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# BEST *of* 2016

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the best of  
mobile software  
&  
emerging  
technology

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*"I read a study that measured the efficiency of locomotion for various species on the planet. The condor used the least energy to move a kilometer. Humans came in with a rather unimpressive showing about a third of the way down the list.*

*That didn't look so good, but then someone at Scientific American had the insight to test the efficiency of locomotion for a man on a bicycle and a man on a bicycle blew the condor away.*

*That's what a computer is to me: the computer is the most remarkable tool that we've ever come up with. It's the equivalent of a bicycle for our minds."*

*- Steve Jobs*

# TOP STORIES *from* 2016





# SNAPCHAT SPECTACLES

1

Back in October, a giant eye banner appeared somewhere in New York, The banner was for Snapchat's latest product called "Spectacles" and a name change to "Snap Inc," which indicated an attempt to develop a much wider range of products instead of just 'chat'. Snapchat Spectacles have been a constant source of media attraction ever since then. Snapchat Spectacles are goggles that can shoot video. If this sounds similar to Google Glass, it is. But its done in a much better manner, and their pleasant design actually makes Spectacles a much desired product, a complete opposite of what Google's Glass turned out to be (the metal frame with a protruding glass made people look like cyborgs! And it freaked out people in the vicinity, the doomed augmented reality headsets were never socially accepted.).

Snapchat Spectacles let you record 30 second videos and post them to snapchat. The video format, is a great piece of user interface (surprise!) where the video you shoot, changes perspective as you rotate your device, eliminating the black bars!

Moreover, Snapchat's youth appeal and the uni-tasking nature of these devices completely justify the queues people playing along Snapchat's artificial scarcity campaign of delivering Spectacles via a Bot.

My only complaint with Snapchat Spectacles is its one size fits all approach which may make them too big or too small for people, and and the fact that outside of snapchat, the videos it records are basically small circles.

But Overall, Snapchat Spectacles are pretty much worth the hype and every bit as exciting as they look. Gadget of the Year? Sure

# ANKI COZMO



2

It laughs, grunts, snores and is always overjoyed to see me. Anki Cozmo is a powerhouse of personality. Cozmo may more or less be a toy but the bot has some really amazing tech up its sleeve. Using Anki Cozmo is a delightful experience, it's like a tamagotchi pet. You can play with him, you can let him explore the surroundings on his own, program him to remember faces, so that he can greet them whenever he sees them, you can make him say phrases and move him around the table. There's also an API to add more functionality to it.

Cozmo's design feels like it's straight out of a Pixar movie. In fact, if you look at its face, it's very similar to one of Wall-E's characters, Eve. But the Pixar Like feel goes deeper. More than the AI, and the facial recognition tech built into this device, Cozmo's killer feature is its personality. Cozmo instantly surprises the users with his excitement and expressions. It's almost like a child, it conveys everything it wants through its expressions And a nice voice, which doesn't try to be human at all!

2016 in many ways has also been the year when virtual assistants have moved out of the phone and taken the form of speakers. In my opinion, one of the key aspects of Virtual Assistants are their personality, and being jailed in a speaker box doesn't look very nice. On the other hand, we have this device, which if it had a virtual assistant-ish aspect to it, would have been the perfect device to house something like Siri. It's just a niggle but I genuinely feel that Anki missed an opportunity here. Cozmo got me excited about a new gadget like no other device has, in the recent times and I'm still impressed by what it can do, and what the possibilities lie ahead for it.



## NETFLIX GOES GLOBAL

3

Back in January, Netflix made a special announcement at CES. Netflix was about to open its gates to more than a 130 Countries.

Launching in major markets like India, China and Italy; providing access to tons of content globally For the first time.

The announcement was one of the biggest announcements of 2016. For the first time, countries outside of the United States, now had a way to access International Content as it appeared. Moreover, this prompted others like HBO and Amazon Prime to also go global. This one move by Netflix has stirred up a global streaming revolution Of sorts. Moreover, it has also allowed local content to be available on a global platform. Allowing for stories from around the world to be told on a bigger platform



## iMESSAGE APP STORE

4

At WWDC this year, Apple Announced a completely revamped iMessage; Apple's messaging platform that allows iPhone users to send free Messages amongst themselves. The new Messages app introduced iMessage Apps and Stickers Packs. Now, this didn't really seem like a big deal back then, but come September 2016, and the iMessage App Store was loaded with a humongous amount of iMessage Applications and Sticker Packs.

Apple's decision to allow developers to use the all too familiar UIKit for these apps and a drag and drop function to compile basic Stickers, resulted not only, in a massive influx of apps on launch day but also ensures that Messages remains differentiated from other similar services. (Also, finishing any rumors for iMessage on Android)

To top all that, people absolutely love these apps. In a recent report, it was reported that the majority of Sticker Pack/ iMessage App downloads were that of paid applications



## POKEMON GO IS A SUCCESS

**5** We've all grown up watching Pokemon, and wondering if we too could be like Ash Ketchum, wandering across the city, looking for pokemon trainers to challenge and beat them. This is exactly what Pokemon Go provided its users with. That added with the Nostalgia around Pokemon, was enough to generate a fad so huge that Pokemon Go went on to become a bestselling mobile game and an international sensation!

But Pokemon Go had the same fate as that of the other fads, it was replaced by something else. And people almost seem to have forgotten the game. But timely updates and a brand new Apple Watch app released this month could spur up some interest again, as the Watch is a popular holiday gift this year.

