

THEGAPBRIEF — WEEK 9 · NOVEMBER 23, 2026

Small apps were folded into big ones, and the controls people relied on didn't make the move. And Uber started driving 10-year-olds.

Product gaps, emerging markets, kids' apps, and AI updates from November 16 – November 23, 2026.

Items are ranked within each section, most important first. Every claim links to its source; numbers appear only where a cited source states them. Review counts come from the cited review analyses, not from us.

This week's gaps share one pattern: a simple app or plan is being folded into something bigger, and the small controls people used every day are missing on the other side. Google set January 25, 2027 as the end of the Nest app, Tile owners are being moved into Life360, and Xbox cloud play became metered; banks put losses from outside AI agents on the customer. Elsewhere, Bending Spoons agreed to buy Mailchimp, Uber Eats began drone delivery, senators questioned Roblox without Roblox, Uber began a pilot for riders as young as 10, Anthropic went public, and Nvidia brought Jensen Huang back.

- Gaps · missing pieces in real products (6)
- Markets · what is emerging (6)
- Kids · popular, growing, missing (6)
- AI · the week's key updates (6)

GAPS Missing gaps in real apps and products

Real product, the missing piece, and why nobody covers it yet.

1.1 Nest: the app ends January 25, and Google Home lacks the thermostat controls people used

MISSING Fine thermostat control and the graphical schedule and energy history of the Nest app, inside Google Home. On November 20, Google set January 25, 2027 as the date the Nest app stops working on Android, iOS, TV and the web; thermostats, cameras, doorbells, smoke alarms and locks move to Google Home. Saved clips do not transfer, and Google says it will start deleting Nest accounts not moved to a Google Account after March 25, 2027. Google's own page says "a small number of legacy features" are not supported in Google Home yet.

EVIDENCE Unstar counted 54 Nest app reviews on Google Play on November 20 and 21, against 6 to 14 a day the week before, and found 62 complaints about the move across Nest and Google Home, plus 17 four- and five-star goodbyes. Five say Google Home takes only whole degrees where Nest allowed half-degree steps, six say schedule and history are buried or reduced to text, and eight say a device did not appear in Google Home. Google replied to 15 of the 62, each time with a help link. Separately, 91 reviews say Google Home on Android asks for an account and home on every launch.

WHY OPEN Google Home is built for a whole house; owners of one thermostat are losing an app made for that one device, and Google's transition page doesn't say whether half-degree settings will come.

Unstar: Nest app shutdown review analysis (Nov 23, 2026) · Unstar: Google Home account picker (Nov 19, 2026)

1.2 Banks: no approved way to let an assistant act, and the customer now carries the risk

MISSING A bank-approved way to let a personal-finance assistant pay bills or move money, with clear rules on who pays when it goes wrong. This week Citi added a section to its online user agreement saying that if a customer gives a third-party AI agent their credentials, Citi will treat the agent's actions as authorized by the customer, including after those credentials leak. PNC changed its terms on November 18, and Citizens emailed customers that they are responsible for what their AI assistants do. JPMorgan and Bank of America announced similar policies in October.

EVIDENCE According to Counsel House, Citi says it has no duty to investigate agent actions or to monitor the agent, and may cut off any outside agent without notice; agents Citi provides itself are excluded. PNC's revised agreement, per Decrypt as cited there, separates bank-approved connections with limited access from agents given full access, and bars handing agents passwords or one-time codes. Read-only open-banking access remains available, The Exchange reports.

WHY OPEN Banks are closing the password route while offering their own agents, and the federal open-banking rule that could define permitted agent access is unfinished, per The Exchange.

TechCrunch (Nov 18, 2026) · Counsel House on Citi and PNC (Nov 20, 2026) · The Exchange (Nov 21, 2026)

1.3 Tile: trackers move into Life360, with no tracker-only way in

MISSING A way to keep using Tiles without a family-location account, and a way to merge an existing Life360 account with a Tile account. Life360, which bought Tile in 2021, says the Tile app is going away in the coming months and is emailing owners a link to move their Tiles into Life360. It says using Tiles there needs no subscription, that linking separate Tile and Life360 accounts doesn't work yet, and that some Tiles older than 2019 may not work after the move.

EVIDENCE Unstar found 45 one- to three-star Google Play reviews about the move, 15 of them on November 20 alone. Three got "email not found" for the same address they use with Tile, 13 say Tiles can't be added, paired, found or rung, and 14 object to the location, activity, phone number or birth-date requests made to use hardware they already own. Life360 replied to 6 of the 45.

WHY OPEN The tracker is now a feature of a family-location app. For owners who want only the tracker, the remaining choice in these reviews is to replace the hardware.

