Children's
TECHNOLOGY
REVIEW

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LITTLECLICKERS
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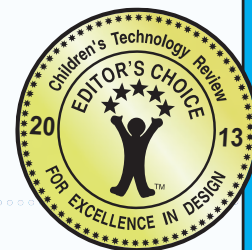
On the cover: **Sago Mini Forsest Flyer, Page 12**

Children's Technology Review
EDITOR'S CHOICE
20 13
FOR EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN

** Donotes an "Editor's
Choice." See p. 4*

In This Issue: Scratch 2.0, Lessons From Asilomar, Apps For Young Artists, Soccer and More

Welcome to the 159th Edition of *Children's Technology Review*. There's a lot of news, including a first look at the new cloud-based, motion sensing edition of Scratch (p 13), plus seven other Editor's Choice titles on page 4. These include a first look at the new Sago Sago (the name of Toca Boca's new Canadian outpost) releases and Dan Russell-Pinson's **Tipping Point**; an app that proves that tablets can deliver Myst-like adventures.

Missed AppCamp? You Can Watch It

Last month's Dust or Magic AppCamp was a 36-hour marathon of talks, walks, discussions and demos. There was a lot to see and hear, with sessions by Björn Jeffery, Caroline Hu Flexer, Max Whitby, Barbara Chamberlin, Dan Russell-Pinson, Chris Crowell, Gregg Spiridellis, Gail Lovely, Ann McCormick, Barry O'Neill, Carly Shuller, the California State Parks, Daren Carstens and Mark Schlichting; plus 20 demos, a kids panel, and an AppDance. Couldn't make it? Here's some good news. Thanks to the magic of two tiny Sony camcorders, some $150 bluetooth microphones, YouTube, and some great volunteer camera work, you can watch the sessions on a new Dust or Magic YouTube channel http://www.youtube.com/dustormagic. So far, ten of the sessions are posted, including Max Whitby's historical overview of Touch Press http://youtu.be/2CBQkztDDeU. Mr. Whitby reminds us that "making apps for young minds is at the heart of our culture." The message -- If you know how to properly program a multi-touch tablet, you can make a big difference for children.

LittleClickers: Learn About Soccer

Can the goalkeeper score a goal? What's the most goals ever scored in a single game -- and who scored them? This month we answer some of questions we've overheard our children asking about soccer. We also take you inside a factory in China where soccer balls are made, and find out if it's OK to wear baseball cleats in a soccer game.

Next Month

Will the new Xbox be good for children? Will the PS4 and the Wii U be able to survive in the age of the tablet? Stay tuned for our report from E3 2013.

Save the Date —

The 13th Annual Dust or Magic Institute, To Be Held Nov 3-5, 2013 in Lambertville, NJ

The main meetings will be held in the original location, in the Riverside Room at the Inn at Lambertville Station. Seats cost $1480 for one seat, $990 for 2 to 5. Visit http://dustormagic.com to register.

Dust or Magic

Learn About Soccer

What game originated in China, and has been called the most popular sport in the world? We're talking about soccer, my friends. Because the month of June falls in the thick of soccer season, let's take a moment and learn more about this game.

1. Why do some people mix up the words "soccer" and "football?" At Slate http://slate.me/17aAWv you learn the modern edition of soccer started 100 years ago during the English boarding-school athletics craze. Back then it was called "Association Football" or "Assoc" for short. People who played it were called "soccers." When the sport migrated to America, the word "football" was already being used so it became known as "soccer."

2. How are soccer balls made? At http://howisitmade.org/how-are-soccer-balls-made/ you can learn that the first soccer balls were made out of an inflated pig bladder. Today they are made in factories out of rubber or synthetic leather.

3. What country makes the most soccer balls? At made-in-china.com http://bit.ly/ZiD7s7 you can see a listing of the current soccer ball brands. An expert soccer ball sewer can make between 3-4 balls a day.

4. Who holds the record for the most goals scored in a game? At Sports Addiction http://bit.ly/ZiDt27 you learn that Archie Thompson http://bit.ly/142Pf2d scored 13 goals in one game. It was a FIFA game between Australia and American Samoa.

5. Can a goalkeeper score a goal? Yes! At FTB Pro http://bit.ly/17DCoYa you can watch the top 5 scoring goalkeepers at work, scoring goals instead of defending against them. Goalkeepers are allowed to take penalties or free kicks, or even leave the goal box open to play on the field. With luck, skill and a good wind, goalies can score goals, too. Here's another example http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sq8Csw09kpY

6. Who is Mia Hamm? At http://www.soccermaniak.com/mia-hamm-biography.html you can learn how a five year old girl learned to play soccer watching her older brother. Today she's one of the most famous female soccer players who has scored 158 goals. Her name is Mia Hamm.

7. What is the Golden Boot? Is it made out of real gold? At http://www.eurotopfoot.com/soulierdorhistorique.php3 you learn that the golden boot is a soccer trophy given to the player with the most goals. We're not sure if the shoe is made of solid gold, but we can tell you that the World Cup trophy is (see http://bit.ly/ZyeiLa) which is why it is protected by bullet proof glass.

8. Are baseball cleats and soccer cleats the same? At Soccer for Parents http://bit.ly/11GYPbL you learn that you can wear a soccer cleat for baseball, but not a baseball cleat for soccer. Why? Baseball shoes have an extra toe cleat, so they're not as good for extending running.

APPLICATION

How do I juggle a soccer ball?

At Wikihow http://bit.ly/15jxnQe you learn these steps:

1. Hold the ball out in front of you with both hands and drop it onto the pavement for a bounce.

2. After the bounce, tap the ball back up to your hands with the shoelace or instep part your foot.

3. Catch the ball and repeat several times with each foot.

Select Videos About Soccer

Here are some videos about Soccer at http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcBVHzUUEKwl54jmpunNuPwWOcFOcCTLB

Interact with this page online, at http://www.LittleClickers.com/soccer

Editor's Choice *June 2013*

Here's a summary of the the top rated products from this months issue, organized by age or topic.

