ALL NEW iPODS REVIEWED

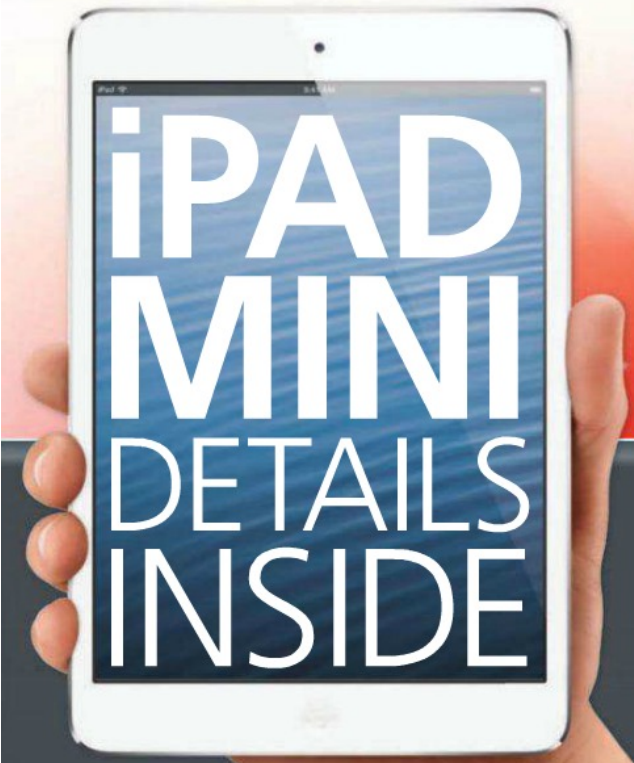
iPad & iPhone user

APP REVIEWS, TIPS AND BUYING ADVICE FOR iOS ADDICTS

BEST iPAD & iPHONE GIFTS



PLUS 106 NEW APP REVIEWS



iPAD MINI DETAILS INSIDE

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www.maxell.eu

iPad&iPhone user

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WELCOME

Email me your thoughts: david_price@idg.co.uk
Or contact me on Twitter: twitter.com/pricivius



iPAD MINI IS BORN

Sometimes Apple makes things difficult for us humble journalists. Hours before deadline on this issue, we listened to Tim Cook announce not one but two new iPads, along with a new Smart Cover, an updated iBooks Author, and new MacBooks and iMacs. Where to begin?

In fact it's a no-brainer; of course I'm going to talk about the iPad mini. Don't get me wrong: the **fourth-gen iPad** is a significant update (turn to **page 8** for all the launch details), but it's like a toddler trying to compete with a new baby brother. Nothing can match the excitement of an entirely new Apple line.

After wowing the world with a series of groundbreaking launches – iPod, iPhone, iPad – nothing less than the totally new is expected every time Apple books a theatre and sends out invitations. Sensible, incremental improvements to already superb products don't seem to cut it any more (one of the topics addressed by our angry columnist on **page 66**).

And so we have something new – and risky. The **iPad mini** is sure to see explosive demand, but in the long term, does it risk diluting the Apple brand, stealing sales from the full-sized iPad or simply confusing consumers? Are users even ready for a 7.9in screen? Steve Jobs, of course, once said that 7in tablets should come with sandpaper so users could file their fingers down.

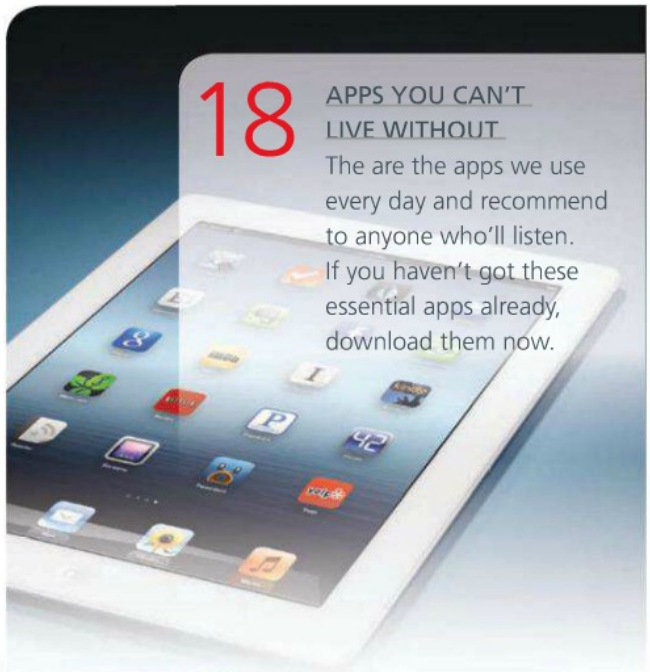
Read all about the iPad mini on **page 6**, and enjoy the issue.

David Price, EDITOR

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Apple unveils iPad mini

The 7.9in iPad is thinner than the full-size iPad and weighs half as much

Apple saved the iPad announcements until the end of its special event on 23 October at the San Jose California Theatre. The highly anticipated iPad mini was revealed at last, and in an unexpected move, Apple streamed a video feed of the event live on its website and Apple TV devices across the globe.

Apple senior vice-president of worldwide marketing Phil Schiller showed off the new, smaller iPad at the event. "You can hold it in one hand," Schiller said, as he highlighted its aluminium and glass enclosure. "It's incredibly thin, and beautiful from every angle."

When determining what size to make the iPad mini's screen, Schiller said that Apple engineers worked to make the device smaller, but not "so small that it stops being incredibly useful".

The iPad mini's screen measures 7.9 inches diagonally. It is 7.2mm thick – that's 23 per cent thinner than the full-size iPad – and as "thin as a pencil", as Schiller put it. It weighs half as much as the previous iPad: "It's as light as a pad of paper."

The iPad mini sports the same 1024-by-768 resolution as the iPad 2, which means that existing iPad-optimised apps should work fine on this new model.

The littler tablet is available in white & silver or black & slate, much like the iPhone 5.

Schiller said the iPad mini is great for the same tasks that the full-size iPad works well for: games, Facebook, web browsing, email, GarageBand, iWork and so on. "I could sit here and list 275,000 examples of what the iPad mini is good for," Schiller said, referring to the number of iPad-optimised apps in the App Store.



Compared to Android tablets, Schiller said, the iPad mini is vastly superior. Apps are custom-built for the iPad, but on Android tablets, apps are often blown-up phone offerings that aren't optimised for the device.

> You can hold it in one hand... it's incredibly thin and beautiful from every angle
>
> - Apple's Phil Schiller

Light and thin
Apple's new iPad mini is half the weight of the full-size 10in iPad

Looking inside the iPad mini

Inside the iPad mini, Schiller said, "the technologies... are equal to or better than the iPad 2." The iPad mini uses Apple's dual-core A5 processor. It has a FaceTime HD front-facing camera and a 5 megapixel iSight camera on the back. It also has LTE 4G capabilities, which will be compatible with EE's 4G frequencies in the UK.

Unsuprisingly, it uses the new Lightning connector. Apple says that, like other iPads in the lineup, it still offers ten hours of battery life; the company boasts that the iPad mini uses the largest and thinnest battery Apple's ever made.

The price

One of the biggest questions about the iPad mini was: "How much will it cost?" Apple has announced that the iPad mini will retail from £269 in the UK (for the 16GB Wi-Fi iPad mini) and will be available for pre-order from 26 October, while 3G models will start at £369 and ship slightly later.

The tablets are expected to ship on 2 November, with the iPad minis shipping a little later, suggesting the possible influence of supply-chain headaches.

Among the new Lightning accessories Apple unveiled at the event are cables for connecting cameras and SD cards.

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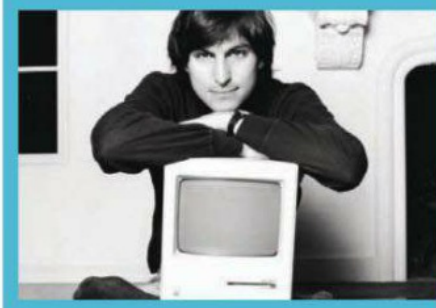
MINI SMART COVER



Apple has expanded its lineup of Smart Covers to include the iPad mini. The polyurethane Smart Covers custom-designed for the iPad mini are available in pink, green, blue, light grey, dark grey and (Product) red. Existing Smart Covers and Smart Cases work with the fourth-generation iPad.

REMEMBERING STEVE JOBS

Steve Jobs, Apple's co-founder and its CEO through a period of record growth, died one year ago on 5 October 2011. To mark the anniversary of his passing, Apple played a tribute on the home page of its website, which included soudbites of Jobs played over a slideshow of commemorative photographs.



iPHONE 5 PURPLE HAZE

Apple has publicly responded to iPhone 5 owners' concerns about a purple haze issue spotted in photographs taken with the device. The company suggests that users should shield the iPhone 5's lens or change position in order to prevent the problem, which it claims is common among most small cameras.





Revamped
The fourth full-size iPad has an A6X chip and FaceTime HD camera

Apple surprises with fourth-gen iPad

The new iPad arrives just seven months after the iPad 3

Despite unveiling the third-generation iPad just seven months ago, and selling 100 million iPads in just two and a half years, Apple CEO Tim Cook said: "We're not taking our foot off the gas."

During Apple's 23 October event, alongside the iPad mini, Phil Schiller also took the wraps off the new fourth-generation iPad, saying: "It's amazing."

The new iPad uses the Apple A6X chip, a new chip that further improves upon the speed performance of the A6; the company claims that it is twice as fast as the A5X, with double the graphics performance. It gets the same ten hours of battery life as the third-generation iPad.

New to the fourth-gen iPad is a FaceTime HD front-facing camera and a Lighting port that replaces the 30-pin dock connector of old. And the Wi-Fi is twice as fast as in the previous generation.

The new iPad follows the same pre-order and shipping schedule as the iPad mini, so will be available for pre-order on 26 October and will hit the shelves on 2 November.

The new model will have the same pricing as the third-generation iPad, which will no longer be available to buy. The iPad 2 is still being sold by Apple.

Apple loses UK appeal, must run pro-Samsung adverts

Apple has to publicly acknowledge that Samsung isn't a copycat



Apple has lost its appeal against a UK ruling that Samsung did not copy its iPad. The judge at the time ordered Apple to acknowledge the ruling with adverts that would "correct the damaging impression" that Samsung was a copycat, both on its own website and elsewhere.

In July, Judge Colin Birss ordered Apple to buy adverts in major UK newspapers acknowledging his ruling that Samsung did not infringe on Apple's iPad design patents with its Galaxy Tab line of tablets.

Apple appealed against the ruling – and the attached humiliation of acknowledging it publicly – but now faces defeat, and appears to have no choice but to set its ad agencies on the problem.



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With over 50 years of heritage in the Japanese audio industry, Audio-Technica's range of 'Street' headphones produce an experience so close to the real thing, every track sounds like a live performance.

www.audiotechnicashop.com

audio-technica

Christmas Gadget

With the launch of the new iPad, iPhone 5 and redesigned iPod touch and iPod nano, there are bags of new accessories that would make perfect Christmas gifts this year. Here, we round up the best.

Juice boost

£44.95

Just Mobile Gum
www.just-mobile.eu



Just Mobile's Gum is a pocket-sized power pack that's perfect for giving your iPhone a boost when the battery is running low. Available in three colours, it has LED power indicators so you'll know exactly how much juice it has left. Just Mobile says that the Gum works with the iPhone 5, as well as older generations of iPhone, but points out it doesn't come with a Lightning adapter.

VERDICT: The Just Mobile Gum could be an ideal gift for iPhone owners that like to travel a lot, or often complain about low battery on their device.

£99.95

Speak up

Blue Microphones Mikey Digital
www.bluemic.com



The Mikey Digital is a portable, lightweight Dock-connector microphone, with powerful functionality and good features. It's a condenser, pressure gradient mic that can attach to an iOS device and be angled towards the audio you want to record. You'll find the audio quality is vastly improved with this microphone attached. Note that it's not compatible with any device that uses a Lightning connector.

VERDICT: Being able to record decent audio on an iPhone (or iPad) is a great thing for musicians, journalists, students and more.



Zoom in



Bluetooth Ferrari Enzo
www.sciencemuseumshop.co.uk

Those with a love of fast cars but a lack of cash to splash will love the Bluetooth Ferrari Enzo, a remote-control Ferrari that can be steered using an iPhone. The 1:16th-scale car has working headlights, tail and brake lights, indicators and hazard lights. The miniature Ferrari even has suspension and sound effects. And it's red, of course.

VERDICT: Imagine the fun you could have on Christmas day with this impressive gift.



Step it up

Fitbit One
www.fitbit.com/uk

Made a plan to get fit next year? The new Fitbit One might help. It's a tiny pedometer that keeps track of how many calories you've burned, how far you've walked, how many floors you've climbed, and even how well you slept. You can set an alarm that wakes you up slowly in the morning, and also set goals to help motivate you and compete with friends. You can keep track of your progress on the Fitbit app, which connects to your One via Bluetooth.

VERDICT: For the health-conscious relative who plans to step it up a notch next year, the Fitbit One could be the perfect present.

Comfy chat

Swissvoice ePure
www.swissvoice.net/eu



Swissvoice's ePure handsets are designed to bring the comfort of landline phones to mobile devices. Use the colourful gadget during long phone calls to avoid discomfort. The ePure plugs into your iPhone using a 3.5mm jack, and can even be used with Siri, by pressing the buttons located on the handset itself.

VERDICT: Know a chatterbox who tends to rack up a large phone bill? The ePure could be just the gift you're looking for.

GEAR GUIDE

PRACTICAL GADGETS:
These iPhone 5 cases will help protect Apple's latest handsets from knocks and scratches

Cygnett ICON – The Bronx

uk.cygnett.com
£19.95



Cygnett has teamed up with various artists to produce a variety of iPhone 5 cases, including The Bronx, created by Tats Cru and inspired by New York graffiti.

MediaDevil Grafikcase

www.mediadevil.com
£19.97



Creative types will enjoy choosing their own image or photo to turn into one of MediaDevil's Grafikcase protective cases for iPhone 5.

Griffin Mustachio Case for iPhone 5

www.griffintechnology.com
£16



Check out this facial hair – it would make a Victorian brigadier proud. Griffin's Mustachio case is a fun way to keep nasty scratches away from your iPhone 5.

Proporta Ted Baker iPhone 5 Case

www.proporta.com
£29.95



Protect your iPhone 5 in style with Ted Baker's cases from Proporta, which include this bike-themed blue version.

iPad owners will love these pressies

Touch type

£89.99

Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover

www.logitech.com/uk

The Logitech Ultrathin Keyboard Cover is ideal for iPad owners who like to type on the move. It's a multitasker, providing a protective case for the front of your tablet, a stand, and a Bluetooth keyboard to make typing on the iPad easier than ever. Plus, it's available in white or black for whichever iPad model you own.

VERDICT: iPad-owning commuters with lots of words to write will benefit from Logitech's Ultrathin Keyboard Cover.





£95.00

Spare room

AirStash

www.maxell.eu

iPad owners will find the AirStash very useful, particularly photographers and movie addicts. It's effectively an SD card reader with Wi-Fi built in, so you can store files on the device and use the AirStash + app to stream video or audio files, or view documents or photos on an iOS device.

VERDICT: Available in 8GB or 16GB capacity, the AirStash is a handy solution to iPad storage struggles.

Double sided

Bamboo Stylus Duo

www.wacom.eu

We recommend the Bamboo Stylus duo to any designer or illustrator who enjoys sketching ideas on an iPad, but likes the option to use paper too. Combined with the free Bamboo Paper app for iPad (**bit.ly/Ttz8C8**), Wacom's stylus and pen combo is one of the most effective we've used.



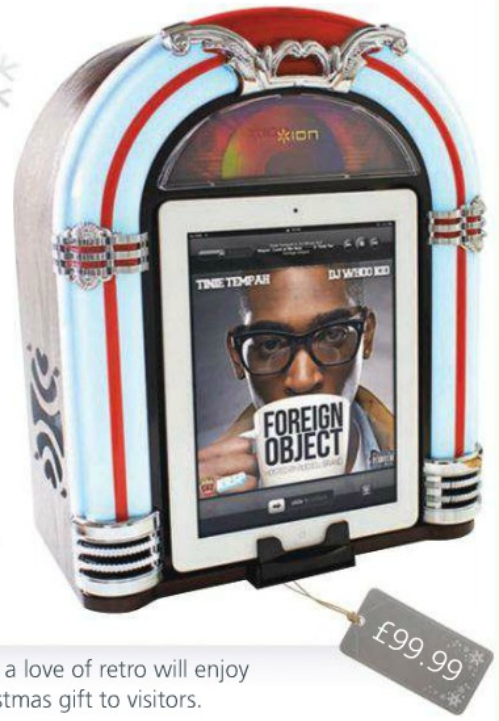
VERDICT: This stylus and pen combo is the perfect tool for any iPad owner with a creative flare.

Old meets new

Jukebox Dock

www.firebox.com

This 1950s-style Jukebox Dock could liven up any iPad owner's bedroom or living room. It's also compatible with all non-Lightning iPhones and iPod touchs, and charges any device that's docked. The neon strip also changes colour as the Jukebox plays your music, which is pretty cool.



VERDICT: Those with a love of retro will enjoy showing off this Christmas gift to visitors.

Pick 'n' mix

iRig Mix

www.ikmultimedia.com

Aspiring DJs might be interested to hear about IK Multimedia's iRig Mix, a mobile mixer for iPad, iPhone or iPod touch. It has controls such as crossfader, cues, EQ, volume controls and more, and works with DJ mixing apps. The company provides four apps with the device, including DJ Rig Free, which provides a virtual DJ rig with two turntables, AmpliTube Free and GrooveMaker Free.

VERDICT: Fancy trying your hand at deejaying over Christmas? IK Multimedia's iRig Mix might be perfect for you – or a loved one.



GEAR GUIDE

PRACTICAL GADGETS: This selection of cases will ensure an iPad is safe from accidental damage

Maroo Drogo

£89.95

www.maroo.com

Maroo's Safe Bumper technology helps protect your iPad and looks great – its design is inspired by the Chinese sign of the dragon, celebrated this year.



Dodo

£44.95

www.execspot.com

Inspired by artist journals, the Dodo Case is made with Bamboo, and has an elastic strap to ensure your iPad is secure. It's available in four colours.



Booqpad

www.booqeurope.com

£79.65

The Booqpad provides a safe place for your new iPad or 2, and also has a notepad and pen holder. It's available in eight different colours.



BookBook Vol 2 for iPad

£69.99

www.twelvesouth.com

Book lovers everywhere will enjoy this quirky case, which brings a touch of antiquity to the iPad 2 or new iPad.



Music lovers will enjoy these audio products

Fit as a fiddle

Philips ActionFit
www.philips.co.uk

The Philips ActionFit earphones get top marks from us for security of fit, and are perfect for sporty people who want to listen to music as they work out. They've also got great sound quality.



VERDICT: Pair them with some decent tunes and the ActionFit earphones will help motivate sporty types.



Standout speakers

Edifier Spinnaker
£329.99
www.edifier-audio.co.uk

Edifier's Spinnaker e30 speaker system is certainly worth considering if you can get your head around the unusual design. The speakers performed well in our tests with a range of music and compatible devices, even handling the less-than-audiophile limitations set by Bluetooth well.

VERDICT: Odd-looking speakers with solid sound for those with a bigger budget this Christmas.

Super six

Braven Six Series
www.braven.eu



The Braven Six Series consists of three portable Bluetooth speaker designs that can charge your iPhone as well as play its music. They can also act as a speakerphone via the built-in microphone.

VERDICT: Listen, charge and chat with Braven's Six Series. They come in a variety of different colours too, including red and grey.

Soft music

iLuv Sweet Cottons

www.iluv.co.uk

The iLuv Sweet Cottons are a colourful pair of over-ear headphones that are ideal for anyone looking to upgrade from the Apple-issued earphones without coughing up a lot of cash.

£29.99



VERDICT: These cute headphones are cheap but cheerful.



Sound travels

Libratone Zipp

www.libratone.com

Libratone's portable AirPlay speaker has changeable covers, so you can choose a colour to suit your mood. You can also plug a non-Lightning iPhone in via the USB port for charging. A battery indicator lets you know when the speaker needs a boost.

£330.00

VERDICT: If you've got some cash to splash on a top-notch AirPlay speaker, then the Libratone Zipp could be worth considering.

GEAR GUIDE

PRACTICAL GADGETS: Apple has given its family of iPods a shiny makeover, making them the perfect gift

iPod touch

From £249

www.apple.com/uk



The iPod touch has been given a bright update, with new colours added. The device also has a 4in Retina display, Siri, and is super-thin and light. A 5-megapixel iSight camera has been added to the back of the touch, too. For our review see page 30.

iPod nano

£129

www.apple.com/uk



The thinnest iPod nano yet packs a lot of functionality into the palm of your hand. It has a built-in pedometer for fitness fans, and a multi-touch 2.5in display. We can see the new colours appealing to the younger market. For our review see page 31.

iPod shuffle

£40

www.apple.com/uk



At £40 for 2GB of storage, the iPod shuffle is not only the perfect entry-level iPod, it's also a solid second device for iPhone users who want to keep it simple while exercising.

AOC

Available now

STYLE

myStage

ULTIMATE MONITOR

for iPod®/iPhone®-Fans

The AOC myStage monitor is an intelligent display providing the Apple® fan community with the ability to listen to music or view their pictures, videos and YouTube content from numerous iPhone and iPod devices on a stylish 23" (58.5 cm) monitor, with or without the need for a PC. Connect a PC to synchronise music, downloads and office applications or simply work on your PC applications and listen to great music through the powerful 5 W in-built speakers. A complete multimedia solution for Apple users.



Easy accessible menu/buttons



Stylish design with 1.29 cm profile



Dock your iPhone/ iPod directly into the socket

Monitor specification : e2343Fi, 23" LED backlight monitor, 50,000,000:1 contrast ratio, 5 ms response time
Connections : VGA, HDMI connection, audio input, audio output, USB 2.0, iPhone docking station

www.aoc-europe.com

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Apple rejects

Early iPhone & iPad prototypes reveal what might have been

BY MARTYN WILLIAMS



Early iPhone
A circa-2006 prototype iPhone appeared in a filing to a California court

Documents submitted to a California court as part of the patent battle between Apple and Samsung provide a fascinating look at the iPhone and iPad designs Apple considered before settling on the devices that eventually went on sale.

Among the revelations was a prototype of the iPhone – developed in 2006, it bears a strong resemblance to the iPhone 4 that went on sale in 2010. Some early designs for the iPad were also revealed, including one with a pull-out arm that acted as a stand.

The proto designs

One of the iPad prototypes, which carries the label 'X9 #4', appears in images with a kickstand attached to the back. Another picture shows it sitting at an angle on a desk, presumably propped up by the stand. A second prototype, shown without the stand attached, has a hole and a recessed channel carved in the back that would presumably store the stand when it folds away.

While Apple decided against using the stand on the finished product, it's notable that a number of third-party case makers have built that feature into some of their models. Speck offers the HandyShell, an iPad 2 case with a fold-out stand that doubles as a grip for carrying the tablet (£28, **bit.ly/UdGuyZ**).

Other iPad prototypes include a model with a two-stage thickness, thinner around the edge than in the centre.

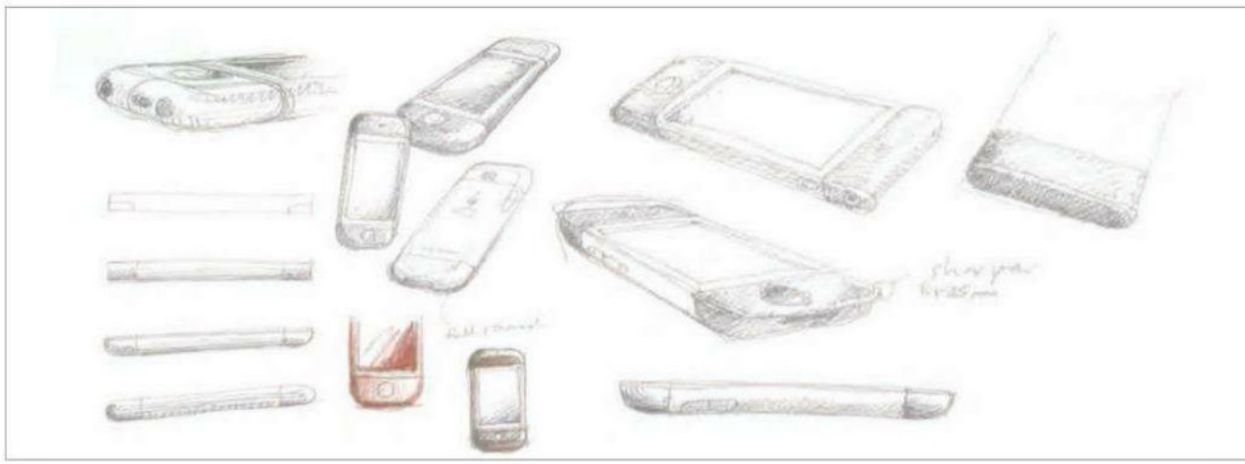
Among the iPhone prototypes is an octagonal model, labelled 'boeing v6', with angled corners and a two-tone design that has a black front and a curved white back. There's also a prototype that's longer and thinner than 2007's iPhone 3G. Most of the prototypes appear to date back to 2006.

Other similar filings with the court revealed that Apple had tasked one of its designers in 2006 with dreaming up 'Sony-like' phones (**bit.ly/R82U01**). The resulting designs had more defined sides. Some were black with a silver band running around the edge, making them look much more like the iPhone 4 than the first handset that Apple offered.

Variations on a theme

The court submissions also show some early designs for the iPhone's home screen. In one photo, an early set of icons are arranged onscreen without any text labels underneath – something that was present in later prototypes.

While some icons, such as those for weather, stocks, the calculator and Safari, appear to have remained almost unchanged, others have been through redesigns. In an early version, the iPod button was an orange box with a music note; Apple later changed this to an iPod icon. And the Photos icon showed a young boy on a beach, not the sunflower familiar to millions of iPhone users.



Prototype designs
Apple sketches of prototype iPhone designs were also shown

Our 20 favourite APPS

They're the ones we use every day – and recommend to everyone

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BELANGER



We see a lot of iPad and iPhone apps here. Some of them we try for a bit, check out what they have to offer, and then discard. Other apps hang around a little longer; those are the ones we actually decide to review. Then there are the apps that stick, the apps we use day in and day out, year after year. Those aren't necessarily the ones that earn the highest ratings, however. Sometimes, it takes a while for an app to grow on you.

So we did a little poll of our staff to find out which apps they use the most. Based on that poll, we came up with the following list of 20 terrific apps (most of them optimised for the iPad, with one that's definitely best on the iPhone alone). You've no doubt heard of some before. But do you have them installed? Are you using them? If not, we'll tell you what we'd tell our family and friends: these are the apps we use, the ones we think everyone should have.

