japan or Thailand, joining them on trips to cafes, hot springs and karaoke.

They slot their phones into a plastic headset and are then immersed on a [date](#), during which they can choose options for activities.

Promoters of the Hong Kong-made app, which is known by its Cantonese name "leoi yau" or "VR travel friend", said it was to help what they called "Otakus" to practise their dating skills.

The name is a Japanese term for obsessive manga or anime fans.

"We want to allow more people to try out what it's like to date a girl because there are a lot of Otakus who don't know how to communicate with [girls](#)," Margaret Ming, the app's communication officer, told AFP.



Hot Toys is a local firm famous for its figurines

"This game can teach them how to get to know girls," Ming said, adding that there is some flirting involved in the story arcs with the models.

Student Wong Wing-yeung, 14, said he enjoyed trying out the app at the fair Friday as it could be hard to interact with the opposite sex in real life.

"Maybe it can help those who are shy with girls," he said.

The app is free, while the plastic headset and magazine introducing the women to date cost HK\$48 (\$6).

The show at the city's harbourside convention centre is one of the biggest of its kind in Asia and was packed with teenagers, many of them

in coloured wigs and costumes mimicking their favourite Japanese comic book heroes.

Die-hard comic fans posed with life-size ultra-realistic models of Wonder Woman, Thor and the Hulk at the stall for Hot Toys, a local firm famous for its figurines.

Others posed for selfies with people dressed as Star Wars stormtroopers.

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