



Children's  
**TECHNOLOGY**  
REVIEW EXCHANGE

**October 2017**

**LittleClickers**  
**Squirrels (p 3)**



**News**  
**Jeff Bezos wants to snatch  
your child's iPad mini (p 2)**



**Discussion**  
**Is AR a Fad, Feature or Both? (p 4)**



*On the cover -- Remember Spore? Tinybop's "The Creature Garden" brings back some of those ideas.*

**Children's Technology Review**  
**October 2017**

Volume 25, No. 10 Issue 211

- |                                 |   |                               |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Animal Rescue*, p. 5            | Michka, p. 8                                      | Teddy Ruxpin, p. 11           |
| Creature Garden, p. 5           | My Very Hungry Caterpillar AR*,<br>p. 9           | Thomas & Friends Minis, p. 11 |
| Cue, p. 6                       | Oregon Scientific SmartGlobe<br>Explorer AR, p. 9 | Tinybop Schools, p. 12        |
| Daniel Tiger's Storybooks, p. 6 | Pai Augie - Coding Robot, p. 9                    | Toca Life: Office *, p. 12    |
| Dino Tower, p. 7                | School of Dragons: Rise of<br>Stormheart, p. 10   |                               |
| Dr. Panda Town: Mall*, p. 7     | Shimmer and Shine: Genie<br>Games, p. 10          |                               |
| Fiete Quiztime, p. 7            | StoryTime: Billy Goats Gruff*,<br>p. 11           |                               |
| Hello Kitty Friends, p. 8       |   |                               |
| JumpStart Junior, p. 8          |   |                               |



*\* Denotes "Editor's Choice."*

"Facebook and Google have spent billions of dollars developing virtual reality systems. They can spare a billion or two to protect actual reality." Kevin Roose, from his New York Times essay "After Las Vegas Shooting, Fake News Regains Its Megaphone" at <https://nyti.ms/2yELf1S>



#### AMAZON WANTS YOUR CHILD'S IPAD

A bold holiday "buy back" program from Amazon.com is engineered to go after your child's iPad Mini.

"Trade in an iPad Mini and receive an Amazon.com gift card for the appraised value of your device, plus a \$20 credit that can be used toward a Fire Kids Edition tablet." We checked, and you can get as much as \$165 for a late model iPad Mini.

Besides making us wonder what Amazon will do with all those used iPads, there are two caveats to understand.

**1) Amazon's deal has a 365 day fuse.** The Amazon price goes up after the "free" one year trial ends, and that cost can be as much as \$132/year. If you don't pay on day 366, then "poof" -- your child's virtual bookshelf (and app and movie shelf) disappears.

**2) The iPad as a platform is better, with fewer strings.** Not only does it score better for hardware factors (UI, battery and screen) but the iPad has much more content, with no expiration date.

As with any digital decision around your children, read the fine print carefully, at <https://www.amazon.com/b/?ie=UTF8&node=10825011011>

#### HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SQUIRRELS?

**LittleClickers: Squirrels.** Fall is a busy time for the common squirrel. You see them everywhere - walking on wires and gathering food. How do they stay warm in the winter? How long do they live? Learn more at <http://littleclickers.com/squirrels/>

Select Condition  
Apple iPad mini 4 (128GB, Wi-Fi, Space Gray)  
By Apple



## Children's Technology Review October 2017

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Dust or Magic

Save these dates!  
[www.dustormagic.com](http://www.dustormagic.com)

**October 22-24 • Digital Storyteller's Retreat** at the Highlights Foundation

in Boyd's Mills, PA Three days at the intersection of language, literacy, storytelling and emerging technologies. \$1000 (all inclusive), including transportation to/from New York City airports.

**November 5-7 • 17th Annual Dust or Magic Institute on the Design of Children's Interactive Media** The original event that started it all. Review the year in

toys, video games, apps, AR and VR with the best minds in the world; all in one room, at the Inn at Lambertville Station, in New Jersey. \$1480/seat.

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5 (or so) sites  
& 10 videos

# Squirrels

LittleClickers is made possible by Computer Explorers

Safe, fun Internet explorations for children

LittleClickers is brought to you by Computer Explorers, who offer camps on programming.

Visit [www.computerexplorers.com](http://www.computerexplorers.com) to learn more. The web-based (html) version of this page is at <http://www.littleclickers.com> with live links, plus a place to report any errors.

