Nothing’s ‘first step’ to an ‘AI OS’ is not first, or an OS, but is fascinating

Nothing says it has just taken “the first step towards an AI-native operating system.” Not exactly. Playground, Nothing’s new app store filled with user-designed, AI-generated apps, is neither Nothing’s first step, nor is it an operating system — it’s built on Android. But the idea lands, and beneath the hype, it is genuinely exciting — a glimpse of smartphones that feel more personal and adaptable, with a clear vision for where this might go in the future.

The bold proclamation of an AI-native OS centers on the launch of Essential, which Nothing says brings us closer to a world “where devices adapt to people, not the other way around.” In plain speak, Essential is Nothing’s “name for all our AI-related products,” founder and CEO Carl Pei tells *The Verge.* Despite the London startup claiming to be unveiling Essential today, the line actually has several products live already, including an AI search tool and Essential Space, which organizes voice notes and images.

What’s really new is Playground, and with it Essential Apps. Playground is basically Nothing’s take on an app store. Filling it will be apps designed in Essential Apps, an AI-powered tool that can build simple apps from written prompts alone. In short, users can design their own apps for their own needs. Nothing suggests a mood tracker that syncs with a music playlist, a receipt-to-expenses-form pipeline, or an app that can suggest what to wear based on your wardrobe and upcoming appointments.

