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The 2017 KAPi awards

On the cover: A graphic from the web site of the 2017 KAPi Awards. See the list of winners on page 5.

Children's Technology Review
EDITOR'S CHOICE
2017
FOR EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN

* Denotes "Editor's Choice."

"Perfecting the world is our task, in whatever way we choose to do it." Dr. Arella J. Lehrer, President of Legacy Interactive, from her Facebook birthday greeting.

Will Algorithms Start Raising Our Children?

New parents used to bring home a baby with some simple statistics, like a time of birth and a weight. A child born from 2016 on will have the added advantage -- or perhaps curse -- of being accompanied home from the hospital by growing cloud of data associated with their newly minted identity. This growing cloud is poised, ready to deliver chunks of your baby's and family's Pii (Personally Identifiable Information).

It starts when a concerned father searches for a stroller, or when a parenting app is downloaded. Advertisers will know your child's likes and dislikes, how much she sleeps, where she lives (and the value of the home she lives in), how she learns and will someday buy.

There's no doubt that these web-centric technologies offer great promise. They might customize a curriculum or help predict and prevent an eating disorder. But they might also deliver laser-guided commercialism that is adept at influencing behaviors, helping to create a digital caste. Who knows?

As we documented in last week (CTR Weekly December 28 http://eepurl.com/cvBfw9), 2016 will go down as the year our of our first major step into the future. We saw hordes of children roaming the streets with smart phones and the location sensing game Pokémon GO. We also saw the commercial viability of VR systems from Sony and voice controlled computing devices like the Echo. That was last year. What's next?

CES is a great place to find out, and there's no better guide than Robin Raskin, who helps figure out the programming for various conferences (in full disclosure, CTR is hired to help manage of these). Last November Robin gave at talk at Dust or Magic called "Thinking Outside the App: A Look at Real World Forces Informing Kids Media Development" https://youtu.be/0Hkd08mki1s.

Here are nine important ideas from the 30 minute talk, in case you don't have time to watch the entire video. They explain which technologies will shape the next 12 months, and beyond, for better or for worse.

1. Artificial Intelligence, Algorithms & Predictive Analysis. Algorithms will help teachers, librarians, doctors or marketers through "predictive analysis" which can

Watch Robin's talk
https://youtu.be/0Hkd08mki1s

Terms to know:
Here are some terms that are identified in either Robin's talk, or this article. How many can you define?

Predictive Analysis

IOT (Internet of Things)

Digital Currency.

Pii. Personally Identifiable Information.

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5 (or so) sites & 10 videos

Skyscrapers

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

What single building has 73 elevators and enough structural concrete to pave 200 miles of sidewalks? The Freedom Tower in New York City. Is it the world's tallest skyscraper? No. But it's the safest, newest, and most energy efficient. Let's learn more!

1. What city has the world's tallest building?
a) New York City (USA)
b) Taipei (Taiwan)
c) Dubai (United Arab Emirates)
Answer: C. The 163 story tall Burj Khalifa in Dubai has been the world's tallest building since 2008, according to Wikipedia bitly.com/2ivG3lD. By comparison the Freedom, tower is quite a bit shorter, at104 stories making it the 4th tallest in the world as of 2016.

2. True or false. Do tall buildings sway in the wind?
Answer: True. But they are designed to move, in either wind or an earthquake. Tiapea 101 for example has a giant ball hanging inside it's hollow core. See what happens during an earthquake, at https://youtu.be/NYSgd1XSZXc

3. Which skyscraper has the best observation deck?
The best might just be Sears Tower, with it's the Observation Ledge. It's made out of glass and it comes with a dare... can you go to the ledge? See for yourself, at
http://theskydeck.com/

4. Has anyone ever jumped off the top of a skyscraper and lived?
Yes, as long as they have a parachute. In 2008, two French daredevils jumped off the 160th floor of the Barj Khalifa with a video camera. Have a look https://youtu.be/9pGp1LX8yZY.