For Toddlers

Sago Mini Forest Flyer is an excellent first app for a child, as young as 12 months. Children use their finger to steer a bird around a forest to discover 32 or so animated routines. This "mini" app was made by Sago Sago, the studio formally known as zinc Roe that was acquired by Toca Boca. Teaches: spatial relations. Sago Sago. www.sagosago.com, $1.99. Best for ages 2-up. [Rating: 4.5]

Sago Mini Sound Box is an updated edition of Sound Shaker (CTR March 2010), also designed to be a child's first touch screen experience. It offers them a set of musical materials that are very high in child control. In the previous version, pitch was associated with how long you held your finger on the screen; sadly this feature has been modified. The experience offers plenty to explore. Teaches: causality, pitch and rhythm. Sago Sago. www.sagosago.com, $free. Best for ages 1-up. [Rating: 4.7] or .94%

For Preschoolers

The Jungle Book is easy to use and fun to explore... and it represents some of the best work yet out of Ireland-based StoryToys (www.storytoys.com). Nine of the 29 pages turn into 3D activities, each offering a simple story-related game. The graphics, narration and music are of excellent quality. That, combined with an easy-to-use interface make this an excellent addition to any child's virtual bookshelf. Teaches: reading, classification, logic (English, French, German or Spanish). $4.99. Best for ages 3-up. [Rating: 4.6]

For Artists

Draw This App is a clean, straightforward set of self-correcting art sketching tutorials, with content sold as an in-app purchase (the first two levels are free) that uses an innovative auto-scoring technique. The scoring is less than accurate, but it's close and it successfully motivates you to practice for a better score. The result? It works. Teaches: art, drawing, cartoons, animation. Peterson Hamilton. http://petersonh.com, $free with in-app sales. Best for ages 6-up. [Rating: 4.5]

Petting Zoo is an "immersive sketch" featuring the world of New York Times cartoonist Christoph Niemann. In one screen you can play with the musical teeth of an alligator. When you turn the page, the teeth become legs which run away and turn into a giraffe. Teaches: art, visual relationships, spatial relationships. Abstract City Media, LLC. http://www.christophniemann.com, $0.99. Best for ages 3-up. [Rating: 4.5]

Rijksmuseum Online Art Collection is a treat for art lovers of any age, and it's free. Just visit https://www.rijksmuseum.nl to discover a free, online archive of 125,000 high resolution images. Each image gives you the ability to zoom in, making it possible to examine the individual brush strokes in the eye of van Gogh's famous self portrait. Teaches: art, history. Rijksmuseum. https://www.rijksmuseum.nl, $free. Best for ages 10-up. [Rating: 4.6]

For Older Children

Scratch 2.0 http://scratch.mit.edu is a major new update of the best (in our opinion) programming option for children. There are three things to know about this update to the Scratch programming language, which uses jigsaw-puzzle like bits of code that snap together, bringing programming within reach of novices. The first is that you no longer need to download or install anything.. this edition is completely browser based. Second, is that it works best with a traditional Mac or Windows computer rather than a tablet. The third thing is that the language has been enhanced with additional sensors that use your webcam or microphone to detect motion or sound. Teaches: programming, debugging, logic, math, science, STEM. MIT Media Lab. www.media.mit.edu, $free. Best for ages 7-up. [Rating: 4.9]

Tipping Point Adventure Game is a five chapter science-fiction adventure. You start in your living room when your TV intercepts a cryptic message. Reading is required to access the clues, and some of the puzzles are challenging. Plan on an entire weekend to get to the end. Tipping point was demoed last month at AppCamp by Dan Russell-Pinson (creator of Stack the States). Teaches: logic, deductive reasoning, reading comprehension. Dan Russell-Pinson. http://dan-russell-pinson.com/, $1.99. Best for ages 10-up. [Rating: 4.7]

The class of 2013 from Dust or Magic AppCamp, at Asilomar Conference Center on May 20. This was the fourth AppCamp since the release of the iPad. The location is a former state park and YMCA camp on the tip of the Monterey Peninsula in California.

Lessons from Asilomar

by Warren Buckleitner

We were on hallowed scientific ground. I learned this from Max Whitby, the scientist-turned-app-developer, who was about to address the attendees of the Forth Annual Dust or Magic AppCamp on the Design of Children's Interactive Media. Max told me that in the biotech field, Asilomar had become synonymous with a famous 1975 meeting of scientists who met at the dawn of DNA-related research. That meeting resulted in a set of guidelines that paved the way for future genetic research. It proved to the world that a community of people from diverse backgrounds could meet for a few days on neutral ground to collaborate on a single big question. Of course creating and evaluating children's content on multi-touch screens is a very different topic than DNA

science. However, it is also a topic that can be both controversial, and offers great deal of cultural potential.

As Max later explained, our work -- making and reviewing apps for young minds— is currently at the center of our culture. The AppCamp attendees seemed to sense this potential, and were full of energy http://youtu.be/uCum-RQRptM. For many, the stakes were high; there was a feeling of excitement and in some cases urgency in the air.

This year's speakers were especially generous with their demos, and stories of success and failure. There was way too much information to absorb in one small slice of time. Fortunately, we were able to capture most of the sessions using low cost video cameras.

Here's a start of some of the highlights of this year's AppCamp. I say "start" because we're only half way through the videos, and our June deadline has arrived. My sincere apologies to those who have not yet been edited and posted. We're working as fast as we can. Here's what we have so far:

THE STATE OF THE CHILDREN'S APP was the name of the first panel, moderated by David Kleeman. He expertly challenged Caroline Hu Flexer, Björn Jeffery, Gail Lovely, Dan Russell-Pinson and Carly Schuler to "see the forest from the trees." They confirmed that the children's app market is maturing, despite being flooded with apps that vary widely in quality. There is now more "money and focus" involved, and it is possible to find examples of small publishers that are turning

into large publishers. These rapid changes cause both optimism and anxiety. When I asked one publisher how his stress level was on a scale of 0 to 10, he said "12."

BJÖRN JEFFERY shared five decisions (three good, two bad) that shaped Toca Boca. He served as a reminder that it is possible to build a profitable business making apps, but that it can result in becoming "seriously stressed out." The Toca Boca formula -- to make digital toys with no winning, losing or high scores has worked. Toca Boca has now paid back the initial investment. But it's not easy and it takes a fair balance of skill and luck. The five decisions were:
1. **Good decision:** Trusting the team.
2. **Bad decision**: Thinking others could solve my marketing problems.
3. **Good decision**: Cancelling projects.
4. **Bad decision**: Letting technology get in the way of the fun.
5. **Good decision**: Saying no to 99 percent of all requests.

