

On the Cover: **Worm and the Sea**, a title submitted to this year's Bologna CrossMedia Award, from Danish publisher Piboco. See page 12.

Children's Technology Review Summer 2021

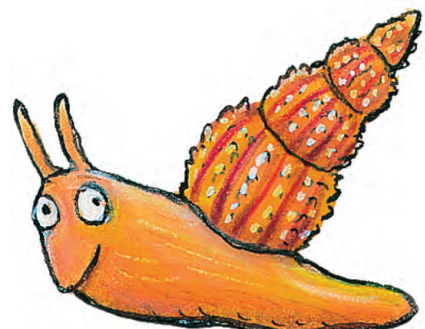
June - August
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* Denotes "Editor's Choice."

"Why is my preschooler doing virtual surgeries?" Sara Schaefer, interviewed in "What Weird Games Lurk on Your Kid's Tablet?"

There's a lot of news to report, which is typical for this time of the year. Three virtual events to watch include E3—the video game conference which is currently underway, WWDC—Apple's developer conference which happened last week, and the Bologna Children's Book Fair, which is also underway.

Last week, New York Times Parenting writer Jessica Crose described a five year old who had put "\$900 worth of toys and princess-related products in the family's Amazon shopping cart." That's when her parents discovered an iPad full of bizarre content that their daughter had downloaded. The article illustrates why regulation is needed, to force app stores to start acting responsibly when promoting children's content. Read the article, at <https://nyti.ms/3gsGbig>

Apple's WWDC: Introducing Share Play

As Apple increasingly recognizes that it lives in a Discord/Zoom-centric world, it only makes sense that they would leverage their hardware advantage. Share Play is a suite of video sharing features built into the latest operating system that includes easier screen sharing, and something called "spatial audio" that sends your orientation to your screen to the people you're sharing with. It's another interesting step towards augmented reality. Learn more at <https://developer.apple.com/wwdc21/>

E3 2021 Updates and News

Here's a pro-tip for understanding the world of video games. Follow the hardware. Here are links to three major game platforms, with the latest prices and headlines.

- Sony PlayStation 5 (\$1,100 at Walmart) <https://www.playstation.com/en-us/ps5/>
- Xbox Series S and X (\$430 and \$1000) <https://www.xbox.com/en-US/>
- Nintendo Switch (\$300) and Switch Lite (\$200) <https://www.nintendo.com/switch/>

Nintendo just announced a new DIY game development system, called **Game Builder Garage**. Unlike Mario Maker, this Switch-based experience lets you make and share a variety of platforms. See the preview in this issue of CTR.

I'll be online with the Bologna Children's Book Fair tomorrow discussing the new CrossMedia Award, and catching up on the latest news. If you get a chance, drop in.

Enjoy the summer!
W. Buckleitner

Note our quarterly format - **Spring** (March 1)
Summer (Bologna Ragazzi Winners, June 1)
Fall (September 1)
Winter (December 1)

Our weekly reports will continue to be delivered to subscribers by email.
Contact us with questions (info@childrenstech.com).



The next Dust or Magic event will be June 3-5, 2022 at Asilomar Conference Grounds in Monterey, California. Check www.dustormagic.com for the latest information.



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- We don't distribute, sell or leverage subscriber information.
- Contributors must disclose bias.
- No sponsored or advertising content.
- Complete transparency. We disclose review criteria and sources of potential bias.
- We don't skim from other reviewers.

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CrossMedia Award

On Tuesday, June 15, 2021, CTR will be hosting a Dust or Magic Masterclass for children's publishers in partnership with the Bologna Children's Book Fair. <https://bitly.com/2Tx1as7>

We'll be discussing a new award initiative, called the BolognaRagazzi CrossMedia Award.

This year I worked with three other jurors to examine 50 projects. There was one Grand Prize and two mentions. Here are the results, online at <https://bitly.com/3illfMI>

GRAND PRIZE

The Snail and the Whale

PUBLISHER: Macmillan Children's Books

COUNTRY : GB

BOOK TITLE: The Snail and the Whale

AUTHOR: Julia Donaldson

EXTENSION: MOVIE The Snail and the Whale

PRODUCER: Magic Light Pictures

What the jury said:

"The story and the way it has become a short movie feels epic, like a big message coming in a small package. The movie is charming and beautifully rendered. Faithful to the original text of the picture book, it brings wonderfully enlarged characters to life and expands visually the narrative by representing sea life with a 3D of delightful quality"

