



Children's TECHNOLOGY REVIEW

**"We'll just have to cut your corners off!"
the Little Circles say.**



The Art and the Science of the Children's eBook, p. 7
Meteors vs. Meteorites. What's the Difference? p. 3

CTR, March 2013 **Vol. 21, No 3, Issue 156**

7 Little Words for Kids*, p 10
ABC Airplane, 10
Bats! Furry Fliers of the Night*,
11
Big Hugs Elmo, 20
Brave: Interactive Comic, 11
Brave: Storybook Deluxe, 11
Camelio, 20
Clifford's BIG Birthday, 12
Croods: Prehistoric Party!, The,
20
Disney Infinity, 21
Drawp, 21
Dynastid Beetle, 12
Faces iMake ABC, 12
Foldify*, 13
Four Little Corners*, 13
Furby Party Rockers, 21

Furreal Friends Cuddles My
Giggly Monkey, 22
Goodnight ABC*, 13
iDollhouse, 22
Journey Collector's Edition*, 14
LEGO City Undercover, 22
Letters with Pooh, 14
Meebie, 14
Mibblo, 15
MLB 13 The Show, 22
My First Orchestra App, 15
Nintendo Land*, 16
One Direction 12" Singing
Dolls, 23
PBS Parents Play & Learn App,
23
Pip and Posy: Fun and Games*,
16
Playrific, 23
Playskool ShowCam, 23
PowerMyLearning.com, 24

Ridge Racer Vita, 17
Scott's Polar Trip*, 17
SiNG Party*, 17
Spy Hunter*, 18
StoryToys Grimm's Snow
White*, 18
Ten Giggly Gorillas, 18
Ubooly (iPhone accessory), 24
US Hockey Intelligym, 24
Voyage of Ulysses, The*, 19
Wreck-It Ralph Storybook
Deluxe, 19
XDRONE, 24

* Denotes an
"Editor's Choice."



March Headlines

- ✓ Toca Boca makes a bold move by taking a business interest in zinc Roe, the makers of the Tickle Tap Apps. Read more about it at <http://childrenstech.com/blog/archives/11426>
- ✓ The PlayStation 4 Preview Event was marked by (virtual) rocket launchers, mega sized screens and -- no hardware. Still, there were a few highlights. Don't miss the presentation by Media Molecule's Alex Evans, at <http://youtu.be/31B9SVug1LQ>
- ✓ The BolognaRagazzi Digital Results are in, and listed on page 7. This year, we tried to make this much more than a contest by trying to figure out what makes a good children's eBook. <http://youtu.be/DnV1wA796CI> See page 7.

LittleClickers: Meteors

The idea for this month's LittleClickers came crashing down from outer space, as if from nowhere. It raised some very logical questions, like "what are the chances a meteor could hit you in the head" and "are there any craters near your house?" It turns out that you don't have much to worry about. Have a look at page 3, or <http://littleclickers.com/meteors/>.

The Art and the Science of the Children's eBook

Throughout the ages, children's storytellers have tapped into the state-of-the-art to practice their craft. Whether it was achieved with charcoal drawings and shadows from a torch, or color ink in the case of Beatrix Potter, the goal is always the same: to educate and delight a child.

Today's state-of-the-art technology comes in the form of a slim glass tablet with day-long batteries, multi-touch screens and the ability to access the Internet. Gone are keyboards, wires and complexity. A 21st century child has two kinds of bookshelves: one with traditional printed books, plus a virtual bookshelf that is in the cloud. These titles are stored in a virtual closet managed by iTunes, Google Play or Amazon, or perhaps in one of many content management services that are popping up. These stores reach across borders, permitting a storyteller's ideas to flow around the world speed of light, often in your choice of language. These are exciting times.

The BolognaRagazzi Digital Award was established in 2012 to identify best in this emerging category of commercial products, on a global scale. The six winners serve as guideposts for others. But the prize initiative digs up a lot more than just a list of winners. As we made our trek through this year's entries, we dropped some bread crumbs; making notes on what worked or didn't work. If you're in the storytelling business these days, you can learn from someone else's mistakes. See page 7 or <http://bit.ly/140SOCL>



March 2013

Volume 21, No. 3, Issue 156

Editor Warren Buckleitner, Ph.D.,
(warren@childrenstech.com) [WB]

Contributing Editor Chris Crowell [CC], aka "The iPad Teacher."

Video Editor: Ben Kates

Interns: Matt DiMatteo, Corey Hahn

Editorial Coordinator & Circulation
Lisa DellaFave (lisa@childrenstech.com) [LD]

Office Manager Megan Billitti
(megan@childrenstech.com)

ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTIONS are \$30/year, for 12 issues, \$120 for print & electronic issues including online database access. Issues are sent monthly. Site subscriptions available. Send payment to *Children's Technology Review*™, 120 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822 or call 800-993-9499. Visit www.childrenstech.com to learn more.

PRODUCT SUBMISSIONS. Send one product with release information to *Lisa DellaFave, Editorial Coordinator, 120 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822 (Phone: 908-284-0404)*. Send app codes by email to lisa@childrenstech.com.

OUR RULES. No ads, gimmicks or politics; we work for the benefit of children. *CTR* follows editorial guidelines at (<http://childrenstech.com/editorial-guidelines/>). Highlights include:

- We don't sell or profit from the products we review. Review products are donated to the non-profit Mediatech Foundation (www.mediatech.org).
- We don't distribute, sell or leverage subscriber information.
- Contributors are required to disclose bias.
- There is no sponsored or advertising content of any variety.
- We're transparent; disclosing our review instrument and sources of potential bias.

PUBLISHER INFORMATION *Children's Technology Review*™ (ISSN 1555-242X) is published monthly (12 issues) by Active Learning Associates, Inc. Send address changes or new subscriptions to *Children's Technology Review*™, 120 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822. **Use of this publication for any commercial publishing activity without prior written permission is strictly prohibited.** Readers are subject to the TERMS OF USE found at <http://childrenstech.com/disclaimer>

Contents © 2013 by Active Learning Associates, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Your Subscription is Your Key to 10845 Archived Reviews

Your paid \$30 or \$120 subscription to *CTR* includes exclusive password access to the new *Children's Technology Review* database — a collection of reviews going back to 1985. If you've lost or forgotten your password, please call 800-993-9499 between 9-3 PM EST.

Last month, a rock the size of a school bus struck the earth's atmosphere. Fortunately, nobody was hurt, but a sonic boom and crater stirred up our curiosity. Here are some links and videos about meteors and meteorites:

Meteors and Meteorites



1. What's the difference between a meteor and a meteorite?

At Live Science <http://bit.ly/XyTKI7l> you can learn that a meteor is an asteroid (or any other object) that starts burning when it hits the Earth's atmosphere. Meteors are often called "shooting stars," and they are common. It is much less common for one to survive the plunge through the atmosphere to hit the ground. But if it does it's called a meteorite.

2. What are Meteorites made of?

At <http://www.meteorites.com.au/meteorite.html> you can see a collection of meteorites that have landed in Australia. You'll learn they are made up of very dense iron and rock, and are often magnetic. Watch the video at <http://bit.ly/YdghOG> to learn more.

3. How big was the meteor that streaked over Russia?

According to NASA, <http://1.usa.gov/Z6hREq> the meteor that crashed into the Ural Mountains in February 2013 was about 55 feet in diameter and weighed 10,000 tons. That's about the size of a bus and weighs as much as 1,660 elephants. But it was no match for the Earth's atmosphere, which smashed it to bits, with a huge explosion. Read more at Yahoo News: <http://yhoo.it/Yt3iL8>

4. Are there any craters on Earth?

At <http://geology.com/meteor-impact-craters.shtml> you can see a satellite view of some of the best-known craters. One of the most famous is Meteor Crater, near Winslow, Arizona. The crater was created instantly when a 50-meter meteorite slammed into the desert about 50,000 years ago.



5. Should I worry about getting hit? You can relax. The chances of your house being hit by a meteor are about 1 in 2,745,337,045,030 according to a real estate blog, at <http://bit.ly/10MhtuO> You'd have a better chance of winning the lottery twice!



5. Has anyone ever been hit by a Meteorite?

At the Encyclopedia of Alabama <http://bit.ly/WLaEa4> you can read about a woman who was sleeping on her couch when a grapefruit sized meteor crashed through her roof and hit her on the hip. She wasn't hurt. In Germany, a 14 yr old boy was hit in the hand by a pea-sized in meteor, according to the Telegraph <http://bit.ly/YdvPID>. He was cut on his hand, but other than that wasn't hurt.

LittleClickers is made possible by Safe, fun Internet explorations for children **COMPUTER EXPLORERS**

LittleClickers is brought to you by Computer Explorers, who is offering camps on programming. Visit www.computerexplorers.com to learn more. The web-based (html) version of this page is at <http://www.littleclickers.com> with live links, plus a place to report any errors. Note that CTR and COMPUTER EXPLORERS do not have commercial interests in the sites listed on this page. Librarians and teachers are permitted to copy this page for non-profit use. To suggest a future topic or to report a bad link, please contact the editor, Warren Buckleitner [WB] warren@childrenstech.com, or the web editor, Megan Billitti [MB] megan@childrenstech.com; or call 908-284-0404 (9 - 3 PM, EST).



How do you tell if a rock fell from outer space?

Meteorites are more rare than gold or diamonds. At Geology.com <http://bit.ly/151JhMg> you can see what they look like. Here's a starter list:

- Magnetic. A metal detector helps to find them.
- Look molten on the surface.
- Heavy. They're made of a lot of iron an/or nickel. A softball-sized iron meteorite will weigh five or six pounds.

YouTube Playlist for meteors and meteorites

http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcBVHzUUEKwnqVjSSyElhRpnR_u-A7JTt



Editor's Choice

March 2013

Here's a summary of 14 top-rated products from this month's issue. This month's list includes some of the entries in the 2013 BolognaRagazzi Digital Prize. We've also included some new "quick look" video links, so you can see the products in action.