MAX WHITBY shared the story of how a bidding war on eBay led him to meet a kindred spirit (Theo Gray) which eventually led to the creation of some periodic table tables, and the app that started Touch Press: The Elements. His early decision to hop in a plane and go and meet Gray in Illinois was pivotal. "There's much more in life to be gained by collaborating than by competing" he said. Perhaps he had the 1975 meeting in mind when he started his talk in the Asilomar chapel. After being introduced by Aleen Stein, his friend of many years, Max said "We're in a very exciting period—one of cultural change. What we're doing—making apps and especially making apps for young minds—is really important, and it's right at the heart of our culture." He shared how the ideas at the core of Touch Press have been "shamelessly ripped off " from the multimedia hypercard period, when Douglass Adams and Tom Baker (the 4th Dr. Who) visualized the potential, years ahead of their time. Jump to the 8:22 segment of the talk http://youtu.be/2CBQkztDDeU?t=8m22s when he plays a segment with Robert Winter talking about "seeing" Beethoven. The message for anyone in the chapel that night was that we have 20 years of pre-tablet digital work to mine, and some of those concepts could be wildly successful in today's conditions.

Top: Whitby starting his address in the Asilomar Chapel. Below: the effect of his talk on Ben Kates, an undergraduate college student who edited the video.

Asilomar's Role in Science History

In February, 1975, a group of 140 scientists gathered at Asilomar to debate the safety of recombinant DNA research. Known officially as the International Congress on Recombinant DNA Molecules but remembered ever since simply as "Asilomar," the meeting was viewed as a key event for advancing DNA-related research. The meeting was called because researchers had just discovered how to splice DNA from different species. But there were many that were concerned. Would this new knowledge be misused? The meeting had a packed day to evening agenda and there was a lot of haggling according to the Science article I found describing the event. When the dust settled, the group had a set of safety guidelines that allowed the research to resume, resulting in a new chapter for genetic science. Exerpted from Science, Volume 287, Number 5458, pp. 1584 - 1585. March 3, 2000. *Below: the scribbled notes from Stanley Cohen, a speaker at the 1975 talk at Asilomar, from http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/Exhibits/Biotech/25.html*
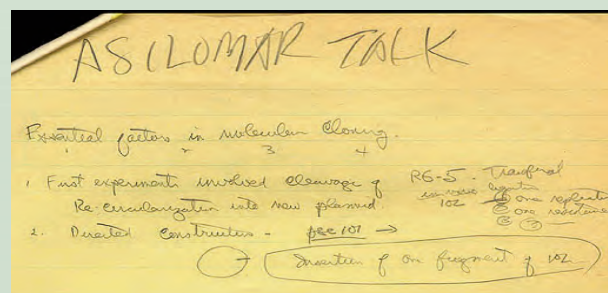
DAN RUSSELL-PINSON, like many successful children's app developers, doesn't have a formal educational background. However, his apps, including Math Bingo (2009) and Stack the States (2010) have become well known in US classrooms. In his talk, Pinson told us "when you hear an artist talk about their craft they don't describe themselves as being creators. It's more that they're a conduit. You have to get out of the way." He went on to talk about two steps to making magic (1) create an environment where magic can happen, and (2) be mindful enough to notice when it does happen. Interestingly Pinson's steps are very similar to the way many teachers talk about creating an optimal classroom learning environment. Perhaps he's more of an educator than he thinks.
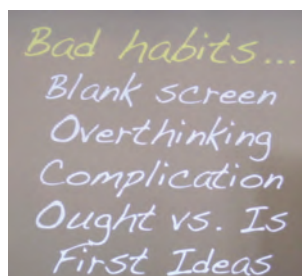
BARRY O'NEIL of StoryToys took the conversation about the business of children's app publishing up a notch, introducing the concept of ROI, or Return On Investment in the context of what he's learned making the StoryToys apps. O'Neil was accompanied by the creative director of his apps, Jim Pipe. O'Neil's talk has yet to be edited; make sure to check it out when it is ready.
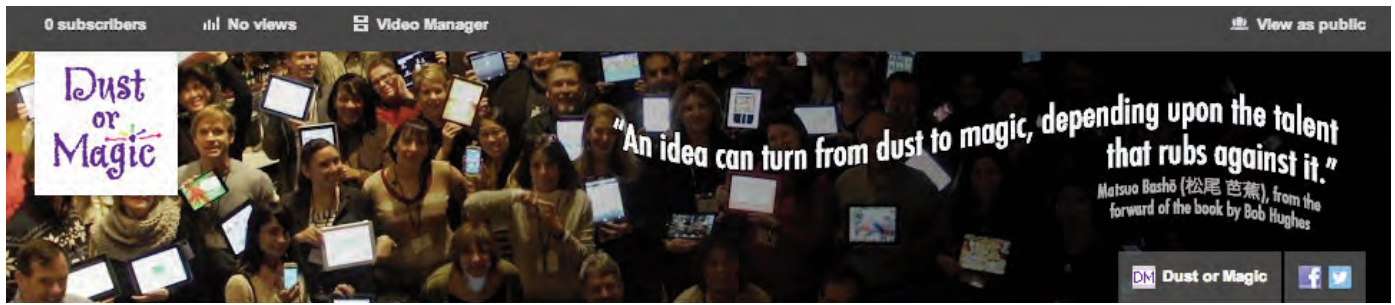
Here's the header to our new Dust or Magic YouTube channel. The header was designed by CTR intern Ben Kates, and it will be where we post all future talks. See http://www.youtube.com/dustormagic.

That's it for now. We're less than half way through uploading the videos, but are making excellent progress. It is our hope that -- like the meeting in 1975 -- we can help the field along freely exchanging quality information. "Good information is lubrication for change."

Quotes & Tweets

The scarcity is no longer capital. It's talent. Jib Jab Media CEO Gregg Spiridellis.

Kids' exploratory play is not a bug. It's a feature. @NoodleWorks #dustormagic pic.twitter.com/cf2X8iuhjS

If you're going to fail, at least fail big. Otherwise it seems like you haven't even tried. Caston Almqist, former Chairman of Toca Boca in a slide show by Bjorn Jeffery.

Video Guide

Here's a listing of the AppCamp 2013 videos online so far.