SPECIAL MENTIONS

Hilda and the Troll

PUBLISHER: Flying Eye Books

COUNTRY : GB

BOOK TITLE: Hilda and the Troll

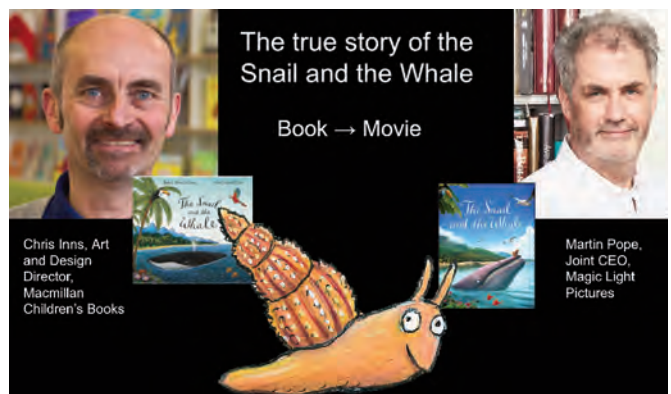
AUTHOR: Luke Pearson

EXTENSION : TV SERIES Hilda

PRODUCER: Silvergate Media

What the jury said:

"The TV series is a great adaptation of a great



Join a Zoom meeting to hear about the book-to-movie transition, from Chris Inns and Martin Pope on Tuesday, June 15 at 8:30 AM EST. The meeting is free, but you must register in advance, at <https://bitly.com/2Tx1as7>

story, with excellent screenplay, witty dialogues and a modern style that manages to be visually faithful to the graphic novel. The stories of the tv series go beyond the books and capture the mystery and magic of Hilda's world."

Tutto Il Contrario (The Other Way Around)

PUBLISHER: Minibombo

COUNTRY : Italy

BOOK TITLE: Tutto il contrario

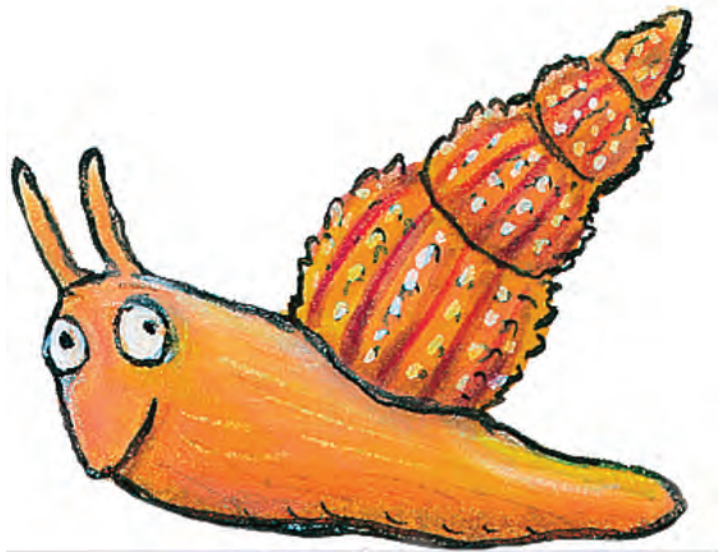
AUTHOR: Silvia Borando

EXTENSION: APP Tutto il contrario

PRODUCER: Minibombo

What the jury said:

"Minibombo's app devoted to opposites is a charming extension of the book, noteworthy for its pedagogy. The app adds interactivity to the playful, colourful and fun features of the book. It is a perfect example of how a book narrative and a digital expansion should work together."





Feature Reviews and New Releases

SUMMER 2021

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 Antics (for Families)

Designed to get a child talking, this is a very basic puppet/animation experience, where you are asked to choose expressions for your puppet, and then record a short snip of dialog using your iPad's microphone. Testers found the instructions to be a bit heavy handed in part because they loop every few seconds when the app is not in use. If you're using an iPad, you'll have to manually change the screen size.

The lip syncing is crude, and you can't move the characters around the scene. But the upside to this lack of features is simplicity. Work is saved automatically. Animal Antics is a product of the Reach Every Reader initiative at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, in collaboration with FableVision Studios. Learn more about the searies at <http://hgse.me/apps>.

Details: Fablevision, Inc., www.fablevision.com. Price: \$free. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: language, reading. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.3 stars. Entry date: 4/20/2021. []



Ease of Use	9	86 %
Educational	9	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	10	

Animated Colouring Book - Matisse

Turn your paper coloring book pages into moving images with this phone or tablet-based AR (augmented reality) experience. After you color, you take a photo using the required BlinkBook app, which can be downloaded at no cost. A nice feature is the ability to take a selfie and record your voice to become an actor in the animations.

Details: Éditions Animées, <https://editions-animees.com>. Price: \$14 for the book. Ages: 6-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: art creativity. Entry date: 5/13/2021.



