Celebrating Our 200th Issue!

How much media is too much?
Decoding the New AAP Guidelines

LittleClickers
Presidential Facts

On the cover: A screen capture from **Fox Tales**, reviewed on Page 8

Children's Technology Review
EDITOR'S CHOICE
20 16
FOR EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN

* Denotes "Editor's Choice."

This has been a big month for elections (see LittleClickers on page 3), policy statements (page 4) and fall releases (page 5). If you're in a hurry, have a look at the Editor's Choice picks for this month are Cozmo, Fox Tales, Horton Hears a Who, Pettson's Inventions 3, Shadowmatic, Toca TV, and Understanding Math: Telling Time. On page 4, don't miss the three techniques for prying a screen out of a child's hands.

"If you are a teacher or parent who uses computers with children, you know that your computer is only as good as it's software." From Children's Software Revue, Issue 1, Vol. 1 March 1993.

Celebrating Our 200th issue

You are holding in your hands -- or on your retinal display screen -- the 200th issue of *Children's Technology Review.* I'm not sure what to make of this number, other than we've come a long way since we published our first issue, on paper, from a home office in Ypsilanti, MI. That was 1993.

Issue #1 of *Children's Sofware Revue* printed in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

The decision to turn my Masters Thesis, called "a Survey of Early Childhood Software" into a life's work has given me a front row seat on an incredible period of microprocessor driven innovation -- from floppy disks to touch screens. We've negotiated with printers, felt the sting of plagiarism, and been courted by investors who have wondered why we won't sell out, take ads or sell the products we review. They don't understand that business objectives aren't why we do this work. CTR is about the search for the magic that can happen when a well-designed experience meets a curious mind. In 1993, I had no idea that a small newsletter could take me to Italy every year, allow me to speak to the US Congress, and generate a decade of articles for The New York Times. As we cross this landmark, let me pause to offer a tribute to my family, colleagues and friends who have shared my quest for the next amazing app. My biggest thanks go to you, our paid subscribers for helping us keep the lights on. Thank you, 200 times.

So what's next for CTR? CTREX

Databases have always been at the center of our work. Over the years we've used many types to collect, list and share review information. I've never been more excited about the cloud-based tools we can apply to our age-old mission. We're now able to give publishers and subscribers the ability to exchange thoughts on any product. And there's more... here are the new features on the horizon:

- "Only the Best" one click lists of the top rated products (live last week).
- Flex Rubrics. No two digital products are the same. Our new Flex Rubric system lets you choose from a variety of rating scales, or create your own.
- Expert voices. Coming soon, the ability for outsiders to add their validity to the reviews.

In our first issue, we told you that our mission was to help teachers and parents find good software. We're more determined than ever to stay true to this challenge, because (again quoting our 1993 credo) "good software empowers children."

5 (or so) sites & 10 videos about

Presidents

Read this column online, with links, at **www.littleclickers.com/presidents**

"I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of the President of the United States... With these words, you become President of the United States. Is this a job you'd like? How much do you get paid? Can anyone run for president? Here are some answers!

1. How old do you have to be to run for President?
A) 53 years old   B) 64 years old   C) 18 years old   D) 35 years old
Answer: D) 35 years old. At http://bit.ly/1sAwEJp , you'll learn that the President and the Vice President must meet three requirements. They must be at least 35 years old, be a natural-born U.S. citizen and have lived in the U.S. for at least 14 years.

2. How much does a president get paid per year? At http://read.bi/2eFQu3p, you'll learn that President Obama is earning $400,000 a year. To see how much the presidents have earned throughout the years, check out http://abt.cm/2fcbtN2.

3. True or False: Two Presidents had pet alligators in the White House. True. At http://bit.ly/1eJnQDU, you can find out which two Presidents had pet alligators. Learn more about presidential pets at http://bit.ly/2e7aJVc .

4. What's the latest news from the 2016 campaign? At http://bit.ly/2ej6EhP, a group of kid reporters are following the Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton campaigns. While you're on the site, try the "You're the President" game at http://bit.ly/1UcZtE9.

Applications:
1. How well do you know the Presidents? Try this quiz
http://bit.ly/2eD3a9u

2. Try making Ronald Reagan's favorite mac and cheese. It's delicious, and here's the recipe http://bit.ly/2eD61PG4.

Select Presidential Videos

Here's a starter set of hand-picked Presidential videos:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcBVHzUUEKwlX6VG8jnDaY9fieHo2wSkg&jct=FuNSO6tqfJvgGndJAEQgXF-DYYEOeA

How much media is too much?
Decoding the New AAP Guidelines

By Warren Buckleitner

"No screens 1 hour before bedtime, and remove devices from bedrooms before bed." From the AAP's new guidelines.

