



Children's  
**TECHNOLOGY**  
REVIEW EXCHANGE

Our amazing  
LittleClickers  
topic this  
month...



May 2018

**Oh No!!**

More bad news for children's  
digital publishing

**Nosy Crow  
is giving up  
on apps!**

Find out why, on page 2



On this month's cover: Hansel and Gretel -- the last fairy tale app to be published by UK based Nosy Crow

**Children's Technology Review  
May 2018**

Volume 26, No. 5 Issue 219

Baby Alive Potty Dance Baby  
Beyblade Burst Switchstrike  
Chow Crown  
Evo Explores\*  
Feed Me Cookie Monster  
Fortnite\*  
Hansel and Gretel\*

Lola Slug at the Exhibition  
My Perfect Puppy  
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Variety Kit  
Orboot  
.projekt\*  
Run Ready Run!  
There's a Wocket in my Pocket -  
Read & Learn by Dr. Seuss\*



\* Denotes "Editor's Choice."

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**ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTIONS** are regularly \$60 for 12 monthly issues, 52 weekly issues plus online database access. Weekly issues are sent at 8:30 AM on Wednesdays EST. Site subscriptions are available. Contact *Children's Technology Review*™, 126 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822 or call 908-284-0404. Visit [www.childrenstech.com](http://www.childrenstech.com) to learn more.

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**PUBLISHER INFORMATION** *Children's Technology Review*™ (ISSN 1555-242X) is published monthly (12 issues) by Active Learning Associates, Inc. Send address changes or new subscriptions to *Children's Technology Review*™, 126 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822 or [circulation@childrenstech.com](mailto:circulation@childrenstech.com). **Use of this publication for any commercial publishing activity without prior written permission is strictly prohibited.** Readers are subject to the TERMS OF USE found at <http://childrenstech.com/disclaimer>

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"I am so ridiculously proud of those apps, and of our courage and persistence and avid learning while we made making them. But the market for children's book apps that we hoped would develop - on the App Store supported strongly by Apple, and among our publisher competitors who had great content and great experience of storytelling- just didn't happen to the extent we thought it would." Kate Wilson, CEO, *Nosy Crow*



Dear CTR Subscribers --

Some bittersweet news this month. While we were thrilled to see a fresh new app from *Nosy Crow* (see the review of *Hansel and Gretel*, in this issue), we were sad to read an accompanying press release stating this would be among the last apps the respected publisher would make. We chalk this up to the growing "culture of free" that dominates the app stores. According to *Nosy Crow*'s top crow, Kate Wilson, "we'll be closing our in-house app department and saying goodbye to three remarkable, brilliant, creative colleagues, Ed Bryan, Will Bryan and Andrew James. The cost of making apps like ours is high, and we have not seen the market for them develop in the way that we would have liked. **It seems that many parents don't choose to spend money on digital content for children and fewer children and their parents are reading on screen than we had hoped.**

*Nosy Crow* also publishes regular books, and that market is up by 35% (per Nielsen). "It makes sense for us to focus our resources on the resilient children's print market and on the area of the business where we are enjoying such success," said Wilson. "We have learned so much from making apps in-house. It has enabled us to better understand what print can do that the screen cannot, making us better print publishers in the process." **So is there a viable business model for digital children's content?** We're reviewing more subscriptions, and AR books -- that require a physical book purchase -- might be worth exploring. See **My Perfect Puppy** by Carton Books, at <http://bitly.com/2HQrerF> for example. We don't know. But we do know that **Hansel and Gretel** is well worth every cent of your \$4.99.

Do you want more? Read about Kate Wilson's pioneering work with screen reading, at "Lesson's in App-Craft" at <http://bitly.com/2HSvN4U>

**LITTLECLICKERS: DRONES** For about the cost of a good bicycle, you can purchase a powerful drone that can fly for up to 20 minutes, and land itself. See page three.

**ILLUSTRATION MAGIC** Celebrate the Illustration Art of Alice and Martin Provensen. Alice died this week at age 99. You may not know her name, but you know her images. Watch the tribute, at <https://youtu.be/KC02klubaww>

Dust or Magic

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

June 1-3, 2018 • AppCamp The West Coast edition

of Dust or Magic, at the Asilomar Conference Grounds. \$1280/seat.

Nov 4-6, 2018 • Institute The 18th Annual fall institute will once again take place at the Inn

at Lambertville Station. \$1480/seat.

