



Children's TECHNOLOGY

www.childrenstech.com

Review™

February 2011

Volume 19, No. 2, Issue 131

REVIEWS IN THIS ISSUE

- 7 Wonderlicious Girls
- Alpha and Omega
- Atari's Greatest Hits: Volume 1
- Barbie Groom and Glam Pups
- Disney/Pixar Cars Toon: Mater's Tall Tales
- Donkey Kong Country Returns
- Game Party in Motion
- Grimm's Rapunzel - 3D Interactive Pop-up Book
- Hot Wheels Video Racer
- I Love You Through and Through
- James Bond 007: Blood Stone
- Kids Fireman
- Kindermusik Radio
- LettersAlive: Animals from Land to Sea
- Mavis Beacon Keyboarding Kidz
- MindSnacks Spanish
- My Reading Tutor
- My Underwear
- Nancy Drew: The Model Mysteries
- Nelson Tethers Puzzle Agent
- NGP (Next Generation Portable)
- Nintendo 3DS
- Oregon Trail (for Facebook)
- Penguins of Madagascar, The Pictionary
- Plants vs. Zombies DS
- PokéPark: Pikachu's Adventure
- Shawn Johnson Gymnastics
- Sing-a-ma-jigs Duets
- Sweet Talkin' Ken
- Toontastic
- TouchMaster: Connect
- Vinci Tab
- Yogi Bear: The Video Game (DS)



Turn your iPad into a puppet show, with ToonTastic (p. 13).

Put your voice into Ken's plastic soul (p. 12), and your eyes in a Hot Wheels car (p. 15).

Portable gaming takes shape with the soon to be released 3DS, and Sony's NGP (p. 5).



Sweet Talkin' Ken, p. 12



Nintendo 3DS, p. 18

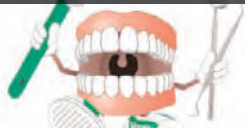


Sony NGP (Working Title) p. 17



Apple iPod Touch 4th Generation

LittleClickers: Learn about Teeth



Price: \$24/year for 12 PDF issues
<http://childrenstech.com/subscribe/>



Toontastic

Why watch a cartoon when you can make one? This pirate-themed cartoon storyboarding toolkit exploits the iPad's microphone, touch screen and web connectivity for the sake of creating and sharing puppet-show like productions. Features are limited, however. If you're looking for a variety of clip art, the ability to add text, or the ability to import your own backgrounds or music, you're likely to be disappointed by Toontastic. Hopefully these features might be in future versions.

As it is, Toontastic proudly goes where no iPad app has gone before; by giving children a small but playful palette of smart stickers, and making it simple to layer over your voice and quality music.

You're forced to start with a story planner, where you can arrange the general parts of your production. Teachers will love this step because it forces children to plan; children less so because they'll just want to get started. But this step correlates nicely with a typical language arts curriculum and it increases the educational value of the experience.

To create your cartoon, you choose a background -- a blank screen is an option-- or finger-paint your own, using a rudimentary set of creativity tools (too few drawing options, no fill or undo, too many color choices).

Next, you drag one or more "toys" onto the screen, from up to 20 possible, or you can draw your own. Despite the pervasive pirate theme, skin tone and gender choice is possible. Here's where Toontastic starts to shine. By choosing "Start Animation" you can move your character around your screen, puppet-show style, as you talk, sing or play into the iPad's microphone. Next you can select background music, from about 20 classical selections, and watch your scene. If you don't like it, you simply re-record, and move to the next scene.

Sharing and revisiting your creation online is easy and automated if your iPad is online, although we weren't able to establish a connection in the early version of the app we reviewed. The bottom line? While this app is limited in content and editing abilities, it successfully provides children with a powerful creative outlet.

Details: Launchpad Toys, <http://launchpadtoys.com>. Price: \$3. Ages: 5-up. Platform: iPad. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, language, planning, art, music, telling stories, cartoons. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 8/5/2010. [WB]

TouchMaster: Connect

If variety is the spice of life, TouchMaster on the DS is a good choice. This collection of 20 action, strategy, puzzle, trivia and card games has something for everyone. Most are variations on a theme of familiar casual games. In Feeding Frosty you move a snowman around the screen to see how big you can grow it, while avoiding bad guys. In Boxdrop, you create stacks of number blocks that add up to 21. If you don't like a game, it's easy to exit and play something else.

While the scoring scheme can be complicated, the games are generally easy to play and well designed. There is no commercial content or worrisome content. Features include the ability to connect with Facebook and Twitter to post high scores, three game save slots, and the ability to control background sounds. Multiplayer options are available for both single player, DS System Swap and DS Download play. Developed by DoubleTap Games for Warner Brothers.

Details: Warner Brothers Interactive Entertainment, Inc., www.warnerbros.com. Price: \$20. Ages: 6-up. Platform: Nintendo DS, Nintendo DSi. Teaches/Purpose: logic, strategy, spelling, fine motor coordination, temporal relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 12/14/2010. [WB]

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



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



ESRB Rating: Everyone, Comic Mischief