David Kleeman et al: State of the Children's App Panel http://youtu.be/ee5KMYUkVL0

Björn Jeffery: Five decisions that shaped Toca Boca http://youtu.be/JPw8WHENTJE

Max Whitby: Amazing, but true -- the 40+ year overnight success of Touch Press http://youtu.be/2CBQkztDDeU

Dan Russell-Pinson: Letting Magic Happen http://youtu.be/a16wuluJUdU

Carly Shuler: Thoughts on ebooks vs. apps and some "Make Your Own Research." http://youtu.be/pm0GOyDV-ZM

Gail Lovely: Poof! Chalk dust or Magic dust? What educators are waiting for in apps. http://youtu.be/MM4NgoS-idk

Greg Spiridellis of Jib Jab Media: The driving inspiration behind the StoryBots http://youtu.be/PqgmSBep-7g

Caroline Hu Flexer of Duck Duck Moose. The past, present and future, from a DDM point of view http://youtu.be/Yowrm0pm9gI

THANKS to everyone who makes the Dust or Magic dream into reality. Many of these photos were submitted by participants. Because Dust or Magic has outgrown my own capacities I've started a web page, at http://dustormagic.com/credits to attribute the specific contributions. I appologize in advance if I've overlooked somebody.
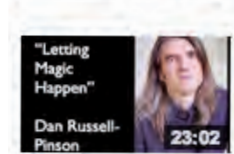
Here's an alphabetical listing of new products, along with a full review, specific ratings and tester feedback. The "Entry Date" refers to the date we first learned of the product.

Abricot Games - Hide & Seek

Beautiful but challenging (for mostly the right reasons) this hidden object app fills every pixel of your screen with detailed art, along with a simple challenge -- to find one of four characters shown on the bottom of the screen. To find, say, a baby devil, you must carefully scan the multi-screen mural. You can adjust the view with a swipe, or zoom in for a very close look. There are six lands to visit, each based on a fantasy theme (ogres, dragons, giants, goblins, fairies and wizards), and the menus can be set between five language choices: English, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese. Fortunately there's a fairly good zoom feature, but there is no clue system, and the background music is nice at first but gets repetitive.

If you guess too many times, you are shown an alligator holding a baby pig, so there is no real penalty for just jabbing around the screen; correct identifications are marked with a star. Created by Chocolapps in partnership with Presse Fleurus. CTR review at http://youtu.be/xVQm_xf8-rM

Details: Chocolapps, www.chocolapps.com. Price: $.99. Ages: 8-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: visual discrimination, classification, memory. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.2 stars. Entry date: 5/29/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	8	84%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	9	

Animal Train

What to sell more children's apps? The designers of this app have combined a scheme with a theme. Designed to help your child "learn animal sounds" this app comes with a seven car train -- but just two of them are available -- the other five are blacked out and covered with a large lock. Touch the lock, and you're pulled into a social media sharing screen, where you can unlock the entire screen for an hour by solving a simple jigsaw-like puzzle, that automatically indicates that you "like" the app on Facebook. Or you can generate a tweet, providing your iPad is online. The other option is to pay the $1.99 to unlock all the cars. The animals are animated and make sounds, and the weather changes as the train moves. These techniques may be legal, but they're not right.

Details: Yomio, s.r.o., http://animaltrainapp.com/. Price: $free, $1.99. Ages: 1-3. Platform: iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch. Teaches/Purpose: causality, "animal sounds". Rating (1 to 5 stars): 1.8 stars. Entry date: 5/29/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	8	36%
Educational	5	
Entertaining	4	
Design Features	1	
Good Value	0	

Disney Junior Appisodes: Mickey Mouse Clubhouse Road Rally

Warning... once your child tries the free sample of this app -- which is the equivalent of 30 minutes of quality Saturday morning cartoons running on your iPad, she's likely to want another program. And that costs $4.99, available as an in-app purchase. There's no danger of an accidental purchase, however. The designers do a nice job to keep keep the store element away from children, using a math puzzle firewall. In other words, this is a free app that is safe to download.

Called Disney Junior Appisodes for iPad, iPhone and iPod Touch, this collection of linear footage combines viewing with minimal interaction points, including faux voice recognition, where the app pretends to hear your voice, but what you say doesn't matter. It might hear, but it doesn't listen. Other interactive elements include asking you to shake the iPad to knock a coconut from a tree, and several multiple-choice decision points. In all cases, random answers count as well as those that are intentional. Where this app excels is the quality of the linear footage -- with excellent music, graphics and narration. We also liked the review component at the end of the the app. All in all this is well worth the download, providing you have the room on your iPad. Developed by Disney/ABC Television Group's Digital Media team, this free app serves as the first of a series of animated adventures featuring Mickey and friends. Other chapters, sold at $5 each include Mickey and Donald Have a Farm Appisode and the Jake and Never Land Pirates Appisode. Visit www.appstore.com/disneyjuniorappisodes for more information. Note that this is a big download (430 MB in size).

Details: Disney/ABC Television Group, . Price: $free, $4.99 for a download. Ages: 2 -6. Platform: iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch (430 MB). Teaches/Purpose: some classification, music. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.2 stars. Entry date: 4/26/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	9	84%
Educational	5	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	9	

Draw This App

This is a clean, straightforward set of self-correcting art sketching tutorials, with content sold as an in-app purchase (the first two levels are free). Your efforts are graded, with a score and a comment such as "really?" (for low scores). The scoring is less than accurate, but it's close and it successfully motivates you to practice for a better score.

Created in Toronto by artist Peterson Hamilton, this app adapts cursive writing teaching techniques, for shapes. You start with simple cubes and cones and eventually get to cartoon hands.

The result? It works. You learn how to break down complex objects into lines and curves. Content includes four drawing modes including left and right handed, and six units in version one, hoping to build a complete library over time. Note that you might want to use a stylus to help you see your line.

