

Eight Games on the Go: Something for Everyone in the Family

I happened to be on the road with my family when the call for this month's review came in. As usual, we brought along our SONY Playstation Portable (PSP) and our Nintendo Dual Screen (DS). Rather than picking just one game, each of us picked two games that we would recommend, and here they are:

Lindy, Age 4 – [Dora Saves the Mermaids](#) and [Nintendogs](#) for the DS. These are both good titles for younger players, and each has some instructional value. The Dora game is basically an interactive episode of Dora the Explorer, which you are familiar with if your son or daughter watches Dora or Diego. Predictably here is a Diego counterpart available for the DS as well. Nintendogs is actually a series of games for the DS, each of which has a different set of dogs from which you choose up to three to virtually train and care for. Overall Nintendogs is the better title with more longevity.

Katherine, Age 7 – [Little Big Planet](#) for the PSP and [Looney Tunes Cartoon Concerto](#) for the DS. Similar in that they both are very creative titles, yet very different in their gameplay. Little Big Planet is the PSP version of the best selling PS3 title of the same name. It is basically Super Mario Brothers with customizable sack puppets as characters and very malleable levels. The Looney Tunes title is a rhythm game that is filled with classical music selections. The gameplay consists of matching the rhythm of the music using the touch screen stylus. Little Big Planet is the better of the two titles, and much easier to find (good luck finding the Looney Tunes title anywhere).

Mom – [Sudoku](#) and [The New York Times Crosswords](#), both for the DS. The same brain-training games that you find in your newspaper are also available for a variety of portable game systems. The DS versions are particularly good in that the stylus offers an experience closest to the originals.

Dad – [PixelJunk Monsters Deluxe](#) and [Half-Minute Hero](#), both for the PSP. PixelJunk is perhaps the best Tower Defense game on any console, portable or otherwise. Half-Minute Hero is an homage to the classic RPGs of the 1990s (Zelda, Ultima, Final Fantasy, etc...). The twist is that you basically play a full RPG in 30 seconds, with writing that is refreshingly light and self-deprecating. Both, incidentally, are great multiplayer titles if you happen to have a second PSP.

If you are a person or family on the go, consider investing in a portable game system or two. They are great for travelling and filling the "spaces between" that we can't seem to avoid. Ours came when our stewardess announced that the airport bag scanner had broken down and that every piece of luggage going onto our plane had to be screened by hand, including a whole lot of golf bags. 45 minutes later she announced that we were ready to take off, and thanks in part to our virtual golden retriever *Lucky*, and that rascally rabbit *Bugs Bunny*, our family was no worse for wear.

Dr. Anthony Betrus

with help from wife Kristen and daughters Lindy and Katherine