A social network where everyone’s a bot

Hi, friends! Welcome to *Installer* No. 53, your guide to the best and *Verge*-iest stuff in the world. (If you’re new here, welcome, so psyched you found us, and also you can read all the old editions at the *Installer* homepage.)

This week, I’ve been reading about **Beyoncé** and **Rosanna Pansino** and **Bowen Yang**, pouring my life back into **Todoist,** watching the end of ***The Grand Tour,*** catching up on some ***My Brother, My Brother and Me*** episodes, seeing if the **Pixel Recorder** app can replace my trusty voice recorder, and moving **Headspace** to my homescreen to see if it helps me meditate more. (So far… no.)

I also have for you a truly wild new pair of AR glasses, a Batman-adjacent show on HBO, a great new book about the end of Twitter, a funny twist on social networks, and much more. Lotta good new TV this week! Let’s do it.

(As always, the best part of *Installer* is your ideas and tips. What are you super into right now? What should everyone else be reading / playing / watching / buying / downloading / building out of Legos right now? Tell me everything: installer@theverge.com. And if you know someone else who might enjoy *Installer*, forward it to them and tell them to subscribe here.)

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Alex Goldman, the excellent podcaster and former cohost of best-tech-pod-ever *Reply All*, has a new show! It’s called ***Hyperfixed***, and basically, Alex’s job is to fix people’s problems of all kinds. The first two episodes are silly and deep, and this show is going to be great.

I asked Alex to share his homescreen with us as his new show launches because if there’s one thing I know about Alex, it’s that he’s a person of many interests and obsessions. (I always enjoyed him posting about songs he made in his attic, just to name one example.) I was curious what his phone would say about what he’s up to right now.

Here’s Alex’s homescreen, plus some info on the apps he uses and why:

The phone: iPhone 14.

The wallpaper: A picture of my kids being cool on the beach.

The apps: Camera, Weather, Settings, Notes, App Store, FaceTime, Amazon, Proton Mail, Find My, Overcast, Patreon, Koala, Messages, Google Voice, Gmail, Safari.

I know my homescreen is a mess, but I have long since given up on trying to organize it. It has reached an uneasy stasis in which I know where everything is, and it’s been a while since I’ve downloaded an absolutely essential new app.

Everything I need is on the front page: from games to exercise stuff, apps for watching TV and playing music, social media platforms, and so on. My go-to apps are Notes (every morning, I make a bulleted list of things I need to get done), Voice Memos (it’s super convenient if you’re thinking of an idea or

a good melody pops into your head to just go ahead and record it before it's long gone) and ***Threes***. *Threes* is a game where you try and combine blocks of the same number on a playing field without running out of space, and I have truly not gotten further in the past three or four years, but I still play it like four times a day. Just out of nervous habit. And then Overcast is the podcast app. Everything else is lame in comparison.

I also asked Alex to share a few things he's into right now. Here's what he sent back:

- **Pinball Map**. I love pinball. But loving pinball means you're a pinball snob and you like certain games better than others. For me, the mid-'90s Midway/Williams pinball games were a renaissance, so I'm constantly trying to find copies of Attack From Mars, Medieval Madness, Twilight Zone, Monster Bash, Creature from the Black Lagoon, and Bride of Pinbot. Fortunately, the Pinball Map helps me locate them.
- **Koala**. Koala is an incredibly powerful sampler app. You can record sounds directly off your phone or load sounds in, or rip sound directly from a video. It has nearly all the functionality of the classic Roland SP-404 Samplers, except those are $500, but Koala is around $5.
- **Erica Synths' LXR-02**. A cheap handheld drum machine that you can load sounds on to or make sounds with. I am very much a dude making little beats on public transit.
- **WFMU's Beware of the Blog**. A blog for a nonprofit radio station in New York City that was shut down almost a decade ago but is full of fantastic obscure recordings, comics, and bizarre culture stories. Probably most famous for being the only place you can find the story of how Paul Simon allegedly stole a bunch of songs on *Graceland* from Los Lobos.

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On Wednesday, I was at the Made on YouTube event in New York City (the crowd was made up of me and like 200 extremely cool and fun creators), where CEO Neal Mohan and a bunch of other executives rolled out some new features. But forget the new features — the absolute highlight of the event was the singer / songwriter / creator **D4vd**, who talked about an AI project and then did a live performance of his mega-popular song, “**Here With Me**.” It was awesome, and I’ve been reading about and watching his videos ever since. Here’s **a great *GQ* interview** with lots of details on his story, **here’s his TikTok**, and **here’s his YouTube channel**.

To be fair, D4vd is already very popular, so maybe I’m the last one to discover him. But I figured I’d share just in case. I’m a huge fan.

See you next week!

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