ENTERTAINMENT

IMDb

The Internet Movie Database is older than the web itself. It began as the Usenet group rec.arts.movies, where film buffs compiled a searchable list of movie credits. From there it evolved into the massive website (**www.imdb.com**) it is today, containing listings for more than two million films and TV shows and more than four million actors, directors and crew members. After all those mutations, the database may have found its perfect form in the IMDb app (free, **bit.ly/RLy7WN**).

That's largely because it makes all that information easily accessible where you most need it – on the sofa in front of your TV. It can be used to look up movies, grab details about a film's cast and crew, and even movie trivia. Each listing also includes an album of images, and each actor has their own page.

IMDb is more than just a convenient couch-side reference work, though. It also includes trailers for the latest films, as well as a Coming Soon section.

The app sounds busy, but it's also well done. Although you can find other movie and television apps with comparable focus, none of them offer the comprehensive depth and detail of IMDb.



In-depth movie info
The IMDb app offers complete details for film classics and new releases



ENTERTAINMENT

Netflix

I purchased my first iPad for two reasons: to sketch on it and to watch episodes of *Doctor Who*. The latter was made possible by the Netflix app (free, **bit.ly/T86Tbf**), which lets you view any item in the company's Watch Instantly catalogue on your iPad (or your iPhone).

Ready for viewing
Through the Netflix app for iPad and iPhone, you can enjoy movies and TV episodes wherever you are

Although the app isn't quite as fully featured as Netflix's website (**www.netflix.com**), it still offers more than enough to keep you satisfied. You can search by title or genre, rate films and television programmes you've seen, add a movie to your Instant Queue and, of course, watch TV series and films until your eyes cross.

The app works over Wi-Fi or 3G (if the latter connection is decent), so you can stream everything to almost anywhere; and if you want to watch anything on the big screen, you can use AirPlay Mirroring.

More than any other app I know of, Netflix fulfils the iPad's promise as a mobile entertainment device. I can't say that it has enabled me to ditch my TV entirely, but I have to admit that I do use my big screen a lot less.

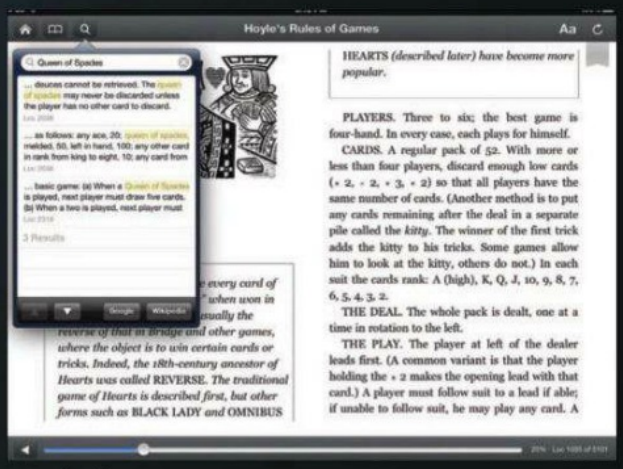
BOOKS

Kindle

The iPad has changed the way we read. Many of us now spend as much time reading news and books on the tablet as we do on paper. But the Kindle iPad app (free, **bit.ly/TmEorf**) has changed not only people's reading habits but their buying ones, too. Now a vast library of titles are at your fingertips.

Once you're ready to curl up and read, the Kindle app really shines. The app's main reading view is entirely unadorned; it's literally just words, words, words. You turn pages with a short swipe, or a tap on the edge of the screen. If you tap elsewhere on the page, the app's other interface options appear. You can add bookmarks, navigate to a specific location or the table of contents, or adjust the display.

Those display options are important. You can choose from five different font-sizes and three different colour options. You can choose to read with black text on a white background, white text on a background, or dark text on a sepia background. A brightness slider lets you further adjust how things look. Kindle for iPad also supports landscape mode, but you won't want to use it. The single-column of text that it employs is just too wide to read comfortably.



Searchable Text
It's easy to look up information you need with Kindle



NEWS

Instapaper

Although there are other 'read this later' services, Instapaper was the trailblazer – and it's still our favourite, thanks to its iOS apps (£2.49, **bit.ly/RRXWEr**).

Part feed reader, part bookmark tool, it's a simple idea that's been well executed. If you see an online article you don't have time to read, simply send it to your Instapaper account (through a browser bookmark, email, or the Send To Instapaper feature of countless Mac and iOS apps). When you launch Instapaper, the app will download these articles for offline reading.

Articles are stripped of adverts and formatting. You can adjust the line spacing, margins, fonts and screen brightness, and for even easier reading, Instapaper can shift from black type on white during the day, to a sepia look at dawn and dusk, to white type on black at night.

Even better, if you have the app installed on more than one device, Instapaper syncs your location in articles. You can organise articles in folders and mark ones you enjoy as Favorites, too.

Optimised for reading
Instapaper shows articles in a grid view reminiscent of a newspaper or magazine

FINANCE

Mint.com Personal Finance



It never fails: those moments when you wonder about the status of your bank account never seem to occur within easy reach of a cashpoint. Thankfully, there's Mint.com, one of several finance trackers vying for your attention in the App store.

Mint's iOS version (free, **bit.ly/Slnr1t**) is an extension of the Mint.com website, so you'll need a Mint account to get started. It's a free service, with features robust enough to challenge traditional competitors like Quicken or that old Excel file you've been adding to since 1998.

On the iPhone, the Mint opening screen presents you with an instant overview of your registered accounts, your monthly budget, cash flow and investments. All of these are initially set up on the website; the app simply tracks them for you. Clicking on any of these overviews gives you more details on where your money is going or has gone, even breaking data down by individual expenses. Mint will also alert you when you have gone over your budget or when you have reached a pre-set amount.

The app's user interface is friendly, simple and attractive. Always nice to look at something pretty while watching your investments slip away, right?

Mint looks good and is easy to set up and use. It's a fine option for keeping track of your finances on a casual basis.

Watch your wallet
Mint.com's easy-to-read charts help you track your spending

MUSIC

TuneIn Radio Pro

While rival music services enable you to specify individual tracks, artists or songs, and either play these directly or create playlists based on similar tunes, TuneIn Radio Pro (69p, **bit.ly/QDj95Q**) streams radio stations from around the world.

One trump card that TuneIn Radio Pro holds over other online services is that you are listening to live radio that's streamed over the internet. Obviously this has a number of advantages, and it's great for listening to sports radio or live music shows. On the downside, you're streaming music constantly, which means you'll have to keep a close eye on data usage.

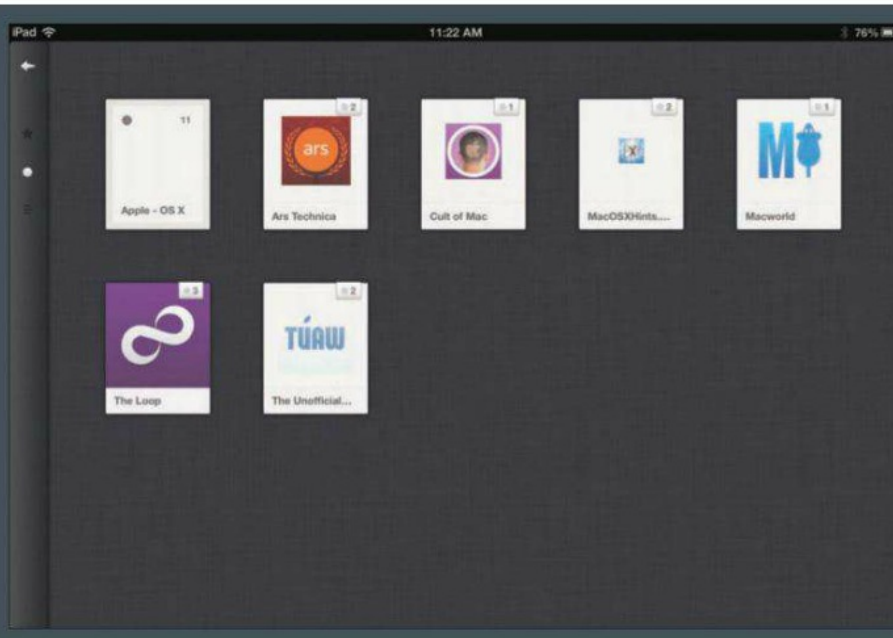
The bitrate that TuneIn Radio Pro provides varies according to the quality of the data connection and the radio service in question. A small blue box next to the radio station or programme lets you know what the bitrate is – typically this is between 64kbit/s and 192kbit/s.

Having said all that, we would have liked it to be easier to browse for shows and stations. It's simple enough to search for shows you know the name of, but its search option is mostly location- rather than provider-based. We had no problems, for example, searching for programmes in the UK, but had difficulty finding listings for individual stations. A guide or links to show listings would have been welcome.

At just 69p for the ad-free Pro version and with no monthly subscription fee, it's a great addition to your iTunes collection.



TuneIn, drop out
Browse stations, listen and record your favourite hits with TuneIn Radio Pro



News organisation The Reeder app lets you browse RSS feeds quickly

NEWS

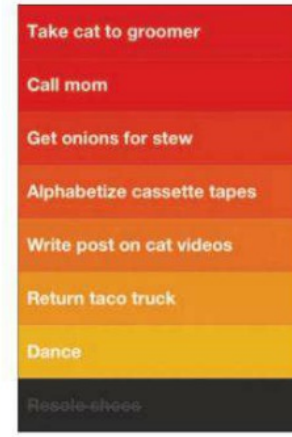
Reeder

We love RSS, and subscribe to a couple of hundred feeds, ranging from tech and world news to personal blogs and humour sites. The Reeder app (£1.99 for iPhone, **bit.ly/RSYyJq**; and £2.99 for iPad, **bit.ly/VlErVo**), makes navigating these a pleasure.

Perhaps Reeder's greatest trick is that it can be controlled with a single finger. You just tap into a subfolder of feeds, an individual feed, an article, and so on. The app is also packed with options that allow you to browse feeds, digest them quickly, and then share or save them as you desire. For example, if you wanted to sort your feeds by the timestamps on the stories in them, but if you decided to group them by source, that option is just a tap away.

Similar to many newsreaders, Reeder can work with your Google Reader account. That means regardless of which app you use on your Mac (we use the free NetNewsWire, **bit.ly/ReBgRq**), your unread articles always remain in sync between the two platforms. And if you tap and hold on a link, you get a slew of configurable options for sending the selected story to Instapaper (see opposite), Twitter, email or a lengthy list of other services.

For all of those reasons and more, Reeder is our single favourite way (particularly on the iPad) to navigate the unceasing flood of articles our many subscriptions bring us. The Reeder app makes keeping abreast of what's going on both quick and enjoyable.



TO-DO LISTS

Clear

The list-keeping iPhone app Clear (£1.49, **bit.ly/QVhbiD**) doesn't look or act like anything else on your phone.

The interface consists of bold horizontal stripes; you'll find none of the usual iPhone interface elements. You drag or pinch stripes to navigate from list to list, add items, and access the settings. That could explain why we like Clear so much: it does one thing and one thing only, but it does that job very well, with as simple an interface as possible.

Clear makes recording, rearranging, ticking off and deleting items easy; we can do the last three with just a thumb. We wouldn't use it for work to-do lists, but for simple lists, we've found nothing better.

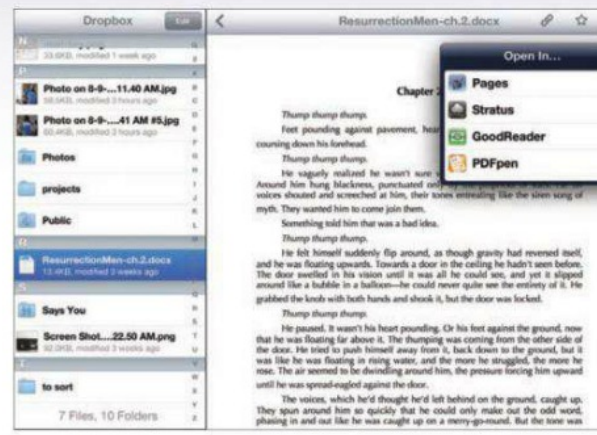
PRODUCTIVITY

Dropbox

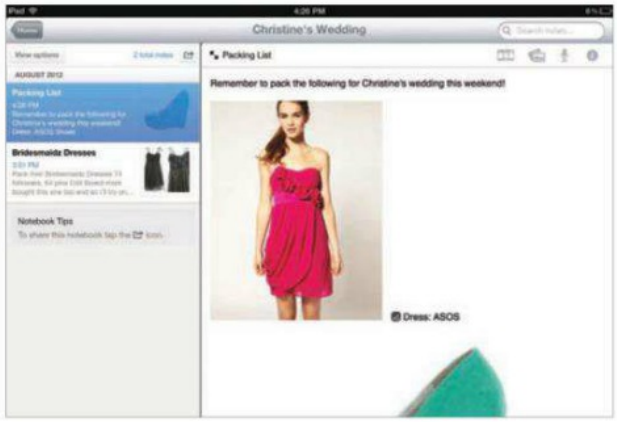
Clever as an iPad may be, you still can't rely on it alone for work. For many tasks, you'll need a Mac and an iPad.

That's why we love the Dropbox app (free, **bit.ly/WFIRLX**). Not only does it let you view files you've uploaded to the cloud-sync service, but it also allows you to open files in other apps and share them. The service integrates well with other apps, too; for example, uploading photos or video from the Camera Roll is easy. And Dropbox has a viewer that lets you see Word and Pages files, images, and video without leaving the screen. Note that you'll need to go to **www.dropbox.com** to sign up for an account to use the service.

When we first tried Dropbox on a Mac, it became one of our favourites. With the arrival of its iOS apps, it became something we can't live without.



Easy File Access
Dropbox lets you open items in other apps.



Notes and more Clip and store online articles and images

PRODUCTIVITY

Evernote

If you're a compulsive note-taker, an essential part of your workflow may consist of making to-do lists, taking notes, and jotting down ideas whenever they occur to you. Evernote is the perfect tool for that. You can take jumbled lists and notes, and sort them into organised notebooks with tags for different tasks and categories. You can use Evernote across a Mac and iPhone, as well as on an iPad, but Apple's tablet is where this free app (free, **bit.ly/Uwfwmp**) truly shines.

Among the many things we use Evernote for is to take notes on an iPad during meetings and while we're researching stories. We clip online articles, images, and even entire web pages. We record and store voice memos with the app. And because it recognises dates (much as iOS's own Notes app does), we can quickly create an event for our calendar. To keep track of any to-do lists, we simply create a list and add an empty tickbox next to each item; as we complete a task, we tap the box to mark it off.

Certainly, we've found many other note-taking tools, and a lot of them can sync across all of our devices. But although we've tried other tools – including Notebooks, Projectbook and Simplenote – Evernote's easy-to-use platform and consistent updates make it a favourite.

PRODUCTIVITY

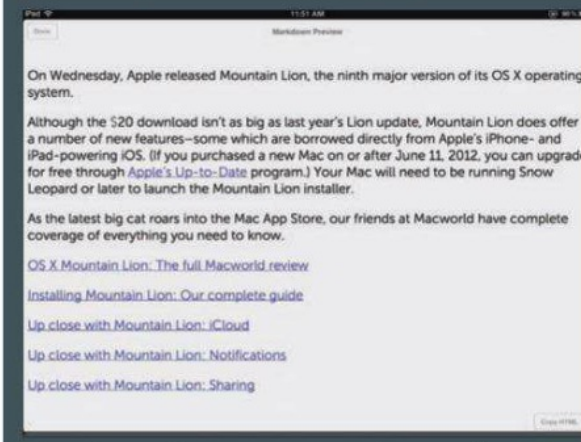
Elements

At some point in getting to know an iPad, you'll have realised that you need a reliable way to create and edit plain text documents on the device. After trying a good number of the many text-editing options available out there, we settled on Second Gear's Elements For Dropbox (£2.99, **bit.ly/OYGfWg**). Why? Because it just works.

It provides a clean interface, syncs its content via a Dropbox account, runs natively on the iPhone and the iPad, supports and previews the Markdown plain-text syntax format, and works with the TextExpander iOS shortcut app. And it costs only £2.99.

To customise the app's look and feel, you can choose the font, text size, text width, and background appearance. And although everything you work on is available through Dropbox, you can also email or print the text, publish the content to Facebook or Tumblr, or export items as HTML or PDF files to Dropbox, iTunes or email.

Indeed we find Elements so useful that we've even started using this editor for our shopping lists.



Clean formatting You can edit and preview files in the Markdown plain-text syntax format

PHOTO EDITING

Snapseed

There are a lot of cool image-editing apps for the iPad, but none of them are as good as Snapseed (£2.99, **bit.ly/XOelNU**).

Its interfaces were designed from the ground up to be controlled by gestures, which makes Snapseed easier to use than any other iPad image-editing application.

Tap one of the editing options to enter that mode, and your image will go to almost full-screen and a simple status read-out will appear at the bottom. Slide your finger up or down to rotate the image, for example, and Snapseed will automatically zoom the image in and out to crop it.

From the status bar, you can choose to apply the edit, or hit Back to discard it. Either way, you'll return to the main screen, where your various mode options are available. It doesn't matter where you tap and drag on the screen, the interface will pop up anywhere.

Nik Software has also added Control Point technology, providing an easy way of creating complex selective adjustments without having to make masks or elaborate selections. This was revolutionary in the developer's desktop software, and it's even more so on the iPad, where you don't have the advantage of pressure sensitive tablets.

If you have even a minor interest in image editing, and you have an iPad, then you need to buy Snapseed.



PRODUCTIVITY

GoodReader

Although iOS has file-viewing features, they're limited. That's why the GoodReader (£2.99 for iPhone, **bit.ly/Ri7j0T**; £2.99 for iPad, **bit.ly/RZQw4X**) is one of our must-haves. This app allows us to view PDFs, text files, Office and iWorks docs, HTML files, Safari web archives and photos, as well as play back audio and video files. The app lays out and crops pages in a number of ways for easier reading, and it has a Night Mode for better low-light reading. It also performs cross-document search.

But GoodReader goes beyond file viewing. When reading a PDF, for example, you can annotate, bookmark, highlight, draw, and add notes to the file; and then save these modifications and share the edited document. You can also extract the text of a PDF, and the app offers tools for copying, moving, renaming, linking and sharing files.

One of our favourite things about GoodReader is how easy it is to get files into the app. We can use iTunes' File Sharing, email, the Finder (by connecting to an iOS device through Wi-Fi or USB), a web URL, WebDAV, cloud storage services, and more.

GoodReader is simply the easiest way to work with files on an iPad or iPhone that we know of.



Making arrangements The GoodReader app gives you several layout and cropping options for comfortable reading

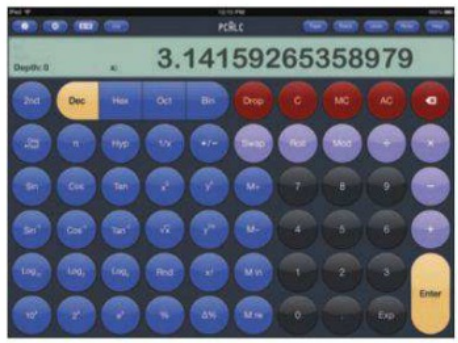
PRODUCTIVITY

PCalc RPN Calculator

Thank goodness Apple didn't include a calculator app with the iPad. It would have ended up in a folder along with all the other pre-installed software we don't use and can't delete, replaced with the PCalc RPN Calculator (£6.99, **bit.ly/X7ttXm**) – in our opinion the best calculator app for iOS.

PCalc excels at complicated maths problems. The 'RPN' part of its name refers to one of our favourite features: support for Reverse Polish Notation. That's an efficient method for creating mathematical expressions – no need to deal with parentheses. We also love the Conversions tool: enter a number, tap the A > B button, and the app instantly converts that figure to a different unit (fluid ounces to cups, for instance, or metres to feet).

If you want a calculator for basic mathematical problems, PCalc might be overkill. But if you need more, PCalc definitely has it.



Problem solver PCalc can handle a wide array of scientific functions

REFERENCE

Google Search

On the surface, Google's search app (free, **bit.ly/PO8Ajq**) may seem redundant. After all, why not just use the iOS web browser? The reason is that it offers more than Safari's search box does.

That 'more' starts with voice input. Even before Siri, Google Search allowed you to talk to it, making searches easier. As we went to press, Google announced that it's adding even more advanced vocal support, making spoken searches more intelligent than before. For example, you'll no longer need to use cryptic Google-ese; you can ask "When is *Skyfall* playing?" instead of saying "showtimes *Skyfall*."



Beyond search You can access assorted Google offerings by way of the Google Search app

The app refines its basic search skills by adding support for Google Goggles, which allows you to search the internet via pictures, and by focusing your searches vertically (images, news and so on).

Of course, Google Search now does much more than simply search the web. It also gives you access to Google apps such as Gmail, Calendar, Earth and Docs. Indeed, it's so useful, we sometimes forget we're using it.



Follow the conversation
Tweetbot provides a wealth of features for staying on top of Twitter activity

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Tweetbot for Twitter

Although we initially tried to resist Twitter's allure years ago, we failed. A key element of our infatuation is its surfeit of third-party apps that offer easy access to the service from an iOS device. Of those, Tweetbot (£1.99 for iPhone, **bit.ly/VlNINh**; £1.99 for iPad, **bit.ly/SlRBS5**) is our favourite. Tweetbot not only includes all the necessary features, but also executes them flawlessly, offering smooth scrolling through tweets, the ability to fill in any timeline gaps, integrated push notifications for mentions or direct messages, and the ability to view the full conversations surrounding tweets.

Tap and drag a tweet to the left, and you see any replies sent to the original tweeter. Drag to the right, and you'll see the full conversation thread that led up to the current tweet. You can also configure a triple-tap on a tweet to handle various actions; we use it to mark a tweet as a favourite, but you can use it for replying, retweeting, translating or viewing in Favstar. Tapping and holding on a hashtag pops up options to compose a tweet with that tag, or to mute all future tweets.

Although iOS has an abundance of innovative, well-made Twitter apps, none of them can rival Tweetbot's mix of charm, intuitive navigation and depth.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Facebook

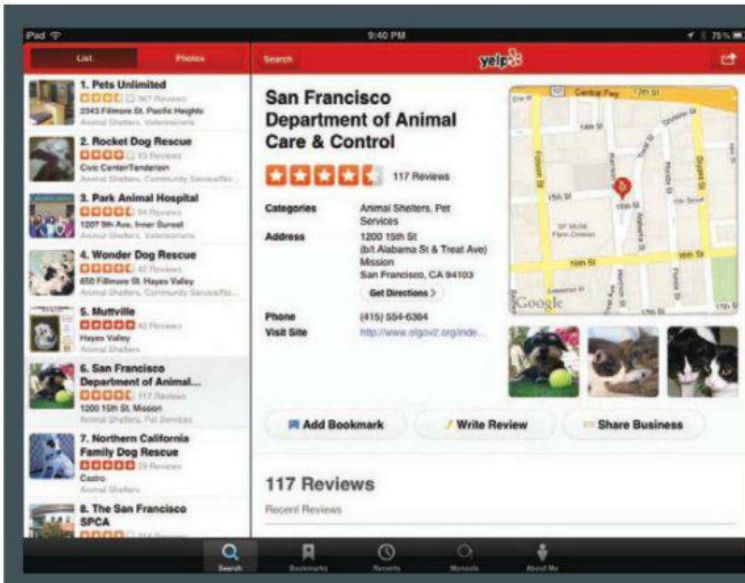
No service is as personal as Facebook, so it makes sense that Facebook and the iPad go so well together. You can use Facebook through your web browser on a computer, of course, but when you use the iOS app (free, **bit.ly/SlU13a**) on an iPad, you'll quickly find that your tablet is devoted to your Facebook experience. If you're anything like us, you'll become completely immersed in your Facebook page, so you can pay close attention to the posted updates for your family, friends and favourite (liked) things.

Although some people might prefer the alternative interfaces available in third-party Facebook apps, we like the fact that the official Facebook app is almost a mirror image of the Facebook web interface. The app is at its best in landscape mode, in which a list of friends who are online appears in a column on the right side. If you feel like chatting with a friend, just tap that person's name, type a message and send it. Facebook's web interface works the same way, but on the iPad, both the names and the profile pictures are nice and big, which helps remind me that I'm dealing with another person on the other end.

The one major qualm we have about the Facebook iPad app, though, is that it lacks the pop-up menu that's available in the web interface on Wall postings. We like to use that menu to hide postings we're not interested in or have finished following. The menu is also helpful whenever you want to change your subscription status to a particular friend. Despite that missing feature, however, Facebook is still the app we use most often.



Personal contact
In landscape mode, the Facebook iPad app offers a clean layout that helps you get in touch with friends



The People's Choice The Yelp app brings you consumer ratings and reviews for just about any local establishment.

TRAVEL

Yelp

Even though the Yelp service itself is not without its detractors, we still find the app (free, **bit.ly/Td0BeU**) indispensable.

The Yelp website (**www.yelp.co.uk**) is, naturally, the place to go for ratings and reviews of restaurants, bars, shops or just about any other public establishment. It's like Consumer Reports written (for the most part) by consumers, and it's free. Everyone's opinions are represented – and not everyone is nice or even sensible. But the sheer volume of comments offers its own balance, and Yelp is nothing if not diverse.

Yelp's iOS interface differs significantly from its website. With its on-the go orientation, the app lets you type the topic you're looking for into a Filter box and either use your current location or type a different one in the Near box. The results then flow on to the screen. You can browse the results in either List view (accompanied by a map pinpointing the location of each entry) or Photos view (which gives a visual cue about what you're searching for).

On the website, some reviews are 'filtered' or hidden, and you have to finish an elaborate 'Captcha' process to view them. Yelp has had its share of criticism about how it derives its overall rankings, but from our perspective anyone who uses the web should know not to take all comments or websites at face value. Approached with a 'trust but verify' mentality, the Yelp app is still a great tool to find out where to eat, drink and shop wherever you have your iOS device.



Safe and Secure 1Password Pro keeps your details to hand

UTILITIES

1Password Pro

We rely on AgileBits' 1Password app (£6.99, **bit.ly/Td2yrD**) to keep track of, enter and even create passwords on multiple Macs. But we don't only need passwords on desktop computers. That's where the company's 1Password Pro (£10.49, **bit.ly/OYU5b9**) becomes so essential.

Whether you're logging into a banking site or your Twitter account, all the info you need is at you fingertips thanks to Dropbox syncing of your secure database across all the computers and iOS devices you use.

While the app works well if you employ its desktop software, 1Password Pro for iOS doesn't require you to have the OS X version.

UTILITIES

Screens VNC

These days, not only is remotely viewing your desktop easy, but an app like Screens (£13.99, **bit.ly/POchpp**) even lets you control it from a handheld device. What makes this app stand out is the sheer degree of thoughtfulness that went into its design. It has no shortage of features, including the ability to remember multiple connections, securely connect to remote systems via SSH, and even configure multitouch gestures for specific commands.

