



Children's
TECHNOLOGY
REVIEW EXCHANGE

September 2018

**15 Apps
That Let a
Child
Mingle
With the
Masters**



Our amazing
LittleClickers
topic this
month...

Plastic

On the cover: **Mixerpiece** by Giuseppe Ragazzini

Children's Technology Review
September 2018

Volume 26, No. 9 Issue 223

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Adventures

Blox 3D City Creator*

Famous Five Adventure Game

Fiete Math Climber

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School

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Games

Mixerpiece*

My Town Discovery

Orchard by Haba, The

Railway Hero

Sizzle & Stew

Squirreled World

Town Musicians of Bremen

Transformers Studio Series



* Denotes "Editor's Choice."

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"Clearly, it can be nearly impossible to know whether an ad or a post on Facebook is legitimate or a ploy by a foreign government to turn you against other Americans. You can look for language clues, or investigate the posts that pop up on your feed, or try to get familiar with posts by known Russian pages. But unless a page is taken down, you probably won't know for sure." The following is the customized paragraph from an interactive article in today's New York times, offering a quiz that every upper elementary student should take. At <https://nyti.ms/2PvOPNM>

Which post about Latin American heritage is from a fake page?



Dear CTR Subscribers,
As a reminder of how far Moore's Law has taken our hardware, it's fun to take a look under the hood of Alan Kay's "A Personal Computer for Children for All Ages" written August 1972. Here's how he describes the storage on his device. "The only technology that currently exists which can handle the modest, though important, demand for a writable file storage is magnetic oxide on plastic in the form of tape cassette or floppy disk. Until recently, tape handling typically required a conglomeration of pinch rollers, capstans, solenoids and motors. Now the problems of constant tape tension and differential drive have been solved by a number of companies, the most elegant being the cassette by 3M which uses a 'magic' driveband which contacts the outside of the tape takeup reels and requires only one motor for read, write, search and rewind. Four tracks of tape at a bit density of 1600 bpi allows 6400 bits/inch to be stored and retrieved. Our requirement thus demands 1250 inches (or 105 feet) of tape in the cassette. Of course there will be gaps, etc., so to play safe, our fantasy cassette will have 50% more tape or 150 feet."

Apps to Connect Your Child to Artistic Genius

We're really excited about a new CTREX feature we have that lets us tag specific apps to match a topic. Following the theme of our cover app for this issue (Mixerpiece), we pulled up 14 similar titles.

LITTLECLICKERS: Plastic

The news that LEGO is thinking about using plant-based plastic raised our curiosity about this amazing substance. See page 3, or visit www.littleclickers.com/plastics.

Dust or Magic

Save the date!
www.dustormagic.com

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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Plastic

5 (or so) sites & 10 videos

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

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How long does it take for a plastic water bottle to disintegrate? Who invented plastic? Do elephants like plastic? How many types of plastic are there? Plastic is an amazing substance that we use for just about everything. It's greatest advantage -- strength and the fact that it never decomposes -- is also it's greatest disadvantage (that it never decomposes). It's amazing to think that as recently as 100 years ago, people lived without it. Let's learn some more!

1. Why do elephants love plastic? According to Scientific American, thousands of elephants were hunted in the early 1800's to make billiard balls (for the game of pool) out of their tusks. That changed in 1867, when John Wesley Hyatt, a printer in New York, figured out how to make billiard balls out of a crude form of molded plastic called bakelite. His invention saved many elephants. <http://bit.ly/2LV0jIh>

2. How long does it take for a plastic water bottle to naturally break down? It depends on where it. If it's in the ocean, it might float for a year before being ground into billions of tiny bits that will float for hundreds of years. A bottle by the side of the road could last for at least 400 years. That means if George Washington's army left their water bottles by the banks of the Delaware, they would still be there! Learn more at <http://bit.ly/2LWBRqf>



3. Can a "brass" instrument be made out of plastic? Yes! Increasingly, plastic is replacing metal and wood for all sorts of things. The Allora brand plastic trombones and trumpets are cheap (1/10 the cost of a good brass instrument), light and dent free, made with ABS plastic -- the same kind that LEGOs are made from. They come in 11 colors <http://bitly.com/2Q5MbPI>. Here's a video of one being played <https://youtu.be/NLAHSgZaMU0>

4. Where does plastic come from? Oil, mostly, although different types of plastic have different components; and LEGO is exploring using sugar cane based plastic (see <https://bloom.bg/2M2qJbc>). Here's a video that explains the entire plastic life cycle, from oil to plastic. <https://youtu.be/IwdUwffecsM>