Note that CTR and COMPUTER EXPLORERS do not have commercial interests in the sites listed on this page. Librarians and teachers are permitted to copy this page for non-profit use. To suggest a future topic, or to report a bad link, please contact the editor, Warren Buckleitner [WB] [warren@childrenstech.com](mailto:warren@childrenstech.com) or call 908-284-0404 (9 - 3 PM, EST). Thanks to Dr. Ellen Wolock for her help with this issue of LittleClickers.

Read this column online, with links, at [www.littleclickers.com/squirrels](http://www.littleclickers.com/squirrels)

Fall is a busy time for squirrels. In most parts of the US, you'll see them everywhere -- walking on wires, searching for food, and driving dogs crazy. How long do they live? Is a squirrel a rodent? How do they stay warm in the winter? Lets learn more.

**1. How long do squirrels live?** Compared to a dog or a cat, not that long -- on average about one to two years. Some free roaming grey squirrels have actually surpassed 10 years in age, and one squirrel lived in captivity for 20 years. Learn more at [bitly.com/2y0g3GV](http://bitly.com/2y0g3GV)

**2. Which is faster, an elephant or a squirrel?** According to [bitly.com/2yWeBmD](http://bitly.com/2yWeBmD) squirrels run about 12 miles per hour. An elephant's top speed is 25 miles per hour. The elephant wins this race, but elephants can't climb trees.

**3. How far can a squirrel jump... and fall?** Squirrels are amazing jumpers... up to 10 feet straight up. See for yourself at <https://youtu.be/j7-TtjltFWo>. They can also survive falls of up to 40 feet by using their tail as a parachute. Learn more at <http://bitly.com/2youlSu>.

**4. Where do squirrels go in the winter?** They don't hibernate, but they do sleep a lot... wrapped in their warm fuzzy tail. They might make a nest inside a hollow tree, or perhaps your attic. Read more at the Lincoln Park Zoo site <http://www.lpzoo.org/blog/what-do-squirrels-do-winter>.

**5. Is a squirrel a rodent?** You'll find a good discussion about this questions at Mental Floss [bitly.com/2xRabQq](http://bitly.com/2xRabQq). Squirrels are rodents belonging to the family Sciuridae. This is a large family of species that include chipmunks, prairie dogs, groundhogs (also called woodchucks), marmots, and flying squirrels.



### APPLICATION

Set up a Squirrel obstical course in your backyard. We found guidebook (by Darrington, Gardner, Sims and Spivey) that provides step by step plans for making a cours that can keep a squirrel busy -- and you entertained. [bitly.com/2xYSRbB](http://bitly.com/2xYSRbB).



Diagram 3



## Squirrels on YouTube

Want more? Here's a video playlist that go along with this column <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcBVHzUUEKwnYjdV4Aj1wweYa4ADu6Ptc>





# Fad, Feature or Both?

by Warren Buckleitner

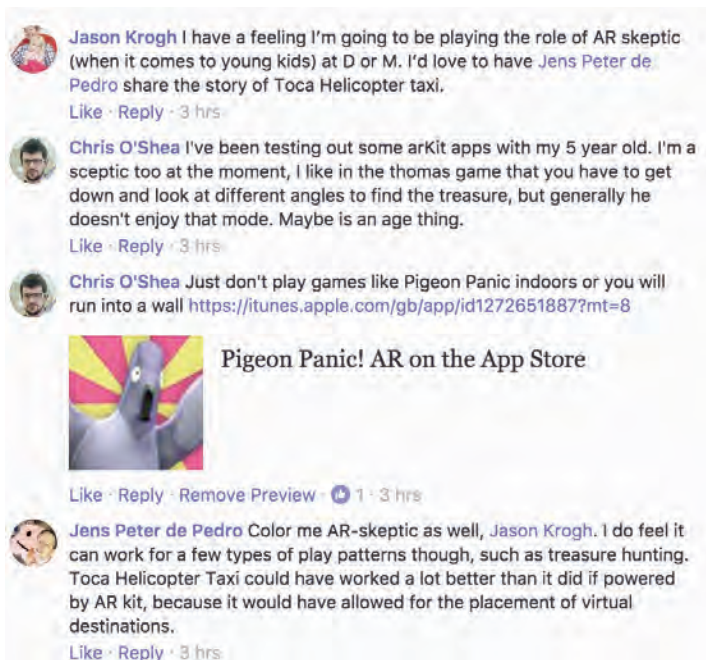
Any emerging technology brings new questions. To figure out what they mean for children, we always turn to a trusted source: child development theory. As more AR (Augmented Reality) apps come into the app stores, we're particularly interested to see how it can "hard wire" a representation of a child's real world to an abstract and symbolic one. A creative designer can bring blur the different between reality and fantasy -- a space that could be very interesting. This might be incredibly useful for language development, and is certainly rich in spatial problem solving. Once again Jean Piaget's ideas about representational thinking are useful for providing a framework.