Although Screens works fine with OS X's screen-sharing and remote-login services, developer Edovia offers a desktop helper app for Mac or Windows, Screens Connect (**bit.ly/yeVDYp**), that makes the process even easier, saving you from dealing with tasks such as setting up port forwarding and remembering IP addresses.

Best of all, Screens works well with iOS's touch interface. You can pinch-to-zoom the remote screen, and tap where you want the cursor to go. It offers a virtual keyboard, plus function buttons for common actions such as Spotlight, Page Up and Down, and sending the current pasteboard.



Remote viewing Screens gives you complete access to your other computers, and works well with iOS's touch interface

If you need to access your Mac when you're not at home, or if you have a Mac hooked up to a TV as an entertainment centre, Screens is an indispensable addition to your iPad.



Infinity Blade II
This hack 'n' slash sequel keeps the gameplay formula simple, but it's an astonishing technical accomplishment

The best roleplaying games on iOS

Calling all wizards: it's time for some RPG action

BY ALEC MEER

The term 'roleplaying game' can mean an awful lot of things. Look at the RPGs on the App Store alone: hundreds of the blighters on what's still a very young gaming platform, showcasing almost as many interpretations of the roleplaying genre. Many more than the 18 here can justifiably be called great, but these are what we reckon are the very best iPhone and iPad roleplaying games.

18 100 Rogues

If you're not familiar with the 'roguelike' sub-genre of roleplaying games, here's the main thing you need to know: you are going to die, and you won't get to reload a save game when you do. These are true tests of skill and endurance, in which a false step costs you all your progress and all your loot.

100 Rogues is a stripped-down, easily grasped approach to what can be overwhelmingly complicated games, but it's no less brutal or satisfying for it. Make your way through levels of a monster-filled dungeon, collecting better stuff and, increasingly, planning every attack with extreme caution. Despite 100 Rogues' heart of darkness, its surface is forever cheerful and imaginative – forever suggesting that this time you will surely succeed. Yeah, right.

READ MORE: bit.ly/RlHdfq

17 Infinity Blade II

Pretty much the polar opposite of the retro masochism of the previous game, this Unreal Engine-powered hack 'n' slasher is the most technically impressive iOS game there is, but sacrifices complexity to achieve this. It's a sort of swordfighter that controls most movement for you, with your interactions limited to swiping and tapping to attack and block your imposing foes. As you do, you'll level up, and find and buy better weapons and armour. Death is simply an opportunity to try again.

Like its predecessor it doesn't entirely deserve the adulation it gets, but it should certainly be your go-to game if you want to show off your iDevice to an admiring crowd.

READ MORE: bit.ly/RT689p

It's definitely something you should experience – a darkly mesmerising abstract tale in a darkly mesmerising abstract world

16 ORC: Vengeance

This action-RPG was never going to be one for the ages, but there's still enough of a shortage of competition that it deserves a moment in the sun now. Highly reminiscent of Mac/PC hack 'n' slash goliath Diablo III, ORC won't make you think for even a second, but you'll soon be lost to a world of experience points, damage statistics and endless hunger for bigger swords. The developers have also had a good think about how to make the Diablo style of gaming work on a touchscreen, incorporating some fairly elegant gestures instead of awkward on-screen buttons.
READ MORE: bit.ly/WaMo33

15 10000000

Here's perhaps the most deadly time-eater of any game on this list – a fusion of retro roleplayer and match-3 puzzle game (in the vein of Bejeweled et al). Beat monsters by creating a line of three swords, defend with shields, open doors with keys, spend gold on upgrades, and try, try and try again until you hit 10000000 points. It sounds like it should be a horrible, artificial mess, but in fact it's effortlessly natural at combining those two types of game. What a silly name, though.
READ MORE: bit.ly/SoW4qz

14 Superbrothers: Sword & Sworcery EP

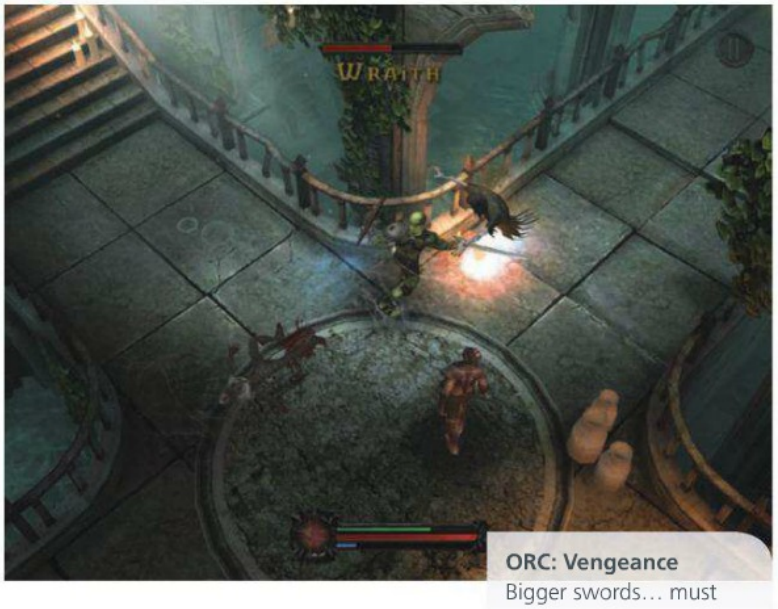
It's not necessarily a roleplaying game, but it's hard to know quite else what to call it. It has elements of old-school point-and-click adventures like Monkey Island, but it also has tactical sword battles, boss fights and side quests. Whatever you want to call it, it's definitely something you should experience – a darkly mesmerising abstract tale in a darkly mesmerising abstract world. Never predictable, always surprising and a great soundtrack too.

The only thing that harms it is an excess of unnecessarily hipsterish, posturing dialogue, but S:S&S's huge success in atmosphere and aesthetics means this scarcely matters.
READ MORE: bit.ly/RCX9u9

13 Call of Cthulhu: The Wasted Land

30-something geek nirvana: an old-school, turn-based roleplaying game in the vein of the original Fallout, based around the otherworldly fiction of HP Lovecraft. To top it off, it's also set during World War I, so it's all stiff upper lips, well-groomed moustaches and tin helmets in the midst of indescribable horror.

The Wasted Land is more linear than it needs to be, but its underlying roleplaying system and combat are deep and varied, allowing you to painstakingly tailor your squad of soldiers into very specific roles, then weep helplessly when one of them's killed by a tentacle-monster and you have to hire a complete rookie in their place.
READ MORE: bit.ly/WihAz0



ORC: Vengeance
Bigger swords... must find bigger swords... This dungeon-crawling action RPG will drag you into a world of loot lust and stat madness. It's, er, good to ORC

12 Judge Dredd: Countdown Sector 106

In a just world, we'd be including some of the *Fighting Fantasy* adventure books that used to be available on iOS, but sadly a rights issue has seen them withdrawn from sale for the time being. This book-based Judge Dredd roleplayer isn't quite up to the same standards, but there's definitely some of the old magic in it. Especially as you get to play as *2000 AD*'s eponymous future-cop, able to make on-the-spot calls as to whether to free, arrest or execute suspected perps.

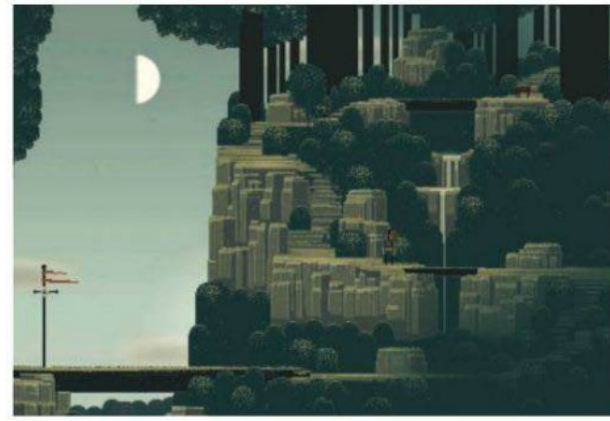
Combat and other tricky situations are resolved by virtual dice rolls – and yes, if you fear having to start over again, there's an easy mode where you can return to previous 'pages' in the event of a bad call or roll. Unfortunately the writing's a little characterless, but at least you get some great *2000 AD* comic art to look at.
READ MORE: bit.ly/RTae1k

11 Cthulhu Saves The World

The second appearance for ol' squidface on this list, this is a rather more irreverent take on Lovecraft's 'dark gods' mythology. You play as the titular horror, on a cheerful retro adventure, with turn-based combat styled after the original Final Fantasy games. It's very playful, revelling in the fact that it's forcing an inherently evil character to behave like a hero. It also packs in a ton of variety and detail in terms of its many foes and locations.
READ MORE: bit.ly/X040y8



Above: Call of Cthulhu: The Wasted Land
Stiff upper lips, well-groomed moustaches and unnameable eldritch horrors from beyond the mind's comprehension



Above right: Superbrothers: Sword & Sworcery
An evocative, strangely melancholy and utterly unique pixellated RPG adventure

10 Uplink

Another 'but is it a roleplaying game?' debate-starter, one thing's for sure: Uplink is spectacular. You play as a never-seen hacker, tasked with remotely gaining access to an array of banks, organisations and governments across a cyberpunk world. As you do so you can spend your gains on better computing equipment in order to break through tougher firewalls and the like.

What makes Uplink sing is its tension – can you break into that government server before you're seen and before the timer runs out? And can you defend your own systems against the incursions of sinister rivals? Uplink might be combat-free, but playing a role it most certainly is.

READ MORE: bit.ly/RTf5iY

9 Puzzle Quest 2

Like 10000000 this melds roleplaying with a block-matching puzzle game, but somehow it feels entirely different. This is more about the long game and elaborate strategies as you embark upon a fantasy quest. Meaty and great-looking, it might be getting on a bit now but it's still an App Store essential.

READ MORE: bit.ly/TrLLTP

Bastion
A brilliantly atmospheric game, in a way you wouldn't expect from its cutesy appearance



8 Cardinal Quest

There are far too many rubbishy games on the app store with 'quest' in the title, but don't let this lo-fi gem get lost in the noise. It's another roguelike (see entry 18), and a defiantly retro-looking one at that, but it rips out anything that could be deemed wastage to focus utterly on the strategy necessary to survive multiple dungeon tiers packed with monsters who can wipe you out with frightening ease.

Combat just requires moving into an enemy, any loot that's inferior to what you've already got is automatically sold, and its three playable classes offer wildly different playing experiences. Unfair, unforgiving and essential.

READ MORE: bit.ly/QVVVZZ

7 Chaos Rings II

From the Final Fantasy stable, this doesn't stray too far from the tropes of Japanese roleplaying games: endless cutscenes, childlike dialogue, sprawling plots, over-the-top sights and highly tactical combat. It's not for everyone and its £13 price (£14 on iPad) is scandalous, but if you're after a more full-fat, high-tech RPG than is generally available on the App Store, this is where to look.

READ MORE: chaosrings.com

6 Swordigo

It's no looker, and would probably have been better-served by a faux-retro look than its strangely cheap-looking 3D, but Swordigo is a slick and cheerful roleplaying game that concentrates more on adventure than statistics. It's vaguely in the vein of the Legend of Zelda games, but a little more fast and furious, with some elegant touchscreen combat and rewarding exploration.

READ MORE: bit.ly/SV3ufN

5 Legends of Yore

Another one of those games whose cheery retro appearance belies

a faintly sadistic interior, Legends of Yore has everything you need: quests, loot, stats, classes and oh-so-many monsters. It's all set within one huge overworld with dungeons below it, so you're able to explore and play it at your own pace. You will, of course, be near-instantly killed if you roam too far without fattening up your loot and levels, but surviving what's clearly beyond your abilities is part of the point. Great stuff, and far more substantial than its art style suggests.
READ MORE: legendsofyore.com

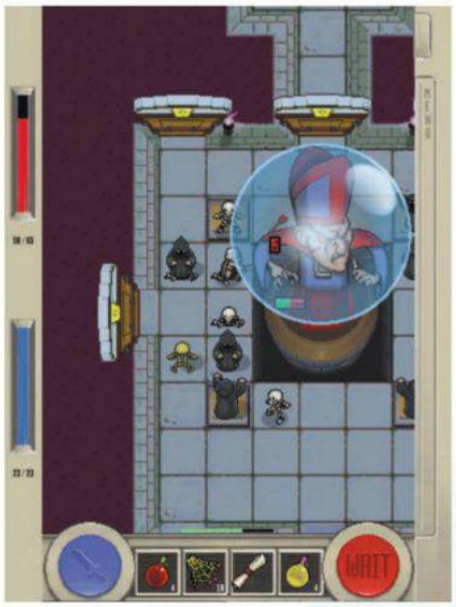
4 The Bard's Tale

You'll either love it or you'll hate it. Bard's Tale is a tongue-in-cheek pastiche of old-school roleplaying games and fantasy worlds, which is certainly something that's ripe for a spot of mockery, but the over-the-top humour got a lot of folks' backs up when it was originally released – especially as it's a remake of a rather more revered ancient game. Fortunately, a recent update meant that the original game is now also included with this one, so you've got the choice of smirking or po-faced action in any case.
READ MORE: on.fb.me/RP4TpF

3 Doom II RPG

Yep, you read it right – the classic shooter reimagined as a turn-based roleplaying game. It sounds absurd, but actually Doom's use of health packs and ammo and the hunt for bigger weapons to take down harder foes suits roleplaying down to the ground.

Each shot you take becomes a matter of luck and dice rolls rather than how quickly you can aim, but somehow this manages the same tension and adrenaline that its shooter predecessor offered. Of course, it's a little gimmicky and the control system feels crude and lazy, but it gets away with it.
READ MORE: idsoftware.com





Avernum: Escape From The Pit
A deeply absorbing love letter to the free-roaming isometric RPGs popular in the 1990s

2 Avernum: Escape From The Pit HD

Probably the RPG with the most substance in this list, with the possible exception of Chaos Rings, Avernum is a love letter to isometric, free-roaming 90s computer roleplaying games such as the revered Ultima series.

If you've convinced yourself that iPhone RPGs are throwaway affairs that only last a few hours of superficial button-bashing, you really should try this. Thirty-odd hours of play, dozens of towns to explore, even more quests, a branching storyline and complex mechanics – this is one to settle down with for a couple of deeply absorbed weeks.
READ MORE: avernum.com

1 Bastion

This new indie action-roleplaying game, which we first reviewed last issue, does a fantastic job of something most of the other games in this list barely bother with: story. As you explore a crumbling city in the sky, bashing monsters, upgrading your selection of melee and range weapons, and trying not to fall off the edge into the endless void beyond, a gravel-voiced narrator comments on what you're doing, why you're there and even what you've done wrong. As he's reactive to your actions, Bastion ends up being a brilliantly atmospheric game, in a way you wouldn't expect from its cutesy appearance. The controls take a bit of getting used to, and sadly it's iPad-only for now, but even so this is one of the strongest iOS games to date.
READ MORE: bit.ly/Sfuton

100 Rogues
Stabbing a giant pope is one of the many pleasures on offer in 100 Rogues. But much of the time you'll be the one getting whacked



Apple iPod touch (5th gen)

A TALLER, FASTER AND MORE COLOURFUL iPOD TOUCH

Intended for a younger audience than the iPhone, and one that desires a cool media and game player that can stand on its own, there's a new iPod touch on the block. And in many of the ways that matter, it's a belter.

DESIGN

Like the iPhone 5, the new iPod touch is slimmer, lighter – noticeably, even surprisingly so – and taller than its predecessor: 123mm versus the fourth-generation's 111mm.

The extra screen space allows for an extra row of icons, but more importantly, many apps will be built (or redesigned) to take advantage of the taller display; the Videos app is better for watching widescreen movies, for instance, and you'll get more elbow room on some games. The list of optimised apps will expand, but in the meantime non-optimised ones run between unobtrusive black bars.

The new touch looks different in another way. Available in various pastel-leaning hues – pink, yellow, blue and red, as well as grey and silver – this is the first colourful line-up.

PERFORMANCE

The iPod touch has had its A4 processor upgraded to the dual-core A5 chip found in last year's iPhone, and you'll find this model noticeably quicker at starting up from shutdown and firing up apps. Graphics performance in games is also improved.

CAMERAS

The new iPod clearly outshoots the old one's 0.7- and 0.3-megapixel cameras. As well as a 1.2-megapixel front-facing camera (for FaceTime and self-portraits), it now packs a 5-megapixel rear-facing iSight camera that reveals far more details, is better in low light, and has superior colour accuracy. The old touch's camera tends to drench images with a blue hue and produces very grainy results in low light. Indoor skin tones are warmer with the new iPod.

The flash isn't great in low light, though. It can produce results good enough to embarrass your friends on Facebook, but tends to blow out subjects in a dark setting.

OTHER COMMENTS

A small silver disc on the back pops out slightly when you press it, allowing you to attach a colour-coordinated wrist strap. The strap seems pretty sturdy, and we can see it preventing some deadly tumbles. And if you don't like it, just leave the disc pushed in.

The 5G iPod touch ships with a variation of Apple's decent new EarPods headphones (reviewed overleaf). What makes them different is the lack of an in-line three-button remote control, which is too bad: the touch is one of those iPods that cries out for a remote.

And we're more likely than ever to talk to our iPod now that Siri is onboard. Siri works just as well as on the iPhone – provided, of course, you're connected to a Wi-Fi network.

VERDICT

Whether you're in it for the apps, games or media, this is an iPod you'll treasure. With its improved cameras, zippy performance, bright and roomy display, support for Siri and more colourful form, the fifth-generation iPod touch is a winner. **Christopher Breen**

READ MORE: bit.ly/RFP0ot

£249 (32GB), £329 (64GB)
Apple • apple.com/uk/ipod-touch

RATING ★★★★★

LIKES:
- Far faster than previous iPod touch model
- Bright screen
- Solid camera performance
- Supports Siri

DISLIKES:
- No remote on the bundled headphones

iPad&iPhone User STAR BUY



Apple iPod nano (7th gen)

WELCOME RETURN TO FORM FOR APPLE'S MID-RANGE MUSIC PLAYER

The last version of the iPod nano launched back in 2010 was absolutely tiny, and consisted of little more than a 1.5in touch-sensitive screen with a belt-clip on the back. The controls didn't entirely suit adult fingers, and the screen was so small that Apple didn't even include an option for playing video.

UPDATED DESIGN

It's no surprise, then, that this latest version of the iPod nano reverts to a more traditional tall-and-thin design that provides room for a decent-size display once more. The new model measures a still-modest 76.5 x 39.6mm, but increases the size of the screen to a more practical 2.5in. The nano also regains its ability to play video, and while its 240 x 432 resolution is modest – especially compared to the high-resolution Retina displays used by the iPod touch and iPhone – it's adequate for watching the occasional music video.

The screen is touch-sensitive, as before, but the increased size makes it a lot easier to browse and flick through your music and video collection. Battery life is rated at a maximum of 30 hours for audio, although video playback is a more modest 3.5 hours.

The larger screen means this model is slightly heavier than its predecessor, but at just 31g it's not going to slow you down when you're jogging. And Apple has managed to slim it down, from 8.8mm to a wafer-like 5.4mm. It really is amazingly thin.

The nano looks good, too, with an aluminium exterior that's available in more than half a dozen colours. The chassis seems tough enough to withstand the occasional bump, but we're a bit worried it could get scratched quite easily. Buy a protective case if you want to keep it looking shiny and new.

FEATURES

Apple has crammed plenty of useful features into the super-slim nano. Like the last version it has an FM radio, along with a built-in motion-sensor and pedometer for jogging junkies and – hallelujah! – Bluetooth for streaming music to wireless speakers and headphones. But the new Lightning connector requires an adaptor (£25) in order to work with existing iPod docks and wired speakers.

On the subject of headphones, Apple has also updated the bundled earbuds. The new 'EarPods' are certainly an improvement, with stronger bass and greater clarity on higher frequencies, although we won't be giving up our trusty Sennheiser headphones anytime soon. The EarPods are reviewed overleaf.

We also have mixed feelings about Apple's pricing. We were pleased to see that the 16GB model has been cut from £159 to £129, but disappointed that there's no longer a cheaper 8GB model. With the iPod shuffle only offering 2GB of storage, there seems to be an obvious gap in the line-up between the shuffle at £40 and the nano at £129.

VERDICT

We're glad to see the iPod nano get back on track after the 2010 model's somewhat baffling experiment. It's still a bit pricey, and we reckon Apple really needs a model that hits the £99.99 mark, but the larger screen and super-slimline design return the iPod nano to its glory days. **Cliff Joseph**

READ MORE: bit.ly/XxwsHH

£129 (16GB)
Apple • apple.com/uk/ipod-nano

RATING ★★★★

LIKES:
- Elegant, slimline design
- Larger screen with video playback
- Bluetooth wireless

DISLIKES:
- Expensive
- Low-res screen
- New Lightning connector makes the iPod incompatible with existing docks and wired speakers

Apple EarPods

COMPLETELY REDESIGNED BUNDLED HEADPHONES OFFER SUPERIOR SOUND & FIT

Apple's earbuds have frequently been derided as offering sub-par sound, and it didn't come as a huge shock when the company introduced a completely redesigned set alongside the iPhone 5: the EarPods.

You can pick them up for £25, but most users will acquire them along with another Apple product. The EarPods are bundled with the iPhone 5, fifth-gen iPod touch and seventh-gen nano; but not the shuffle, which keeps the old earbud models.

DESIGN CHANGES

The EarPods' inline remote/microphone module, on the right earpiece cable, is slightly larger than that of previous earbuds, with additional strain relief, bigger buttons that are easier to press and no visible mic hole. The three sections are easy to distinguish, and the buttons have a firm, decisive action.

The microphone, too, is improved. In testing, it sounded smoother and more natural without sacrificing clarity; the mic on Apple's older earbuds sounded a little harsh in comparison. This is one of the top inline microphones we've tested.

The left side of the split cable has a slider, which, just like that of the previous earbud and the Apple In-Ear Headphones, can attach to the right-hand cable to adjust the fit or keep the split cord together during storage. The connections between the cables and the earpieces now have improved strain relief.

But the earpieces are where most of the new action is. Oblong, roughly teardrop-shaped as opposed to the circular profile of the previous earbuds, they are the result of Apple taking ear impressions of a large number of people and creating an earpiece to best fit a wide range of ears. The result looks a little alien, and features two grills: one on the front face and another over the opening that directs sound into the ear. The back side of the earpiece and the stem that leads to the cable both feature bass ports that help tune bass and midrange response.

QUALITY OF FIT

Sound quality aside, one of the most common complaints about Apple's previous earbuds was that they didn't stay in listeners' ears well. That flaw was annoying for the wearer, but also meant that the earbuds were often positioned in a way that produced poor sound quality. The new design offers a much more secure and comfortable fit. The EarPods didn't fall out due to pesky things like gravity during normal use (although a sharp pull on the cable will dislodge an earpiece).

Nevertheless, the fit is still far from perfect, as we discovered when we used them during a workout. Within a minute or two, the right earpiece managed to work its way clear.

QUALITY OF SOUND

Bass was always a weak spot of Apple's earbuds. With the EarPods, it's much cleaner, with distinct tones, but it's still muddy and lacks detail: it feels like they're compensating for a lack of bass quality with an abundance of bass quantity. Overall, the EarPods provide solid bass for an earbud, but it's not up to the level of, say, an inexpensive canalbud.

Mid-range frequencies sound decent enough, but some instruments seem to lack body, and there's limited detail. High frequencies are the real standout, with a clear, natural sound that avoids the tinny quality of their predecessor. That may sound like faint praise, but for this style of headphone, at this price, the EarPods are impressive, and represent a fantastic upgrade over the previous model.

VERDICT

While we will continue to recommend third-party headphones for a substantial upgrade in sound quality, the EarPods provide a significantly improved listening experience compared to Apple's previous bundled headphones. And if you're looking to upgrade from existing Apple earbuds, or to replace a broken set, the EarPods are easily worth £25, especially considering that they include an excellent inline remote/microphone module. **R Matthew Ward**

READ MORE: bit.ly/T2W2iV

£25
Apple • apple.com/uk
Product page: bit.ly/OBisI1

RATING ★★★★

LIKES:

- Secure and comfortable fit
- Clear, natural high-frequency sound quality
- Excellent remote and mic
- Good price as a standalone product (and bundled with new iPods and iPhone)

DISLIKES:

- Bass still somewhat muddy, and mid range lacks body
- Prone to pop out during vigorous exercise



Two Pods in a piece
Apple's alien-looking but audibly improved new headphones come in a minimalist case that also acts as a spool for their cable

Gear4 AirZone Series 1

GEAR4 JOINS THE AIRPLAY BRIGADE



Gear4 generally focuses on the more affordable end of the market, but the company has added a few more upmarket speaker systems to its range. This includes the AirZone Series 1: the first Gear4 speaker to use Apple's AirPlay wireless technology.

The AirZone is still quite modestly priced, though, with a £199.99 price tag that's about half those of most of its AirPlay rivals. In fact, at first glance we were worried that it might be a little *too* cheap, as its lightweight plastic casing looks and feels rather flimsy.

We soon changed our tune, however, as the AirZone actually works very well. Setting it up is easy, as you can either enter your Wi-Fi password using the remote control and the small LCD screen on the front of the speaker, or download the Gear4 app (**bit.ly/RokAoh**) that allows you to enter the password via your iPhone, iPod touch or iPad.

You're not just limited to Wi-Fi streaming, either: the AirZone includes a dock unit for iOS devices, as well as an AUX input around the back. It's got a built-in FM radio tuner too, which is a welcome bonus at this price.

Crucially, this lightweight speaker manages to produce a surprisingly robust sound. It's clear and detailed on the higher notes, with a reasonably firm bass behind it. Gear4 doesn't quote any figures on its website, but we reckon the AirZone provides about 40W output – not quite in rave territory, but more than enough to liven up a dinner party or barbecue.