## APPLE v FBI

**6** 2016 also saw one of the most important debates on user privacy. With FBI practically asking Apple to build a back door into their iOS so that they could access encrypted data, questions arose over the access of data.

It is evident though, that such backdoors not only harm Apple's stance of User Privacy very severely, but such an access to user's data could put the users in jeopardy, if a future government were to use it to further their motives.

Apple's solid stance on user privacy did tick the needle in Apple's favor, but the incoming change of presidency and the fact there remains no law to prevent governments and government agencies to access encrypted data, makes such a similar situation only imminent in the future.





## ALPHA GO WINS BIG!

7

In March 2016, Google DeepMind's Alpha Go defeated Lee Sedona in a series of Go matches. The defeat was one of the most resounding successes in the field of Artificial Intelligence. More difficult than a game of Chess or Checkers, Go, according to various AI researchers requires decisions based on Good Strategy, and depend on judgement. These traits being more qualitative, looked extremely difficult for a machine to learn.

Alpha Go's victory is often regarded as something that's at least five years ahead of it's time. AI may not be a reason to be scared of computers or a cyborg revolution yet, but its definitely a reason to pay more attention to it

## AMAZON GO

8

Announced in December 2016, was a vision for the future of Grocery of Shopping Amazon Go. Starting early 2017, users would be able to walk into an Amazon Go Store and shop in a way that they haven't done before.

The way this works is that you walk into Amazon Go, scan a QR Code, pick your groceries, put them in a bag and checkout. You'll be charged by Amazon automatically for what you've brought and you don't need to stand in a queue or wait for a cashier.

A product first thinking and a judicious use of Artificial Intelligence could enable Amazon to revolutionarize this market. Yes, it'll be glitchy at first, but like all things with modern day services relying on AI, it'd only improve with time!





# AIRPODS

9

The iPhone 7 saw the imminent death of one of the most popular ports through the history of technology of technology, the removal of the port that housed the headphone jack for Audio. The writing was on the wall, clearly the future of audio is wireless. As one podcast host would accurately summarize it, even though we enjoy using our headphones, it's the sound quality we like and not the wires.

But wireless audio, as it stands today isn't the best User Experience, issues with a bluetooth are aplenty And the audio quality isn't what you'd get for the same price with Wireless.

Apple's tries to tackle the quality problem. With their W1 chipset, Apple's trying to make the experience of pairing and listening to audio on Wireless headphones, a seamless one. To go with the W1, they also have a set of wireless headphones called AirPods.

AirPods are literally just EarPods but sans Wires. So, if you enjoy using earPods there's little doubt that you'd like these too. The early reviews are in high-praise for Apple here, hailed as one of the best Apple products in a while, if the reviews are to be believed, they are a clear winner.

But will these headphones push the users for a truly wireless future? That is, will generate enough demand to make Wireless Headphones a norm? I think they can. If they ship in box on the next iPhone. And then this 2016 announcement will truly be one of the turning points for the audio industry.



# NINTENDO'S SUDDEN RISE TO POPULARITY

10

It all began back in July, when Nintendo saw an unexpected rise in its stock after Pokemon Go's success. Nintendo had little to do in the game, except for the fact that they owned only a part of the Pokemon company.

In July itself, Nintendo announced the NES Classic was coming back. The retro gaming console would look just like its much older sibling but with modern additions like an HDMI Cable. The Nostalgia of using the console, that most people first saw in their childhood was enough to grab attention.

Then in October Nintendo announced Nintendo Switch. It's portable and mountable gaming console. The switch is a tablet-like portable console which can be docked to work on a TV as well, allowing users to play the games in both the ways. This concept of beaming your mobile games to the TV, has been previously experimented by other companies including Apple but this is the first time we are seeing a dedicated console to do this. A few months ago, Nintendo may have seemed doomed, but Switch gives more than a ray of hope to Nintendo's fairly large gamer community.



December saw the much awaited release of Mario Run. Completely redesigned for iOS as an endless runner, Mario Run took the familiar character and soundtrack to give it a completely new feel.

Either way, Nintendo has had an year of unexpected popularity!