7 Little Words for Kids

Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; Blue Ox Technologies Ltd.

www.sevenlittlewords.com

Runs on iPad

What's another word for an old dinosaur bone? How about a sweet treat? The answer is hidden in a 4 x 4 grid of word squares, each with a bit of a word such as FO, CAN, SS, IL and DY. (Answer: Fossil and Candy).

Each puzzle, which consists of seven words, provides playful language skills experience on several levels. You learn how words are broken into sounds and how they work to build words. There are seven riddles in each grid, hence the name of this app. The puzzles are grouped by themes that can be unlocked by earning stars, such as museums, down under, frozen fun and spacewalk, each with about 50 words. Features include a hint system, plus it is possible to shuffle the tiles, which can help the clues jump out. Sadly, there is no speech synthesis, so you can't touch and hear the sounds. There is an external link to the publisher's website in the main menu, and no in-app purchases. The puzzles were designed by Christopher York, who also designed last year's game 7 little words. All in all, this is an excellent language and vocabulary activity for middle elementary and older. See <http://youtu.be/R4bEdyxiL3I>.

Bats! Furry Fliers of the Night

K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; iPad

Runs on iPad; by Bookerella

www.bookerella.com

Every child wonders about bats. Here's an excellent app for helping them to satisfy their curiosity. Based on the printed book by Mary Kay Carson, Bats! Furry Flyers of the Night is an interactive exploration of bats. There are seven chapters, each with something to do. For example, you can see how a human would look with bat wings. You can even flap the bat wings. The app was published by Bookella and created by Story Worldwide, who did the digital effects using the programming language Unity. This is an outstanding iPad based scientific exploration.

Brave: Storybook Deluxe

P, K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; iPad

iPhone; Disney Publishing Worldwide

www.DisneyDigitalBooks.com

Fans young and old won't be disappointed by this 36 screen interactive app adaptation of the now Academy Award winning movie. Our recommendation? If you've seen the movie, get the app... you won't be disappointed.

Here's why -- Each narrated page is sandwiched between nicely crafted animated transitions that set a new standard for weaving linear movie content with pages. As you swipe to go to the next screen/page, the next scrolling scene unfolds in 3D - a nice touch that feels akin to sliding slippery panels of glass that suddenly become real. As with other Disney "Storybook Deluxe" apps there are standard but well-designed coloring book pages (4) and jigsaw puzzles (4) extracted from key story scenes, plus a fun, leveled arcade style game where you shoot arrows at trees. You can also hunt for an arrow that has been camouflaged into many of the 36 scenes.

Reading teachers will like the highlighted text that syncs to the narration; plus there's the ability record your own narration. If you like this app, you'll also like the other recent Disney Publishing apps, which can be distinguished by the words "Storybook Deluxe."

Foldify

K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; iPad; Pixle

Once in a while an app comes along that makes you splurt your coffee. Take, for instance, Foldify. It plays with your notion of 2D and 3D space, by letting you scribble on one dimension (the flat, 2D part) and see the result, in real time, on a 3D rendering that you can spin with your finger.

You can do a lot more than just scribble. You can drag and drop clip art onto the cube or use your camera to superimpose a photo onto an unfolded, flat blueprint for a shape, at the same time that you can see your artwork. Note that some of the controls, like importing photos from your photo library, are less-than-intuitive. Foldify was made in Poland by Pixle - <http://www.pixle.pl>, and indie development and UI design trio. Take a quick look, at <http://youtu.be/xSjLjbHcsW4>

Four Little Corners

P, K, 1, 2, 3; iPad, iPhone, Android; DADA Company
www.dadacompany.com

Here's another wonderful adaptation of a printed children's book by Jerome Ruillier, adapted for the iPad by Dada Company, from Spain. It is a delightful story of inclusion, about a square who can't get through a door, because it is the wrong shape. So the square's friends -- all circles -- decide to modify the door. There's not a lot of content with this app; and there's not that much to do. But the animation, sounds and graphics nicely support the story. Weaknesses include links to other titles at the back of the story, and an inability to adjust the sound. Features are limited - there is no text scaffolding, language options, background music adjustment, or table of contents. Created by Dada Company www.dadacompany.com. See <http://youtu.be/Iifcw6A3d3M>.

Goodnight ABC

T, P, K; iPad; Goodnight ABC <http://goodnightabc.com>

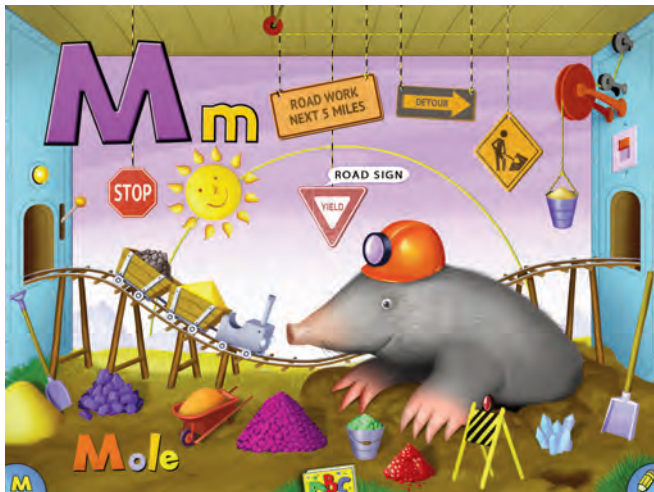
Colorful, responsive and fun, this interactive alphabet lets children freely explore 26 screens (one screen per letter), each containing a dozen or so interactive hot spots. Each screen has a day and night mode, plus two additional modes: a coloring activity where you fill in the illustrations with your fingertip, and a labeling mode.

Each screen has a letter-related theme. For B, you can play basketball with Bear; for X you become a doctor with X-Ray Fish. Just about everything you'd want to touch reacts in interesting,



multi-level ways.

You can touch, tap, and drag every inch of the screen to uncover more items, set things in motion, assemble and disassemble devices, see and hear vocabulary words, find games and so on. Weaknesses include a rather complex first menu. The day and night mode is clever, although once a screen is asleep, it stays locked until you reset the page. More child control with this feature would be good. All in all, this is a fun, well designed alphabet-themed app.



Journey Collector's Edition

Grades 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, S, Jr, Sr.; PlayStation 3; Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc.

www.us.playstation.com

This is a collection of three innovative PlayStation games that include Journey, Flower, and Flow. Other content includes mini-games, plus a documentary on the making of Journey.

Nintendo Land

Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, S, Jr, Sr.; Wii U; Nintendo of America, www.nintendo.com

Nintendo Land for the Wii U is an invitation to a specialized Nintendo theme park, featuring 12 single- and multi-player minigames with classic Nintendo characters. Think Mario Party meets Super Smash Bros. As usual, Nintendo has blended just the right mix of old and new to make this game feel like a tribute rather than a rehash. It's worth picking up, especially since there isn't a new Mario Party game on Wii U.



Pip and Posy: Fun and Games

P, K, 1, 2, 3, 4; IOS-Apple, Nook; Nosy Crow
These days you can find thousands of jigsaw puzzles, games of concentration and coloring books in the app store; but few are crafted this well. There are five games in all, each

Dust or Magic

eBooks

ANNOUNCING THE FIRST DUST OR MAGIC EBOOK RETREAT: DESIGNING AND CRITIQUING NARRATIVE DRIVEN INTERACTIVE MEDIA FOR CHILDREN

WHEN: April 21-23, Sunday through Tuesday

WHAT IS IT: A special event bringing together leading designers of children's interactive content, to "get smart" on children's literature in the age of the touch screen. We'll critique best practice, as identified by the 2013 BolognaRagazzi Digital Prize Jurors, and see what went wrong with the many less-than-noteworthy products flooding the Apple and Android app stores. We'll explore how to tap the potential of the tablet medium for:

- Telling stories— to move beyond the page swipe and hot spot.
- Scaffolding techniques to help a child move from a non-reader, to a reader.
- Child empowerment techniques, to increase engagement.
- Embedded reinforcements — ways to use interactive techniques to work with the narrative
- Child authorship techniques. Examples of ways you can put a child's voice inside a story.



Note that this is an event that is more about **making** than **selling**. We'll also demo and discuss the state of children's app design in general, and offer on the spot critiques of participant work using Dust or Magic's laser guided feedback.

ATTENDEES: Children's publishers, app designers, reviewers and researchers. As with other Dust or Magic events, this is independent, there are no sponsors or selling; all platforms are discussed equally.

WHERE: Our meeting will take place at the epicenter of children's literacy – at the former home of the founders of Highlights for Children, in the wooded hills near Honesdale, Pennsylvania. The campus consists of the Founders' farmhouse, 21 cabins and a 5,200-square-foot conference center known as The Barn at Boyds Mills, located 2½ hours from New York City and approximately 45 minutes from the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport. Participants from distant points are welcome to come early. Meetings and meals take place in The Barn, which has several relaxed classroom-like areas, a Great Hall, an outdoor fireplace and a giant kitchen. There is excellent password-free Wi-Fi and high definition displays. Charming cabins with a rustic feel have modern facilities and are writer-ready with desk, chair and filled bookshelves. Everyone raves about the food. Farm-style meals are prepared by a top-notch chef and mealtimes are a time for lively discussion. Snacks are always available for late-night or early morning writing sessions. We will accommodate dietary restrictions.



REGISTRATION: \$1680 per seat. Price includes food, supplies and housing for two nights. To register by phone, please call 800-993-9499 (9 to 3 EST) and speak with Lisa or Megan. Group size is limited to 40, on a first-come, first-served basis.

www.dustormagic.com

featuring the art of the German book illustrator Axel Scheffler and the trademark British Nosy Crow narration by expert sounding British children. There's a coloring book, a concentration game ("Matching Pairs"), a Spot the Difference activity and a set of jigsaw puzzles. Children can choose their own difficulty level and the narration is always supportive. Especially noteworthy is the "Make a Face" game, that uses the iPad's camera to take a picture of your own face, with a challenge like, "Can you make a surprised face?". Weaknesses include some annoying background music that can't be adjusted. This is a great all-purpose app to have for a rainy day or a long car trip.