In the Zone

The AirZone Series 1 provides AirPlay streaming for just under £200

VERDICT

You're not going to get an audiophile speaker system for £199.99, but the AirZone provides good sound quality for everyday music listening, along with a radio tuner and the convenience of AirPlay wireless streaming. It's good to see Gear4 raising its sights, and bodes well for the other AirZone models that are planned for later this year. **Cliff Joseph**

READ MORE: bit.ly/RhAmkb

£199.99
Gear4 • gear4.com
Product page: bit.ly/OSoM1h

RATING ★★★★

LIKES:
- Good sound quality
- Ease of setup
- Includes FM tuner

DISLIKES:
- Flimsy plastic casing
- Bass could be a bit stronger

iPHONE 5 CASES



Cygnett Urban Shield

£19.95 ★★★★

uk.cygnett.com, amazon.co.uk • bit.ly/P9V35D

This smart-looking case is also tough enough to provide good protection. The sturdy polycarbonate frame has a rigid plate of aluminium mounted on the back panel to deal with knocks and scratches, but also has a smart brushed-metal finish to give it a touch of Apple-esque style. Soft rubber padding around the edges acts as a shock absorber, and the case includes a separate screen protector. For added protection, a version of the Urban Shield replaces the aluminium plate with a cover made of tough carbon-fibre weave. **Cliff Joseph**



Scosche GlosSee

£20 ★★★

scosche.com • bit.ly/ODOHbG

Colour-wise, our GlosSee sample – a translucent lime-green model – divided opinion; we loved its vibrancy, but many colleagues felt it ruined the 'Appleness' of the iPhone. Other hues are available, fortunately (such as pink), and this soft iPhone 5 cover wins style points for its sleek profile, which lets you enjoy the contours of the phone while protecting its back. One down side, however, is that the case makes the iPhone's volume and sleep buttons annoyingly stubborn: you have to press unusually hard to get it to wake up. **Charlotte Price**



Griffin Survivor

£34.99 ★★★★★

griffintechnology.com • bit.ly/XnZBVX

You could opt for one of Griffin's lovely soft wool cases, but for more extreme pursuits it's the Survivor that will keep your iPhone 5 safe. Available in a variety of colours – and with models for the iPad and iPhone 4/4S too – the Survivor is designed to meet UK and US military standards. The case consists of a shatter-resistant polycarbonate frame with silicon padding to cushion your iPhone from drops, shocks and vibrations, and a screen protector. The port covers are sealed in order to keep out dirt, rain and sand. **Cliff Joseph**

Griffin StudioConnect

PLUG-AND-PLAY MUSIC ACCESSORY FOR iPAD



Only Connect
Hook up your instruments to the StudioConnect and get composing

It's a little pricey, but Griffin's new StudioConnect will appeal to many musicians who want to use their iPad as a compact recording studio.

Shaped a bit like Doctor Who's 1970s Whomobile, the StudioConnect acts as a stand and docking station for the iPad, giving you a good view of the screen and allowing you to keep it charged at the same time. The device is made of plastic, but it's quite sturdy and there are non-slip grips on the base of the unit to keep it stable.

On the front of the unit there's a single headphone socket and volume control. That will come in handy, as it allows you to leave your headphones plugged into the StudioConnect and then slip them on whenever you're ready to sit down and start jamming.

However, the serious stuff is going on around the back of the unit. There's an additional stereo output – also with its own volume control – so you can hook up a set of external speakers. A quarter-inch mono plug allows you to plug in a guitar or other instrument, and there's a standard 3.5mm input connector as well.

You also get Midi input and output for connecting Midi devices. That's useful, but a lot of music accessories (particularly keyboards such as our trusty M-Audio Keystation) now tend to use USB rather than a Midi interface, and there's no easy way to plug a USB instrument into the StudioConnect. There's no pre-amp for microphone input either, which might put some people off.

VERDICT

It's not the complete recording system that it could be, but the StudioConnect provides multiple audio inputs and outputs for musical instruments. It makes the iPad a genuine alternative to a laptop or desktop computer for amateur recording sessions. **Cliff Joseph**

READ MORE: bit.ly/Q0MBjP

£119.99
Griffin • griffintechnology.com
Product page: bit.ly/OZb9Mt

RATING ★★★★

LIKES:
- Compact device with multiple audio inputs and outputs

DISLIKES:
- Expensive
- No USB connectivity



Krusell Luna Undercover

£10.18 ★★★

www.krusell.se • bit.ly/WLLBVH

With a lightweight polycarbonate shell, faux-leather backing and stitch detail, the Luna Undercover is more fashion-conscious than protective. The Luna is easy to put on and comes in dark brown, black, red and other colours. It fits the iPhone 4 only (not the 4S, and obviously not the 5). Although the shell is very minimal, it does protect the phone's back and corners, while leaving the top and bottom edges accessible. The detailed stitching is a nice touch, but the raised plastic logo on the back seems like a blemish. **Rob Renk**



Gogo Stump Portable Tablet Stand

£19.95 ★★★★★

stumpstand.com, amazon.co.uk • bit.ly/RadkyB

One of our favourite accessories, this cylindrical rubber stand has a deep slit that can hold your iPad or iPhone (any model, and with or without a thin cover) in portrait or landscape position; a round cut-out lets you easily press the Home button. It offers three viewing angles and is weighted for stability: your device holds steady, whether you're typing or swiping. Available in black, red, green, yellow or pink, the Stump Stand combines utility with simplicity at a reasonable price. **Jackie Dove**

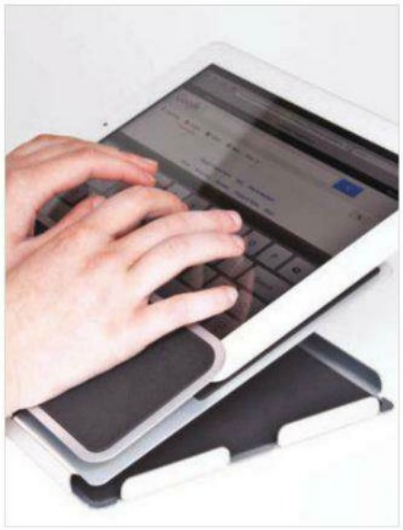


BeAHeadCase iPhone Bottle Opener

£19.99/£24.99 ★★★

beaheadcase.com • bit.ly/RdXUt3

Some iPhone cases are super protective. Others offer handy functions. This one – for iPhone 4 and 4S – has a bottle opener on the back. It's surprisingly minimalist and looks rather stylish. The case provides moderate protection, while the slip-resistant rubber exterior makes sense when you consider that users may well be intoxicated. A free app plays a selection of customisable sounds. Available from **bit.ly/UGQulo**, this is a fun novelty item that will come in handy at parties. **Simon Jary**



Slate iPad Stand

iPAD CASE/STAND IMPRESSES WITH HEALTH BENEFITS

£71.99
Ergonomic Cafe • ergonomiccafe.com
Product page: bit.ly/VOE4XY

RATING ★★★★

LIKES:
- Good support for hands and wrists
- Lightweight and portable
- Solid build

DISLIKES:
- Slightly fiddly to set up

The Slate – or Smart, Lightweight and Adjustable Tablet Ergonomics – is designed to make iPad use comfortable for any length of time, and in almost any position. The Furniture Industry Research Association says the Slate offers a supportive experience by protecting users' hands and wrists, and we're inclined to concur. You'll need to experiment with the setup, but typing especially is a far more pleasant experience. Gaming also benefits.

As well as a stand, the Slate acts as an iPad case, compatible with iPad 2 and the new iPad. While not the prettiest on the market, it does a respectable job of protecting your tablet on the move.

The Slate lacks the finesse of other iPad stands and feels very much the work of a smaller company; and it took a little getting used to. But we found the benefits became clearer over time. Some fine-tuning would be welcome, but for now this is a worthy option for anyone concerned about improving posture while working with an iPad. **Nick Spence**

READ MORE: bit.ly/QS6VaJ



Mophie Juice Pack Powerstation Mini

PETITE iPHONE BATTERY

£50
Mophie • mophie.com
Product page: bit.ly/SPyf5P

RATING ★★★★

LIKES:
- Compact design
- Very lightweight
- Fully charges iPhone

DISLIKES:
- Less practical than case-style battery

Just as it only rains when you've gone out without an umbrella, the iPhone's battery seems to have a knack of running dry just when you can't get to the mains. At times like these a spare power source can be priceless, especially when it comes in a small package.

At just 80g, the Powerstation Mini packs a 2,500mAh battery into a case about the size of a credit card, and a few mm thicker than the iPhone 4 or 4S. The top and bottom are made of a rubberised (and fairly scratch-resistant) material, and the Mini's small size means it'll easily slip into a pocket or bag.

In our tests, it charged a dead iPhone 4S to 100 percent in two and a half hours and still had a little charge left. Charging the Mini itself from a 500mA USB port took a little over five hours.

The Mini is a good compromise between smaller but low-capacity batteries and the higher-capacity but larger variants on the market. On the go, though, it's a tad less practical than a case battery. **Laurence Cable**

READ MORE: bit.ly/QaTqkU



iLuv Mo'Beats

STYLISH BLUETOOTH SPEAKER FOR iPAD, iPHONE & iPOD

£59.99
iLuv • iluv.co.uk

RATING ★★★

LIKES:
- Stylish
- Landscape or portrait stand for iPad
- Good Bluetooth range and battery life

DISLIKES:
- Audio quality lacks bass punch
- Need to remove most iPad cases first

Designed for the iPad, but also compatible with the iPhone and other smartphones and tablets, iLuv's Mo'Beats is a portable Bluetooth speaker stand that offers reasonably impressive audio quality and minimalist looks.

After a few teething issues pairing our iPad to the speaker, the Mo'Beats produced decent audio, although we've heard better from similarly priced speakers in the past. It can reach high volumes, but audio quality drops the louder you go. It also sounds a bit tinny.

The product looks great, though. Its stylish design complements Apple products, and the iPad looks at home in the allotted stand area of the speaker. Another plus is that you can position your iPad in landscape or portrait mode.

If you're after a good-looking iPad stand that adds a bit of oomph to your audio, the Mo'Beats might be for you. However, if you're into your music and want a speaker to fill the room with high-quality sound at your next party, look elsewhere. **Ashleigh Allsopp**

READ MORE: bit.ly/Rwtks4

BBC iPlayer Radio

LISTEN TO LIVE RADIO FROM ALL THE BBC'S UK STATIONS

Bringing together the corporation's vast and varied radio output into one dedicated, convenient app is a welcome move, complementing the popular iPlayer while emphasising audio over visual content. The BBC has a lot of audio content to offer – both live and archived via catch-up and podcasts – which can get overlooked in the search for the latest episodes of popular TV shows.

BBC iPlayer Radio uses a virtual dial to show a good range of channels and brief now and next details. Tap to reveal further information, including duration and what similar shows might be available. Frustratingly, 'All Local Stations' are grouped under 'Find Local Radio', which defaults to your current location – not ideal if you want to listen to content from your home town while based elsewhere. Disappointingly, the built-in search function failed to find any results for either 'BBC Radio Humberside' or simply 'Humberside', but the station is there, listed under All Local Stations.

You can also set reminders for when favourite shows are next on and set an alarm to wake up to the sound of music and chat.



VERDICT

The BBC has set out to revamp its online audio content in style, and the dedicated BBC iPlayer Radio app for iPhone, iPod touch and iPad is an impressive start. While it lacks some of the features found in the excellent and exhaustive TuneIn Radio Pro (discussed in our feature, starting on page 18) – the ability to pause and record radio stations, for instance – the BBC's involvement should ensure further enhancements and features. **Nick Spence**

READ MORE: bit.ly/Tjug82

FREE
Version: 1.0.1
bbc.co.uk
Download: itun.es/i6DM7Tr

RATING ★★★★

LIKES:
- Wide range of services available in one app
- Attractive interface

DISLIKES:
- Search needs improving
- Lacks ability to record and listen to content offline

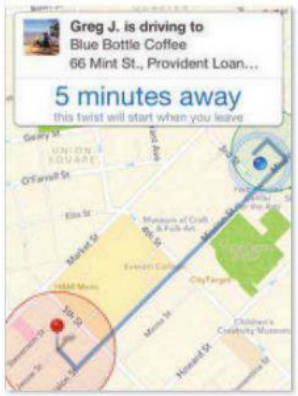


Feedly

FREE ★★★★

itun.es/i6Ds5jk • bit.ly/Vk13pe

Touted as a 'personalisable and beautiful magazine' – and essentially Google Reader done right – Feedly is a joy to use, thanks to a simple, intuitive design that makes browsing more considered. It isn't for news junkies seeking an instant fix, but for anyone who wants to explore and share the wider world online, it's well nigh essential. **Nick Spence**



Twist

FREE ★★★★★

itun.es/i6DM7Ty • bit.ly/XNPxFZ

Anyone who's ever been delayed getting home or to a meeting will appreciate this free app. It does one thing really well: it tracks your location and sends chosen contacts updates on your progress, delays and estimated time of arrival, saving you from sending emails and text messages. Well worth a spot on your home screen. **Brian Beam**



Sciral Consistency

£1.49 ★★★

itun.es/i6DM7Tn • bit.ly/TDApX4

Sciral is a task tracker built around flexible recurrence. Each row represents a recurring task, and each column a day. When you set up a new task, you specify its minimum and maximum intervals, which then display on the grid as colour-coded squares. Used continually, Sciral can build powerful habits. **Erez Zukerman**



Time FX

FREE ★★★★

itun.es/i6DM7jb • bit.ly/TcOCOn

Described as a sculptural fluid dynamic alarm clock, Time FX allows you to select from more than 60 themes and present the current time in that style. If you touch the screen, your fingertips act as the start point for fluid effects that spread across the display. We'd like more variation in the themes, but it makes for a stylish alarm clock. **David Bradforth**

Anomaly Ultimate Augmented Reality

ADD ANIMATED 3D VISUALS TO A TRULY IMMENSE SCI-FI COMIC



At a time when iBooks and the Kindle are making digital novels, comics and magazines conveniently portable, the team behind sci-fi graphic novel *Anomaly* seem determined to give their readers hernias. Weighing in at a huge 2.9kg and featuring 370 10 x 15in full-colour pages, it's both recklessly opulent and defiantly analogue.

Ah ha! But that's where you're wrong – because the book is launching alongside a free app that gives those flat pages a 3D, digital element. Point the camera at certain specified pages (11 at present, but 40 more are promised with the next update) and an animated character or object will start leaping around, and respond to your touch. Click the caption for background information.

The augmented-reality elements are well implemented and fun, not to mention excellent for showing off to an audience, but they're hardly integral to the experience. There are really two separate activities on offer here: reading *Anomaly* – a grand, absorbing sci-fi tale we highly recommend, and discuss further at the link below – and playing around on the Anomaly UAR app, which is enjoyable but a tiny bit gimmicky.

VERDICT

A short-term pleasure, but still a pleasure, this augmented-reality app is frivolous fun. Updated content will add to its appeal, and the book it accompanies is terrific: compelling and richly imagined, with shades of *Avatar*. Try Amazon for sub-£30 pre-orders. **David Price**

READ MORE: bit.ly/XOlj5x

FREE app (book £45)
Version: 1.0
experienceanomaly.com
amzn.to/TDzlm6
Download: itun.es/i6DM7Tp

RATING ★★★★

LIKES:
- Fun augmented-reality effects
- Easy to use
- Updated content promised

DISLIKES:
- Feels separate to book (which is excellent in its own right)



Paper by FiftyThree

FREE ★★★

itun.es/i6Ds8Cp • bit.ly/Rpc0Fz

This may be one of our favourite drawing apps ever to grace the iPad. It has the best digital rendering of a pencil tool we've ever seen, and watercolours are bright and have just the right texture against the digital paper. The app itself is laid out simply, and offers a brilliant way to undo strokes, using two fingers to swipe anticlockwise (or 'rewind') to take away unwanted marks. Sadly a few flaws make it exceedingly frustrating to use: you can't zoom in, which affects your precision, and the range of colours is limited. If these were fixed, we'd change our recommendation from 'problematic love' to 'download it right now'. **Serenity Caldwell**



Posts

£6.99 ★★★★

itun.es/i6Ds8Zk • bit.ly/VjTv64

Posts lets you create, edit and view posts on blogs using Blogger or WordPress. It's easy to edit posts or create new ones, and the interface is similar to a web-based editor. There's no find-and-replace support, and previews don't show how a post looks on your blog; they look like the rich text display. And WordPress's own iOS app is a valid – and free – alternative. But if you need to write and post to your blogs on the go, Posts is a well-designed option that's worth considering. In spite of the limitations of its HTML mode, it offers a great deal of flexibility. And if you manage blogs, it's an excellent way to check up on them from an iPad. **Kirk McElhearn**



Layout

£1.49 ★★★★

itun.es/i6Dm5wj • bit.ly/T71bGD

If you thought photo collages were a thing of the past, think again. Layout, a photo-editing app for iPad 2 or later, helps you create and share collage layouts with ease. It gives you control over your collage's look, from background and border thickness to aspect ratio and photo fill settings, and you can use the preset templates or construct your own, which we found a lot more fun. The app limits how much you can chop and divide your photos, and there are some flaws, such as the lack of an undo in the photo editor. But overall this delivers on its promise: minimum effort, quick results and easy-to-share results. **Brie Hiramine**



£1.99
Version: 1.1
bitmonstergames.com
Download: itun.es/i6Dp9S2

RATING ★ ★ ★

LIKES:
- Unreal Engine doing sterling work
- Vaguely Studio Ghibli-esque art style
- Non-violent action

DISLIKES:
- In-app purchases seem rather cynical
- Gets a bit grating
- Difficulty is erratic

Lili

BE SURE TO WEAR SOME FLOWERS IN YOUR HAIR. AND THEN HAVE THEM TORN OFF BY A FEMALE HARRY POTTER

3D action games must include at least one of these things: shooting/stabbing/punching. Those are The Rules. Yet Lili, a game that aims for a more universal audience than the testosterone-focused bro-crowd most of its peers seek, does not follow the rules. It's primarily for kids, but it has a certain pith and some impressively high-end graphics that will draw in grown-ups too.

Lili is basically the Harry Potter of botany, except female, untroubled by dark pasts and exploring a tropical island populated by wooden robots and snarky spirits. Being a botanist (albeit a magical one) her primary goal is flower collection, which she achieves by searching for and chasing down spirits, leaping upon their oddly rocky backs and plucking whatever plants appear from them. It's violence-free if a little aggressive: the spirits seem more annoyed than harmed.

Based on Infinity Blade's Unreal Engine, this is one of the best-looking iOS games around. Lili herself is a minor rendering marvel – a sort of nerdy teenage Lara Croft (without the sometimes grotty sexualisation) boasting all manner of small details, while the lush vegetation makes for a welcoming setting.

You're also offered large levels to roam around as you please, spending flowers and coins on upgrades for Lili's power, stability and stealth, as well as new outfits and whatnot. The restrictions of touchscreens apply, but this really isn't far short of a console game.

More problematic is its sheer tweeness, which it tries hard to offset with humour and leftfield character designs – but there's no escaping that its focus on flower-picking, perma-smiling cutesy wood-people and Lili's eternal peppiness will prove grating for many. The in-app purchases (flowers and costumes, primarily) also seem a bit seedy.

Lili herself is a minor rendering marvel – a sort of nerdy teenage Lara Croft boasting all manner of small details

So, while Lili is on to something with its universal appeal and impressively open world, its primary role is probably going to be as a technical showcase for your iDevice. Whether you'll truly be in it for the long haul of flower-collecting, spirit-chasing and outfit-shopping is perhaps another matter.

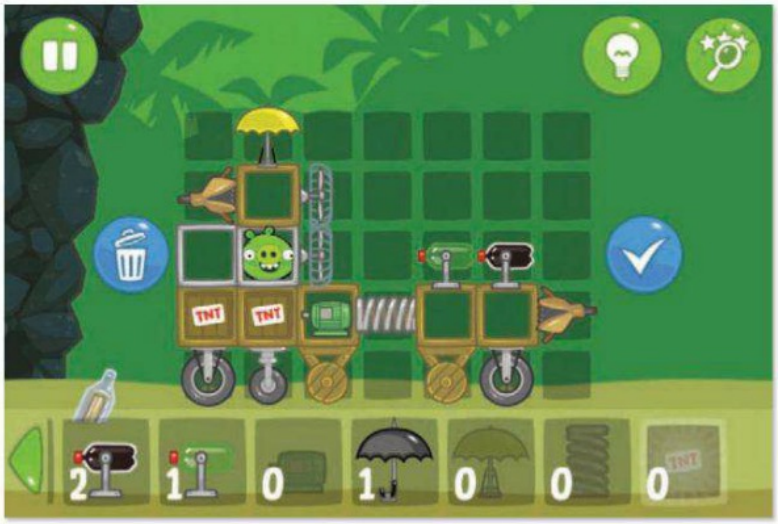
VERDICT

Lili is one of the most technically impressive iOS games around, and strives hard to be original, although every triumph is matched by an irritation. Despite the beautiful setting, flower-plucking starts to wear thin fairly quickly, and it's definitely more suited to kids than grown-ups; but there's stuff here to charm cold adult hearts too. **Alec Meer**

READ MORE: bit.ly/OWi9vi

Bad Piggies

BUILD VEHICLES TO PROTECT THE PIGS YOU USED TO BLOW UP



Rovio is going cold turkey on Angry Birds – sort of. While this is the developer's second release in a row that doesn't involve catapulting feathered creatures through the air, Angry Birds veterans will probably recognise Bad Piggies' main characters.

So we're back in the world of cute cartoon animals and semi-realistic physics puzzles. The main difference is that instead of destroying structures, you're building them: each level requires you to put together a vehicle, using parts and gadgets such as wheels and motors, to transport your helpless pig to the finish.

We're all for crazy inventions, but the focus is sadly less on the building process than on the subsequent journey, in which you have to switch gizmos on or off to traverse tricky bits of the terrain. Unfurl your umbrella and you can float elegantly down an abyss; uncork a bottle of pop to get a one-off speed burst.

Some may enjoy this gentle action, but for us it makes the game feel less cerebral than we'd like. The best puzzles make you feel like there's a perfect solution just out of your grasp, but here you often just muddle through.

The physics effects are still sound, however, and the range of gadgets is enough to keep things fun; a sandbox mode lets you mess around with all the ones you've unlocked.

VERDICT

Bad Piggies has a strong look and chaotic gameplay that's enjoyable in small doses. But the disappointing amount of trial and error means it lacks the compulsive appeal of more brain-taxing puzzle games. **David Price**

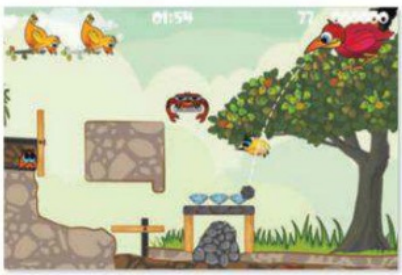
READ MORE: bit.ly/PSBMl2

69p/£1.99
Version: 1.0.0
rovio.com
Download: itun.es/i6DK82G

RATING ★★★

LIKES:
- Cute graphics
- Fun gadgets

DISLIKES:
- Too much trial and error
- Little feeling that there's a 'perfect solution'

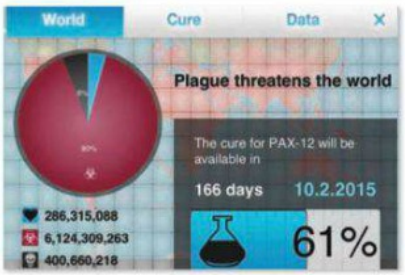


Bubble Grubble HD

£1.49 ★★★★★

itun.es/i6Ds584 • bit.ly/UHdjir

In principle, trapping adorably rotund bugs for birds to eat is not our idea of a fun game, but we quickly got over our ethical gripes once Bubble Grubble got going. You destroy obstacles by tap-shooting stones and bombs, then capture those species-ambiguous bugs in bubbles. Finally, you use tilt controls to bring them directly into a baby bird's mouth. With one wrong tilt, your bubble might pop when you don't want it to: beware of things like crows and bees with sharp stingers. Bubble Grubble's concept is simple but quirky, its graphics are crisp, and the combination of tilting and tapping controls keeps things interesting. **Brie Hiramine**



Plague Inc.

69p ★★★★

itun.es/i6Ds8yz • bit.ly/T3Mq0e

Sometimes, you play games to build a base, or a city, or a civilisation. Other times it's more fun to wreck stuff. Plague Inc. combines the appeal of strategic creation and the subversive glee of wanton destruction, as you craft a pandemic to destroy humanity. You play not as a bioterrorist, but as the germ itself, choosing where in the world to start, how to spread, and how to mutate along the way. There are a few bugs and interface issues, but these may be fixed by updates. And Plague Inc. is extremely engaging just the way it is: difficult yet approachable, and variable enough to keep you busy long after you've completed it the first time. **Jason Tocci**



Arms Cartel Global

69p/FREE ★★

itun.es/i6Dp9Sr • bit.ly/SKf26a

This patience-testing massive multiplayer online game tasks you with building a large illegal drug operation capable of smiting all potential competitors. You travel to far-flung locales such as Mexico and Saudi Arabia, attacking and robbing rival cartels, gathering weapons and recruiting cartel members. You must also learn the art of waiting. You can dictate what your cartel members do, whether robbing enemies or building drug fronts, but you never see them in action; you just point to areas on the map, then sit back and wait for the game to calculate whether your minions were successful. It's a disappointingly passive gaming experience. **Sam Felsing**

For iPad only | For iPhone & iPod touch only | For all three devices



King of Opera

69p ★★★★

VERSION: 1.7 • DOWNLOAD: itun.es/i6Ds58Q • READ MORE: bit.ly/RhFSUd

As with all great party games, King of Opera's concept is simple: there are four operatic tenors, and only one spotlight for them to hog. When someone else has the spotlight, everyone else tries to shove them off the stage to take it for themselves… just like in real life. The game is packed full of charm and a natural source of laughs, with accessible controls that enable four people to fit around an iPad or iPhone: your singer spins on the spot and you press your corner's button to make him move forwards. The action gets a bit samey, but within its short lifespan this is a joyfully pure experience that anyone can pick up and play. King of Opera is the most fun you can have with four people and an iPad. **Alan Martin**



Dishonored: Rat Assassin

FREE ★★★

VERSION: 1.0 • DOWNLOAD: itun.es/i6DK82n • READ MORE: bit.ly/Rda59c

If you play games on console or PC, Dishonored is what you need to be playing right now. However, this stealth/assassination game wouldn't really work on touchscreen, so rather than put out an embarrassingly hobbled version (see Mass Effect: Infiltrator – **bit.ly/VuPGkb**) the developers of the mobile tie-in took a different approach: Fruit Ninja with rats. Shamelessly so, to be honest, but hey, it's free, it's a reliable distraction and it does a good job of evoking Dishonored's grimy, rodent-infested world while still being as silly as a game about swiping desperately at objects hurled up the screen needs to be. If you missed the Fruit Ninja phenomenon, then this is arguably the better slice 'n' dice game. **Alec Meer**



Outwitters

FREE ★★★★

itun.es/i6Dp9Sw • bit.ly/RhD21t

This turn-based strategy game drenches the familiar formula in an absurd level of cuteness. The action is asynchronous, meaning you make a move, then wait for your opponent to respond, and we recommend juggling lots of games. It's easy to dive into and maddeningly addictive once you get a feel for it. Extra factions cost £1.99. **Nathan Meunier**



Monster Flip

69p ★★★★

itun.es/i6DK82z • bit.ly/QOIFmLJ

The mechanics of this puzzler will be instantly recognisable to anyone who's played a match-three game: encircle monsters in a grid, making them flip round, and try to match them by colour. But little details transform it into something truly engaging. The monsters have real personality, and the various modes and features keep things fresh. **Philip Michaels**

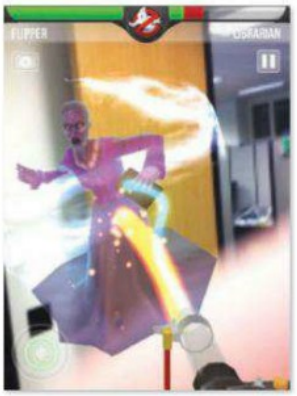


Disc Drivin'

£1.49/£1.99 ★★★

itun.es/i6Ds5HX • bit.ly/QKZpP8

Like Outwitters, Disc Drivin' is asynchronous – a brave choice for a racing game. You use your finger to push your disc down the track, then wait patiently for your opponents to do likewise. Pulse-pounding it is not. There are plenty of power-ups and the courses can be pretty challenging, but we prefer to live life in the fast lane. **Philip Michaels**



Ghostbusters Paranormal Blast

£1.49 ★★

itun.es/i6DK82Q • bit.ly/QXJ2it

As inventive as Ghostbusters' augmented reality and location-aware features might be – virtual ghosts are overlaid on your real-life surroundings – they can't mask the fact that its battles are kind of dull. Tracking down and shooting ghosts is rather awkward and it won't keep you coming back for more. **Philip Michaels**

Dark Meadow

VISITING HOUR AT THE WORLD'S LEAST HOSPITABLE HOSPITAL



You wake up in an abandoned hospital with no idea how you got there. Either you should go easy on the whiskey in future, or you're playing Dark Meadow, an atmospheric horror adventure with shades of Infinity Blade.

