



2011 ILOUNGE

# IPOD IPHONE IPAD BUYERS' GUIDE

KEY TIPS FOR BUYING APPLE DEVICES

THE WORLD'S BEST ACCESSORIES

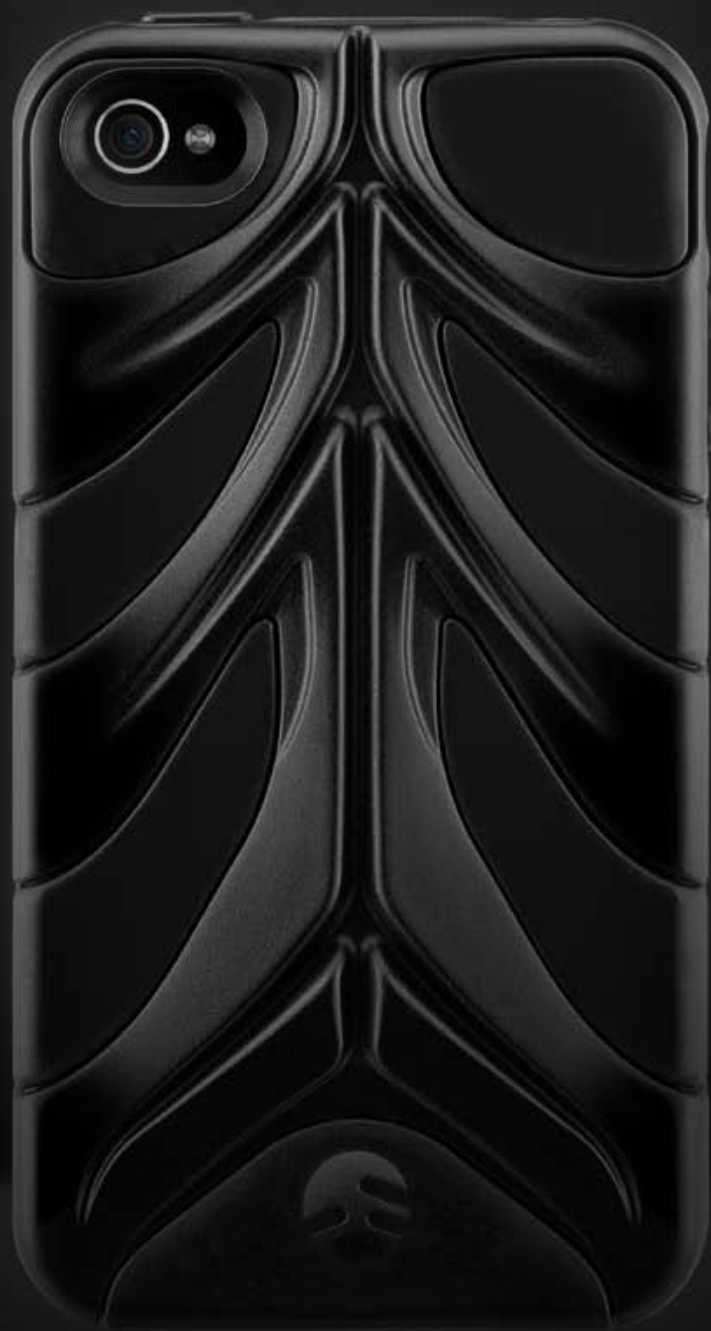
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APPLE HISTORY + JARGON EXPLAINED

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# 2011

# IPOD / IPHONE / IPAD BUYERS' GUIDE INTRODUCTION

After 2009's lackluster launches, 2010 was a truly great year for new Apple products. The iPad was shown in January and released in April, followed by the iPhone 4 debut in June, and September's new iPods and Apple TV. On the surface, the 2010-2011 lineup has something for everyone, but each new product turns out to be missing something major customers had expected - a gap or two for next year's version to fill. That leaves you with a choice: skip today's iPads, iPhones, and iPods to wait for next year's models, or buy in anyway and enjoy the many innovations Apple did deliver.



iLounge's 2011 Buyers' Guide is here to help. Having tested thousands of Apple-related products this year, we've assembled the definitive guide to the pros and cons of each new iPod, iPhone, and iPad, then selected the very best accessories and software that you can use with them. We're not here to sell you anything; we just point to the best options, all selected strictly on merit - without influence from Apple or other companies. Inside, you'll find everything from free applications and \$5 games to \$15 cases, \$50 stands, \$300 speakers, and \$1300 earphones, so whether you're looking for a big gift or a small treat for yourself, you'll discover many great picks here. Enjoy!

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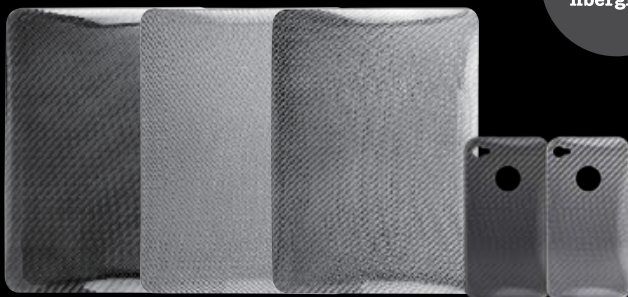


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When we started iLounge in 2001 as iPodlounge, even the brand-new iPod was far from a sure thing: expensive, with limited capacity but a whole lot of style, it was the first of 23 iterations on a theme that evolved from “digital music player” to become “digital media player” and then “pocket computer.” Now with 278 million units sold, the iPod still leads its younger iPhone and iPad brothers in raw numbers, but all three product lines are surging, thanks in increasing part to great software and multi-touch interfaces. We now spend as much time testing applications and games as accessories, which used to consume 95% of our attention, and App Store sales suggest that you’re probably spending a lot of time using software, too.

Our 2011 Buyers' Guide has grown with Apple's product lineup, building on the iPad section debuted in our fifth Book earlier this year, and taking fresh looks at the ever-expanding collections of apps, games, and add-ons to find gems worthy of your dollars. We also offer hard but honest commentary on the latest iPods, which have changed considerably, while including objective insights on whether to buy into Apple's current iPhone and iPad models. Both are likely to see major changes in the year to come, so should you buy now or later? We answer that question inside, along with many more.

Each year we publish this Guide, we reaffirm our commitment to offer you the same straightforward, well-informed advice we'd share with our closest friends, and our track record is unblemished: in these pages, iLounge readers will always find the tools to make the best-informed buying decisions possible. We appreciate your continued readership and wish you the very happiest of days ahead.



Dennis Lloyd  
Publisher

A long-time fan of Apple products, **Dennis Lloyd** was a graphic designer and DJ before creating iLounge, which remains the world's most popular resource dedicated to iPods, iPhones, iPads, and iTunes. Dennis is happily married with a dog, cat, and a two-year-old daughter. He lives in Irvine, CA.



Jeremy Horwitz  
Editor-in-Chief

**Jeremy Horwitz** has written about gadgets, games, and the companies that make them for everyone from GamePro to The New York Times, as well as practicing law. Since 2004, Jeremy has edited iLounge, its Books, and Buyers' Guides. He lives with his wife, two daughters, one dog, and a museum of iPods, iPhones, iPads, and add-ons in East Amherst, NY.



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**Jesse David Hollington** is iLounge's Applications Editor and a Forum Administrator, responsible for our Ask iLounge columns, all things iTunes, and the Apple TV. He lives with his wife, daughter, and cats in Toronto, Canada.



**Bob Levens** is iLounge's Chief Forum Administrator. Married and based outside of Cambridge, U.K., he enjoys music, travel, photography, computers and historic aviation, including “Warbird” airshows with WWII piston-engine aircraft.

**Contributing Editors, Forum Administrators, and Moderators:** Jerrod Hofferth, Albert Tan, Audrey McGirt, Robert, and Tom Levens.





**Clockwise from left:** Apple's first public FaceTime video call shows designer Jony Ive and CEO Steve Jobs using iPhone 4s in June. The square-faced iPod nano and iPod shuffle came soon thereafter with a new iPod touch and Apple TV.



## **iPhone 4 + iPod touch Go HD While iPod nano Fades**

**iPod shuffle, Apple TV refreshed as iPhone 3GS hits \$99, iPod classic becomes a zombie**

Apple's theme across 2009 was "small, iterative improvements," but 2010 was a year of big changes for the iPod and iPhone families. June's release of **iPhone 4** (16GB/\$199, 32GB/\$299) saw a high-definition Retina Display and twin video cameras squeezed inside a smaller, more elegant glass and metal case, selling out internationally despite controversy over its cellular reception and fragility. An even thinner fourth-generation **iPod touch** (8GB/\$229, 32GB/\$299, 64GB/\$399) arrived in September with the same features - diminished a little - and a more durable shell,

while a fourth-gen **iPod shuffle** (2GB/\$49) went back to its prior button controls and pricing, and a completely new sixth-gen **iPod nano** (8GB/\$149, 16GB/\$179) dumped video, games, and some of its prior body colors for a smaller audio- and photo-only touchscreen design. Apple completely ignored the 160GB \$249 **iPod classic**, leaving it alive without mentioning or updating it in any way, but radically changed the **Apple TV** by dropping its price to \$99, reducing its size by 75%, and removing the 160GB hard disk in favor of a pure streaming and video rental model.

