

# Tamagotchi returns: Electronic pet reborn as app

February 14 2013, by Derrick J. Lang

---



This publicity photo released by Sync Beatz Entertainment shows the app mode screenshot of mobile app "Tamagotchi L.i.f.e." by developer/publisher Bandai America Inc./Sync Beatz Entertainment. The app duplicates the egg-shaped

Tamagotchi toy that became a must-own sensation after it was first released in 1996 in Japan. (AP Photo/Bandai America Inc./Sync Beatz Entertainment)

(AP)—Tamagotchi is re-hatching as an app.

Bandai Co. and Sync Beatz Entertainment are hoping to revive the electronic pet craze of the 1990s with a new mobile app launching Thursday for Android devices. The app duplicates the egg-shaped plastic toy that became a must-own sensation like Beanie Babies, Tickle Me Elmo and Furby after it was first released in 1996 in Japan.

Sync Beatz, which has licensed Tamagotchi from Bandai, is calling the app "Tamagotchi L.i.f.e."—with "L.i.f.e" standing for "love is fun everywhere." Much like the original doodad, the app tasks users with taking care of a virtual pet by pressing buttons that simulate feeding, disciplining and playing with the critter on screen. If a Tamagotchi is neglected, it dies.

"The idea was to base the gameplay on the original Tamagotchi that everyone knows and loves," said Shin Ueno, chief marketing officer at Sync Beatz. "As we move along, every two months, we'll refresh the app, and it will evolve."

The colorful app, which Ueno said will later be available for Apple devices, features unlockable characters, backgrounds and shells. It's split between two modes: an old-school one that works like the original—right down to three buttons on the shell—and an app mode that utilizes the touchscreen and allows users to play rock, paper, scissors with their pets.

The "Tamagotchi L.i.f.e." app is free, and a version without ads costs 99

cents. While there have been a few Tamagotchi clones available for mobile devices, this marks the first official Tamagotchi app to come from Bandai, which has released updated versions of the toy since the first Tamagotchi hatched 16 years ago.

Sales of the toy have cracked the 78 million mark, and Tamagotchi paved the way for such virtual obsessions as "The Sims," "FarmVille" and "Skylanders." The executives at Sync Beatz think Tamagotchi's "sweet 16" is the prime time to relaunch Tamagotchi for nostalgic 20- and 30-somethings, as well as a new generation.

"It's like comfort food," said Barry Stagg, chief communications officer at Sync Beatz. "I think Tamagotchi brings back good memories. When we were at the Licensing Expo last year, the first thing that people who came up to us and saw what we were doing tended to do was smile. I think there's an openness to build on Tamagotchi's brand equity."

That means Sync Beatz plans to leverage "Tamagotchi L.i.f.e." as more than simply a sentimental app. The company plans to launch a "Tamagotchi L.i.f.e." product line later this year with clothing, furnishings and accessories slathered with Tamagotchi imagery.

Copyright 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Tamagotchi returns: Electronic pet reborn as app (2013, February 14) retrieved 28 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-02-tamagotchi-electronic-pet-reborn-app.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.