5. Do skycrapers get hit by lighting?
All the time. They act as giant lightning rods during storms, transferring the energy to the ground. So people are not harmed. Here's the Sears Tower in Chicago getting struck by lightning. https://youtu.be/IJGE51oBAms

APPLICATIONS: Try to build your own Skyscraper in Minecraft http://bitly.com/2iwPEsh or out of spaghetti and marshmallows, at http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/sci/tallsturdybuilding.html. Next download Tinybop's well designed app, called Skyscrapers by Tinybop. http://reviews.childrenstech.com/ctr/fullreview.php?id=19283

Do really tall buildings ever get hit by lightning during thunderstorms? (Yes.)

Has anyone every jumped off the top of one and lived? (Yes, but they used a parachute, and they landed in jail.)

You **Tube**™ **Amazing Skyscraper videos**
Here's a set of hand-picked videos: http://bitly.com/2iwlEwE

Burj Khalifa · Shanghai Tower · Abraj Al-Bait Towers · One World Trade Center · Taipei 101 · Shanghai World Financial Center · International Commerce Centre · Petronas Towers · Zifeng Tower
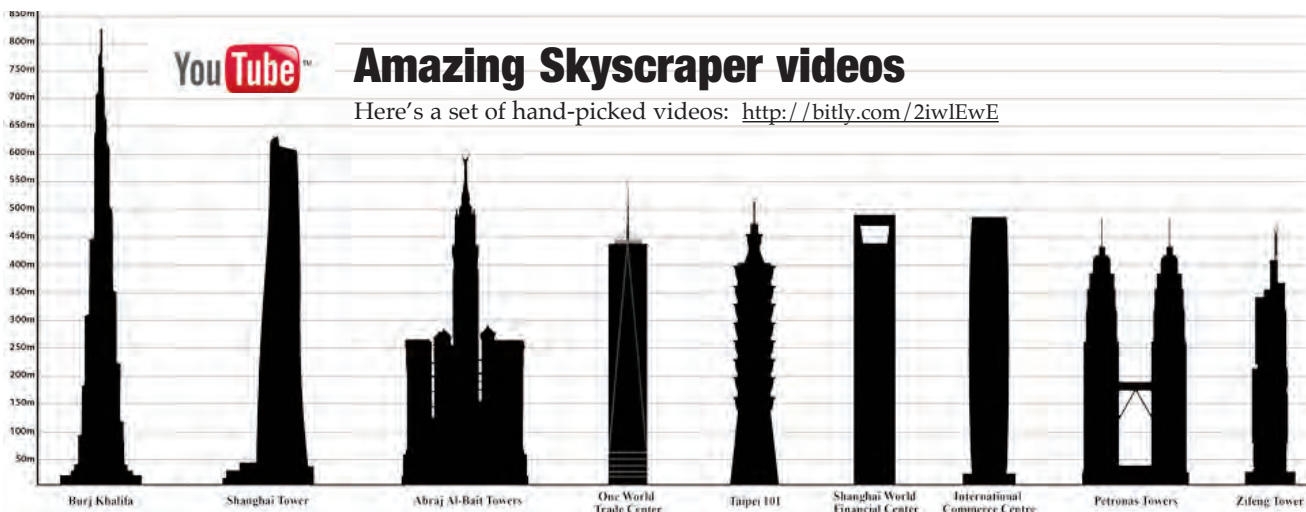
be combined with other emerging technologies including natural language processing and image recognition. Hospitals could use it for disease diagnosis, and it might be used to set insurance rates or figure out if your child has a chance of making it into college. As Robin says, "if a child likes pizza, math problems will be more likely to feature your child's favorite topping."

2. Augmented Reality Meets Your Location. Millions of consumers already shop with augmented reality. They can try out virtual makeup in advance or see what a toy kit will look like before it is assembled (https://youtu.be/PGu0N3eL2D0). Things get really interesting when you add mapping and geo-location. Robin introduced the idea of "narrative geotagging" where a child can tag locations with tweets or social media posts; leaving a cookie crumb trail of stories.