An old man warns you of the horrors within, but is confident you're the person to help him escape. He'll be your guide, and against the spirit of the genre, his chatter is littered with amusing throwaway remarks.

The player must explore the dusty rooms, looking for health packs and money to buy better weapons to deal with the nasties when they emerge. Monsters always appear in the same way, showing up in the corridors (never the rooms) and rushing towards you. First you use a crossbow to take them down from distance, pulling back and aiming on the touchscreen. But when they get close enough you switch to melee weapons, timing your blocks and dodges and then swiping the screen to attack. When the monsters fall, they drop loot and experience points, RPG-style. But if you die, it's back to the hospital bed.

The gameplay generally works well, but does get samey – and the predictable way the baddies emerge takes away a lot of the tense atmosphere the game tries so hard to foster.

VERDICT

Dark Meadow's presentation is immaculate, and its sharp 3D environments make the most of the iPad screen. With the game coming in both premium and freemium flavours, there's no excuse to let this pass you by. **Alan Martin**

READ MORE: bit.ly/T9KIfZ

£3.99
Version: 1.1.1
phosphorgames.com
Download: itun.es/i6Dp9S4

RATING ★ ★ ★ ★

LIKES:
- Brilliant graphics and mood
- Well-acted dialogue
- Fun, detailed RPG levelling

DISLIKES:
- Samey combat
- Grind, or pay to level
- Frustrating save system



Monster Life

FREE ★ ★ ★

itun.es/i6Ds5H3 • bit.ly/WGVynf

Technically 'free to play', but probably better understood as 'pay to win', Monster Life combines Pokémon-style beastie battles with the upkeep of a FarmVille-esque ranch. You start out with a sizable pile of currency, but you'll find this soon runs out and is tough to replace without spending real-world cash. As for the fights themselves, you don't have much room for input: you choose who fights whom, keep an eye out for the critical hit button and spend crystals and stones to revive your monsters and trigger bonuses. Nevertheless, Monster Life piles on the charm with wacky music, cute monsters and bizarre humour. **Jason Tocci**



Band Together

69p ★ ★ ★

itun.es/i6Dp9SW • bit.ly/TbETnr

Band Together sees you dragging cute little hominids through a child's maze of terror. The goal is to get as many 'Bandies' safely to the exit as possible, braving pencil gates controlled by lollipop stick pressure plates, drawing pin traps powered by AAA batteries, and your miniature friends' habit of dozing off beyond the range of candlelight. The visuals are detailed dioramas of cardboard wonder, and the puzzles are just challenging enough to make you think. And while this game clocks in at only 30 levels – or an hour or two of play – and doesn't offer a great deal of replay value, the sadistic kid in you might enjoy a little smirk. **Jason Tocci**



Toca Band

69p ★ ★ ★

itun.es/i6Dp9SQ • bit.ly/QOcNUa

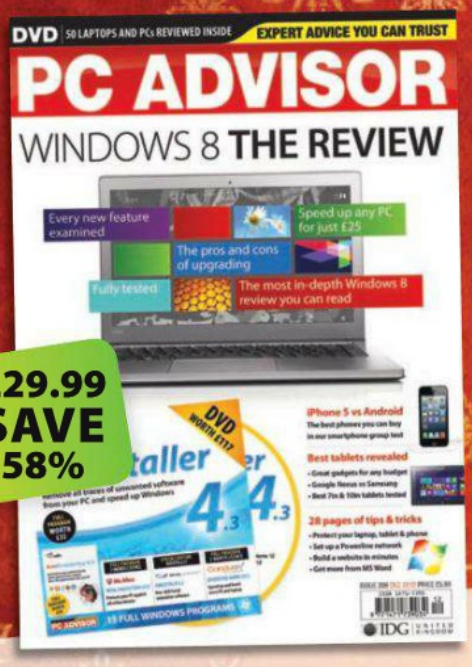
How do you review an app for children, if your kids love it, but you merely tolerate it? Toca Band is a fun but repetitious musical game that lets you select various comical critters and drag them on to empty spots on a stage. Some of the characters are musicians; others are creatures who are themselves instruments; and there are four singers. Where you position them affects how strenuously they play or sing, and there's a special solo spot that lets you play one character's instrument directly. The killer for parents is that the band only knows one song, which consists of the same five-chord progression, repeated infinitely and unceasingly. **Lex Friedman**

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Inspiration for digital creatives. *Digital Arts* is packed with great tutorials and features on the latest tips and techniques across illustration, graphics and animation to ensure you create your best art work.

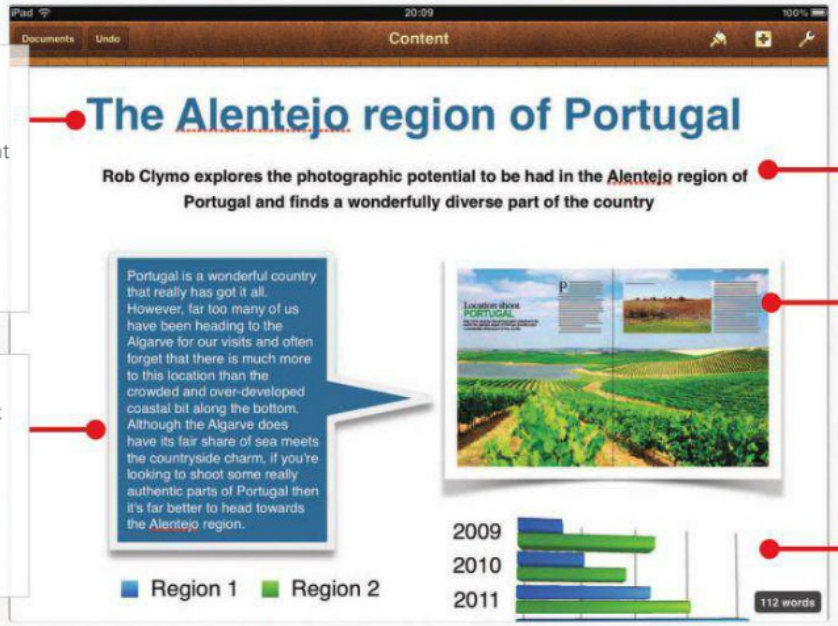


iPad & iPhone User delivers you the latest product reviews, must-have apps, games reviews, accessories, step-by-step tutorials and more. The essential mag for your Apple gadgets.

Working with content in Pages

Pages can be used to revolutionise the way you design and format documents

BY ROB CLYMO



Heads up
Basic text content in Pages is one thing, but you might need headings and suchlike, which can be easily created using the tools on the top right.

Box clever
Next up you'll want to add creative touches to your design, and Pages allows you to add text boxes and shapes together.

A brief introduction
Introductory text can be dropped in and formatted to act as a complement to the main headline.

Photo finish
Additional touches come in the shape of photos, which can be easily embellished with borders, drop shadows and so on.

Chart position
Pages also has the capacity to add charts to illustrate points in your design. These can be customised and shaped.

EXPERT TIP
Adding lots of page elements might seem a bit daunting, but Pages allows you to easily manage the content by sending objects to the back of the document. This means you can prioritise which elements are stacked on top of each other, such as the text inside a coloured shape shown in our illustration.

One of the best things about calling on Pages for your document creation needs is its unparalleled capacity for pulling all sorts of content together to produce great-looking files. The software is also firmly aimed at the mobile platform, so your work area is optimised to allow high-powered productivity while also enabling eye-catching designs and layouts to be put together with nothing more than a few simple screen taps. Select one of 16 template designs to get started or, if you're feeling confident, try working with a completely blank document.

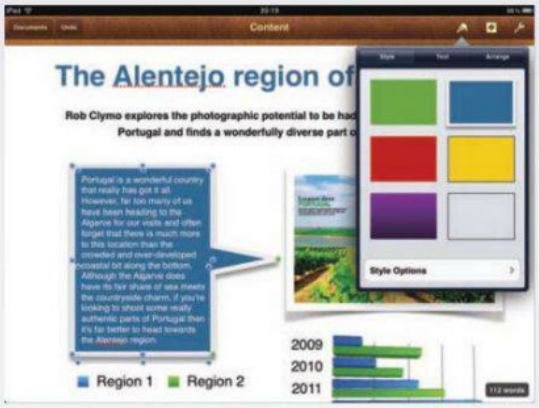
Once you've discovered the basic page layout tools that enable shapes, charts, images and text to be drag-and-dropped on to the work area, it's easy to start pushing Pages to new lengths, thanks to some powerful content manipulation tools found inside the interface. With a few taps of the screen, it's a breeze to pull together component parts such as text and shapes, and then use precise fingertip control to tweak and fine-tune the look and feel of your page design. By calling on drag, pinch and other finger controls it's also easy to get the best from your content within the Pages workspace, while the auto-save functionality means your work is safe with every move you make.

VITAL INFO

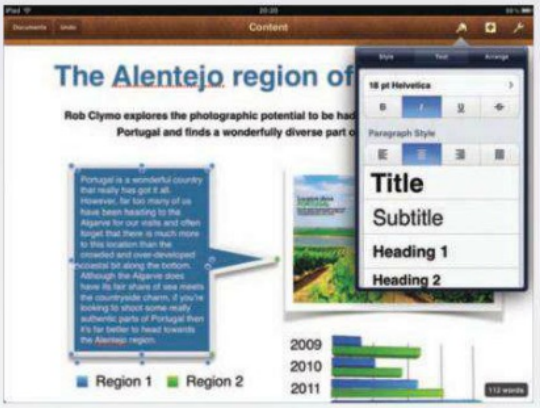
DEVICE: iPhone/iPad
DIFFICULTY: Beginner
TIME REQUIRED: 1 hour

WHAT YOU NEED:
- Pages (£6.99, itun.es/i6DK9wB)
- iOS 5.1 or later

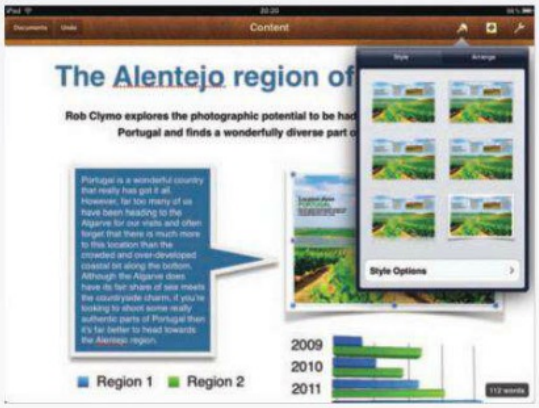
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: LET'S GO TO WORK



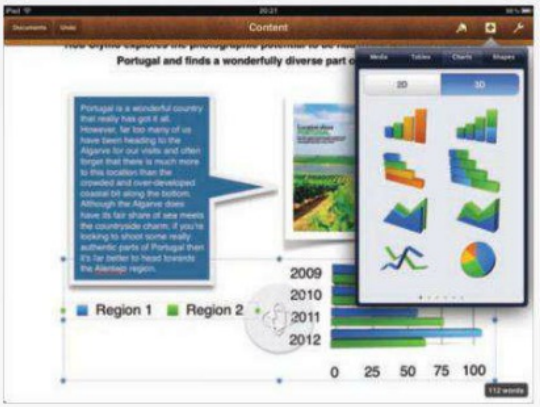
1 Think inside the box Formatting text is easy, but neat text boxes inside a graphic make more of a statement. You can pull content elements together using the tools in the top right-hand corner. Here we've selected a box style, although things like the main colour can be customised to suit your design.



2 Inserting content A text box can then be laid over the top, with the body text pasted in from an external source or typed on to the page. This can then be formatted for size, colour and other style points. Tap both elements at the same time and they group together for easier movement on the page.



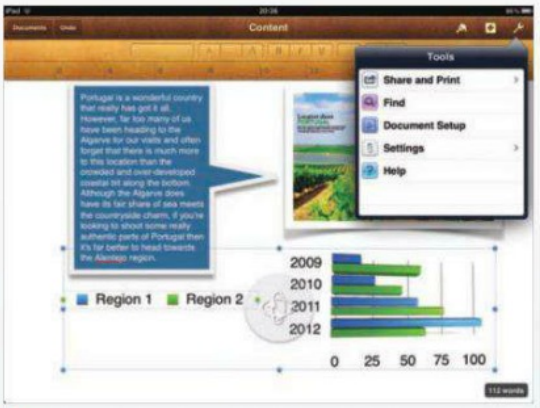
3 A splash of colour Now we'll import our image from the Camera Roll, which can be dragged into position. Tap the graphic and then pick a style from the pre-formatted options, such as this one with a drop-shadow. Use the Arrange tap on the top right to place these elements exactly where you want them.



4 Chart attack Some layouts might need to call upon the powerful tools found in Pages, such as the charts options that come in both 2D and 3D themes. Simply pull one on to the page that fits your design and then drag it around to fit, pulling the corners in or out to resize it wherever needed.



5 Editing content You can also run your other page elements around these charts too, as well as tapping on them to edit the data contained inside. This lets you access a keyboard and database style setup that enables any kind of data, facts or figures to be inserted. When you're finished, click Done.

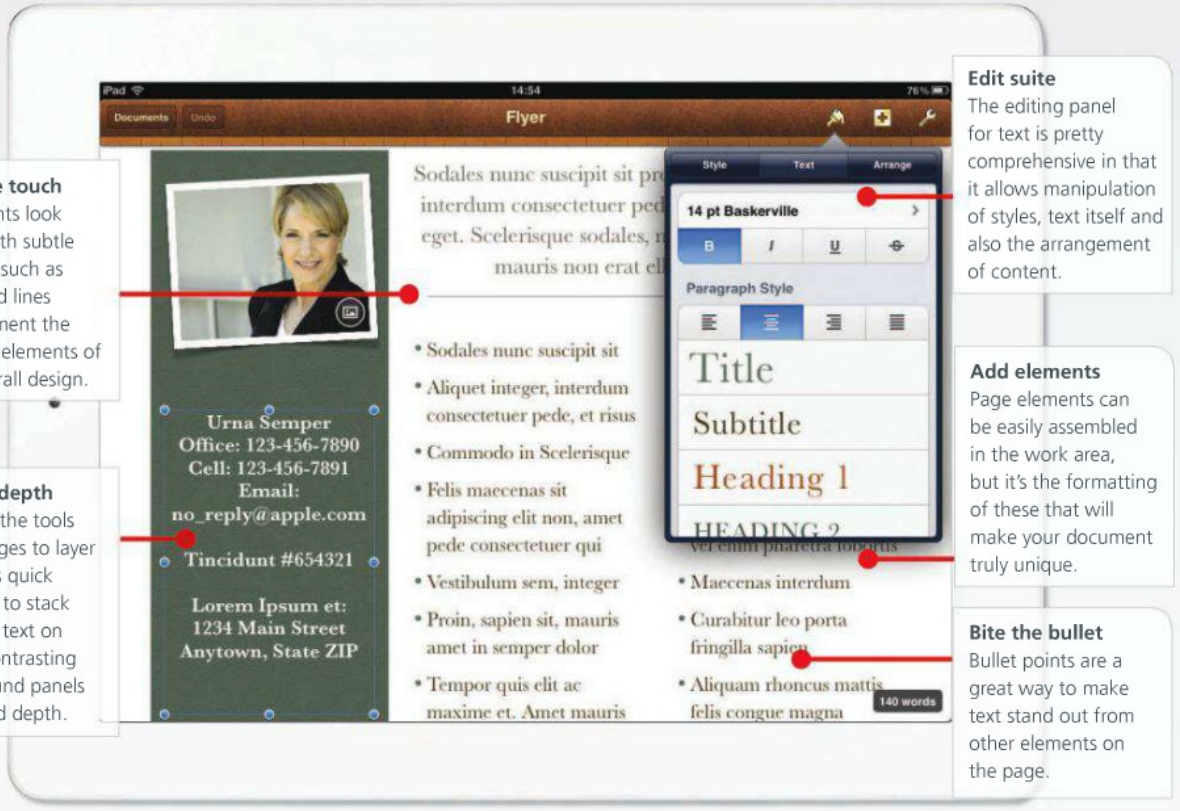


6 Make some space Remember that if you start running into problems with available space, then a quick visit to the Tools menu will allow you to increase your working area using the Document Setup option. Keep dimensions in mind if you want to produce a document that can also be printed out, though.

Editing text content in Pages

Make a style statement when editing documents in Pages

BY ROB CLYMO



EXPERT TIP

Pages can work with text from most sources, so if you have another document with a dated design but useful words, simply select and copy it. This is then added to the memory of the iPad and can be pasted into a pre-formatted area on your page.

VITAL INFO

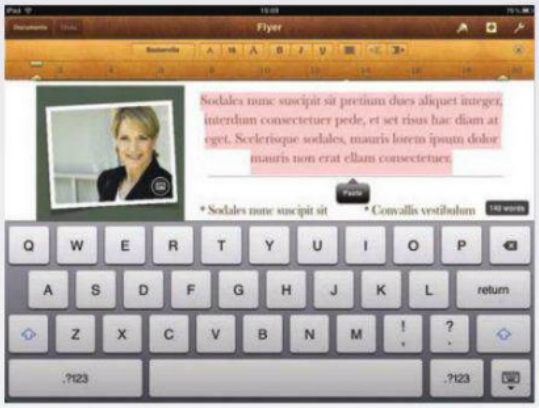
DEVICE: iPhone/iPad
DIFFICULTY: Beginner
TIME REQUIRED: 30 mins

WHAT YOU NEED:
- Pages
- iOS 5.1 or later

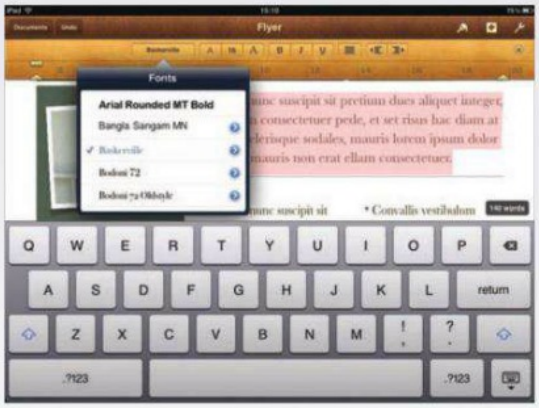
While there are numerous programs that will allow you to build fancy-looking documents, both from scratch and by using templates, few can match Pages for sheer flexibility. This powerful app enables you to format documents in sophisticated ways only normally seen in complex graphic design programs. Even using it as a basic word processor will allow you to transform conventional letters and flyers into documents that pop. Central to this is the way that the touchscreen functionality offers up precision editing of page elements with screen taps.

In the case of something like a newsletter, it's both quick and easy to add content to a blank page and then turn it into a stylish work of art that will grab attention. Making your content match and thereby ensure consistency is another area of designing documents that needs plenty of care and attention. Thankfully, though, Pages does much of the editing hard work for you. Producing text that's perfectly formatted with streamlined headings, body text and captions can all be controlled from the Styles pane in the toolbar. And, with these preformatting tools stored inside the menu system, you can add the same flourishes to every element on your page.

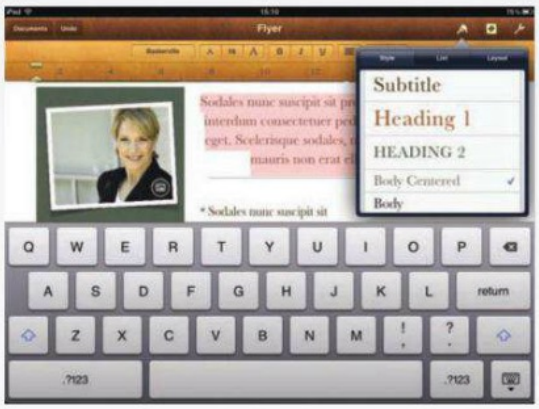
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: BULLET TIME



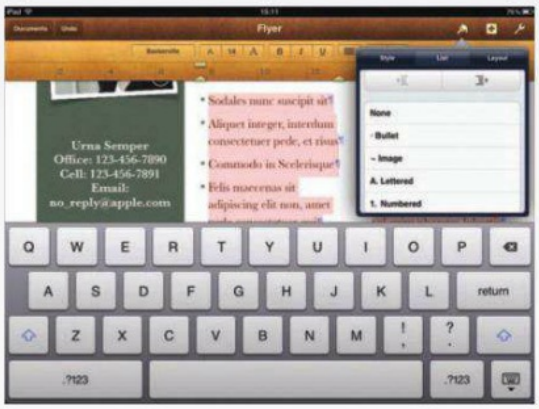
1 Get the text It's fine using a blank document, but things are far easier with templates. In this example, double-tap the body text and then paste in your own words after copying them from another source. Alternatively, just type straight into the document while retaining the formatting.



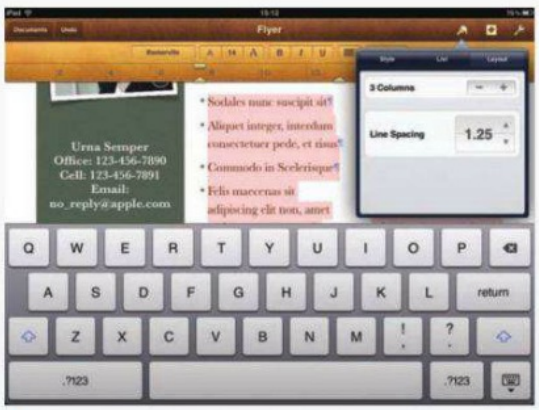
2 Working with words Editing text is a key part of the design process, and fonts can be selected and manipulated using the pull-down formatting bar along the top of your screen. The blue arrow to the right of the font name offers up additional styling options, such as regular, bold, italic and so on.



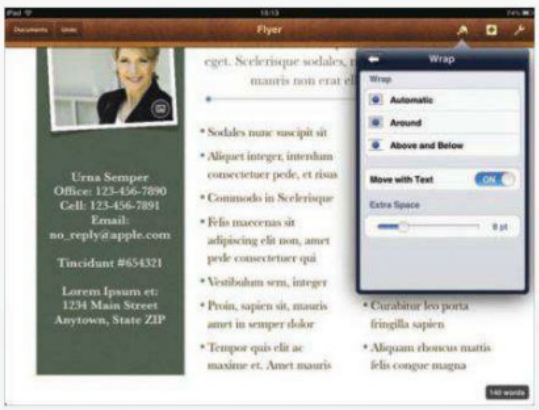
3 Get a heading If you need to flag up some areas of text more than others, tap to highlight the words and pick a formatting option such as heading, subtitle or body text, and the selected words will match that style. The bonus is that you can tweak these predefined styles for a more efficient workflow.



4 Bullet storm Bullet points can help to make selected text stand out and draw the reader through the information you're presenting. Using the option from the Tools panel, it's easy to add images, letters or numbers in place of these bullet points and make the layout attractive as well as informative.



5 Columns and spacing While you're editing text on the page, call on the services of the Layout menu option. This allows you to pick the number of columns within your document, along with the spacing of the text on the page. This means you've got real desktop publishing control at your fingertips.



6 Wrap it up The Wrap feature is another tool that enables control of lines and other shapes on the page. The default option means text will 'run around' (flow around the edge of) the other content automatically. Or you can specify how you want things to work by selecting Around or Above and Below.

Working with shapes in Pages

Lines, stars and other shapes can transform your work

BY ROB CLYMO



EXPERT TIP

An often-overlooked aspect of Pages is that it's possible to create complex graphics in other applications and then import them into your design. If you want to use a logo or freehand creation, simply load it into Camera Roll when you next connect to your main computer.

VITAL INFO

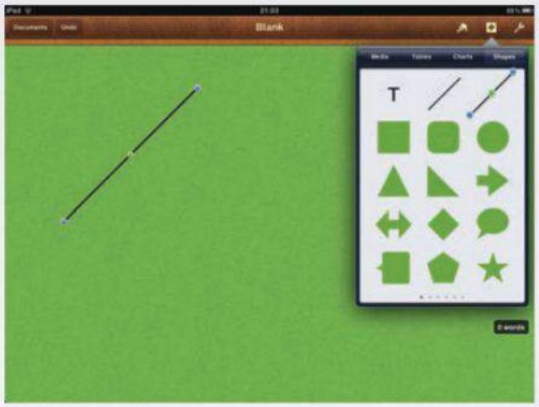
DEVICE: iPhone/iPad
DIFFICULTY: Beginner
TIME REQUIRED: 1 hour

WHAT YOU NEED:
- Pages
- iOS 5.1 or later

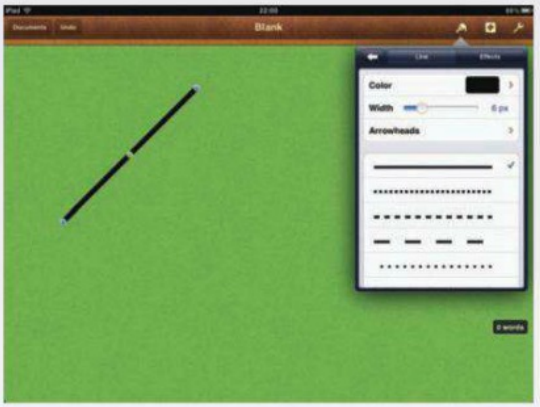
There are lots of surprises hidden inside Pages' interface, but one of the most intriguing is the capacity for working with shapes and other objects on the page. While it's reasonably easy to get the hang of how to add and edit content such as text and photographs, getting a firm grasp of how to work with shapes can help to transform your workflow. Better still, your designs will take on an extra edge as you add more complex shapes in order to complement anything from a flyer through to a poster.

Perhaps the best examples of shapes that can be dynamically altered 'on the fly' to produce new designs are the normally rather humdrum straight line and the star. These two objects – once you've mastered how to edit them with fingertip precision – can help to revolutionise the way you put together your documents. Add in other more conventional page elements, such as stylishly formatted text and eye-catching images, and you'll soon be producing designs that can rival many more advanced desktop publishing packages – and all from within the mobile environment.