APPLICATION: Make a Plastic Collection
How many types of plastics can you find in your house? Look on the bottom of containers and you can find numbers that help you know what type of plastic you're dealing with. Here are the seven standard classifications for plastics. Learn more about each type, at <http://bitly.com/2wOvtLU> or watch <https://youtu.be/qTelxi3MjU>

- #1 - PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate) cold drink bottles
- #2 - HDPE (High-Density Polyethylene) grocery bags
- #3 - PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride) pipes, clothes, toys
- #4 - LDPE (Low-Density Polyethylene) squeezable bottles
- #5 - PP (Polypropylene) microwave plastics
- #6 - PS (Polystyrene) styrofoam cups, egg cartons
- #7 - Other (BPA, Polycarbonate) baby bottles

Plastics on YouTube

Want more? Here's a video playlist that go along with this column:
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcBVHzUUEKwlohvRyFjXCP-Kb4Da1PcWV&jct=m41OijNSgMm0aOvgxxlOc8RUPbsMtA>





15 Apps That Let Your Child Mingle With the Masters

In a dream world, you could pack up your kids and cart them up to Amherst, New York, for a day at the Eric Carle Museum, for a hands on experience with paper collage on canvas. But reality has a way of intervening. While the museum's virtual tour is nice <https://www.carlemuseum.org/virtual-tour> it only goes so far. As part of our ongoing work with the BolognaRagazzi Digital Award (CTR serves as a coordinating publication) we've tagged some apps that can bring the artist's workshops to your child's fingertips on their tablet. Here are four from the list, including the recently released Mixerpiece (on this month's cover). You can see full reviews of each in CTREX following this link bitly.com/ctrex-classicartists

Boum!

Les inéditeurs, <http://www.lesinediteurs.com/>, (\$2.99 on iPad, iPhone, Android), for ages 3-up.

Boum (translation "Boom") is a wordless, horizontal narrative experience by Mikaël Cixous that consists of 104 side-scrolling, musical, sliding illustrations. The art was designed for interactivity, with simple designs and contrasts in color and size to help illustrate the story -- of a lonely man stuck in a boring job. This app turns the screen into a large scroll to be controlled by swiping. The simplicity of interactivity, the uninterrupted progression of the hundred of pictures, the immersion provided by stereo sound offer a new type of experience. There is no language, so a non-reader can use this app. It's fair to note that while a child might be able to use this app, the theme of the story is more meaningful to a working adult. Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/128664116> <http://reviews.childrenstech.com/ctr/fullreview.php?id=19068>

Evaluated using the Standard Rubric

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

Mixerpiece

Giuseppe Ragazzini, www.mixerpiece.com, (\$3.99 on iPad, Android), for ages 5-up. Turn your tablet into visual classical art blender. Using a set of well-designed menus, you can drag and drop elements snipped from famous paintings onto work area. Each item can be tinted, resized, replaced or erased. If you hold your finger over the item (say a nose), you see it in the context of the original work making this a nice soft introduction to classical art. You can also shake your device to quickly remix the project. This lends authenticity and context to your project. Content includes 200 items (bodies, eyes, noses and so on) that can be mixed and matched in an infinite number of combinations. Despite all the variation, all the projects have a similar look. Work can be shared publicly in the app gallery, or sent as a digital postcard. Designed by Giuseppe Ragazzini from Milan. Video Link: <https://youtu.be/BI5EMeviRsw> <http://reviews.childrenstech.com/ctr/fullreview.php?id=19928>

Evaluated using the Standard Rubric

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

ExplorArt Klee - The Art of Paul Klee, for Kids

Lapisly S.C.P., www.lapisly.com, (\$4.99 on iPad), for ages 6-12. Jump into the mind of Paul Klee - the Swiss-German artist who mixed different art styles. While the interactive design is mid-quality, the content is excellent, which makes sense given the source. There are six nicely animated versions of his paintings including Landscape with Yellow Birds, Dream Town, Castle and Sun, Twittering Machine, and the puppets that Klee created for his son out of recycled materials. Each has a simple activity. <http://reviews.childrenstech.com/ctr/fullreview.php?id=19129>

Evaluated using the Standard Rubric

Ease of Use	8	86 %
Educational	9	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	9	

