

Star Trek movie inspires apps

May 13 2009, By Craig Crossman

I just got back from seeing the new "Star Trek" movie and I give it five out of five hard drives. I've been a big fan of "Star Trek" and most of its spin-offs throughout the years. I remember watching the original TV show broadcasts and waiting every week for the next episode. This latest movie takes you back to how all of the original characters met and does a really nice job of capturing how they all interact with each other.

"Star Trek" memorabilia throughout the years has been huge, with everything from action figures to replicas of hand phasers, communicators and even Tricorders. I have an excellent Star Trek screen saver that I run from time to time. It's been around for a few years but in case you didn't know about it, check out the System 47 screen saver available in Windows and Macintosh versions. It emulates the LCARS (an acronym for Library Computer Access/Retrieval System) computer screen displays that were made popular on the "Star Trek Next Generation," "Deep Space Nine" and "Voyager" TV series as well as several of the more recent "Star Trek" movies. You can download the free screen saver at: www.mewho.com/system47 .

The Star Trek fantasy lives on the iPhone as well. Currently there are two iPhone apps that turn your iPhone into a Tricorder. The first is entitled iLCARS (99 cents). This little app does a marvelous job of emulating a Tricorder. The sound effects and the screens are an excellent depiction of how a Star Trek Tricorder would actually look and should be most any Trekker's fantasy come true.

iLCARS lets you select from three different modes, each with its own

corresponding visual display. These include a radar-type scanning circle complete with little red blips, a geological anomalies display that interacts with the iPhone [accelerometer](#) when you shake it and several other options that just make it fun to play with it.

The other Tricorder app is Tricorder-580 (99 cents). This one also adheres to Federation guidelines in its design and sports a variety of interactive displays along with lots of buttons you can touch and manipulate. Needless to say, while waiting for the "Star Trek" movie to begin, I decided to test both of these apps out and fired them up while waiting in line and when seated in the theatre waiting for the movie to begin. The reaction was overwhelming. Everyone wanted to know what my iPhone was doing and where they could get the apps once I told them they were Tricorder apps that you can get at the iTunes store.

If you're looking for some Star Trek fun now that Star Trek is back in fashion with the new movie, the iPhone is where it's at.

By the way, since my column this week is about frivolous apps and screen savers, here's a few more fun iPhone apps you can download to be the hit of the party. Vibrazor (99 cents) turns your iPhone into an electric razor. Just flip the big switch and you hear the distinctive electric razor buzz and feel the vibrations. Just run the iPhone up and down across your face whenever you need a quick shave. It's good for lots of laughs. Koi Pond (99 cents) puts an beautifully rendered Koi Pond complete with a variety of fish, crickets, dragonflies, frogs and plants which you can manipulate by touching the iPhones screen. It's actually somewhat therapeutic and quite soothing to watch as your finger splashes the surface while the Koi swim over to be felt. I put it down on the table and everyone wants to touch it.

Finally check out Labyrinth (\$2.99). It's a beautifully rendered wooden maze and steel ball that you must tilt and avoid holes into which the ball

may fall. The latest version sports a 3D look. You'd swear the walls of the puzzle actually exist because the shadows and walls move correspondingly to the tilting. It's just something you have to see to believe.

So there you have it. A virtual cornucopia of wasted time on the iPhone that will bring you hours of enjoyment. Sounds like a good deal to me.

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