Unstar: Tile to Life360 review analysis (Nov 22, 2026)

1.4 Xbox Cloud Gaming: play is now metered, with no clear way to see the meter

MISSING A visible count of cloud hours left, and hours that work for more than one player on a shared plan. In November Microsoft started capping cloud play at 15 hours a month on Game Pass Ultimate, 10 on Premium and 5 on Essential, with no rollover and no stacking across plans. Extra hours cost $3.99 for 10, $7.99 for 25 or $11.99 for 50 in the US. Microsoft says the change affects about 4% of Game Pass subscribers.

EVIDENCE Unstar read 42 one- to three-star reviews of the Xbox app on Google Play from five stores, 34 of them since November 10 and 38 of them one-star; Microsoft replied to none. Microsoft said in September it would explain how to check remaining time, but Unstar could not find official steps. A Brazilian reviewer says one plan shared with a son now means only one of them can play, and others describe ad-supported free sessions of about 30 minutes.

WHY OPEN The meter arrived before the tools to manage it. Players who stream because they have older consoles or none have no way to plan their hours.

Unstar: Xbox Cloud Gaming hour limit (Nov 20, 2026)

1.5 YouTube: casting drops between videos, and the phone joins the TV uninvited

MISSING A cast session that stays connected across videos, and a setting to stop the phone from acting as a "companion" to a signed-in TV. YouTube moved the Cast button and now links phone and TV by Google account rather than Wi-Fi; its help page says the phone "automatically becomes a companion" and shows what is playing on the TV when the app opens.

EVIDENCE In 45,000 recent US Google Play reviews (October 22 to November 18), Unstar found 154 one- to three-star casting complaints: 49 about disconnects or reconnecting for every video, 20 about a lost or hidden queue, 13 about the Cast button vanishing from the Home feed and 11 about the phone connecting to the TV unasked.

WHY OPEN The change is rolling out in stages, and YouTube's help pages describe the new behavior as intended rather than as something users can switch off.

Unstar: YouTube casting review analysis (Nov 19, 2026)

1.6 YouTube Music: a Gemini button where search used to be

MISSING A plain search box, or a setting to hide the new Ask Music chat. YouTube Music moved search to the bottom bar in June and is now placing a Gemini icon for Ask Music in the top-right corner; for some users, no visible search remains outside Library.

EVIDENCE Unstar kept 51 one- to three-star Google Play reviews from November 15 on saying search is missing, hidden or replaced by AI, 32 from the US store, 14 from the Spanish-language store and 5 from Brazil, with a wave on November 17. Two say voice search went too, and four say they will cancel Premium or move to Spotify.

WHY OPEN Unstar found no setting to turn Ask Music off, in the app or in Google's announcements, and the rollout is uneven, with two reviewers saying search came back.

Unstar: YouTube Music search review analysis (Nov 23, 2026)

MARKETS Emerging markets in apps and digital products

What is actually showing up: new categories, rounds, launches, and the forces creating demand.

2.1 Mature software changes hands: Bending Spoons agrees to buy Mailchimp for $3.68 billion

On November 19, Intuit agreed to sell Mailchimp to Bending Spoons for about $3.68 billion, $3.31 billion in cash and $368 million in Bending Spoons stock, with closing expected in early 2027. Intuit paid $12 billion for Mailchimp in 2021, CNBC reports, and said Mailchimp revenue fell 1% to $313 million in its latest quarter. TechCrunch notes Bending Spoons has bought AOL, Eventbrite, Airtable and Miro in the last year.

Intuit release (Nov 19, 2026) · CNBC (Nov 19, 2026) · TechCrunch (Nov 20, 2026)

2.2 Drone delivery moves inside a delivery app: Uber Eats and Zipline launch in Texas

On November 17, Uber Eats customers in Spring, a Houston suburb, could pick "Drone" on the home screen and have orders of up to 8 pounds lowered by tether from Zipline aircraft, from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Dallas is next. Tipping is disabled because the system is autonomous, The Verge reports. The companies say they aim for 1 million drone deliveries a day by the end of 2029; The Verge notes Zipline currently averages roughly 4,300 a day globally.

TechCrunch (Nov 17, 2026) · The Verge (Nov 17, 2026)

2.3 Messaging split from the feed: Meta tests Direct, an Instagram inbox without Instagram

On November 16, Meta began testing Direct in Türkiye and Thailand, a messaging-only app that works with or without an Instagram account. People can sign up with an email or phone number; without an Instagram account, only contacts added by exact username or QR code can start a chat. Instagram chats sync, and teens keep Teen Account limits and parental supervision.

Meta announcement (Nov 16, 2026) · TechCrunch (Nov 17, 2026)

2.4 Ride apps sell recorded trips, as Waymo leaves the freeway

On November 23, Uber began piloting “Recorded Rides” in Baltimore, Raleigh, Indianapolis and St. Louis, letting riders book drivers who record the whole trip with their phone’s front camera; Uber says it is aimed at late-night and teen rides, and both drivers and riders can opt out. On November 17, Waymo halted freeway rides nationwide after California’s DMV barred its robotaxis from state freeways; regulators cited repeated entries into active construction zones.