Scott's Polar Trip

P, K, 1, 2, 3; iPad, iPhone, Android; Square Igloo
www.squareigloo.net

In this original story, Scott arrives at the North Pole on his submarine, accompanied by Jazz the cat. While there are fictional elements, many of the pages are based on real content.

In the story, a Inuit boy named Inook helps Scott, and shows him how people live in the Arctic Circle. Content includes four games drawn from Inuit life and customs: the blanket toss; building an igloo; looking for murre eggs; and setting up an inukshuk. The parent options let you choose from two reading levels. The parent options are a plus, but we didn't like the "review our app" link on the main menu.

SiNG Party

5, 6, 7, 8, 9, S, Jr, Sr.; Wii U; Nintendo of America
www.nintendo.com

SiNG Party is a musical performance game based around popular songs. In party mode, the lead singer uses the Wii U GamePad controller to view lyrics and receive cues, freeing them from the TV and allowing them to interact with the audience. It's like any great quality karaoke game and you can see the five bars which indicate pitches of singing. While there aren't that many songs available, the game plays well and there are several modes for both single or group play. You can also make playlists & share your score.

Audience participation, such as singing, dancing, interacting with the lead singer and playing instrumental sounds with other Wii Remote controllers.

Spy Hunter

5, 6, 7, 8, 9, S, Jr, Sr.; Nintendo 3DS
Vita; Warner Brothers Interactive Entertainment, Inc.
www.warnerbros.com

Spy Hunter is a revision of the original combat driving series, where you once again take on the role of the Agent the driver of

the G-6155 Interceptor supercar. You take on a global terrorist organization. The Interceptor transforms from supercar to off-road assault vehicle to speed boat, allowing you to go wherever you like within its branching mission tracks. The game now features more choice in the transformation and customization with greater hand controls and enhanced action cameras. The PlayStation Vita version features local multiplayer for 2-4 players. Developed by TT Fusion for Warner Bros.

StoryToys Grimm's Snow White

P, K, 1, 2, 3, 4; iPad
Android
Kindle; StoryToys
www.storytoys.com

The name says it nicely, with StoryToys. Here's another outstanding addition to any children's app library. Available for both Android and Apple mobile devices, the \$2 app features a solid design and playful 3D graphics. This particular story mixes a Snow White and the Seven Dwarves theme with creativity and classification games. There's more breadth of content than previous StoryToys titles we've reviewed. What makes it stand out is the way the 3D graphics are synced with your screen movements, giving it a "book on a stage" effect. When you flip a page, the graphic elements pop up. We liked how there is always something to do on each page. You can help Snow White clean by sorting items, or move around in maze. Each short skit supports story. All in all, this is a good addition to any early childhood app library.

Voyage of Ulysses, The

K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; iPad; Elastico Srl
www.elasticoapp.com

How do pull kids into Greek Mythology and make it interesting? The Voyage of Ulysses contains 26 screens full of innovative interactive strategies to let you explore each page. The techniques let you drive the action, and do a nice job extending the story. For example, you can touch the city of Troy to set fire to buildings, tilt the screen to steer Ulysses' raft through the ocean, or touch the screen to uncover the next page of text. The traditional index has been replaced by a map. Features include the ability to toggle between Italian or English. This is the second in the "Books to Play" series from Italian-based Elastico (www.elasticoapp.com). The first was Pinocchio.

Wreck-It Ralph Storybook Deluxe

P, K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; iPad, Disney Publishing Worldwide
www.DisneyDigitalBooks.com

While this isn't our favorite Disney Storybook Deluxe app, it's still very solid, and it offers a nice extension of the candy and cookie themed racing movie. Content includes swipe-through 35 screens, with a record-your-own narration feature and some clever page transitions. The characters and graphics could've stepped out of the movie, with voices by John C. Reilly, Jack McBrayer, Jane Lynch and Sarah Silverman.

The pages can be hard to turn, however, and the background music can drown out the narration. Fortunately you can mute the sound and turn on arrow keys for page transitions. There are two games -- a potentially fun Kart racing game with power ups, and a decorate your own car. See the CTR video review at <http://youtu.be/svgtivkardc>.

The Art and the Science of the Children's eBook



Let's take a closer look at the **2013 BolognaRagazzi Digital Award judging notes**

by Warren Buckleitner

Throughout the ages, children's storytellers have tapped into the state-of-the-art to practice their craft. Whether it was achieved with charcoal drawings and shadows from a torch, or color ink in the case of Beatrix Potter, the goal is always the same: to educate and delight a child. Today's state-of-the-art technology comes in the form of a slim glass tablet with day-long batteries, multi-touch screens and the ability to access the Internet. Gone are keyboards, wires and complexity. A 21st century child has two kinds of bookshelves: one with traditional printed books, plus a virtual bookshelf that is in the cloud. These titles are stored in a virtual closet managed by iTunes, Google Play or Amazon, or perhaps in one of many content management services that are popping up. These stores reach across borders, permitting a storyteller's ideas to flow around the world at the speed of light, often in your choice of language. These are exciting times.

The BolognaRagazzi Digital Award was established in 2012 to identify best practice in this emerging category of commercial products, on a global scale. The six winners serve as guideposts for others. But the prize initiative digs up a lot more than just a list of winners. As we made our journey through this year's entries, we made some notes on what worked or didn't work. If you're in the digital storytelling business you can learn from someone else's mistakes. We also made a video (at <http://youtu.be/Ea0VL0-Jiw4>) in which we discussed the entries.

eBook, Defined: "Narrative Driven Interactive Media"

We understand that an "eBook" can be many things to different people. For the purposes of this prize, we define an eBook as "narrative driven interactive media" or an interactive work based around some sort of story. We didn't consider products with no story involved. We also didn't consider non-interactive products, such as digitized printed books presented as PDFs or on e-readers. This year, we broke the entries into fiction and nonfiction.

FAQs about the Prize

Who can enter? This is a free, public, annual contest sponsored and paid for by the Bologna Children's Book Fair and organized by *Children's Technology Review*. Any author or publisher can enter, and there is no entry fee. Only recent products are considered (within the past year).

Who picks the winners? Four jurors, myself included, each have one vote: Warren Buckleitner, USA; André Letria, Portugal; Chris Meade, UK and Cristina Mussinelli, Italy.

How many products were considered? For the 2013 edition, there were 234 entries from 32 countries. All entries ran on either Android, Kindle or iOS.

How many winners? There were two winners (one fiction, one nonfiction), four mentions (two fiction, two nonfiction) and ten finalists (five fiction, five nonfiction). The winners and mentions were included in the ten finalists.

Why a Product Didn't Win

In many contests, it is common to end by issuing a press release and some trophies, and then start thinking about next year. Not with this one. We are equally interested in understanding these fascinating products from an objective vantage point. We want to know -- and share -- what's working and what's not. So we want to be just as clear about what counts as dust as well as what gets the prize. In that spirit, here are some common attributes of the many non-winning products we encountered.

- **Sprinkled with hot spots**, as in "it's been sprinkled" with animated hot spots that may not support to the story. Said Chris Meade "there were a lot of things being trotted out that were nothing more than some illustrations for you to jab." THE LESSON: Make sure the interactivity "does work" for the narrative.
- **Static graphics**. Worse from a child's point of view, are items on the screen that look like they should do something, inviting a child's curious touch, but responding with stillness. THE LESSON: If you put a balloon in an illustration, make sure you can pop it.
- **Page flippers** is a term that came up more than once in the juror meeting, as in "it's just another page flipper." It came to stand for old thinking in a new age. Page flippers were very common in this year's entries. Sometimes they even had their own paper rustling sound. Such a navigation choice is an instant flag that says "not very innovative." THE LESSON: Think outside the page.
- **Free**. Free products were treated with a healthy dose of suspicion. We'd ask "what's the catch?" Some free products act



like a spring-loaded snake, reading to jump at you with an offer or a distracting web page. THE LESSON: If you have a “free trial” version, keep the in-app purchases away from young children.

- **Noisy.** Achieving a psychological balance between screen and child initiation is an art that is instantly violated when sound can't be controlled. Jurors noted many apps that start like a three-ring circus, throwing music, sound effects and moving graphics, and removing a child's ability to control the experience. THE LESSON: Make sure you have a mute button.
- **Anonymous.** Sometimes it was hard to find out who made the app. THE LESSON: Make the answer to the question “who made this app” easy to answer.
- **Nothing new.** Many ebooks blend together into a collective mush of medium quality stories with limited features and perhaps a jigsaw puzzle, a coloring page or a game of concentration. There's so much more the medium can do. THE LESSON: try to stay a step ahead on the innovation wave. It's far easier to get noticed.
- **No help for the emerging reader.** How does the ebook help a child who can't read? We were impressed by labeling strategies, closed captioning options, and touch and hear techniques to help a child build a bridge (or a scaffold) toward becoming a reader. THE LESSON: create hooks for success for all developmental levels.

Attributes of Winners

Each other juror might have his or her own list of winning attributes; these are mine.

- **Innovative.** Thinks outside the page; ideas haven't been done before. Said André “Imagination and authenticity count for a lot.”
- **Narrative.** The value of a good story can't be understated.
- **Pulls the child into the story.** There are many ways to pull a child's ideas into the experience, using the camera, for example.
- **Beautiful.** Today's tablets have clear, bright screens that are good vehicles for delivering high quality experiences.
- **Technically sound.** No bugs, snags, crashes or delivery worries.
- **Social.** There are opportunities for more than one player to participate, simultaneously.
- **Made by a real person.** Good apps make it possible to learn more about the people behind the work. See, for example Identikat.
- **Well crafted.** The animation and sounds dance perfectly with the story.
- **Text scaffolding.** Helping readers of all levels participate with the language by decoding the print. See We are Alaska.
- **Work on various screen sizes.** We saw some titles like the Nutcracker that were designed with small or large screens in mind.
- **Ethical.** Priced reasonably, with commercial links and/or prompts for additional content kept behind a firewall to protect children from frustration and wasted playtime.
- **Scary.** See iPoe.