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# EPIC MOBILE GAMES



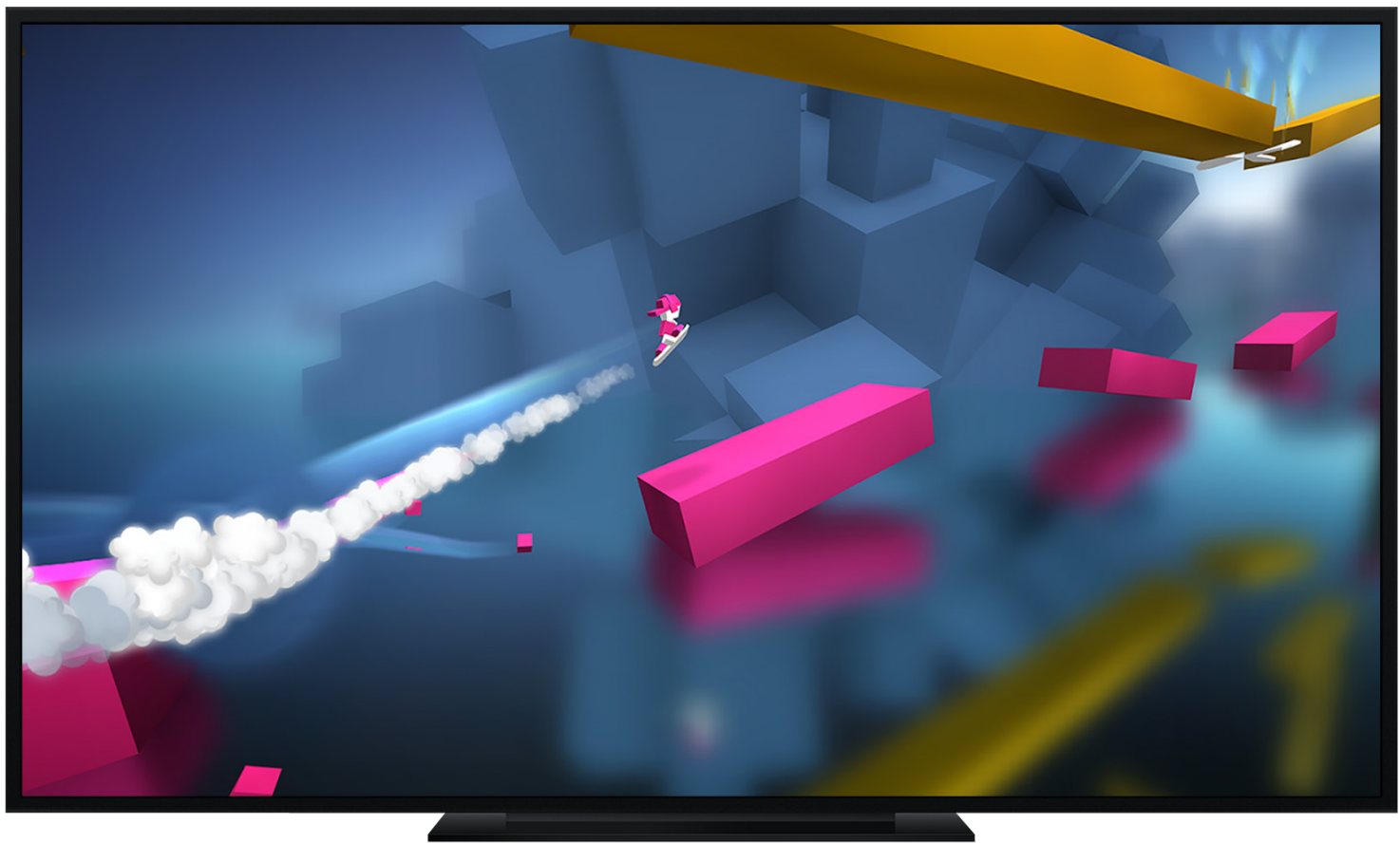




## MINI METRO

Mini Metro is a popular Desktop game is now available on iOS. The gameplay is simple. You are given a public transport map for a Metro Service (Like the London Tube or New York Subway) and you need to connect and manage the different stations so that they don't get overcrowded. Mini Metro is incredibly addictive, reminded me of an older now defunct game called Flight control. Mini Metro is a must have if you like strategic games that just get harder to manage with time!