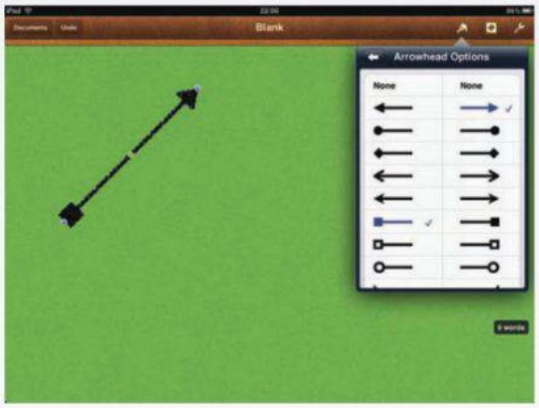
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: STARS AND STRIPES



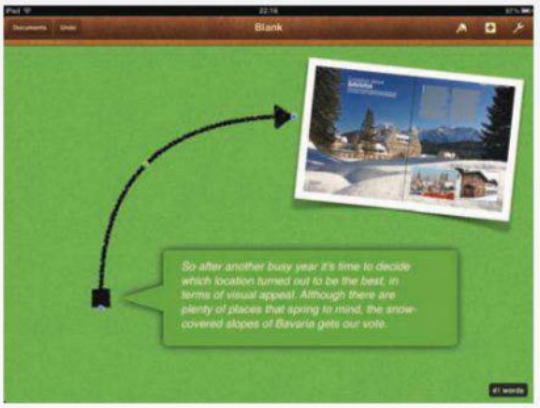
1 On the line With a blank canvas you're able to head straight to the top-right '+' symbol and select a straight line from the palette. Be sure to pick the one to the right, with the dots on it, as these will allow you to manipulate it as required. Then simply drag it on to your work area.



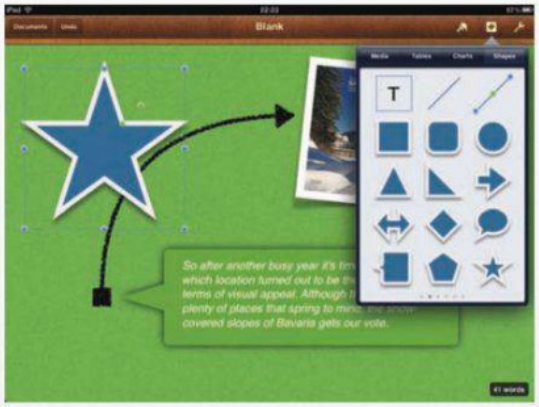
2 Style it up The tool options inside Pages allow you to customise a basic line into any kind of look that's needed for your design. You can pick the colour, the width and whether the line is to be solid, dotted or dashed from the options in the list. It can even sport a 'freehand'-style finish.



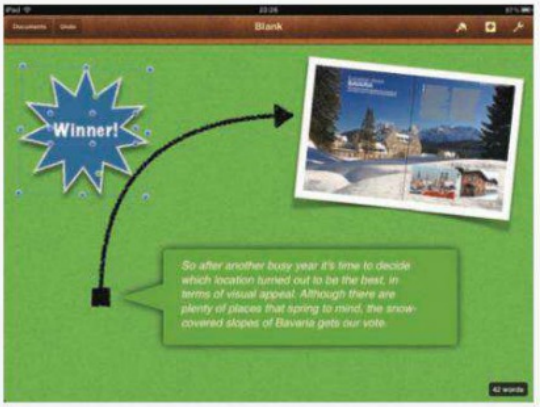
3 Arrowhead options The next thing we'll add is an arrowhead, to turn that boring line into a useful pointer. Arrowheads can be applied from the same tool palette we were using previously. Note the freehand-style pattern discussed in step 2, which has also been applied to the straight line itself.



4 Bend it Another nice thing about the way Pages treats lines is that if you hold your finger on any of the points you can manipulate them – you can bend it right over into an attractive curve if you like. It's also possible to combine more than one line together to produce more complex drawings.



5 A star is born Similarly, select a star from one of the palette options and then drag it on to the working area. The blue dots signify where the shape can be rotated and moved, while the small green dots indicate where you can drag the corners in and out to add or subtract points on the star.

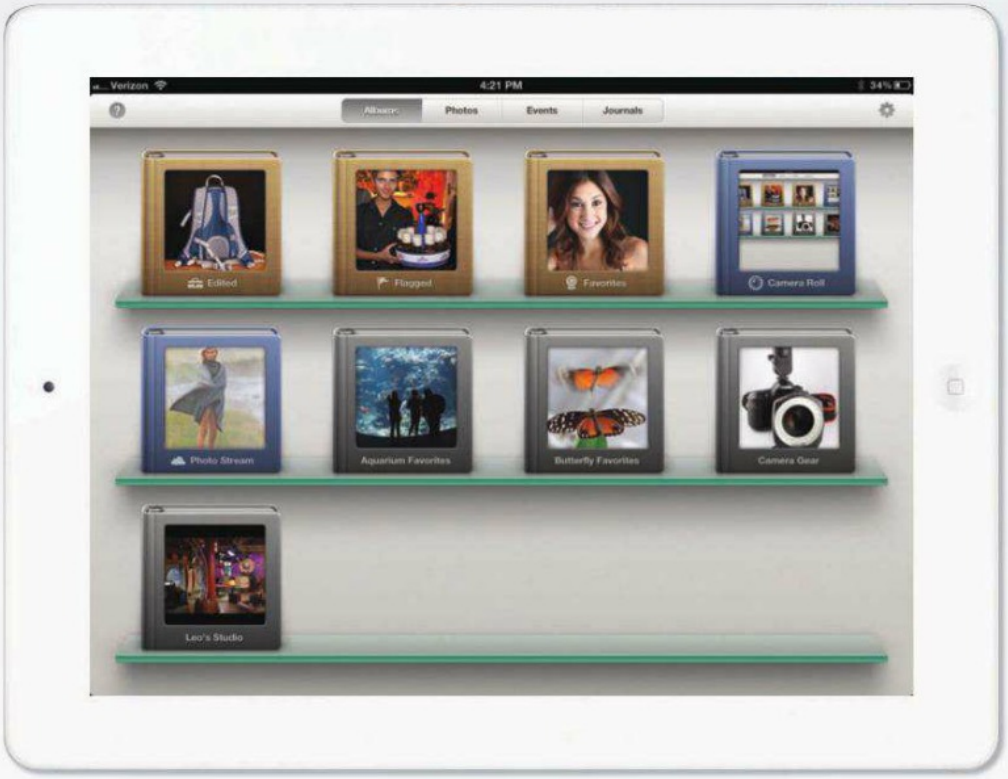


6 Shapes and text As you can see from the star above, it's possible to overlay text boxes on to the shape for a glitzy effect. Double-tapping both the star and text box lets you group them for easier movement on the page, as indicated by the large number of blue points shown here.

Master Photo Albums in iPhoto

iPhoto's organisational tools are convenient and invaluable

BY DERRICK STORY



The grey zone
If you create your own albums in the Photos app, or sync with Aperture or iPhoto on the Mac, you can have grey albums too

VITAL INFO

DEVICE: iPhone/iPad
DIFFICULTY: Intermediate
TIME REQUIRED: 30 mins

WHAT YOU NEED:
- iPhoto (£2.99, itun.es/i6Dp9Lh)
- iOS 6.0 or later

If you've spent any time with iPhoto for iOS, you've probably got a few albums on your library shelves, and the chances are you didn't create any of them: they just started showing up in a variety of colours.

Those albums are designed to help you manage the pictures inside. To take full advantage of them, you'll need to familiarise yourself with a couple of iPhoto's tagging tools, and then learn the logic behind the application's album creation and organisation.

PHOTO TAGS AND ALBUMS

Two types of album in iPhoto are directly linked toimage tags: Flagged and Favorites. When you're viewing a picture, you can either Flag it or mark it as a Favorite. To reveal these options, open a photo and tap the Edit button in the upper-right corner. A toolbar will open at the bottom of the window. Tap the flag icon once to mark the image. Holding your finger on the flag reveals more options, such as Flag All and Last 24 Hours.

Tap the Ribbon icon to mark the picture as a Favorite, and again if you change your mind. You can use Flags and Favorites for any type of sorting. They are merely a way to help you organise your library.

Images can appear in multiple albums, so you should consider these techniques to be organisational tools, not necessarily image residencies. To get a feel for this organisation, we'll walk though the process where albums begin to appear on your library shelf.

BLUE ALBUMS

When you first start using iPhoto, you'll see only blue albums. The application creates these, and they hold images from your Camera Roll or Photo Stream, plus those that have been imported.

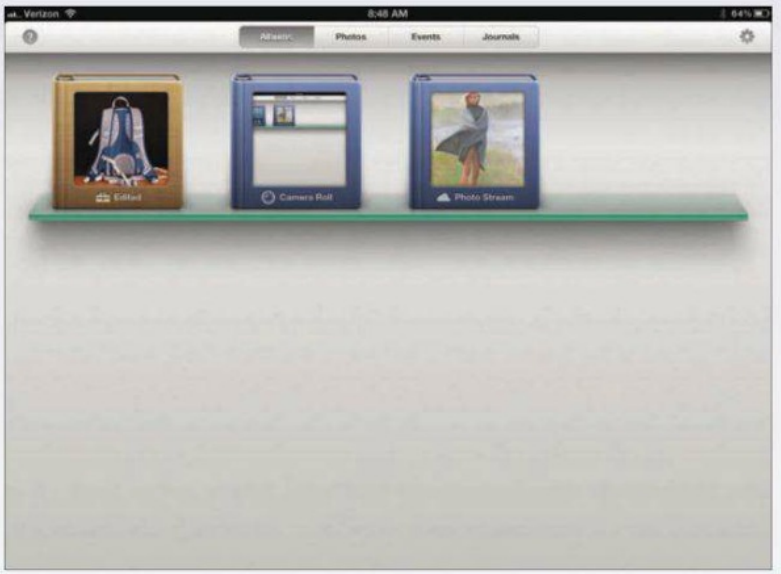
At first, blue albums will be at the top of the shelf, in alphabetical order. When you start working on individual images in iPhoto, the app will create a brown album – Edited – and position it in the upper left of the top shelf, pushing the blue albums to the right.

You don't have much control over blue albums – you can't, for example, choose the key photo for their covers. The Camera Roll album displays the last image on the cover, and Photo Stream shows the first picture.

BROWN ALBUMS

Once you've tagged an image by using an organisational tool or by applying image edits, iPhoto will create a brown album to contain these. There are three types of brown albums: Edited, Flagged and Favorites. This means if you're pulling together a collection of portraits from the Camera Roll, you can flag them and they will appear in their own brown album. To flag multiple images, hold your finger down on the flag icon, tap Choose, and then tap all the thumbnails you want to tag. When you're finished, tap Done.

iPhoto has another brown album called Photo Box, but this only appears when you delete an edited image from your device. If you remove a photo's edits, caption or Favorite tag, or if you delete it from a journal, iPhoto moves it to the Photo Box album.



Top shelf
Once you edit an image, iPhoto creates a brown album and puts it on the top shelf of the library

GREY ALBUMS

If you want to take control and create an album composed of shots that you choose, grey is the assigned colour. There are two ways to create these albums. You can either build one in iPhoto or Aperture, and then sync it with the iPad via iTunes, or create an album in the Photos app on the iPad.

For the latter method, tap the Photos tab in the Photos app, then the Share icon in the upper-right corner and finally the images you want to collect. A blue tick will appear on the thumbnails you've selected. Tap the Add To button, and then the Add to New Album pop-up. Enter the name of the new album, and tap Save. The Photos app will take you to the Albums view that includes your new collection. Now leave the app and launch iPhoto. The album will appear trimmed in grey on your library shelf in iPhoto.

And since it's a grey album, you can choose the key photo. Open the album and tap the image you want featured. If you're not already in Edit mode, tap the Edit button. Then tap the gear icon in the lower-right corner and select Set As Key Photo. Now, when you go back to the library shelf, your selected image will grace the cover of the grey album.

SYNC WITH APERTURE OR iPHOTO

If you have images in iPhoto or Aperture on a Mac that you'd like to reside on an iPad, you can make that connection through iTunes.

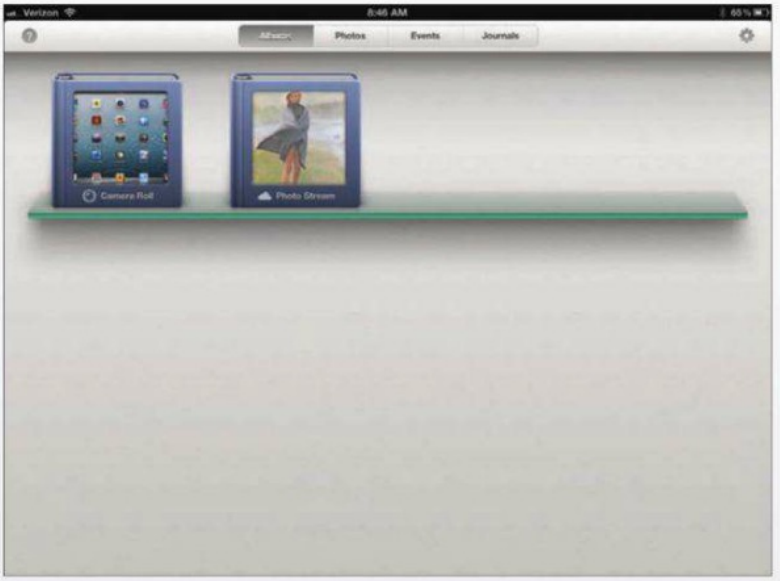
1. Create an album in iPhoto or Aperture with the images you want.
2. Open iTunes and select your iPad from the Devices list in the left column. If you're using Wi-Fi syncing, the iPad will be there. Otherwise, connect the device via USB.
3. Click the Photos tab and tick the box for Sync Photos From (Aperture or iPhoto).
4. Click the button for Selected Albums, Events, And Faces… and choose No Events from the pop-up menu.
5. Tick the album(s) you want to sync.
6. Click the Apply button.

Your images from the Mac will now appear in two places on the iPad: under the Albums tab in your Photos app and on the Library shelf as a grey album in iPhoto.

If you decide that you want to remove an album but retain a photo or two from it, just make an image edit to the shots you want to keep on the iPad. This could be something as simple as adding a caption. Once you do so, the picture will also appear in the brown Edited album, even after you've disconnected the source album from your iPad.

By no means is iPhoto for iOS as powerful as Aperture for the Mac. But by mastering these few simple techniques, you can bring a semblance of image organisation to your iPad.

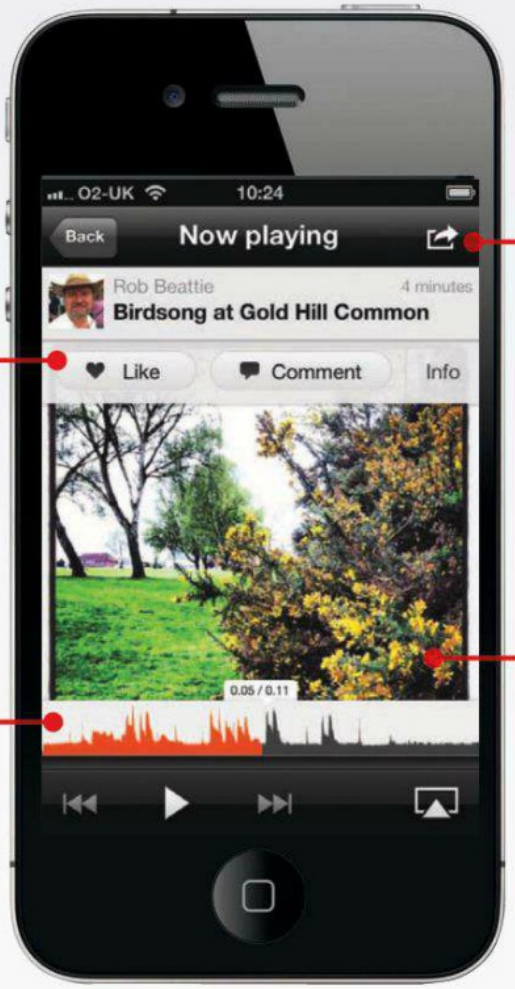
Basic blue
When you first start working in iPhoto, this might be all you see on your library shelves



Record the soundtrack of your life

Save and share sounds from your daily life with the free SoundCloud app

BY ROB BEATTIE



Like what you hear Once a sound has been sent to the SoundCloud timeline, others can 'like' or comment on it by using these buttons.

Transport controls Use these to play, fast-forward and rewind through the recording – or drag your finger along the waveform to move to a specific point.

Get social Tap the Share icon to send the recording to popular social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr.

Picture show Using a photo helps to differentiate your SoundCloud recordings so you can tell them apart more easily.

VITAL INFO

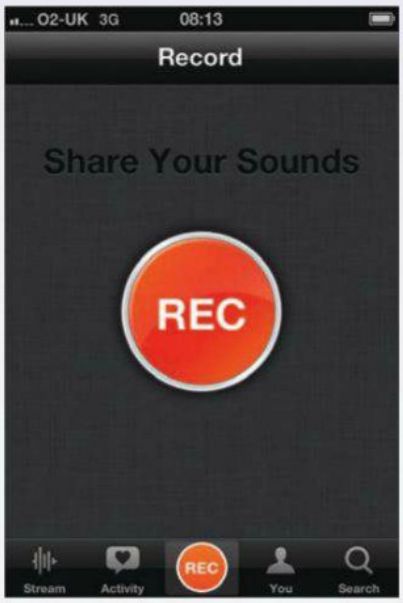
DEVICE: iPhone or iPad
DIFFICULTY: Beginner
TIME REQUIRED: 5 minutes

WHAT YOU NEED:
- SoundCloud (free, itun.es/i6DK9w6)
- iOS 4.3 or later

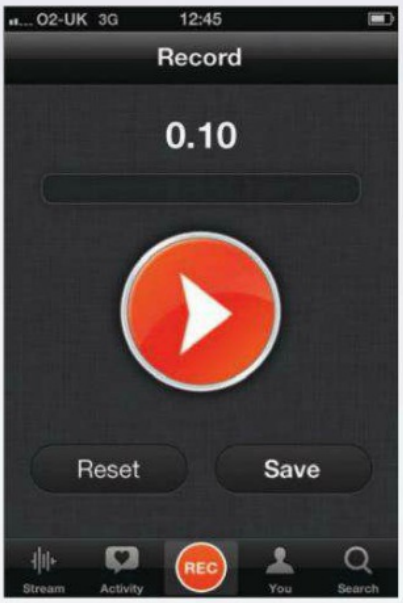
The rise of social media has made many of us feel more comfortable with the notion of sharing what's happening in our daily lives, whether it's a quick tweet about a late train, a photo of a beautiful view, a link to a rare YouTube clip of a favourite band or a rant about another cold call from a direct marketing company. Most of the popular social media sites aren't so geared up to handle sound recordings, though, and often there's an immediacy to snatching a quick recording of something that's going on around you that goes beyond what you can capture by typing on a keyboard.

That's where SoundCloud comes in. Already popular with musicians and media types thanks to its excellent embedded player, the SoundCloud app lets you record and share (or keep private if you prefer) all manner of voice recordings quickly and easily.

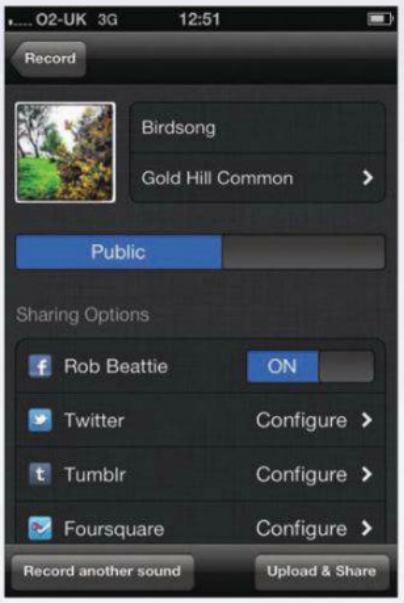
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE: THE SOUND I FOUND



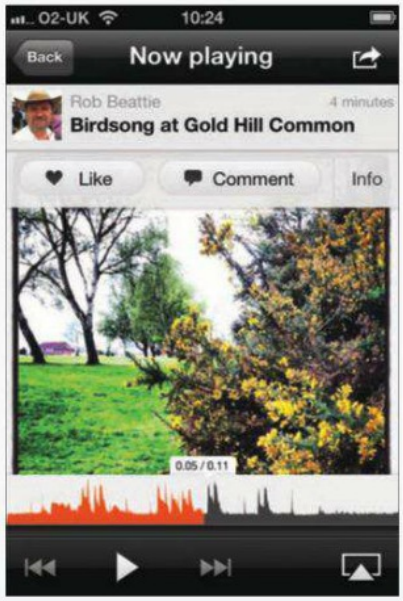
1 Getting started Download and install the SoundCloud app from the iTunes store and tap the icon to start. Sign in using your Facebook account (or sign up using a valid email account) and allow the app to send Push Notifications. Ignore all the Find Friends stuff and tap the Done button. This loads the Record screen.



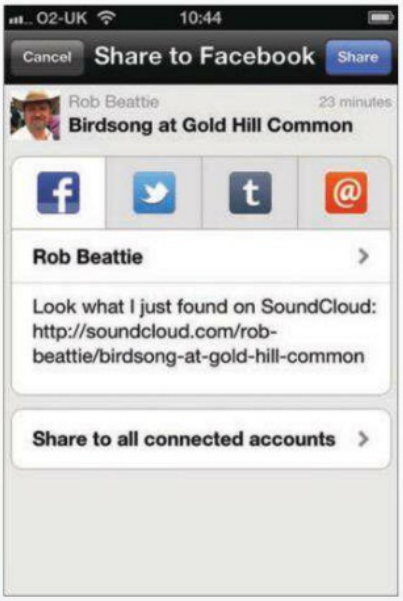
2 Recording a sound The whole idea behind the app is to record voice memos, snatches of song ideas, a podcast, a band playing in a pub or just you and your friends joking around. So tap the Rec button, make the recording and when you've finished, tap Stop. Tap Reset to remove the recording and start again or tap Save.



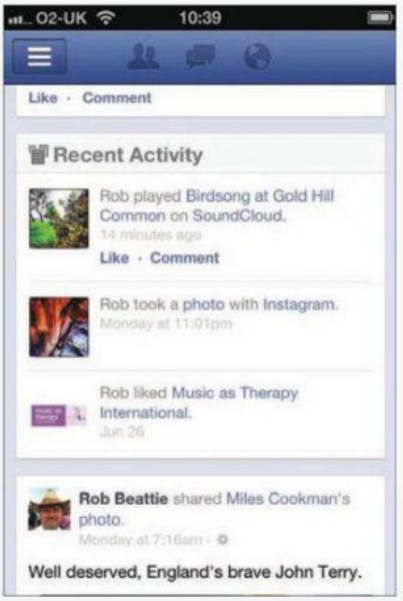
3 Name and details Type a name for the recording, tap 'Where' to enter a location, tap the empty image slot to pick (or take) an image to accompany it, and then decide whether to share the recording on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or Foursquare. Since we signed up with our Facebook account, that's already active. Tap Upload & Share.



4 Playing sounds Although the previous step implies that the file will share with your chosen service (in this example, Facebook) that's not the case – yet. So wait for the sound to load on to SoundCloud's timeline and then tap it. The recording plays back full-screen in the iPhone. Tap the Share button (top right) to continue.



5 Sharing sounds Where the account is active and connected – with Facebook, say – the app inserts a standard message with the recording. Tap one of the other, unconnected services and you'll see a 'Connect to' button. Tap the 'Share to all connected accounts' option or tap the blue button to share to the currently selected service.



6 SoundCloud on Facebook And here's the sound displayed on our Recent Activity timeline on the iPhone's Facebook app. From here, you can tap the picture and this will load Safari, open the SoundCloud page and let you play the sound back. On a desktop PC, the same recording will play back using the distinctive SoundCloud player.

Edit holiday videos with iMovie

How to give your films a professional touch using your iPad

BY HEATH McKNIGHT



The big picture The general interface for iMovie in iOS offers plenty of tools for whipping your videos into shape

VITAL INFO

DEVICE: iPad
DIFFICULTY: Intermediate
TIME REQUIRED: 1 hour

WHAT YOU NEED:
- iMovie (£2.99, **itun.es/i6D7386**)
- iOS 5.1 or later

With iMovie for iOS on your iPad, you can quickly and easily cut casual videos, spruce them up with themes, mix video with still photos, and add effects, music and titles. Here's how.

GET ORGANISED

You and your holiday companions will probably use various devices to take photos and shoot video: an iPhone, a point-and-shoot camera, a DSLR or even an iPad. Apple's tablet offers several ways to organise your media before editing, while having iCloud activated means pictures will immediately appear in your Photo Stream. And with a laptop, you can sync video via iTunes.

TRANSFER YOUR ASSETS

If you didn't take a PC on your trip, you can use the iPad Camera Connection Kit or SD Card Reader to import photos and video on to your iPad from your camera. PhotoSync (£1.49, **itun.es/i6Ds8Qs**) provides an easy way to wirelessly transfer photos and videos from iPhone to iPad. Once you've got all the elements in place, you can put them together.

EDIT YOUR VIDEO

Launch the iMovie app on your iPad, tap the '+' button, and select New Project or New Trailer. Pick a theme under Project Settings (the gear icon in the top-right corner); iMovie will add related music, loops and transitions.

If you don't want to use any of the app's themes, tap the film strip or photo symbol to import media, or the camera icon to record video from the iPad. In the Video window, adjust the length of your clips by moving the orange handles. When you're finished, tap the blue arrow to send the clip to the timeline. As you add clips and images, iMovie automatically adds a dissolve transition.

A precision editor built into iMovie for iOS makes it easy to cut your video accurately. To activate it, simply pinch up on the transition point. Pinch down to close it.

ADD PHOTOS

To integrate photos into your video, click the picture icon below the window. This allows you to pull up images. The default length for a still is four seconds; tap the photo and adjust the orange handles in or out to change the length.

iMovie adds a 'Ken Burns effect' to photos (zooming or panning around still images to create the illusion of action), but you can tweak it. Tap the photo in the timeline; then tap Start in the Project window and pinch the picture to zoom in. Next, tap End, and move and zoom the image back out to where you want to finish, then click Done.