The American Academy of Pediatrics finally updated its recommendations on children and media, and it's filled up my "children and technology" news alerts.

The sternly worded report is less restrictive than the previous "no screens" position, but (unfortunately) does a poor job distinguishing between linear (passive) and non-linear (interactive) media. It offers no examples of "good" media beyond those with a research backing, namely PBS kids and Sesame street and threatens that careless exposure can lead to attention problems, sleeping and/or eating disorders and obesity.

The main message? "Media is bad and be afraid" unless used in small carefully scheduled doses. One good example of good media use? Skyping with a loved one.

Why the AAP Guidelines are a Recipe for a Power Struggle

The downside of the report is that busy parents may interpret these guidelines as out of reach (along with "floss every day") or an attempt to turn their home into power struggle.

For example, in one of the resulting articles (Overwhelmed: How to keep your children from overusing technology from 12NewsNow.com) tells the story of six year old Presley Stavinoha.

"Too much screen time is definitely a thing," said Presley's mother, Nicole Stavinoha. "She wanted to watch the TV and use the iPad at the same time and we had to create some boundaries for her....It is a privilege. And the iPad is usually the first thing that we take away." But when that happens, Presley admits she will search the house for the iPad while her parents sleep. http://bitly.com/2fdvIYd

Three Principles Instead of One Presciption

In the spirit of preventing hundred of other young children from roaming the house at night looking for their hidden iPads, I offer the following.

First, recognize that the best way to capture a child's interest in something is to tell them it's forbidden. Getting between a determined child and something they love can be treaterous space.

Rather than trying to sketch out an exact prescription for media use, instead focus on three general ideas as you integrate technology into your child's daily routine: Access, Balance and Support.

A is for access. Children won't gain technology competence and learn self control if they can't use it. Libraries and schools should

The AAP offers some nifty media time planning tools.

provide access to children who do not have the technology at home. By playing or fiddling around with digital cameras, downloading apps, using laptops, and playing video game systems, they will figure out how to wiggle a connection to make something work, find a wi-fi signal to avoid roaming charges, or get a song from a CD to a file. By the time they reach middle school, they will be bilingual, fluent in both Windows and Mac, and they can pick up a Kindle or an iPad with no hesitation. But Access alone is not enough.

B is for balance. Just as a healthy diet consists of a variety of foods, a child needs the right mix of concrete and abstract, real and pretend. Screens tend to be abstract and symbolic, so screen time should be balanced with real and concrete activities.

This can be easier said than done when a child is immersed in a digital game or app. There's an art to knowing when to set a limit or when to play along. You might take your child camping in a state park in the summer, but rather than leave your iPad behind, you could use the Star Walk app to find stars or use the camera to capture the sunset. The screen can make a pretty good night light too, but no app can replace the charm of singing songs around a supervised, screen free campfire.

S is for support. Left on their own, children won't be able to get access to technology and achieve balance. They need an adult to tune into their abilities and interests. Support can come in the form of friends, siblings, parents, grandparents, librarians, and teachers, who might serve as technology role models, bedtime story readers, app curators, and helpers for reaching those hard game levels.

If you can create your ABS formula while your children are young, it increases the chance that a child will be able to record and edit a video for a class project, best their parent's score in Super Mario Bros., program a sprite in Scratch, find and download a calculus app, use online banking, post prom... and eventually wedding pictures.

Three Suggestions for Setting Media Limits

Before shutting down the tablet in frustration when a child appears to be a digital zombie, take time to understand what's going on. Start by watching. Observe the rhythm of the child's play so you understand what the child is thinking about. Now play along. You might play along or ask what is going on. Consider these helpful tips for setting limits:

1. Give advance notice that the time is almost up, and follow through. You might say, "In five minutes we are going for a walk." Use a countdown timer app so the child can visualize the time remaining. Be aware that if you give a warning but don't stick to it, the credibility of your words fade.
.
2. Put the time limit into the context of the activity children are immersed in. Rather than saying "no more than one hour." Tell them they have time for two more puzzles, one more level, or one last picture.

3. Let the child's finger (not yours) control the "off" button.
Giving children control over making the experience end can help them more peacefully accept the consequences. This button might be the power button on a remote, the pause option on a video game, or the home button on an iPad. This gives children the active role in ending the activity and somehow helps them internalize -- and accept-- the process. When the screen image disappears, it is almost magical how you get the child to interact with you again.

These techniques have served me well in both classroom and home settings. Rather than fight a child's intense interest in something, try to work with it and see where it can take you. As my horseback riding instructor once told me, it's wise to ride the horse in the direction it's going, whenever possible.

