The ultimate app for reading the internet



Hi, friends! Welcome to *Installer* No. 18, your guide to the best and *Verge*-iest stuff in the world. (If you're new here, hello, happy holidays, and also you can read all the old editions at the *Installer* homepage.)

This week, I've been **combing this list for new board games to try**, reading about **the NFL's obsession with ping pong** and **the rise of chess influencers** and **the wacky history of Yahoo Pipes,** watching , testing **Anytype** as a Notion alternative, trying to figure out how to justify buying myself **a Lego Polaroid**, and adding Us to all my words on Threads to welcome my European friends.

I also have for you a new way to play *Grand Theft Auto,* some new AI-powered note-taking and journaling tools, new stuff to watch this weekend, a look into the creator economy, and much more.

I also have a question. We only have one more *Installer* this year, so I figured now's the time to do it: **what was your**

favorite thing of 2023? I promise I won't hold this to, like, a legal standard of *this is your only favorite forever.* But when you look back on the last 12 months, what new show / book / blog / app / creator entered your life that you're particularly happy about? Tell me one, or two, or three! Doesn't have to be new this year, just new to you. Email installer@theverge.com, or text / WhatsApp me at (203) 570-8663, and tell me everything. All things Favorites, coming your way in two weeks.

(As always, the best part of *Installer* is your ideas and tips. What do you want to know more about? What awesome tricks do you know that everyone else should? What app should everyone be using? Tell me everything: installer@theverge.com. And if you want to get Installer in your email inbox a day early, subscribe here.)

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For a really long time, Instapaper was the most-used app on my phone. (This was back in the pre-TikTok era, when I spent more time reading and less time scrolling. But let's not dwell on that change.) I read a lot for work, I will read any celebrity profile anywhere, and I'm forever looking for a better way to manage all the stuff I have to read.

This year, kind of by accident, I wound up doing a tour of all the best options. And good news, there are a bunch of them! **Instapaper** is still great; **Matter** is gorgeous; **Omnivore** is super powerful; **Upnext** is doing some clever AI stuff; even **Pocket** still does the job, though I dislike a lot of its recent design changes. We're sort of spoiled for choice in

this department.

But I've found the one for me, at least for now. It's **Readwise Reader**, which works on iOS, Android, and the web. It's still technically in beta but is already totally indispensable in my life and workflow. Here's a few reasons why:

- **Reader can handle *everything*.** You can save articles, upload books, add videos, import RSS feeds, subscribe to newsletters, and more. The app does a really good job of sorting things into the right places, so you're not just stuck with a giant mass of stuff. But it can parse, store, and organize practically anything of any file type, and I love it for that.
- **It's more than just a queue.** The first thing I loved about Reader was the homescreen, which shows you categories like "quick reads," "long reads," and "recently added." There's also a Digest feature that just grabs a bunch of stuff you've saved and tells you to read it today. I try to get through my digest every day, and so I'm actually reading stuff I saved more than ever.
- **It's also kind of a note-taking app.** Readwise's original shtick was to compile all your notes and highlights from places like Kindle and Pocket into a searchable, reviewable archive. With Reader, I can highlight anything I upload, or any live webpage altogether, and everything goes into that same notes archive — all of which can sync to Notion, Obsidian, or other note-taking apps, too. All my reading, and all my notes, now live in the same place.
- **You can… read… video.** I watch a lot of YouTube, for, uh, journalism. Reader adds a (good but not perfect) transcript to every video you save, so you can highlight and take notes just like on an article. Everything gets time-stamped, too, so you can find it later. It's *so* helpful.

- **It’s super fast.** One reason I’ve stopped using Reader in the past is that the app was kind of sluggish. One of those apps that always felt like it was *working,* you know what I mean? But recently it has been slimmed down and sped up, and now it feels pretty zippy — except when it’s loading the AI voice to read an article aloud, which takes forever, but I don’t care for that feature much anyway.

I only have two ongoing issues with Reader, really. One, it’s not the most attractive app; it feels more Productivity Tool than Beautiful Reading Space, you know? (I *hate* the app icon, too. Fingers crossed there’s a better one coming.) And two, it actually might have too many features for my taste. You can add tags, there’s an Inbox and a Feed and Library and a Later and an Archive, there are a million Views, just figuring out where everything goes takes a while. Oh, and a bonus third thing: it’s not cheap. The whole Readwise service — note syncing, Kindle integration, all that — costs $8 a month. Well worth it, if you ask me, but not cheap.

Speaking of: if you use this link, I think you’ll get two free months before you start paying instead of just one. Give it a whirl, let me know what you think and what you use to read on your devices!

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Here’s what the Installer *community is into this week. I want to know what you’re into right now as well! Email installer@theverge.com with your recommendations for anything and everything, and we’ll feature some of our favorites here*

every week.

“I used this shelf app called **Anybox**. This app is a box to quickly access any type of item: image, text, document, and links. The app allows customization for default action based on saved item type, we can preview, copy, share, and so on.” – Krishna

“Watching ***Fisk*** on Netflix. This Australian quirky comedy just released a second season this month. I love the short 25-minute episodes, makes it easy to watch and enjoy.” – Carter

“As you were talking about media organization / collection apps, please check out the game-tracking app developed by IGN called **Playlist**. It is free and I am liking it.” – OK

“**Analogue Duo** baybee.” – Chris

“AI wallpapers on the Google Pixel! I’ve been hooked on **creating AI wallpapers** and it feels like the combinations are truly endless. Going from an AI-generated painting of a mountain and spaceships to a surreal castle made of muslin with different color shades is wildly fun!” – Michael

“Listening to ***The Vergecast*** **podcast** on how Twitter officially died this year and Watching ***Blue Eye Samurai*** on Netflix. I highly recommend it to anyone who likes animation.” – Paul

“If it hasn’t been mentioned yet, or even if it has, you should check out the show ***Scavengers Reign*** on Max. Brilliant and freaky sci-fi wonderfulness!” – Edward

“Using **Calibre** to subscribe to newsletters / newspapers and have them appear on my kindle every morning gives me a beautiful little ‘slow internet’ experience while I sip my coffee.” – Jon

“This week I discovered **Mammoth**, an insanely gorgeous Mastodon app. Until now I’ve not been able to see past Ivory. Also **Longplay** is a brilliant iOS app to rediscover my album

collection in Apple Music.” – Chris

“**Spotify audiobooks**. I know you don’t own the audiobooks after but it is really convenient to get 15 hours for free. It’s enough to get me through at least one medium-sized book each month. I use it with **Libby** and to read a bunch during the month!” – Harrison