On the "dust" front, AR counts as a "cool effect" that can wedge itself between a motivated child and his or her objective. If used carelessly, it can clutter things up. At this point, it ranks as a mostly frosting effect that can work in concert with a book or game. In the meantime, the Dust or Magic face-book page has attracted some excellent commentary among app designers:

**Jason Krogh** (Sago Mini) I have a feeling I'm going to be playing the role of AR skeptic (when it comes to young kids) at D or M. I'd love to have Jens Peter de Pedro share the story of Toca Helicopter taxi.

**Chris O'Shea** (Cowly Owl) I've been testing out some arKit apps with my 5 year old. I'm a sceptic too at the moment. I like it in Thomas & Friends Minis (<http://reviews.childrenstech.com/ctr/fullreview.php?id=19735>) that you have to get down and look at different angles to find the treasure, but generally he doesn't enjoy that mode. Maybe is an age thing. Just don't play games like Pigeon Panic AR indoors or you will run into a wall. <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/id1272651887?mt=8>

**Jens Peter de Pedro** (former Toca Boca designer, Biff Niff) Color me AR-skeptic as well, Jason Krogh. I do feel it can work for a few types of play patterns though, such as treasure hunting. Toca Helicopter Taxi could have worked a lot better than it did if powered by AR kit, because it would have allowed for the placement of virtual destinations.





# Feature Reviews and New Releases

OCTOBER 2017

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.

## Animal Rescue

10/4/2017 Note that the menu has been simplified, increasing feelings of control. The rating has been adjusted.

Short, sweet and innovative, this app deals with the treatment of 14 common animals that are often subject to hunting or captivity.


For example, on one page you might see a set of chickens in cages. Your swipe turns them into free-range chickens. The illustrations are well done and the sounds support the narrative. This app is designed to reinforce an environmental message about the ethical treatment of animals. Designed for the iPhone 5 and up, iPad and Android. Ebooks are easy to find in many forms, but this is the first we've found to offer "transparent pages" that let you move items from one page to the other with a swipe. In this case, you flip the page to rescue one of animals by way of a clever visual trick that you control with your swipe.

Need to know: There's not much content -- just 14 animals and no other interactive features besides the page trick. But it's a cool visual trick that is high in child control.

Details: PatrickGeorge Ltd, [www.patrickgeorge.com](http://www.patrickgeorge.com). Price: \$1.99. Ages: 4-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: animals, conservation, animal rights, biology, ecology. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.8 stars. Entry date: 3/14/2017. [buckleit]



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



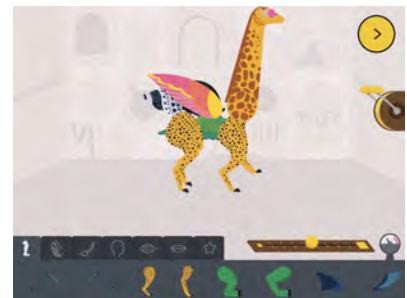
## Creature Garden, The

This open-ended experience lets you mix and match exotic creator parts like hooves, fins, heads, horns, wings, beaks and paws... to see them come to life. The parts can be resized for more strength for flying or swimming, for example. After you make your creature, you take it to a lab see how it works when running, swimming or flying.


The final step is a visit to the garden where you can let your critters roam to see how they interact with one another. Cross breeding is an option, and there are races. Content includes 100 parts and the ability to save creatures in your own profile.

Need to know: The art has a distinctly exotic look, created by artist Natasha Durley.

Details: Tinybop, Inc., [www.tinybop.com](http://www.tinybop.com). Price: \$2.99. Ages: 6-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, art, logic, storytelling, cause and effect. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 9/14/2017. []



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





## Cue

What's fast, talks a lot, and can be programmed? This new rolling robot follows in the tradition of Dash from Wonder Workshop. It rolls faster and knows more words. It is the star of three new "CleverBots" from Wonder Workshop, each for a different age group.