REFERENCES
How to keep your children from overusing technology,
Melissa Correa, KXTV 8:25 AM. PDT October 31, 2016
http://www.abc10.com/tech/how-to-keep-your-children-from-overusing-technology/345022218

AAP's Media and Children Toolkit
https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx?nfstatus

Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8
http://www.naeyc.org/content/technology-and-young-children

The New AAP Guidelines at a glance

For birth to 18 months: Avoid all screen media, other than video-chatting.

For 18 months to age two: Choose "high-quality programming," and watch it with your children to help them understand what they're seeing. No time limit is given but one can assume it is less than one hour.

From two to five years: No more than one hour of high quality "screen time" per day. Co-view all media to help children understand what they are seeing.

For ages six and older: make a plan. Place consistent limits on media time, and make sure it doesn't impose on sleep, diet or physical activity.

AND ALSO:
• Designate media-free times such as dinner or driving, and media-free locations in the home. Especially avoid screens at night.
• Have ongoing communication about online citizenship and safety.
• There's a new web based family media planning tool is innovative and useful. www.HealthyChildren.org/MediaUsePlan

My two daughters (now both in their 20s) far exceeded the AAP's recommendations. Looking back, putting a cap on screen time would've been impossible to enforce. But they had the luxury of having access to high quality, powerful digital media options, that fostered rich collaborative play, like the Pokémon cartridges running on Nintendo DS game systems.

Feature Reviews and New Releases

NOVEMBER 2016

Here's an alphabetical listing of both the feature reviews (with ratings) and the new and future releases. "Entry Date" refers to the date we first learned of the product.

Anywhere Teacher

This is a School Zone content management app. The download is free; the additional content is sold extra. Content includes videos, games, flash cards (called "speed cards"), ebooks, printables (worksheets from Schoolzone's vast library) and music.

Details: School Zone Publishing, www.schoolzone.com. Price: $free with IAP. Ages: 5-12. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: reading, math, science, social studies, music, and art. Entry date: 9/6/2016.
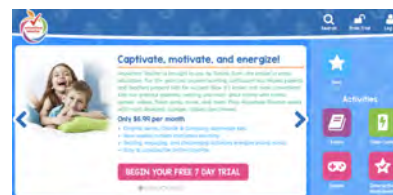
Califone GH131 Surround Sound 3D Effects Headset

Smaller and lighter that the GH507 Gaming Headset, the GH131 is designed to include the fancy audio features minus the bulky size.

Features include both 5.1 or 7.1 surround sound and an optional USB controller. The detachable inline USB gaming controls disconnect so the stereo headset can then plug into your smartphone, tablet, Chromebook, laptop or desktop computer.

The headband is adjustable, and the ear cups are vinyl. Other specs include a 3 foot (short) cord and a swivel Mic that can be moved out of the way when not in use. On-ear ear cups help focus on the audio by diminishing external distractions.

Details: Califone International, Inc., www.califone.com. Price: $55.99. Ages: 4-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Kindle, Nintendo DS, Nintendo 3DS, Windows, Mac OSX, Chrome, Xbox 360, Xbox One. Teaches/Purpose: a headset with earphones and microphone. Entry date: 10/12/2016.

Califone GH507 Gaming Headset

Here's the new high end gaming headset and microphone combo from Califone. The sound quality is good but this headset really grips your head and shuts out outside noise. It could get uncomfortable after a while.

Features include 5.1 or 7.1 surround sound and optional USB controls. If you use the USB attachment you can adjust the volume and audio effects from the cable. The stereo headphone can then be plugged into any smartphone, tablet, laptop / desktop computer, or Chromebook.

The headband is adjustable, and there is a microphone mute button on the USB attachment.

Details: Califone International, Inc., www.califone.com. Price: $83.99. Ages: 8-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Windows, Mac OSX, Chrome. Teaches/Purpose: a microphone, earphones and headset. Entry date: 10/12/2016.

Cozmo

Our Mediatech testers loved Cozmo -- a fast, smart little robot with a personality that grows on you.

The robot itself is durable, surviving several falls off a table, and moves on treads. It looks like a tiny bulldozer that uses a camera to view the world. Cozmo interacts with cubes and your smart phone or tablet (all three flavors -- Kindle, iPad and Android), which doubles as the controller. The app lets you play a variety of timing games.

The setup is complex (requires putting in a Wi-Fi code), but the Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this robot is extremely well done. Cozmo has a camera that can transfer streaming images to your tablet and rechargeable batteries (the cradle is provided). Here's the unboxing video: https://youtu.be/CwAMX_W12pg

Details: Anki, www.anki.com. Price: $180. Ages: 8-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: robotics, programming, cameras. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 10/7/2016. [BL]

Ease of Use	7	88%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	8	
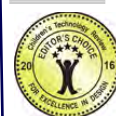
Discover Music

Explore a colorful landscape with musical animals. You'll discover musical instruments, notes and melodies as you explore rhythms by mixing and matching tracks.

