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NEWS



Chen San-yuan, 70, known as 'Pokemon grandpa,' talks on his mobile phone as he plays the mobile game 'Pokemon Go' near his home, in a Taipei suburb on Monday. | REUTERS

ASIA PACIFIC / OFFBEAT

Taiwan grandpa catches 'em all playing 'Pokemon Go' on 15 phones

REUTERS

ARTICLE HISTORY | NOV 13, 2018

TAIPEI – Chen San-yuan turns heads as he cycles through a suburb of Taipei, Taiwan’s capital.

The reason why?

Attached to the front of his bicycle are 15 mobile phones which Chen, 70, uses to simultaneously play the augmented-reality game “Pokemon Go.”

The smartphone-based game requires players to “catch” animated characters that appear in real locations.

Known as Pokemon Grandpa, videos of Chen and his fan-shaped phone setup cycling between “Pokestops” have gone viral on the internet and made him a minor celebrity in Tucheng district, where he lives.

“I used one cellphone and then kept playing and playing” Chen, dressed in a crisp, white long-sleeved shirt and pants, to Reuters Television on a recent outing.

"After a month, it became three cellphones, six cellphones, nine cellphones, 12 and then 15," he said, crediting his grandson with introducing him to "Pokemon Go" in 2016.

Chen said his gear cost more than \$4,800 and he spends about \$300 a month on virtual currency to use in the game.

Playing on multiple phones allows him to get to higher levels in the game more quickly and capture rarer creatures, he said.

The pensioner said he sometimes plays all night thanks to the custom-made portable battery packs that recharge the phones.

Chen's fellow players are amazed at his energy.

"He's able to take care of fifteen cellphones at once," said Shih Wun-sheng, 45. "From going out until returning home, Chen can remain energetic for six to seven hours, not feeling tired. That's really impressive."

"Pokemon Go," jointly developed by Nintendo Co. and Niantic Inc., has been the biggest hit so far among games using so-called augmented reality, where digital characters are superimposed on the real world.

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