3. Virtual Reality. VR has been well discussed (see last month's Dust or Magic talk by Jesse Schell). Its widespread commercial use raises many new questions. Could it be used to increase feelings of empathy? Will it be used as a learning tool, and is it true that girls tend to drop out of VR experiences faster than males? If so, why? Are there other concerns? We'll learn much more in 2017.

4. Voice Computing. Our babies won't know what to do with a mouse or keyboard. Amazon's Echo (and Google Home) are now in stores, and they will bring voice recognition into many more homes or playrooms. Simultaneous translation will be a reality.

5. Wearables. As the Apple Watch's "taptic" features demonstrated last year, the next generation of connected devices will help use "behavior nudging" to remind you when to sit up straight, go for a walk, or increase your heart rate.

6. Digital Allowance. Gone are the days of dollar bills for allowance. The next generation will have virtual allowance to services like Minecraft, Moshi Monsters, iTunes, Amazon or Google Play: services where every transaction is linked to other products.

7. Videos Instead of Text. Children of the future don't read for answers, even if it's on the screen. They prefer to type (or say) a few easy keywords into YouTube to pull up short videos for the answer/ The next generation will want bite sized, informative, searchable videos that answer their questions.

8. Internet of (Kids) Things. When you say IoT (Internet of Things) most people think about an app controlled furnace or a smart light bulb. In the future, your child's toys, tablet and mattress (https://youtu.be/HiwoUec109o) might harvest information about your growing child. More apps will make money from targeted ads or loyalty points. This brings a host of new opportunities and worries.

9. Pii. Personally Identifiable Information is another buzzword you'll hear about in 2017. It means information that can be linked to your email, screen name or IP address. Google and Facebook collect tons of Pii, and so will Minecraft (owned by Microsoft) and toy companies. The more Pii a service has, the better they can serve you. There's very little guidance about how kids should be treated in a Pii world, says Raskin. Because current laws like COPPA (the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) are antiquated and expensive to implement, children can use social media like Facebook, YouTube and Snapchat based on the fiction that adult permission has been granted.

KAPi (Kids at Play Interactive) Awards
Recognize Best in Kids' Tech at CES 2017

Ceremony Features Lifetime Award for Seymour Papert

NEW YORK, Dec. 27, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- This was the year when coding became as important a kids' skill as readin', writin' and 'rithmetic. It's the year augmented reality went mainstream thanks to Pokémon GO! and there were clever uses of everything from Play-Doh to labyrinths. Finally, it was the year when we recognized that physical and digital play go hand in hand.

Join Living in Digital Times at the eighth annual KAPi (Kids at Play Interactive) Awards at CES® 2017 as we salute these ten awardees, all game-changers for kids and tech. The ceremony, emceed by Warren Buckleitner of Children's Technology Review, and Robin Raskin and Tonda Bunge Sellers of Living in Digital Times, follows the Kids@Play/Family Tech Summit Friday, January 6, at Tech West (Venetian, Level 4, Lando 4301) at 5:30 PM.

"Our expert group of judges spent hours debating the tech features and play value of each and every submission, enabling us to truly identify which products broke the mold this year," said Warren Buckleitner of Children's Technology Review. "Each of the awardees has moved the dial on making tech a better experience for kids."

"Leaders like Dr. Papert have brought a more inclusive, more exploratory vision to kids' tech," said Tonda Bunge Sellers of Living in Digital Times. "It's only fitting that this award is presented where innovation rules, CES 2017."

The 2017 KAPi Awards winners are:

Legend Pioneer: Seymour Papert. Dr. Papert passed away earlier this year, but his ideas and inventions live on. He transformed how millions of children around the world create and learn.

Best App or Product for Younger Children: Kudos App by KUDOS. This app provides younger kids with a safe set of training wheels for entering the world of social media.

Best App or Product for Older Children: Space by TinyBop. The Space app turns your child's tablet into a working model of the solar system and playfully introduces ideas about everything from Saturn's rings to relative sizes of the planets.

Best "Maker" Spirit Toy or Service: SAM's Curious Cars by SAM Labs. With this smart wireless construction set, you can create a myriad of moving, blinking, noise-making vehicles, programming them from your smartphone.

