

POKEMON GO DIGITAL POPULARITY ALSO WARPING REAL LIFE

LOS ANGELES: The 'Pokemon Go' craze has sent legions of players hiking around cities and battling with 'pocket monsters' on their smartphones. It marks a turning point for augmented reality, or technology that superimposes a digital facade on the real world.

But the game's popularity has created unintended consequences in everyday life, from annoyed property owners dealing with hordes of monster hunters to store owners using the game to attract customers. Though perhaps that's to be expected from a game that has players visit real-world landmarks such as train stations, churches and museums in order to find and trap cartoon creatures.

Here's a look at some of the bigger questions that have emerged since the game went live last Wednesday:

Can digital lures lead to real cash?

Some shops are exploring ways to use 'Pokemon Go' to drum up business. An Atlanta cafe owned by digital ad agency Huge turned out to be roughly 30 feet away from two prominent 'Pokestops' - game representations of physical landmarks where players can stock up on digital game gear. So it spent about \$40 in real money to add digital "lures" to the stops, refreshing them every 30 minutes. The lures increase the chance that rare Pokemon with names like 'Starmie' and 'Poliwhag' turn up nearby - drawing players in turn. "Our corner was essentially lit up all day long," says Huge executive creative director Derek Fridman.

In San Francisco, enthusiastic players working for Kawika's Ocean Beach Deli likewise set out lures and branded the store as a "charging station" for drained phones. (The game is notoriously hard on batteries.)

Given that the shop is bracketed by Pokestops on one side and a battle arena on the other, players "have no choice but to walk past us," says owner David Nottage III. "So we put up some signs." The deli plans additional Pokemon-related activities in the future.

Who's to blame when playing really gets out of hand?

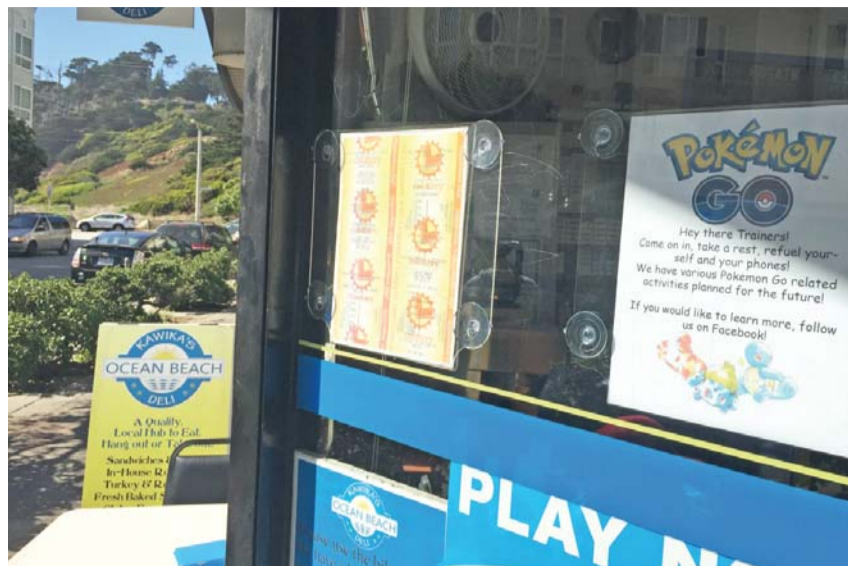
In St Louis, police say robbers perched near attractive digital spots to rob players engrossed in the game.

Another man who lives in a former church says his home - now also a Pokestop - has become a digital magnet for 'Pokemon Go' players, who sometimes block his driveway and passing traffic as they pull over to stare at their phones.

A 21-year old player in Forest Grove, Oregon, even shrugged off a stab wound to continue his gaming. He approached a stranger on the street and asked him if he was playing, too, police say.

The other man then stabbed him. Police say the player described his attacker, refused treatment and continued on his Pokemon hunt.