Details: Peterson Hamilton, http://petersonh.com. Price: $free with in-app sales. Ages: 6-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: art, drawing, cartoons, animation. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 5/28/2013. [WB]

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

Happy Draw Bug

Crudely designed, but interesting, this is a set of guided drawing lessons that makes it possible to see the lines you are supposed to draw before you draw them. It's another example of a pedagogy that would not be possible in any other medium, before the tablet. It's a bit like having a tutor built into your pen. You start with easy shapes, like circles and squares, and progress to harder with animals and eventually letters. You can earn stars by staying close to the lines; in addition when the shape is complete you can color in the drawing. Finished projects can be saved to the photo library. Content includes 40 drawings. This is not the most fluid design, but the interesting feedback mechanism makes it of potential interest to ECE educators. http://youtu.be/hxcli9Zfl6s

Details: Drawbug, http://drawbug.wordpress.com/. Price: $0.99. Ages: 3-5. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: art, fine motor skills, tracing, shapes, drawing, letters. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4 stars. Entry date: 4/9/2013. [WB]

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

Jungle Book, The

Easy to use and fun to explore, here's one of the best releases yet from Ireland-based StoryToys. Like many children's eBooks, you can turn the pages with a swipe or by using the page turn icons. The StoryToys apps take the page transitions a step further, however, with a 3D effect that is hard wired to your tablet's accelerometer. So you can move the background, parallax style, as you move your screen. It's as if the book were on a 3D pedestal.

The story, adapted from the Rudyard Kipling's tale, consists of 29 pages of narrated text, with four language options. Nine of the pages turn into 3D activities, each offering a simple story-related game. You can pluck the thorns from the lion's paws, or shake the trees to get fruit to feed the hungry animals. The graphics and narration and music are of excellent quality. That, combined with an easy to use interface make this an excellent addition to any child's virtual bookshelf.

Details: StoryToys, www.storytoys.com. Price: $4.99. Ages: 3-up. Platform: Android, iPad. Teaches/Purpose: reading, classification, logic (English, French, German or Spanish). Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.6 stars. Entry date: 5/28/2013. [WB]

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

Kids Boats

A fun idea (sailing paper boats) with some quirky interface issues, Kids Boats is a maze game where you try to steer a boat along a river without hitting things. The idea is to provide a setting where children can practice fine motor skills.

Along the way, you pick up items related to "geographical knowledge." These items are stickers of animals found in different climate zones. The game has three different kinds of controls. You can blow into the microphone, tilt, or touch & drag. The first few menus are confusing. There are 21 animals to collect and no ads. You can buy additional levels for $.99.

Details: Pyjamas Apps Team, http://pyjamasapps.com. Price: $free. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch. Teaches/Purpose: fine motor skills. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.9 stars. Entry date: 5/28/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	7	78%
Educational	8	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	8	
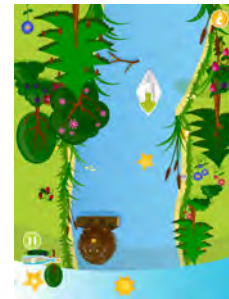
Living Stories: The Brave Little Tailor

A Brothers Grimm interactive fairy tale comes to your iPad in this well illustrated eBook, with pages that turn into well designed jigsaw puzzles. The reading level is good for older children or adults.

Need to know: As with many Grimms tales, there's a happily ever after ending, with plenty of implied violence and a not-very-politically correct boy saves girl storyline. Created by Daedalic Entertainment for Ravensburger.

Details: Ravensburger Digital GmbH, www.ravensburger-games.com/en/. Price: $3.99. Ages: 4-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: reading, spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.1 stars. Entry date: 4/4/2013. [WB]

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

Madagascar: My ABCs

Designed to "teach letters and letter sounds" this poorly designed app combines slow screen loads with a didactic narrator who likes to give instructions. The app is designed to let children build their own alphabet book by dragging letter-related stickers onto a letter screen. These pages can be saved as images in your photo gallery. Other activities include letter tracing, which rewards correct tracing with a poem, and Sticker Safari which asks to to find hidden animals in a forest. This latter task is made challenging for the wrong reason -- your finger doesn't always line up with the object found. The Madagascar characters are used in the marketing of this app, but they are hard to find in the activities. The "more games" icon on the main menu leads directly to a page with links to iTunes, with no firewall.

Details: JumpStart, www.JumpStart.com. Price: $2.99. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch. Teaches/Purpose: language, letter recognition, writing, tracing, upper and lower case. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 2.6 stars. Entry date: 4/23/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	5
Educational	4
Entertaining	7
Design Features	5
Good Value	5

52%

Me and You, ACHOO!

Me and You, ACHOO! is a strange rhyming story about a young couple dealing with an end of the world scenario caused by a killer virus. The couple, depicted as two lovers -- must find a safe place. The app has some interactive elements, plus a explanation of viruses and vaccinations, along with a video demonstrating how to wash your hands. Given the way the topic has been paired with an end-of-the-world theme, there's no doubt that you'll want to watch your hands, too.

Details: Black Heart Super Friends, http://meandyouachoo.com/. Price: $1.99. Ages: 7-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: heath, science, reading. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.2 stars. Entry date: 5/17/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	9
Educational	6
Entertaining	5
Design Features	6
Good Value	6

64%

My Little Story Factory

Innovative and easy to use, this is a mad-lib style story creation activity that lets you construct meaning by shifting pieces of text. The large number of possible combinations makes it possible to create rather odd paragraphs, such as "in the kitchen, Mrs. Flowers visits six pumpkins."

Mixing and matching short sentences isn't new. What is interesting about this app is that you can trigger a background soundtrack for phrases. You can also compose a new story by shaking the Tablet. There is no advertising or in-app purchases. Adapted from the book of the same name name, written by Bruno Gilbert and available in French and English. It is not possible to make your own sounds which is a big drawback. Published by http://www.autrement.com and http://www.etoiles-editions.com

Details: e-Toiles éditions, http://etoiles-editions.com/. Price: $3.99. Ages: 7-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: reading, language. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4 stars. Entry date: 4/23/2013. [WB]

Ease of Use	10
Educational	8
Entertaining	9
Design Features	5
Good Value	8

80%
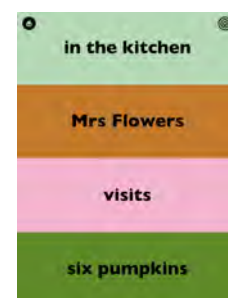
Petting Zoo

Perhaps best described as an "immersive sketch" by New York Times cartoonist Christoph Niemann, this innotative app, for both iOS and Android, connects one "page" (or screen) with the next by way of often related interactive features. For example, in one screen you can play with the musical teeth of an alligator. When you press the page turn icon, the teeth become legs which turn into a giraffe. Animals of one variety or another make up the common theme. Content includes 21 animals, many of which respond to touches or swipes. Features include the ability to toggle on/off the background music or the animated transitions. We didn't like the "rate this app" icon at the end, which takes you to iTunes. There is no reading. This app has a high novelty effect, but it fades quickly because the content never changes. It is a good example of innovation in interactive children's publishing.