## CHAMELEON RUN

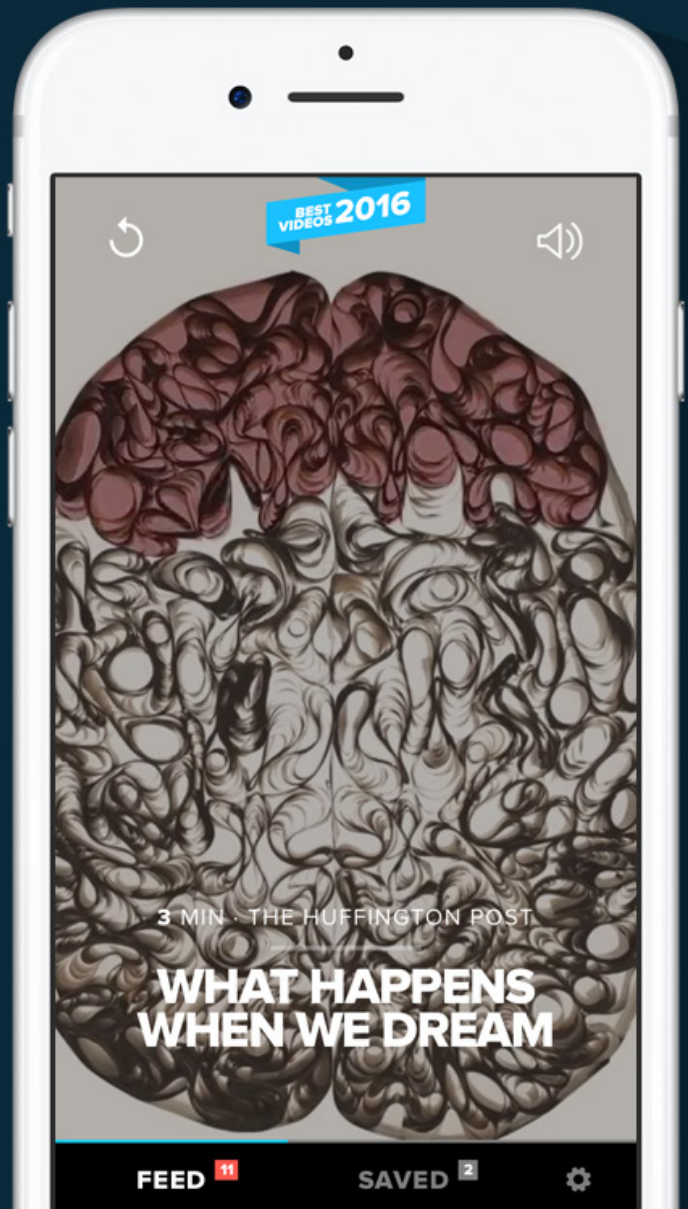
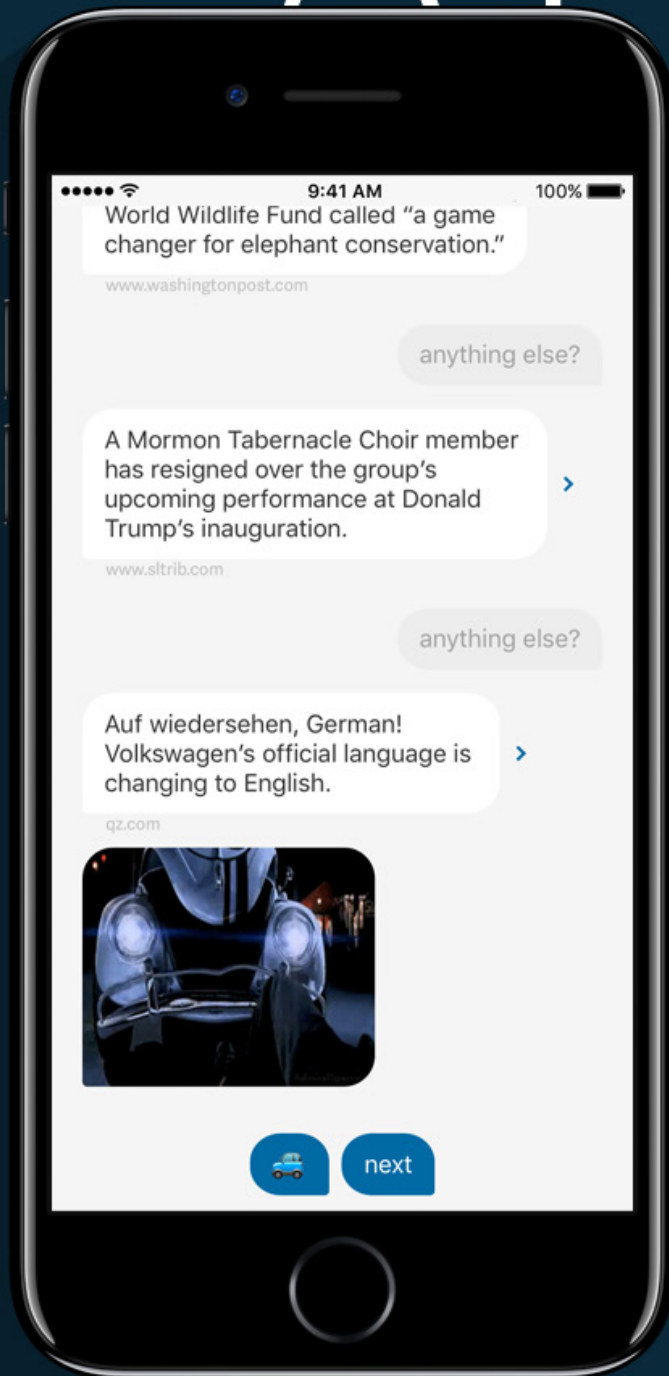
An apple design award winner. Chameleon Run is a must have for Apple TV users. The simplistic controls of jumping and changing colours of the character so that they match that of the floor or walls is makes for a really fun and challenging game. Add to that the vibrant graphics of Chameleon Run and you have a game that you'd love to kill time on!

