Apps for Kids & Parents

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Technology in Family Life

• Value-laden area: lawmakers, advocates, academics, and engineers all have their own perspectives.

• Protecting and monitoring children is a key theme.

• What do families care about? How do we design for their values?
Exploratory Research Questions

How, when, where, and why do kids use technology in the home?

What matters most to parents with respect to technology and kids?

What are the technology problems families face?
Initial Impressions

• Family interviews provide many insights.

• It’s hard to interview kids.

• There were significant differences between families.

• Technology placement and routines in the home were important.
Uncovering Themes

- Parents have different strategies for exposing kids to the benefits of technology while protecting them from harm.
- Parents have different rules for what is appropriate and inappropriate.
- Parents want to use technology to spur creativity.
- Parents spend time seeking and researching content for their kids.
Anna and Friend often play together.
Angry Birds

Pixie Hollow

Dragon Vales
“I used to look up into the sky and daydream…

…she looks at a device and does the same thing!”
Recycling bin creations!
Engaging kids = Attention and interaction
Sometimes you just need a 10 minute babysitter
How might we help families incorporate technology into their lives in meaningful ways?

How might we promote a combination of analog and digital play and creativity?
• Literature review on imagination, creativity and play
• Competitive analysis
• Understand what parents are currently using and doing
Problem Statement

*Quotes from parents:*
“a no screen time day is a tough day”
“there are always things to do but the device is the easiest”

A key experience of childhood is freeform play and imagination, which can become tainted by extreme device usage.

How might we design a tool that helps facilitate offline play and creativity?
Use cases

- Woman is fixing dinner. Son says on her shirt saying he’s bored.
- Woman gets box of stuff (random) and finds a ‘low carb’ app.
- Son decides he wants the box in a wrap and makes a sandwich it in.
- He begins looking through the items in the box and comes up with a pilot in mind.

2 hours later, his robot is done and the app guides him on what shots to take to make the video.

After dinner, he goes into his mom’s room to show her the app video he made.

Personas
Prototype Testing
I’m Bored inspiring creativity and imagination

What do you want to do?
Pick a door to begin.
I’m Bored  *inspiring creativity and imagination*

Let’s spend some time offline... Find some paper and markers and draw a scene about a rooster, marbles, and a lake.
I’m Bored *inspiring creativity and imagination*
Interact co-create stories

- Dad started a story with you. Go to The Penguin Chase
- Mom added a page to The Lonely Tree
- Austin wants you to start a story with him.
- Dad added a page
Interact *co-create* stories

*The Lonely Tree*

on a bright sunny day,

a sad and lonely tree cried...

until
Can we design a tool that would help parents find apps based on what they care about and what their kids love?
Personas and Scenarios

“They can get obsessed with the same stuff, which I get tired of listening to. Finding new content is a good thing for everyone.”

- Kevin Russell, father of 2
Competitive Analysis Findings

• Existing app recommendation engines don't specifically serve the needs of parents.

• Existing sites for parents don't provide mobile optimization or custom recommendations.
eeny meeny:
a ‘content discovery’ tool for parents
Usability Testing

Three rounds of testing:

1. Ten parents at Lake Merritt with low fidelity prototype
2. Eight parents at Lawrence Hall of Science with low fidelity prototype
3. Six parents at Lawrence Hall of Science with high fidelity prototype
Final Prototype
Create an account

email: 
username: 
password: 

Which apps do your kids already love?
Tap on their favorites to get a custom recommendation

We download □ Free apps □ Paid apps
Skip N→K
Recommendations

- Temple Run
  14 parents like you love this app

- Angry Birds
  12 parents like you love this app

- Words with Friends
  9 parents like you love this app

- Bubble Blast
  8 parents like you love this app

- Plants vs. Zombies
  6 parents like you love this app

- Fruit Ninja
  6 parents like you love this app

My Rating

App Description
from Google Play

Run for your life!

The addictive mega-hit Temple Run is now out for Android! All your friends are playing it - can you beat their high scores?!

You've stolen the cursed idol from the temple, and now you have to run for your life to escape the Evil Demon Monkeys ripping at your heels. Test your reflexes as you race down ancient temple walls and along sheer cliffs. Swipe to turn, jump and slide to avoid obstacles, collect coins and buy power-ups, unlock new characters, and see how far you can run!

Content Ratings
from Common Sense Media

Bookmark This
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Conclusions

• Values expressed by lawmakers, advocates, and academics don’t fully reflect the complexity of values “on the ground.”

• Values change with context and sometimes conflict within a household.

• People express their values not only through words and behaviors, but also in the way they organize their homes and routines.
Thanks!
Questions?