Details: Abstract City Media, LLC, http://www.christophniemann.com/. Price: $0.99. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, Android, 41.6 MB. Teaches/Purpose: art, visual relationships, spatial relationships. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 5/26/2013. [WB]

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

90%
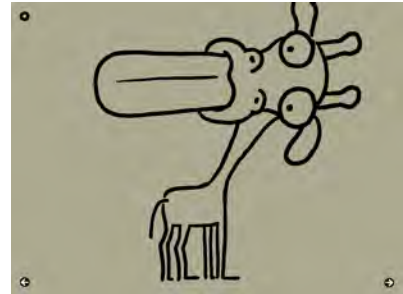
Sago Mini Forest Flyer

Looking for an excellent first app? Children use their finger to steer a bird around a forest, where they discover 32 different animated routines. You start by touching the birdhouse, which rings a bell. The routines are responsive and offer an element of surprise. There are balloons to pop, singing frogs, a dancing stump, a set of musical mushrooms and a nest full of babies. To make something happen, you fly near them, or land on a specially marked branch. The graphics are uncluttered and easy to control and the only sounds are the ambient forest sounds, with an occasional giggle from the bird. There's no formal educational content, but that's not the point. It's best to think of this app as a busy box that promotes exploration, feelings of control, and discovery. This "mini" app was by Sago Sago, the studio formally known as zinc Roe that was acquired by Toca Boca. It is the second release under the new brand -- the first was Sago Mini Sound Box.

Details: Sago Sago, www.sagosago.com. Price: $1.99. Ages: 2-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 5/13/2013. [WB]

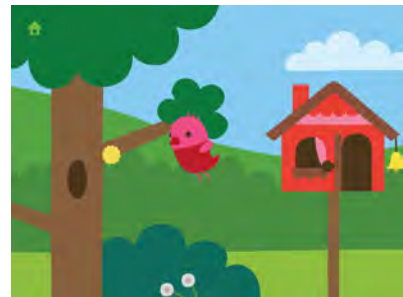|	
Ease of Use	10
Educational	8
Entertaining	9
Design Features	9
Good Value	9

90%

Sago Mini Sound Box

This updated edition of Sound Shaker (CTR March 2010) is designed for very young children (12 months and up) offering them a set of musical materials in a way that could only be presented on a motion sensing touch screen. Your child starts by choosing one of nine sets of sounds: chimes, car sounds, drums, barnyard sounds, a flute, a xylophone, dog, alarms, and piano. From this point, your iPhone, iPod Touch or iPad screen becomes an open-ended busy box, where every tap becomes an object that can be tossed or rolled around the screen. You soon learn that the pitch varies from the left side of the screen to the right, so it is possible to make scales or chords, although there is a lot of trial-and-error involved in this process. In the previous version, pitch was associated with how long you held your finger on the screen; sadly this feature has been removed. If you touch a ball too long, it cracks open like an egg, and an animal pops out. These random elements diminish the child control than the last edition of Sound Shaker had, but very minimally. All in all the experience offers plenty to explore, in a way where motion can make music.

Details: Sago Sago, www.sagosago.com. Price: $free. Ages: 1-up. Platform: iPhone, iPad, iPod Touch. Teaches/Purpose: causality. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 5/13/2013. [WB]

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

94%

Scratch 2.0

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

98%
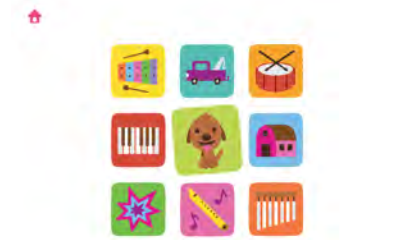
There are three things to know about this update to the Scratch programming language, which uses jigsaw-puzzle like bits of code that snap together, bringing programming within reach of novices. The first is that you no longer need to download or install anything. Second, is that it works best with a traditional Mac or Windows computer, with an Internet connection, browser and Flash. The third thing is that the language has been enhanced with additional sensors that use your webcam or microphone to detect motion or sound.

Can you run this edition on your iPad or Android tablet? Not yet. Because Android tablets can run Flash, it is possible to view existing projects, however, most are designed with a mouse and cursor in mind. To get started, visit http://scratch.mit.edu, and click on any project icon. If you create an account (with a user name and password), you can make your own program. New features include an integrated paint editor that combines bitmap and vector graphics.

The online community is a key part of Scratch. So it is easy to make a program and then share it, or modify an existing project. The drag-and-drop puzzle pieces control on-screen Sprites, which can take any form (such as a digital photo of your dog, or perhaps a word from a poem, that is read out loud when it is clicked). There's also a set of Logo commands (such as Penup and Pendown) that will cause some to recall the language that was popular 25 years ago. Because you can record sounds or turn any digital picture into a sprite, the power of Scratch as a story telling or artistic tool begins to emerge. Finished products can be uploaded to an MIT website where they can be previewed on any browser, or downloaded and further edited.

According to Mitchel Resnick, the LEGO Papert Professor of Learning Research at the MIT Media Lab and director of the Scratch Team. "Scratch 2.0 is as much about coding to learn as it is learning to code." According to Mr. Resnick, "since the launch of Scratch in 2007 there are more than 3 million projects on the website." As a result, this new version of Scratch is backwards compatible with the old projects.

While Scratch is free and easy to use, there are some weaknesses to note. Deleting parts of code—such as a Sprite—is done by dragging it off the work area, which can result in accidentally loosing all or parts of a program. We wished there was a better undo or Control-Z option. We also noted that because Scratch is Flash-based, there are times when a lot of computing (and battery) power is used, especially when the camera is turned on. We also noted that clicking on a link can lead you away from your program, ahead of the autosave.

For those who have been waiting to take back the power of interactive media from Viacom and Disney and give it to the children, Scratch is a welcome new option—and you certainly can't argue with the price.

According to CTR Intern Matthew DiMatteo, "Scratch is legit. It's nice how they give kids this kind of programming power without appearing too formidable." Visit http://scratch.mit.edu/ for more information.

