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US BOOK PLATFORM GAMIFIES READING

 PUBLISHING & MEDIA

The Overdrive reading app rewards reading with video-game inspired badges and awards

Spotted: US-based [Overdrive](#) is using AI and gamification to encourage children to read. The company's app [Sora](#) employs video game-like elements to create an interactive experience for children, including badges and rewards for finishing books. The aim is to make reading more like experiencing the popular game [Fortnite](#) or watching Netflix, according to Overdrive.

"I actually had a team studying how Fortnite became so addictive," co-founder and CEO [Steve Potash](#) told [Futurism](#). "This is why with Sora we have badges and achievements, and we're actually in the school market, creating social. We're not actually saying 'pick a reading squad and go kill some books,' but we're trying to learn from the addictive nature of interactive gaming."

The result is a platform that publishers are using to add voiceovers, music and even "choose your own adventure" aspects to ebooks. The company is also working on developing virtual and augmented reality elements to books, like giving teachers the ability to insert quizzes directly onto the pages of a book. [Sora](#) is already available for download.

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Takeaway:

Research has shown that improved literacy has the power to lift children out of poverty. Overdrive believes that by using gamification and AI technology to make books more fun, it can turn children into life-long readers. Data collection plays a key role here. By analysing what people read and how they read it — like if children are more likely to read a book if their favourite animal is on the cover — engineers can create more effective tools and enhance the reading experience. Springwise has spotted other recent apps using gamification and AI-based apps for educational purposes, including a VR app that aids learner drivers and a game that helps those with ADHD improve their focus.