Big Heart World

This is a music-driven collection of songs and short form videos designed to promote social and emotional development by way of Nickelodeon Noggin characters. It is part of your \$8/month Noggin subscription. The quality is excellent. Here's a sample, on YouTube <https://youtu.be/QhQhH2Fbkh8>.

Content covers self awareness, awareness of others and relationships; and includes ten songs. The music videos be shown on the Nick Jr. channel and will also be available on services such as YouTube, Apple Music, Spotify, and so on.

Learn more at BigHeartWorld.org. Development was done by the Sparkler Learning with support of the Walton Family Foundation.

Details: Nickelodeon, www.nick.com. Price: \$8/month. Ages: 3-6. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: social emotional learning, relationships. Entry date: 4/14/2021.

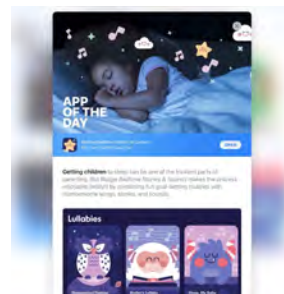




Budge Bedtime Stories and Sounds

One of Apple's "App of the Day" selections, this "free" app is best described as a bait-and-switch scheme for hurried parents. The bait is a free download and a promise of a smooth bedtime routine. In reality, the app subjects parents to a twelve step customization process that includes turning on device notifications and entering your child's name and interests, before taking you to a dead end interface that forces you to either exit the app and lose your progress, or agree to start a "free trial" that auto renews for \$9.99/month, or \$120/year. All on the promise of a smooth bedtime. In most homes, the phone or tablet is a multi-use device. Getting it out anytime near bedtime can lead to an unwelcome invitation to play another favorite app, or make a call to a grandparent. Ethical descriptors: Teasing, Time Trap

Details: Budge Studios, www.budgestudios.ca. Price: \$free \$10/month. Ages: 3-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: bedtime routine. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 1.1 stars. Entry date: 2/15/2021. []



Ease of Use	6	27.5 %
Educational	N	
Entertaining	2	
Design Features	2	
Good Value	1	

Clicbot

This is a snap together modular robotics kit that was designed in China. The eye and personality was designed Pixar's Carlos Baena, who also worked on Toy Story. The robot comes with 50 pre-defined setups and 1000 possible combinations. The eye includes a color screen, two megapixel camera, face recognition, LEDs, touch sensors, a microphone, USB-C charging. Parts include a hand, suction cup, wheel, distance sensor, joint and phone holder. The curriculum includes a series of videos. The robot can be programmed using Blockly by Google, and it also has editable Python in the background for advanced coders. The full kit costs \$1,100.

Details: Beijing Keyi Technology Co. Ltd. , <http://clicbot.keyirobot.com/> . Price: \$449. Ages: 8-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: robotics, programming, coding. Entry date: 2/11/2020.



¡CRACK!

Beautiful illustrations are mixed into some low quality interactive design, in this natural science exploration experience. There are two other apps in the series, with a similar design; all from Chili-based Ediciones Liebre Limitada. Your objective is to explore a nicely illustrated map in search of eggs. The eggs lead to a detail page, where you try to figure out which creature is associated with the eggs. You do this by tapping on items on the screen, to find seven hidden clues. This is frustrating, because the clues have little to do with the creature you're looking for; and the items that need to be tapped are often small. Fortunately there is a hint option. Testers noted that the font is too small, even on a large iPad Pro. It is possible to record your own narration. The content comes from the well-illustrated book ¡Crack!, also by Ediciones Liebre. Options let you toggle between English and Spanish. Some of the animal facts are very interesting. The English narration is not polished. Created by Rocket Smash Studio for Ediciones Liebre. This app was submitted to the 2021 BolognaRagazzi Crossmedia Award. There are no ethical concerns.

Details: Ediciones Liebre Limitada, <http://edicionesliebre.cl/> . Price: \$1.99. Ages: 3-7. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: natural science, eggs, mammals, reptiles. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.2 stars. Entry date: 5/3/2021. []



Ease of Use	8	64 %
Educational	7	
Entertaining	6	
Design Features	6	
Good Value	5	



Dino Dino

Good content meets clumsy design in this exploration app based on 26 of the most common dinosaurs. The activities load slowly, and the fossil digging game is frustrating. There's also a feeding game that we did not play. Features include the ability to have the instructions read aloud in your choice of 12 languages. The activities are presented on a map. As you move around, you can put dinosaurs back together by dragging and dropping missing parts. Finished puzzles earn dinosaur fact cards. The games load slowly. Dinosaurs include Allosaurus, Ammonite, Ankylosaurus, Archaeopteryx, Baryonyx, Belemnite spine, Brachiosaurus, Deinonychus, Dilophosaurus, Diplodocus, Gallimimus, Hypacrosaurus, Iguanodon, Coprolite, Maiasaura, Microraptor, Pachycephalosaurus, Parasaurolophus, Spinosaurus, Stegosaurus, Theropod, Titanoceratops, Triceratops, Tyrannosaurus, Utahraptor, Velociraptor. Content comes from the Paleontological Society.