Best Digital/Physical Bridge: Play-Doh Touch by Hasbro. Augment reality using well-loved, classic Play-Doh. Shape something, scan it with your smartphone and app, and watch your Play-Doh creations come to life on the screen.

Robots: Cozmo by Anki. Cozmo wins the Mr. Personality of kid's robots. Powered by advanced robotics, artificial intelligence (AI) and computer vision, Cozmo's sophisticated techniques come across as child's play as he jokes, shows some attitude and demonstrates he's his own "robot" when it comes to building and stacking cubes.

Augmented Reality: Pokémon GO! by Niantic. Who would have imagined that everyone from tots to seniors would be getting out and combing the streets in search of Pikachu? Niantic's deft combination of classic Pokémon, mapping geography, the smartphone camera and VR, gave us the family app of the year.

Virtual Reality/Emerging Technology: Maze by Seedling. It all starts by building a real-world maze. Snap its photo, add some traps or walls, and it becomes a screen-based virtual reality adventure (choose an outer space or ancient ruins theme) game designed by you. Put on your cardboard glasses (included) and explore your creation.

Educational (Learning Tool): Happy Atoms by Thames & Kosmos. Learn chemistry by making an atom from flexible rods and joiners. Hold your molecule up to a tablet where powerful software will use image recognition to identify and tell you about what you've created.

Best Series: Tech Will Save Us by Technology Will Save Us. If you don't have a fortune and you want some instant gratification, Tech Will Save Us offers a series of make-it-yourself kits. Whether it's a plant watering meter, a wearable bracelet, a music synth or other, your first electronic experience is bound to be a winner thanks to this company's attention to detail.

2017 JURORS

This year's 15 jurors set the KAPi Awards apart from other award programs. Any juror can nominate a product (it doesn't need to be entered to win), and there are no hidden fees or hooks.

Jackie Breyer, The Toy Book
Chris Byrne, TTPM
Warren Buckleitner, Children's Technology Review
Barbara Chamberlin, New Mexico State University
Mary Couzin, Chicago Toy & Game Group, Inc.
Claire Green, Parents' Choice Foundation
David Kleeman, Dubit

Rebecca Levey, KidzVuz.com
Frank Migliorelli, New York Public Library
Yohei Nakajima, Techstars
Dan Nessel, DadDoes.com
Robin Raskin, Living in Digital Times
Reyne Rice, ToyTrends
Mark Schlichting, Noodleworks
Tonda Bunge Sellers, Living in Digital Times
Scott Traylor, 360KID

About Living in Digital Times

Founded by veteran technology journalist Robin Raskin, Living in Digital Times brings together the most knowledgeable leaders and the latest innovations impacting both technology and lifestyle. It helps companies identify and act on emerging trends, create compelling company narratives, and do better business through strong network connections. Living in Digital Times produces technology conferences, exhibits and events at CES and other locations throughout the year by lifestyle verticals. Core brands include Digital Health Summit, Digital Money Forum, FitnessTech, Baby Tech, Kids@Play, FamilyTech Summit, TransformingEDU, FamilyTech TV, Beauty Tech, Wearables and FashionWare runway show, Mobile Apps Showdown, Last Gadget Standing, Robots on the Runway and the KAPi Awards. The company also works with various foundations and manages the Appreneur Scholar awards program for budding mobile entrepreneurs, as well as the 10 Under 20: Young Innovators to Watch awards recognizing student STEAM innovations in Las Vegas and New York City. For more information, visit LivinginDigitalTimes.com and keep up with our latest news on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.

About CES

CES is the world's gathering place for all who thrive on the business of consumer technologies. It has served as the proving ground for innovators and breakthrough technologies for 50 years—the global stage where next-generation innovations are introduced to the marketplace. As the largest hands-on event of its kind, CES features all aspects of the industry. Owned and produced by the Consumer Technology Association (CTA)TM, the technology trade association representing the $287 billion U.S. consumer technology industry, it attracts the world's business leaders and pioneering thinkers. Check out CES video highlights. Follow CES online at CES.tech and on social.