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5 (or so) sites & 10 videos

# Drone Rules



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

Drones are a mixture of the powerful technologies, many of which didn't exist a few years ago. Today you can purchase a drone for about the price of a bicycle that can fly for 20 minutes while taking clear, stable videos. Your new eyes in the sky requires new responsibilities, so let's take a crash course in flying a drone.

**1. How high can I legally fly?** 400 feet; or a 40 story building. At the <https://faadronezone.faa.gov> you'll find a set of rules that include:

- Only fly for fun. You must register with the FAA if you are hired for a job, such as to take photos of a roof. If the police spot you flying an unregistered drone or if someone complains, you could get fined.
- Fly during the daytime, when you can see your drone.
- Your drone can't be too big. But this shouldn't be a problem, because the FAA says it must weigh less than 55 lbs (a heavy suitcase).
- You must always keep your drone in view when flying.
- Stay away from other aircraft or emergency response efforts.
- Never fly over active roads, moving traffic or people.
- Be aware of controlled airspace, such as around military bases or around airports.

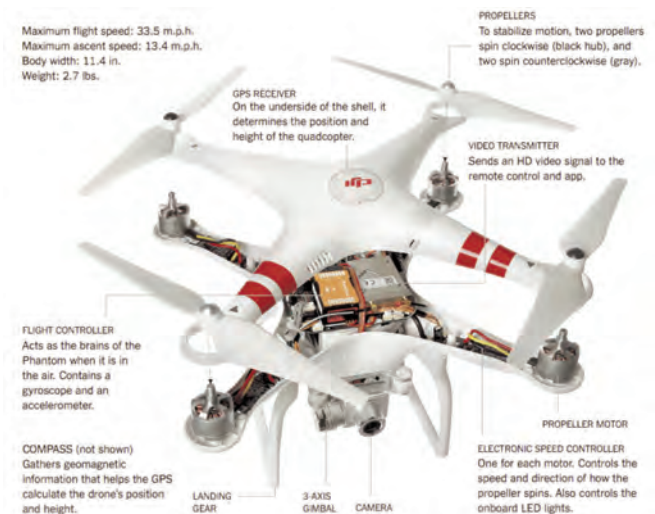
**2. Can anyone fly a drone?** There are more and more rules about drones. If you're serious you should register your drone with the FAA (Federal Aviation Association). It only costs \$5, and takes a few minutes. Visit <https://www.faa.gov/uas/> to learn more.

**3. What does UAS stand for?** Unmanned Aircraft Systems. That's what a drone is. Check out this college degree in UAS, at Embry-Riddle University <http://bitly.com/2rrOu4r>

**4. I'm really serious about drones, and I don't want a toy. What should I get?** You have a lot of choices. One of our testers uses a the DJI Spark for about \$550. It can fly for about 20 minutes and works with your smart phone. It comes with crash guards and spare parts.

**APPLICATION: MAKE A DRONE OBSTACLE COURSE**  
Sharpen your drone flying skills! Check out this drone store, full of ideas for making a drone obstacle course <http://bitly.com/2KAVAMw>.

Or you can make one inside your house. Here's a plan we found [http://thomasrenck.com/share/Microdrone Course Project.pdf](http://thomasrenck.com/share/Microdrone%20Course%20Project.pdf)



From: a field guide to civilian drones, in the New York Times <https://nyti.ms/2k50qn9>

**LittleClickers**  
Safe, fun Internet explorations for children

**Computer Explorers**

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## Drones Rules on YouTube

Want more? Here's a video playlist that go along with this column

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcBVHzUUEKwkj8iyWUE2AkOCFmenf18PT&jct=niOT3T1DwhG38mwjMlipaf1qb91k6A>





# Feature Reviews and New Releases

MAY 2018

*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.*

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## My Perfect Puppy

Buy the 32 page hardcover book for about \$10 -- and you have a high quality, durable, illustrated non-fiction book by Kay Woodward with clear photos and real puppy facts.

And if you want more, you can download the app on your phone or tablet for an Augmented Reality puppy experience. These puppies do more than just pop off the page. You can swipe the screen to teach them tricks, "pet" them, give them treats, given them a new name or toys, and play a game of fetch. Content includes six puppies. The app is free for some base content. More features can be unlocked with and IAP. It works with iOS.

Details: Carlton Books Limited, [www.carltonbooks.co.uk](http://www.carltonbooks.co.uk). Price: \$2.99. Ages: 4-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: language, animals, dogs. Entry date: 2/13/2018.