## **iTunes 10 Goes Gray (And Blue) As Apple Opens Music-Buying Social Network Ping**

Every year, iTunes grows a little bit larger and more capable, leading some to praise its power and others to hate its bloat. With a new and less colorful interface, largely stripped to gray with blue accents and a new blue icon, iTunes 10 includes lots of small tweaks under the hood, focusing on the addition

of Ping, a "social network" to let iTunes Store users create profiles and recommend music to friends and contacts. Generally viewed as a misfire, Ping lets you follow selected artists and bands, but provides very little opportunity for actual socializing and discussion. Updates will be needed, and surely forthcoming to improve its limited appeal.



Far more information on these and other topics of interest to iPod, iPhone, and iPad users is available from the iLounge.com news archives at [ilounge.com/index.php/news/archives/](http://ilounge.com/index.php/news/archives/).

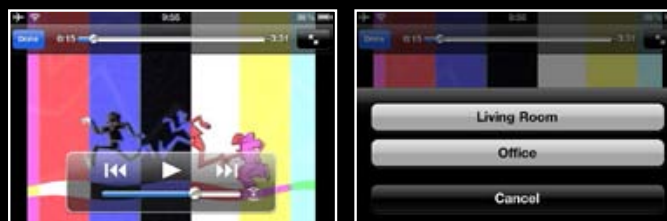


## iOS 4.2: November for iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch

iPad gains folders, multitasking, and unified e-mail; all devices can print, stream media

Less than a week after the iPad's release, Apple unveiled iOS 4.0, adding app-organizing folders, a limited multitasking system, and unified e-mail inboxes to certain iPhones and iPod touches. Early iPad adopters howled that they wanted in, too, but Apple promised an update only in "fall," later scheduling it - and a simultaneous iPod and iPhone update - for some time in November. For iPad users, iOS 4.2 will bring all the improvements mentioned above plus Game Center, a matchmaking, achievement tracking, and leaderboard service for App Store games,

as well as Ping, the iTunes Store's music-focused social network. New to all of the devices will be support for AirPlay, the renamed and bolstered version of the music streaming feature once called iTunes, now capable of letting the devices play their videos, photos, and music wirelessly through new Apple TVs - and upcoming third-party accessories. Additionally, the new AirPrint feature will enable iPads, iPhones, and iPod touches to send web pages, e-mails, photos, and some app content directly to printers without requiring any drivers to be installed. We can't wait.







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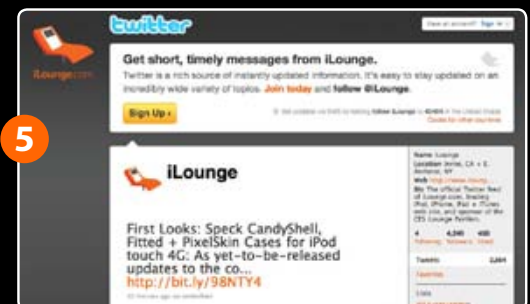


### 1. Now Read This (And Past Guides) in iBooks

Apple's free iBooks application for the iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch now includes PDF support, enabling users of all of these devices to easily read all of our past Buyers' Guides and Books - plus the one you're seeing now. Simply drag the desktop icon for any PDF into iTunes, and drop it onto your device in the left pane; it will appear in iBooks under PDFs.

### 2. Get A Weekly Briefing Through E-mail

As the name suggests, iLounge Weekly provides a quick digest of what's been going on in the iPod, iPhone, and iPad worlds over the last seven days, complete with direct links to news stories, major articles, tutorials, First Looks, and full reviews of accessories and apps. Sign up for it on the left column of our main page, below the iLounge Store.



### 3-5. Three News Feeds: RSS, Facebook + Twitter

Our recently improved RSS feed at feeds.feedburner.com/ilounge offers up-to-the-minute updates on all things iPod, iPhone, iPad, and iTunes, and is now mirrored in real time by our enhanced Facebook page (facebook.com/iloungecom) and Twitter feed (twitter.com/ilounge), so you can stay informed no matter how you read your news.



## A place for everything that matters.

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# Tune into HDTV on your Mac



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EyeTV app brings  
live TV to the iPad

Available on the  
App Store



SRP  
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# SNEAK PEEKS

Revolutionary new accessories will be few and far between in early 2011, but developers are offering early looks at some compelling evolutionary ones for the iPad, iPhone, and iPod families. Here's what's planned to arrive in stores for the holidays, or at the beginning of the new year.

## Scosche iClops

CAMERAS

**\$100**  
3-11

It's designed and ready to go in March, but it doesn't have a final name, and Scosche is willing to reward you for helping. The award-winning accessory developer has created a video and still camera for iPads and iPod touches, complete with a 60mm-equivalent auto-focus lens, 2.1-Megapixel still sensor, and 640x480 video capabilities - plus a microphone for older iPods. Capable of streaming and encoding video at a decent 15 frames per second in MPEG-4 format, the camera has been designed with a metal enclosure and a pivoting plastic base, capable of tilting upwards or downwards to improve its filming angle relative to your face - something Apple's current FaceTime cameras can't do without shifting the angle of the whole device. The company's engineers are calling it iClops, a fitting but perhaps overly funny name.

Though FaceTime support is a long shot, Scosche will offer a photo/video recording application along with the accessory, and intends to partner with video calling app developers to enable the camera to communicate with iOS and non-iOS devices; an SDK is available for developers. To get the community involved in this launch, Scosche is holding a renaming contest through December 15, 2010, and will pick one winner to win a 16GB iPad, plus a Scosche iPad accessory bundle. Send your entry to Scosche's Twitter account at [twitter.com/scosche](https://twitter.com/scosche) or its Facebook page at [facebook.com/scosche](https://facebook.com/scosche).







**\$450**  
11-10

VIDEO

## Optoma Neo-i Pico Projector

Having tested a handful of miniature video projectors that happened to work with iPods but weren't specifically designed for them, we were immediately intrigued by Optoma's new Neo-i Pico Projector - a higher-end model that combines a true iPod and iPhone dock with twin 8-Watt speakers and, significantly, a 50-lumen video projector. Many of the pico projectors out there have less than half the brightness of this model, resulting in a video viewing experience that's washed out if any light intrudes into a room; this one actually has the ability to be seen on a wall in dim but not pitch-black lighting conditions. Neo-i's resolution is a DVD-ready 854x480, right-sized for 16:9 widescreen videos, and the picture can be scaled up to a 120-inch diagonal size. iPod and iPhone users aren't the only ones who can use the projector: an iPad accessory kit will be sold for \$40, while Apple TV fans will be glad to see the unit's HDMI port, which can alternately be used with video game consoles, Blu-Ray Disc players and other devices - even though Neo-i's display resolution falls short of true HD quality. It has composite and VGA inputs, plus an auxiliary audio output port for those who want to connect bigger speakers. As might be guessed from its size and atypical light and sound output capabilities, Neo-i is designed to be run off of wall power, though Optoma notes that it was designed with high-efficiency components that are capable of working with an optional battery pack, price not yet known.



## Scosche **freedomMIC** For iOS

MICS

**\$90**  
3-11

Here's one we didn't see coming: Scosche's new freedomMIC For iOS takes an interestingly different direction from the now numerous microphone accessories we've tried for iPods, iPhones, and iPads, pitched as a high-quality wireless microphone for use during video recording. Read that part again: the 4-hour battery-powered, noise-cancelling condenser microphone inside the clip-on microphone can be worn at a distance of 100 feet away from the iPhone or iPod touch while it records videos using a free, downloadable app. The goal is to help movie makers capture what's being said by on-camera subjects at greater distances, with superior clarity than Apple's pinhole-sized mics would allow. We'd expect this to be of particular value to reporters who want to record and send content from the field.



## Digipower **JumpStart Flip**

POWER

**\$50**  
11-10

On occasion, the right features, pricing, and design combine to make a new take on a familiar product seem better than what's come before, and Digipower's JumpStart Flip is one of them - an attractive, roughly iPhone-sized battery pack with a flip-open video stand and powerful 3300mAh rechargeable cell built in. Bundled with cables for the iPod/iPhone and Micro/Mini-USB devices, Flip folds up into a sharp-looking black and silver package for easy storage, with a power button on its hinge and four charge indicators on its black plastic base. The promise is 10 hours of additional 3G talk time, but iPhone 4s could easily see 50% more than that depending on how they're replenished using this battery pack.





**\$90**  
11-10

IN-CAR

## Belkin TuneBase FM Live

As long as there are cars without auxiliary audio inputs or wireless audio streaming capabilities, there will be a demand for FM radio-overwhelming transmitters, and most likely, Belkin will offer solutions. TuneBase FM Live is its latest car mounting, charging, and FM transmitting design, combining a rotating iPhone cradle with a flexible mounting pipe and a new charging and broadcasting bulb; a white on black screen is in its center, with ClearScan, manual tuning, memory, and Pro audio buttons on its front bezel. Like Belkin's earlier Live-series FM transmitter, TuneBase FM Live will be able to use a ClearScan Live application for station tuning if you don't want to play with the built-in screen or buttons.