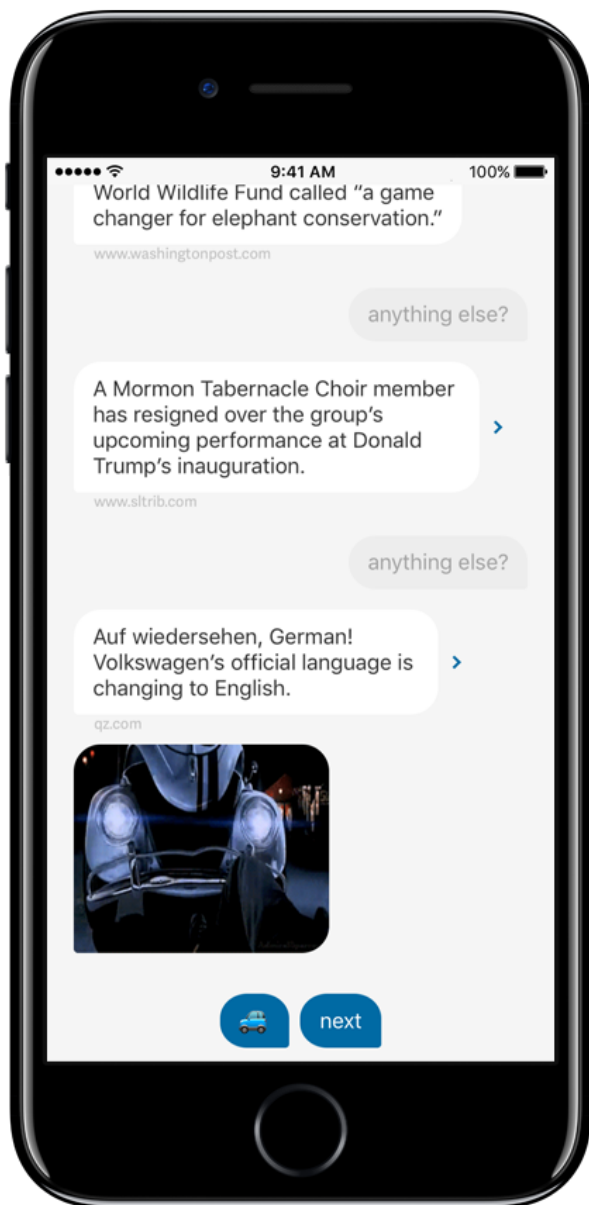


## PINCH WORM

Based entirely on pinch-gestures, pinch worm is an endless runner with a twist, to constantly cross the hurdles you'd need to be good with the gestures & the worm speeds up as it gathers points. Pinch-worm is a fun and innovative game, with a decent graphic set. Worth a play if you are looking for some new game-play controls on iOS

# The Best Mobile APPS



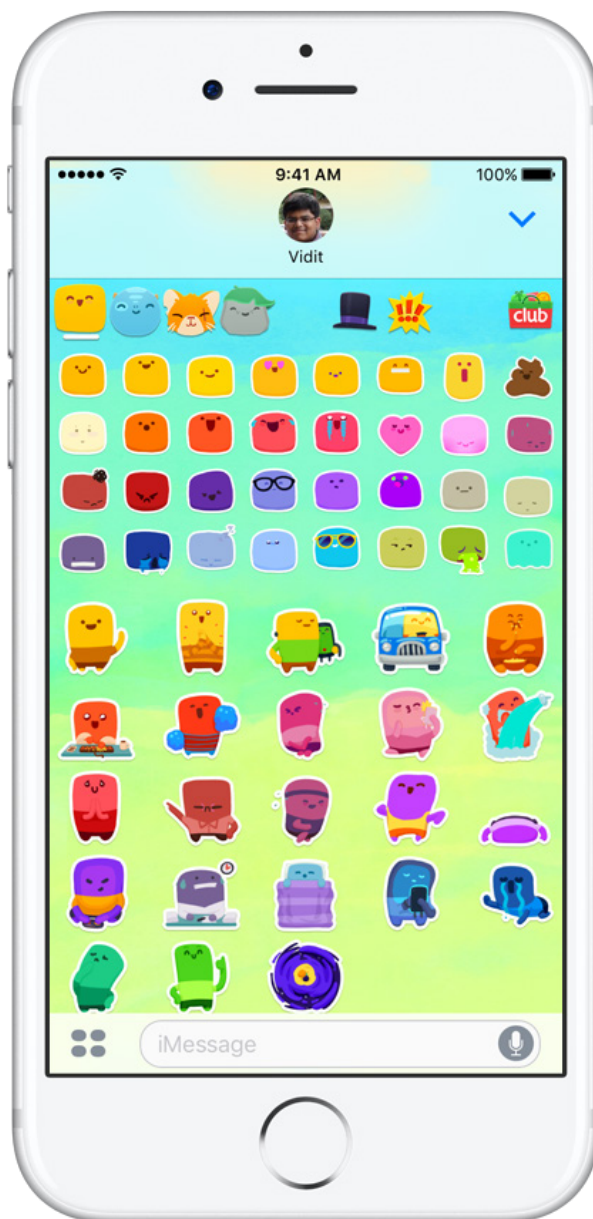


## QUARTZ

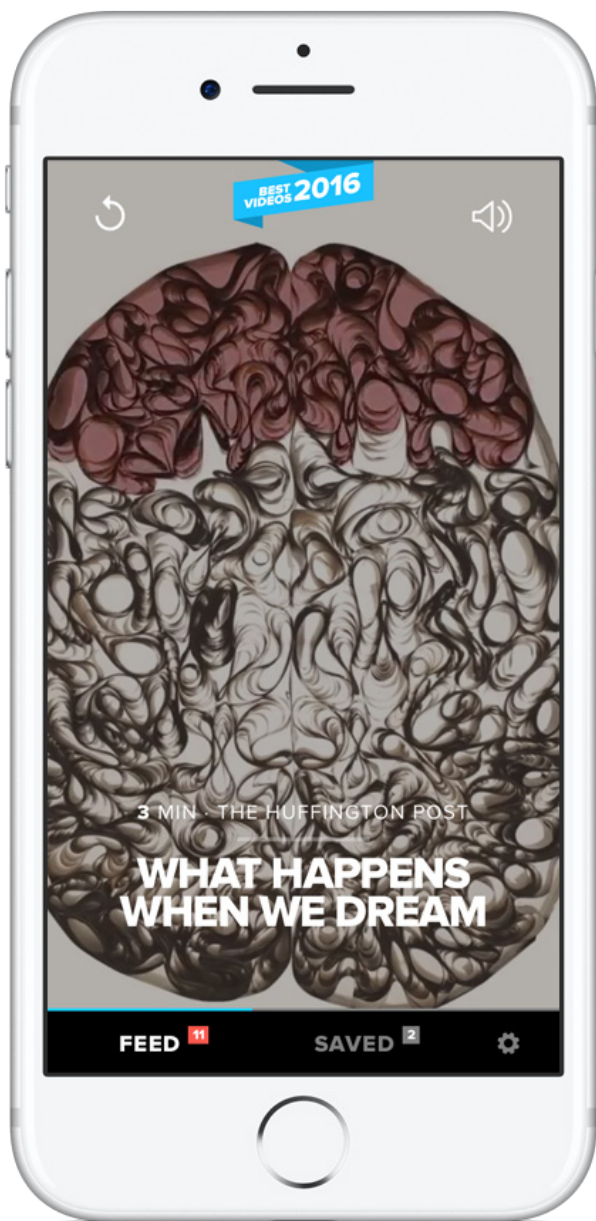
In a unique way of giving news to its readers. Quartz made an iOS App that provides users in a conversational UI. the way quartz feeds you with news. Surprisingly though, this is more than just a gimmick, it's an incredibly well thought of User Interface and over the year, it has helped me read more news. To top that, Quartz news quality is pretty good too and offers a complete overview of the news!