The Winners

So, at the end of the contest, the jurors were required to identify the products that they thought deserved the honor of the 2013 BolognaRagazzi Digital Prize. Per the Bolognafiere's requirement, we were allowed two winners (one fiction, one nonfiction), four mentions (two fiction, two nonfiction) and four additional titles, to make up the list of ten finalists (five fiction, five nonfiction). Here are the results with the juror's comments.

Fiction

WINNER: Four Little Corners by Dada Company, Spain

This delightful story is about helping a square peg as it tries desperately to fit through a round hole, in order to be with friends. This book-inspired app demonstrates that the translation from print to digital needn't be sophisticated, as long as a good story is involved. The underlying message -- that childhood can be a time when fitting in is difficult -- struck a chord with the jurors, who noted “Geometric forms have never been so moving or funny.” <http://bit.ly/VrPSPk> (Android)
<https://itunes.apple.com/app/four-little-corners/id598573155> (Apple)

MENTION: Monster's Socks by Martin Hughes, UK

Wonderful, whimsical illustrations meet a good story, and an especially clever scroll-like navigation technique. The story, about a child-like monster in search of his socks – is expertly delivered on the touch screen, where pages are replaced by two simple arrows, letting you move with fluid ease forward or backward through the adventure. You help by making a

Comments from the Judging Form.

Here were some of the notes I jotted down as I reviewed the entries. Not all were deal breakers, but they were marks against making to the winner's list.

- Clumsy design: e.g., pages flip in the wrong direction.
- Not responsive.
- I've seen this before. This design was clearly influenced by Toca Tea Party with no attribution.
- Good story, amazing graphics, but it is hard to operate the catapult.
- Instructions are confusing and unnecessary.
- Loads too slow.
- Background music loops, over and over and over again.
- Crashed.
- Starts with a wordy introduction.
- Contains ethnic stereotypes.
- Evil. This is a “free” catalog designed to tease children, and trick them into an in-app sale.
- Contains links to web content in the main menu.
- Feels like a template, with sprinkled hotspots
- Not reversible.
- Asks you to rate this app before you play it.
- Pages get turned accidentally.
- Lots of beautiful looking art that just sits there.
- Yet another page-flipper.
- Clunky mechanics get in the way of the narrative.
- Horrible narration.
- Ending makes no sense.
- Who made this? The author/illustrator/publisher are not clearly identified.

bridge, sailing a boat or flying home from the moon.
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=air.monster-socks&hl=en> (Android)
<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/monsters-socks/id521546698?mt=8> (Apple)

MENTION: **Rita the Lizard** by Irene Blasco Studio, Spain
This ancient tale of friendship and identity is delivered with luscious illustrations and state-of-the-art interactive elements that extend the ideas of the story beyond the traditional page. You can swipe your way up the neck of a giraffe, or explore the rich foliage of a jungle scene. Responsive and playful, the jurors liked the ability to toggle between four languages or record the narration.

Link: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/rita-la-lagartija/id568650448?l=es&mt=8>

Non-Fiction

WINNER: **War Horse** by Touch Press, UK
This towering achievement in the interactive non-fiction category is based on the historical interpretation of WWI, as told by the Michael Morpurgo novel. The app expertly mixes traditional text, musical performance and 360 degree photography techniques with a live author reading. Jurors appreciated the multiple ways to explore a complicated social topic, from either the Allied or German point of view.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/war-horse-interactive-edition/id557865146?mt=8>



MENTION: **Endless Alphabet** by Callaway Digital Arts, USA
Interactive alphabet books abound, both in print and on touch screens. Few, however, are this playful and so informally educationally. Children discover an own ensemble of singing letters who work together to link word bits to words, to build meaning. Jurors appreciated the social play opportunities of this app.

Link: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/endless-alphabet/id591626572?mt=8>

MENTION: **Rounds: Franklin the Frog** by Nosy Crow, UK
Nosy Crow's "rounds" firmly demonstrates how a digital work can masterfully help children think outside the all-too-typical beginning, middle and end format. They first meet a frog named Franklin, who swims, hops and hibernates his way through a complete life cycle, in a way that ends with a beginning. It gently introduces some profound ideas that can ignite

the curiosity of a future scientist.

Link: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/rounds-franklin-frog/id547240957?mt=8>

Four Additional Finalists

The judges made a top ten list: In addition to the two winners and four mentions, there were four additional finalists:

Bats! Furry Fliers of the Night, \$2.99, by Bookerella, USA
<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/bats!-furry-fliers-night/id494297887?mt=8>

This well crafted non-fiction app is an interactive exploration of a mammal that catches the attention of every child. For ages 5-12.



IdentiKat, \$0.99, by Lastrego & Testa Multimedia S.r.l., Italy
<http://j.mp/Yollao>

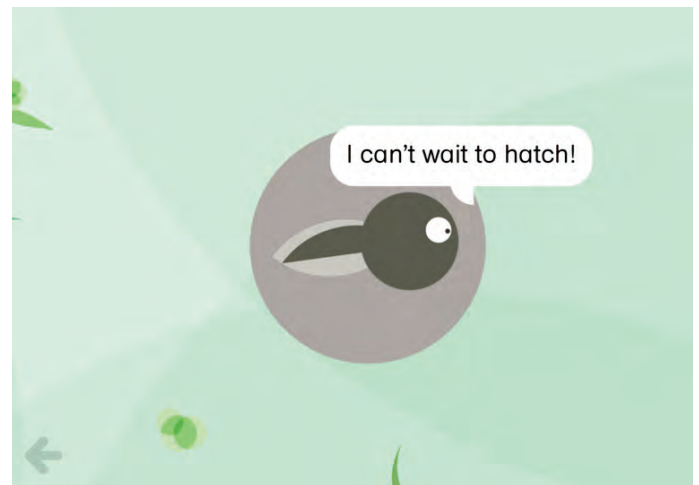
Even a dog lover will like this richly illustrated cat collage toolkit, complete with an endless supply of exotic materials from "Grandma's scrap box." For ages 3-up.

Voyage of Ulysses, The, \$3.99, by Elastico Srl, Italy
<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/the-voyage-of-ulysses/id538571921?l=it&ls=1&mt=8>

A set of ancient stories come to life on tablet technology, by way of 26 surprise-filled screens. For ages 7-14.

Where Do Balloons Go?, \$5.99, by Auryrn, Inc.
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/where-do-balloons-go-uplifting/id522189097?mt=8>

This app explores a simple question with beautiful art and clever interactive techniques. There's even a balloon theatre, for





Feature Reviews

MARCH 2013

Here's an alphabetical listing of new products, along with a full review, specific ratings and tester feedback. The "Entry Date" refers to the date we first learned of the product.

7 Little Words for Kids

What's another word for an old dinosaur bone? How about a sweet treat? The answer is hidden in a 4 x 4 grid of word squares, each with a bit of a word such as FO, CAN, SS, IL and DY. (Answer: Fossil and Candy).

Each puzzle, which consists of seven words, provides playful language skills experience on several levels. You learn how words are broken into sounds and how they work to build words.

There are seven riddles in each grid, hence the name of this app. The puzzles are grouped by themes that can be unlocked by earning stars, such as museums, down under, frozen fun and spacewalk, each with about 50 words. Features include a hint system, plus it is possible to shuffle the tiles, which can help the clues jump out. Sadly, there is no speech synthesis, so you can't touch and hear the sounds.

There is an external link to the publisher's website in the main menu, and no in-app purchases. The puzzles were designed by Christopher York, who also designed last year's game 7 little words. All in all, this is an excellent language and vocabulary activity for middle elementary and older. See <http://youtu.be/R4bEdyxiL3I>.

Details: Blue Ox Technologies Ltd., www.sevenlittlewords.com. Price: \$0.99. Ages: 7-up. Platform: ipad, iphone, itouch. Teaches/Purpose: reading, language, spelling, comprehension. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 3/6/2013. [WB]

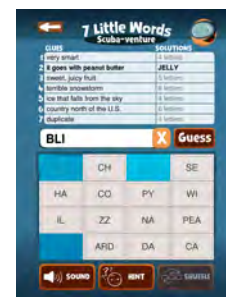
ABC Airplane

Letter tracing is more fun when you have your own set of drawing tools, especially when one is a pretty monarch butterfly who leaves a trail of flowers as you trace over the letter. There's also a hot rod, bike, and space shuttle among the six cursor options. If you pause, a hint mode shows you where to draw.

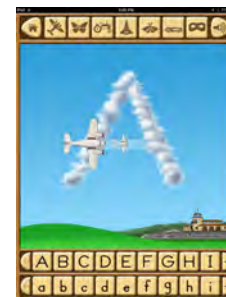
Some of the letters are less than responsive, and you can't go outside the lines. Also, this app drills just one handwriting style: called Zaner-Bloser, with stick-like upper and lower-case letters. Some of the letters give you an area of the screen to practice handwriting. But the writing area is frustratingly small. All in all, this is a fun way for children to play with letter creation despite some clunky areas. The app from is Alphabet Galleries and it was created in Michigan by Leslie Arwin and Joe Sokolov.

Details: Alphabet Galleries, LLC, www.abcairplane.com. Price: \$3.99. Ages: 3-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: letters, handwriting. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.1 stars. Entry date: 3/6/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	8	88%
Educational	10	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	9	



Ease of Use	9	82%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	8	





Bats! Furry Fliers of the Night

Every child wonders about bats. Here's an excellent app for helping them to satisfy their curiosity. Based on the printed book by Mary Kay Carson, Bats! Furry Flyers of the Night is an interactive exploration of bats. There are seven chapters, each with something to do. For example, you can see how a human would look with bat wings. You can even flap the bat wings. The app was published by Bookella and created by Story Worldwide, who did the digital effects using the programming language Unity. This is an outstanding iPad based scientific exploration.