**\$70**  
11-10

CASES

## Belkin Grip 360° + Stand

It's no secret that the iPad's lack of an integrated stand has made nightstand and desktop viewing - and case use - somewhat of a challenge depending on one's personal aesthetic and stability preferences, so Grip 360° + Stand offers a best-of-both-worlds approach: in addition to a highly protective, form-fitting case, it has an adjustable stand that switches to separate video viewing, picture frame, and typing angles for your convenience. It also converts into a handheld carrying system with a grip on the back for times when you're looking for added portable support rather than just a way to set the iPad down. We're genuinely excited to see how this one performs.



# enjoy the landscape

## kickBACK™ P1

### Hybrid Case with Kickstand for iPad

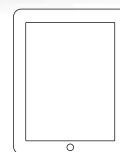
- Polycarbonate and rubber hybrid case provides unmatched protection and shock resistance
- Hinged kickstand for convenient widescreen and vertical viewing as well as low-angle typing
- Integrated traction nubs provide grip on flat surfaces



White/Grey  
IPDK



Black/Black  
IPDKBK



iPad  
16GB 32GB 64GB



**\$30**  
12-10

STANDS

## Digipower Coffee Clutch

We've seen iPad-ready purses and stands, as well as Griffin's Standle combination of a stand and handle, but Digipower's Coffee Clutch goes a step further: designed to appeal to women, it adds a purse-like handle and arm strap to a flip-out rear stand - all at a lower price than Standle, and frankly most dedicated iPad stands. The stand is angled for video, photo, and web use.



**\$110**  
3-11

IN CAR

## Scosche solVUE

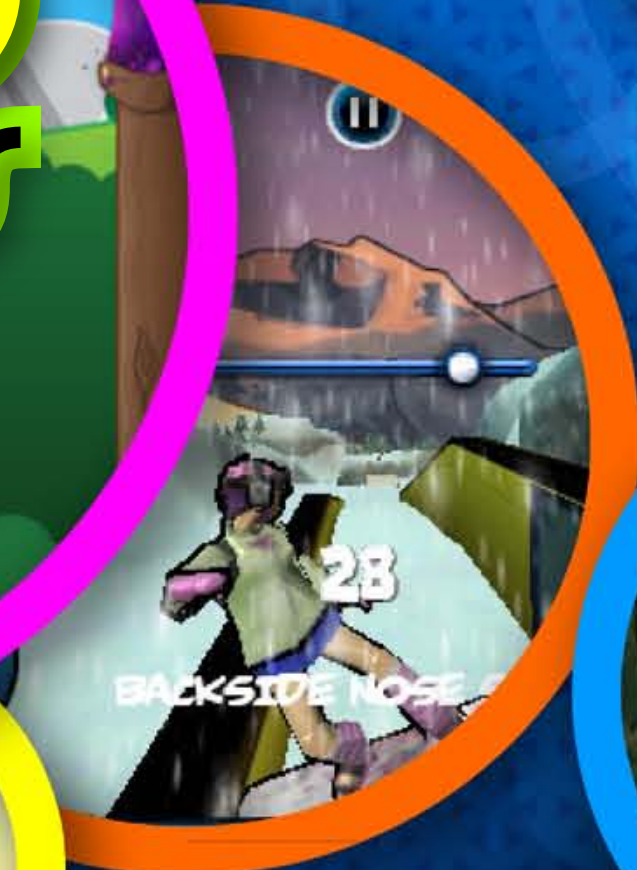
When we selected 2009's iPhone Speakerphone of the Year, Scosche's solChat II was the clear winner, thanks to its voice dialing for even pre-iPhone 3GS models, great sound quality, and built-in solar rechargeable battery. Scosche will soon release a proper sequel called solVUE, adding two key features: first is the namesake viewing screen, a flip-out white-on-black display with the ability to let you know battery, pairing, and cellular strength status at a glance, as well as the names or telephone numbers of your incoming callers. Like solChat II, it syncs up with your iPhone's contacts database and stores up to 1,000 names in its own memory. Second is an innovative power management feature that Scosche refers to as "shake to wake," which automatically turns the unit on when vehicle motion is detected - a really smart way to re-initiate contact without the need for a button press, and to avoid draining its integrated battery when it's not in use. As with the prior model, it preserves a solar panel for charging, and an echo-cancelling DSP/mic combination; windshield/dashboard mounts, a wired car charger, and USB cable are also included.







# TOP 100 GAMES 2010







Though 2010 will likely be remembered as the year of the iPad, it was also the year when iOS gaming truly came into its own as a rival to dedicated Nintendo and Sony handhelds - enough to overtake both in monthly sales, but more importantly, in innovative and affordable new software. There are now tens of thousands of games amongst the 300,000 titles in the App Store, increasingly including major titles from big publishers, and brilliant little games from noteworthy indie developers. Some sell for as little as \$1, and few sell for more than \$15, unlike competing \$20-\$40 cartridge and disc games for the Nintendo DS and PSP. Good cheap games are the exception on other platforms, and the norm on Apple's, thanks to App Store distribution.

Here, you'll find the 100 best games we selected from everything we tested in the last year, without repeating picks from 2009 or 2010's Buyers' Guides. The prices are almost all below \$10 per title, though they may change - generally downwards - over time. In each case, they're currently worth their asking prices, and thus, your attention.



# ACTION + ARCADE GAMES

After three years, iOS devices still don't have joypads. But that hasn't stopped developers from successfully porting action games – in fact, some are incredible examples of what can be done with touchscreen controls. These are the best around.



## Street Fighter IV

Capcom's initial release of this vaunted one-on-one fighting game was short, but updates boosted it to 12 characters. Tons of pre-rendered animation and good music make up for the iPhone/iPod touch low-res art and missing 3-D from the PS3/Xbox 360 game. Even if the controls aren't quite arcade-worthy, no other portable device has a version of this game, a major App Store coup. **\$10**



## Hero of Sparta II, Prince of Persia: Warrior Within, and Spider Man: Total Mayhem

Using variations on the same virtual joystick and context-switching button control scheme, three Gameloft action games have given App Store gamers a dose of PSP-quality action, including Retina Display artwork. **Prince of Persia: Warrior Within (\$5)** is a hugely ambitious port of the console and handheld sequel to the famous swashbuckling and time-shifting platformer, while **Hero of Sparta II (\$5)** is a Gameloft original, based heavily upon the mythology and gameplay of Sony's popular God of War series, with all the artwork and characters replaced. It's stronger in the brawling department than Prince of Persia, but weaker in platforming elements. Finally, there's **Spider Man: Total Mayhem (\$7)**, which has the most cartoony artwork of the bunch, adding web-slinging, Spider Sense attacks, wall climbing mazes, and more complex fighting to the same formulas found in the other two. One bummer: all three games are iPhone/iPod touch releases, with separately sold "HD" versions designed to look and play nearly identically on the iPad. Our advice would be to pass on the HD games until Gameloft and other companies release universal titles with iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch artwork all in a single download, charging a fair price for one game rather than two.

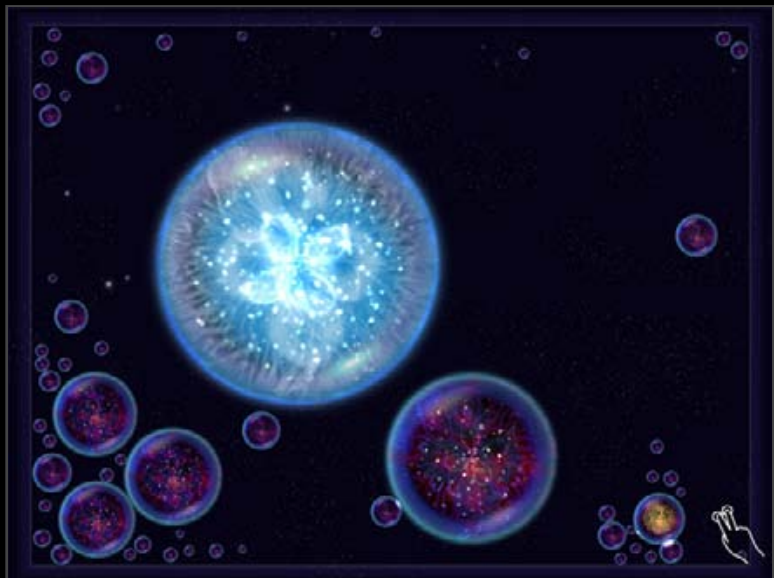
## Plunderland, Sonic the Hedgehog 4: Episode 1, and Kings of Leon Revenge

Following in the footsteps of last year's Rolando games, the side-scrolling pirate ship game **Plunderland (\$3)** from JohnnyTwoShoes is even more impressive than it looks in screenshots, blending high-res 2-D Retina Display art with smooth animation. It puts you in control of a vessel with a motley crew and cannons, using its sense of humor as a major selling point. Sega's low-res **Sonic 4 (\$10)** includes familiar themes from old Sonic the Hedgehog games - in addition to its clean pre-rendered and polygonal art, it offers good control over the speedy blue title character, plus a handful of levels. **Kings of Leon Revenge (\$5)** is a good continuation of Tapulous's rhythm tapping games, with music from the popular band, and nicely themed backdrops. None of the three has iPad art.



### Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars/HD

Released in separate, same-priced versions for the iPad and iPhone/iPod touch, Chinatown Wars is a tweaked translation of the same-named PSP and Nintendo DS Grand Theft Auto title, focusing primarily on overhead shooting, fighting, and driving sequences. Cartoony but compelling intermissions, solid music, and tons of voice acting are used as offsets for the lack of close-up 3-D perspective action; it controls well. **\$10**



### Osmos for iPad and Osmos for iPhone

Beautiful like a jellyfish tank set to the ambient music from a hip lounge, Hemisphere Games' Osmos challenges you to grow in size to overwhelm or absorb organic blobs in pool- and space-like settings. As soon as you think you understand the action, Osmos introduces the ability to control the speed of time, and the challenge of outpacing new rivals. Brilliant and unique, it's sold in separate versions. **\$3/\$2**



# BOARD + TABLE GAMES

High-resolution screens do a lot for old-fashioned games, enabling levels of detail that make even forgotten classics seem gorgeous. Most of the titles here include either iPad or Retina Display support; some have both, one uses cutscenes to great effect.



## Pinball HD + Slayer Pinball

Try as they might, no one could beat or even match the outstanding Retina Display- and iPad-ready 3-D pinball machines released by Gameprom this year: **Pinball HD (\$1)** bundles three prior, individually impressive games together for a low price, and **Slayer Pinball Rocks HD (\$3)** features the devilish art and music of the heavy metal band. Each title is amazing.



## Battleship, Scrabble, Shanghai Mahjong, and Solitaire Classics

We were never expecting to see Electronic Arts take the classic board game **Battleship (\$1)** to new heights, but the introduction of a mode with special weapons sped up its pace, and full-screen 3-D cinematics (shown, inset) unexpectedly pump up what would otherwise be an exercise in staring at a board. By comparison, EA's **Scrabble for iPad (\$10)** impresses in a different way, letting iPhones and iPod touches serve as wireless tile racks for the larger game board on the iPad screen, or just letting iPadders take turns. MobileAge scored major points with us this year by releasing the iPad version of the classic tile-matching game **Shanghai Mahjong (\$1)** as a free upgrade to the excellent iPod and iPhone version, giving it higher-resolution art. Finally, **Solitaire Classics HD (\$2)** presents klondike card games with cool Retina Display details.



# I got game. Anytime, anywhere.

I can race, conquer, or destroy while I'm waiting in line for a triple espresso. But hey, this ain't no sim, it's the real world. White-knuckled action can get slippery. One drop and it's game over. I protect my new iPod® touch using a Speck **CandyShell® Grip**. It's super-protective: hard on the outside, soft on the inside, with finger grips on the back and thumb-placement indents on the rim to help make my game wicked good.



\* Plus, Speck makes awesome cases for iPhone®, iPad®, MacBook®, and more. And full-featured, stylish bags customized to carry it all in!

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# CASUAL + MINI GAMES

Some of the App Store's most popular games are so small and simple that Nintendo and Sony would never have let them appear on their devices. But this simplicity enabled Apple's developers to focus on strong themes, and rivals now beg for ports.

## Tilt to Live and Tilt to Live HD

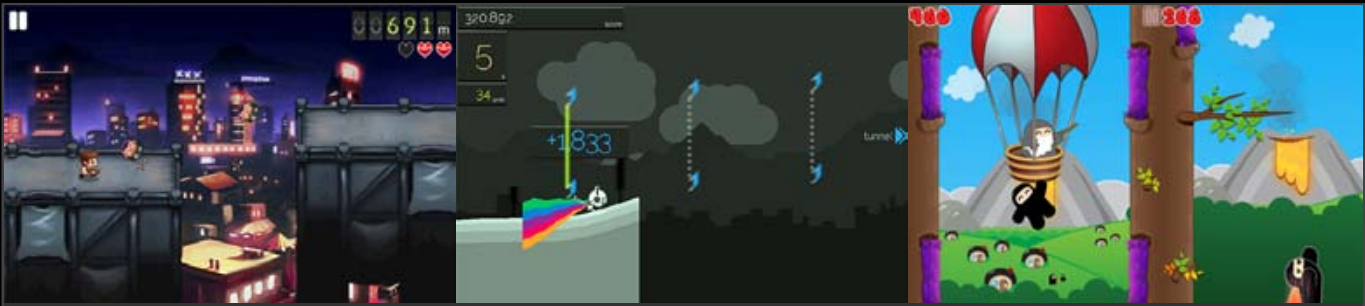
Hold your iPhone, iPod touch, or iPad in a flat position, then move it so that a tiny arrow darts around the screen, avoiding dangerous and increasingly numerous red dots that move to the infectious sounds of a Latin big band. That's Tilt to Live, a dead simple concept that bursts with energy thanks to beautiful unlockable power-ups, four novel game modes, and memorable sound effects. The iPad version offers a larger play area and slight level tweaks at a higher price. **\$3/\$4**



## A.D.D. Addictive Dumb Distractions, Angry Birds + Let's Create! Pottery HD

Nintendo's Wario Ware series of off-kilter mini-games rapidly became one of its most popular new franchises, so IUGO Mobile took it as inspiration for **A.D.D. - Addictive Dumb Distractions (\$3)**, a collection of fast-paced twitch action sequences unified largely by a comical lack of good taste. Salt a slug, help a cannibal boil an explorer, pop pimples; it's all juvenile, and almost entirely funny. By comparison, Rovio's **Angry Birds (\$1)** uses comedy in better taste, quickly setting up a revenge theme in which the titular angry birds are slingshotted to destroy fortresses filled with evil pigs, physics puzzles that are infinitely more enjoyable using touch-swipe controls than the old-fashioned alternative of crank-like changes to height and power meters. Then there's Infinite Dreams' **Let's Create! Pottery HD (\$5)**, a surprisingly subtle and smart effort to transform the craft of pottery making into a video game, using the iPad's screen to simulate the sculpting process, firing through a kiln, and pattern-based painting. Where Pottery HD scores "wow" points is in its structure, which walks you through the process of creating pottery on commission or for auction, rewarding you with funds to improve your products as you satisfy customers. Beautiful 3-D graphics and soft backgrounds transform what otherwise could have been a dull simulation into a compelling and original experience. Of the three games, it's the only one with an iPad version we'd recommend.





## Monster Dash, Solipskier, and Ninjatown: Trees Of Doom!

The App Store has become known for one-trick ponies - “do it over and over again” dollar games where higher scores are the primary motivation to keep going. But some of these titles have actually been pretty impressive, including these three: **Monster Dash (\$1)** from Halfbrick Studios builds on the success of last year’s Canabalt, placing you in control of an endlessly running character who merely jumps and shoots at your command, trying to keep from falling off platforms, running into obstacles, or getting killed by the various monsters that populate randomized stages. Mikengreg’s **Solipskier (\$3)** is an ever-moving skiing adventure, where your goal is to create the ground underneath a cartoony skier who needs to keep moving fast and occasionally jump in order to stay alive. Constant jumping is the goal in Venan’s **Ninjatown: Trees of Doom (\$2)**, which sees your adorable Wee Ninja vault from wall to wall in an effort to go higher than before.

## Pocket Chef

Taito had a hit with Cooking Mama, so the ever-enterprising gang at Gameloft built upon the idea for Pocket Chef, a somewhat less cartoony version with 3-D polygonal food items, dishware, and kitchen supplies. Pocket Chef walks you through the preparation of 25 different dishes, rewarding you for successful cutting, mixing, and baking by providing you with the actual recipes in a mini-cookbook when you’re done. It’s only for the iPhone and iPod, and low-res. **\$5**



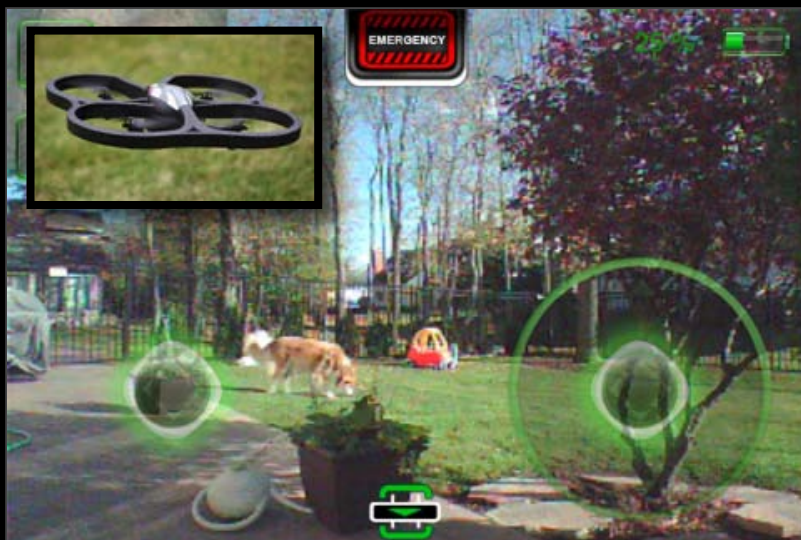
## Fruit Ninja

Though Monster Dash is newer, Fruit Ninja is the game that made Halfbrick Studios famous - and the target of plenty of “food warrior” clones, including the predictable “Veggie Samurai.” The idea is simple: your finger becomes a slashing tool, cutting 3-D pieces of fruit that are tossed into the air in clusters; you score points by chopping as many in half at once as possible, and die if you hit a bomb that’s mixed in with the produce as a trap. On the iPhone and iPod, it’s cheap and cute; the \$5 iPad version is overpriced. **\$1**



# FLYING + RACING GAMES

We were convinced that the App Store would get its first truly awesome flying game in 2010, and it happened, though not in the way we expected - an amazing new toy transformed the genre. Racing titles improved visually but stumbled in gameplay.



