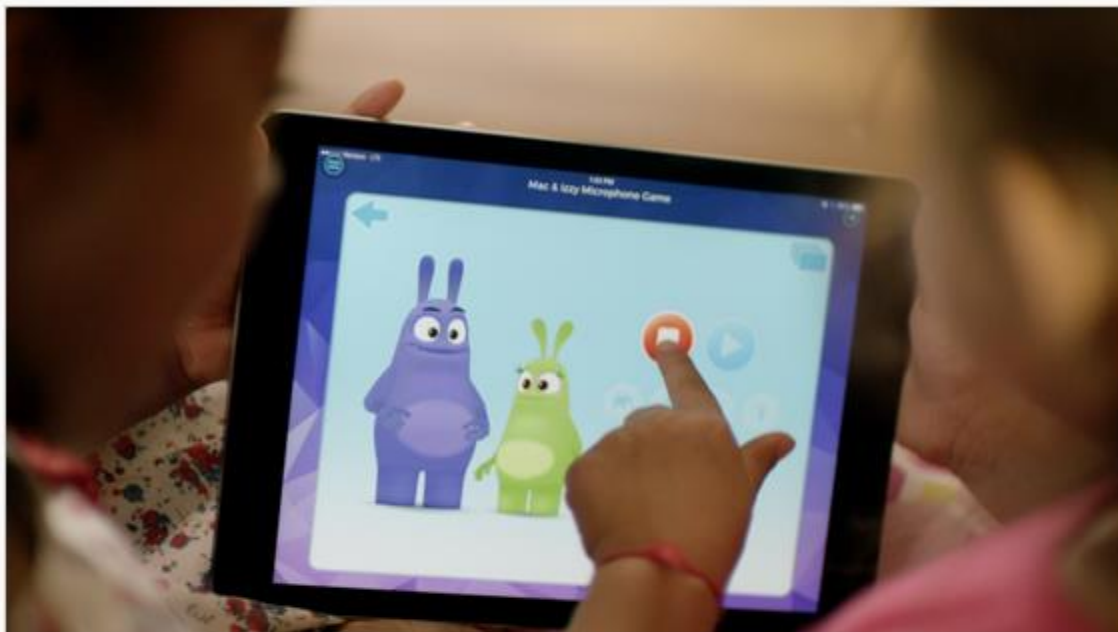


## Curious World Debuts A Subscription Service For Kid-Friendly Videos, Games And Books That's The Same Price As Netflix

Posted yesterday by [Sarah Perez \(@sarahintampa\)](#)

477  
SHARES



There was a time when kids curious about the world around them would have to go to the library and check out books, or sit around thumbing through the family's encyclopedia. But these days, access to knowledge is within easy reach, thanks to the internet, high-speed connections, and mobile devices. However, not all that content is appropriate for children. Today, publisher Houghton Mifflin Harcourt is hoping to inspire the same desire to learn in modern-day kids on the devices they love with the launch of [Curious World](#), a subscription-based website and [iOS application](#) combination that offers fun but educational content, including games, videos and e-books.

Unlike many kids' apps, however, Curious World is meant to be used by both parents and children. Parents set up the app by filling out a brief profile for their child in order to personalize the content recommendations to the child's age. The app will then offer suggestions across categories like math, science, literacy, creative expression and more.

As the child engages with the books, games and videos, parents can also track their child's progress via a separate "parent portal." Here, they can see what content their child engaged with in the app over the past 30 days, including how much time was spent within each learning area. This can help spark conversations about the topic, the company says. In addition, parents are offered custom recommendations of real-world activities they can do with their child in order to encourage further learning.



Although by description alone, the app sounds like it might not be as fun as, say, watching an episode of *Spongebob Squarepants*, the publisher has smartly leaned on its own library in order to fill *Curious World* with authors, brands, and characters most kids already know of and love, and combined that with acquired content. For example, the e-books section includes *Gossie and Curious George*, among other acquired titles.

Videos, meanwhile, also feature a number of kids' favorite subjects like music, animals, cooking and science experiments. In addition to exclusive content from HMH itself, *Curious World* has rounded out the selection of video by working with third-party providers such as NatGeo, PBS Digital, Caspar Babypants (music videos), NASA (video shorts), StoryBots and Young Rembrandts (drawing tutorials).

There are also original, interactive games that also focus on the app's key learning areas like *Math Arcade*, *Skyscraper Builder* and *Coral Reef Explorer*.

At launch, the company tells us there will be over 500 pieces of content in the library, which will be continually updated on a weekly basis with around 5 to 10 new additions. However, as new titles are introduced, older titles may be retired to keep the content selection fresh.



That's an important point given that *Curious World* is available not as a one-time fee, but rather as a subscription service. In fact, it's around the **same price as a new Netflix subscription** – that is, it's \$9.99 per month. (Parents can opt to pay for *Curious World* on an annual basis — \$79.99 — instead to save on the cost).

The selection of content, and the way it's organized by age as well as in thematic collections is decent for a kids' app like this, and the addition of a parents' portal makes this app stand out from others purporting to be educational experiences for kids.

However, I think parents will balk at the pricing – \$10 per month for this sort of service feels high. For comparison's sake, [Nickelodeon's Netflix-like for kids, Noggin](#), is \$5.99 per month. And App Store reviews are filled with complaints about subscription pricing. While Noggin isn't really educational in nature – it's only videos, cartoons and music – it does have some of Nick's well-known brands like music from Dora, Yo Gabba Gabba, and its B-list of TV programming available.



Meanwhile, a lot of content that's similar to what Curious World provides is already available for free through other resources – like YouTube or YouTube Kids (the kid-focused mobile app), PBS, Amazon, and elsewhere, including the web. Not the *same* content, mind you – but other educational programs, video, books, and games.

That being said, HMH has a history of knowing how to develop kid-friendly content that also teaches – it previously developed Carmen Sandiego and Oregon Trail, for example. This time around, it's creating 114 original assets this calendar year, including 56 original games and 58 original videos. The games are rolling out weekly, and many of the videos are launching in February 2016.

The company says it's betting on this original content as a way to drive subscribers, and notes that the selection of originals will increase in 2016, as well.

Curious World is available now via the [web](#) (the parents' portal) and [on the iTunes App Store](#) (the kids' content).

---

## Related Articles

[Consumer Watchdog Groups Complain Updated YouTube Kids App Still Exposes Children To Deceptive Ads](#)

[Sproutkin Ditches Its "Netflix For Kids' Books" Service, Moves Into Digital Subscriptions](#)

[Zoobean Debuts A Recommendation Service For Children's Apps And Books](#)

---