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For updates on the KAPi Awards, follow FamilyTech Summit on Twitter at @FamTechSummit, #KAPiAwards and #FamilyTech.

Tweet this: of #KAPiAwards at #CES2017 represent innovation in #edu & entertainment tech

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.

Crayola Color Blaster

Designed specifically Tango-enabled Android devices (learn more at https://get.google.com/tango/), this free app fills your real-life room with zombies. You must look around to find paint buckets, to blast the zombies with color. This is a game that gets you moving around. Content will be released in chapters (we're assuming as IAPs).

Chapter 1: Zombies Ate the Color – is free and comes with the initial download. Chapter 2: Enchanted Forest is planned.

Details: Legacy Games, www.legacygames.com. Price: $free. Ages: 6-up. Platform: Android. Teaches/Purpose: gross motor coordination, movement. Entry date: 12/7/2016.
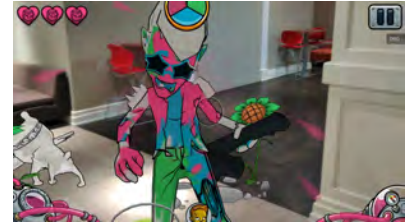
Grandpa's Toy Shop

Coming December 15, 2016 -- a chance to help Grandpa run his toy store.

Dressed in a Santa hat in time for the holidays, this app playfully introduces a variety of bite-sized school-friendly games that reinforce spelling, math, reading charts and spatial reasoning. If you've used any of the Fairlady Media apps in the past, you'll find the design of this app to be very familiar. The parent options let you toggle on/off each game, so you can customize the presentation for your child.

You start by designing, then build, decorate, and sell ten types of toys, such as a crown, robot, or stuffed animal. It's important to note up front that none of these toys are branded, and there is no commercial content in this app. This is not an easy task for any toy related app.

Then it's time to advertise and price the toys, help customers, make a poster by arranging letters on a sign, use a grid chart and a cash register, and clean up the shop by working with a maze puzzle. As toys get sold, you'll build new toys to restock the inventory.

Details: FairLady Media, Inc., http://fairladymedia.com. Price: $2.99. Ages: 6-9. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: money, economics, spelling, reading, creativity, holidays, logic. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.9 stars. Entry date: 11/7/2016. [buckleit]

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

98%

Kudos

Think Instagram for toddlers and you get the idea of Kudos (formerly called Kuddle) -- an easy to use, gated community for children under 13 years of age, that is heavily monitored by parents or caregivers.

Those under the age of 13 have to enter their parent's/caregiver's e-mail address to get approval. So for all photos shared, captions written, friends added, or groups joined, you'll know about them and have the option to remove them via e-mail. Children are frequently reminded about the importance of netiquette.

The app offers private profiles so you can't see another person's posts unless you are "friends" -- a process determined by the parents. Come children have complained about a lack of features, such as video, and a limited amount of things to do. There is no geo-location.

This subscription service was established in Oslo, Norway, in March 2014 by the three Norwegians (Ole Vidar Hestaas, Christian Vebner and Knut Taroy).

Details: Kudos & Co, Inc., www.kudos.ai. Price: $call. Ages: 5-9. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Windows. Teaches/Purpose: a social media service for young children. Entry date: 12/13/2016.
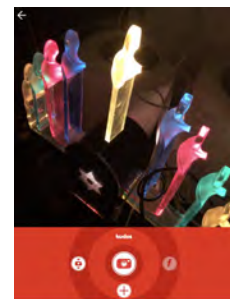
LEGO Worlds

LEGO Worlds is a "digital LEGO brick building experience where players explore, discover and create together."

The game will launch on Steam on February 21, 2017. The game is available in both physical and digital formats for PlayStation 4 and Xbox One (costing $25), and is currently available in STEAM early access for an introductory price of $15. The virtual building experience was developed by TT Games and published by Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment.

A special LEGO Agents DLC pack features new characters, vehicles, weapons and more from the Agents range of play materials, will be available exclusively on PlayStation 4 for a limited time.

In LEGO Worlds, players uncover hidden treasures in environments.

