

A love letter to glory days of iPhone gaming

It may be hard to believe now, but the App Store was once a thriving place for inventive indie games. The ubiquity of the iPhone coupled with the relative ease of development for the platform meant that smaller studios were able to get their games in front of huge audiences, leading to a great time of experimentation that unfortunately didn't last. But if you want to relive those better days, Simogo's new collection is just the thing.

You might recognize the name Simogo from more recent titles, like the noir mystery *Lorelei and the Laser Eyes* or the vibrant interactive pop album *Sayonara Wild Hearts*. Before that, though, the studio was a creative force in mobile. The *Simogo Legacy Collection*, as it's called, collects seven games from this period, plus a companion app, which were all developed over a five-year span between 2010 and 2015.

The most striking thing about the collection is the sheer range of games. It's hard to believe they were all made by the same team. Some of the early titles, like the arcade game *Kosmo Spin* and the charming automatic platformer *Bumpy Road*, feel like slightly more stylish takes on popular mobile genres. But from there, you can see the studio getting bolder and more confident. *Beat Sneak Bandit* is a rhythm action game, while *Year Walk* is an adventure about going on a folklore-inspired vision quest. (Also in the collection is the *Year Walk* companion app, which details the strange creatures you'll encounter in the game).

Things get weirder from there: *Device 6* is a combination of game and mystery novel; *The Sailor's Dream* is a mixed-media

storytelling experiment; and rounding out the bunch is the most traditional title, *SPL-T*, a puzzle game that burrows into your brain like *Tetris*.

If there's any connective tissue between these disparate releases, it's an incredible sense of style and clear sense of purpose. The games may all be very different, but each has a specific focus and vision. You can tell each was made with care in every element, from the visuals to the game design to the music.

The same goes for the collection itself. I played the game on the Switch 2 (it's also on Steam and the original Switch) and it re-creates the mobile experience by essentially turning your device into a giant smartphone, complete with a basic menu where the games all appear as app icons. There are a whole bunch of extras to dig into, including playable prototypes of some of the games and other bonus materials, like a podcast series that was released as a companion to *The Sailor's Dream*. Don't sleep on the music player; there are some amazing tracks here.

The *Simogo Legacy Collection* isn't just a well-crafted collection of some great games; it's an important act of preservation. You can still find them in the App Store right now, but Apple's digital store can be hostile to older games, so this release ensures the likes of *Year Walk* and *Device 6* can continue on through other platforms. It's also a great reminder of how vibrant those early days were and how the best stuff stands the test of time.

The Simogo Legacy Collection is available now on Steam and the Nintendo Switch and Switch 2.

<https://www.theverge.com/games/839050/simogo-legacy-collection-review-switch-steam>