

## The Next Evolution: Five Important UX Lessons We Can Learn from Pokemon Go



It's no secret that Pokemon Go has taken the world by storm. Since its release back in July 6th in the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand, the game has since expanded to six other countries. The number of active players has risen to the peak of an estimated 21 million daily users, and it's rumored that the game may come to India as early as next [month](#). This type of phenomenon has affected the entertainment world, the global economy, and even [certain countries' security](#). Quite simply, it is an unprecedented event in the modern, digital era.

Pokemon Go's vastly popular reputation has admittedly aided in its efforts. As the modern trend of rebooting and retooling has had its effects film and television, so too has it extended to the gaming realm. Established franchises like [Doom](#) and [Tomb Raider](#) have had reboots released in recent years, and have largely been well-received. Not one to miss out, the popular franchise, whose roots go back as far as 1995, has managed to similarly release a new installment. This has further built upon its previously-established brand name and nostalgia from a largely young demographic. And such a demographic is feeding into its popularity. Indeed, the game is on track to become [bigger than Snapchat](#), one of the most popular mobile apps for millennials.

The effects of this monumental game have reverberated not only through the economy, but through the realm of marketing and design strategy as well. As is true with every product/service that develops a strong user base, previously unforeseen factors have been realized which may help to explain its remarkable success. Brand name, nostalgia, and recreation are all factors, but the topic of user experience (UX) also enters the equation.

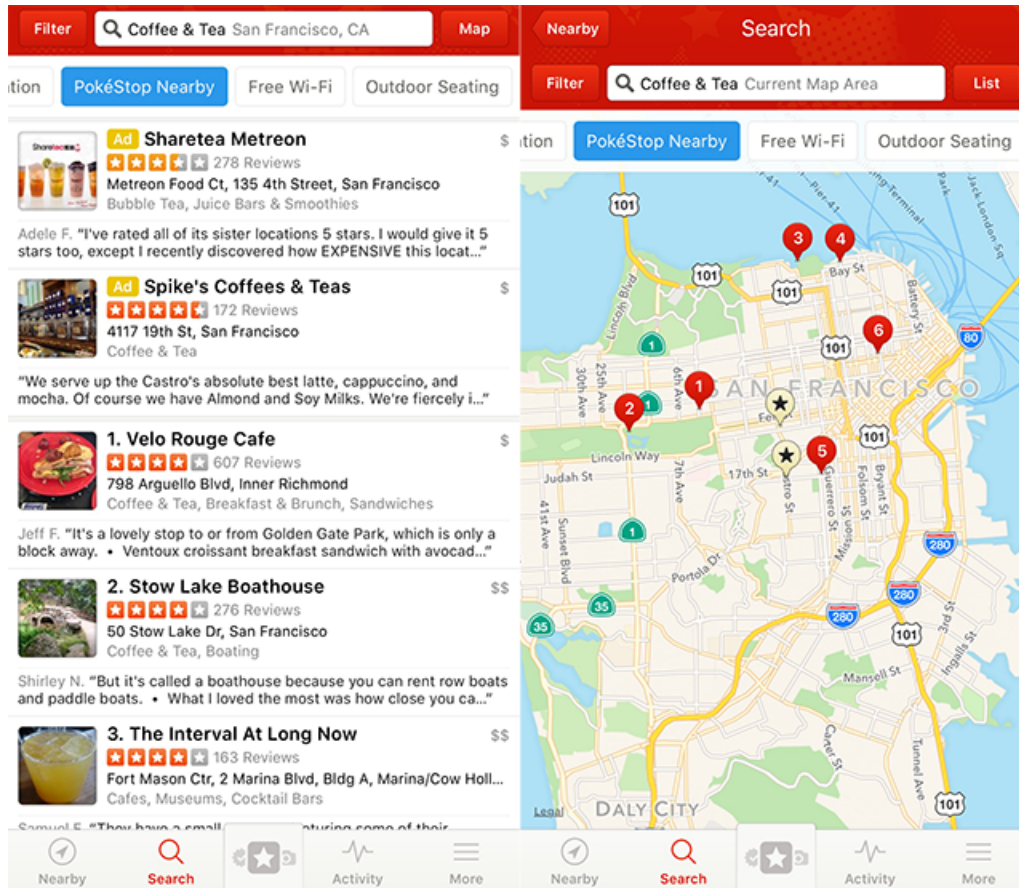
What can we learn from this extraordinary event, and how can we extend it to UX as well?