## Nintendo Labo Toy-Con 01 Variety Kit

This kit has the lowest entry price, and it comes with enough materials to make two small RC cars, a fishing rod, house, motorbike and piano.

Details: Nintendo of America, [www.nintendo.com](http://www.nintendo.com). Price: \$70. Ages: 7-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: creativity, spatial thinking. Entry date: 2/20/2018.





## Chow Crown

Put a party on your head, with this rotating eating game. After you clip eight pieces of food onto the rotating clips, you press a start button. Music plays, and you attempt to get the treats into your mouth. The crown is powered by AA batteries, and the size can be adjusted.

Details: Hasbro, Inc., [www.hasbro.com](http://www.hasbro.com). Price: \$20. Ages: 10-up. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: a social game. Entry date: 4/10/2018.



## Beyblade Burst Switchstrike

Pull the zip line, to spin your top (aka "Beyblade") with this continually evolving new set of collectible battle tops. New for 2018: more choices, an improved app and a four player Battle Tower. The Android/iOS app requires the purchase of the toys.

Some Beyblades have a small QR code that you "scan" with the app (using your camera) to activate the battle. There's also an RC feature, that lets you reverse the direction of the spinning. There are many different configurations. For example, the "E Burst Evolution Switchstrike starter pack" (\$13) includes the ability to "burst" into pieces during the battle. The parts can be snapped together, to make custom tops.

Details: Hasbro, Inc., [www.hasbro.com](http://www.hasbro.com). Price: \$13 and up. Ages: 8-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: fine motor skills, logic. Entry date: 4/10/2018.



## Baby Alive Potty Dance Baby

Designed for potty training, this doll knows 50 phrases or potty-related sounds, and can be toggled between mommy/daddy and English/Spanish modes. After baby drinks from her water bottle, she does a "potty dance" to let mommy or daddy know she's gotta go! Once she starts dancing, you put the doll on the potty so she can tinkle. Included in the box are a potty, soap bottle, stickers and a reward chart, water bottle and comb; plus a pair of "big girl" underwear. Available in three hair colors and hair types. Powered by AA batteries. Coming Fall 18.

Details: Hasbro, Inc., [www.hasbro.com](http://www.hasbro.com). Price: \$50. Ages: 3-6. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: potty training, language. Entry date: 4/10/2018.



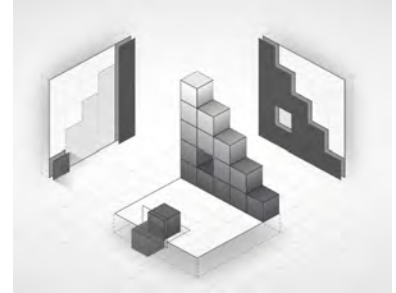


## .projekt

Simple, powerful and well designed, minimalistic puzzle challenges you to take different points of view to recreate a shadow, made of stacked blocks. Content includes 60 levels. Progress is automatically saved.

Other than an early ping to "rate this app" there are no ads, high-scores or time limits. It's easy to reset a level to try again. We would've liked the ability to jump to a harder level at any point, however. No language is required, and the tutorial is very well done. From creator of Evo Explores. Thanks to Barry O'Neill for suggesting this app.

Details: Kyrylo Kuzyk, <http://stampedegames.net/>. Price: \$1.99. Ages: 7-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Kindle, Windows, Mac OSX, Steam. Teaches/Purpose: logic, spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.8 stars. Entry date: 4/11/2018. []



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

## Lola Slug at the Exhibition

An interactive book app for beginning readers with or without special needs like dyslexia and SLD. Every letter has its own different shape so that you can well distinguish p, b, q, d, n, u, l (el), l (uppercase i), and 1 (one) even if you are seeing them mirrored or rotated like it happens in some kinds of dyslexia.

The app has a lower case "a" like a cursive "a" because this is the most taught at school around the world, but you can also choose between the cursive "a" and the standard "a". Backgrounds are light grey or coloured in order to prevent flashing effects on brilliant screens. The letter spacing is almost double than usual. High-readability font and letter spacing expressly designed for beginning readers with or without special needs. In the Read Myself mode special reading rulers help you to track one line at a time.

Details: Giulia Olivares, [www.giuliaolivares.com](http://www.giuliaolivares.com). Price: \$2.99. Ages: 6-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Apple TV, Android. Teaches/Purpose: reading, dyslexia, upper/lower case. Entry date: 4/14/2018.



## Feed Me Cookie Monster

This singing, vibrating plush toy is just like Tickle Me Elmo, only it's Cookie Monster. If you squeeze his belly he rumbles, and when you put the cookie in his mouth, he responds with the Cookie Monster song. Powered by AA batteries.