Details: Ahoiii Entertainment UG, www.fiete-app.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 4-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: science, dinosaurs. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 2.9 stars. Entry date: 4/20/2021. []



Ease of Use	7	58 %
Educational	6	
Entertaining	6	
Design Features	5	
Good Value	5	

Game Builder Garage

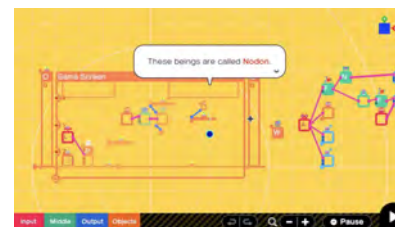
Roblox comes to the Switch? Perhaps... (without the money making features). This is a programming experience that makes it possible to publish your own games. It includes a tutorial system with checkpoints to check your knowledge of basic visual programming.

It's easy to swap between programming and game modes. You'll be able to create a variety of games, including side-scrolling platformers, kart racers and to space blasters. It's easy to switch between coding and playing modes, so you can try out your creation and see how it plays. You can also download and share games with others over the internet or via a local wireless connection.

Game Builder Garage can be controlled with a Joy-Con controller, Nintendo Switch Pro Controller or the controls of the Nintendo Switch Lite system, as long as you buy the game. You can also plug a compatible mouse into the USB port on the Nintendo Switch dock.

Available in Nintendo eShop for \$30. and on Nintendo.com at a suggested retail price of \$29.99. Learn more at <https://nintendo.com/games/detail/game-builder-garage-switch>.

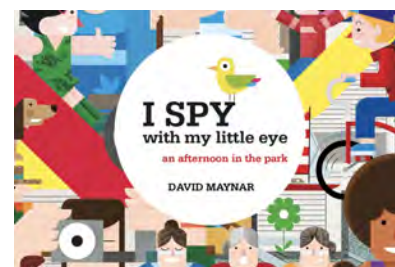
Details: Nintendo of America, www.nintendo.com. Price: \$30. Ages: 7-up. Platform: Nintendo Switch, Nintendo DS. Teaches/Purpose: coding, programming. Entry date: 6/10/2021.



I Spy: An Afternoon in the Park

Sixteen lovely illustrations -- but that's about it -- await your tap, as you trigger the single animation. The interactive features are limited to one item per page. The text is well narrated in English. This is a book title; so the word "interactive" is taken liberally. Also note that this book does not appear to be related to any Scholastic I Spy title. Based on the book I Spy, An Afternoon in the Park, by David Maynar Gálvez.

Details: Estudio Cian, www.ciannetwork.com. Price: \$3.99. Ages: 3-12. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: reading. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.2 stars. Entry date: 5/10/2021. []



Ease of Use	8	64 %
Educational	6	
Entertaining	6	
Design Features	5	
Good Value	7	



Jetpack Joyride

An well designed endless runner with all sorts of traps to get you to come back tomorrow, buy additional time, or force you to watch an interactive demo of another "free" app. As you dash through the carefully engineered (and often extremely fun) mazes, the app is learning about you, using your progress in the maze to show you ads or to get you to download another "free" trial for an app. This type of app opens up a Pandoras box situation, where one app leads to another, which leads to another.

Below is a list of some of the business partners that the Australian publisher uses: AdColony. Located in United States; Admob (Google). Located in United States. AppLovin. Located in United States. Campaign Monitor. Based in Australia with servers in United States; Chartboost. Located in United States. Facebook. Located in United States. Helpshift. Located in United States. HyprMX. Located in United States. ironSource. Located in Israel. Mech Mocha. Developers of Jetpack Joyride India. Located in India. MoPub (Twitter). Located in United States. OneTrust. Located in United States; UnityAds. Headquartered in the United States with offices throughout the Americas, Asia and Europe. Upsight. Located in United States, United Kingdom and Canada; and Vungle. Located in United States, United Kingdom, Germany and China.

Ethical descriptors: teasing, intermittent reinforcement, entrapment, onboarding.