## STICKER PALS

One of my most frequently used sticker packs and probably one of the best Designed apps of 2016, Sticker Pals by David Lanham is a must have for any iMessage User. Lanham's incredible understanding of how people would use these and the assortment of beautifully crafted characters with different expressions makes your day! There's something for everyone in Sticker Pals.





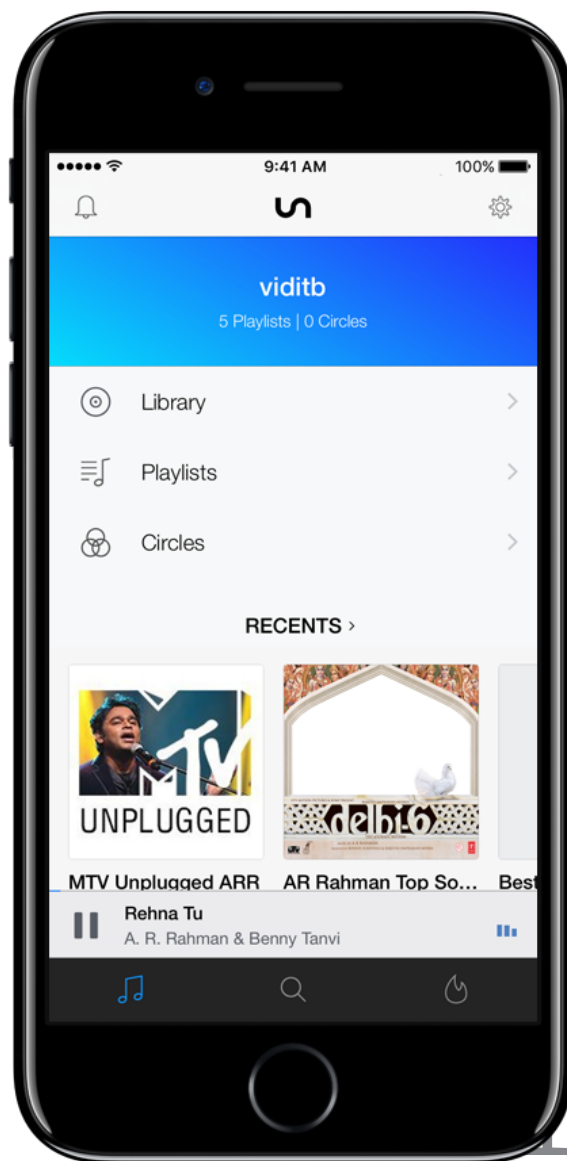


## HYPER

If you like watching random videos about cool things on the web, hyper is the place for you. Offering one web video every hour in a cool, easy to access Interface hyper is perfect for a lazy Sunday morning's content consumption. In the time I've used Hyper, I've seldom found anything that's not interesting to watch. Hyper is worth a try if you are a content consumer. And they are available on major platforms, that's another positive!

## SYLO

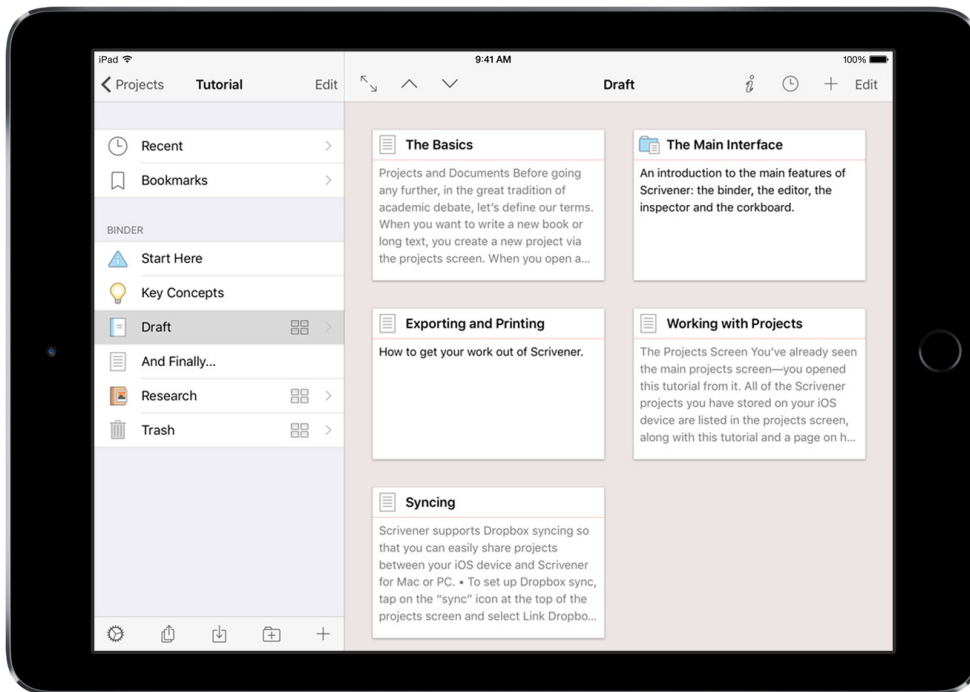
I've always hoped for a universal playlist for all kinds of audio on my phone. I don't want to switch back and forth between different music apps. With Sylo you can listen to audio on Soundcloud, YouTube, Apple Music and Spotify in a single playlist or up next queue. A decent interface, combined with the convenience of not having to switch between different apps and being able to play YouTube audio in the background, makes Sylo a great music utility application!





