

PRESS RELEASE
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THESE PARENTS WANT TO REVOLUTIONIZE HOW KIDS INTERACT WITH TV

Seattle, WA — Matt and Melissa Hammersley may start and end each day as parents, but they spend the rest of their time shaking up the world of voice technology. This week, their immersive storytelling start-up, Novel Effect, is showcasing a fresh approach to streaming videos: voice interactions that control and influence the story.

Novel Effect's voice-driven videos are not its first undertaking to make voice impactful for kids and families. In 2015, the Hammersleys set out with a simple idea: if every grown-up could make books engaging and fun, every kid would fall in love with reading. The result is the Novel Effect app, which follows along as a children's print book is read aloud, playing theme music, sounds, and character voices at just the right moment. The videos are a natural addition to the company's list of interactive, family friendly content.

"We're bringing the element of active play into a traditionally passive experience." says CEO Matt Hammersley, "By blending voice, literacy, and video kids take a key role in a story, speaking to characters and for the first time, getting a response"

That back-and-forth interaction is something television shows have spent the last 50 years simulating, and is only now possible. What's more, Novel Effect has included the choose-your-own-adventure format, providing the opportunity to shape experiences as they go. Melody Furze, the company's Chief of Education sees this as an opportunity to engage children and improve educational outcomes. "We put people at the center of our experiences to inspire children, and as a result create better tools for learning."

Their solution feels obvious. We've all been there: shouting at our favorite characters to watch out, or groaning as they make a decision that spirals out of control... they've always ignored us. Now, for the first time, with Novel Effect we can talk to, influence, and hear characters respond. Voice-driven videos play like any other video, but at times speech bubbles appear on-screen. Reading the text inside them out loud continues the episode, with prompts that range from narrative to actual conversations with characters.

The Novel Effect video showcase is now available through the company's free [website](#) and [Android app](#) and in [beta for iOS](#) devices. Currently, there are three videos to enjoy: an episode of *The Stupendous Drew Pendous & His Mighty Penultimate!* from YouTube standout Driver Studios, a quirky choose-your-own-ingredients culinary show for kids, *Cooking with Matt*, and the first episode in a new animated series, based on middle grade books from Capstone, *Monster Heroes*.

ABOUT NOVEL EFFECT

Novel Effect reimagines entertainment with voice-driven experiences that empower kids and their grown-ups to bring stories to life by combining powerful voice recognition and family-friendly content.

Novel Effect's was named a Best App for Teaching & Learning by the American Association of School Librarians. Learn more at www.noveleffect.com or [download](#) the free app in the Google Play and App Stores.