

# 1702822 Leam Jenkins - User Experience Design

*by Leam Jenkins*

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**Submission date:** 15-Dec-2023 12:19AM (UTC+0000)

**Submission ID:** 219459820

**File name:** 26239\_Leam\_Jenkins\_1702822\_Leam\_Jenkins\_-\_User\_Experience\_Design\_532322\_2118169442.docx (12.96K)

**Word count:** 1913

**Character count:** 9061

## How Pokemon Go and Walking Dead are changing the user experience in gaming

### **What is Pokemon Go?**

Pokémon Go is based on the original handheld games, but it also takes some liberties with the franchise.

There are Pokémon, and you do catch them. There are also gym leaders and other trainers whom you can fight for fame, glory, and money. Players can also customise their in-game characters. Additionally, there's also a 'professor' who helps get you started, particularly by giving you your first Pokémon.

The game makes some big changes. For one, the way you navigate the world is obviously different. In the handheld games, you simply use a controller to move around the in-game world the developers have made. In Pokémon Go, you have to travel around the real world, and the game uses your GPS and clock to detect your location on the in-game map and decide which Pokémon appear around you.

The game also does a lot to make you explore your real-world environment at different times. For example, if you go out to a park, you'll probably see more grass- or bug-type Pokémon. If you go near a lake or ocean, you'll be able to pick up more water types. And if you go out at night, you'll see more nocturnal fairy and ghost types.

This is further enhanced by PokéStops, which are locations in the real world marked on your in-game map. You can go to these to grab items, including Poké Balls and eggs that can hatch into full Pokémon. It's also possible to install special items at PokéStops that lure extra Pokémon, which also make the stops glow pink on the map so players know that hanging around will attract extra Pokémon. (1)

### **Pokemon GO: Review**

Pokémon GO is great because it balances relaxing gameplay with physical activity and socialisation. The whole point of Pokémon GO is to go outside and get some fresh air. (1) It is pretty impossible to play the game without moving and this is what directly stops the traditional form of gaming in players.

The game has no story because what happens is dependent upon how physically active the player is. Players can join teams that are regularly pitted against one another to take over vantage points through Pokémon battles. This means that players must get to know their fellow team members and work together in order to win. This encourages players to see the dignity of the human person inherently present in his/her teammates. (2) In this game, the Pokémon creatures themselves are the players' 'friends' as they can walk around with the player and work together to win battles.

The game is inspiring and industry changing because it makes a person want to go outside. The whole world being filled with mysterious, powerful Pokémon is enough

to get me off of my feet. Creating AR (Actual Reality) games, let alone good ones, is not an easy feat. The designers did a great job at developing a game that plays well, functions as it should, and makes physical activity addictingly fun. (3) The amount of Pokémon there are in the game is crazy. How can a player ever catch them all?!

This is how it keeps players onboard and continuing to play for years on end because it shows that the developers know a lot about human psychology. (3)

Pokémon GO is the perfect tool to get the media-consumed generation outdoors and interacting. Whilst I understand that some people can get overly immersed into this game (looking down at their phones all the time and putting themselves in danger by playing while crossing roads), I feel that this app is face-value more beneficial than others. If we're comparing apps, I would rather have someone playing Pokémon GO outside and walking around (more or less) than have someone playing Candy Crush inside. To stop people driving whilst playing, the game does have a speed monitor that shuts you out if you are going too fast, meaning that if someone is driving while playing, the app will shut them out. (2) This is to deter people from playing the game while driving, exposing themselves and others to dangerous situations. (2)

The one issue I did find is that the amount of data needed is much higher than I anticipated as I found myself out for hours looking for Pokémon so it is certainly something gamers need to be wary of before purchasing.

### **The Walking Dead: Our World**

Much like with Pokémon Go, players are able to move their avatars by walking around different areas. Instead of catching creatures by throwing Pokéballs at them, players explore the landscape to fight walkers, collect stashes, rescue survivors, go on missions, and team up with other players to complete weekly challenges. (4) Players can also collect characters from The Walking Dead TV series, like Andrew Lincoln's Rick Grimes, Danai Gurira's Michonne, and Norman Reedus' Daryl. (5)

### **The Walking Dead Review**

In this game I can sum up the meaning of life in one word, survival. Or in this case, 'survival of the fittest'. (4) However, with the amount of things you need to buy in this game to not only progress but to stay interested makes it more like 'survival of the wealthiest'. It's very much like Monopoly, but at least in Monopoly you get to use pretend currency. Once you start playing you will quickly learn that the bigger clans bully, intimidate and attack all of the other smaller clans even knowing that resources can easily be obtained from the overabundance of scavenge sites. (5)

They pressure you into joining them or else. If you don't join them they help themselves with constant raids and attacks draining your precious resources. (5) Therefore, it comes down to two choices. Give up your morals and join one of the mega-clans or start spending real money developing on your own which made me think that this game could be a waste of time and lose the player lots of their money.

