SIFTEO CUBES

Forget The 3DS And PSP, These Little Cubes Are Trying To Build A Brand New Gaming Platform

Believe it or not, there’s still a green space when it comes to the video game market.

The TV console market is locked up. The portable gaming console is locked up. So what’s next?

Board games and educational games.

And that’s where these new Sifteo Cubes come in. They were first introduced as a prototype during a 2009 TED talk by David Merrill, Sifteo’s CEO.

It’s a pretty cool concept: Sifteo cubes have tiny, 1.5-inch screens that can interact with each other via spatial awareness. They know when they’re close to each other, to the left, right, top, or bottom, and you can load them up with games that use that new technology.
Sifteo cubes connect wirelessly to a nearby computer via a compact USB radio link, and can hold up to 4 hours of play on a single charge. Our SiftRunner desktop software is your command-center: browse and play your games, create your own with the Sifteo Creativity Kit and find more in the Sifteo store. The included Sifteo charging dock can recharge up to six cubes at once, and can house your cubes and USB link when not in use.

Each Sifteo cube packs a clickable, full color LCD display, a variety of motion sensors and a rechargeable battery into a sturdy 1.5 inch block – perfect for hands of all ages to grab and play with.

**The Positives:**

Spatial awareness has never been used so well in games since Nintendo launched the Wii in 2006. Moving the cubes around, shaking them, bumping them together, feels incredibly natural. It reminded you of playing with Legos as a kid, except the Legos actually play back now.

The games are dead simple. But that's the point. Sifteo won't replace your iPhone or Nintendo DS as a gaming system. Instead they provide a fun, simple way to pass the time. It's like the new board game.

Finally, the technology behind the cubes is pretty amazing. The 1.5-inch screens are far from high-resolution, but the spatial awareness, accelerometers, etc. add a fun and intuitive dimension to simple games.

**The Negatives:**

The thing that’s going to hurt Sifteo the most is the price. The cubes are pretty expensive to make, but at $149 for the starter Sifteo pack with three cubes, plus $45 for each additional cube, a lot of people are going to be turned off.

If Sifteo could get the starter pack down to $99, that would be the sweet spot.

Also, the cubes are worthless unless you’re near a computer. They ship with a tiny USB dongle that plugs into the back of your computer and beams games to the cubes. If you move more than a few feet away from your computer, the cubes turn into bricks.
Games are downloaded and stored on a desktop app. There's a virtual storefront, similar to any other app store, where you can download new games to your PC. Most games cost a few bucks, but there are some decent free ones too.

Sifteo cubes are still fun, imaginative, and open up a lot of new possibilities for gaming. It's definitely a new, green space.