AUDIO AND TITLES

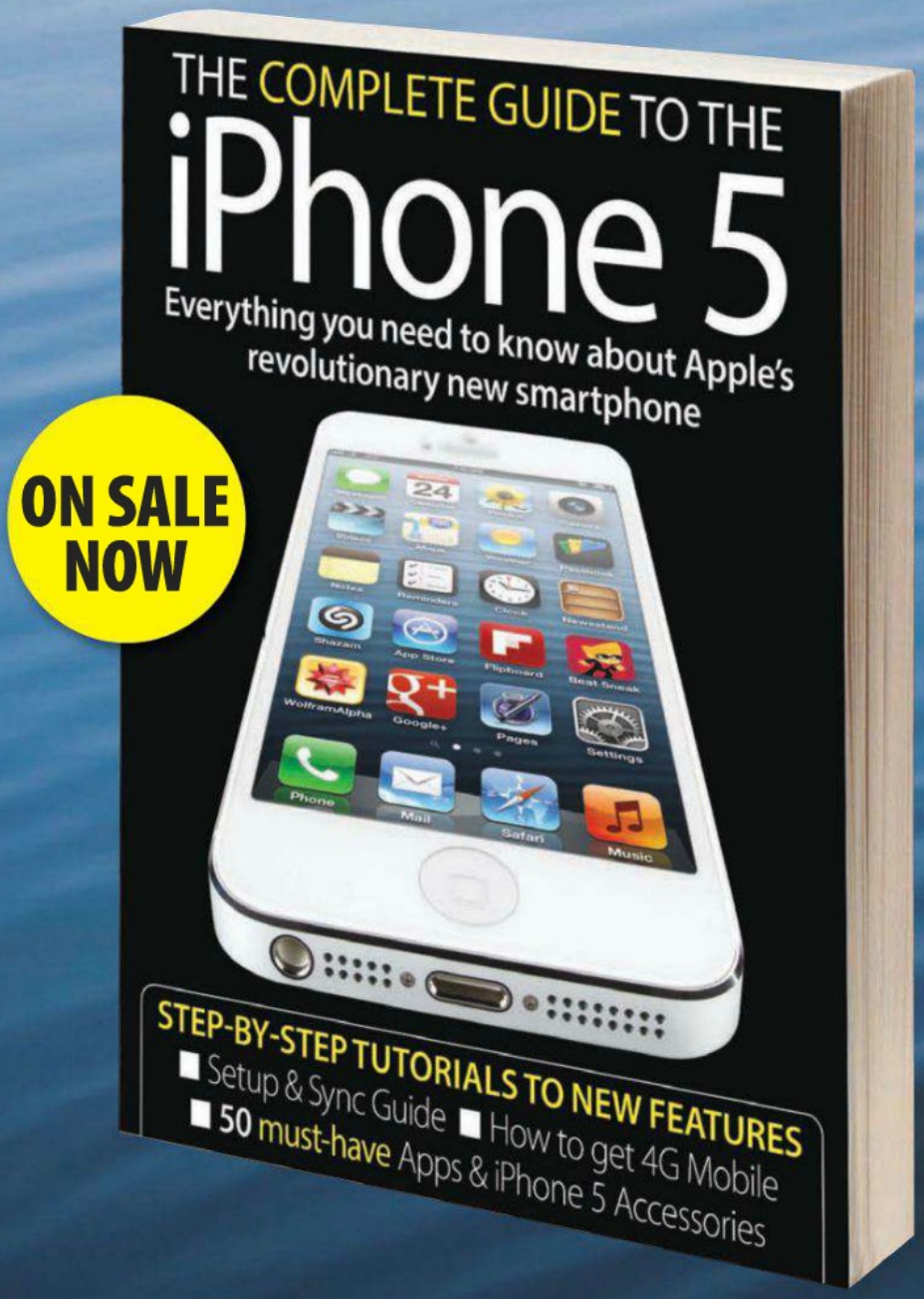
To open the audio options window, click the music icon. You can select Theme Music, Sound Effects, or playlists, albums and more from iTunes. Simply double-tap the clip to bring up Audio Clip Settings.

To add titles, double-tap a video clip or photo to bring up the clip settings dialog box. Next, select Title Style and choose Opening, Middle or Ending titles. Type the text in the project window.

SAVE AND SHARE

Go to the marquee screen by tapping the My Projects button (the document icon in the project window). With your project selected, click the right-arrow icon at the bottom to pull up the Share Movie To menu. From here, you can send your holiday video to Facebook, iTunes, Vimeo or YouTube.

All you need to know about the biggest little phone around



Available from WHSmith Stores

Also available digitally via Zinio and the iPad & iPhone User Newsstand app

zinio™

Available on the App Store

IDG | UNITED KINGDOM

In Hit List you'll find our picks of the best gadgets, updated each month with the most favourably reviewed kit.

Hit List starts with Apple's devices themselves: on this page we look at the current iPad and iPhone line-ups, and the iPods are rated overleaf. Later you'll find the accessories most worth your hard-earned cash, from audio gear to cases, keyboards and stands. And finally we round up the best apps and games from the iTunes Store. Only the best kit makes it into Hit List: look out for the golden 5-star logos, which indicate a product that has earned our coveted Star Buy award for excellence.

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iPad (third-generation)

The new iPad features an amazing Retina display



Wi-Fi: £399 (16GB), £479 (32GB), £559 (64GB)
Wi-Fi + 4G: £499 (16GB), £579 (32GB), £659 (64GB)
www.apple.com/uk/ipad
RATING ★★★★★

LIKES:
- Retina display
- 5-megapixel camera
- Dictation feature
- FaceTime integration
- Improved graphics
- A5X chip; video-mirroring
- Same launch price as iPad 2

DISLIKES:
- Some third-party apps not yet optimised for Retina display (apps that are will take up more space)
- 4G still not available in the UK
- Battery takes longer to charge

The runaway success of the original iPad and the iPad 2 – which is still on sale at a reduced price – meant the third-generation model had a lot to live up to. (It's just called the iPad, confusingly, but you may hear it referred to as the new iPad or the third-gen iPad in certain circles.) With this version of its tablet, Apple chose to focus on a few areas of improvement, while keeping the package largely the same.

By far the most important feature is the 9.7in Retina display, and its 2,048 x 1,536 resolution results in pin-sharp images. Photos reveal details that weren't there before, and watching an HD movie is just like having a home cinema in your lap.

To power the screen, Apple has added its A5X chip, which blows aways other iOS devices in graphics processing. It also comes with a 5-megapixel camera that's better than that of any other tablet, and while Siri didn't initially make the move to iPad as some expected, iOS 6 has corrected that omission – see **bit.ly/KywxnP**. The new iPad isn't smaller or lighter than its predecessor, but it's got a truly remarkable screen and a much better camera.

READ MORE: bit.ly/yDCQHL

iPad 2

Reduced in price and a decent alternative to the new iPad



Wi-Fi: £329 (16GB) Wi-Fi + 3G: £429 (16GB)
www.apple.com/uk/ipad
RATING ★★★★★

LIKES:
- £70 cheaper than new iPad
- Fast and user-friendly
- 3G model means you're not paying extra for 4G, which is not yet available in the UK
- Still a stunning device

DISLIKES:
- Now only available in 16GB capacity
- Camera is poor, especially compared to the new iPad
- No Retina display

Few Apple fans are going to spare a thought for the humble old iPad 2 now that its successor has hit the shops. But this is the same sparkling, all-conquering tablet we loved just a few months ago, and it's had £70 slashed off its price tag too.

A quick go on the iPad 2 and you'll understand just why it proved so popular. Instantly switching on, it enables you to access the internet and all your favourite apps with the kind of finger interaction that made the iPhone popular. The large screen makes it ideal for reading books and watching video, and gaming is on a whole new level. The third-generation iPad's A5X chip gives it the edge in gaming terms, but this is still a powerful platform with a wealth of games.

The two biggest differences between this and the third-gen iPad are the screen and the camera. The display here looks sharp, bright and clear – right up until the second you read some text on the new iPad's Retina display. The difference in non-text environments is less marked, but is likely to increase as developers take advantage of the extra detail.

The price is now £70 below the equivalent new iPads, but all but the lowest storage versions (of both Wi-Fi and 3G models) have been discontinued: it's 16GB or nothing. This is likely to fill up quickly if you watch films and play games.

READ MORE: bit.ly/OUaNGA

RATING: ★★★★★ = iPad&iPhone STAR BUY

WE TEST PRODUCTS FOR PERFORMANCE, BUILD QUALITY AND VALUE, THEN RATE THEM ON A 5-POINT SCALE. HERE'S WHAT THE SCORES MEAN.

★★★★ = VERY GOOD ★★★ = GOOD ★★ = FLAWED ★ = UNACCEPTABLE

iPhone 5

Long-screened, beautiful upgrade to an already brilliant smartphone

Price depends on mobile contract. SIM-free: £529 (16GB), £599 (32GB), £699 (64GB)
www.apple.com/uk/iphone
RATING ★★★★

LIKES:
- Thin, light, beautiful design
- Faster graphics and all-round processing than 4S
- Better low-light photography
- Taller screen
- 4G compatibility

DISLIKES:
- Lightning connector
- 4G limitations

Notable new technology in the iPhone 5 includes a larger 4in display, 4G LTE connectivity, a new A6 processor, a better camera and an HD front-facing iSight camera.

The amazing thing about the iPhone 5 is that the device itself manages to feel smaller, while the screen is bigger: up to 4in. Partly this is down to the lighter weight, slimmer design and smaller bezel. Depth is down to a ridiculous 7.6mm.

The taller (but not wider) 4in display's 16:9 ratio is better for watching films and TV shows. In portrait mode you get an extra row of apps on the Home screen, and many list-based apps can pack in an extra story or two. Once they've been optimised for the additional space, games will look pretty special.

The A6 processor makes the iPhone 5 around two and a half times as quick as the 4S, and also speeds up its camera; this component is again rated at 8Mp but has improved low-light capabilities and a tougher lens.

While slimmer and reversible, the new Lightning connector has its down sides – those dozens of old cables and wired accessories won't work without an adaptor. But overall the iPhone 5 is marginally better in just about every area than the iPhone 4S. A solid, if not radical, step forward, then.

READ MORE: bit.ly/PsYqTf



iPhone 4S

Fast, great at photos and gaming, and £50 cheaper than a few months ago

Price depends on mobile contract; SIM-free: £449 (16GB only)
www.apple.com/uk/iphone
RATING ★★★★

LIKES:
- Faster than 4S
- Terrific camera
- Full iOS 6 compatibility
- Same smart design as iPhone 4

DISLIKES:
- Easily outpaced on most demanding apps by iPhone 5
- Lack of noticeable changes may put buyers off

Can a £50 price cut tempt buyers to consider last year's model? Perhaps. The 4S hasn't turned into a bad phone overnight, and at £449 it represents sound value for money, if lacking in the excitement of the very latest release.

The 4S earned record-breaking sales by taking the successful look of the iPhone 4 and tossing in a dual-core processor for dramatically improved speed, a heavily upgraded camera and some brand-new voice-command technologies with tremendous potential. Siri, indeed, is now a stronger proposition than ever thanks to the free software update iOS 6, whose features the 4S can enjoy in full. (See **bit.ly/KywxnP**.)

The dual-core A5 processor is one generation more advanced than the A4 processor that powered the iPhone 4 and the original iPad, and you can expect better performance when handling demanding apps and games. The iPhone 5, however, sees a yet more significant speed bump thanks to its A6 chip.

The 4S's camera saw a jump in spec from 5Mp to 8Mp and offers fast response shooting.

The iPhone 4S is worth considering for its decent speed, great camera, extensive iOS 6 compatibility and smart design.

READ MORE: bit.ly/JPUuJW



iPhone 4

The faithful old 4 still has qualities to consider. And it's incredibly cheap

Price depends on mobile contract; SIM-free: £319 (8GB only)
www.apple.com/uk/iphone
RATING ★★★★

LIKES:
- High-resolution Retina display
- 5Mp camera with LED flash
- Vastly improved battery life over 3G and 3GS
- Bargain price tag

DISLIKES:
- Antenna attenuation issues
- 8GB will fill up quickly
- Not as quick as the iPhone 4S, and about a quarter of the speed of the iPhone 5

Now relegated to third place on the list of available iPhones, the faithful old 4 will struggle to catch buyers' eyes, but it still has something to offer – not least of which is a stunning price tag that has dropped by another £110.

The iPhone 4 saw most of the major gripes about older versions addressed: it can multitask (kind of) and has a camera that's really rather good instead of woefully bad. But there's a caveat. The iPhone 4's design is such that the antennae are on the outside of the unit. If you cover up the gap between the antennae on the left-hand side with your hand, you seriously affect your signal. Apple admitted to the issue, and offered a free 'Bumper' case to all iPhone 4 owners. A case fixes the issue, but rather spoils the device's cool look.

Fans of films and games should note that 8GB – the only available configuration – will quickly fill up with media and apps, and the screen and processor are in any case less suited to those activities than those of the mighty iPhone 5. But the Retina display remains a visual treat – even if one that now looks a little stunted compared to its new cousin – and the battery life is great. Go to **bit.ly/RGLkQf** to read our thoughts on which model of iPhone is best for you.

READ MORE: bit.ly/MIlRmz



iPODS

iPod shuffle

■ Apple
■ apple.com/uk/ipodshuffle
■ £40 (2GB)
RATING ★★★★★



The current shuffle is an improved version of the previous buttonless model – it's now a clip-on portable music player with an easy-to-use onboard control system. The economy of design means it's also a third smaller, and it boasts an improved battery life. There's no control lock, admittedly, but it's clear that the new design erases bad memories of the previous iteration.

iPod nano

■ Apple
■ apple.com/uk/ipodnano
■ £129 (16GB)
RATING ★★★★

We're glad to see the iPod nano get back on track after the 2010 model's somewhat baffling experiment – it was little more than a tiny touchscreen with a belt-clip.



It's still a bit pricey (you can now only buy it in the 16GB flavour, leaving an obvious gap in the £60-£120 niche) but the larger screen, super-slimline design, Bluetooth capabilities and ability to play video all return the iPod nano to its glory days.

iPod classic

■ Apple
■ apple.com/uk/ipodclassic
■ £199 (160GB)
RATING ★★★★

The classic is brilliant if you want to take a large collection of music and video with you. The latest version is 160GB, which represents excellent value for money. It also offers superb battery life: it'll play your tunes for



almost two days before the battery dies. And the click-wheel is still a design classic.

Turn to page 30 for our review of the new iPod touch

HEADPHONES

Sennheiser RS 220

■ Sennheiser ■ www.sennheiser.co.uk ■ £349
RATING ★★★★



There are less expensive headphones that provide comparable quality – the RS 160s (**bit.ly/Ji9UXX**), for example, are half the price – but the extra input and output features built into the transmitter unit will appeal to audiophiles and home cinema buffs who want to integrate the RS 220 into their home entertainment system.
READ MORE: bit.ly/M85cNI

MEElectronics Air-Fi AF32

■ MEElectronics ■ www.meelec.com ■ £70
RATING ★★★★



For a set of Bluetooth headphones in this price range, the Air-Fi AF32 on-ear stereo Bluetooth headphones are extremely comfortable and offer good sound quality. And you can't beat the feature set or the 12-hour battery life. Leaving aside minor quibbles about hot ears and not-quite-perfect audio, we really like them.
READ MORE: bit.ly/IEBITW

Klipsch Image S4i

■ Klipsch ■ www.klipsch.co.uk ■ £90
RATING ★★★★★



The Klipsch S4is are an in-ear set of headphones that offer exceptional sound quality, if at a premium price point. You also get full iPod or iPhone control thanks to an in-line remote control, which doubles up as a button for answering and hanging up calls on the iPhone. A cracking set of earphones.
READ MORE: bit.ly/LOYjyr

Shure SE315

■ Shure ■ www.shure.co.uk ■ £50
RATING ★★★★



The SE315's design and ergonomics are as good as it gets for in-ear canal headphones without stepping up to custom-made models. The sound quality is almost as good as the design, with a neutral balance and great detail, missing only some bass impact and the superior amount of detail found in the best offerings on the market.
READ MORE: bit.ly/LaBuTB

Shure SE215

■ Shure ■ www.shure.co.uk ■ £100
RATING ★★★★



The Shure SE215s are based on an inverted design – the cable runs over the top of your ear – and we found them a little tricky to put in at first. (The secret is to waggle them in like earplugs.) Once we'd mastered this, we were able to enjoy exceptionally rich sound quality, with a monstrous, thick bass punch to boot.
READ MORE: bit.ly/KoyQMJ

Sennheiser CX 550 Style II

■ Sennheiser ■ www.sennheiser.co.uk ■ £80
RATING ★★★★★



Sennheiser's new noise-isolating headphones are a stylish and sturdy set. They're designed with a small arm that's tilted forward to help the cable stay in place and the headphones comfortably in the ear. Sound-wise, the CX 550 Style IIs are a strong choice – balanced and detailed. Pricey, but worth it for the quality and comfort.
READ MORE: bit.ly/KSNyXr

Denon AH-C560R

■ Denon ■ www.denon.co.uk ■ £70
RATING ★★★★★



Denon is known for its high-quality audio systems, but its earphones can be quite pricey. However, the AH-C560R costs £70, and still provides excellent quality. A high frequency range results in a very clean, clear sound with rich echoing bass and detailed higher frequencies. Includes a mic for making and taking calls.
READ MORE: bit.ly/JRSOKZ

Etymotic HF2

■ Etymotic ■ www.etymotic.com ■ £99
RATING ★★★★★



A phenomenal set of earphones – the HF2s might be at the top end of most budgets, but they deliver the kind of sound that can cost a lot more. Etymotic has also teamed up with hearing experts ACS to offer a custom eartip service, which makes for a comfortable fit. This costs an extra £90. Moulds can be done at your local Boots.
READ MORE: bit.ly/KoA9Ly

SPEAKERS

Rechargeable Speaker S715i

■ Logitech ■ www.logitech.co.uk ■ £129
RATING ★★★★★



It may be bigger and heavier than most portable models, but the S715i is still practical as a travel speaker and should fit into a backpack or bag fairly easily. Its eight-hour rechargeable battery is great for listening to music on the go, and the chunky design allows it to generate enough power and bass to really get things swinging.
READ MORE: bit.ly/MyYk6Q

iDM12

■ iHome ■ www.ihomeaudio.com ■ £60
RATING ★★★★



Despite the over-enthusiastic bass, the iDM12 is still one of the better pocket-size speakers we've come across. It can't match the quality and power of the larger model from Logitech above, but if you want a decent speaker that you can just pick up and drop into your pocket, then the iDM12 is hard to beat.
READ MORE: bit.ly/NJJRZ3

Lenco iPT-223

■ Lenco ■ www.lencouk.com ■ £230
RATING ★★★★



The tall but quite slender iPT-223 from Lenco is a good solution for anyone short on floor space or wanting a second speaker system – for a bedroom or study, perhaps – that isn't too sonically compromised. The one-box option isn't ideal, but with a good range of features this particular tower speaker is one worth considering.
READ MORE: bit.ly/NQZm2r

Valve80

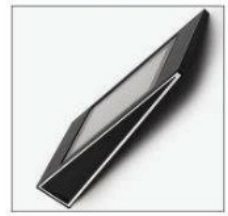
■ Logic3 ■ www.logic3.com ■ £293
RATING ★★★★



This strikingly designed iPod amp is a hybrid valve and transistor system. It uses the warm fuzzy sound of valve amplification as a pre-amp, before the sound signal goes through the main amp. It creates a lovely sound. It also has the valves externally mounted, so there are three glowing glass tubes on the outside.
READ MORE: bit.ly/JrgRkw

B&O Play BeoPlay A3

■ Bang & Olufsen ■ www.beoplay.com ■ £449
RATING ★★★★



A novel iPad speaker and stand that embraces Apple's tablet snugly, the BeoPlay A3 is clearly a quality product from a quality brand, and it's especially suited to those who keep their iPad at home and close to hand. Great for desktops and bedside tables, the A3 offers a rich, detailed sound. The price, however, makes it a serious investment.
READ MORE: bit.ly/N1z2DT

Orbitsound T9

■ Orbitsound ■ www.orbitsound.com ■ £199
RATING ★★★★



Compact one-piece speaker docks are a popular and convenient option, but often suffer from poor bass output. To counteract this, the T9 comes with a separate subwoofer. The speaker dock itself has a similar soundbar, with an iPod dock on the top. It's also equipped with digital audio and video output connectors to hook up to a TV.
READ MORE: bit.ly/OLLhmh

iMT630

■ Altec Lansing ■ www.alteclansing.com ■ £100
RATING ★★★★



The iMT630 makes a fine travel speaker, with a good sound and long-lasting rechargeable battery. There's a retractable dock, and a secondary input source around the back for connecting another audio source. Altec Lansing's RRP of £100 is a bit steep, but you can find it for closer to £85 if you shop around on the web.
READ MORE: bit.ly/PCa89l

Luna5 Encore

■ Edifier ■ www.edifier-international.com ■ £179
RATING ★★★★



The Luna5 is a good mid-range speaker system. It's not massively loud, but the inclusion of a proper sub-woofer gives it an edge over less expensive models, while the £179 price tag ensures that it's a lot more affordable than luxury brands, which tend to cost £250 or more. (We've even seen it on Amazon for a tempting £120.)
READ MORE: bit.ly/x2noYZ

AIRPLAY SPEAKERS

Zeppelin Air

■ Bowers & Wilkins
■ www.bowers-wilkins.co.uk
■ £499
RATING ★★★★★
The iconic Zeppelin speaker has been turning heads for a while; the latest model supports AirPlay, allowing you to wirelessly stream audio from an iOS device. Carrying on from its predecessor, the Air combines solid build quality with high-quality sound – tweaked from the already impressive original model – and great looks.



Logitech UE Air

■ Logitech
■ www.logitech.co.uk
■ £299
RATING ★★★★
The UE Air has a distinctive design, with a flared, curving panel. It's easy to set up and a retractable dock allows you to quickly connect an iPhone or iPod. The price tag is competitive too, and while sound quality isn't up to audiophile standards, most people will find it more than adequate. It's certainly powerful enough to be a main home speaker system.



Beolit 12

■ Bang & Olufsen
■ www.bang-olufsen.com
■ £599
RATING ★★★★
We'd like to see AirPlay battery life longer than four hours, but overall the Beolit 12 is impressive: AirPlay functionality is great, and it's portable. The only doubt concerns the price. There are plenty of quality alternatives at a third of the price. Still, this is the first system we've seen that offers this combination of quality sound, portability and AirPlay support.



iPAD KEYBOARDS

Wireless Solar Keyboard K760
■ Logitech
■ www.logitech.co.uk
■ £69.99
RATING ★★★★

This full-size Bluetooth keyboard looks right at home in front of a Mac, but is also designed to work with iPads and iPhones. The K760 can draw power to recharge its battery even from dim ambient light. The low-profile keys are comfortable to use and offer good feedback.



iMage
■ Accuratus
■ www.ceratech.co.uk
■ £82
RATING ★★★★★

This high-quality faux-leather case ensures that your iPad is safely protected, but the real star of the show is the detachable keyboard – although touch typing will need some practice. Able to operate up to 10m away from your iPad, it reattaches via an embedded magnet. The iMage ships with a USB cable for recharging its lithium-ion battery.



Wireless Keyboard
■ Apple
■ www.apple.com/uk
■ £40
RATING ★★★★★

As a portable option that makes typing more comfortable, Apple's own Bluetooth keyboard complements any iOS device. You would need an additional case or stand for your iPhone or iPad to make typing truly convenient, but this is a lightweight and low-profile keyboard for iPad typists.



STYLUSES

Snugg 2 in 1 Stylus & Pen
■ The Snugg ■ www.thesnugg.com ■ £9.99
RATING ★★★★



For professional artists looking for an advanced tool, this may not be the best choice. But at £9.99 it's perfect for the average touchscreen device owner who wants to use it for drawing, painting, playing games, taking notes and more. With the added ink pen and headphone jack attachment features, you can't go wrong.
READ MORE: bit.ly/JHTxEn

Cosmonaut
■ Studio Neat ■ www.studioneat.com ■ £15
RATING ★★★★★



The Cosmonaut is a novel-looking stylus which does a precise job of mark-making on your iOS device. Indeed, despite concerns over its size and shape, we were impressed. Ideally suited to more creative pastimes such as drawing, the Cosmonaut also proves an excellent all-rounder.
READ MORE: bit.ly/JKx9uR

AluPen
■ Just Mobile ■ www.just-mobile.com ■ £20
RATING ★★★★



Just Mobile has won a significant number of design awards, and the AluPen makes it easy to see why. Nicely weighted, the nib is a soft and spongy type that responds well to the iPad's LED screen. It's also well built and the nib doesn't look like it will drop off. This is an excellent choice for iPad users looking to get creative.
READ MORE: bit.ly/Kplsrn

Inscribe Stylus
■ Incipio ■ www.myincipio.com ■ £15
RATING ★★★★



This is a simple, no-nonsense iPad stylus that has a good feel and build. It also produces consistent results on all Apple handheld devices in a range of activities including note taking, game playing, drawing and painting. While not the most striking of iOS styluses, the Inscribe is a good all-rounder, for both work and play options.
READ MORE: bit.ly/KoSWq9

iPHONE 4/4S CASES

Pro Slider
■ InCase ■ www.goincase.com ■ £29.95
RATING ★★★★



InCase's Pro Slider for the iPhone 4/4S is a hard shell case. The bottom slides off for docking. If you're looking for a simple but sharp-looking case that offers decent protection without too much bulk, then the Pro Slider case is one to consider, particularly if you have a dock accessory that makes easy case removal a priority.
READ MORE: bit.ly/LoGmDs

FlexiGel
■ Cygnett ■ uk.cygnett.com ■ £14.95
RATING ★★★★★



The FlexiGel strikes a great balance between protection and thickness. It's a simple gel case: soft (yet firm) and easy to put on and take off. It ships with an adhesive-film screen protector, a swipe card for removing bubbles and a microfibre cloth, providing a good measure of protection.
READ MORE: bit.ly/M5KqhC

Barely There
■ Case-Mate ■ www.case-mate.co.uk ■ £14
RATING ★★★★



The Barely There is a super-thin shell that fits like a glove, covering the back and sides of your iPhone 4 or 4S and protecting it from scratches and bumps. With more than 60 colours, designs and textures to choose from, as well as a do-it-yourself custom version, you're sure to find a rendition to fit your tastes.
READ MORE: bit.ly/zhu7E8

TANK
■ Case-Mate ■ www.case-mate.co.uk ■ £33
RATING ★★★★



Looking for an iPhone case that will stand up to some serious punishment? The Tank's hard, polycarbonate shell protects from impacts and drops, and there's a neat corrugated screen protector that can be retracted into a slot in the back when you're using the touchscreen. You're compromising on looks and slimness, though.
READ MORE: bit.ly/AjA5vH

iPAD STANDS

HoverBar

■ Twelve South ■ www.twelvesouth.com ■ £75

RATING ★★★★★



The HoverBar is a malleable metal arm with a clamp at one end and an iPad mount at the other. Attaching the clamp to an object, such as an iMac, lets you position your device at any angle or height you find convenient. A ball joint behind the iPad enhances flexibility, allowing the user to rotate and tilt the device with ease.

READ MORE: bit.ly/z8GU8l

Luxa2 H6

■ LUXA2 ■ www.gearzap.com ■ £39.95

RATING ★★★★★



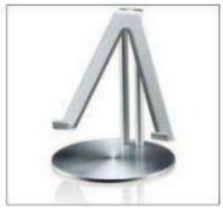
The multi-legged H6 is unlike any other iPad stand we've seen. Those spidery legs can be adjusted separately so they can grip tablets of different sizes. It's not the cheapest stand on the market, but the flexible design means it's suitable for both work and play, at home and away.