Details: MIT Media Lab, www.media.mit.edu. Price: $free. Ages: 7-up. Platform: Logic, math, science. Teaches/Purpose: programming, debugging, logic, math, science, STEM. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.9 stars. Entry date: 5/17/2013. [WB]

Tipping Point Adventure Game

This is a five chapter science-fiction adventure that starts with a view of a modern-day living room out in present time in your living room, when you intercept a cryptic message. Things start getting interesting when a Flamingo steps out of your TV and eats one of your potato chips. After you figure out your cell phone and remote, you learn that your TV has become a time machine. Nice touches include the use of vintage early TV footage as you flip through channels. You wake up on a deserted island, in a jungle tree house and outer space.

In the story, a father and son team were on the verge of making history when their technology unexpectedly summoned something from out of this world, and you are now at the center of the discovery that changes everything. Features include the ability to save 5 player profiles, for which your progress is bookmarked automatically. An in-game hint system is very helpful, letting you determine how many clues you need. Content includes five chapters of puzzles, some of which incorporate fun retro elements, such as an Atari 800 computer, cassette tapes, and some of the first electronic toys.

Weaknesses -- while testers greatly appreciated the hint system, the navigation icons are hard to see. You spend a lot of time jabbing at the screen trying to go back to the next screen. Reading is required to use the clues, and some of the puzzles are HARD. Cory, age 18, took three days to get to the forth chapter... there's enough content for an entire weekend if you don't use the clues. This is a gimmick-free app -- with no ads, commercial content or in-app purchases. Tipping point comes from Dan Russell-Pinson (creator of Stack the States). It is proof that games like "Myst" can work well on a tablet.

Details: Dan Russell-Pinson, http://dan-russell-pinson.com/. Price: $1.99. Ages: 10-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: logic, deductive reasoning, reading comprehension. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 5/17/2013. [WB]

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

94%

Trip, The – Little Critter GamePak

Designed to accompany the Little Critter eBook called "The Trip" this "GamePak" is a set of 50 workbook and flashcard style activities based on the story. There are some innovative features sprinkled into some very typical activities including a jigsaw puzzle and dot-to-dot puzzles. At the core of the app: a concept called Digistix—interactive, animated stickers with sound effects. In one screen, children can place a set of digistix around a scene from the story, where they perform context sensitive animated routines. This is a nice touch although it is not possible to pick them up and move them around once they are placed. Both apps were produced by John R. Sansevere. The Trip – Little Critter Reading Adventure and The Trip – Little Critter GamePak are now available in iTunes, Barnes & Noble, Amazon, and Google Play.

Details: Sliver Dolphin Books, . Price: $1.99. Ages: 3-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Nook, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: language, classification, logic. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.9 stars. Entry date: 3/22/2013. [WB]

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

78%

Watch and Find - VeggieTales Games and Video Clips

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

78%

This object recognition activity mixes video clips with a hunt and find game that is cleverly layered over the moving video. The video in this case comes from VeggieTales archives with older classics and sneak peeks at new releases. The objects to find are shown in an upper part of the screen, while your score is kept on the screen bottom. You get two segments for free; additional episodes are shown with a lock. In order to get it, you must solve a math word problem, and have your iTunes password. The free version of the app, which we tested, might start the experience with a video advertisement for a Happy Meal. If you want to turn off the ads, you can as an in-app sale. The free game levels include I Love my Lips and Lend a Little Hand.

Weaknesses include some leveling issues -- some of the images are shown so fast it's nearly impossible to catch them. In addition, the hunt and find play pattern is distracting, if your goal is to sit back and enjoy a quality cartoon episode. All in all, this is a nice merger of quality video content that comes with a challenging twist.

Details: Fingerprint Digital, www.fingerprintplay.com. Price: $free with in-app ($1.99)sales and ads. Ages: 3-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch. Teaches/Purpose: matching, logic, visual discrimination. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.9 stars. Entry date: 5/28/2013. [WB]

Future Releases & Updates

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.

Ace Geographer: Canada

This iOS app is designed to help you learn your Canadian Provinces and Territories by way of puzzles that ask you to match countries with flags, capital cities, flowers, official birds and so on. There are six puzzle categories, each with a Trivia & Time Trial mode, collectable badges, and more than 150 facts about Canada.

Details: HB Studios Multimedia Ltd., www.hb-studios.com. Price: $3.99. Ages: 10-up. Platform: iPad (iOS version 4.3 or later). Teaches/Purpose: Canadian facts and geography. Entry date: 5/28/2013.

Animal Crossing: New Leaf

This downloadable edition of Animal Crossing for the Nintendo 3DS (through the eShop) lets you become mayor for the first time. The previous mayor, Tortimer, will visit you to tell you about the tropical island he now lives on.

There's plenty of searching and mini-games. You can also participate with up to three other players in mini games, rent a wetsuit and dive into the ocean to catch underwater creatures or swim around for some virtual exercise. This version also features more customizable options, allowing you to personalize your town, your character's clothes and house. Other unique features include the ability to make QR Code patterns to be shared with others who also own a copy of the game via wireless broadband Internet connection. You can also tag players using the StreetPass feature. The game is played in real time, so even when the power is off on your 3DS system the town is constantly evolving and changing. Certain items can only be found at a certain times of day, and certain events can only be experienced during special in-game holidays on the calendar. Note that you'll want to have an SD card to store this game.

Details: Nintendo of America, www.nintendo.com. Price: $35. Ages: 6-up. Platform: Nintendo 3DS. Teaches/Purpose: logic. Entry date: 5/21/2013.

Beethoven's 9th Symphony

Beethoven's 9th Symphony for iPad presents four of Deutsche Grammophon's recordings, with the ability to switch instantly between each performance at any point in the piece.

As you listen, you can watch the synchronized musical score, be guided by expert commentary, follow Beethoven's 1825 manuscript or immerse yourself in the graphical BeatMap of the orchestra, highlighting every note.

The app also includes filmed video interviews with musicians, writers and conductors discussing Beethoven.

This free version of the app includes two minutes from the second movement of the symphony, with all features enabled. The full experience can then be unlocked through In-App Purchase; and no further download is required.

Completing the in-app purchase in the iPad version will unlock the full features of the iPhone edition, which is available on iTunes as a separate app. Purchases sync via iCloud. This app requires iOS 6 or later; compatible with the iPad 2 and later iPad models including iPad mini.