There's no text – instead, an animated character is your guide. Designed by music teachers and illustrators. The recordings come from Deutsche Grammophon.

Details: Firstconcert Productions GmbH, www.firstconcert.com. Price: $1.99. Ages: 3-8. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: music, rhythm. Entry date: 10/20/2016.

Fiete KinderZoo

Here's a refreshing idea -- to let children provide the pictures and sounds of an app.

Created by the German studio Ahoiii (home of Fiete), the creative power in this app came from 30 children (aged 3 to 10 years), who used paper scraps and markers to make an animal. They also made their animals food, and recorded a accompanying sound.

All of this content is put into a side-scrolling "zoo." You explore by touching on the left or right side of the screen, to see each animal. Tapping an animal makes it move, letting you hear the recorded sound. You can then feed each animal by dragging a food item into place. Note that the animal names are in German, and the animals range from several fish to dinosaurs.

The children who made this app obviously learned a lot; but for the children consuming it, there's not that much to do. Still this is a novel idea and it is always refreshing to see how children from another country think. Use this app as a fun cultural experience.

Details: Ahoiii Entertainment UG, www.fiete-app.com. Price: $free. Ages: 3-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: animals, zoo, German culture, children, art. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.9 stars. Entry date: 10/24/2016. [buckleit]
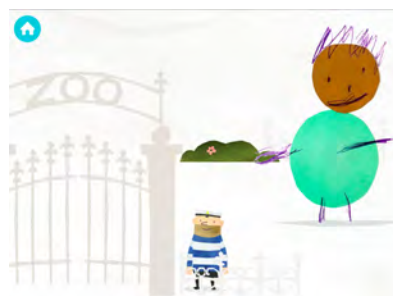
Ease of Use	10	78%
Educational	6	
Entertaining	6	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	10	

Fox Tales

Ready for a scare? This intense, richly illustrated story is about a pair of brave foxes who set out on dangerous journey. As you explore the 45 screens, you help the foxes save their island from giant spiders, earthquakes and other bad things. Many of the items come to life when touched, and there are 84 hidden stars to discover. If you find them you can unlock a secret area. Underlying themes to the story involve not stereotyping good or bad, and the importance of working together. A well designed index lets you jump to any scene, and you can toggle between five languages (English, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Chinese). The bottom line -- this is a rich language experience.

This story comes from the same team that made "Amelia and Terror of the Night." The story is by Luhasz Rutkowski and Piotr Ruszkowski; illustrations by Piotr Foksowicz and Piotr Ruszkowski.

Details: OhNoo Studio, ohnoo.com. Price: $1.99. Ages: 5-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: reading, fine motor control, logic, language, stories, fairy tales. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 10/18/2016. [buckleit]

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

94%

Hasbro Family Fun Pack Super Edition

Here's a solid video game value, for homes or libraries. We've reviewed most of these titles individually, so the idea that you can get six for the price of one should be tempting, providing you have a PS4 or an XBox One. This is a bundle of six complete video games based on Hasbro board games.

These include MONOPOLY Plus, RISK, RISK Urban Assault, TRIVIAL PURSUIT Live!, Battleship and BOGGLE.

MONOPOLY Plus consists of a 3D animated city. The city evolves when homes and hotels are purchased as the game progresses and includes tokens that move across the properties. Players can customize their gameplay experience by selecting which of the "House Rules" they want to play. Additionally, players can choose Speed Die mode, a faster-paced way of playing the game where players move quicker around the board.

The console version of the RISK game retains the authenticity of the classic 2010 rules with a modern twist, with 3D tactical battlefields, configurable win conditions and rule variants. Players can bring out their inner commander from a high-tech control room and set off to dominate the world using the classic map layout.

RISK: Urban Assault is a new version of the RISK game set in a post-apocalyptic world in famous cities. Players must act cunning and play strategically to defeat their opponents. At its heart, the game retains the DNA that makes RISK so popular with an additional layer of strategy introduced by commanders, facilities and alliances.

BOGGLE contains digital featuers like point multipliers, timed matches, and banning certain letters. Players can compete against their friends in person or play in multiplayer cooperative or competitive modes online.

TRIVIAL PURSUIT Live contains adapted difficulty levels and four question formats and 1,200 questions.