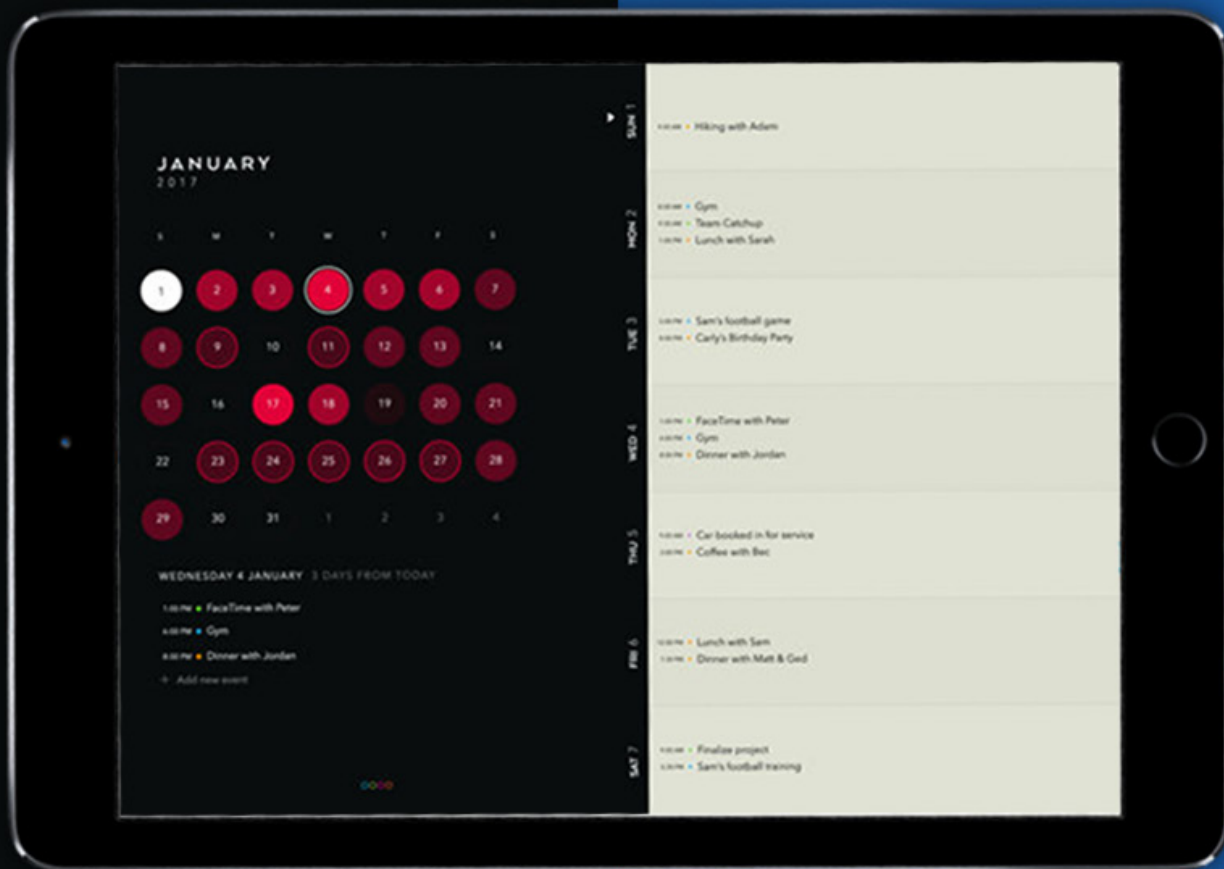
# SKETCHBOOK MOTION

With enough tools for you to generate your Animated Stickerpack or An animated gif or simply storyboarding, Autodesk's Sketchbook Motion is the ultimate prosumer app! You can use basic options like The preset animations or you can use richer more complex tools to alter opacity, speed or Scale of these apps. Autodesk Sketchbook Motion is a great tool for anyone looking to make easy animations.



# SCRIVENER

Scrivener has been a popular writing tool for Mac users for quite some, and it's now available on iOS. it's the perfect tool for anyone into writing. With the ability to manage ideas and storyboards built right into the app, scrivener is the perfect tool for a lot of long form writing. The new app completely re-designed for the iPad and iPhone is a great option for an all in one writing app.



