



2019 Toy Fair Trends

March 2019

**LittleClickers: Radio
Waves (p. 3)**



Voice commands collide with
augmented reality, in
Wonder's Land

All I have to do is say Wonder?

On the cover: WonderScope, one of the 2019 BolognaRagazzi Digital Award Winners

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* Denotes "Editor's
Choice."

"Imagine if, due to decisions made by Nintendo to move the NES platform forward, you were never able to play the original Super Mario Bros. ever again ... that's exactly what has happened, and continues to happen, with mobile gaming." Eli Hodapp in "We're Losing the History of the App Store" at <http://bitly.com/2IUP1b0> (hat tip to Scott Traylor).

WHAT WAS NEW AT TOY FAIR?

I had some help at this year's Toy Fair from Evan Jones, one of my TCNJ students who helped me explore the endless rows of booths, each with promising endless childhood wonder. The journey included running into dozens of kid influencers (with YouTube channels) and many friends (Dan Nessel, Reyne Rice, Claire Green and the Parents' Choice gang, Robin and Tonda from LIDT and Chris Byrne) -- each generously contributing ideas on the trends. Here are some observations.

- **"Surprise inside"** toys were everywhere. This trend started in 2016 with the Hatchimals. It seemed like everyone had a surprise inside toy this year.
- **Licensed characters** were more prominent than in previous years. In other words, the famous became more famous, especially at LEGO, Spinmaster, Mattel and Hasbro.
- **Plentiful Platforms.** There were some nice surprises this year at VTech/Leapfrog including the RockIt Twist (combines a busy box with screen) and the new LeapPad GO (puts a LeapPad into a stylus). While these products show promise, both follow the "buy into a platform approach." That means you buy the initial affordable device that comes with a few teaser activities, that soon prompt a child to "ask your parent to visit our store." This means a layer of complexity that includes plugging the thing into your computer, creating an account and getting out your credit card.
- **More app complexity.** Parents will increasingly discover that making a new toy work requires a visit to the app store. This isn't always a bad thing. Thanks to bluetooth and touch screens, a connected phone or tablet can augment the play (see Lightsaber Academy). But in some cases, the app part brings suspicion, because toy makers are starved for the valuable marketing information that apps can harvest.
- **Toy inventors are iterating rather than starting from scratch.** Cheaper, more powerful components make it possible to charge up and improve previous products, like the Fisher-Price Code-A-Pillar Twist.

There were other smart people covering Toy Fair with reports. Read Scott Traylor (in KidScreen) --> <http://bitly.com/2Tw5R3Y> and Robin Raskin (in Twice) --> <http://bitly.com/2TtLTa7>

LITTLE CLICKERS: Learn About Radio Waves

We all use Bluetooth and WiFi these days, but few can explain how Bluetooth got it's funny name (hint, it was from a king with a rotten tooth). Learn more on page 3.

BOLOGNARAGAZZI DIGITAL AWARD JUROR COMMENTS

On the cover this month: Wonderscope -- one of the winners from this year's entries. Anyone with an interest in children's books and children's publishing will want to watch the official Juror's commentary. <https://youtu.be/gdkAubJvv-k>



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www.dustormagic.com

Nov 3-5, 2019 • Institute The 19th Annual fall institute is on the books.

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5 (or so) sites & 10 videos

Radio Waves

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

We all use Bluetooth and WiFi these days. Do you know the difference? How did Bluetooth get such a funny name? (Hint, it was from a king with a rotten tooth). Let's learn more.

1. What is the difference between WiFi and Bluetooth?

Both are speedy, invisible radio waves. But Bluetooth takes less energy to make and it has a very short range (no more than 30 feet). It is handy for connecting speakers, headphones and toys. WiFi waves carry the Internet to your phone or computer, and they have more power than Bluetooth. Learn more at [techopedia](http://techopedia.com), at <http://bitly.com/2J2BBKb>

2. How did Bluetooth get its name? There actually was a guy with a blue tooth.

King Harald "Bluetooth" Gormsson was known for two things -- uniting Denmark and Norway in 958 AD, and his dead tooth, which was a dark blue in color. When present day engineers were trying to unite the industry with one standard, they used "bluetooth" as a code name for the project, and the name stuck. Learn more at <https://www.bluetooth.com/about-us/bluetooth-origin>.