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Creative Play

Storytoys, www.storytoys.com, (\$2.99 on iPad and Android), for ages 4-up. Make your own Very Hungry Caterpillar with this well designed, collage-making and drawing app. At the core of this app are 40 sheets of virtual colored tissue paper designed by children's literature legend, Eric Carle. Once you've picked a pattern, you can carve out bits of paper with your fingertip, for mixing, matching or layering. An additional set of pen and pencil tools help you color and paint, for finer details, or for free drawing. If you're lucky enough to have an iPad Pro with an Apple Pencil, this app really shines. Video Link: <https://youtu.be/HZL-4djUWl4> <http://reviews.childrenstech.com/ctr/fullreview.php?id=19246>

Evaluated using the Standard Rubric

Ease of Use	8	92.5 %
Educational	10	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	10	





Feature Reviews and New Releases

SEPTEMBER 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.

Town Musicians of Bremen

Beautiful artwork is mixed with rudimentary interactive design, in this well illustrated rendition of the classic tale. The detailed pages look great on an iPad Pro, and many of the illustrations come to life when your screen is tilted. Each scene is painted by German illustrator Lev Kaplan. Other content includes 800 animations that are activated by a touch, 120 sounds and voiceover. Think of this as a serious of paintings, and lower your expectations as a reading or creativity experience, and you'll like this app. See the artist in action, at <https://youtube.com/watch?v=C6zi6GVx4oo>

Details: Albert Frischmann Publishing, <http://www.frischmann.biz>. Price: \$99. Ages: 4-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading, art. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.9 stars. Entry date: 2/27/2018. []



Ease of Use	9	78 %
Educational	8	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	8	

Hungry Caterpillar Play School

Beautiful, well designed activities feature Eric Carle's Hungry Caterpillar art work, in this subscription model full of activities covering math, spelling, reading, writing, science, nature studies & creative arts. You get a lot of content at first, but watch out for the opt out subscription model.

The reviews indicate plenty of surprised parents who forget to stop the seven day free trial, and end up paying for an entire year. Content is refreshed each month. Sections include Shapes and Colors, ABCs, 123s, Art (with paint or cut out collages, Eric Carle style); and a set of ebooks, songs and videos with featuring themes of nature, science & art.

Hungry Caterpillar Play School is a subscription service. <https://storytoys.com/terms-hcps/>

Details: Touch Press, www.touchpress.com. Price: \$50/year. Ages: 2-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: logic, memory, school readiness, reading. Entry date: 4/14/2018.





Squirreled World

A complicated, timed maze game that asks you to move a squirrel around to collect items. with a built in math table exercise., The game "may help build essential math table memory muscle as you play." Works with MFi (made for iPhone) game controllers. The first level is a free download; the cost to unlock the full game is \$.99 and an in-app purchase.

Details: ABC Interactive, <http://abcinteractive.net>. Price: Free sample (\$.99 for full game). Ages: 8-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: logic, math facts. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 2.9 stars. Entry date: 6/12/2018. []



Ease of Use	5	82 %
Educational	6	
Entertaining	6	
Design Features	5	
Good Value	7	

Kiddopia - ABC Toddler Games

You get a lot of activities designed around basic school readiness content, in this subscription service specifically designed for preschool and kindergarten-aged children. We reviewed the Kindergarten level, and found 14 clusters of leveled activities or videos, many times starting easy and getting harder. Mostly take the form of interactive workbook pages, starting easy and getting harder. Testers noted that the music and graphics felt busy, although you can silence the repeating music and children are never trapped in any activity. The screen rotation is not integrated across the activities, and there is some sloppy pedagogical design. For example in one counting game, children are shown bunches of bananas and asked to count each bunch as a single banana. All in all, there's a lot of content to explore.

Details: Paper Boat Apps, www.curiousfingers.com. Price: \$6/month, \$45/year. Ages: 3-5. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: reading, math, school readiness, handwriting, letters, upper case, lower case. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.1 stars. Entry date: 7/24/2018. []



Ease of Use	9	82 %
Educational	9	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	7	



Blox 3D City Creator

The second in the Blox 3D series, this is also an easy to use, powerful-feeling block building experience. Just keep in mind that your "world" is limited to one screen that is about 60 by 60 by 60 blocks.

You start with an empty screen surrounded with 16 types of building blocks, a simple color palette and 10 moving items.

After a short tutorial that can be skipped, you tap the screen to add a block. A fast double tap takes it away, so you quickly learn that it is possible to unbuild as quickly as you can build.