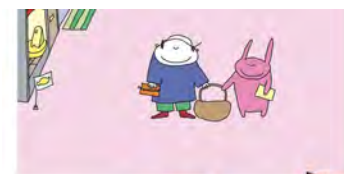
Details: Halfbrick, . Price: \$free (IAP up to \$59). Ages: 8-up. Platform: iPhone, Apple TV, Android. Teaches/Purpose: logic. Rating (1 to 5 stars): .5 stars. Entry date: 4/18/2021. []



Lassa Goes Shopping

The graphics are delightful, but there's not a lot to do. This app is good for giving children and parents a shopping experience to do together. It features something rare in children's apps -- silence, making it an experience that Fred Rogers would appreciate. There's also a noticable lack of commercial content. We noticed some minor localization problems (one store clerk is called the chemist, for example). Games include Cash Register ("buy" your groceries and pay with coins to see a receipt). The Balance Scale works in a similar way. Language options include Frisian, Gronings, Dutch, French, Spanish and English.

Details: Studio Lassa, studiolassa.nl/. Price: \$.99. Ages: 4-6. Platform: iOS and Android. Teaches/Purpose: counting, sorting, logic, language. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.1 stars. Entry date: 4/14/2021. []

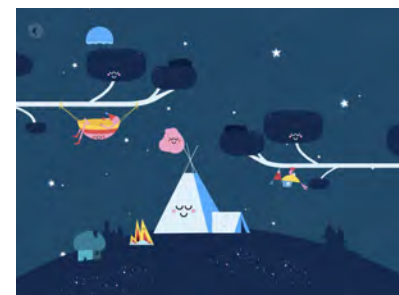


Ease of Use	9	82 %
Educational	8	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	9	

Little Slumber Lullaby Music

Turn your phone or tablet into a hypnotic sleep aide with five animated, musical soundscapes. After you set the timer, the music volume, animations and the brightness of the screen are reduced to promote a fading to sleep. The playing time can be set using a slider menu. Testers noted that the songs load slowly the first time, and the editing on one of the loops is choppy. The music comes from Christian Maier. The publisher recommends putting your device in airplane mode once the songs are downloaded. Before you send your child to bed with a phone or tablet, make sure to explore the parent options, to prevent your child from getting out of the app. All things considered, it might be smarter to invest in one of the many musical night lights. Content themes include Evening Sky, Dinosaurs, Railroad, Underwater, and Dreamy Glade.

Details: Fox and Sheep GmbH, www.foxandsheep.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 1-5. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: Music, a sleeping aid. . Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.5 stars. Entry date: 5/27/2021. []



Ease of Use	9	70 %
Educational	N	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	6	
Good Value	6	



My Neighbourhood

Excellent illustrations, music and narration meet minimal but appropriate interactive features, in this ebook about an aging woman. The message of acceptance for the elderly is wonderful and refreshing. In the story, an older woman named Marta goes out and verifies that everything is the way it should be: her friends in a terrace playing cards; the same beach as always in the usual place; children having fun in the school's courtyard. Illustrated by Ana Penyas. Written by Maria Jose Ferrada. By Alboroto Ediciones.

Available as part of the Piboco library (picture book library).

Details: Piboco, www.piboco.com. Price: \$3.50 via IAP. Ages: 8-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: reading, the elderly. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 5/12/2021. []

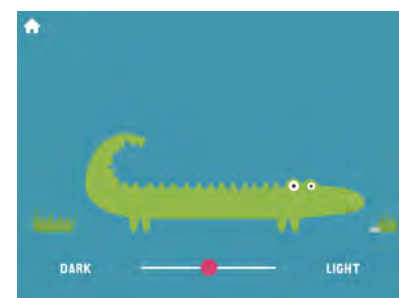


Ease of Use	9	90 % 
Educational	8	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	9	
Good Value	10	

Other Way Around, The (Quite the Contrary)

Play with opposite relationships like light/dark, big/little, short/long and so on by way of eight animals. This play pattern facilitates turn-taking, which makes it a good app to share with a child. Content includes 24 types of opposites. This app comes from Italy, and is based on the book Tutto il Contrario or Quite the Contrary, by Silvia Borando. While there's not a lot of content, the game is fun, and the results are playful and simple. This is an ethical, paid app.

Details: Minibombo, www.minibombo.it. Price: \$1.99. Ages: 3-12. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: opposites, classification, logic. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 5/13/2021. []



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

Photo Play

Designed to promote interaction, this app gives children and caregivers the opportunity to decorate and then talk about photos using a set of stickers and drawing tools. Work can be saved in the photo library. This app won't work on iPads. Created for the Harvard Graduate School of Education by Fablevision.