### Business Opportunities for Secondary Infrastructures

This means that a secondary business or organization is latching on to the popularity of a product/service, in order to utilize its demographic for their own benefit. Examples of this abound. Medical professionals have been [quoted](#) as saying that Pokemon Go could help those

with depression or other psychological issues, and articles have even been published on the best “workout routines” to use when playing the game.

Business aggregation sites such as “Yelp” have started adding [filters](#) for businesses that have “PokeStops.” T-Mobile U.S. has offered [free data access](#) for a year specifically for Pokemon Go sessions. There has even been a high increase in [stock purchases](#) of companies that are related to the game. Any competent business will always recognize an opportunity to reach out to additional demographics, especially tech-savvy segments of the population who are avid consumers. If you have a product/service that these types of customers actively use, then chances are that other businesses will want to know how they can gain the same benefit.

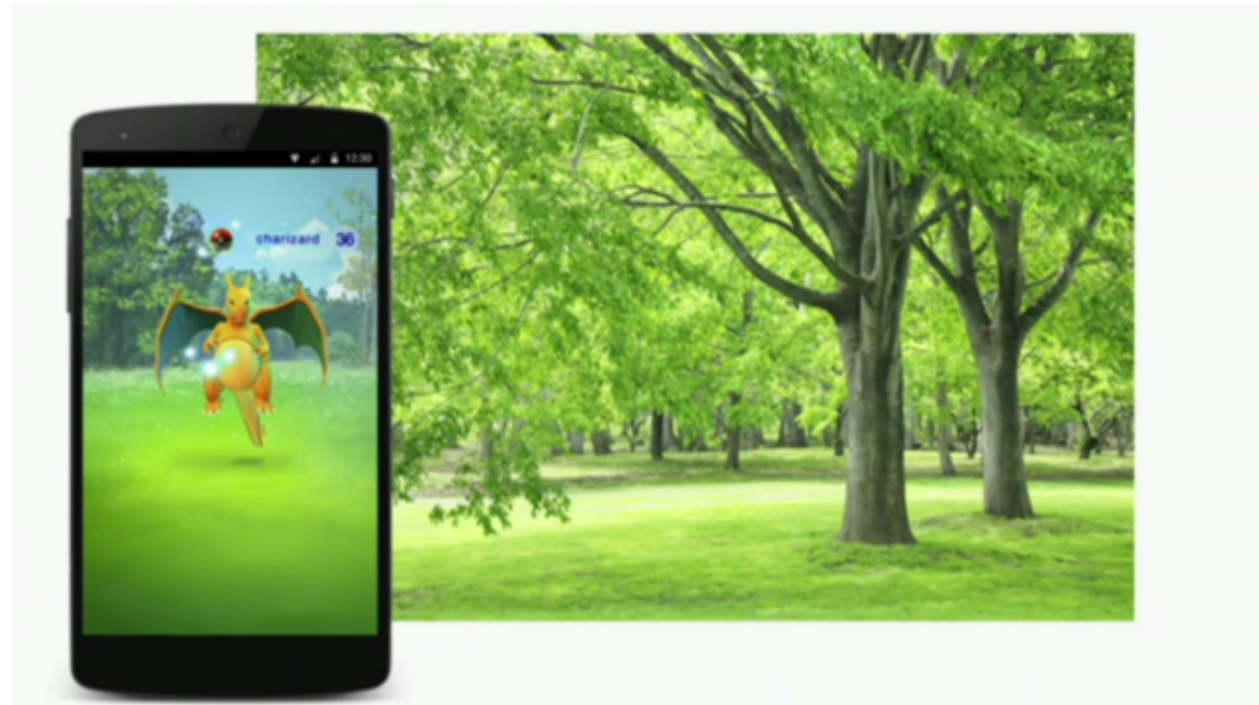


## Gamification

The concept of gamification can create deeply-felt effects, not only in a recreational context but also in a [professional](#) one too. Part of Pokemon Go's allure is how it expertly utilizes the concept of augmented reality, along with geolocation features. This creates a fictitious, virtual “environment” based within the real world. This gamification of a preexisting reality leads to an engaging atmosphere, where the user is able to interact with his or her surroundings in a fun way (without a developer needing to construct an artificial environment).

Players are encouraged to traverse their neighborhood in order to avail themselves of different Pokemon, badges, and other prestigious accolades within the Pokemon universe. This is a mainstay that

goes back to the inception of the franchise. Usage of awards within the game encourages continued use and enhances the concept of gamification. Unlike the stereotype of gamers being sedentary or antisocial, Pokemon Go gamers explore their environment more actively. This establishes a unique connection between the real world with the virtual one—the player is interacting with a virtual world, yet doing so by traversing and exploring their actual surroundings.



### Availability of Use

Using a mobile phone as a gaming platform has been in place since the days of Solitaire. In general, there are vastly more mobile users than owners of video game systems such as Playstation 4 or Xbox One (over [one billion mobile users in India](#) alone). More accessible—and more affordable—hardware/software equals a larger user base. This greatly increases those who have access to your service, as well as your opportunities to profit off of such a number. The developer Supercell, who created Clash of Clans and Boom Beach (two of the most popular mobile games on the market right now), is proof of this: their vast user base and widely-available software has made them one of the most profitable mobile game development firms in the world. They took in a [record revenue](#) of \$2.3 billion in 2015.