## AR.Drone With Free Flight

There's never been anything like Parrot's AR.Drone on an iPhone or iPod touch before - a demonstration of just how incredibly powerful these pocket devices can be for gaming and accessories at the same time. Coupled with the Free Flight application, a free download, the AR.Drone quadcopter connects to these devices over Wi-Fi, simultaneously accepting commands and sending back live video from one of two cameras: one in front, one underneath. It flies at a maximum height of nearly 20 feet in the air, working from a distance of 150 feet away. With Free Flight, the real world becomes a video game as you make the radio-controlled vehicle fly indoors or outdoors, using a foam guard inside to protect its plastic rotors and whatever's around them. While AR.Drone's best days may be ahead of it, thanks to a software package for developers interested in creating additional games to play with the device, Free Flight is an incredibly fun demonstration of how prior-generation toys can be enhanced with modern camera and control technologies. Our only regret, and not a trivial one, is the limited battery life offered by the expensive kit: 15-30 minutes of continuous flying time might be fine by typical RC aircraft standards, but tossing a spare \$10 battery into the box wouldn't have hurt. **\$300**



## Ace Combat Xi + Glyder 2

Though we'd love to be able to tell you that there were a dozen great flying games this year, the others were less ambitious than Free Flight. Namco's **Ace Combat Xi: Skies of IncurSION (\$5)** is the iPhone and iPod touch version of the long-running series of PlayStation military flying games, with stunningly near-photorealistic graphics and strong audio, but very few missions - Namco wants you to buy airplanes and levels separately. Glu's gentle, dreamy **Glyder 2 (\$2)** started out as an iPhone/iPod game before becoming iPad-only, placing you in control of a winged girl who glides through fantasy-themed islands, collecting items while soft music plays.





## GT Racing, Need For Speed Shift, Raging Thunder 2, and Reckless Racing

Clearly inspired by Sony's famous series of Gran Turismo driving games, Gameloft's **GT Racing: Motor Academy** (\$5) stars a collection of 100 licensed cars from 25 manufacturers, each controlled either with amateur and fully automatic settings or precision-demanding manual ones for greater realism. It was recently updated with Retina Display graphics but is still sold in separate iPhone and iPad versions. Electronic Arts' **Need for Speed Shift** (\$7), a drifting-focused, arcadey racer, was even more impressive when it launched but fell behind GT due to its continued use of low-resolution artwork; an overly pricey iPad version looks better. Polarbit's **Raging Thunder 2** (\$5) dispenses with realism in the name of faster action and power-ups, like the old arcade game San Francisco Rush, while EA's **Reckless Racing** (\$3) is a hillbilly-themed overhead driving game with some of the most incredibly detailed artwork we've yet seen on the Retina Display-aided iPhone and iPod touch, making you feel like you're controlling a miniature car or truck in gritty country settings.



## Aqua Moto Racing 2 and Snow Moto Racing

It's no insult to say that the single most appealing feature of Resolution Interactive's **Aqua Moto Racing 2** (\$1) and **Snow Moto Racing** (\$2) is their price tags - for a bill or two, each of these games is so impressive that it's easy to look past their flaws. Aqua Moto Racing 2 does an even better job than its predecessor of mimicking Nintendo's Wave Race series of 3-D jetski games, with improved water, vehicles, backgrounds, and controls - plus Retina Display and iPad support. Snow Moto Racing offers a simple but nice enough take on the similarly niche sport of snowmobile racing, lacking for high-res art but including solid snow effects and smooth controls.



## Low Grav Racer 2

The App Store still doesn't have a futuristic racing game nearly as good as Sony's famous Wipeout series, but Cobra Mobile's Low Grav Racer 2 comes the closest so far. Six ships with vapor trails race on 18 different tracks, many with impressive (though low-resolution) scenery, and all at smooth frame rates. As with Wipeout, weapons are available to blow other ships away, but take a back seat to steering your way to wins. **\$3**





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# PUZZLE GAMES - ACTION

Small but memorable puzzle games are quite possibly the App Store's strongest selling point today; whether you're looking for slow brain teasers or titles requiring quick wits, there are plenty of options. Here are the best ones that reward nimble fingers.



## Cut the Rope and Bejeweled 2 + Blitz

Chillingo's **Cut the Rope** (\$1/\$2) is simple and smart: its numerous levels feature the same vertical challenge - strategically slice the ropes so that a ball of candy winds up in the monster's mouth - but quickly ramp up in creativity and pressure. Popcap's older match-three game **Bejeweled 2** (\$1) became "+ Blitz" with a free update this year, adding Facebook Connect support, then a coin and power-up system that led to some of the most intense online rivalries we've seen. It's amazingly addictive, and fast.



## Blaze: Fire Puzzle, Cogs HD and Zen Bound 2 Universal

Three puzzle games made especially good use of gritty 3-D this year. Secret Exit's **Zen Bound 2 Universal** (\$3) started as an iPad sequel to a rope-binding game, adding new levels, more great music, and the paint ball, which eases the task of fully covering the objects you spin in 3-D. It's now universal for iPhones and iPods, and has Retina Display support. Handmark's high-res **Blaze: Fire Puzzle** (\$2) has its own set of objects to rotate, challenging you to light all of the candles by touching flames to unlit wicks, and Chillingo's iPad **Cogs HD** (\$5) offers an increasingly impressive and difficult collection of steampunk-themed machines that need to be turned around while their gears and pipes are connected.





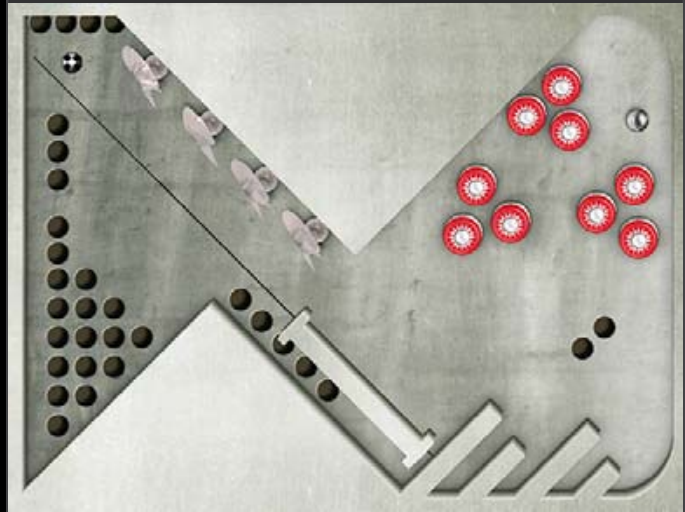
## Jet Car Stunts

It looks like Sega's classic Virtua Racing, but it's actually a physics-based puzzler: can you get the rocket-powered car to the end of 36 tracks without falling? Developer True Axis lets you steer, brake, and reverse, but the key to success is your jet engine, which lets you vault over jumps that will scare you into many mistakes along the way. Released after our last Buyers' Guide at the tail end of 2009, Jet Car Stunts received a Retina Display upgrade this year that made it look even cooler. While there's not yet an iPad-specific version, it runs well at lower resolution on the larger-screened device. **\$2**



## Labyrinth 2 HD

In an App Store populated by \$1-\$2 games, Illusion Labs' Labyrinth 2 HD fully justifies its higher asking price: it's a ball-in-the-maze game with "hundreds of thousands" of levels, many user-created, and all available as free downloads. What started as a charming take on old-fashioned wooden puzzles evolved into a collection of devious single-screen maps filled with lasers, fans, bumpers, and switches, some downright brilliant. It's all tied together with a stylish interface that's one of the best on the iPad. The iPhone version is sadly separate. **\$7**



## Cubetrix 3D, Sparkle The Game, and Super Monkey Ball 2

A few other action-puzzlers also caught our attention in 2010, starting with Mobicle's **Cubetrix 3D (\$1)**, a surprisingly compelling little game that initially challenges you to match like colors by rotating and moving cubes on a flat grid. It ramps up with stages that add numbered pieces and bombs to the mix, becoming smarter as it continues. Next is **Sparkle the Game (\$3)**, the latest clone of the match-three-balls games Puzzloop and Zuma, only with the sort of impressive special effects, music, and control tweaks we've come to expect from developer 10tons. Rounding out the group is Sega's **Super Monkey Ball 2 (\$6)**, a sequel to the early iPhone ball-in-maze game, upgraded with 115 new levels, better graphics, and more monkey-themed mini-games - improved after initial release.