Details: Fablevision, Inc., www.fablevision.com. Price: \$free. Ages: 3-up. Platform: iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, language. Entry date: 4/20/2021.





Piboco

An online subscription based store for about 100 children's books. Unlike many children's book stores we've reviewed, the many of the books have age-appropriate interactive features. These features are well mixed with excellent narration and illustrations. If you want to expose your child to quality on a screen, you'll find it one the shelves of this virtual app store. Publishers include Auzou, Versant, Tiny Owl, Etana Editions, Editorial Manuta, At Noon Books, Callis, Alboroto, Kilowatt and The Old Lion Publishing House. The studio is based in Denmark, and the books are available in common EU and US languages. Books are purchased through IAP (in app purchases) and run on iOS and Android. Access to PIBOCO picture books ranges from \$3.50 to \$38 by subscription, which auto-renews. The navigation of the stories could be improved -- there is no way to jump around the pages, or exit to the library. Also, there are no search feature so if you're looking for a specific book you have to scroll through the titles.

Details: Piboco, www.piboco.com. Price: \$38/year. Ages: 3-12. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: reading, language. Entry date: 5/12/2021.

Pinkfong Baby Shark Storybook

Unethical design for children is mixed up with ten mid-quality ebooks and some sloppy reading pedagogy. The lure to get you to download this sample is the addicting Baby Shark song, which has been watched millions of times on YouTube <https://youtu.be/XqZsoesa55w>. But the famous song is not part of this app -- only ten shark-themed stories, each with a game (we tested the two unlocked options - the remaining content is shown behind locks). If you subscribe you also get access to Pinkfong Baby Shark, Baby Shark Storybook, Pinkfong Car Town, Pinkfong 123 Numbers and Pinkfong Tracing World. The first time you run the app, you are forced into registering; a process that gives the publisher access to your device use information. This strong-armed information gathering technique, combined with a theme designed to attract children, should attract the attention of regulators. Ethical descriptors: teasing, forced registration, and contextual ads.

Details: Smartstudy, www.smartstudy.co.kr/about. Price: \$60/year. Ages: 3-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: reading, music. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 1.5 stars. Entry date: 2/15/2021. []

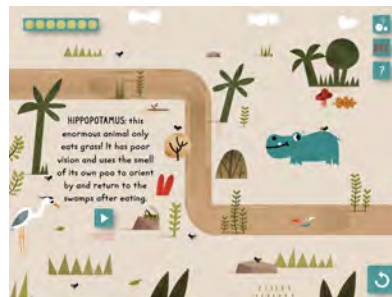
¡Poop! (Puf)

Explore a nicely illustrated map in search of examples of well-illustrated but non-realistic poop. You learn the science behind excretion in either Spanish or English. While the illustrations are exceptional, the experience is limited by low quality interactive design, which you discover as you try to figure out which creature is associated it's poop. You do this by finding seven hidden clues. As with the other apps in this series, this can be a frustrating, because the clues have little to do with the creature you're looking for; and the items that need to be tapped are often tiny. Fortunately there is a hint option. Testers also noted that the font is too small, even on a large iPad Pro. We liked the ability to record your own narration. Options let you toggle between English and Spanish. The English narration is not polished. There are two other apps in the series, with a similar design; all from Chili-based Ediciones Liebre Limitada. The content comes from the well-illustrated book ¡Puf!, also by Ediciones Liebre. Created by Rocket Smash Studio for Ediciones Liebre. This app was submitted to the 2021 BolognaRagazzi Crossmedia Award. This is a paid app with no ethical concerns.

Details: Ediciones Liebre Limitada, <http://edicionesliebre.cl/>. Price: \$1.99. Ages: 2-7. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: science, poop. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.2 stars. Entry date: 5/5/2021. []



Ease of Use	5	36 %
Educational	4	
Entertaining	5	
Design Features	4	
Good Value	0	



Ease of Use	8	64 %
Educational	7	
Entertaining	6	
Design Features	6	
Good Value	5	



SharePlay FaceTime

Part of Apple's mobile operating system (iOS 15) this new feature makes screen conversations seem more natural. Features include "spatial audio" (so voices sound as if they are coming from where the person is positioned on the screen). There's also better background noise filters, and a "Portrait mode" that lets you blur your background. SharePlay makes it possible to listen to songs together with Apple Music or watch the same TV show or movie from Apple TV+. Borrowing from steaming services like Discord, SharePlay also lets you share your screen. SharePlay works across iPhone, iPad, and Mac, and with shared playback controls, anyone in a SharePlay session can play, pause, or jump ahead. Apple announced that third party publishers are building the features into their apps, including Disney+, ESPN+, HBO Max, Hulu, MasterClass, Paramount+, Pluto TV, TikTok, and Twitch.