If I could say one thing it would be don't play this game because it really isn't worth it. Another example of the 'free to play, pay to win games'.

### **Social experience: Pokemon Go**

According to (7) There's 752 million users across the globe with 147 million people active monthly playing Pokemon Go. Pokemon go is changing the social experience of mobile games, using franchise nostalgia, AR features, and locations tracking Pokemon Go builds on its success with the ptr-exiting media and creates a strong, emotional Connection with the players who are able to share a piece of their childhood with one another. (7)

As such, 113 million friend connections have been made through the game, nearly 90% of all users met others while playing. (8)

Players who had grown up playing the card game and watching the show already had familiarity with the concept as well because friend groups could bond over shared interests. Pokemon go contributed a new element to an existing fanbase.(7) According to (8) Pokemon go encourages players to find other fans of the games to rules and levels. The nostalgic elements of the brand creates an open environment for conversations and events.

### **Social experience: The Walking Dead**

The Walking Dead, unlike Pokemon Go, can easily be played staying in one place, as the draw distance for zombie encounters is relatively large, but the experience is much improved when a player walks around the neighbourhood and discovers undead infestations on the go. (6)

The Walking Dead fans and non-watching mobile gamers alike might find something they like in the game, but for the most part it's casual fun.

To use the AR in combat encounters, players tap an "AR Available" toggle and point their phones at the ground. If the conditions are right (and they often have to be perfect, with the AR failing more often than not), returning the phone to zombie-shooting' positions shows the player's selected character companion superimposed in their real world surroundings with walkers lurking a few IRL steps away. (5)

### **Similarities**

Similar to Pokemon Go, The Walking Dead AR is powered by Google Maps to display a map of the real world in real-time on your phone screen. You can see your avatar as you physically walk around and explore your environment and it moves in unison based on your phone's GPS tracking. (7)

One downside to The Walking Dead AR that I've seen so far is the use of an energy system. This means that, for example, you're given 50 energy points per day and every time you go on a mission it costs energy. If you run out of energy, you can't do any more missions.(7)

Luckily it's very easy to get energy for free without having to pay out of your own pocket. All you have to do is just get up and go explore, which is great for increasing social experiences. According to (3) players will find supply crates spread all over the world that usually contain energy or some other useful resource as you pass by. You can even buy energy with the in-game currency as well, which is earned by doing pretty much anything and everything.(3)

Make no mistake about it: gameplay in The Walking Dead AR absolutely can get very boring very fast. This isn't really the type of game that you're meant to sit at home and play while watching TV for hours. Instead, it's best played in short bursts while out and about, waiting in line, walking outside, or doing something else, similar to Pokemon Go. (8)

According to (7) The Walking Dead AR feels like it's a bit more 'feature-filled' than Pokemon Go. For starters, you can create custom groups inside the game right now and even chat, in real-time, with group members from inside the app.

One mechanism that I didn't get to see in action is the player v player element, which is supposed to work a lot like Gyms in Pokemon Go. For The Walking Dead AR you'll assign a group of your followers to a raid mission and then other players will pit their followers against them. You play out battles in real-time on your end, but don't actually fight players in 1:1 real-time combat. (8)

Overall, I think one crucial thing that The Walking Dead AR is missing is the sense of being directed as to where to collect. For example, in Pokemon Go you can find out where Pikachu like to gather and go out on a mission to catch a Pikachu. You can visit the beach and find Squirtles. And so on. But as far as I can tell, The Walking Dead AR doesn't seem to be as intelligent about its spawns and locations, other than where not to spawn (like schools, police stations etc).

Finally, it is clear that Pokemon Go has had more money and time spent on development and not relied on its followers just purchasing the app. Whereas, it seems The Walking Dead has focused on in-app purchases which is to the detriment of the game and is something that AR games of the future need to be wary of.

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## GRADEMARK REPORT

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### FINAL GRADE

68/100

### GENERAL COMMENTS

Leam, your overview of Pokémon GO provides a clear understanding of the game's mechanics and its unique blend of augmented reality (AR), physical activity, and socialization. The emphasis on the game's impact on getting players outdoors and interacting is well-stated, and your recognition of the absence of a traditional storyline due to the game's dependency on physical activity adds depth to your analysis. Overall, your analysis is detailed, and your ability to draw comparisons between the two games showcases a keen understanding of their respective strengths and weaknesses. Consider adding more examples or player testimonials to support your observations and enhance the overall credibility of your analysis.

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