Phoenix police are telling people not to trespass while playing the game. New York's subway is warning people not to jump onto the tracks to chase digital



SAN FRANCISCO: A sign outside of Kawika's Ocean Beach Deli advertises Pokemon Go related activities to passersby in San Francisco, on Monday, July 11, 2016. — AP

'Rattatas.' The National Safety Council implored players not to play and drive.

The US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC called playing the game inside its walls "extremely inappropriate" and is trying to remove itself from the game. At The Associated Press bureau in Los Angeles, an outdated reference to a statue no longer on the property beckons Pokemon players in from the street.

Todd Richmond, a director at the Institute for Creative Technologies at the University of Southern California, says a big debate is brewing over who controls digi-

tal assets associated with real world property. "This is the problem with technology adoption - we don't have time to slowly dip our toe in the water," he says. "Tenants have had no say, no input, and now they're part of it."

Does this affect my privacy?
Adam Reeve, principal architect of security firm Red Owl, however, found that 'Pokemon Go' required overly broad permission for those using a Google account as a sign-in. Even setting aside the location data collected by the app, he said, the app is a "huge security risk." He noted the app, in theory, could allow 'Pokemon Go' to read one's Gmail, send email as you and access your Google search history.

Niantic said in a blog post Monday that it never intended to request such sweeping data access, hasn't collected information beyond the user's ID and email address. By Tuesday, signing in on an iPhone with a Google ID showed this pared back authorization. — AP

Stock in Nintendo, which part owns 'Pokemon Go,' jumped 25 percent on Monday and another 13 percent Tuesday, adding nearly \$8 billion to its market value as investors assessed the breakout game. But Jefferies analyst Atul Goyal says that's



WASHINGTON: In this June 12, 2009 file photo, people line to enter the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. — AP

ARLINGTON, HOLOCAUST MUSEUM: STOP CATCHING POKEMON HERE

TWO BOYS INJURED WHEN HIT BY VAN NEAR IOWA CITY

CAPITALS: The US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Arlington National Cemetery requested Tuesday that smartphone users refrain from "catching" Pokemon when they visit. Like many other landmarks, the museum and the military cemetery are featured in the popular new 'Pokemon Go' game. Players can stumble upon Pokemon while wandering their grounds. The museum is a Pokestop - a place where players can get free in-game items - and online users say the cemetery also contains Pokestops.

Museum officials are trying to have it removed from the game, Communications Director Andrew Hollinger said in a statement. He said playing the game inside a memorial to victims of Nazism is "extremely inappropriate." At Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, spokesman Stephen Smith said the move was pre-emptive rather than to address a problem they're already seeing.

"Playing games such as 'Pokemon Go' on these hallowed grounds would not be deemed appropriate," cemetery officials said in a statement. He said the cemetery's layout makes it difficult to know whether an individual visitor is playing the game on his phone or using the cemetery's own app to navigate landmarks in a respectful manner. Game developers Niantic Labs did not immediately respond to The Washington Post's question of whether it could stop Pokemon from popping up inside the museum.

POKEMON-MANIA VINDICATES NINTENDO'S MOBILE GAME SHIFT

TOKYO: With Pokemon-mania sweeping the planet, Nintendo's nascent shift into mobile gaming has proved a massive hit, vindicating the Japanese videogame giant's decision to unshackle itself from a long-standing consoles-only policy. Since its release last week, smartphone game Pokemon Go has been winning legions of fans around the world, downloaded millions of times and topping the rankings at official online shops. The game hasn't even been released in Japan yet, but Pokemon franchise creator Nintendo is reaping the rewards as its Tokyo-listed shares skyrocket in response to the app's sizzling debut.

The stock was up nearly 60 percent in just four sessions as of Tuesday. That eye-popping rally has boosted Nintendo's market value by billions of dollars and underscored how investors see the game as crucial to its fledgling migration on to mobile devices.

The free app was adapted to the mobile internet age by US-based Niantic Labs, a company spun out of Google last year. "Investors have big expectations that Pokemon Go will open a new chapter in Nintendo's future growth," said Takashi Oba, a senior strategist at Okasan Securities in Tokyo.