3. Who discovered radio waves?

Heinrich Hertz saw an electrical spark that changed the world, after he discovered that it generated a radio wave. The place was Germany, and the year was 1886, according to <http://bitly.com/2Tr5K9S>. Within the next decade, researchers Nikola Tesla and Guglielmo Marconi figured out how to transmit sounds over extremely long distances. Learn more at https://www.pbs.org/tesla/11/11_early.html

4. Which goes faster, light or radio waves?



They travel the same speed -- about 186,282 miles per second. In miles per hour that's 670,616,629 mph, or 7.5 times around the Earth in one second. Learn more at <https://www.space.com/15830-light-speed.html>

5. Are radio waves dangerous?

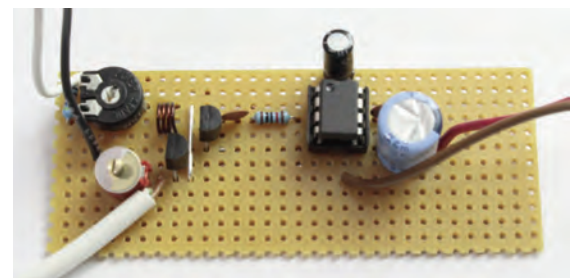
That's up for debate. Consider that right now there are many types of radio waves passing through your body. Should you worry? Unless you plan on sticking your head in a microwave oven, you can rest easy, according to the American Cancer Society. Read up on the topic at <http://bitly.com/2TxMC6>

APPLICATION: PLAY WITH RADIO WAVES

To understand the idea behind radio waves, it's fun to start by making an electromagnet. You'll need a battery, a nail and copper wire. Wrap the wire around the nail, and touch each end of the battery to pick up some paperclips. To make a radio, the easiest way is buy a kit, like this one for \$15 from Elenco <https://amzn.to/2IQvmIZ>. If you want to see the power of radio waves at work, simply put a small piece of Ivory brand soap in a microwave. The radio waves heat up the tiny bubbles of air to create a rather dramatic effect. Make sure to tell your parents if you put anything unusual in the microwave oven. Learn more at <https://www.scienceinschool.org/2009/issue12/microwaves>.



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Radio Waves on YouTube

Want more? Here's a video playlist

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcBVHzUUEKwk7i9KO-Vu8OJXs5j_ouf4C





Feature Reviews and New Releases

MARCH 2019

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.

Bayam

With the emergence of a number of children's digital content libraries this year, Bayam stands out as one with the highest overall level of quality. It's clear that great care has been taken to include innovative titles that include some past Bologna Ragazzi Digital Award winners.

One subscription can contain up to six children's profiles. Visit <https://bayam.tv/fr/>.

Details: Bayard Presse, www.bayard-magazines.co.uk. Price: \$5/month. Ages: 3-10. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Windows, Mac OSX. Teaches/Purpose: A collection of apps, books and video. Entry date: 2/10/2019.



Birdcage, The

A well designed mystery puzzle game in which a heartbroken king has trapped birds in golden cages containing ancient locks. The goal is simple -- free the bird. The challenge is not. In order to open the cage, you must solve a series of complicated puzzles. We liked the intuitive touch controls and mechanical puzzles. There is a well designed tutorial and hint system. Note that the free version is full of ads. Content includes 21 cages, and the story about birds locked inside. There is a VR mode <https://youtu.be/Y5-XyDxl3yo>

Details: Key Cube, www.keycube.com. Price: \$free with IAP. Ages: 10=up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: logic. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.1 stars. Entry date: 3/2/2019. []



Rubric used Fred Rogers

Ethical	0	} 56 %
Honest	3	
Empowering	6	
Child Paced	9	
Supportive of Inter-Personal	N	
Well Crafted	10	



Bookful

This online book store from Israel does something special, by making classic children's books look like they're sitting on your table using Apple's ARKit for Augmented Reality (AR). You can swipe to turn the page, zoom into a page, and examine illustrations in 3D as the virtual book sits on your table. Jurors liked the collection, which includes Peter Rabbit and the DK Children's Encyclopedia. The 400 MB download is free; books cost \$4 each as IAP. The publisher, Inception launched in October 2016, and has VR apps for Oculus Rift, Samsung Gear, iOS, Android, Google Daydream, HTC Vive, and Microsoft MR. The company has partnered with with Facebook to use their AR Studio.

Details: Inception VR, <https://bookful.app/>. Price: \$4 per book. Ages: 4-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: Reading. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 3/1/2019. []



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

Code-a-Pillar Twist

The original Code-a-Pillar has been updated and simplified, and is being sold at lower cost. Now you can program each of the five links, to determine the path. The bad news is that there's less flexibility because "programs" are limited to five steps, and the speed is the same -- too slow. But the price is lower, and there are no parts to get lost. Powered by 4 AA batteries.

Details: Fisher-Price, www.fisher-price.com. Price: \$35 . Ages: 3-6. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: STEM, coding. Entry date: 3/3/2019.