BATTLESHIP gives you a 3D board and a Clash at Sea! mode to bring gameplay to life. In this mode, players strategize to win by managing their resources and using their fleet's abilities to win the game. There are both local and online in a unique player-versus-player experiences. Learn more at http://hasbrogamechannel.com/

These games were created for Hasbro by Ubisoft.

Details: Ubisoft, www.ubisoft.com. Price: $60. Ages: 7-up. Platform: PlayStation 4, Xbox One. Teaches/Purpose: logic, strategy. Entry date: 10/25/2016.

Hatchimals

Part Furby, part Furreal Pet and part Tamagotchi, Hatchimals are plush/robotic bird-like creatures that live inside of eggs.

Each egg contains one of two interactive Hatchimals (you don't know which) and there are five in total, which makes this toy into a collectible. The idea is that if you "take care" of the plastic egg it will crack open and you meet a surprise creature. Your creature then develops, through three stages. Your Hatchimal sings "Hatchy Birthday" each time it enters a new stage. It interacts through light up LED eyes, and makes sounds to tell you how it feels. Hatchimals can't hatch on their own. Your touch encourages them to peck their way out of the egg. It can walk, dance, play games and repeat what you say. Requires 2 AA batteries (included).

Details: Spin Master Inc., www.spinmaster.com. Price: $60. Ages: 5-8. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: a watch me toy. Entry date: 10/7/2016.

Horton Hears a Who

Available on all major tablet formats, this is another one of the sell designed "read and learn" format apps from Oceanhouse Media.

This means that as you explore the pages, you can discover hidden stars that lead to ten bite-sized structured memory and phonics practice activities called Memory Match, Jigsaw Puzzle, Word Search, Sequence and so on. But the genius of these design of these apps is that there is a control panel that lets you toggle on or off these features, making it easy to turn off all the pedagogical bells and whistles and simply page through a silent version of the story. We think Theodor Seuss Geisel (aka Dr. Seuss) would like this type of control over the presentation.

The main strength of this app is the narrative -- about an elephant named Horton, and his attachment to dust particle. We learn that "a person's a person, no matter how small" -- as told by Dr. Seuss rhyme read by excellent narrators. The text scaffolding features are well designed, letting you tap on any picture or word to see and hear the associated concept. As with other Oceanhouse titles, you can easily jump to any page, and a parent's reporting feature lets you track the number of minutes spent reading.

Details: Oceanhouse Media, www.oceanhousemedia.com. Price: $3.99. Ages: 3-7. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: language, reading, spatial relations, memory. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.9 stars. Entry date: 10/24/2016. [WB]

Ease of Use	10	98%
Educational	10	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	10	

Is That A Fairy?

One of about 30 titles available from the subscription-based StoryPanda library, this is a nicely illustrated branching story with the added bonus of a "Create" mode that lets you freely modify (and share) the text.

Additional stories are sold at $2.99 each, and the quality varies. This particular story has an outdoor theme, featuring a young boy and his dog, and their search for a "real" fairy.

In terms of interactive design, this book is not unusual. The pages slide with a swipe and one-step animated effects are sprinkled around the images. This includes finding the hidden fairies. An icon at the top corner of the screen leads to a table of contents.

Need to know. Use the iPad's voice dictation feature to let children type with their voice. The book was written by Chris Young and Dave Skwarczek, and nicely illustrated by Michael Fleming.

Details: StoryPanda, http://storypanda.com/. Price: $2.99. Ages: 5-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading, writing, language. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.2 stars. Entry date: 8/31/2016. [WB]
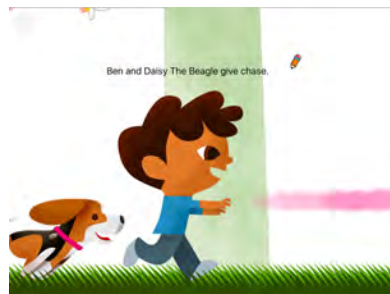
Ease of Use	9	84%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	8	

Learn Animals: Hide and Seek

Hide and seek comes to your iPad by way of this simple app for preschoolers. In the first (free) level, eight animals are hiding on each screen, along with the verbal challenge to "find the cat." Additional levels cost $.99.

You explore the graphics, dragging items out of the way to reveal the hiding animal. As you find animals, you start to deduce the animal location by remembering where each animal is that you find.

The illustrations are crude and the interactive design has some rough spots. But the general idea is fun.

Details: Blabbs, https://plus.google.com/u/1/collection/ArC-mB. Price: $free with IAP. Ages: 2-5. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: visual discrimination, language, logic, memory, deduction. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.2 stars. Entry date: 10/7/2016. [WB]

Ease of Use	7	63%
Educational	8	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	8	

Math Integers 3.2

This is an update to Math Integers, for iPad.