Like with Supercell's games, Pokemon Go uses the free-to-play format, further encouraging more users to play, and leaving out any up-front monetary requirement necessary to take part in such a service. If you have a smartphone, and are able to download the software, then you're good to go. Such an accessible means of entertainment is a breath of fresh air to mobile consumers used to less interactive gaming options.



### **Social Engagement**

This is yet another factor that stems from the game's vast user base. At the outset, Pokemon Go users are encouraged to work together. Groups exist on social media, Craigslist, and even on Pokemon Go-centered [dating sites](#) that can bring together players in various types of social contexts. This furthers Pokemon Go's reach across consumer groups outside of the gaming world.

This opens up even more avenues for group communication, and furthers the concept of uniting users from all demographics. A good business analyst knows that their product/service can be more far-reaching when it brings together different segments of the population. (Most of all because it increases the reach of ads, which will be coming to Pokemon Go in the form of ["sponsored locations"](#) relatively soon.)

### **Shareable Content**

This is another important factor. Players of the game share new Pokemon they caught, new awards they achieved, etc. Users have the ability to share snapshots of Pokemon they encounter on the go, and share them across multiple social media platforms. The more content that a user is able to share among their peers, the more attention and interest your service will garner. This doubly enhances gamification as well.





Pokemon Go is, at its heart, an enjoyable means of recreation. But once one looks past that as just a popular “game,” one begins to understand just how it has managed to attain such unique heights in societies the world over. From the dawn of cinema, to the development of the first video game, means of entertainment have always been a vessel for engagement with the consumer. Digital interactivity has only furthered this concept.

It’s clear that Pokemon Go has come along at the right time, when billions of users the world over post on social media, share content, and communicate across oceans daily. Adding recreation to this equation—especially with a preexisting IP which already has a strong reputation—has sparked something whose globally-reverberating effects have still not been fully realized. Game and software developers can learn from this, but so can businesses who wish to improve upon the way their customers experience their product. It is this combination of factors which can help companies more effectively engage, enhance, and yes, evolve.