Deluxe Lamp Kit

A battery powered DIY lamp kit sold in two configurations -- the Party Lamp Kit (\$45) and Deluxe 3-in-1 Party Lamp Kit (\$60). We like this concept because it takes something every child uses every day, and lets them put it together and then program it using the color mixing and timing controls. The kits contain shades, stickers, markers, a screwdriver, a well designed instruction manual. Powered by AA batteries.

Details: Brainy Yak Labs, www.brainyyaklabs.com. Price: \$45. Ages: 8-up. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: electronics, coding, STEM. Entry date: 3/2/2019.



Fisher-Price WonderMakers Design System

This is a low tech ("digital detox") collection of themed snap together construction kits designed to offer gender neutral play with mixed materials (plastic, wood and felt). Approximately 70 parts come in each \$40 box, and all the parts are interchangeable, including a track that can connect the themes into an entire city. Packs include a schoolyard, campground, town starter kit, post office and home. Coming on Amazon.com in July 2019.

Details: Fisher-Price, www.fisher-price.com. Price: \$40 and up. Ages: 3-8. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: logic, creativity, spatial relations. Entry date: 3/4/2019.





Ghostkeeper's Journal & Field Guide, The

The first in the "Sprung" series, this is a genuinely creepy book/app combination that sets a new standard for how AR features can assist a printed material. The app is called Ghost-o-matic. As you enhance your skills as a ghost hunter, you uncover clues, capturing ghosts and solving the puzzles. BolongaRagazzi Jurors noted the quality steam punk style design. Detailed help with this app can be found at <https://www.carltonbooks.co.uk/digital-magic-help#ghostkeeper>.

Details: Carlton Books Limited, www.carltonbooks.co.uk. Price: \$15. Ages: 10-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: reading, problem solving. Entry date: 2/10/2019.



Hoot Reading

Want to hire a live teacher to come into your home to read a book, at the same time with your child? Hoot Reading is an online book sharing and tutoring service that provides personalized (one to one) reading practice with real books and real human teachers. The sessions can be done anywhere you have an iPad with WiFi access. Sessions are 20 minutes and must be scheduled in advance. Prices and names of tutors are not yet available. Note that service was formerly known as Kindoma -- one of the early story sharing services.

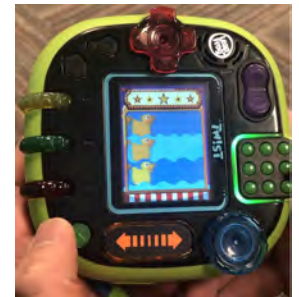
Details: Kindoma, www.kindoma.com. Price: \$call. Ages: 5-11. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: reading, comprehension, skills. Entry date: 2/13/2019.



LeapFrog RockIt Twist

This fat sandwich-sized rotatable busy box with a screen. It supports, four-sided play with buttons, a spinner, slider and switch, light-up controls, multiple games, digital pets and songs. The 12 preloaded games cover literacy, math, problem-solving, science and creativity. Six game packs are available, sold separately. Each pack comes with a RockIt Pet as well as a download code to unlock additional games and a digital version of the pet to nurture and grow. Coming "later this year."

Details: LeapFrog, www.leapfrog.com. Price: \$60 (activity . Ages: 4-8. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: school readiness. Entry date: 2/26/2019.



LeapStart GO

What if you could put an entire LeapPad (you know, the clunky, plastic, 4 AA battery powered book holder) into a single stylus? That's what LeapStart GO does. It's a fat, wireless rechargeable stylus with a small video screen. The stylus tip contains the IR camera dot scanning technology used for years now in LeapFrog products. New content, which we did not review, includes audio and now video clips that are triggered by things that are tapped on the page. Compatible with the LeapStart library of 25 or so books. In addition, there will be a set of new activity sets with topics such as the human body for more challenging multi-curricular subjects. These materials include charts and stickers. As with many technology driven platforms, the overall success of this device depends on the individual content packs, which we'll look forward to testing.

Details: LeapFrog, www.leapfrog.com. Price: \$50 (Activity Packs are \$11 each). Ages: 4-8. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: school readiness. Entry date: 2/26/2019.





LEGO Hidden Side

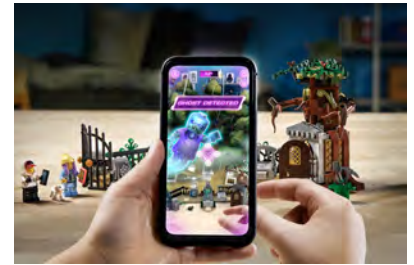
An augmented reality-enhanced set of eight LEGO construction sets (each sold individually) that lets you make your haunted world normal, by catching and fighting ghosts. Each model can be built as it appears by day – a school house, bus, or graveyard, for example – and has transforming functionality to become the haunted version of itself. The app, which you download at no cost, lets you assume a first-person perspective.