READ MORE: bit.ly/KT5Urq

UpStand

■ Just Mobile ■ www.just-mobile.com ■ £41

RATING ★★★★



The UpStand is a real looker, with a solid circular base and arrow-shaped supporting bracket, all made of gleaming aluminium that complements the iPad beautifully. The stand is a bit on bulky side, but the aluminium design is surprisingly lightweight, so you can easily move it from room to room. Smart and convenient.

READ MORE: bit.ly/KDRZst

Chef Stand and Stylus

■ Belkin ■ www.belkin.com/uk ■ £25 (from Amazon)

RATING ★★★★



We like to use our iPad in the kitchen with recipe apps, videos and graphics, and Belkin's clever Chef Stand is ideal for that. It allows you to prop the iPad upright, or lay it almost flat, and has a non-slip rubber base to keep it steady on your work surface. The chunky stylus lets you tap the screen without getting sticky fingermarks on it.

READ MORE: bit.ly/KprBnJ

BATTERIES AND CHARGERS

Air Voltage Wireless iPad Set

■ Maxell ■ uk.maxell.eu/en/ ■ £129.99

RATING ★★★★



Maxell's set comprises a plastic iPad 2 case and matching stand/charger, which is plugged into the mains. It's only the transfer of power from stand to iPad that's wireless: your charger needs to be tethered to mains power, and the iPad must maintain physical contact with the stand. It's still a convenient charging setup, though.

READ MORE: bit.ly/OLcmpU

Solar 15

■ Crosskase ■ crosskase.com ■ £139.99

RATING ★★★★



The Solar 15 is a sturdy, well-made rucksack with plenty of pockets and a solar panel on the front. The slim battery can charge an iPhone 4S twice over. Filling the battery requires at least eight hours of solid sunshine; the reality is likely to be more. As a backup power supply, the Solar 15 is a nice option.

READ MORE: bit.ly/OL5JUm

Juice Pack Powerstation Pro

■ Mophie ■ www.mophie.com ■ £104.99

RATING ★★★★★



We like the Juice Pack Powerstation Pro. It holds a large amount of charge (it can charge an iPhone two and a half times over), feels sturdy and offers protection from the wet and wild elements. Perfect for those outdoor camping trips or visits to festivals; indeed anywhere where you're likely to be away from a power source.

READ MORE: bit.ly/LL4HqJ

Air Voltage Qi Chargers

■ Maxell ■ uk.maxell.eu/en/ ■ Mat £60; sleeve £37

RATING ★★★★



These two products combine to form a convenient method of charging your iPhone. The sleeve is like a conventional hard case, covering the sides and back but leaving the screen, volume buttons and camera free. Place the sleeved iPhone on the mat (which needs to be plugged in), and the phone starts to charge.

READ MORE: bit.ly/H1jNTB

iPAD CASES

Taylor Smart Stand Sleeve for iPad

■ Case Addict

■ www.caseaddict.com

■ £49.99

RATING ★★★★

Quirky but clever, this smart, robust and partially stiffened sleeve is also a stand. A stitched triangular groove on each side lets you fold it into two neat tetrahedral structures: a shallow one for typing and a nearer-vertical one for viewing video. Magnets are sewn into the mouth of the sleeve so that it clamps shut when the iPad is inside and holds itself together well when folded into a stand.



Flexi-Fold Smart Case

■ GGMM

■ www.thepadzone.co.uk

■ £35

RATING ★★★★

This is a great case and stand for the iPad 2 or 3. It's a tight fit, but that's not such a bad thing, and it looks smart and feels sturdy. The folding stand idea (the covering flap can be bent into various supportive shapes) is more than a gimmick: it's an effective concept that adds to the user experience. At £35 it's not super-cheap, but Apple's polyurethane Smart Covers set you back just as much without offering any protection for the iPad's back.



Bergame Portfolio Case

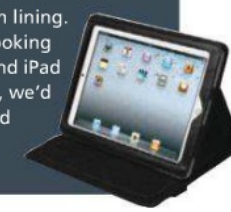
■ Port Designs

■ www.portdesigns.com

■ $40

RATING ★★★★

The Bergame is a slim case: it really doesn't add much thickness to your iPad considering the amount of protection and functionality it provides. It's also an adjustable stand for the iPad 2, with a Velcro slot for the tablet and a microfibre anti-scratch lining. If you're looking for all-round iPad protection, we'd recommend checking this out.



BOARD GAMES

Fingle
■ Game Oven
■ itun.es/ibj2MH
■ £1.49
RATING ★★★
Imagine a game of Twister, the board game. Now picture it with two people's hands and fingers interlocking intimately on an iPad screen. Finally, imagine the iPad letting out a sign of ecstasy whenever you complete a level. That's Fingle in a nutshell.



Catan HD
■ United Soft Media
■ itun.es/iLh5tS
■ £2.99 (plus £2.99 for each expansion)
RATING ★★★★
The iPad version of this superb tile-based island conquest game looks fantastic, and the fact that the iPad handles banking and point-counting duties is a bonus. Fun and addictive – but the computer players' brutal competitiveness can occasionally be frustrating.



Ticket To Ride
■ Days Of Wonder
■ itun.es/iLV8Qc
■ £4.99
RATING ★★★★★
Adaptations of board games tend to work beautifully on the iPad, and Ticket to Ride is no exception. It manages to bring all the fun of building your own railroad lines without the little plastic bags full of playing pieces.



GAMES

Autumn Dynasty
■ BulkyPix ■ itun.es/i6jt9By ■ £4.99
RATING ★★★★



With its distinctive, calligraphic art style and gesture controls, Autumn Dynasty is a thoughtful, distinctive and pleasingly non-boring take on historical strategy gaming, entirely built with touchscreen controls in mind. It needs a little fine-tuning in the interface and difficulty departments, but it's fresh and attractive.
READ MORE: bit.ly/RQeLkO

Tiny Wings HD
■ Andreas Illiger ■ itun.es/ibF6mT ■ £1.99
RATING ★★★★★



Wonderful, charming, inventive, simple, beautiful, fun: pick an adjective. We were happy enough to see Tiny Wings' clever side-scrolling action transferred to the iPad's larger screen, but the new head-to-head two-player mode is a bonus. Currently the defining iPad game.
READ MORE: bit.ly/MDWQYR

Sky Gamblers: Air Supremacy
■ Namco Bandai ■ itun.es/isz397 ■ £2.99
RATING ★★★★



It's probably too hardcore for the more casual iOS gamer, but Sky Gamblers is an impressive action flight sim that even manages to rival its console equivalents in some departments. Multiplayer mode is fast and unforgiving, and the graphics are a treat, harnessing the new iPad's power but also coaxing great things out of older models.
READ MORE: bit.ly/NcjsAd

Incoboto
■ Fluttermind ■ itun.es/isM9VL ■ £2.49
RATING ★★★★



Effortlessly charming, carefully escalating, and somehow making perfect sense of the concept of being followed around by a friendly sun, Incoboto is a finely-crafted adventure that pulls off the trick of being simultaneously cheerful and sinister. Only the occasional obtuse puzzle lets it down.
READ MORE: bit.ly/LvuLpv

Bastion
■ Supergiant Games ■ itun.es/i6Dq9nx ■ £2.99
RATING ★★★★★



Beautiful both visually and atmospherically, Bastion is fortunately not so bogged down in its own grandeur that it forgets to be a reliably compulsive stream of action too. The controls do feel on the awkward side, but not to the extent that this stops being a magnetic, highly memorable few hours of storytelling and monster-bashing.
READ MORE: bit.ly/QyBbVj

Fieldrunners 2
■ Subatomic Studios ■ itun.es/i6jt9qB ■ Free
RATING ★★★★★



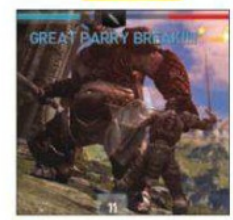
Subatomic has taken an addictive little iPhone game and sharpened everything up. It's about as polished, well-crafted and enjoyable to play as the humble tower defence genre gets. The graphics are vastly improved, and there's a wide arsenal of weapons to choose from.
READ MORE: bit.ly/NPVzTj

New Star Soccer
■ New Star Games ■ itun.es/isz74V ■ Free
RATING ★★★★★



While others try to cram full games console experiences on to a touchscreen interface, New Star has simplified things. And it's a testament to the gameplay that even football haters will get something out of this. Indeed, New Star Soccer offers the perfect mobile footballing experience and hits the top corner.
READ MORE: bit.ly/PT3lhY

Infinity Blade II
■ Chair ■ itun.es/iLP9qV ■ £4.99
RATING ★★★★★



Infinity Blade II keeps and expands almost everything that was great about its predecessor, and fixes the few things that didn't work. The graphics are even better, you're forced to approach the fights more imaginatively, and there's much more content. If anything can force the world to take iOS gaming seriously, this is it.
READ MORE: bit.ly/vO1SvJ

10000000

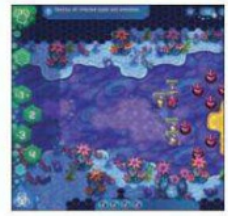
■ EightyEight Games ■ itun.es/i6Dq3mb ■ £1.49
RATING ★★★★



An effortless blend of match-3 puzzles like Bejewelled and dungeon-running roleplaying games like Diablo, this is two of the most notoriously time-devouring genres combined into one frightening whole. Fortunately, it's also brilliant. As for the title? Well, that's the score you need to finish the game. It'll take a while.
READ MORE: bit.ly/SoW4qz

Amoebattle

■ Grab Games ■ itun.es/i6DL66r ■ £2.99
RATING ★★★★



Microcosmic warfare plots a course for cuteness in Amoebattle's pastel world of Pokémon-like critters, but don't be fooled. This colourful real-time strategy offering boasts a brisk challenge to match its enticing visuals. Aided by a robot advisor, you battle to cleanse each map of rogue amoeba. An entertaining romp.
READ MORE: bit.ly/Qyw47O

Walking Dead: The Game

■ Telltale Games ■ itun.es/i6jN5Sj ■ £2.99
RATING ★★★★



If you're after high-speed zombie-shooting, you'll need to look elsewhere. But Walking Dead offers affecting storytelling and painful decision-making in spades. Choices have deep-seated consequences in terms of how characters treat you and who survives.
READ MORE: bit.ly/NIXuG0

Beat Sneak Bandit

■ Simogo ■ itun.es/i6jv249 ■ £1.99
RATING ★★★★



Beat Sneak Bandit puts the emphasis on music and rhythm. Everything in the house follows a set rhythmic pattern, from trapdoors to security guards. Tap to the beat on the screen and the cat burglar will step forward. It's harder than it sounds, but Beat Sneak Bandit will charm everyone.
READ MORE: bit.ly/Ozplh7

Ski Safari

■ Defiant Development ■ itun.es/ibJ62Q ■ 69p
RATING ★★★★★



An avalanche is coming, and it's up to you to keep skiing mountain dweller Sven one step ahead of icy doom, while navigating hills, dips and other alpine obstacles. Tapping makes Sven jump, while tapping and holding causes him to flip – you get bonuses for completing backflips. There are even mini-challenges to take you to another level.
READ MORE: bit.ly/MleWng

Gets To The Exit

■ Rolling Media ■ itun.es/ibJ8nZ ■ 69p
RATING ★★★★★



Reminiscent of the 1990s classic Lemmings, Gets To The Exit is a puzzle game in which the player's aim is to guide the Tribesmen safely to the exit. You have to move platforms up or down to avoid game-over-inducing obstacles such as spikes and lava; there are bouncy platforms and other features that make this extremely fun, if a bit frustrating.
READ MORE: bit.ly/Ovwp9c

W.E.L.D.E.R.

■ Ayopa Games ■ itun.es/iS655L ■ 69p
RATING ★★★★★



At its core, W.E.L.D.E.R. is a word search: you create words of four or more letters by swapping nearby letters. But there are numerous twists as you progress, a great-looking interface and some lovely ambient sounds. It's addictive and a pleasure for the senses. If you have an interest in word games, make sure you own this.
READ MORE: bit.ly/H0JbvH

Uplink

■ Introversion Software ■ itun.es/isz3S2 ■ £2.99
RATING ★★★★



Now here's an old game that's entirely suited to the iPad. 2001 hacking sim Uplink has managed to retain its tension and strange drama over a decade later. Rarely showing more than a blue map populated by nodes, which can be hacked into with simple precise actions, Uplink offers far more than even the spangliest of graphics could.
READ MORE: bit.ly/Nt6fCm

SHOOTING GAMES

Max Payne Mobile

■ Rockstar Games
■ itun.es/iP47zf
■ £1.99
RATING ★★★★★
As fans will know, Max Payne is a third-person shooter. This mobile version is one of the best games to hit the App Store: it remains true to the original, has all of its addictive qualities and has a cheat mode allowing quick progression to later levels. There's also an optional auto-aim feature.



9mm

■ Gameloft
■ bit.ly/phqchE
■ £4.99
RATING ★★★★★
This hugely entertaining third-person shooter is very much a case of 'shoot first, ask questions once the bad guys are dead'. The graphics are superb and the dialogue is hilarious – it's a must-buy for Grand Theft Auto fans. 9mm offers optional gyroscope-based controls, and the controls are convenient.



Asteroids: Gunner

■ Atari
■ itun.es/iLv32K
■ Free
RATING ★★★★
This is a 21st-century revisit of the popular arcade classic. You need to blow up clusters of asteroids: the left onscreen joypad controls movement, while the right pad fires. The original premise is given a facelift with elegant graphics and responsive controls.



MUSIC SERVICES

iTunes Match

■ Apple
■ www.apple.com/uk
■ £21.99 per year
RATING ★★★★

Apple's service lets you access all your iTunes music from all your devices for a yearly subscription. If you've got more than one computer and several iOS devices, iTunes Match makes accessing music far easier. You could delete your iTunes library on your main PC and then reconstitute it with high-quality downloads from the cloud.



Spotify

■ Spotify
■ bit.ly/cbS2ze
■ Free app; subscription £10 per month
RATING ★★★★★

Spotify allows users to listen to 13 million tracks on their iPhone via the £10-per-month Spotify Premium service. Tracks can be stored locally, which means you can listen to them even when you haven't got a web connection or you don't want to waste 3G data. Music via Spotify tends to sound better than tracks you've ripped into iTunes.



TuneIn Radio Pro

■ Synsion Radio Technologies
■ itun.es/iL73zh
■ 69p; free subscription
RATING ★★★★

This offering is lightly different. Rather than playing specific tracks or artists, TuneIn Radio Pro streams – and lets you record – radio stations from around the world. We wish it was easier to browse for shows and stations, and bitrates are variable. But at just 69p for the ad-free app, this service is a great addition to your iTunes collection.



APPS

TumbleBee

■ Tomaz Nedeljko ■ itun.es/i6jt3Qh ■ £1.99
RATING ★★★★



Given its popularity, it's baffling that Tumblr doesn't have an official iPad app. TumbleBee is a decent substitute, allowing you to post photos, quotes, links, video, audio – whatever takes your fancy – from within the app. You can even shoot video on your iPad and share it at once. It's the best Tumblr app we've come across.
READ MORE: bit.ly/NjoXB2

Popsicolor

■ Tinrocket ■ itun.es/ibD3xP ■ 69p
RATING ★★★★



Popsicolor offers a way for iOS users to create watercolour-style paintings with minimal fuss: simply select a photo from your library and wait for the app to make a mess. Despite a few shortcomings – the tools and colour palette are both limited – it offers attractive, painterly results way above the standard set by most other art apps.
READ MORE: bit.ly/LobhQn

Bento 4 for iPad

■ FileMaker ■ itun.es/ibf9Gq ■ £6.99
RATING ★★★★



FileMaker should be congratulated for Bento 4 for iPad. The look and feel are both intuitive and pleasing to the eye, and there are 40 new themes and 25 templates. A major update which, despite some quirks, should make life easier for anyone needing to pull data together.
READ MORE: bit.ly/MshhO6

MotionX Sleep

■ Fullpower ■ itun.es/isz3st ■ 69p
RATING ★★★★



Place your iPhone on the bed, and the motion sensors will monitor your movements. When you wake, detailed analytics show periods of light, moderate and heavy sleep, and offer a 'sleep efficiency' number to help you work out what's causing sleep problems. A genuinely helpful app.
READ MORE: bit.ly/Mvh3DM

Flipboard

■ Flipboard ■ itun.es/iLN2p4 ■ Free
RATING ★★★★★



Flipboard displays content from all sorts of sources, from your Facebook and Twitter feeds to major publications such as *The New York Times* and *Rolling Stone*. It's now available on the iPhone as well as the iPad. They've also added Cover Stories, which assembles the best stories across all your sources.
READ MORE: bit.ly/wAovjJ

iTunes U

■ Apple ■ itun.es/iS25zw ■ Free
RATING ★★★★★



The iTunes U app has a clear purpose for pupils and teachers, students and lecturers. It has the potential to change classrooms everywhere, and it has appeal for people outside education too. With free access to course materials, audio, video and presentations, it's nothing less than a gift to iOS users.
READ MORE: bit.ly/wKQ22g

GarageBand

■ Apple ■ itun.es/iPL6n7 ■ Free
RATING ★★★★★



We found it hard to imagine how GarageBand could work on any iOS device except the iPad, and while it works best on the larger device, the designers have generally done a good job of transferring it to the iPhone. There are also enough improvements to ensure that this remains a must-have app for musicians everywhere.
READ MORE: bit.ly/vva1UV

iBooks 2

■ Apple ■ bit.ly/dDwoLW ■ Free
RATING ★★★★



iBooks 2 does a superb job of getting out of your way as you read normal eBooks. And when it works, the app's handling of optimised eBooks is undeniably impressive. This experience is marred, however, by optimised eBooks' tendency to crash, massive file sizes and lack of iPhone support. Hopefully this will improve.
READ MORE: bit.ly/ydz5xq

iPlayer

■ BBC ■ itun.es/i6DS3gN ■ Free
RATING ★★★★★



With version 2.0, the iPlayer app just became much more useful – especially for anybody going on a long-haul flight, who'll cherish the ability to download TV shows on to their iPad for viewing offline. Probably the only thing that's missing concerns radio; fortunately the BBC just released iPlayer Radio, reviewed on page 36.
READ MORE: bit.ly/Tm6dmC

iTranslate

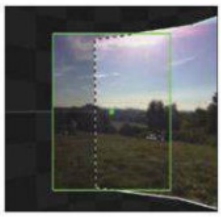
■ Sonico ■ itun.es/i6DS3Ny ■ 69p
RATING ★★★★★



iTranslate Voice makes light work of communicating in a range of languages by translating on the fly. A simple interface shows two button-shaped microphones, each with the flag of the relevant country. Tap to speak, then tap again when you stop. It's all very simple, mostly accurate and greatly impressive for just 69p.
READ MORE: bit.ly/OjxwtU

Photosynth

■ Microsoft ■ itun.es/i6DB5j7 ■ £1.99
RATING ★★★★



Photosynth lets you take panoramic photos. It uses a rectangle with a centred dot to indicate the area being captured. The app paints edges using dotted lines to show what's missing, and as you move the camera around, it tries to capture new portions automatically.
READ MORE: bit.ly/P3r0KM

OmniFocus

■ Omni Group ■ itun.es/i6jt88c ■ £13.99
RATING ★★★★★



If your red badge count of unfinished tasks never seems to go down, try this superb to-do list app. Although it takes some effort to learn, it's well worth it. Eventually, it changes you. You stop being tied to just getting that wretched list of tasks down, and instead look to see what you can do now.
READ MORE: bit.ly/Mri2q9

SoundHound ∞

■ Wow ■ itun.es/i6jt3yK ■ £4.99
RATING ★★★★



SoundHound ∞ lets you identify ambient music. Tap the big orange button and the app will return its best guess after a few seconds. You can also type or speak a song title, artist name or lyric snippet, or even hum or sing. Once it's identified a song, SoundHound inundates you with information, such as the title, artist name and iTunes links.
READ MORE: bit.ly/OesuDM

Avid Studio

■ Avid ■ itun.es/iS25ZX ■ £2.99
RATING ★★★★



Avid Studio may not be as elegant as iMovie for iOS, but it's incredibly simple to use, if a little light on features – it's missing voice-over tools and visual effects. If you own Avid for your desktop, you'll be able to transfer all your work from the iPad to it, which may well be a clincher when deciding which application to invest in.
READ MORE: bit.ly/HBSh0X

iPhoto

■ Apple ■ itun.es/iPL6n6 ■ £2.99
RATING ★★★★★



The beauty of iPhoto for iOS is that, at its core, it's iPhoto by different means – easy to learn and use, while retaining the desktop application's best attributes. It doesn't match the Mac program feature-for-feature, but its overall functionality is so similar that users of the desktop version will instantly recognise the app's conventions.
READ MORE: bit.ly/ze4niv

Find My Friends

■ Apple ■ itun.es/iLV47r ■ Free
RATING ★★★★



On the face of it, Find My Friends is brilliant. Launch it and invite your friends or family to install it and sign up for the service using their Apple IDs. If they 'follow' you, they'll know where you are and vice versa. There are privacy controls so you can 'hide' from your followers, and parental controls to lock down settings so your kids can't hide from you.
READ MORE: bit.ly/KVGdX7

iWORK FOR iPAD

Numbers

■ Apple
■ bit.ly/deRvtC
■ £6.99
RATING ★★★
Numbers is Apple's own spreadsheet app. An issue with the previous version was that it generated its own spreadsheet format, rather than .xls or .xlsx. Version 1.5 fixes this, and adds the ability to create folders, but it still has some way to go before it can replicate the full desktop spreadsheet experience. For simple spreadsheet creation or basic editing on the go, however, it's not bad for the price.



Pages

■ Apple
■ bit.ly/cm7LVY
■ £6.99
RATING ★★★★
Apple's word-processing app makes the easiest transition to the iPad, and after its 1.1 update it works a lot better in landscape mode. Pages works best with the keyboard dock, as the onscreen keyboard is functional but a chore to use. It's also now available in a fairly complete form on iPhone and iPod touch, and works surprisingly well in those formats.



Keynote

■ Apple
■ bit.ly/c5flzf
■ £6.99
RATING ★★★
Keynote is Apple's answer to PowerPoint. From a slide-design perspective, the iPad's touchscreen is perfect, and the app flashes up guides and rulers for maximum polish on your designs. However, there are problems with importing presentations from the Mac.





Craig Grannell is a loudmouth and iOS gaming nut. Gleefully ignore him at twitter.com/craiggrannell

THE GUESSING GAME

Analysts don't deserve the title, says Craig Grannell. Nor the privilege of not being catapulted out of the window

Every time Apple releases a new product – and, for that matter, at almost every waking moment in between – it's customary to hear from a group that you might know as analysts. But I think that term's too kind for the vast majority of these cursemongers. I prefer to call them guessers.

TAKE A WILD FLYING GUESS

The pattern guessers choose to follow is relentlessly methodical. Before Apple releases a new product, they must make outlandish claims about how the company will be doomed unless it adds features competing products have, or possibly plan to have at some unknown date in the future, regardless of their utility and effectiveness. After a new product is released, guessers must make outlandish claims about how Apple is now doomed, because it didn't add features competing products have or possibly plan to have at some unknown date in the future, regardless of the utility and effectiveness of such features. And at all the points in between… well, you get the idea.

The snag is that guessers are by their very nature guessing. Sometimes, one might argue that they are making educated guesses, but on the basis of their accuracy and effectiveness, this education presumably happened at the Big School Of Tech Numpties.

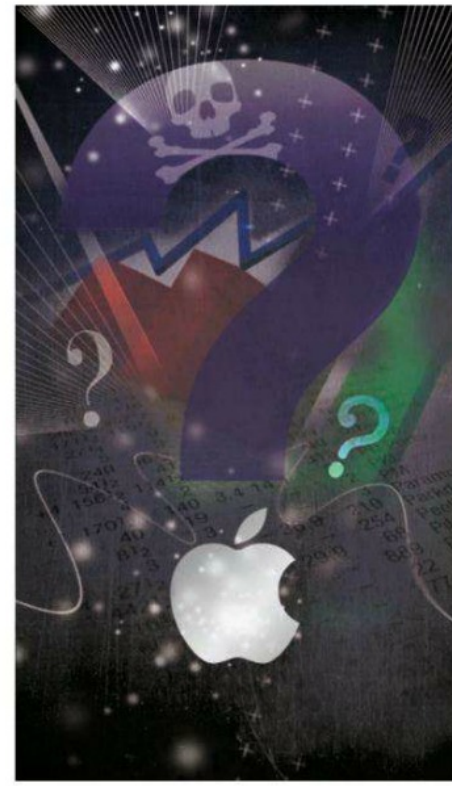
> "On the basis of their accuracy and effectiveness, this education presumably happened at the Big School Of Tech Numpties"

WE'RE ALL DOOMED! DOOMED!

This is really the only explanation of why guessers continue to bang on the same old drums, despite Apple bucking industry trends and disobediently not doing what the guessers command, such as reducing prices while also increasing profits, making devices that are both smaller and larger, and doing precisely what the competition is doing while staying unique and true to itself.

It's almost like guessers are providing self-contradictory arguments, and yet suggesting Apple will fail unless it follows their demands to the letter.

Yet the press laps up the guessers' collective dribble. "Guesser says Apple doomed in five seconds" reads a headline I just made up, if only because it's more accurate and less irritating than actual headlines technology websites run based on the words of these strange creatures.



LIFTING THE CURSE

I'm not sure how we should deal with the curse of the guessers; but the curse needs eradicating, given that it regularly impacts on Apple's share price and the expectations of people worldwide who don't realise that guessers guess.

Brief internet research (ie typing 'how to get rid of a curse' into Google) suggests employing the services of a witch, a psychic or even the church. But I'm thinking a better option would be to place every guesser's chair on top of a massive computer-controlled catapult. They would guess in the knowledge that more than one inaccurate guess per day would catapult them out of the window. And possibly into the jaws of a giant dragon conjured by a witch big on cosmic irony. This might sound cruel, but it's the only way.

Okay, it's not the only way. But it would be a fun way, and at least if we can ignore the sound of screaming guessers being hurled through the air, we'll be able to concentrate on the shiny new toys Apple has to offer, without halfwits constantly yelling that it should be "more like Android".

RELATED LINKS

APPLE 'WILL SELL 10 MILLION iPHONE 5s IN ONE WEEK'
bit.ly/PBQUaB

APPLE 'TOO LATE TO THE 7IN TABLET MARKET'
bit.ly/R9xbw3

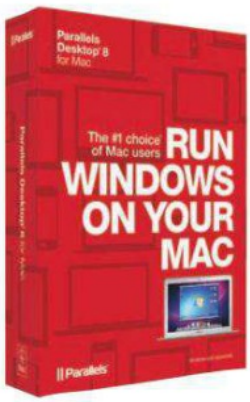
iPHONE 5 'WILL BE CALLED iPHONE 6'
bit.ly/T0flE0

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