After you charge Cue via USB you download the free controller app (for iOS and Android) and select one of four modes: Chat (send and receive text messages with 30,000 possible responses with a vocabulary of 170,000 words); Control (an auto modes that lets Cue seek, avoid, and explore to navigate obstacles); Create (discover a freestyle environment to program adventures using Cue's proximity sensors, encoders, gyro, accelerometer and microphones) and Code (build your program with blocks or toggle to JavaScript text mode).

As with Dash, there is no camera in this edition. Objects and walls are sensed via IR (infrared) receivers and transmitters, microphones and a speaker, voice triangulation (so it can look at you) and personalized recording and playback. Cue supports Apple's Swift, and can be customized by assigning up to four Avatars (personality profiles) sold for \$4.99 each, as an in-app purchase. Our testers downloaded "Smirk" and were sorry -- they thought thought this personality talked too much. They wanted to reset the robot to one of the "less chatty" personality. Sadly this is not possible -- once your robot is imprinted, there's no turning back -- unless you pay \$4.99 as an IAP for another test.

Need to know: Skip all the chat and go straight to the movement controls and coding features -- that's where this robot ads the most value. Wonder Workshop is also announcing a partnership with Microsoft. Cue's coding experience was built upon Microsoft's open source platform, MakeCode. Cue comes in two colors: white or black. See also the Dot Creativity Kit is \$80.

Details: Wonder Workshop, [www.makewonder.com](http://www.makewonder.com). Price: \$200 plus IAP. Ages: 11-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: coding, STEM, robotics. Entry date: 9/19/2017.



## Daniel Tiger's Storybooks

From a content point of view, the five short stories in this app are "pure Mr. Rogers," who would've most likely liked of the messages of sharing and helping. Parent/child props pop up from the bottom of the screen, offering suggestions for a nearby adult. These tips can be turned on or off in the parent's menu, and it is also possible to toggle between Spanish and English. There are five stories as of 9/6/2017: Big Brother Daniel, Daniel Shares His Tigertastic Car, Daniel and His Friends, Daniel's Babysitter and Neighborhood Cleanup. Each consists of ten screens. The illustrations and narration are TV quality, but the interactive design offers false choices, in the form of items that look interesting but don't respond to a curious finger, and sluggish page transitions. You can't see all five stories in the main menu (increasing the chance you'll never find them) and you don't know how long the story is when you're in the middle pages. We're not big fans of "page flippers" that don't stray far beyond a book metaphor other than a few sprinkled animated routines and some faux page flipping sounds. Apps from StoryToys and Nosy Crow do a much better job with digital storytelling on touch screens.

The bottom line? While the interactive design is limited, it's easy to forgive the flaws in light of the useful Daniel Tiger themes.

Details: PBS Kids, [www.pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org). Price: \$2.99. Ages: 3-7. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Kindle, Android. Teaches/Purpose: helping, inter-personal skills, social relationships, reading, language. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.6 stars. Entry date: 9/5/2017. []



Ease of Use	8	72%
Educational	7	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	7	





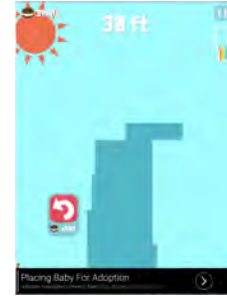
## Dino Tower

Fun but evil, this is a free addicting tower building game with a dinosaur twist. Note that the app is called "Stack Dino Tower" in Google Play.

As you line up slices of dinosaurs to try for a higher tower, the app serves up ads. Most are floor banner ads, but there is an occasional full screen ad that requires closing a window to continue.

The app uses behavioral shaping techniques to increase engagement, and keep you watching the ads. For example, if you are able to line up the slices of dinosaur neck just right, you are rewarded with a very satisfying shower of stars. If you can get eight perfect matches in a row, you get an extra big reward and a new record. The result is an effective pairing of competence and exposure to advertising. The app comes from Super Awesome, the UK advertising/children's app development company that specializes in delivering custom child safe ads to an under age 13 audience.