Details: Touch Press, www.touchpress.com. Price: $free with inApp Purchases. Ages: 8-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: music, history, Beethoven. Entry date: 5/16/2013.

DragonBox Algebra 12+

DragonBox Algebra 12+ is the second in a series designed to help students improve their algebra confidence. The first title is DragonBox Algebra 5+. This app was also created by Patrick Marchal and Jean-Baptiste Huynh. It is based on a teaching method developed in Norway, that focuses on discovery and experimentation. Players can learn at their own pace by experimenting with rules that are introduced gradually, and progress is illustrated with the birth and growth of a dragon for each new chapter.

Topics include: parentheses; positive and negative signs; addition of fractions (common denominators); collection of like terms; factorization; and substitution. Features include: 20 progressive chapters (10 learning, 10 training); 357 puzzles; basic algebraic rules children can experiment with; focus on minimal instruction to encourage creativity and experimentation; multiple profiles for easy progress control; dedicated graphics and music for each chapter; and multiple supported languages including English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch and others.

Details: WeWantToKnow AS, http://wewanttoknow.com/. Price: $9.99. Ages: 12-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch. Teaches/Purpose: algebra, math, logic. Entry date: 5/22/2013.
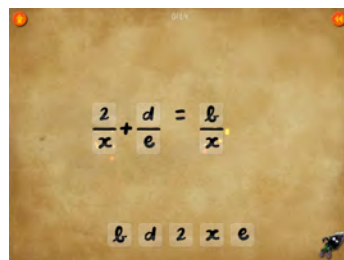
iSpotPro for Kids

This spot the difference game features 35 unique real-life scenarios, contained within seven packs. The scenarios are designed to teach and familiarize children with their surroundings while they play. Features include: rewards system with certificate; unlimited hints; and no in-app purchases or ads. The app is designed for use in Schools, Special Educational Needs (SEN), Homeschooling and Therapy.

Details: AppyCrumble.com, www.appycrumble.com. Price: $1.99. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: visual discrimination. Entry date: 1/25/2013.
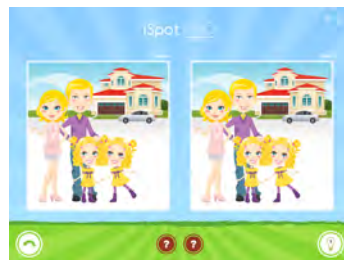
LeapReader

Coming this summer, yet another attempt to put a teacher inside a child's pen, from the company that pioneered the concept. Unveiled last week and available this summer, LeapReader ($50, www.leapfrog.com) represents a mashup of previous devices. You may remember the original LeapPad from the '90s, the short-lived FLY Pentop Computer (2005 or so) and you've undoubtedly seen the still viable battery operated $35 Tag Reading System. The new LeapReader works just like the Tag, using a tiny camera to scan an array of nearly invisible dots on each page, so that the onboard computer knows where you are pointing. It also requires a connected computer to download new content.

So what's different? Rechargable batteries, more memory, and improved speakers for playing music or listening to stories. The onboard 256 MB of storage represents an 8x boost over Tag, so no cartridges are required. This means the ability to hold more content, which is either onboard, or can be purchased from Leapfrog's online store. If you already own Tag content, your LeapReader will work ... in addition Tag will work with LeapReader content, except the writing books. A new set of writing activities requires specialized workbooks made of pressure sensitive paper, designed exclusively to work with the LeapReader's hard plastic tip. So it can write, sort of; but you still can't use one to sign a check.

Details: Leapfrog, www.leapfrog.com. Price: $50. Ages: 4-8. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: reading, writing, phonics. Entry date: 1/24/2013.

Little Critter Collection #2

Little Critter Collection #2 contains 10 Little Critter stories, all designed on Oceanhouse Media's platform that features touch and hear text scaffolding and the ability to record your own narration.

Titles include Just Go to Bed, Just a Mess, Just Going to the Dentist, Just Grandpa and Me, Just Lost, Just Me and My Little Brother, Just Me and My Puppy, Just Shopping with Mom, What a Bad Dream, and When I Grow Up. Note that you can also buy these apps individually. More information is at http://www.oceanhousemedia.com/products/littlecrittercollection2/.

Details: Oceanhouse Media, www.oceanhousemedia.com. Price: $12.99. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading. Entry date: 5/28/2013.

Numbler

Designed for one or two players, this is a Scrabble-style game, with numbers. The idea is to build math equations on a crossword style board by dragging number titles into position. Players take turns forming or extending equations in a horizontal or vertical direction. You must use at least one tile from the board and two tiles from your hand on each turn, and all adjacent tiles must be part of a true and complete equation. The game takes some getting used to... once you place a tile, you cannot move it, however you can choose to pass and forfeit your turn. The game ends when both players pass twice in succession. The score for each turn is the sum of each digit in the equations formed or extended during that turn, according to the following rules: operator and equal sign tiles have no score value but do help capture bonus tiles; the value of two consecutive number tiles is the sum of their individual values. So a 1 and 2 tile placed beside each other has a value of 3, not 12; and the value of a created or extended equation is increased or multiplied by bonus tiles covered by tiles placed during the turn.

Details: Brainingcamp, www.brainingcamp.com. Price: $0.99. Ages: 6-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch. Teaches/Purpose: math. Entry date: 5/28/2013.
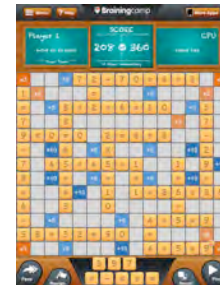
Rijksmuseum Online Art Collection

Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum https://www.rijksmuseum.nl is a free, online archive of 125,000 high resolution images. Each image gives you the ability to zoom in, making it possible to examine the individual brush strokes in the eye of van Gogh's famous self portrait. This type of access and ability to examine details make this collection very useful for art students. Social media tools are built in, so you can "like" a photo (and the museum). The collection, which includes works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Mondrian and van Gogh, has already made images of 125,000 of its works available through Rijksstudio, an interactive section of its Web site. The museum hopes to add 40,000 high res images a year the library, according to the New York Times http://nyti.ms/1465viS.

Details: Rijksmuseum, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl. Price: $free. Ages: 10-up. Platform: Windows, Mac OSX, Internet Site. Teaches/Purpose: art, history. Entry date: 6/1/2013.