The app provides quizzes for arithmetic operations with positive and negative integers and Statistics (mean, median, mode, range). Math Integers is designed to "help students explore, consolidate and check knowledge and understanding of positive and negative numbers; a skill required of students grades 6 and 7."

Management features include record keeping for individual students. The app can send results of the practice session to the parent or teacher immediately after a session is finished, and can be used by multiple students on the same iPad.

Details: Bel Math Apps, belmathapps.com/. Price: $.99. Ages: 11-14. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: math entegers, math facts, positive and negative numbers. Entry date: 10/17/2016.

Mini Go Math

Designed for schools, this 1,500+ math problems cover the following: Grade K covers 12 Topics, introducing children to foundational math skills, counting to 20, addition and subtraction, 2-D & 3-D Shapes, measurement, sorting and grouping. Grade 1 covers 12 Topics including graphs and charts; Grade 2 covers 11 topics, up to geometry and fractions.

Details: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, www.hmhbooks.com. Price: $call. Ages: 3-7. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: math. Entry date: 10/7/2016.

Mover Kit, The

This is a wearable watch-like sensor that you can program.

Features include 8 LED lights, a motion sensor, compass and a micro USB plug to connect to your Mac or Windows PC, for charging and programming.

You can make a bike light that reacts to motion or direction for example.

Details: Technology Will Save Us, www.techwillsaveus.com. Price: $75. Ages: 8-up. Platform: Windows, Mac OSX, Chrome. Teaches/Purpose: programming, STEM, movement. Entry date: 10/5/2016.

My First Voice Lite

Created using the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) this app lets children with autism or any other language deficit communicate their basics needs. There are five icon categories: food, drink, clothing, toys and emotions using actual photographs and real voices.

 The app can easily be turned into an AAC device by simply installing it onto a device, providing savings of thousands of dollars. The application's main purpose is to let non-verbal children communicate what they want quickly and easily. However, it can also be used as part of a child's ABA therapy to teach basic language skills.

Details: Special Learning, Inc., http://special-learning.com . Price: $free. Ages: 6-8. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: Special needs, language. Entry date: 10/27/2016.

NES Classic Edition

Coming Nov 11, 2016, this hardcover book sized game console plugs into your HD TV with an HDMI cable, giving you your choice of 30 classic Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) games from the 1980s. The game library includes Super Mario Bros. 3, Metroid and The Legend of Zelda.

The controller is a pint-sized copy of the original NES controller. Other features include the ability to save your game in progress, using up to four "suspend points" for each game. You can also view the games' original manuals online by scanning an on-screen QR Code with your phone or tablet.

Note that the library contains several two-player games, but there is only one controller that ships with the console. The second controller will be sold seperately. All of games can be played in three display modes. With the CRT filter, a scan-line effect is added to the screen. 4:3 is a sharp, clean look that adheres to the original aspect ratio used by the NES. And when playing in Pixel Perfect mode, every pixel is shown as a perfect square, providing the most accurate representation of the games as they were originally designed.

Missing are the game save passwords. While all aspects of the original 30 NES games are intact, the Suspend Points feature makes it much easier to pause and continue playing later on. See the list of all 30 games at http://www.nintendo.com/nes-classic.

Details: Nintendo of America, www.nintendo.com. Price: $60. Ages: 6-up. Platform: Smart Toy, TV. Teaches/Purpose: classic video games, interactive design, Nintendo history. Entry date: 10/18/2016.

Pettson's Inventions 3

This is the third collection of Rube Goldberg-style puzzles, featuring Pettson, the silly farmer by Swedish author Sven Nordqvist. The books feature an old farmer and his cat who live in a small ramshackle farmhouse in the countryside.

The illustration style is playful, and there's a nice range of machines to assemble, that must be unlocked in sequence. Content includes 36inventions divided into 6 themed areas (woodshed, create an egg-painting machine and so on). You can build a wake-up invention by combining an apple, a dog and some paint or using missing bike parts to fix Pettson's bike.

This app looks better than it plays, in terms of interactive design. We didn't see any hint system, and the drag and drop format doesn't allow for experimentation (parts placed in the wrong place just fall off the screen). In other words, the problem solving process feels rigid. But once you get used to the controls, you can have a good time because there is a nice range of challenges.

Details: Filimundus, filimundus.se. Price: $2.99. Ages: 6-12. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: logic, spatial relations, problem solving. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.3 stars. Entry date: 10/25/2016. [WB]

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

86%

Pokémon Moon

It's now been 20 years since Pokémon Red and Pokémon Green were released in Japan. Coming Nov. 18th, the latest pair of Pokémon games for 3DS and 2DS; named after the Sun and the Moon. Each is designed the same, but features different Pokémon. The RPG (Role-Playing Game) is designed for one to 4 players.