Details: SuperAwesome, [www.superawesome.tv/](http://www.superawesome.tv/). Price: \$free with ads. Ages: 6-13. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: logic, timing, spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.6 stars. Entry date: 9/5/2017. []



<b>Ease of Use</b>	9	72%
<b>Educational</b>	8	
<b>Entertaining</b>	9	
<b>Design Features</b>	9	
<b>Good Value</b>	1	

## Dr. Panda Town: Mall

The second in the Dr. Panda Town series, this virtual Mall also has a design similar to Toca Life, offering a dollhouse-style experience that lets you freely move around to visit three floors with shops, a food court and a movie theater.

There are 16 characters and 25 outfits that can be mixed and matched. The app supports multi-touch, so children can play together. A shared map menu shows the other Dr. Panda town apps you have unlocked or may unlock in the future, making it possible for your world to grow with each download. Additional areas in Dr. Panda Town: Mall can be added via a one time in-app purchase. These permanently unlock the content for your account.

There are no voice recording or movie making features.

The free app comes with 1/3 of the content unlocked. The other two areas are shown to children with a lock. See also Dr. Panda School and the Toca Life series.

Details: Dr. Panda Limited, [drpanda.com](http://drpanda.com). Price: \$free plus IAP for \$4.99. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, representation, logic. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 9/15/2017. []



<b>Ease of Use</b>	9	90%
<b>Educational</b>	8	
<b>Entertaining</b>	9	
<b>Design Features</b>	9	
<b>Good Value</b>	10	



## Fiete Quiztime

Fast and fun but a bit buggy (with some examples of sloppy English) this playful trivia experience contains 500 questions, divided five categories (Animals, Dinosaurs, Horses, Nature and Knights & Co. A random feature draws from the entire pool. There's a multi-player option that lets up to four players compete. Scores are saved on a leaderboard. Questions are presented in a large, clear font, in English or German. The app requires a lot of reading, and is good for reading practice.

The free starter set gives you 25 questions. You can unlock all 500 questions for \$1.99 as a one time IAP.

Details: Ahoiii Entertainment UG, [www.fiete-app.com](http://www.fiete-app.com). Price: \$free with IAP. Ages: 6-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading, trivia, science, facts, history, horses. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4 stars. Entry date: 9/27/2017. [buckleit]



<b>Ease of Use</b>	8	80%
<b>Educational</b>	8	
<b>Entertaining</b>	9	
<b>Design Features</b>	7	
<b>Good Value</b>	8	



## Hello Kitty Friends

Think Candy Crush with kittens, and you get the idea of this addictive puzzle game featuring Hello Kitty characters. Adapted from Bejeweled, the entire experience is designed provided a fun, easy experience at first that eventually requires money to continue.

If you match two or more characters on a grid, you earn points. Success requires fast action, and purchasing additional gems, sold in bundles of 80 for \$4.99. You can also get a and unlimited "24 Hours Pack" for \$59.99.

The app is made by Super Awesome, a company known for helping sites deliver COPPA safe advertising to children. In this case, the app creates an unhealthy blend child-oriented content with addicting game play and powerful reinforcements; all with the intention of getting you to spend money.

Details: SuperAwesome, [www.superawesome.tv/](http://www.superawesome.tv/). Price: \$free with IAP. Ages: 6-14. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: logic, matching. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.4 stars. Entry date: 9/5/2017. []



<b>Ease of Use</b>	9	68%
<b>Educational</b>	7	
<b>Entertaining</b>	9	
<b>Design Features</b>	8	
<b>Good Value</b>	1	

## JumpStart Junior

JumpStart Junior mobile "invites kids to join Botley in an interactive world full of games and missions that address topics like shapes, letter and number recognition, Phonics, counting and rhythm." The app is free to play while membership options are also available starting at \$9.99 a month.

Details: JumpStart, [www.JumpStart.com](http://www.JumpStart.com). Price: \$free with IAP of \$9.99/month. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad, Android. Teaches/Purpose: readiness skills. Entry date: 9/19/2017.



## Michka

Sahar Shams is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse in Iran. So she made an ebook with games, designed to help children better understand and report sexual abuse.

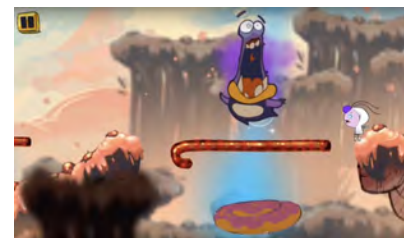
In the story, Michka -- a gender neutral insect-- has wings are a private part that should not be touched by others.

When Mr. Koopoom, an adult insect, touches Michka's wings, Michka becomes confused about what it should do.