Details: Bookerella, www.bookerella.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 5-12. Platform: IOS-Apple, iPad. Teaches/Purpose: science, biology, mammals, bats . Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.8 stars. Entry date: 1/30/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	9	96%
Educational	10	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	10	



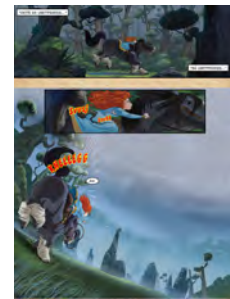
Brave: Interactive Comic

Don't bother downloading the early versions of the Brave Interactive Comic app. The design is hard to figure out, and some of the page transitions don't work correctly.

The app features 48 interactive comic pages; two reading modes - panel by panel and autoplay; music and special sound effects in each panel; special sections on the main characters, with a slideshow including sketches and concept art from Pixar artists; and a How-to-Draw Guide, with a step-by-step art course on Merida, Elinor, Mor'du and the Triplets. Featuring Merida, the heroine of Disney-Pixar's film Brave, this interactive comic tells the story of the headstrong daughter of King Fergus and Queen Elinor. The best part is the step-by-step drawing tutorials.

Details: Disney Publishing Worldwide, www.DisneyDigitalBooks.com. Price: \$1.99. Ages: 6-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading, drawing, art, sketching. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 2.3 stars. Entry date: 2/28/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	5	46%
Educational	6	
Entertaining	4	
Design Features	5	
Good Value	3	



Brave: Storybook Deluxe

Fans young and old won't be disappointed by this 36 screen interactive app adaptation of the now Academy Award winning movie. Our recommendation? If you've seen the movie, get the app... you won't be disappointed.

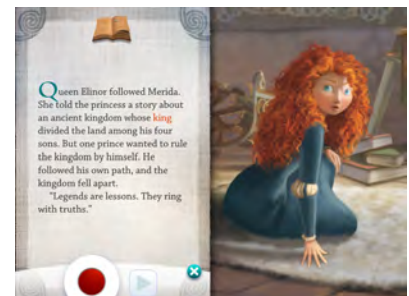
Here's why -- Each narrated page is sandwiched between nicely crafted animated transitions that set a new standard for weaving linear movie content with pages. As you swipe to go to the next screen/page, the next scrolling scene unfolds in 3D -- a nice touch that feels akin to sliding slippery panels of glass that suddenly become real. As with other Disney "Storybook Deluxe" apps there are standard but well-designed coloring book pages (4) and jigsaw puzzles (4) extracted from key story scenes, plus a fun, leveled arcade style game where you shoot arrows at trees. You can also hunt for an arrow that has been camouflaged into many of the 36 scenes.

Reading teachers will like the highlighted text that syncs to the narration; plus there's the ability record your own narration. If you like this app, you'll also like the other recent Disney Publishing apps, which can be distinguished by the words "Storybook Deluxe." See also Finding Nemo: Storybook Deluxe, Cars 2: Storybook Deluxe.

This app was developed by Brooklyn-based Small Planet Digital for Disney Digital Books.

Details: Disney Publishing Worldwide, www.DisneyDigitalBooks.com. Price: \$6.99. Ages: 3-12. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading, logic, timing, spatial relations, verbal skills. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.8 stars. Entry date: 2/28/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	9	96%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	10	





Clifford's BIG Birthday

Children explore Clifford's doghouse as they work together to set up a surprise party for Clifford's birthday. This app looks good but it acts a lot like it was designed by TV people who are trying to make something interactive. There are some fun ideas, especially when you can choose the shape of the birthday cake, but the app provides limited opportunities for child control because it walks children through each step of many first screens; a dumbed-down approach that limits engagement. Mix in a talkative narrator with looping prompts, slow transitions between screens and looping music that is "on" by default (but can be toggled off in the parent's menu) and you have a mediocre app. Made in the UK by Plug-in media, for Scholastic.

Details: Scholastic, Inc., www.scholastic.com. Price: \$.99. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: reading, counting, spelling three letter words. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.3 stars. Entry date: 9/19/2012. [WB]

Ease of Use	8	66%
Educational	7	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	6	
Good Value	5	



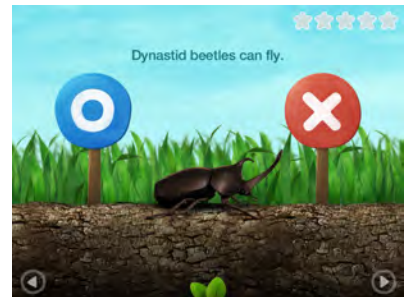
Dynastid Beetle

Featuring excellent, clear 3D graphics and some innovative finger-driven navigation/examination techniques, Dynastid Beetle is divided into seven sections: Body, Habitat, How They Move, Raise a Dynastid Beetle, Battle, Quiz and Video. In case you're wondering Dynastid beetles are large beetles with horns that some people keep as pets in Asia. There are varieties that live around the world, however. Most of the sections include some type of interactive application opportunity. For example, you can spin the beetle 360 degrees and touch on different parts to zoom in on, say, the wings. In another screen you can touch and drag a line on a thermometer to set the temperature (in Celsius) in order for the egg to hatch. Other content includes four clear short videos and a multiple choice-style quiz.

Minor weaknesses include looping background music that can't be turned off. Some of the testers did not like the child-like voices super-imposed over the footage, saying it felt "sugar coated." However, you do learn a lot about Dynastid Beetles with this app.

Details: CJ Educations, www.cjeducations.com/. Price: \$1.99. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: science, entomology, beetles. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.2 stars. Entry date: 11/19/2012. [WB]

Ease of Use	9	84%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	8	



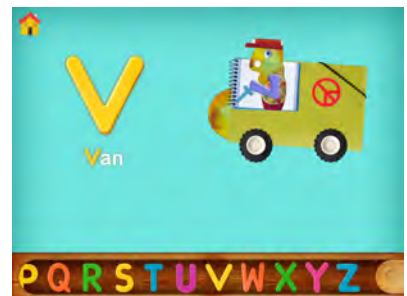
Faces iMake ABC

Here's a collection of 26 drag and drop puzzles -- one per letter. Each follows a letter-related theme. For the letter P, for example, you are first shown a pig, made out of common objects, such as rolls of thread, tools and pasta shells. When you touch it, it "breaks" (the parts scatter all over) and you are told "we have some work to do." You drag and drop the parts to reassemble the pig, which then animates itself. Because these are all familiar items, the language value of this app is increased. The puzzles nicely done, each designed by Israeli illustrator Hanoch Piven.

Weaknesses include a looping ABC song melody that can't be muted and the app self-brands itself by putting it's title in the alphabet bar. Some might find the interaction style of this app too pushy (a child is frequently reminded to "touch a letter").

Details: iImagine Machine, www.imaginemachine.com. Price: \$1.99. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: letter recognition, language. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.1 stars. Entry date: 2/5/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	9	82%
Educational	8	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	9	





Foldify

Once in a while an app comes along that makes you do a double take. Take, for instance, Foldify. It plays with your notion of 2D and 3D space, by letting you scribble on one dimension (the flat, 2D part) and see the result, in real time, on a 3D rendering that you can spin with your finger.

You can do a lot more than just scribble. You can drag and drop clip art onto the cube or use your camera to superimpose a photo onto an unfolded, flat blueprint for a shape, at the same time that you can see your artwork. Note that some of the controls, like importing photos from your photo library, are less-than-intuitive. Foldify was made in Poland by Pixle - <http://www.pixle.pl>, and indie development and UI design trio. Take a quick look, at <http://youtu.be/xSjLjbHcsW4>

Details: Pixle, www.foldifyapp.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 5-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: geometry, symetry, 3D space, spatial relations, creativity, printing. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.6 stars. Entry date: 2/28/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	9	93%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	N	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	9	



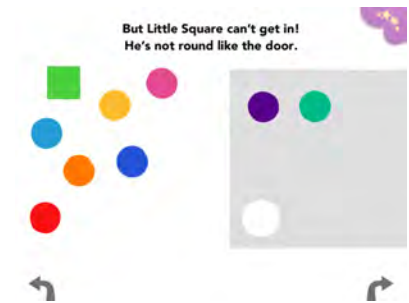
Four Little Corners

Here's another wonderful adaptation of a printed children's book by Jerome Ruillier, adapted for the iPad by Dada Company, from Spain. It is a delightful story of inclusion, about a square who can't get through a door, because it is the wrong shape. So the square's friends -- all circles -- decide to modify the door. There's not a lot of content with this app; and there's not that much to do. But the animation, sounds and graphics nicely support the story.

Weaknesses include links to other titles at the back of the story, and an inability to adjust the sound. Features are limited - there is no text scaffolding, language options, background music adjustment, or table of contents. Created by Dada Company www.dadacompany.com. See <http://youtu.be/lifcw6A3d3M>.

Details: DADA Company, www.dadacompany.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 3-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: social skills, inclusion, bullying. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 2/14/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	10	90%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	10	



Goodnight ABC

Colorful, responsive and fun, this interactive alphabet lets children freely explore 26 screens (one screen per letter), each containing a dozen or so interactive hot spots. Each screen has a day and night mode, plus two additional modes: a coloring activity where you fill in the illustrations with your fingertip, and a labeling mode.

Each screen has a letter-related theme. For B, you can play basketball with Bear; for X you become a doctor with X-Ray Fish. Just about everything you'd want to touch reacts in interesting, multi-level ways.

You can touch, tap, and drag every inch of the screen to uncover more items, set things in motion, assemble and disassemble devices, see and hear vocabulary words, find games and so on. Weaknesses include a rather complex first menu. The day and night mode is clever, although once a screen is asleep, it stays locked until you reset the page. More child control with this feature would be good. All in all, this is a fun, well designed alphabet-themed app.

Details: Goodnight ABC, <http://goodnightabc.com>. Price: \$1.99. Ages: 2-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: reading, letters, language. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.3 stars. Entry date: 7/17/2012. [WB]

Ease of Use	7	86%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	9	





Journey Collector's Edition

This is a collection of three innovative PlayStation games that include Journey, Flower, and Flow. Other content includes mini-games, plus a documentary on the making of Journey.

