



## SMART WOODEN BLOCKS ADD A PHYSICAL ELEMENT TO DIGITAL INTERACTIONS

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**Qleek is a system of crafted wooden blocks that play digital content when placed onto a special reader.**

Consumers' entertainment libraries are no longer stacks of vinyl, shelves of books or even collections of DVDs, as more content becomes streamed through the web. While we've seen creators embrace digital — British band Metronomy recently released a single only to fans [pointing their smartphones at the star sign Aquarius](#), for example — others still yearn for the physical aspect of the music, film and books that define them. Enter **Qleek**, a system of crafted wooden blocks that play digital content when placed onto a special reader.

Developed by Paris-based Ozenge, the kit consists of two parts — a wooden-finished base and small, hexagonal blocks, called Tapps, which slot into the base. Each Tapp represents a piece of digital media — an album, a podcast or a YouTube playlist — and is inscribed with its own unique code that can be read by the base. Users connect their desired device and whatever is placed onto the base is automatically loaded onto the chosen screen or hifi system. Customers can buy Tapps from Qleek, or upload their own media and have them custom made, along with imagery that lets them know what's stored on it.



While the idea may seem nostalgic and even unnecessary, it shows how user interfaces for smart technology can be designed to blend in with their surroundings. Because of their decorative nature, users can place their favorite Tapps in a frame to show off their taste, or they can lend and gift digital media to friends without having to transfer files or send a link. As the Internet of Things develops, are there other ways to incorporate physical objects into digital interactions?

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