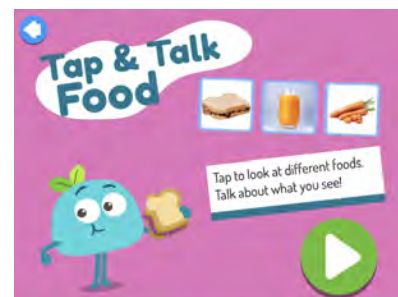
Details: Apple, www.apple.com. Price: \$free. Ages: 5-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: sharing. Entry date: 6/10/2021.



Small Wonders

This is a collection of simple activities and videos that vary in quality. A few of the structured games Sometimes there are right answers; someno wrong answers, and sometimes there are which can be confusing, but there's enough content, given the price, to consider the download. There are two sections: one for adults, the other for children and adults to play together. The grownups section contains tips and activities based on food, outdoors, faces and home. The Family Play section includes four categories (food, outdoors, faces and home) each with four types of activities (for food, there are tap and talk, let's shop, let's cook and pizza party). There's a lot of matching and concentration, and very little depth to the game play. Graphics are simple and colorful; and the navigation is consistent making it easy to use. Part of a series of three grant-funded apps published by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, created by Fablevision. Learn more at <http://hgse.me/apps>.

Details: Fablevision, Inc., www.fablevision.com. Price: \$free. Ages: 4-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: language, parent child interactions, singing, matching. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.6 stars. Entry date: 4/20/2021. []

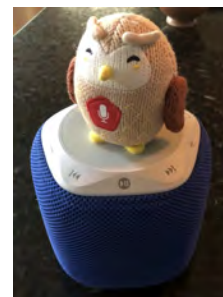


Ease of Use	8	72.5 %
Educational	8	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	6	
Good Value	N	

StoryPod

Well designed from a hardware point of view, but tricky to use, this is a stand-alone speaker with a padded exterior that responds to plush yarn figures -- called Crafties -- with different audio content. The stories are triggered by that RFID chips that are sewn into the base of each figurine. Setup is required, which requires downloading an app onto your phone or tablet. You then create an account and configure your wifi settings so that you can get the speaker onto your home wifi account -- a process that is required in order to listen to new content. The operation is similar to the Toniebox (a competitive device). Content includes "classic stories, music, & read-along audiobooks." We struggled with the setup and were not able to download additional content. The stories vary in quality. Our testers were less than impressed with the story quality that came preloaded on the speaker. It is possible to record your own stories that are up to 100 minutes in length. The speaker can also be used to deliver white noise soundscapes.

Details: Craftie Fox, Inc., www.storypod.com. Price: \$107. Ages: 3-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: music, language. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.5 stars. Entry date: 4/14/2021. []



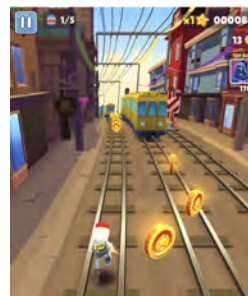
Ease of Use	6	70 %
Educational	7	
Entertaining	8	
Design Features	7	
Good Value	7	



Subway Surfers

Addicting and fun, but designed to take your time and money, this is an endless runner-style game (like Sonic) that starts easy, before making watch ads for app offers. To earn coins, you must navigate by swiping up/down/left or right to get through a maze of moving subway cars. There are many ways to die. To get your game back, you are forced to watch an ad. The app also takes your information, and delivers custom ads based on the other apps you've downloaded and your location. Made in Denmark by Kiloo Games and Sybo Games. Ethical descriptors: teasing, intermittent reinforcement, advertising, interactive advertising, trapping

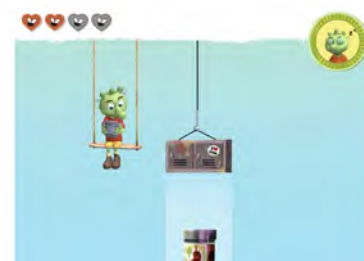
Details: Sybo Games ApS, www.sybogames.com. Price: \$free with IAP up to \$99. Ages: 5-u[. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: fine motor skills, timing. Rating (1 to 5 stars): .5 stars. Entry date: 4/13/2021. []



The Oggles

This a simple, fun stacking game with some confusing design elements. The idea is to pile junk items to make a tower as high as possible. There's a bit of a Tetris element, although the parts can't be rotated, and some of the physics elements seem unrealistic. As you stack, the screen scrolls from top to bottom giving the illusion that your tower is getting taller. The higher you go, the harder it gets. At one point, a bad guy (Mr. Hammer) tries to slow you down and make your tower collapse. Some junk elements take points away, while others help -- it's not always clear when the items help or hurt. But the underlying play pattern is fun, so you can spend time with this app and have fun, despite the confusion. The music gets repetitious. Content comes from "The Oggles" characters, based on a children's book series and film published by Oetinger, by Erhard Dietl. Learn more at www.olchis.de. This is a largely ethical, paid app.