Using Pokémon Bank, you'll be able to transfer Pokémon you've caught in the Nintendo 3DS Virtual Console versions of Pokémon Red, Pokémon Blue, and Pokémon Yellow into your copy of Pokémon Sun or Pokémon Moon. Pokémon from Pokémon Omega Ruby, Pokémon Alpha Sapphire, Pokémon X, and Pokémon Y can also be brought into Pokémon Sun and Pokémon Moon in the same way.

Pokémon Sun and Pokémon Moon will be the first games in the Pokémon series to allow players to choose from nine languages to play in. In addition to English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish, players will now be able to play in both Traditional and Simplified Chinese. Learn more at www.pokemon.com/sunmoon. Created by Game Freak for Nintendo.

Details: Nintendo of America, www.nintendo.com. Price: $40. Ages: 6-up. Platform: Nintendo 3DS. Teaches/Purpose: logic, reading, language, maps, deductive reasoning. Entry date: 10/18/2016.

PopUp Play: Imagine, Create, Play

Here's an innovative idea. What if you could give your child a simple CAD app to design their own walk-in home (complete with punch-out doors, printed designs and their name on the family crest? This is a free design app (called "Build Lab") coupled to a mail-order printing shop that lets you create large, walk-in houses.

The app gives you your choice of two types of constructions (a Castle and a Gingerbread house) although more are planned. You can drag and drop the doors, windows and decorations into place. As you work you can rotate your house for a 360 degree examination, making this a good spatial thinking exercise, even if you don't send away for the $100 house.

After your design is complete, you can work through the parent gate and order form to enter your credit cart information, and upload your design to the the Texas-based publisher, where it is cut, printed and shipped as a flat, fitted construction to your home in a week.

For an extra $5 you can get a box of crayons for coloring. PopUp Play is no threat to the old refrigerator box, but it does bring a new twist to the planning process.

Details: PopUp Play Inc., . Price: $free plus $110. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, construction, spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.1 stars. Entry date: 5/27/2016. [WB]

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

83%

RedStory

Good design and amazing illustration meet ads and in-app purchases, in this fun side-scrolling action game, that lets you become Little Red Riding Hood.

This is a sand-trap type of experience. As you solve each level, you earn goodies like magnets and parachutes to more easily make it through each level. When you fall into a hole or hit your head on one of the wolf's traps, you die. This happens more frequently as you progress, making the experience into a sand trap (the better you get, the more likely you'll die). You get new lives by watching an ad or by buying coins for as much as $30 as a single IAP. You are also asked to rate the game at a strategic point in the game... just when things start to get fun.

Details: From Paris Entertainment, . Price: $free with IAP of up to $30. Ages: 7-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: timing, logic. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 10/10/2016. [WB]

|		
Ease of Use	9	**90%**
Educational	9	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	8	

Shadowmatic

Know a child (or adult) in search of a logical thinking challenge? Explore the relationship between 2D and 3D with this well-designed problem solving experience. You see a molten, abstract shape (in 3D) on one side of the screen, with it's shadow (in 2D) projected on the other.

As you rotate the object in space, a familiar item gradually appears. There are 100 objects to figure out, and the difficulty varies from easy to very hard. The later levels consist of multiple parts, ensuring that there is always a challenge. You win experience points for speed and accuracy, and can play for time if you like. The puzzles are organized into themes, such as animals or the playroom. There is a version for Apple TV, making this an excellent family game. There is a well designed tutorial, plus a five level hint system in case you get stuck.

Progress is saved automatically, and it is possible to go back a level in case you want to try it again. See also Shadow Move (CTR Nov. 2012).

Details: Triada Studio Games, www.triadastudiogames.com/. Price: $2.99. Ages: 7-up. Platform: Apple TV, iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: logic, spatial thinking, 2D and 3D graphics, art. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.9 stars. Entry date: 10/10/2016. [WB]
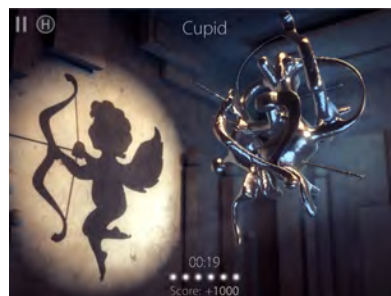
|		
Ease of Use	9	**98%**
Educational	10	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	10	

Tinkerblocks

Turn your iPad into a timer, fortune teller or motion-sensing camera with this potentially powerful but hard-to-learn visual coding system.