# PUZZLE GAMES - THINKING

Some of the best iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad puzzle games require more strategy than action, and these are the best of that genre: most of these titles are so compelling that you'll enjoy just looking at them while scratching your head.



## Tumbledrop

Low-res but charmingly illustrated, Starfruit Games' iPhone and iPod touch title Tumbledrop offers more than 80 individual puzzles in which the pink star needs to be brought safely to the ground from a precarious perch in the sky. The trick is to move pieces under the star while considering the physics of each tumble they'll create, and do so with the fewest possible moves. We played from start to finish, smiling all the way. **\$2**

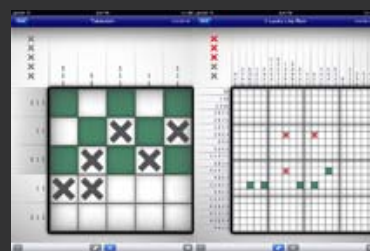
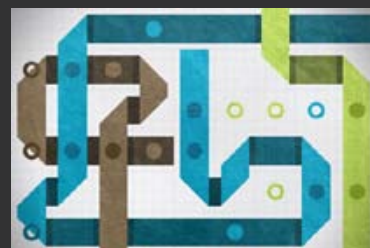
## No, Human

Awesome concepts are few and far between, so we appreciated Vol-2's theme for the universal iOS game No, Human: you're the universe and don't want to make space exploration easy, so you use meteors to smash space stations and astronauts, swiping to hit your targets with as few moves as a stage permits. Each of the now 80 levels is a single screen with polygonal objects that range from asteroids to magnets and repulsors, forcing you to use physics to win. The treat: 3-D views of your victories. **\$2**



## Brain Challenge 2, Colorbind + Pixellogic

We were impressed with Gameloft's original Brain Challenge, derived from Nintendo's popular DS game Brain Age, and **Brain Challenge 2: Think Again! (\$1)** features 38 new and fun mind-stimulating games, with reworked graphics that are far less clinical than the original title's. Nonverbal's **Colorbind (\$2)** is comparatively straightforward: you need to figure out where to roll and turn multiple colored strips of paper to fill empty dots on the screen in a specific pattern. Joel Riley's **Pixellogic (\$3/\$5)** is the best take we've seen on the Japanese "illustration logic" or picross game, using numbers to build images on ever-bigger grids - like crossword puzzles for math fans.





## Jeopardy! + Wheel of Fortune

Two classic American game shows received iPhone versions and subsequent updates from developer Sony Pictures Television: **Jeopardy! Platinum** and **Wheel of Fortune Platinum** each sell for **\$1**, and replicate the experience of playing the trivia and word guessing games at home. Both games merited inclusion on our top 100, but they've also been beset by bugs, only recently addressed.



## Peggle Nights

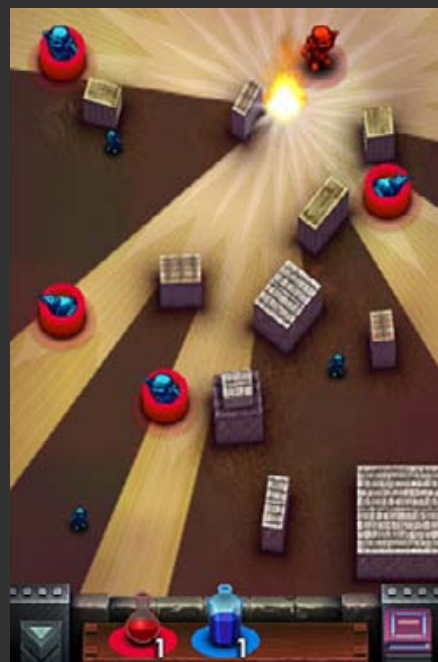
Hidden as an inexpensive in-app purchase within last year's iPhone/iPod touch title Peggle, the sequel Peggle Nights adds 60 more levels of the awesome peg-eliminating action and artwork at a fraction of the cost of the PC/Mac original - a must-see. **\$3**



## Mayan Puzzle and Helsing's Fire

Two of our very favorite puzzlers this year used special effects to glam up what otherwise might have been simple games. Mind Crew's amazing **\$1 Mayan Puzzle** was the real shocker, with 36 individually illustrated levels that could easily have been used in 36 separate App Store games, some astoundingly beautiful. Haunting music kept us playing for days as we worked to solve the main stages, which require you to eliminate all of the on-screen blocks with strategic matches - a challenge that becomes nigh-impossible in the latter third of the game. By contrast, Clickgamer's

**Helsing's Fire (\$1)** is an easier game with one especially cool visual effect that's used on every level: you control a glowing torch and one colored potion at a time, positioning the torch in a place that will strip the same-colored shields or skins off of enemies, without accidentally touching enemies of a different color. Obstacles block some of the rays of light, letting you eliminate all of the red shields and enemies before moving on to blue or green ones. It's smart and fun, now in HD.



# RETRO GAMES

Graphics and gameplay harkening back to 1980's classics can be a sign of developer devotion or incredible laziness. Our top picks of the year are the real deal: titles that have 8-bit style plus the modern attention to detail we'd expect from 2010 games.



## The Incident

With confidence that most game creators lack, Big Bucket Software presents the plot of this universal retro-styled platformer as a tease: something is hurling dangerous objects from the sky, and the higher you climb on them as they fall, the better your chance at discovering the cause. While tilting to dodge and jumping your character is the core of the game, the stars are the objects, which offer hundreds of funny ways to die. **\$2**



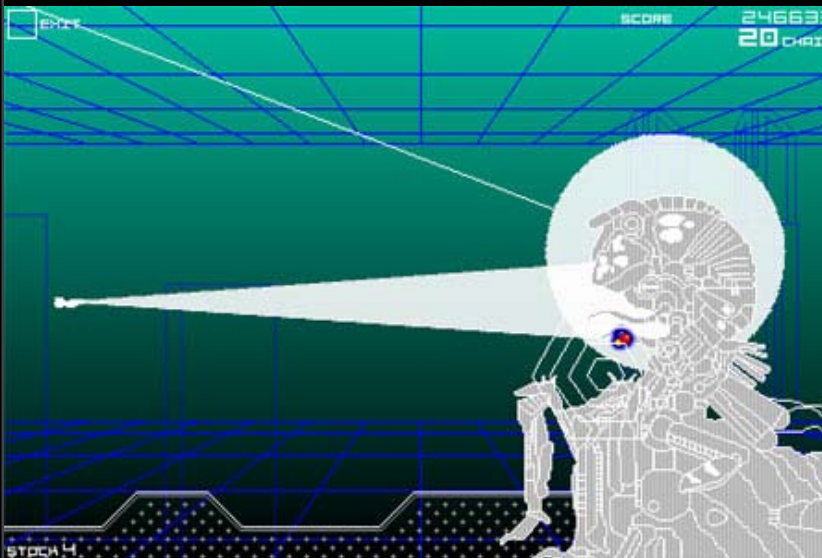
## Dark Void Zero, Super Mega Worm, and Super QuickHook

Designing new games to look like old ones comes with a challenge, namely elevating the experience beyond what was left behind decades ago. Capcom took a different tack, jokingly presenting the iPhone/iPod title **Dark Void Zero (\$3)** as the forgotten 8-bit predecessor to a new console game. The art and platforming gameplay are straight out of the company's early Nintendo playbook, featuring a lone hero who switches weapons, runs, jumps, and uses a rocketpack, though the virtual controls aren't quite NES D-pad precise. Deceased Pixel's **Super Mega Worm (\$1)** isn't as varied but graphically would have been impossible on early consoles, featuring a growing segmented worm anti-hero that flies through land and air, showering blood and explosive particles as it eats living things and destroys everything else. Simple controls belie complex flying and eating challenges. In sheer ambition, Rocketcat Games' **Super QuickHook (\$3)** bests all of the games above, using simple backgrounds to provide a great set of running and swinging challenges, inspired only in concept by Capcom's classic Bionic Commando. Using grappling hooks to survive chasms and grab coins is fun, but powering up your character is the real thrill, expanding the gameplay and demanding exploration.



## LightBike 2, Pac-Man Championship Edition, and Space Invaders Infinity Gene Version 3.0

Though it's surely a "mini-game," Pankaku's **LightBike 2 (FREE)** is also the spiritual sequel to one of the most memorable games of the 1980's - Tron's light cycle section. While its controls aren't ideal, it offers the most compelling 3-D rendition yet of the film's wall-creating bikes, and free online play. Namco's **Pac-Man Championship Edition (\$3)** is cut down from the hit Xbox sequel to the classic arcade game, adding new mazes, glowing visual effects, and trippy music, plus \$4 worth of optional extra levels. Taito's Space Invaders **Infinity Gene (\$5)** grew to version 3.0 with major new extra levels (\$2 each) this year, including side-scrolling tributes to the company's other shooters.