Release date "Fall 2018."

Details: Hasbro, Inc., [www.hasbro.com](http://www.hasbro.com). Price: \$30. Ages: 3-6. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: a musical plush toy. Entry date: 4/14/2018.





## Evo Explores

A 4D puzzle that is rich with spatial problem solving opportunities. Those familiar with Monument Valley (the obvious inspiration for this game). Content includes ten levels that you unlock, as they gradually get harder. There are more puzzle mechanics than Monument Valley, and there's more of a story. You turn cranks to manipulate walkways, rotate columns to build staircases, flip blocks shaped like a cassette tape to change planes, and more. The narrative is presented in writing between the levels, as you learn why Evo is exploring. There are no hints, so things can get frustrating when you get stuck. This app is available in many languages, and progress is saved for one player, automatically. The bottom line? This is an excellent app to download.


Also available on Blackberry at <https://appworld.blackberry.com/webstore/content/59967219/> and for Microsoft <https://www.microsoft.com/uk-ua/store/games/evo-explores/9nblggh6ch07>

See also .projekt

Details: Kyrylo Kuzyk, <http://stampedegames.net/>. Price: \$0.99. Ages: 10-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Kindle, Windows, Steam. Teaches/Purpose: spatial relations, logic, problem solving. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.6 stars. Entry date: 4/19/2018. []



<b>Ease of Use</b>	7	92 %
<b>Educational</b>	10	
<b>Entertaining</b>	9	
<b>Design Features</b>	10	
<b>Good Value</b>	10	



## Orboot

This is a physical, ten inch plastic globe/app combination, that offers AR features. If you download the free app, you can point the camera at one of the icons to trigger a set of animated objects from each region of the world. Once in the app, you can rotate the object with a swipe, and hear narration that varies in quality (see the testing video, below).

If you're looking for geographic detail, there's not much with this app. Each continent contains icons that serve as markers that trigger AR (augmented reality) events on the associated app. Besides the globe, printed materials include a set of stickers and a little book where you can stamp the places you discover. Need to know: the app was obviously designed for tablet (10 inch or larger) screens. It is impossible to read the text on phone-sized devices.

Details: PlayShifu, [www.playshifu.com/](http://www.playshifu.com/). Price: \$50. Ages: 7-14. Platform: iPad, Android. Teaches/Purpose: geography. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.2 stars. Entry date: 4/24/2018. []



<b>Ease of Use</b>	7	64 %
<b>Educational</b>	8	
<b>Entertaining</b>	7	
<b>Design Features</b>	5	
<b>Good Value</b>	5	



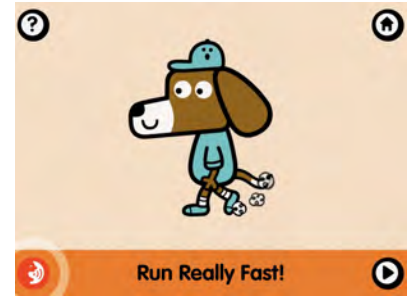
## Run Ready Run!

A simple, voice-driven story where you speak (out loud) short written commands to control your character. This is an extremely strong early reading experience, as we've seen with other software experiences like this one over the years. Once children learn that what they say can drive the screen activity, they understand the power of reading.

Scaffolding features include the ability to hear the words modeled. You can also skip ahead in the story in case your voice isn't picked up. This is an extremely strong early reading experience. Scaffolding features include the ability to hear the words sentence read outloud, plus you can jump forward in the story. After you download the app and grant permissions for voice commands, you see different actions on command.

Need to know: This app has some design flaws to note. The microphone doesn't always react, and the background music can become annoying. But these are minor problems because you can skip sentences at any time. One third of the app is free, unlocked; two other stories are locked, offered in the main menu as IAP.

Details: Banana73, [www.readreadyrun.com](http://www.readreadyrun.com). Price: \$1.99 for each story. Ages: 4-5. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: Reading, decoding, text to speech. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.2 stars. Entry date: 4/24/2018. []



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

## Hansel and Gretel

Another classic fairy tale gets the Nosy Crow treatment. The result is a rich language experience with features like automatic text highlighting.

You help the two children (Hansel and Gretel) collect items to outsmart the witch. These include collecting pebbles to mark your path back to your home, exploring a forest maze, finding watering can to grow a pumpkin, avoiding moving bats, catching eggs and more.