OCTOBER  
2016

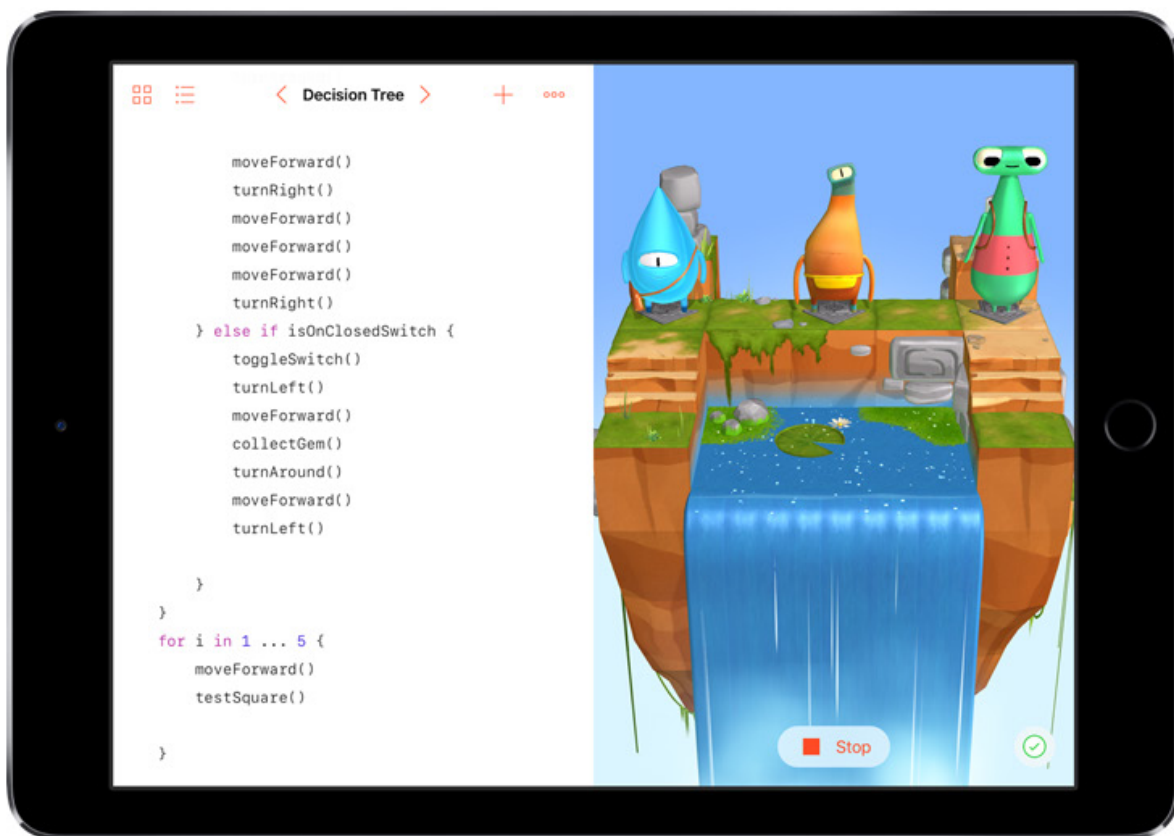


S	M	T	W	T	F	S
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

TODAY

# TIMEPAGE

Just like their physical notebooks, Timepage for iPad is elegantly designed, rich in gestural interactions and visual appeal and much like the iPhone app an easy to use weekly planner. The iPad app gets more breathing room and is worth a try if you need to plan your busy weeks. Timepage's design just inspires me to get more work done.



## SWIFT PLAYGROUNDS

Calling Swift Playgrounds just an app to allow young users to learn the programming language is a gross understatement. Swift Playgrounds is more or less a miniaturized Xcode compiler. With access to almost the entire UIKit, Swift Playgrounds not only allows young users to learn swift in an interactive way but is also a great tool to construct tiny applets To get things done. It's a small step towards more and more developer tools for the iPad.

More than just a learning tool for Swift,

Swift Playgrounds lets you build mini applets too,



# Pixel Quiz December 2016

Vidit Bhargava

Q1. The idea of X came to Y when he took a vacation with his children in the summer of 1999. Y would then be reminded of his own childhood and how travelling used to be an event in itself, and how the creation of interstate highways led to a demise of that culture. This forms the idea of X. What is X? Who is Y?

Q2. The chief futurist for this company X is Neil Stephenson, since one of the products X is working on, is a direct implementation of one of the elements of a Stephenson book. X was founded by Rony Abovitz in 2010. However, all doesn't look well at X at the moment, according to a "The Information" report, that states that the latest X demo was nothing more than a special effects video. What is X?

Q3. We did not invent the algorithm. The algorithm consistently finds Jesus. The algorithm killed Jeeves. The algorithm is banned in China. The algorithm is from Jersey. The algorithm constantly finds Jesus. This is not the algorithm. This is close. Where will you find these lines?

Q4. DeNa, Co. Ltd, is a Japanese provider of mobile portal and e-Commerce websites. DeNa also owns one of the most popular Japanese Gaming platforms called Mobage. However, DeNa's most popular works to this day, come from a partnership with X announced in the March of 2015, after a previous partnership of X with another company called GungHo didn't garner much interest. Why is DeNa famous today or Who did they partner with?

Q5. He first featured in the game, Rad Mobile released in 1991. Originally code named 'Mr. Needlemouse'. his shoes were a concept evolved from a design inspired by Michael Jackson's boots with the addition of the color red, which was inspired by both Santa Claus and the contrast of those colors on Jackson's 1987 album Bad. His personality is said to be based on Bill Clinton's "Get it done" attitude. In 2005, it was one of the first characters to be included in the Wolf of Game, placed alongside characters such as Link. Who is he?