The story tells a tale of how children can talk to their parents about things that are confusing. The story is by Sahar Shams a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. She created the app for Iranian parents to talk about the difficult topic of sexual abuse. Michka is the sixth app from United for Iran's app incubation project, the IranCubator. United for Iran launched its new app incubation program in June 2016, seeking to match civil society activists with app developers and programmers to build smartphone applications for the 40 million smartphone users currently living in Iran.

IranCubator provided financial and technical support to winning developers and activists with projects that advance civil society in Iran.

Details: Shams Studio, [www.shamsstudio.net](http://www.shamsstudio.net). Price: \$free. Ages: 5-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: sexual abuse, health, reading. Entry date: 9/29/2017.







## My Very Hungry Caterpillar AR

Now you can bring the caterpillar into your living room (classroom or library) with this AR (Augmented Reality) edition of My Very Hungry Caterpillar. Teachers and librarians -- plug the app into a big screen to let the caterpillar loose during your story time.

AR means that the computer generated graphics are layered over the images captured by your iPad's camera, in real time, giving the illusion that the caterpillar's world exists in your world. After a bit of experimentation (moving your tablet around to find spot in the room), our testers got the concept, feeding apples and pears to their caterpillar to see it fatten up and eventually turn into a butterfly that flaps around your room. Besides to cool visual effects, there's not much else to do with this app. Those looking for a narrative structure will be disappointed. Our testers ran out of things to do after exploring the toy chest. This app would be a nice addition to the existing My Very Hungry Caterpillar app. As a stand-alone experience however, it offers a high novelty effect with little lasting play value.

The app was made using Apple's ARKit, which means it won't work unless you are using iOS System 11 or newer on your device. Compatible devices are iPhone 6s and 6s Plus, iPhone 7 and 7 Plus, iPhone SE, iPad Pro (9.7, 10.5 or 12.9), iPad (2017).

Details: StoryToys, [www.storytoys.com](http://www.storytoys.com). Price: \$2.99. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: spatial relations, augmented reality. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 9/19/2017. [buckleit]



<b>Ease of Use</b>	8	88%
<b>Educational</b>	8	
<b>Entertaining</b>	9	
<b>Design Features</b>	9	
<b>Good Value</b>	10	

## Oregon Scientific SmartGlobe Explorer AR

Tap the surface of this globe with a fat space shuttle shaped stylus, to explore geography facts. You can also download the associated AR (Augmented Reality) app and watch as landmarks pop up on your screen, along with facts. The stylus is loaded with geography and history facts, presented according to the age you select on the globe's dashboard. The app (on both iTunes or Android) turns your phone or tablet into a portal, letting you explore animals, landmarks, dinosaurs and more that pop up on your screen as you reveal the globe in your camera viewfinder. You can tap on the images to learn more. According to the publisher there are 20,000 facts covering general history, 220 national anthems, population facts and news. Six language options: English (US), English (UK), Spanish, Italian, Russian and French.

Need to know: The sound comes out of the stylus, which also contains controls for volume, a USB port and a headphone jack. Because there is no tether, the globe won't work (other than serving as a globe) if the stylus is misplaced. The globe also opens up to reveal interactive photos of the solar system and the Earth's inner layers. Everything you see is explained verbally in your choice of six languages.

Details: Oregon Scientific, [www.oregonscientific.com](http://www.oregonscientific.com). Price: \$130. Ages: 5-15. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: geography, history, geology (Earth science), astronomy, science. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4 stars. Entry date: 9/11/2017. []



<b>Ease of Use</b>	9	80%
<b>Educational</b>	8	
<b>Entertaining</b>	7	
<b>Design Features</b>	8	
<b>Good Value</b>	8	

## Pai Augie - Coding Robot

Combining three sexy topics into one product (AI, robotics and coding) this \$200 rolling robot is designed to "pair coding with augmented reality." You must first pair the robot with your phone or tablet by downloading the app.

You can either freely drive your robot around or program movements and behaviors using Google's open source Blockly code.

A video function lets you record sounds and movies, which can be viewed on your phone or tablet. Each feature is introduced by video tutorial. Modes include structured programming tasks (executing the right commands to move to the next level) and free play-programming with Blockly.

Need to know: Many features are similar to Dash and Dot from Wonder Workshop, with the exception of the AR, that is delivered with the app.