Details: Fox and Sheep GmbH, www.foxandsheep.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 3-12. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: logic, fine motor skills. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.1 stars. Entry date: 4/1/2021. []



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

¡Tweet! (Piu)

Beautiful illustrations and low quality interactive design are combined in this natural science exploration. There are two other apps in the series with a similar design; from Chili-based Ediciones Liebre Limitada. Your objective is to explore a nicely illustrated map in search of some eggs. The eggs lead to a detail page, where you try to figure out which creature is associated with the eggs. You do this by finding seven hidden clues. This is frustrating, because the clues have little to do with the creature you're looking for; and the items that need to be tapped are often tiny. Fortunately there is a hint option. Testers also noted that the font is too small, even on a large iPad Pro. We liked the ability to record your own narration. The content comes from the well-illustrated book ¡Crack!, also by Ediciones Liebre. Options let you toggle between English and Spanish. Some of the animal facts are very interesting. The English narration is not polished. Created by Rocket Smash Studio for Ediciones Liebre. This app was submitted to the 2021 BolognaRagazzi Crossmedia Award.

This is a paid app with no ethical concerns.

Details: Ediciones Liebre Limitada, <http://edicionesliebre.cl/>. Price: \$1.99. Ages: 2-7. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: science, birds, biology. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.3 stars. Entry date: 5/3/2021. []



Ease of Use	8	66 %
Educational	7	
Entertaining	7	
Design Features	5	
Good Value	6	




When I Coloured in the World

Each of the 17 screens (pages) of this 17 ebook features a color and an emotion. As you swipe through the pages, you tap to remove one color, and replace it with another to see the mood of the page change. The illustrations, music and narration are very well done. The interactive features are limited, but work. You learn that colors can make you feel different emotions like happy, sad or angry. The idea is that imagination can change the world from bad to good. Books tend to load slowly. Written by Iranian author Ehsan Abdollahi with beautiful illustrations by Ahmadreza Ahmadi. The story is by Based on the printed book by Tiny Owl Publishing.

Details: Piboco, www.piboco.com. Price: \$3.50 and up. Ages: . Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: reading, language, social change. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 5/12/2021. []



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

World of Peppa Pig

This app looks and sounds great, with well designed Peppa Pig characters and a few playable unlocked games. But it teases children with a lot of tempting looking locked options mixed in with the free options, and it's not easy to tell which are free and which aren't. Wrote a reviewer (Cramer12345008) in iTunes "After the free trial my son was going mad because he couldn't play anymore." The additional content can only be unlocked by way of a paid subscription (\$5/month). The free download lets you try one of each type of activity from four categories: Play and Learn (memory games and read along stories); Watch (download full length episodes of the show, including some for off line viewing); Sing (Peppa Pig songs and nursery rhymes) and Create (by way of coloring and dress up activities).

This app requires an internet connection, and a subscription in order to download and save videos. Like many apps this one offers a one week, opt out trial that auto renews. So be careful. You will not get a refund for any remaining period of a subscription. Note also that subscriptions are limited to one device.

Learn more at <https://www.peppapig.com/world-of-peppa-pig/help/>.

Details: Entertainment One, <https://www.entertainmentone.com/>. Price: \$5/month. Ages: 3-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: logic, language, music, creativity. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.8 stars. Entry date: 2/23/2021. []



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

Worm and the Sea

A 24 page/screen retelling of a beautifully illustrated story with an ecological twist. As you swipe through the story, the pages unfold along with nicely done illustrations, music and narration. In the story, Worm is sitting on a cliff and suffers from longing for faraway places. When a message in a bottle calls for help, Worm's greatest adventure offshore begins. During his adventure he comes across a sea full of fish with nowhere to live. The story portrays the state of the environment and indirectly shines light on over-consumption.

By Jenni Erkintalo. The printed book was published by Etana Editions.

The navigation of the story could be improved -- there is no way to jump around the pages, or exit to the library.

Details: Piboco, www.piboco.com. Price: \$3.50 and up. Ages: 7-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: reading, ecology. Entry date: 5/12/2021.