One 9/4/12, Corey said "Journey is an unusual, stunning game. The graphics are realistic and the game looks like advanced photography in motion. The sand is blown by the wind, and the music is soothing. The other two games work the same way, but they have different stories. The bonus features include commentary & a look behind the scenes at how the game was made."

Details: Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc., www.us.playstation.com. Price: \$30. Ages: 10-up. Platform: PlayStation 3. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, art. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.6 stars. Entry date: 8/27/2012. [WB]

Ease of Use	8	92%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	10	



Letters with Pooh

Featuring authentic Winnie the Pooh graphics (some animated) and narration, this app combines a storybook format with simple tracing games designed to introduce each letter of the alphabet. The instructional prompts are excessive, and the sorting game (where you catch specific letters as they fall from a letter tree by tilting the screen) is poorly designed. Still, for some children -- especially those who like Pooh -- this app could provide another way to playfully learn about letters and their sounds.

Nice touches include the ability to record your own voice, and a parent option that lets you set up four separate profiles for different children.

Details: Disney Publishing Worldwide, www.DisneyDigitalBooks.com. Price: 2.99. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone (824 MB). Teaches/Purpose: letter recognition. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.1 stars. Entry date: 2/12/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	9	82%
Educational	8	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	8	



Meebie

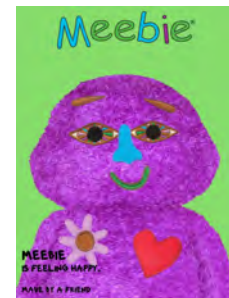
Well intentioned but poorly designed, this is a flannel-board style activity where you drag and drop items onto the face of a virtual plush toy. The app is based on the Meebie cuddly therapy toys that let kids express their feelings.

The idea is that children can maneuver and resize the colorful facial pieces (eyes, mouth, etc.) on Meebie's face and body, and then can discuss the emotions. The app is designed to "help kids process and identify emotion, and deepen understanding and empathy."

The app includes a list of 40 feeling words that you can use to name your finished work. Published by Gramercy Consultants for Orkid Toys.

Details: Orkid Toys, www.orkidtoys.com. Price: \$0.99. Ages: 4-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: emotions. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 1.9 stars. Entry date: 3/5/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	5	38%
Educational	6	
Entertaining	4	
Design Features	2	
Good Value	2	





Mibiblio

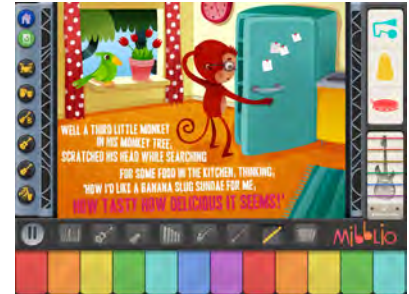
This musical sandbox makes it possible for children to mix and match musical elements as they hear a song sung to them. It's a bit like a play-back only Garage Band, for Kindergartners.

You start by choosing a story (called a mibblet), an illustrated story-song, which can be downloaded as long as you have a live Internet connection. Additional mibblits are sold as in-app sales, which are in view of children in the main menu, so so be careful. Weaknesses include no record mode, plus options for new songs are shown in the menu that children can see. So be careful.

Selections include On Top of Spaghetti and The Wheels on the Bus. This kind of experience shows lets children discover new instrument combinations and learn the basics of creating a song, with a dash of reading. The \$4.99 includes one mibblet; additional mibblits cost \$2.99. Learn more at www.mibiblio.com.

Details: Mibiblio, www.mibiblio.com. Price: \$4.99. Ages: 3-8. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: music. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4 stars. Entry date: 1/31/2013. [CC]

Ease of Use	8	80%
Educational	8	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	7	



Ease of Use	8	84%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	8	

My First Orchestra App

This British music app is designed to let children explore the instruments in the symphonic orchestra. The best part is the music, in the form of 30 lengthy (but still excerpted) music selections that feature each instrument, and are of excellent quality. A set of furry troll characters serve as the hosts to this app -- if you touch one, he/she might try to experiment with an instrument. This provides the novice point of view.

The music can only be played from within the context of the app, so don't think you'll be able to load up your iTunes. Selections include the theme from Superman (by John Williams); the Carmen Fantasy and Wagner's Overture to Tannhäuser.

Weaknesses include some clunky "extra" activities that include a multi-choice quiz and a conducting game where you follow along with the music. The font is very small on the iPad mini. The interaction is primitive, but the musical samples pull up the ratings.

The app was created by Genevieve Helsby with illustrations by Karin Eklund. This is the sequel to the My First Classical Music app.

Details: Naxos AudioBooks UK, www.naxos.com/. Price: \$4.99. Ages: 4-11. Platform: IOS-Apple. Teaches/Purpose: music, the orchestra. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.2 stars. Entry date: 1/30/2013. [WB]





Nintendo Land

Nintendo Land for the Wii U is an invitation to a specialized Nintendo theme park, featuring 12 single- and multiplayer minigames with classic Nintendo characters. Think Mario Party meets Super Smash Bros.

With only a few extra features, most of the game centers around the minigames. They each require different skills and are difficult enough to keep you playing. For example, there's a sidescrolling obstacle course game based on Donkey Kong and a 3D racing game based on F-Zero. The only weakness is that there could have been more, since they are all fairly simple. The real attraction here is the multiplayer, which can support up to five players.

The game advertises innovative uses of the Wii U gamepad, the giant controller with a touchscreen. Some of the gamepad features are a little gimmicky. For example, certain game objectives can only be accomplished by touching the pad. Others, however, are truly unique: one minigame requires you to blow on the microphone, which lifts a platform operated by a propellor. There are also differences in how certain minigames work when played with the gamepad or the regular controller, which can shake up the gameplay in multiplayer when only one player has the gamepad.

The motion sensing, which is the main control mechanic, is extremely precise, unlike in many games where it has a slippery feel.

The sound and music are familiar and very nice. Much of the music is remixes of classic Nintendo themes, with a jingle from the Donkey Kong arcade game and several Super Nintendo themes. The graphics are bright and whimsical, though lacking in creativity compared to other Nintendo games like Super Mario Bros. U.

As usual, Nintendo has blended just the right mix of old and new to make this game feel like a tribute rather than a rehash. It's worth picking up, especially since there isn't a new Mario Party game on Wii U.

Details: Nintendo of America, www.nintendo.com. Price: \$40. Ages: 6-up. Platform: Wii U. Teaches/Purpose: socialization, logic. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 11/27/2012. [ADM]

Pip and Posy: Fun and Games

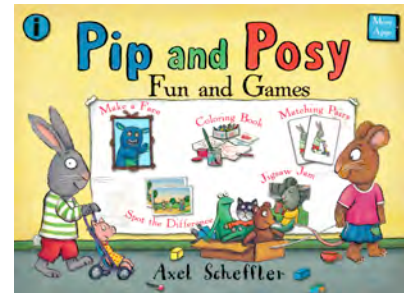
These days you can find thousands of jigsaw puzzles, games of concentration and coloring books in the app store; but few are crafted this well. There are five games in all, each featuring the art of the German book illustrator Axel Scheffler and the trademark British Nosy Crow narration by expert sounding British children. There's a coloring book, a concentration game ("Matching Pairs"), a Spot the Difference activity and a set of jigsaw puzzles. Children can choose their own difficulty level and the narration is always supportive. Especially noteworthy is the "Make a Face" game, that uses the iPad's camera to take a picture of your own face, with a challenge like, "Can you make a surprised face?". Weaknesses include some annoying background music that can't be adjusted. All in all, this is a great all-purpose app to have for a rainy day or a long car trip.

Details: Nosy Crow, www.nosycrow.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 3-9. Platform: IOS-Apple, Nook-dNB. Teaches/Purpose: emotions, logic, math, spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 1/30/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	9	90%
Educational	N	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	9	



Ease of Use	9	88%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	9	





Ridge Racer Vita

Now available for the PS Vita, this Ridge Racer game features "high-contrast graphics and advanced lighting effects powered by the PlayStation Vita."

On 10/9/12, Corey said: although the graphics are fine, the gameplay needed improvement. Gameplay-wise, the physics of the car are inferior to its opponents and when I played it the opponents were awfully faster than me, and I couldn't catch up. When I let go of the acceleration, my car would do an extreme swerve. I couldn't understand the things that made this game different from the other Ridge Racer games, although I felt Ridge Racer 3D was better than Ridge Racer Vita in terms of gameplay. Graphics are not bad though, and the sounds are as expected. This game has received negative reviews and I agree because it is more complicated than other Ridge Racer games. Going through the sign in screens can be boring. I recommend Ridge Racer 3D for Nintendo 3DS instead of Ridge Racer Vita.

Details: Namco Bandai Games America Inc., www.namcobandaiames.com. Price: \$30. Ages: 10-up. Platform: Vita. Teaches/Purpose: sports, racing. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.4 stars. Entry date: 3/20/2012. [CH]

Ease of Use	4	68%
Educational	N	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	7	



Scott's Polar Trip

In this original story, Scott arrives at the North Pole on his submarine, accompanied by Jazz the cat. While there are fictional elements, many of the pages are based on real content.

In the story, a Inuit boy named Inook helps Scott, and shows him how people live in the Arctic Circle. Content includes four games drawn from Inuit life and customs: the blanket toss; building an igloo; looking for murre eggs; and setting up an inukshuk. The parent options let you choose from two reading levels. The parent options are a plus, but we didn't like the "review our app" link on the main menu.

Details: Square Iglloo, www.squareigloo.net. Price: \$3.99. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: reading. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 10/18/2012. [WB]

Ease of Use	9	88%
Educational	8	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	8	



SiNG Party

SiNG Party is a musical performance game based around popular songs. In "Party" mode, the lead singer uses the Wii U GamePad controller to view lyrics and receive cues, freeing them from the TV and allowing them to interact with the audience. It's like any great quality karaoke game and you can see the five bars which indicate pitches of singing. While there aren't that many songs available, the game plays well and there are several modes for both single or group play. You can also make playlists & share your score.