This version contains more animated city themed features, including cars, planes, helicopters, roads and people. The people walk into buildings, cops chase robbers and trains chug through the city. There are also several types of boats and planes. It is possible to share your city levels with other players using fictional screen names. We liked how you can control the weather and lighting with night, day and rain controls.

It is easy to zoom in or out, or rotate the stage to view your creation from any angle, but we noticed that larger projects result in sluggish navigation. This is a minor issue. We'd only recommend using this app on larger screens. Work can be saved at any point. All things considered, this app is well worth the download. Made in Unity.

Details: Appy Monkeys, www.blox3d.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 4-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: logic, spatial relations, blocks. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 7/30/2018. []



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

Railway Hero

This is a mix of math-related mini-games and videos based on PBS Kids Cyberchase content. The games vary in quality, but are mostly poorly designed. All content costs nothing, and there is no sign up. Because it is delivered using HTML 5, it runs on any browser, including Chromebooks.

Learn more at <http://pbskids.org/cyberchase/>

Produced for WNET by Bridge Multimedia in New York City.

Details: Thirteen WNET New York, www.thirteen.org. Price: \$free. Ages: 6-8. Platform: Windows, Mac OSX, Chrome. Teaches/Purpose: math, logic. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.6 stars. Entry date: 8/7/2018. []



Ease of Use	6	72 %
Educational	7	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	6	
Good Value	10	

My Town Discovery

My Town Games (the Israel-based studio) is partnering with Discovery to create a co-branded dollhouse-style experience, where children can freely drag and drop items on the screen. This co-venture will launch later in the summer. It features a virtual world where kids can explore their community, shop, go to a park, and visit Science Discover Museum. The game will be available in the App Store and on Google Play as a 7-day free trial. You can then "join the club" with a monthly subscription fee.

Details: My Town Games, <http://www.my-town.com>. Price: \$by subscription. Ages: 6-12. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: science, logic, creativity. Entry date: 8/7/2018.



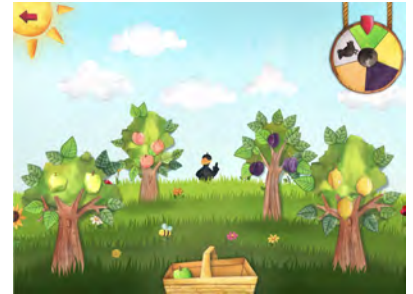


Orchard by Haba, The

Don't be fooled by the beautiful illustrations (and orchestral music) in this app. There's simply not much to do. Your sort fruit using by first using a roulette wheel to identify the target color, and then dragging the fruit from the tree to the basket before a mischievous raven steals the fruit. Longer play equals more distractions. There's too much waiting, and spinning the roulette wheel each turn interrupts the flow of the experience.

Based on the 1986 HABA board-game classic of the same name; this is the second App from HABA, after Unicorn Glitterluck. Created in collaboration with Honig Studios.

Details: Fox and Sheep GmbH, www.foxandsheep.com. Price: \$3.99. Ages: 3-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: colors, sorting. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 2.4 stars. Entry date: 8/8/2018. []

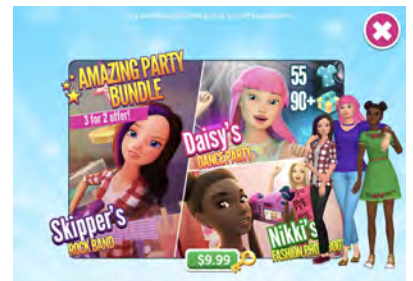


Ease of Use	5	48 %
Educational	5	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	4	
Good Value	3	

Barbie Dreamhouse Adventures

If you like Barbie, you'll like the premise of this interactive dreamhouse. You can choose two of the unlocked characters (the rest are shown with locks) to try on outfits, take naps, and earn hearts which are used for unlocking more items. Included in the house are large screens that show ads for additional adventures. These include Ken and the Pups (\$7.99) and Skipper's Rock Band (\$4.99). If you were to unlock all the items offered, it could cost about \$46. This experience is carefully engineered to mix dollhouse play (see Toca Life and My Town) with ads and expansion packs, that could cost over \$40, this was an Apple Recommended app on August 13, 2018. It's also made by Budge Studios, a group that is known for COPPA compliant, ethically challenged apps. Budge Studios says "Before you download this app, please note that it is free to play, but additional content may be available via in-app purchases. This app may contain contextual advertising from Budge Studios regarding other apps we publish, from our partners and social media links that are only accessible behind a parental gate. Budge Studios does not permit any behavioral advertising or retargeting in this app. the End-User License Agreement available through the following link: <http://www.budgestudios.com/en/legal/eula/>.

