

Media Release

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Picklets: new ways to pop up in digital books



A new opportunity for animators, illustrators and authors to get digital

Could we lose more than just the feel and smell of a book as we move to reading digitally? Have you considered what will happen to the traditions of pop-up books, comics and children's picture books in the digital world?

Picklets is an e-publishing platform for interactive picture books that blends reading and animation to replicate these much-loved book forms for digital natives.

First launched in April this year on the iTunes App Store (in Australia and New Zealand) for iPhone, iPod touch and iPad, the free Picklets app will soon be available to US and UK readers on the iTunes App Store in those markets.

'Picklets is an attempt to preserve the traditional reading experience while taking advantage of the interactive potential of digital media,' says the platform's creator Melbourne designer and software developer, Stewart Haines.

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Unlike short-films or flash animations that you passively 'watch', a Picklet is interactively 'read'. Pages are turned with the swipe of a finger to motivate action and camera moves that add atmosphere, drama and surprise. The picklet reading experience remains intimately book-like by deliberately not using audio or film elements. Pages can be lingered over, played with and re-read at the reader's own pace.

'I like traditional pop-ups a lot and transferring that into a digital format sounded good,' says German freelance illustrator Peter Nishitani, creator of one of the first picklets, *Mummy in the House!*. 'I also very much liked the idea of working independently... I loved doing just what I wanted to do.'

If you create an ebook, Nishitani says, you can be lost under thousands of other ebooks vying for attention on the internet. But with Picklets he feels you're in a unique place that lies between ebooks and animation and are working with an easy to use publishing platform.

The Picklets app is a free download from the iTunes App Store. Individual picklet titles are available via in-app purchase. The in-app catalogue provides interactive previews of new and existing titles so readers can try before they buy.

Creating a picklet requires some basic knowledge of animation and digital image-making skills (or teaming up with someone who does) and strong visual storytelling.

There is enormous potential for producing picklets of varying lengths and genres from humour to horror, crime to romance or educational and children's picture-book stories.

The publisher is currently looking for new titles to launch with the international release of the Picklets app.

Learn more about creating picklets <http://picklet.net/>

Download the Picklets app for free from the iTunes App Store <http://pck.lt/app>

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For further information, images or interview requests contact **Stewart Haines** on 61 (0) 422 678 498 or stewart@picklet.net

Stewart Haines has worked as a software developer since graduating from Ballarat University in 1997. Two years ago he began creating the picklet project under the company name RobotInaBox. Previously he taught interactive media design at RMIT University and developed software at the Centre for Electronic Media Arts at Monash University, alongside collaborating in projects for theatre, installation art and online games.

In 2011 Stewart travelled to Germany and the UK presenting seminars for illustrator/designers interested in authoring interactive books. He continues to run workshops for picklet authors in Melbourne.

Editor's note: The iPhone/iPad app is called Picklets (plural, capitalized). An individual interactive work is referred to as a picklet (not capitalized). 'picklet' is a registered trademark of RobotInaBox Pty Ltd

Image credit: *The 3 Baddest Bandits of the Wild Wild West* by Ben Hutchings with Arran McKenna and Jase Harper. (Image has been digitally altered adding motion blur.)