Details: Pai Technology, . Price: \$200. Ages: 5-12. Platform: iPad, Android. Teaches/Purpose: robotics, programming. Entry date: 9/17/2017.





## School of Dragons: Rise of Stormheart

This is an expansion pack for the virtual world by JumpStart Games. It is the first release for the studio since being acquired by Hong Kong-based company, NetDragon Websoft.

Released in tandem with the new season of DreamWorks Animation TV's Netflix Original Series *Dragons: Race to the Edge*, *Rise of Stormheart* lets you play with characters from DreamWorks Animation's *How to Train Your Dragon* universe.

*Rise of Stormheart* takes off exactly where the last expansion left off, inviting Vikings to use the skills and knowledge from previous educational quests as they face off against a new foe, Nikora Stormheart.

While helping Hiccup and friends secure *Dragon's Edge*, players are challenged with various tasks and must surpass 4 levels of strategy-focused gameplay as part of their introduction to *School of Dragon's* most adventurous mini game - *Dragon Tactics*. All the while, players are working their way toward unlocking access to the popular Triple Stryke dragon as they interact with familiar characters such as Dagur and Harald. Available for free to all new and existing *School of Dragons* members, nonmembers can also purchase *Rise of Stormheart* with Gems. *School of Dragons* is available to download on the App Store, Google Play™, Amazon®, Windows, Steam and online at <http://www.schoolofdragons.com/>.



Details: Jumpstart, [www.JumpStart.com](http://www.JumpStart.com). Price: . Ages: 9-12. Platform: Chrome, iPad, iPhone, Android, Internet Site. Teaches/Purpose: . Entry date: 9/19/2017.

## Shimmer and Shine: Genie Games

Apple says this is one of the "Apps We Love" in iTunes. So we downloaded a paid version, and once again, wonder about Apple's selection process. Not only is the interactive design rudimentary, the content is limited to four non-original games, each with a "bling" theme. The paid app includes ads for additional Nick content, within the context of the child's experience. Translation? Not good on many levels for a paid app. Apple can make wonderful hardware and curved glass buildings, but has yet to master how to recommend well designed, ethical apps for children.

Need to know: If apps were people, this one would be a chatty, overly helpful teacher who likes glitter, and who assumes you've never touched a screen. There's excessive coaching (a lot) and that you need rewards in order to stay interested in a game. S/he also sends a detailed report of what you do and gives it to the publisher, and recommends other Nick-related apps. In app-speak "this app may include the use of persistent identifiers for game management purposes and installation of this app constitutes your permission to such usage of persistent identifiers for all users on your device." All for \$2.99.

Details: Nickelodeon, [www.nick.com](http://www.nick.com). Price: \$2.99 plus ads. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: logic, classification. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.1 stars. Entry date: 9/12/2017. []



Ease of Use	7	62%
Educational	7	
Entertaining	6	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	4	



## StoryTime: Billy Goats Gruff


The first of a new series of storyapps called "StoryTime," this rendition of Billy Goats Gruff combines quality illustrations and narration with a simple narrative structure that sticks with the original story. According to press materials, this new series is designed to "provide a rich literacy experience in an easy to use format." There are three modes available in the parent's menu: Read to Me (text is read by a narrator as text highlights); Read by Myself (text is presented with no narration); and Picture Mode (no text). At one point in the story -- just after the goats cross the bridge -- a "Kid Prompts" appears -- a classic comprehension building strategy. In this case "How did the goats plan together to get across the bridge?" There is no table of contents, so you can't easily navigate within the story, and you need to go all the way to the end to find the credits (why not include them in the parent's menu?). We liked the ability to adjust the presentation, background music and reading mode. For example the Picture Mode presents the story without any text, making it possible to add your own narration. It would be good if a child could record his or her own voice reading the story. Future storyapps include Sinbad the Sailor, Pinocchio and Jack and the Beanstalk.

Need to know: Looking for the credits? You have to go all the way to the end of the story to see the credits (the illustration is by Fiona Curran, the story text by Jim Pipe). Also you can't touch and hear specific words to hear them sounded out individually.

Details: StoryToys, [www.storytoys.com](http://www.storytoys.com). Price: \$1.99. Ages: 3-7. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading, fairy tales. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 9/6/2017. [buckleit]



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



## Teddy Ruxpin

First released in the 1985 the original talking bear now has technology that the original Teddy Ruxpin creator, Ken Forsche, could've only dreamed of.