You can become a "Master Builder" by helping other LEGO characters -- find a sword for a king, protect a farmer from a zombie invasion, or build a home for a caveman.

Environments and creations are brought to life, either by building brick by brick, placing down prebuilt structures, or using a tool kit to paint and shape the landscape. The online multiplayer functionality lets you explore each other's worlds, Minecraft style.

Details: Warner Bros. Interactive , . Price: $15. Ages: 7-12. Platform: Xbox One, PlayStation 4, Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: LEGO, creativity, spatial relations. Entry date: 12/15/2016.

Little Kitten: My Favorite Cat

This app lets you play simple games with a very realistic looking kitten. You'll be instantly drawn to the cute furry animal that looks as if it could've stepped out of a Pixar movie.

But there's a tradeoff for the aesthetics -- feelings of control. On several occasions our testers tried touching items that didn't respond (some did, some didn't), and the first "room" in the kitten's house is actually a menu, with some items leading to an age-gated external web site.

Instead of following and responding to your finger, your kitten waits until you tap an specific item or area of the screen. It's a multiple-choice cat, rather than one that offers fluid interactions. There are some specific activities that include hide-and-seek, animal matching and a painting game that is easy to use, despite some screen orientation issues and non-intuitive color mixing features. Touching the bed or window in the playroom leads to a night scene where you put your cat to bed. There's not much more to do with this app. Expect a very high novelty period, but not much more. It's too bad you can't take care of your pet, as you could with Nintendogs. This kitten looks good, but doesn't do much. Created for Fox & Sheep by Squeakosaurus (graphics by Peter Colebatch; animation by Jilmann Vogt).

Details: Fox and Sheep GmbH, www.foxandsheep.com. Price: $3.99. Ages: 3-8. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: animals, cats, taking care of things. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.8 stars. Entry date: 1/2/2017. [buckleit]

Ease of Use	8	76%
Educational	8	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	8	

Max & Meredith: The Search for Percival

From the publisher: young readers choose the course of the story. Faced with decisions and dilemmas, kids decide what to do, driving the plot down one of eight unique paths on a fully original adventure. The app will launch on January 31, 2017.

Details: Move On Pluto, www.moveonpluto.com. Price: $2.99. Ages: 2-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading, comprehension, story structure. Entry date: 12/17/2016.

Maze

This is a DIY (do it yourself) VR adventure that lets you design a marble maze by placing walls onto a grid.

Next, you add traps and choose start and end points.

You can then download the free iOS or Android app to "scan" your maze using your camera (lining up can be a bit tricky) and then play in virtual reality, from the point of view of your marble. This is a very clever idea. You learn that sometimes your maze doesn't translate cleanly -- fortunately there's a well designed maze editor that lets you move or remove walls, and so on. You can also add photos, sounds and riddles to your virtual maze. This process is amazing when it works, but we found that it can crash the app when you customize your app. Fortunately there are some pre-made mazes that you can play (but they're not yours).

There are enough materials for about two mazes. It is not possible to reposition the maze walls, once they are taped down. Works with any Google Cardboard viewer (included in the kit) and your iOS or Android smart phone.

Details: Seedling USA, www.seedling.com. Price: $60. Ages: 8-up. Platform: Android, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: spacial relations, logic, creativity. Entry date: 12/13/2016.

MusicMessages

Designed only for Apple (iOS) devices, this is a collaborative iMessage utility that makes it possible to send a melody. Tape a few notes or chords and you can send it to a friend. The others can reply by adding onto melody to create a more complete song.

Content includes five layers of notes and 40 instruments, plus rhythms. On newer iPhones, you can push harder to feel haptic feedback -- like pressing on popping bubble wrap.

The base app is free, but there is a one-time, one-dollar in-app purchase to unlock the extra content. Messages created by paid users can be edited by free users with the full feature set for free. This product contains no ads and does not track its users. Created by the makers of Composer's Sketchpad.

Details: Alexei Baboulevitch, http://composerssketchpad.com. Price: $free with IAP. Ages: 6-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: music. Entry date: 12/6/2016.
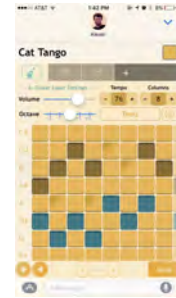
Pango Storytime

Not all early language experiences involve reading, and this app is a good example.