Audience participation, such as singing, dancing, interacting with the lead singer and playing instrumental sounds with other Wii Remote controllers.

In "Sing" mode, up to two singers' vocal and overall performance quality are evaluated on the TV in real time. The GamePad can be used as an audio mixer and to create a playlist. The song list includes selections from the '60s to current pop hits.

CTR tester Corey called this "a great karaoke game and found that the included microphone responded perfectly to the singing" but "I wanted more downloadable content." All in all, this is an excellent music app, with good music in it & this game was very well done!

Details: Nintendo of America, www.nintendo.com. Price: \$60. Ages: 10-up. Platform: Wii U. Teaches/Purpose: music, singing. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 11/27/2012. [WB]

Ease of Use	8	88%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	8	





Spy Hunter

Spy Hunter is a revision of the original combat driving series, where you once again take on the role of the "Agent," the driver of the G-6155 Interceptor supercar. You take on a global terrorist organization. The Interceptor transforms from supercar to off-road assault vehicle to speed boat, allowing you to go wherever you like within its branching mission tracks. The game now features more choice in the transformation and customization with greater hand controls and enhanced action cameras.

On October 11, 2012, Corey said: Spy Hunter 2012 is for the 3DS and PSVita is amazing. The graphics are truly great, especially on the Nintendo 3DS. The designs are spectacular and the enemies come in all types, keeping things interesting. The music for 'Spy Hunter' is awesome but dialog was just text with motionless cartoon pictures of the visible characters except for the automated spy gadget voice. Explosions & animation effects are spectacular. This is an action-packed game full of fast paced racing style driving.

The PlayStation Vita version features local multiplayer for 2-4 players. Developed by TT Fusion for Warner Bros.

Details: Warner Brothers Interactive Entertainment, Inc., www.warnerbros.com. Price: \$40. Ages: 10-up. Platform: Nintendo 3DS, Vita. Teaches/Purpose: logic. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 6/20/2012. [CH]

StoryToys Grimm's Snow White

The name says it nicely, with StoryToys. Here's another outstanding addition to any children's app library. Available for both Android and Apple mobile devices, the \$2 app features a solid design and playful 3D graphics. This particular story mixes a Snow White and the Seven Dwarves theme with creativity and classification games. There's more breadth of content than previous StoryToys titles we've reviewed. What makes it stand out is the way the 3D graphics are synced with your screen movements, giving it a "book on a stage" effect. When you flip a page, the graphic elements pop up. We liked how there is always something to do on each page. You can help Snow White clean by sorting items, or move around in maze. Each short skit supports story. All in all, this is a good addition to any early childhood app library.

Details: StoryToys, www.storytoys.com. Price: \$1.99. Ages: 3-9. Platform: iPad, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: reading, logic, sorting, classification, spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.6 stars. Entry date: 1/30/2013. [WB]

Ten Giggly Gorillas

Ten Giggly Gorillas is like Five Little Monkeys. The story is enjoyable and the optional Read to Me narration by Angela Catterns is well done.

Young children who tested the app laughed at appropriate times and quickly picked up the counting down concept. There is a separate Monkey Memory game featuring the characters from the story.

The main feature of Ten Giggly Gorillas is the ability to tickle the gorillas in order to make them fall, which did not work well. Children became frustrated when the gorilla they were trying to tickle did not respond. Sometimes, pages would turn instead. The arrow to turn the page on the bottom right of the screen also blended in with the background colors which made it hard to find.

Details: Wasabi Productions Pty Ltd, www.wasabipro.com.au. Price: 3.99. Ages: 2-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: counting, math. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 2.9 stars. Entry date: 1/29/2012. [CC]

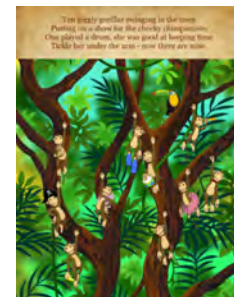
Ease of Use	8	88%
Educational	N	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	8	



Ease of Use	10	92%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	10	



Ease of Use	5	58%
Educational	6	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	5	
Good Value	6	






Voyage of Ulysses, The

How do you pull kids into Greek Mythology and make it interesting? The Voyage of Ulysses contains 26 screens full of innovative interactive strategies to let you explore each page. The techniques let you drive the action, and do a nice job extending the story. For example, you can touch the city of Troy to set fire to buildings, tilt the screen to steer Ulysses' raft through the ocean, or touch the screen to uncover the next page of text. The traditional index has been replaced by a map. Features include the ability to toggle between Italian or English. This is the second in the "Books to Play" series from Italian-based Elastico (www.elasticoapp.com). The first was Pinocchio.

Details: Elastico Srl, www.elasticoapp.com. Price: \$3.99. Ages: 5-11. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: mythology. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 2/18/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	9	94%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	9	




Wreck-It Ralph Storybook Deluxe

While this isn't our favorite Disney Storybook Deluxe app, it's still very solid, and it offers a nice extension of the candy and cookie themed racing movie. Content includes swipe-through 35 screens, with a record-your-own narration feature and some clever page transitions. The characters and graphics could've stepped out of the movie, with voices by John C. Reilly, Jack McBrayer, Jane Lynch and Sarah Silverman.

The pages can be hard to turn, however, and the background music can drown out the narration. Fortunately you can mute the sound and turn on arrow keys for page transitions. There are two games -- a potentially fun Kart racing game with power ups, and a decorate your own car. See the CTR video review at <http://youtu.be/svgtivkardc>.

Details: Disney Publishing Worldwide, www.DisneyDigitalBooks.com. Price: \$.99. Ages: 5-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading, racing. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.3 stars. Entry date: 11/2/2012. [WB]

Ease of Use	8	86%
Educational	8	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	9	





Future Releases & Updates

MARCH 2013

This section contains a listing of products in the process of being reviewed, but not yet rated. We also include significant updates of older products.

Big Hugs Elmo

Now under the Hasbro PlaySkool brand, this year's robotic Elmo is designed to hug you back. The squishy 22-inch arms are flexible, and they can move to music. This Elmo can sing and play imagination games; he also has an "instant off" button on his back. He requires four AA batteries.

Details: Playskool (Hasbro), www.hasbro.com/playskool/. Price: \$60. Ages: 3-6. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: a watch me toy. Entry date: 2/24/2013.



Camelio

Camelio is a theme-based 7" Android tablet designed to be customized for different ages or interests. Themes will include Hot Wheels, Barbie, Monster High or Hello Kitty. Each "Personality Pack" includes a tablet case, as well as a code that unlocks branded content. Up to five users can share the device with each customized theme displayed automatically upon sign in, and Personality Packs can be changed or updated as children grow and their interests change.

Features include parental controls, Android 4.1 (JellyBean) with automatic upgrades, a 1.1GHz processor, built-in Wi-Fi and both front and rear-facing cameras. More than 25 apps will be installed. The tablet will be produced in a partnership with Vivitar and Saker. The Personality, Theme and App Packs will be available at retail stores or online from retailer websites when the product hits store shelves this summer, just in time for back to school.

Details: Vivitar, www.vivitar.com. Price: \$130. Ages: 3-12. Platform: Android. Teaches/Purpose: a tablet for children. Entry date: 2/10/2013.

Croods: Prehistoric Party!, The

Based on a DreamWorks film, this E-rated game features the Croods family - Grug, Ugga, Eep, Thunk, Sandy, Gran, and Guy in 30 party-style minigames. You can compete in film-themed events with up to four other players, making this a fun party game.

Activities include old games with new characters. You can race on creatures, box with punch monkeys, play football with eggs and bowl with rocks. You can earn bonus items such as eggs, shells, and prehistoric points to unlock artwork and mini-games.

The game is playable with up to four players on the Wii or Wii U, or in single player on the Nintendo DS or 3DS. Prices are \$40 for the Wii U version and \$30 for the Wii, Nintendo DS and 3DS versions. Developed by Torus Games for D3Publisher.

Details: D3Publisher of America, Inc., www.d3publisher.us. Price: \$40. Ages: 6-up. Platform: Wii U, Wii, Nintendo 3DS, Nintendo DS. Teaches/Purpose: social play, logic, party game. Entry date: 3/6/2013.





Disney Infinity

On first glance, Disney Infinity looks a lot like Activision's Skylanders. When you take a closer look, however, you realize that there's more to it than just a set of movie-inspired figurines that can jump inside a video game. Yes, these toys each follow a script, but they have some interesting additional features, especially the open-ended feature called the "toy box" mode .

The starter kit is \$75 which includes a game disk, three figurines and a base that you plug into a computer or game console by USB. No batteries are required -- the power comes from your computer.

You are now ready to "jump into" a richly animated 3D environment created by video game maker Avalanche Studios, makers of Dragon Ball Z, Mortal Kombat and Tak. If you pay \$13 for an individual figure, it will unlock other parts of the virtual world. The more figures you have, the more access you have, and the more money you'll spend. See the demo at <http://youtu.be/NEZNS7LACU8>

Details: Disney Interactive, Inc., www.disney.com. Price: \$75. Ages: 5-up. Platform: Windows, PlayStation 3, Wii, Wii U, Xbox 360. Teaches/Purpose: logic, creativity, collaborative play. Entry date: 2/22/2013.



Drawp

This iPad app is designed to let children create and share drawings with a single swipe, regardless of platform (Facebook, email, etc.). The idea is to make it easy to share digital sketches with family members, near or far. Tools include a paint set with Cotton Candy, Pixie Past, or Mega Pixels. Once they have created their drawings, they can share with anyone in their secure, parent approved network. Other features include collaboration, which allows you to positively reinforce and collaborate with children by adding color or audio to the drawing you receive and swipe it back to the child. Even if you don't have an iPad you can still respond through email and it will appear as a Post-It note on the child's drawing. The app also allows for multiple child profiles.

Details: Moondrop Entertainment, www.moondropentertainment.com. Price: \$free. Ages: 3-11. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, social media. Entry date: 2/4/2013.