This edition -- about the same size (14 inches) has a motorized mouth and color LCD eyes that can deliver stories with expression. Everything is synched to stories that are delivered via bluetooth from an app. Once things are setup, the toy works independently from the app.

Sensors in the hands and vest let you start, pause and fast-forward through stories and songs. So the idea is the same, but the technology is very different.

Content includes 3 built-in stories with 7 additional stories available for purchase through the free app. Learn more at <http://teddyruxpin.com/> Runs on 4 AA batteries.

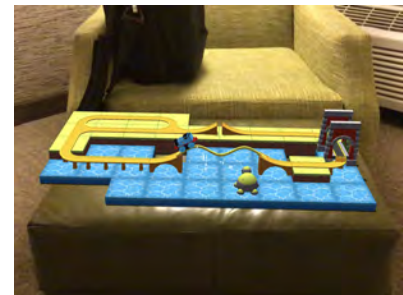
Details: Wicked Cool Toys, [www.wickedcooltoys.com](http://www.wickedcooltoys.com). Price: \$100. Ages: 2-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: language. Entry date: 9/26/2017.



## Thomas & Friends Minis

Create your very own train by dragging and dropping parts onto a small grid, and then bring it to life on your living room rug using the build in AR features. As you move around the track you unlock stars that can be used for additional trains or parts. The app is designed to promote additional branded expansion packs for \$10 each. Made with Apple's ARKit. You'll need iOS 11 to use this app.

Details: Budge Studios, [www.budgetstudios.ca](http://www.budgetstudios.ca). Price: \$free with IAP. Ages: 4-7. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: spatial relations, logic. Entry date: 9/20/2017.







## Tinybop Schools

This is a web-based platform designed to bring selections from Tinybop's high quality apps into schools, even if they don't have iPads.

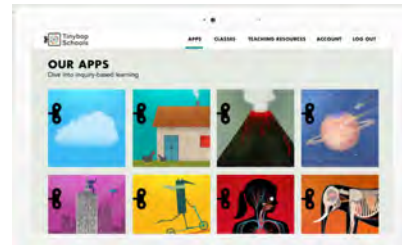
The models actually work in exactly the same way as the established apps, and will work via 'click' on a desktop in the same way. There haven't been any operational changes apart from the fact they also work on a web-connected desktop.

The models cover anatomy in The Human Body, zoology in Mammals, geography in Homes, physics in Simple Machines, geology in The Earth, meteorology in Weather, engineering in Skyscrapers, and astronomy in Space.

In each model, students can observe, explore, and test interactive renderings of real-world systems, such as the water cycle in weather, forces and movement in Simple Machines, and the solar system in Space. Simulations highlight key concepts, such as how the skeletal system supports the body as bones are removed. In Skyscrapers, students can test structures during high winds and earthquakes and observe how buildings are designed to move, while also keeping people safe and secure.

Record keeping features let teachers monitor student progress. Learn more at <http://tinybopschools.com>.

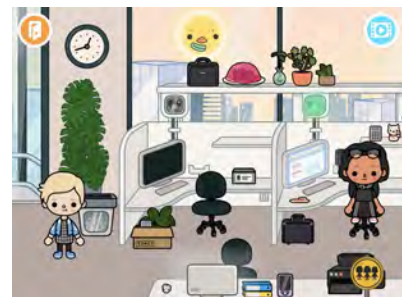
Details: Tinybop, . Price: \$2000/year. Ages: 5-11. Platform: iPad, Android, Chrome, Internet Site. Teaches/Purpose: science, biology, weather, geology, astronomy. Entry date: 9/19/2017.



## Toca Life: Office

Freely explore six job locations where you can cook food, print documents, put people in jail and so on. If you've used any previous Toca Life apps, you get the idea of this version -- simply tap one of the six locations that include a bank, an office, a rooftop, a courthouse, an apartment and a daycare. There are 35 new gender and ethnically mixed characters that you can use as props in a video puppet show, that you can export to your photo library. There are hidden features to discover in this edition, including hidden costumes that can convert characters into superheroes. You can keep valuables in the bank vault and set the alarm to keep them secure. Need to know: Reset everything using the restore icon on the main menu. This is an excellent language stimulation experience... children will encounter many everyday items that they will want to talk about.

Details: Toca Boca, <http://tocaboca.com/>. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 6-9. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, spatial relations, representational play. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.9 stars. Entry date: 9/19/2017. []



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