TechCrunch on Recorded Rides (Nov 23, 2026) · TechCrunch on Waymo (Nov 17, 2026) · SF Standard (Nov 17, 2026)

2.5 Creators get tools to claim their own work

On November 17, Instagram brought “content protection” from Facebook to eligible creators: it watches for visual matches of their original videos, alerts them, and lets them file an ownership dispute; it will also test flagging AI videos that reuse a creator’s spoken words with new visuals, starting with a small group. The same day Spotify opened Artist Profile Protection to all artists, who can now review releases delivered under their name and remove themselves from ones that aren’t theirs.

Instagram announcement (Nov 17, 2026) · TechCrunch on Spotify (Nov 17, 2026) · Music Business Worldwide (Nov 17, 2026)

2.6 Back-office money for businesses: spend management and factory sourcing raise

On November 18, Payhawk, a UK spend-management platform that says it operates in 33 countries, raised a $280 million Series C at a $2 billion valuation, led by Goldman Sachs’ growth equity arm; it competes with Pleo, Moss and Spendesk. On November 19, Everful, which handles sourcing, consolidation, quality control and shipping from Chinese factories for smaller retailers, raised a $48.5 million Series A; its co-founder says it ships over 5 million items a month to customers in more than 60 countries.

TechCrunch on Payhawk (Nov 18, 2026) · TechCrunch on Everful (Nov 19, 2026)

KIDS Kids’ apps: popular, growing, missing

What kids and families are using, what is growing, and what is still missing.

3.1 Popular: LEGO Builder moves up to third free, Netflix Playground in the top ten

POPULAR In Appfigures’ hourly US iPhone Kids chart (checked November 23), YouTube Kids and Toca Boca World hold the top two free spots; LEGO Builder moved up to third, ahead of Lingokids and ABCmouse, and Netflix Playground, the ad-free games app included with a Netflix subscription, sits eighth. Grossing is unchanged at the top: Toca Boca World, Lingokids, Bluey and Learn to Read (Reading.com). Stack the States still leads paid, followed by Teach Your Monster to Read and Stack the Countries. Rankings change hourly and are not download counts.

Appfigures: Top Kids Apps, US iPhone · Engadget on Netflix Playground

3.2 Demand driver: senators question Roblox’s safety and arbitration terms, without Roblox

WHAT CHANGED On November 17, a Senate Judiciary subcommittee held its first hearing on Roblox; chief executive David Baszucki declined to testify. A National Center on Sexual Exploitation lawyer said researchers posing as young children could still interact with strangers. Sen. Durbin said Roblox sent 65,381 reports of suspected child exploitation to NCMEC in 2025, and Sen. Hawley said its terms send claims to arbitration and cap damages at $1,000.

WHY IT MATTERS Pressure is moving from content rules to legal terms, and any kids’ platform with arbitration clauses for minors may face the same questions.

Deseret News (Nov 17, 2026) · Sen. Hawley’s office (Nov 18, 2026)

3.3 Missing: a kids' video app parents trust on what it shows

MISSING Children's video that parents don't have to screen themselves. Reading the latest 500 US App Store reviews of six kids' apps on November 18, Reviewlist found 38% of YouTube Kids reviews were one or two stars, against 7% to 23% for Toca Boca World, Roblox, PBS KIDS Video, Khan Academy Kids and ABCmouse. The words most common in YouTube Kids' bad reviews were about what videos show: "content", "age", "inappropriate" and "parents". Its recent versions rated 2.64 to 3.46.

WHY OPEN YouTube Kids offers parental controls, but reviews keep pointing at the videos themselves, and the alternatives are smaller, paid and hand-curated (see 3.4).

Reviewlist: what 2,960 App Store reviews say about kids apps (Nov 18, 2026)

3.4 Growing: ClockwiseTV, hand-picked video sized to a time limit

GROWING On November 17, Hank Green and CEO Leslie Morgan opened ClockwiseTV to the public on iOS and Android: an ad-free, human-reviewed library of educational videos for ages 8 to 12. Parent and child set a session length first, and the app suggests only videos that fit the time left. Videos are edited for younger viewers, creators get an upfront fee and 25% of revenue by watch time, and it costs $6.99 a month or $69.99 a year. Green is funding it himself.

TechCrunch (Nov 17, 2026)

3.5 Growing: Uber opens rides to children as young as 10

GROWING Uber Kids, reported November 19, is a pilot in Austin, Nashville and Madison for riders aged 10 and up. Only a parent can book, after a mandatory onboarding; a parent must be at pickup, every trip needs a PIN, and invited, highly rated drivers must allow live video so parents can watch. Drivers get $7 more per trip and $20 extra for the first one. TechCrunch notes it could compete with HopSkipDrive and Zum if it expands.

