

# Newsworthy Trends

## New Pets For Today's Kids Are Digital

(NAPSA)—It started with the Boomers. A science experiment in schools to teach students responsibility, (or a simple scare tactic), known as The Pet Egg. Many actually enjoyed caring for their eggs, and the Pet Rock was also born. For thousands of years in fact, kids of all ages have loved to nurture and play parent with baby dolls and the like.

And moving on to Generation X, the eggs mentioned above were often replaced by bags of flour and more life-like crying/peeing baby dolls. Now a full-fledged tradition across the country, kids, as part of their health ed class, often have to take care of an egg, (or something) for a few days or weeks, caring for it like a child or pet. If the egg is broken, failure is imminent.

This commitment to teach children the value of nurturing continued to evolve both in and outside the classroom, and in the 90's Bandai introduced the Tamagotchi "virtual pet," a hand-held electronic pet egg for Generation Y (Millennials) to feed, grow, and nurture. Tamagotchi became a massive phenomenon and more than 80 million units have been sold worldwide since then.

So where does that leave us today in the world of the virtual pets and nurturing playthings? As you may have guessed, all roads lead to digital. It turns out that Generation Z (Digital Natives) are just as interested in this play pattern as generations before; but now are caring for their pets via smart phones and tablets.

Enter Talking Tom and Friends. With more than 230 million active users each month, the app franchise introduced in 2010 has skyrocketed to success with 14 apps (soon to be 15). These apps for any smartphone or tablet by developer Outfit7 Limited, have been downloaded a whopping 2 billion+ times worldwide and, the characters from which, have gone on to enjoy success on YouTube, have licensed merchandise available around the world, and now have an animated series and movie in the making.

My Talking Tom was launched in 2013, letting fans adopt their very own baby kitten, name him and make him part of their daily lives. The app allows pet parents to interact with Tom like never before. Feed him, play with him and nurture him as he grows from a cute kitten to a fully-grown cat. Like the Tamagotchi before it, Tom teaches responsibility as he requires constant love and attention from his digital parent. The



**Kids can now enjoy taking care of a collection of animated friends through a pet app.**

fun that every tween/teen is looking for!

What is especially great about today's virtual pet is that, unlike before, each is personalized to their player. This year, *My Talking Angela* is the newest kitty up for virtual adoption when the app launches on the heels of Tom's virtual pet success, just in time for the holidays for new tablet/smart phone owners. Like Tom, you can adopt *My Talking Angela* as a cute kitten, (nurture her, feed her, brush her teeth), and help her grow into a stylish city kitty.

Not really a pet anymore, but more like a fashion-savvy superstar—a new BFF! Dress up *My Talking Angela* in the latest fashions and the cutest costumes, and give her the most amazing hairstyles. Make her home beautiful and feed her delicious treats. Play games together, collect cool stickers to trade with friends, and much more. The *My Talking Angela* app is free and available on all platforms including Android, iPad, iPhone, and more.

Kinda makes that egg look rotten.