In March, the Kyoto-based creator of Super Mario and Donkey Kong released its first mobile game "Miitomo" - a free-to-play and interactive game that allows users to cre-

Not allowed
In Poland, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum says it does not allow people to play 'Pokemon Go' on their smartphones during visits to the former German death camp because it is "disrespectful on many levels."

'Pokemon Go' is a hugely popular new reality game that uses GPS and allows players to search locations in the real world to find virtual little creatures. There have been reports of people playing the game at Auschwitz and other somber memorial sites across the world.

The Auschwitz memorial wrote Tuesday on Twitter: "Do not allow playing #PokemonGO on the site of our Memorial and similar places. It's disrespectful on many levels." The museum could not be reached for comment Wednesday on the matter.

'Pokemon Go' has been officially rolled out in Germany yesterday. The makers of the game, which is partly owned by Nintendo, announced on Twitter that the game was available yesterday in Europe's biggest economy.

The game has sparked a frenzy of players wandering around US cities hunting for "pocket monsters" to fight. Some have criticized the real-world locations to which the game sends players to battle virtual monsters. 'Pokemon Go' developer Niantic apologized last year for making Nazi concentration camps part of its mobile role-playing game 'Ingress.' — AP

ate avatars-as it tries to compete in an industry that has increasingly moved online.

That followed the firm's announcement last year that it was teaming up with Japanese mobile specialist DeNA to develop games for smartphones based on its host of popular characters. "Markets are thinking that since Pokemon Go is a big hit, Nintendo's original smartphone games will also sell," said SMBC Nikko Securities analyst Eiji Maeda.

Smartphone future

The mobile strategy marked a U-turn for a company that had resisted the move for years, insisting that games for smartphones and tablets risked hollowing out its core business and damaging the value of its games.

But its balance sheet suffered and Nintendo's Wii U console failed to match the popularity of the original, forcing a rethink. "Sales have been slowing, Nintendo was long focused on console games and has not seen a big hit since the Wii series," Oba said.

Nintendo President Satoru Iwata, a leading figure in the videogame industry who died of cancer last year at the age of 55, was a firm backer of the consoles-only view. Iwata had overseen the success of Nintendo's Wii and a surge in revenue before smartphone games started eating away at the company's success. — AFP

LINKEDIN STUDY REVEALS MENA JOB SEEKERS' TOP PRIORITIES

51 PERCENT 'ACTIVELY SEARCHING' FOR NEW ROLES

MIDDLE EAST: LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network, has announced findings from its annual 2016 MENA Talent Trends study providing new insights into job seekers' top priorities, and how recruiters can effectively engage potential candidates and compete for the best talent.

The findings ultimately reveal that almost everyone is interested in hearing about new job opportunities, even if they are not actively looking for a change. In fact, a massive 94 percent of professionals in MENA said they are interested in learning about new jobs. Moreover, approximately 51 percent of respondents in the MENA survey said they were "actively searching" for new roles, which is significantly higher than the global average of 36 percent.

"The region's job market is evolving as a result of many external socio-economic factors. In this environment, it is essential for companies to assess their recruiting strategy and ensure it is aligned with the priorities of today's professionals," says Ali Matar, Head of LinkedIn Talent Solutions, Southern Europe, Middle East and North Africa. "Investing in channels for the public to research jobs before they apply and empowering employees to contribute towards recruitment needs are particularly advantageous. Getting specific about your company's culture and values will also meet job seekers' desire to know more about their long-term prospects before jumping into a role."

Roadblocks in finding jobs

Given the challenging job market globally, the survey investigates the biggest roadblocks that candidates in the region face from companies when finding jobs. Compared to their global counterparts, professionals in MENA don't hear back as frequently after applying to a company (32 percent of respondents in MENA cited this as a challenge), and more find it difficult to negotiate their salary and role with companies compared to the global average (31 percent of respondents in MENA cited this as a challenge).