Details: Budge Studios, www.budgestudios.ca. Price: \$free with \$46 of IAP . Ages: 4-8. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: spatial thinking. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.9 stars. Entry date: 8/13/2018. []



Ease of Use	9	78 %
Educational	7	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	8	
Good Value	6	



Famous Five Adventure Game

Based on the "Famous Five" book series, this app includes beautiful sounds and illustrations. It is an ambitious exploration/adventure game from England that offers a lot of mini-game content, and a variety of games that vary in quality.

You play as one of four children as you explore a map in search of challenges.

When the mystery is solved, a custom storybook is generated from the play session. Through this shared storytelling, children are guided to increase their reading capabilities and stretch their vocabulary.

Innovative features include a dyslexia mode that toggles the font into something that is easy to see. The designers worked with Amanda Gummer as a consultant. Testers noted some UK specific language that may not work well in other countries.

Details: Kuato Studios, www.kuatostudios.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 6-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: logic, patterns, sequences, memory, reading, language. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.2 stars. Entry date: 8/14/2018. []



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

Transformers Studio Series

Transformers were first released in 1984 in the United States by Hasbro, reflecting improvements in injection molding technologies. Over the years, they've improved in design and complexity, and they have a proven track record for keeping busy hands at work. In terms of learning, they ask children to unlocking different space combinations, and they provide a valid spatial thinking challenge. The Transformers line now includes cards, books and movies and a variety of transforming figures.

During Toy Fair 2018, we followed a some Transformer experts around to preview the latest developments. These include a first look at the Studio Series -- a set of collector toys that include Bumblebee Vol. 1 Retro Rock Garage (\$50) that transforms into a Gold Camaro figure in 25 steps, and an Optimus Primal collection (\$70). Watch the Toy Fair movie, at <https://youtu.be/-AgN7h8K-c4>

Details: Hasbro, Inc., www.hasbro.com. Price: \$20-up. Ages: 8-up. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: spatial relations, logic, fine motor skills. Entry date: 8/22/2018.



Sizzle & Stew

If you live in the same home as a young child and an iPad, give this app a download and cook up some silly, random cooking fun using the innovative split screen mode. Specifically designed for two players (but playable also by one) the app is designed to let you "reach across" into the other player's space, using a playful stretchy arm. Described as a "physics driven, open-ended, sandbox experience" the app is great for generating food fights. Content includes a kitchen stocked with food items and gadgets that aren't always from the kitchen (the hair dryer is interesting). We love apps like this because they can create a unique play dynamic while offering an upside down point of view for the other player, and an interesting spatial challenge. Our tester, age seven, liked exploring the kitchen but was frustrated because some of the items didn't behave the way he wanted. The main drawback is that there is a lot of random items and events, which reduces feeling of control, hence engagement. This is not a deal breaker, however.

Details: Cowly Owl, www.cowlyowl.com. Price: \$3.99. Ages: 3-12. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: collaboration play, interpersonal development, food, eating, cooking, spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.2 stars. Entry date: 8/22/2018. []



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



Fiete Math Climber

Designed to "make mental arithmetic child's play" this app is designed to teach math facts, by solve math problems as fast as possible to tasks to climb a staircase. Correct answers take you up, wrong answers go down. The better you do, the harder the problems, as a timer tracks progress. All data is stored locally. Learn more at http://ahoiiii.com/press/sheet.php?p=fiete_math_climber

Details: Ahoiii Entertainment UG, www.fiete-app.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 6-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: math facts. Entry date: 8/28/2018.



Mixerpiece

Turn your tablet into visual classical art blender. Using a set of well-designed menus, you can drag and drop elements snipped from famous paintings onto work area.

Each item can be tinted, resized, replaced or erased. If you hold your finger over the item (say a nose), you see it in the context of the original work making this a nice soft introduction to classical art. You can also shake your device to quickly remix the project. This lends authenticity and context to your project. Content includes 200 items (bodies, eyes, noses and so on) that can be mixed and matched in an infinite number of combinations. Despite all the variation, all the projects have a similar look. Work can be shared publicly in the app gallery, or sent as a digital postcard. Designed by Giuseppe Ragazzini from Milan.

Details: Giuseppe Ragazzini, www.mixerpiece.com. Price: \$3.99. Ages: 5-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: art, art history, creativity, spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 8/28/2018. []



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