



Game Packed With Science to Launch on Earth Day

*New York Hall of Science to Release **The Pack**, a Game That Explores Environmental Concepts and Computational Thinking*

Queens, NY – The New York Hall of Science (NYSCI) in partnership with Design I/O has created an app for iPad, Mac OS and Windows, that pairs environmental concepts with practice in computational thinking. *The Pack* will be available on the App Store for free, beginning on Earth Day, April 22, and will be available for download on nysci.org/thepack.

Designed for use both in the classroom and the home, *The Pack* is an open-ended, digital game set in a fictional world called Algos and filled with colorful, whimsical creatures. “Players use algorithms to help them explore the world of Algos,” says Stephen Uzzo, chief scientist at NYSCI. “In the process, they test and revise their algorithms until they succeed at the task. This helps to develop their computational thinking skills – skills that are in high demand, not just in the classroom, but also in the workplace.”

Game Play

In *The Pack*, the player embarks on a quest to release their friend from a mysterious state of motionlessness that resulted when the environments of Algos were destroyed. The only way to release their friend is to collect seeds that are hidden throughout the world. When the required number of seeds is collected, the environment is regenerated and the player is a step closer to being reunited with their friend. The player must stay close to water to survive, so the barren areas of Algos, as well as the location of the seeds and food, present multiple environmental obstacles to overcome.

To meet these challenges, the player must move water to arid areas so that they can travel the world and hunt for food and seeds. They also need to retrieve food and seeds from difficult conditions. To do this, they build a pack of creatures. The creatures in Algos have specific functions such as dig, move, repeat, hold, grab, seek and bump. Each creature requires a specific food. Each environment has its own set of unique plants, which provide food for the creatures of Algos. The player needs to collect the food to invite the creatures into their pack and to give them energy to perform their functions. Once the player has some creatures, they can combine functions in sequence to perform complex tasks and overcome the game’s challenges.

Developed With Guidance From Teachers

Using an exploratory game format, *The Pack* brings together topics that are in demand in classrooms nationwide: environmental systems and computation thinking. To ensure that the game would be effectively and easily integrated into classroom lessons, NYSCI recruited five middle school and high school teachers to assist with the game’s development and design. A focus group of additional instructors lent further insight. The teachers helped contribute to the concept design phase, prototyped game mechanics, and developed classroom use cases, resulting in a game that supports student learning.



New York Hall of Science



The Pack was the result of research and work by a number of NYSCI staff members, including Chief Scientist Stephen Uzzo, Creative Producer Geralyn Abinader, and Research Assistant Wren Thompson. *The Pack* was created by NYSCI and Design I/O, with the help of the expertise Columbia University's Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN).

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The Pack will be available for iPads on the **App Store** for free, beginning on Earth Day, April 22. Mac OS and Windows versions can be accessed for free at nysci.org/ThePack.

Images for media use can be downloaded from the New York Hall of Science Flickr site at <https://www.flickr.com/gp/nysci/q49s2s>.

For media access to the game prior to the April 22 release date, contact Mary Record at mrecord@nysci.org.

The New York Hall of Science – The mission of the New York Hall of Science (NYSCI) is to nurture generations of passionate learners, critical thinkers and active citizens through an approach called Design, Make, Play. Design, Make, Play emphasizes open-ended exploration, imaginative learning and personal relevance, resulting in deep engagement and delight in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. NYSCI was founded at the 1964-65 World's Fair and has evolved into New York's center for interactive science serving a half million students, teachers and families each year. NYSCI is open Monday – Friday, 9:30 am – 5 pm and weekends, 10 am – 6 pm. General admission is \$16 for adults and \$13 for children (ages 2-17), college students with valid ID, and seniors (62+). For more information, visit nysci.org or call 718-699-0005. Follow NYSCI on Twitter and Instagram: @nysci, and on Facebook at: facebook.com/nysci.

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