Furby Party Rockers

Furby has a new little brother/sister. In stores this week, Furby Party Rockers from Hasbro (\$23, www.hasbrotoyshop.com) are smaller and cost a lot less than a regular \$60 Furby. But they do less, too. There's no animatronics and cheaper, back-lit lenticular eyes, designed to look like more expensive color eyes that move. They run on three AAA batteries and come in four varieties, complete with pre-determined personalities and names like Loveby and Scoffby. So what can they do?

Because the base is rounded, you wake up a these little Furbys with a rocking motion. These motions are captured and counted, along the sound of our voice. More sound and motion equals more Furbish-talk, and eventually a song. If another Furby is near, large or small, they will sing in harmony. According Kris Paulson, Hasbro's design manager of integrated play, Furbys communicate with high frequency sounds, called audio watermarks. You probably can't hear them, but a nearby Furby or your dog probably can. So can your phone if it's running the free Furby App.

These new Furbys are part of a growing Furby empire that includes dress up items, furniture (furbiture) and social media hooks. One feature that Party Rockers share with their larger counterpart is that there is no off switch. Your only option is to remove the batteries, or drop one into solitary confinement for a few minutes. Finding such a place when kids are around just might count as a 21st century parenting skill. See the video at <http://youtu.be/1AUNKE3NEjo>.

Details: Hasbro, Inc., www.hasbro.com. Price: \$25. Ages: 6-up. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: A smart toy, some music. Entry date: 2/22/2013.





Furreal Friends Cuddles My Giggly Monkey

Furreal Friends Cuddles My Giggly Monkey (Fall 2013, \$80, www.HasbroToyShop.com) can react to touch and motion with over 100 sounds or motions. Play patterns include feeding, diaper changing, cuddling, tickling, swinging and rocking to sleep. A banana-shaped bottle fits in a soft rubber mouth that "pulls" during feeding. Powered by four "C" batteries, required.

Details: Hasbro, Inc., www.hasbro.com. Price: \$80. Ages: 4-up. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: a stuffed animal. Entry date: 2/24/2013.



iDollhouse

Turn your iPad or iPhone into a virtual playhouse by snapping it inside a plastic case, and then starting a playhouse app.

The iDollhouse also comes with a doll figurine that you can scan into the game using your iPhone/iPad's camera. Each of the six rooms of the dollhouse can be customized within the app, letting you choose your favorite colors. You can also use photos from your personal library. Each room has activities like watering flowers, playing dress-up, having a dance party and baking a cake. Note that it is possible to use the \$.99 app without the plastic case. There's nothing to stop you from starting any app.

There is also an iFirehouse complete with fireman figurine. In the iFirehouse you can choose your engine, paint your firehouse, and practice putting out a fire. The smaller iPhone version of the case costs \$15, not counting the app.

Details: New Adventures LLC, www.newadventuresllc.com. Price: \$25. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: an iPad accessory. Entry date: 3/6/2013.



LEGO City Undercover

This Wii U game lets you play as police officer Chase McCain, armed with disguises and special abilities, as you look for clues to bring Rex Fury to justice. You go undercover with a variety of disguises, including a firefighter, a construction worker and even a robber, each with unique abilities needed to access areas of the city.

You use the Wii GamePad screen to scan areas for hidden clues and criminals, receive updates and place waypoints on an overhead city map that displays their position in real time. Content includes 100 vehicles to collect and use to explore the city, including sports cars, motorcycles and aircraft. Developed by TT Games for Nintendo.

Details: Nintendo of America, www.nintendo.com. Price: \$50. Ages: 8-up. Platform: Wii U. Teaches/Purpose: fine motor, logic, spatial relations. Entry date: 3/6/2013.



MLB 13 The Show

If you have a PS3 or PS Vita and you want a solid baseball simulation, this is a fun, solid choice. This eighth installment of the series now has a post season mode where you try to get your team into the World Series and an online multi-player home run derby.

Other features include the co-play between the Vita and the PS3, providing both are pre-loaded with the game, a beginner mode and a "push/pull hitting trajectories engine" that tells you about the hitting patterns of the current hitter. Sony also promises better fielding control in this edition.

Details: Sony Computer Entertainment America, www.scea.com. Price: \$60. Ages: 10-up. Platform: PlayStation 3, Vita. Teaches/Purpose: sports, baseball. Entry date: 3/6/2013.





One Direction 12" Singing Dolls

These 12 inch tall dolls don't do much, except sing, and look like the popular British boy band. There are five dolls: Harry, Zayn, Niall, Liam and Louis. Each sings a 30-second clip from one of the band's hit songs. The switch is on the doll's stomach.

Details: Hasbro, Inc., www.hasbro.com. Price: \$30. Ages: 5-up. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: music. Entry date: 2/24/2013.



PBS Parents Play & Learn App

"PBS KIDS' first app designed for parents" (according to the press release) is designed to provide a set of math and reading games that parents can play along with their kids. Each is themed around a familiar place, like the grocery store, the bathroom or kitchen. Features include two languages (English and Spanish). The app is free and runs on iOS and Android, including the Kindle Fire HD 7 and Kindle Fire HD 8.9.

Details: PBS Kids, www.pbskids.org. Price: \$free. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: A resource for parents, math, reading, counting, measuring, letter recognition, rhyming. Entry date: 3/8/2013.



Playrific

This is subscription-based service that locates, curates and offers customized content for children. The tagline is "At Playrific we don't make the content. We just deliver it better." The Playrific "web app" can be accessed from any web-enabled device; an iOS app is available in iTunes and Android is planned.

Details: Playrific, www.playrific.com. Price: \$free. Ages: 3-up. Platform: Internet Site, iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: . Entry date: 11/8/2012.



Playskool ShowCam

ShowCam (\$60 from Playskool, a division of Hasbro, at HasbroToyShop.com) combines a digital camera with a dim LED powered digital projector -- all in one device. If you're over 40, think of it as a 21st century Polaroid.

You toggle between camera to projector mode to give kids the immediate satisfaction of presenting their pictures or movie.

Features include a Silly button, for a library of digital stamps that can be layered over your image. The camera can hold up to 1000 images, has a color LCD screen on the back and a USB port, making it easy to save, print and email images as long as you have a USB cable and computer. It will come in grey, blue, green, white, pink or purple. Requires four AA batteries, not included. Coming this Fall. See the video at <http://youtu.be/VxPhQ47X-LE>.

Details: Hasbro, Inc., www.hasbro.com. Price: \$60. Ages: 3-8. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, photography. Entry date: 2/23/2013.





PowerMyLearning.com

This is a free online searchable database of web-based resources, located at <http://powermylearning.com>. It targets four age groups: grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and high school and is easy to search.

Each entry is aligned to common core standards and is described with promotional-sounding language. The idea is to carve up the web so that it is easier to help children play with ideas that they might encounter over the course of a typical school curriculum. It is easy to rate an activity from one to five stars using one of three perspectives, and you can see how many people have provided a rating.

Many of the activities are presented in frames within the site, which can sometimes make it confusing to get back to the first screen. As of March 2013 there were over 2000 entries. There is no direct advertising (other than the forced name harvesting), but there can be ads within the frames. When you visit a NatGeo activity, for example, you are exposed to all sorts of National Geographic services and information.

You are forced to register after you do your first search. So you might see an activity you like but you can't get to it until you register with your name, age and email. Funding sources include the Gates and Crown foundations. The site is managed by CFY (Computers for Youth), a New York non-profit.

Details: Computers For Youth, www.cfy.org. Price: \$free. Ages: 6-up. Platform: Windows, Mac OSX, Internet Site. Teaches/Purpose: an online database of ideas for parents, teachers and children. Entry date: 3/6/2013.



Ubooly (iPhone accessory)

This is a plush, orange iPhone holder designed to turn your iPad or iPod Touch into a talking, interactive critter.

You must enter the registration code provided on the printed instruction card in order to unlock the app, which is required to make it work. He/she can talk and listen to you using the iOS voice recognition features, understanding such phrases such as "tell me a story," "play a game", and "tell me a joke." New content is promised each month via updates. This is not a new idea. See also Zimmiz, HappiTaps and Woogie.

Details: Ubooly, Inc., www.ubooly.com. Price: \$30. Ages: 4-9. Platform: Smart Toy, iPhone, iPod Touch. Teaches/Purpose: virtual pet, language. Entry date: 3/6/2013.



US Hockey Intelligym

Can a computer simulation help you learn hockey? This \$40/month subscription-based set of hockey tutorials attempts to try. The lessons are combined with a game-like sim for Internet connected PC or Macintosh computers. It is designed to systematically teach the fundamentals -- things like when to pass, positioning on the ice and so on. Of course these types of lessons are useless unless they are used in conjunction with rink time. The game was designed by SaaS (Software as a Service) for the USA Hockey organization.

There's no fancy graphics, licenses or cut scenes, but there is footage from real hockey games. The suggested dose is 10-15 thirty-minute training sessions scattered into 2 sessions a week, for about 5-8 weeks. Visit www.usahockeyintelligym.com.

Details: USA Hockey, www.usahockeyintelligym.com. Price: \$39/month. Ages: 10-up. Platform: Windows, Mac OSX. Teaches/Purpose: sports, hockey. Entry date: 3/6/2013.



XDRONE

The XDRONE by WebRC (\$100, www.myfunkyplanet.com) is a radio controlled four rotor toy copter that can be controlled by a 2.4 GHz remote, from "up to 150 feet." Unlike traditional helicopters, the four brushless motors and auto-stabilizing gyro system let you do flips. The remote has eight direction controls, and the rotors are marked so you know which direction the copter is flying.

Two included batteries are rechargeable, and each providing about 12 minutes of flying time. This was one of several \$100 or so "quad" flying toys we spotted at the 2013 Toy Fair. See the video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InBVcehhtsI>

Details: My Funky Planet, www.myfunkyplanet.com. Price: \$100. Ages: 8-up. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: RC controls, fine motor development, robotics, flying, aeronautics. Entry date: 3/5/2013.