## Geometry Wars: Touch + Vector Tanks Extreme!

Beloved by fans but underappreciated back in their day, vector games were drawn with crisp, glowing lines rather than dots, serving as predecessors to the filled 3-D titles that followed. Activision's overhead dual-joystick shooter **Geometry Wars: Touch (\$1)** captures the spirit of these games with far greater intensity and beauty, adding particle and line explosion effects that have to be seen to be believed, looking best on the iPad and newer iOS devices, scaling downwards with fewer effects for older ones. BlipTime Studios' **Vector Tanks Extreme! (\$1)** is the sequel to an earlier iOS take on Atari's classic vector game Battlefield, putting you in control of a tank that rolls across a landscape destroying glowing targets; impressive voice work is one of its highlights.



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for iPad & iPhone



## iWatch – Nano

iCoat Water resistance watch  
wrist case for nano 6



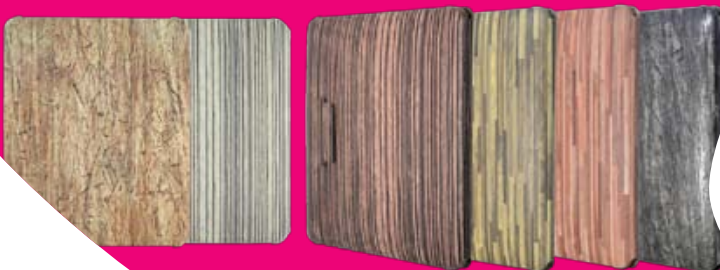
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## Reviews

**JBL On Stage IV**

[illegible]

The pitch with both new On-Stage units is the same. It has introduced a new industrial design concept called "Stream", which gives both of the new Stage 100 and Stage 150 units the appearance of a stream made from flattened, overlapping sheets of metal. The new Stage 100 is a 100-watt, 1000-watt, 1500-watt, 2000-watt, 3000-watt, 4000-watt, 5000-watt, 6000-watt, 7000-watt, 8000-watt, 9000-watt, 10000-watt, 11000-watt, 12000-watt, 13000-watt, 14000-watt, 15000-watt, 16000-watt, 17000-watt, 18000-watt, 19000-watt, 20000-watt, 21000-watt, 22000-watt, 23000-watt, 24000-watt, 25000-watt, 26000-watt, 27000-watt, 28000-watt, 29000-watt, 30000-watt, 31000-watt, 32000-watt, 33000-watt, 34000-watt, 35000-watt, 36000-watt, 37000-watt, 38000-watt, 39000-watt, 40000-watt, 41000-watt, 42000-watt, 43000-watt, 44000-watt, 45000-watt, 46000-watt, 47000-watt, 48000-watt, 49000-watt, 50000-watt, 51000-watt, 52000-watt, 53000-watt, 54000-watt, 55000-watt, 56000-watt, 57000-watt, 58000-watt, 59000-watt, 60000-watt, 61000-watt, 62000-watt, 63000-watt, 64000-watt, 65000-watt, 66000-watt, 67000-watt, 68000-watt, 69000-watt, 70000-watt, 71000-watt, 72000-watt, 73000-watt, 74000-watt, 75000-watt, 76000-watt, 77000-watt, 78000-watt, 79000-watt, 80000-watt, 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System for iPod, iPhone + iPad



Over the past three years have been truly much due to limitations in development" when it comes to new Bluetooth 2.1 wireless audio gear, as the iPod, iPhone, and iPad have proved, we've had multiple occasions to worry about the impact of the Consumer Electronics marketplace and price being all due to the fact that the resulting product now attempts to be a great, meeting recognition as one of the very best products of 2010.



A combination of three earlier Blum products, each of which had potential but the company's late-2008 model **#97** never achieved Blumfast acceptance—**Tork** and end button on **Hilltop** line. Shared with **Mantix**, it competes well with expanding new typical dual-arm chair back function with either armless, four-, five-, most of the rest of its capabilities came from the **#963**, its 2009 predecessor—throughout the look and feel of internal less expensive, more generous models, or with a greater industrial design.

i, Virtual City, Surviving High School, The Sims 3 Ambitions, evolution



For a quick look at a collection of popular strategy game titles, The first three are re-ground in their own right, while at the end we cover the evolution of the popular & the RPG platform.



There, EA's *Angry Birds HD* (E3) was released for the iPad platform first, only to *thunderbolt* (E3). Both adaptations provide the same gaming experience, and, network, players can actually synchronize their game progress between devices, game on whichever device they have readily available. Free trial versions of the upcoming title to explore its more limited area of the galaxy.

**h Apps** AR.PowerFlight, DroneControl, Flight Record,

Indeed, quadcopter **AirDrops**, as we are, you might be surprised to learn that the applications built using Parrot's AR Drone SDK.



# RPG + STRATEGY GAMES

Designed to occupy days rather than minutes or hours, RPG and strategy games had a fine start on the iPhone and iPod touch, but really took off with the expanded canvas of the iPad. Here are the year's best examples; most are available for all iOS devices.



## Plants vs. Zombies/HD and Monster Mayhem

Released in 2009 for PCs and Macs, PopCap's **Plants vs. Zombies (\$10)** is the rare iPad game that justifies a premium price: it's the most addictively designed tower defense game we've ever seen, bringing in female and male players by offering an expanding collection of plants as an army to fight off funny lumbering onslaughts of zombies. While iPhones and iPods get their own visually optimized version (**\$3**), the iPad release makes awesome use of multi-touch controls to truly improve upon an already excellent computer title. PopCap's work inspired clones, none as good as Chillingo's **Monster Mayhem (\$2)**, which drops the plants for knives, guns, and other weapons, and reduces the strategy in favor of more swiping and tapping. Sold for the iPhone and iPod touch, it's fun to play upscaled on the iPad.



## Civilization Revolution HD

Ported to the iPad from the beloved PC and console series, 2K Games' Civilization Revolution HD lets you lead and customize one of 16 real countries as it evolves to achieve greatness as a historic civilization. The iPad's larger screen helps it eclipse the prior iPhone version. **\$13**



## Final Fantasy I and Final Fantasy II

The 1987 and 1988 originators of Square's seminal Final Fantasy RPG series were released as separate games for the iPhone and iPod touch this year, sporting the radical visual makeovers and additional content they received on the PlayStation Portable in 2007. Both games have separate storylines and overhead-style world maps to explore, interspersed with multi-character, turn-based battle sequences used to gain experience points for skill development. Each **\$9** title stands on its own as a worthy introduction to RPGs for players unfamiliar with the genre, and a compelling multi-hour story, besides.



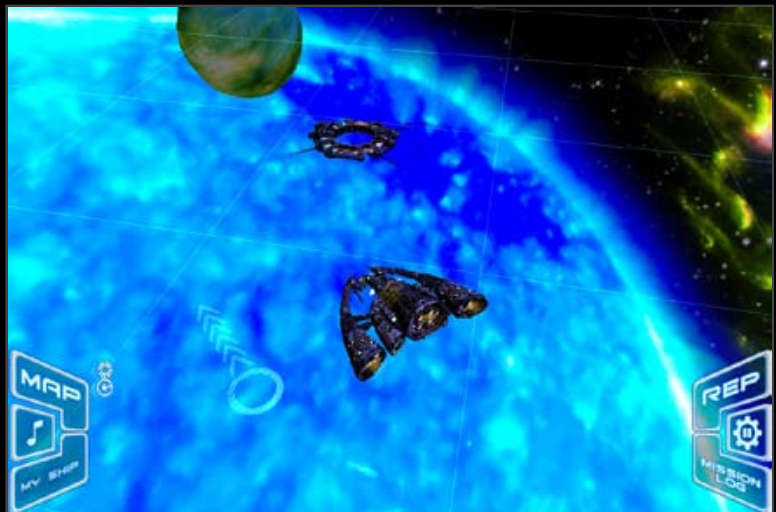
## Sim City Deluxe, The Sims 3 Ambitions, and Virtual City

Three recent world-building games each offered their own worthwhile takes on a genre created and popularized by Maxis's *Sim City*, now owned by Electronic Arts. *Sim City Deluxe* (\$5) is the obvious heir to the franchise, a small touchscreen distillation of complex city construction and management tools. Microscopic pixel artwork is presented from a zoomed-out isometric perspective as you try to handle your city's growth and multiple crises that befall it. The similarly iPod/iPhone-specific *Sims 3 Ambitions* (\$5) takes a more personal approach, focusing on the life, home, and possessions of one character who can progress from single to married with kids and a business - all built by you through choices of 3-D polygonal objects. G5 Entertainment's *Virtual City* (\$5/\$10) offers a cartoony city building and supply management game set in five real states, each structured with multiple levels to complete by focusing on the details of satisfying citizens' needs.