You start by seeing one of four stories -- but only one is unlocked. Each starts with a cartoon-style picture showing some sort of problem involving Pango the pig. In one adventure he breaks the moon with a sling shot; and you help to put it together again. In Piggy Christmas (sold for $.99 extra as an IAP), you have to help to load a sleigh, feed a reindeer, and decorate a tree in order to deliver presents. Each picture is based around a simple narrative structure, and the way the app is designed, children are pulled into the process. Each successful tap advances the story to the next step. There is no reading, and this app would work in any country with no localization problems.

Need to know: The routines are slapstick and silly, with some animated cartoon violence. The initial download is free with one adventure; additional chapters cost $.99 each.

Details: Studio Pango, www.studio-pango.com. Price: $free with IAP. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: language, literacy, story structure. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 12/9/2016. [buckleit]

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

Picabu Kitchen

Potentially fun, this is an Android app that is clearly inspired by Toca Kitchen.

Details: Practjin, http://highend7114.wixsite.com/mysite. Price: $call. Ages: 3-6. Platform: Android. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, cooking. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.9 stars. Entry date: 7/29/2016. [buckleit]
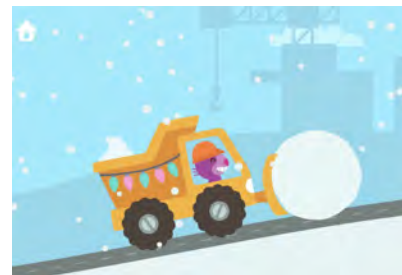
Ease of Use	9
Educational	7
Entertaining	8
Design Features	7
Good Value	8

78%

Sago Mini Holiday Trucks and Diggers

This is a holiday-themed edition of Sago Trucks and Diggers. Freely play with the same six responsive, finger-driven construction vehicles to move piles of snow (instead of dirt, used in the previous app).

The machines work the way you want them to, and the snow is clumpy and easy to scoop into the waiting truck. Once the truck is full, you get to drive (or fly) to a construction site where you dump it into an ice house. There are plenty of silly gags along the way, including some burps and other body noises. We liked how the app supports multi-touch, so two or more children can play along. This is another great, well designed, no-fail starter app from Sago Sago.

Details: Sago Mini, www.sagomini.com. Price: $free. Ages: 2-5. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Apple TV. Teaches/Purpose: christmas, holiday, trucks, construction, fine motor. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 12/9/2016. [buckleit]

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

94%

Sago Mini Puppy Preschool

Sago Mini (a studio owned by of Toca Boca and Spinmaster) keeps adding to their pack of excellent apps for younger children.This one is an excellent all-purpose starter app, which is excellent for preschool or ECE programs as well.

Children choose from four structured activities that playfully reinforce matching, counting and music. Content is limited, but engaging and high in child control.

You can dunk up to ten puppies in a tub to give them a bath, play fetch and work on shape recognition at the same time by matching toys, bones and socks for the puppies to play with. Sorting involves feeding pups donuts or pickles, and you can compose music on the the puppy piano. Manuel Afonso is the play designer for this title.

Need to know: The app supports multi-touch, making it easy for one or more children to play together.

Details: Sago Mini, www.sagomini.com. Price: $2.99. Ages: 2-6. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: logic, classification, counting. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 12/13/2016. [buckleit]

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

90%

Space by Tinybop

Number 8 in Tinybop's Explorer's series, Space should more accurately be called "Hands On With the Solar System." After you create a rocket, you blast off on a mission to visit each planet. Each planet offers different sets of tests. There's a cross-section viewer so you can see the insides, and a snowman that you can drag and drop to the surface to test the temperature. You can see how gravity works by throwing a huge bolder at the planet, and objects on the screen can be labeled with a toggle on/off, which are available in many languages.

There are several ways to navigate -- a fact that makes this app confusing at first, but also increases the chance you'll stumble into something interesting. So you can call this "good confusion."