In the story, Jack and Parker (each represented by a mini-figure) are shown in Newbury (their home town). Using your mobile phone, you see and solve paranormal mysteries hidden in the scene. The app prompts you to hold their phone up to the physical LEGO models to interact with interactive elements, or “points of possession,” which release the virtual ghosts.

LEGO Hidden Side marks the first time the company introduces one of its play themes as a service. After launch, the app experience will continue to expand with new ghosts and challenges; a concept they are calling “fluid play.” Coming late summer 2019. Physical sets will range in price from \$20 to \$120. The LEGO Hidden Side app will be a free download from the App Store and Google Play. Learn more at visit www.lego.com/hiddenside.

Here’s the PR video <https://youtu.be/AClSeLYeXMg>

Details: LEGO Americas, www.lego.com. Price: \$20 to \$120. Ages: 7-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: Logic, spatial relations. Entry date: 2/20/2019.



PBS Kids Games

Plenty of free, “lite” PBS themed casual games await in this solid publicly funded app. It’s a great way to extend your child’s TV watching -- instead of just passively watching a show like Cat in the Hat they can help to setup a campsite. As of February 2019, content includes 20 shows, each with one game pre-downloaded. The others are offered but are greyed out, and can only be played if they are downloaded. So WiFi is required for most of the content. Most of the play patterns are tried and true -- mazes, pong, connect pipes, shape puzzles. Featured content includes Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood, Wild Kratts, Super Why, The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That! and Dinosaur Train. New games are added by themes and times of the year.

Details: PBS Kids, www.pbskids.org. Price: \$free. Ages: 3-8. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: reading, logic, spatial relations, helping. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.6 stars. Entry date: 2/13/2019. []



Rubric used **Fred Rogers**

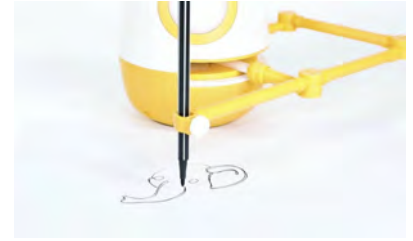
Ethical	10		90 %	
Honest	9			
Empowering	9			
Child Paced	9			
Supportive of Inter-Personal	7			
Well Crafted	10			



WeDraw-Eggy

This is talking, drawing robot with a moving arm that can draw on paper or a whiteboard. It was designed in China to be a "home teacher" that can deliver step-by-step instructions for a child to follow along. Lessons are started by scanning a card. After the card is scanned, the lesson begins, delivered by voice and verbal instructions. There are card decks for drawing, Chinese characters, spelling, alphabet, counting, shape recognition, addition, subtraction and math puzzles. Powered by rechargeable batteries through a mini USB port. The 50 drawing lessons were designed by Ralph Masiello, a Massachusetts artist.

Details: WeDraw, www.wedraw.co. Price: \$100. Ages: 3-8. Platform: Smart Toy. Teaches/Purpose: drawing, art, math facts. Entry date: 2/26/2019.



Women Who Changed the World

Eight strong female role models are highlighted in this well designed high-quality, interactive experience. The interactions, quiz questions, reading, audio and graphics all combine into solid interactive book experience. The history lessons are recommended for children of both genders. The text is narrated in clear English, and the stories give you the chance to control the central characters. You can "fly" Amelia Earhart's plane, answering short multiple choice questions, and testing your historical knowledge.

Details: Learn Land, <http://learnland.com/>. Price: \$3.50. Ages: 7-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: women, gender equity, reading, history. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 2/10/2019. []



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

Wonderscope

Augmented reality meets voice recognition in this extremely innovative app from the UK that was named a winner of the BolognaRagazzi Digital Award for 2019. The app lets you direct AR characters with your voice, using short verbal voice commands. In the story, you help Wonder, The Ringmaster of Wonder's Land get ready for the carnival's big opening. The idea is to solve problems by reading short sentences, like helping a stunt plane fly around your room. The app is based on three historical stunts, including those by Betty Bromage, an 88-year old grandmother that stood on the wings of an airborne bi-plane; Helen Gibson, Hollywood's first stuntwoman; and Charles Blondin, the first person to tightrope walk across Niagara Falls.

As you explore, you can meet, help, and talk to pioneers, inventors, and heroes. There's not a lot to actually do in this voice directed app other than to read short sentences. But the production quality merged with two emerging technologies (voice recognition and augmented reality) is certainly noteworthy. The app works on newer iPhones and iPads (iOS 11 or better). The first adventure is free; others are offered for \$4.99 each as IAP.

Details: Within Unlimited, Inc., www.wonderscope.com. Price: \$Free plus \$5 per adventure for IAP. Ages: 7-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: spatial relations, logic, language, oral language. Entry date: 2/9/2019.