## Surviving High School

Like the Choose Your Own Adventure multi-path books plus added mini-games, EA's *Surviving High School* is notable for its episodic approach: the \$1 price buys free weekly access to new content, while old stories are sold for catching up. Its dozens of characters have become more compelling over its three seasons.



## Warpgate HD

Drawing inspiration from earlier PC space exploration and trading games, Freeverse's *Warpgate HD* leverages the large iPad screen to provide impressive 3-D renditions of space ships and planets, plus intuitively powerful touch controls. Your primary objective is to complete a large story - with hundreds of main or side missions set in 35 different star systems - achieved by earning money, fighting with nearly 200 types of enemy ships, and upgrading or swapping your own craft. The quests will keep you occupied for weeks. \$9

# SHOOTING GAMES

Few games have the intensity and eye-popping visual appeal of the titles included in this section, which range from overhead or side-scrolling shooters to first- and third-person fights against soldiers, terrorists, and zombies. Sci-fi and war are top themes.



## Dodonpachi Resurrection and Espgaluda II

The “bullet hell” genre of overhead shooters relies on visual overload as a challenge: you either move quickly, absorb dozens of enemy bullets, or die. Cave’s sci-fi-themed **Dodonpachi Resurrection** and fantasy-themed **Espgaluda II** move so many objects on screen at once that they work only on the latest iPods, iPhones, and iPads, each **\$9** game offering a different gameplay twist for firing back at small ships and larger bosses.



## AirAttack HD, Radio Flare Redux, R-Type, and Space Miner: Space Ore Bust

Few shooters are as expensive as Cave’s, and several feel like bargains considering the quality of their content. **AirAttack HD (\$1)** by Art in Games is an amazing-looking overhead shooter presented from a forced 3-D perspective, with superbly detailed polygonal aircraft that range from vintage warplanes to alien ships, set over surprisingly varied terrain. Chillingo’s **Radio Flare Redux (\$3/\$5)** is sold in separate versions, updating an earlier music- and swipe-heavy shooter with heavily stylized visuals, plus cool graphic filters to change the experience. **R-Type (\$2)** is a pitch-perfect translation of an importantly well-designed classic arcade shooter, brought perfectly to the iPhone and iPod touch by Electronic Arts. Venan’s **Space Miner: Space Ore Bust (\$5)** updates Atari’s Asteroids with a funny storyline, hillbilly music and rich (low-res) graphics. This is the rare remake that manages to improve its source material with RPG elements.





## Brothers in Arms 2: Global Front, Modern Combat 2: Black Pegasus, Time Crisis: 2nd Strike, and Zombie Infection

Gameloft single-handedly dominated the 3-D shooter genre this year, impressively rethinking the World War 2-themed **Brothers in Arms 2 (\$5)** - complete with vehicle-piloting stages - then following up with the Resident Evil 5 clone **Zombie Infection (\$3)** and the Retina Display-ready **Modern Combat 2: Black Pegasus (\$7)**. Each of the titles focuses on walking, shooting, and switching weapons, but with different art and pacing. Namco's **Time Crisis: 2nd Strike (\$10)** instead lets you focus solely on shooting and ducking, auto-walking you through intense, time-limited gunfights spread across 10 stages.



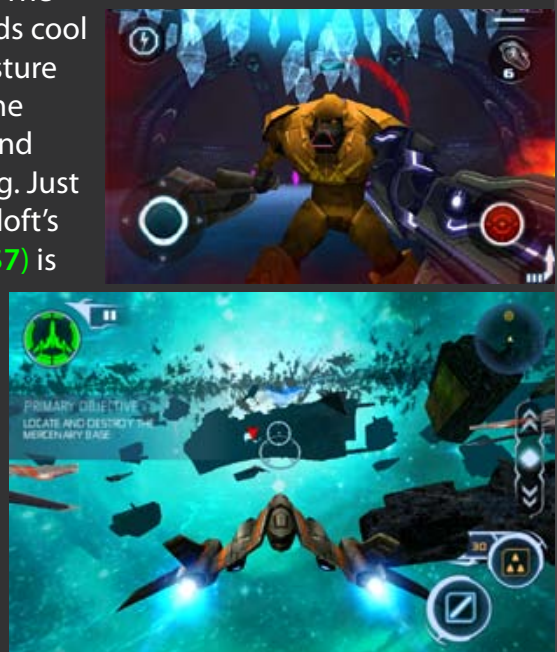
## iBomber 2 + MiniSquadron

A couple of smaller shooters also impressed us this year. Cobra Mobile's **iBomber 2 (\$3)** is a better sequel to last year's WW2 bomb-dropping overhead shooter, with 12 missions. Supermono's cute **MiniSquadron (\$3)** is all about loop-de-loop, side-scrolling dogfighting, letting you pick up weapons to unlock 50 planes across 8 levels.



## N.O.V.A./N.O.V.A. HD and Star Battalion

Sold in separate iPhone/iPod (\$5) and iPad (\$7) versions, Gameloft's **N.O.V.A.** borrows heavily from Bungie's Halo series of sci-fi first-person shooters: the iPod game is effectively a redrawn version of Halo minus vehicles and some of the gameplay depth, providing cool levels focused on eradicating samey waves of aliens. The iPad version adds cool multi-touch gesture controls for some door opening and enemy targeting. Just released, Gameloft's **Star Battalion (\$7)** is a gunplay-heavy sci-fi flying game with online multiplayer to let friends beat its many missions together.



# SPORTS GAMES

If any genre demonstrated how far iOS devices came in 2010, it was sports, which despite limited breadth showed considerable improvements in game depth and control. Can an iPhone, iPod, or iPad rival Nintendo's DS or Sony's PSP? Today, we'd say "yes."



## Madden NFL 11

Though the **\$13** iPad version is the more obvious pick for iPad owners, the eye-popping version of EA's Madden NFL 11 is for iPhones and iPods (**\$8**), which thanks to Retina Display support is quite possibly the most impressive-looking football game ever made for a portable device. TV-like overlays atop 3-D fields with believable, fluidly animated polygonal characters are impressive, while the voice work and controls are both spot-on.

## FIFA 11, Let's Golf! 2, NHL 2K11 + Real Golf

In past years, EA's FIFA soccer games were the undisputed kings of the hill; this year's **FIFA 11** (**\$5**) is a more qualified winner. Dropping support for pre 3GS/iPod touch 3G devices, it boosts graphic realism and controls to new heights, but launched without multiplayer modes. Gameloft's **Let's Golf! 2** (**\$5**) and **Real Golf 2011** (**\$7**) are cartoony and realistic takes on the sport, the former filled with bright colors and fun, the latter with lots of courses and real players. 2K Sports' **NHL 2K11** (**\$1**) is a full-fledged, solid hockey game at a crazy low price.



## MMA By EA Sports

To say that EA's rendition of MMA - mixed martial arts - was anxiously awaited by a certain group of fans would be an understatement, and though the finished product has some obvious issues such as repetitive commentary and pushover lightweight opponents, it's otherwise impressive. Swipe and tap gestures make punching, kicking, grappling, submissions, and dodging feel intuitive; a fine leveling system enables you to improve as you live a career. Real MMA fighters are included. **\$5**





## X2 Snowboarding

With far more style and attention to detail than the vast majority of iOS sports game developers, Exient unleashed X2 Snowboarding, a game with the spirit of Nintendo's 1080° Snowboarding and the hip ink art of Sega's Jet Set Radio. Cool licensed music, unlockable tracks, multiple characters and boards all contribute to the game's depth, while a natural but forgiving touch control scheme makes it fun. **\$3**



## Deer Hunter: African Safari and Deer Hunter HD

If you're a fan of sport hunting, you've almost certainly heard of the Deer Hunter series, which has made its debut in separate apps for the iPhone/iPod touch and iPad. Even pacifist vegetarians would be impressed by the technical quality of these two titles, as Glu's **Deer Hunter HD (\$5)** creates believable American wildlife scenarios in different weather conditions, and **African Safari (\$6)** sets out different types of savannah terrain and plant life to hide its wild game targets. Both titles offer varieties of different weapons and increasingly challenging multi-target scenarios, requiring you to survey a scene, scope animals, then steady yourself for quick, accurate shots.



## 10 Pin Shuffle, Fishing Kings HD, PBA Bowling 2 and Pool Pro Online 3

The best fishing game this year was Gameloft's **Fishing Kings HD (\$5)**, an iPad-only game with 15 different, interesting 3-D locations. Flick to cast and snap back your lure, then use circular gestures to gently pull your line in. **PBA Bowling 2 (\$3)** from Concrete Software is the rare sports game here with universal iOS device support, offering a surprising number of different customizable balls and nice physics that make up somewhat for the samey lanes. A simpler, fun alternative with puck-based bowling, shuffleboard, and poker games is Digital Smoke's **10 Pin Shuffle (\$4)**. Finally, Namco's **Pool Pro Online 3 (\$3)** offers cross-platform online play with customizable 3-D rooms, but sells separate iPad and iPhone/iPod titles for the same price - a real shame given that they're identical.

