Don’t just brush, Playbrush
Improving kids dental health in a playful way

There is one thing that can unite most parents. The clock strikes eight after a long and exhausting day, but the tantrums are still to come. The daily toothbrushing tantrums. Now one small product can make toothbrushing the highlight of a child’s evening: Playbrush transforms all manual toothbrushes via Bluetooth into game controllers for educational games, which are not only fun but also teach correct toothbrushing. The result? Healthy teeth, motivated children and relaxed parents. This innovative and award winning gadget was dreamt and built by two Austrian and one Nigerian postgraduate. Two years after being founded, the team, based in London and Vienna, have already sold 100,000 Playbrushes and conquered 25 countries.
The idea behind Playbrush came from one of the three founders, Austrian Paul Varga, and his godson’s battle against toothbrushing. "He struggled against his parents every evening. He just did not want to brush his teeth”, Varga admits. After lengthy conversations, his two friends Matthäus Ittner and Tolulope Ogunsina found that a playful solution could be built, and they were the ones that would do it. Their solution was called Playbrush: a unique hardware attachment with a coloured rubber toothbrush holder, which attaches to any manual toothbrush, converts it into a game controller.

Together, the friends began building the business in Vienna and designing the product in London. They decided that Paul, who studied biotechnology in Vienna, would be responsible for business development. At University College London, he met the computer engineer Tolulope Ogunsina, who is responsible for the development of the games. And Matthäus Ittner, who studied business administration and international management in Vienna and also attended the IE Business School in Madrid, would look after the marketing and finance side of the start-up.

Helping them on their journey to transform oral health were renowned dentists, including Dr. Paul Ashley, Head of Paediatric Dentistry at the Eastman Dental Hospital in London. "It is important that children learn the right brushing technique early. Playbrush is a great way to encourage teeth to be cleaned regularly, at the right speed and area of the mouth. The idea is very clever”, says Ashley.
Playbrush is a simple concept. A manual toothbrush is placed into the colourful Playbrush device and is connected to a mobile phone or tablet via Bluetooth. There are currently 4 toothbrushing games to play where children aged 3 and above can fight green decay monsters, save the Tooth Fairy, fly planes and even paint pictures. The game is controlled by kid’s toothbrushing movements and built-in motion sensors measure toothbrushing positions, speed and duration. A cleverly designed algorithm measures brushing and ensures that the mouth is cleaned for long enough and thoroughly, and real-time feedback in the form of statistics and a reward system give children extra motivation. The idea is unique so far: "Playbrush is the first piece of technology that uses kid’s playful nature to improve their daily oral hygiene," says founder Paul Varga. "There is also no other solution that works with a manual toothbrush”.

From very early on, Playbrush’s gamified toothbrushing idea was met with great interest. After a successful Kickstarter campaign in 2014, Austrian business angel investor Hansi Hansmann and venture capital firm Speedinvest invested €700,000 in the young company. This launched Playbrush to the point where around 100,000 Playbrush devices have now been sold to children in more than 25 countries - including Germany, Austria, Switzerland, UK and France.

Partnerships, with firms such as German Tchibo or Unilever for France (Signal), have attracted great attention in the health and gaming market. Playbrush has won numerous awards like the Health Media Award in 2016 and the Gamification World Award 2015 in the "Best Technological Innovation”, with reflect the success of the young company.
To date, there are four games available - "Utoothia", "Utoothia Sky", "Utoothia Magic" and "Utoothia Paint". An additional app called “Playbrush Family”, allows parents to track their children's brushing progress over time. More games with a continuing variety will follow. Playbrush is available in blue, pink and green. "We are proud that Playbrush is solely designed and manufactured in the EU," says Tolulope Ogunsina. Every Playbrush also comes with four free games, a toothbrush and a smartphone holder - for a total price of €29.99. And one final very important fact for families, one family can share one Playbrush as everyone can have their own profile in the app and use their own manual toothbrush. For more information, visit www.playbrush.com.
More Information

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Videos und Pictures

Videos: goo.gl/NxQuEk

Rewards and Press

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