We especially liked the distance calculator and the way you can compare the time of each planet orbit, relative to the earth. Nice touches include the planet size comparison tool, and close up view of Jupiter's spot. It helps you understand that on the relative scale of the universe, we're all pretty tiny. Kids can discover new worlds in other Explorer's Library apps, including The Human Body, Plants, Simple Machines, The Earth, Weather, Homes, and Skyscrapers.

Art by Jessie Sattler.The app includes a handbook that can help guide teachers or parents as they talk through Space concepts with kids.

Details: Tinybop, Inc., www.tinybop.com. Price: $2.99. Ages: 9-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: science, astronomy, space, solar system. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 12/5/2016. [buckleit]
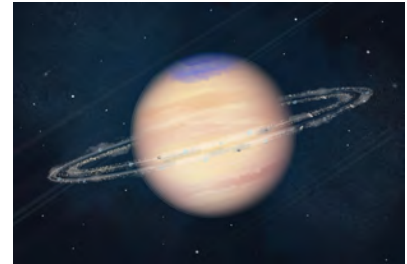
Ease of Use	8	94%
Educational	10	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	10	

Super Mario Run

December 15 was an important day in video game history. That was when Mario, the Nintendo icon migrated to a hardware platform not designed, sold and controlled by Nintendo.

Super Mario Run is a mashup up brilliant interactive design and some bad free app practice, specifically a one time $10 IAP (in app purchase), plus what appears to be a heavy data harvesting.

It is based on an easy goal and a nearly impossible challenge -- to move Mario through a continually scrolling maze, collecting items and avoiding hazards in order to save Princess Peach (note the gender bias).

The game play is very Nintendo-like in the best way. It is responsive, full of surprises, and the failure is frequent but fun. You can start over, and over, and over. The controls are easy to learn, and there's a well-designed tutorial. The controller buttons have been replaced by taps on the glass, with longer touches giving you higher jumps. It works -- after a few minutes you've forgotten you're playing on non-Nintendo hardware. There are three modes of play: 1) completing the courses alone; 2) competing against others in a rally mode (very fun) and 3) a create your own course mode, using coins collected by playing the first two games. The free download includes just four of about 20 levels. You have to pay $10 to play the rest.

Need to know: You won't be disappointed by the gameplay, but you will feel betrayed when you learn you can't go farther in the game unless you pay the one time fee of $10 (the amount needed to unlock all the levels). You also learn that this game won't work without a constant Wi-Fi connection. In addition, this is a one player (non-social) experience and progress is bookmarked and saved in the cloud. The advantage to this model is that you can continue playing on another device, including on your Nintendo 3DS. This app is heavy on the data collection and social media connections so read the privacy policy.

Details: Nintendo of America, www.nintendo.com. Price: $free with $10 IAP. Ages: 6-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: problem solving. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.6 stars. Entry date: 9/13/2016. [buckleit]
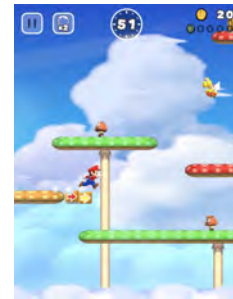
Ease of Use	9	92%
Educational	9	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	9	

Toca Hair Salon 3

Featuring new characters but missing the ability to import your own face, this third edition of Toca Hair Salon is sillier and more zany than previous editions. It also offers more facial hair and skin tone options, and a wider cast of hair salon customers.

Other features include some new outfits, a braiding tool, and more clothing and dress up options.

Weaknesses to note: You can't save your work (although you can take a picture) which is frustrating, because it is possible to grow attached to a particular character. In addition, if you are expecting to import your own face for a hairstyle (as you could with Toca Hair Salon Me) you'll be disappointed. But the good news is that Toca Hair Salon Me is still in the app store, and it is currently free. It's worth noting that this app has been carefully designed to be gender/ethnic-neutral; so all children will feel welcome.

Details: Toca Boca, http://tocaboca.com/. Price: $2.99. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, hair care. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 12/6/2016. [buckleit]

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