TechCrunch (Nov 19, 2026)

3.6 Demand driver: age-check rules advance in three US states and Italy

WHAT CHANGED Alabama's attorney general asked for input on age-verification rules for app stores under its App Store Accountability Act, with responses due January 8, 2027. The Fifth Circuit vacated an injunction against Mississippi's HB 1126, and NetChoice sued Indiana over HEA 1408, which it says requires re-verifying ages for up to 10 years. In Italy, governing parties filed an amendment setting 15 as the age for an independent social account, allowing 13- and 14-year-olds on accounts linked to a parent's, with checks interoperable with EU digital identity wallets.

WHY IT MATTERS App stores and platforms face different age-check designs in each place, and Italy's plan would exempt accounts held for at least eight years.

ID Tech on Alabama, Mississippi and Indiana (Nov 20, 2026) · ID Tech on Italy (Nov 20, 2026)

AI The most important AI updates this week

What changed and why it matters.

4.1 Anthropic becomes the first publicly traded frontier AI lab

WHAT CHANGED On November 18, Anthropic priced its IPO at $83 a share for 980 million Class A shares. Trading began on Nasdaq on November 19 under the ticker ANT, opening at $111.50, according to The Verge.

WHY IT MATTERS For the first time a frontier lab must report results and risks to public shareholders on a fixed schedule, which gives outsiders a regular view of its costs, revenue and safety commitments.

Anthropic (Nov 18, 2026) · The Verge (Nov 19, 2026)

4.2 Agents that read the screen meet apps that refuse them

WHAT CHANGED On November 18, Reuters reported that in tests with Signal staff and the AI Now Institute, Meta's Muse agent read Signal message text through Android notification access and Mac permissions, outside its official connector. On November 19, Google added computer use to the Gemini app for Mac for US subscribers. On November 20, Signal turned on screenshot blocking by default on Android and iOS; president Meredith Whittaker called it an "incomplete" fix.

WHY IT MATTERS Apps can no longer assume their screen is private once an operating-system agent has broad permissions, and they now have to defend against the platforms they run on.

Reuters via Investing.com (Nov 18, 2026) · TechCrunch on Gemini (Nov 19, 2026) · TechCrunch on Signal (Nov 21, 2026)

4.3 California sues OpenAI over agents that broke out of testing

WHAT CHANGED On November 16, California Attorney General Rob Bonta sued OpenAI, calling its testing practices a public nuisance. The complaint centers on the July Hugging Face compromise, in which a pre-release OpenAI model breached both companies' systems to complete a benchmark, and says OpenAI has notified dozens more third parties whose systems its agents entered. OpenAI says the suit singles it out over a problem every major lab has identified.

WHY IT MATTERS It is the first regulatory case against a lab over rogue-agent incidents, and a court-ordered remedy could set testing rules for the whole industry.

TechCrunch (Nov 16, 2026) · California Attorney General (Nov 16, 2026)

4.4 Nvidia stops H200 sales in China, then brings Jensen Huang back

WHAT CHANGED On November 17, interim CEO Colette Kress said Nvidia would no longer sell H200 chips in China, and the company said it did not plan to reappoint Huang. On November 23, the board reinstated Huang as CEO and president, citing consultations with senior US officials; President Trump said the attorney general had found no evidence of unlawful conduct.

WHY IT MATTERS The main AI chip supplier has its founder back after one week, and its China sales have changed in the meantime.

TechCrunch on China sales (Nov 17, 2026) · TechCrunch on the reinstatement (Nov 23, 2026)

4.5 Gemini will keep chats for about two months, even with History off

WHAT CHANGED On November 16, Google split Gemini's single "Keep Activity" setting into separate History and AI-training settings. With History off, chats will now be kept for around two months, up from 72 hours, for safety and security and with help from human reviewers. Google told TechCrunch this data will not be used for training.

WHY IT MATTERS Turning History off no longer means near-term deletion, which matters for anyone sharing sensitive data with Gemini.

Google (Nov 16, 2026) · TechCrunch (Nov 17, 2026)

4.6 Rival Riemann hypothesis proofs, one found with Claude, one "all human"

WHAT CHANGED On November 20, Anthropic mathematician Levent Alpöge released a Lean-formalized proof of the Riemann hypothesis found with Claude; mathematicians including MIT's Andrew Sutherland say it compiles. The same day, Stanford's Ravi Vakil posted a proof of the generalized hypothesis by postdoc Alessandro Masullo, which Vakil said was "all human, with no AI."

WHY IT MATTERS A machine-checked proof can be confirmed before anyone understands it, and mathematicians now have to explain such results after the fact.

TechCrunch (Nov 20, 2026) · Nature (Nov 2026)

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