

PRESS RELEASE

Leading parenting organisation warns parents over popular app dubbed 'Pokémon Go for brands'

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Parent Zone is warning parents about a smartphone app dubbed the '*Pokémon Go for brands*', amid concerns parents could mistake it for a game aimed at children.

Snatch is a free to play, virtual treasure hunt which uses geo location and augmented reality in much the same way as *Pokémon Go*. Players can use real money to increase their chances of winning prizes including cash up to £250,000 and other goods offered by the apps' partners, including household brands such as TopMan and PizzaHut Delivery. Players are also encouraged to steal other players' prizes in the process.

While the app states it is for players aged 17 or over and the Apple online store has Snatch listed as 17+, it is rated as only PEGI 3 on the Google Play store, indicating to parents that it is suitable for children to download and play. The app's use of colourful cartoon avatars also gives the impression that it is suitable for children.

Parent Zone became aware of the app after a mother contacted us after finding out her 12-year-old son had played it.

'My son has been talking about the game as some of his friends have been raving about it. I thought it sounded fine and when I checked it out on the app store I saw the PEGI 3 rating and assumed it was OK for him to play. It was only later I realised it was aimed at over 17s. I really don't think the fact you can use and win real money makes this suitable for a child.'

Parents should also be aware that players are encouraged to 'snatch' prizes from other players, which may result in younger, more vulnerable children feeling picked on if other users try to steal the prizes they have found.

The app's manufacturers told us that it verifies a player's date of birth by cross checking their Facebook account on registration, but many children use fake details to sign up to social media accounts if they are underage, sometimes with parents' permission.

'Snatch is an example of an app that appears to have been developed without any proper regard for young people's safety,' says Vicki Shotbolt, CEO of Parent Zone. 'There are clear risks that it might encourage bullying, and the ratings given by PEGI and the app store are confusing.'

'It is an app parents should look out for and discourage their children from using.'

Parent Zone would encourage all parents to make sure they look at the information provided by the manufacturer about any app their child asks to download and don't just rely on the PEGI rating. Parents should also discourage their children from signing up to any online service or game using a false date of birth.

Read the full story [here](#).

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