One possible reason for this disparity is the transparency of information-or lack thereof-between recruiters and job seekers. The survey found that the number one request from candidates to know about prospective companies is to understand the company's culture and values (54 percent cited this as a priority in MENA). This was then followed by a greater understanding of perks and benefits, as well as the corporate mission, company leadership, and the company's actual products and services.

"I would do extensive search about the company from all the available sources. I want to know details about its leaders, employees, business environment, successes and failures," comments Saeed Mubarak, Intelligent Field Team Leader at Saudi Aramco and one of the participants in the survey.



Ali Matar, Head of LinkedIn Talent Solutions, Southern Europe, Middle East and North Africa

Learning about and landing new roles

In an effort to better connect talent and opportunity, the survey also explores how people learn about new jobs and ultimately land their desired role. Compared to their global peers, professionals in MENA are actually more likely to find out about a new job from a corporate recruiter (13 percent) or someone in their personal network (25 percent) rather than reading online articles about the company.

After hearing about these positions, job seekers in MENA tend to not apply right away, with more than half first researching the company in detail and nearly half saying that they update

their resume before applying. The use of technology is also instrumental in landing the final job. Professionals in MENA were found to be more likely to land a new job by applying through social networks like LinkedIn and through company careers websites than their global counterparts.

The annual Talent Trends report from LinkedIn is based on surveys of over 33,000 professionals around the world. The survey includes input from 3,298 LinkedIn members in the MENA region between January and March 2016, of which 35 percent of these were citizens of MENA countries.



NEW TEST FOR NINTENDO? NORTH KOREA AN OBSTACLE FOR SOUTH KOREAN POKEMON HUNTERS

MAPPING REGULATION TO AFFECT SOUTH KOREA LAUNCH

SEOUL: Nintendo's smash hit Pokemon Go is likely to face hurdles in South Korea, where Google mapping functions are restricted due to security issues with North Korea - though some fans are already trekking out to one remote area where it can be played.

South Korea is the world's fourth-biggest gaming market after China, the United States and Japan, according to Amsterdam-based research firm Newzoo, potentially representing a big opportunity loss for Nintendo and game publisher Niantic if it can't be officially rolled out. The augmented reality game where players walk around neighborhoods in real life, searching out Pokemon to catch and train, relies on Google Maps to work. But in most of South Korea those functions have been limited by the government, which is technically still at war with North Korea, for national security reasons.

"Due to government restrictions on maps data, it's impossible for Pokemon Go to work properly using Google Maps service in South

Korea," a person familiar with the matter said, declining to be identified as the person was not authorized to speak on the issue.

Representatives for Niantic were not immediately available to comment. Nintendo and Alphabet's Google declined to comment. Nintendo's first venture into mobile gaming has only been officially launched in the United States, Australia and New Zealand with other countries such as Japan slated to see a launch soon. The craze has sent Nintendo's shares skyrocketing and although they lost some ground on Wednesday as investors took profits. The stock has gained 46 percent, adding nearly \$10 billion to the company's market value since Thursday's close.

Despite the limited rollout so far, users in other countries have sought to get in on the action either by downloading the game file in some way or masking their account so that it appears as if they have either an Australian or US account for example.

Those tactics are believed to be exacerbating logging-in problems. By early Wednesday, about 1,300 Pokemon Go users had reported problems accessing the game in Australia over the last two days, according to website aussie-outages.com.

In South Korea, some impatient fans have rushed to Sokcho, a city close to the border with North Korea - an area where the game can be played as it has not been classified as South Korean territory in Google map data.

"I didn't go to some big tourist attraction; all I did was walk around for tens of kilometers to play a game. But I'm more satisfied with this than any other trip. I would still be in Sokcho had it not been for an urgent issue," one user posted on an internet message board. Indeed, the city of Sokcho has been quick to capitalize on its unusual status, sharing maps on of free wi-fi areas and advertising itself on social media as "the only Pokemon Go holy land on the peninsula." — Reuters