There's plenty to do -- content includes a 15 room house to explore with three games and seven interactive screens. Testers noted that moving items in the house can be clumsy. For example, there are times when you need to move a block onto a switch to open the door, but the block doesn't always "stick" to Gretel's hands. This is not a deal breaker. We like the well designed table of contents, which lets you jump around in the app. Those familiar with the original fairy tale will know that there are some dark underlying themes to this story -- things like kidnapping, imprisonment, child abandonment and being burned up in a hot stove. Each is handled in an appropriate manner -- staying true to the original narrative without unnecessary gore. The witch is shown being shot out of the chimney (rather than burned up); and the children make it back home with their loving father. The app features illustrations by Ed Bryan original music by Steve Burke. Tom Bonnick was the producer. The child narrators (Freya, Cora, Joe and Willow) are the same as the other Nosy Crow apps.

We've been informed by the publisher that that this will be the last interactive fairy tale to be released by app team at Nosy Crow. They will release one more app, Flip-Flap Dinosaurs, based on Axel Scheffer's book of the same name.

Details: Nosy Crow, [www.nosycrow.com](http://www.nosycrow.com). Price: \$4.99. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading, logic, spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 4/26/2018. []



Ease of Use	8	94 %
Educational	10	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	10	







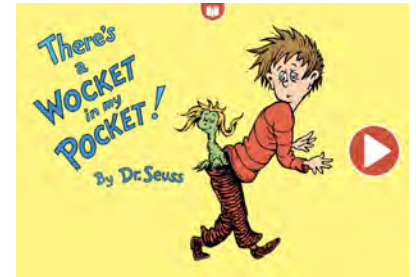
## There's a Wocket in my Pocket - Read & Learn by Dr. Seuss

Inspired by the Dr. Seuss classic "There's a Wocket in my Pocket!" this is another well-designed "read and learn" app, that mixes a playful story, great illustrations and solid reading skill reinforcement activities.


Missing are commercials or IAPs. As you explore the pages, you can discover hidden stars that lead to ten bite-sized structured memory and phonics practice activities. 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.

As the title might imply, the story was written for very early readers. The entire presentation has a lot of quality illustrations, fonts and narration. 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](http://www.oceanhousemedia.com). Price: \$3.99. Ages: 3-12. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: reading, language. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.9 stars. Entry date: 4/30/2018. []



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



## Fortnite

They're not supposed to play it -- in theory -- but children as young as five are playing this "free" well designed 'Teen' rated first person PVP (Player Vs. Player) shooter, with plenty of automatic weapons. Here's what the mobile (iOS) is, and how it works.

After you download the app (there are also console versions with different features) you are required to set up an account, and agree to the terms of use. Next, you skydive onto an island, where 100 other players are also landing. You can also play in Squad mode, where you team up with others.

There are many choices on where you land -- from small towns to factories or farms. The theme changes each month. Once you land, it's every man (or woman) for him/herself. To win, you must move quickly, hide, build structures and kill as many other players as possible. When you make a kill, you get your victims stuff. But if you are killed, you can watch as an observer -- as your killer hunts for (or becomes) the next victim. This an effective teaching strategy.

Your goal is to survive, and kill others so that you're the last person alive. We were impressed by the building tools and the number of clever hiding places. Your chances of surviving, and your looks increase if you spend real money. If you win, you get to perform your own custom dance for the others.

For mobile (only available for iOS as of April 2018) you download the app for free. After you register (fake accounts work) you get a plain avatar with regular weapons. You soon learn that you can purchase more gear or clothing in a store using IAP packs for as much as \$99 real dollars. The console version also contains "packs" of content, consisting of loot and/or weapons. Fortnite comes from North Carolina based publisher Epic Games, who also produces the Unreal 4 game engine which powers Fortnite. Note that there are several versions of the game for different platforms, and it is possible to pass the same game between different platforms.

Need to know: There is no blood, but there is plenty of realistic sounding automatic weapons, with snipers; and the central theme is killing people (not unlike games like Assassins Creed or Halo). Be sure to watch the tester footage to make sure you're OK with this concept. We were able to start playing with a fake account. Gender features are amplified on the avatars who also represent ethnic diversity. Not all the female characters are unrealistically thin.

Details: Epic Games, Inc., <https://www.epicgames.com/>. Price: \$free with IAP. Ages: 12-up. Platform: Xbox One, Windows, Mac OSX, PlayStation 4, iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: spatial relations, teamwork, shooting, weapons. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 5/2/2018. []



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