This app comes from Germany, and is the second experience app of this variety we've seen -- the first is The Everything Machine by Tinybop. Of the two, The Everything Machine is easier to learn and has more power. But don't discount what this app can do.

Here's how it works. The screen is split into two parts. Commands (represented by tiles) are shown on the left side, and are grouped into four categories. It takes some time to learn what the commands do because the icons are non-conventional, and there are no direct print labels. But you soon figure out that each block represents some sort of action.

Details: Urbn Pockets, www.urbn-pockets.com. Price: $2.99. Ages: 6-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: programming, coding. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.6 stars. Entry date: 10/17/2016. [buckleit]
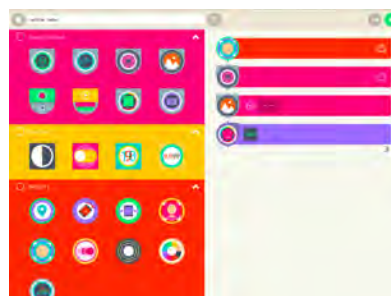
Ease of Use	7	**72%**
Educational	9	
Entertaining	6	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	7	

Toca TV

Here's a welcome addition to children's media -- an app that makes it easy to browse, bookmark or make your own videos. Toca TV is a subscription based ($5/month) "interactive video platform." The week old first edition looks promising but we found some issues to note.

The core of Toca TV is, of course, the videos. You an either browse or search by keyword. The current selection is more fun that educational (or amazing). There's a lot of crafts, Minecraft and Toca Boca previews. We searched on "piano" and "trumpet" and found nothing of interest. If you're looking for quality non-fiction content, you won't find it in this library (at least in it's current form).

Curated content is picked from Toca staff (names are not provided) using a custom scorecard (which is also not provided). According to PR materials, Toca TV screeners look for videos that are free from third-party advertising or sponsored product placement, but we were able to find at least one video with what appears to be sponsored by a brand of nail polish [note Toca Boca's Keely Hopkins has assured us that this particular video is not sponsored. See https://youtu.be/8wjwBDjecT0 for the example]. Also Toca Boca app previews are listed in the "games" category.

Still, this is a lot better than YouTube Kids, which is packed with these types of videos.

The Toca TV video discovery system uses a card-stacking metaphor for browsing, and it's easy to save videos you want to watch, as long as you're a subscriber. A key feature is the ability to record/save/share your own videos, while mixing in animated stickers.

Industry folks will want to know that the head of Toca TV is J Milligan, and that Toca Boca draws content from "75 creators including BroadbandTV (BBTV), DreamworksTV, the kids and family brand from AwesomenessTV, Studio71, and Freedom!" The subscription price is $5/month.

Details: Toca Boca, http://tocaboca.com/. Price: $4.99/month. Ages: 5-9. Platform: iPad, iPhone (iOS 8 or higher). Teaches/Purpose: video, TV, science, creativity. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 10/5/2016. [WB]
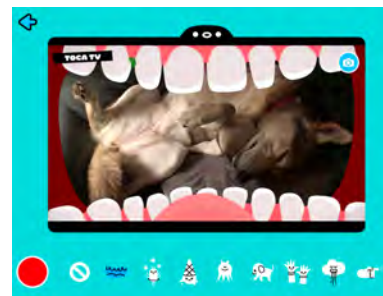
Ease of Use	9	88%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	8	

Understanding Math: Telling Time

Note: This German app won't be on the US market until late October 2016. The following is an advance review.

Clean, structured teaching methods come to your iPad's screen, with this excellent time-telling tutorial that is ideal for early elementary classrooms. There are six activities on the main menu.

The Learning Clock lets touch turn the hands (by touching the screen) of the clock to hear the time read out loud, in either the computer's voice or your own. A night/day dial helps add meaning to the abstraction of the clocks. This dynamic linkage between your finger's movement and the time measurements makes this a strong learning experience. A digital clock appears in other activities to help you associate the two types of clocks, side-by-side). There's also a test to see if you can display periods of time (e.g., 2 hours after the time shown). Correct answers are rewarded with custom clock faces.

Teacher options include the ability to record a child's voice using a well designed sound capture utility (you record each numeral, and bit of time-telling language).

This app is an ideal classroom utility. Show it on the big screen to time an activity or game. Teachers will love the individualized record keeping features -- you can set up a profile for each student. This app is part of the "Understanding Math" series, from German-based ApppMedia. The app was financed by FilmFernsehFonds Beyern.

Details: ApppMedia, www.apppmedia.com. Price: $3.99. Ages: 4-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: telling time, clocks. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.3 stars. Entry date: 10/10/2016. [WB]

Ease of Use	10	85%
Educational	10	
Entertaining	N	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	10	