

Milton whiz kid's iPhone app downloaded 2 million times

Naveen Sidhu's The Impossible Test game international hit

Naveen Sidhu is the creative developer and savvy businessman behind the world's most popular free iPhone app of the moment, The Impossible Test.

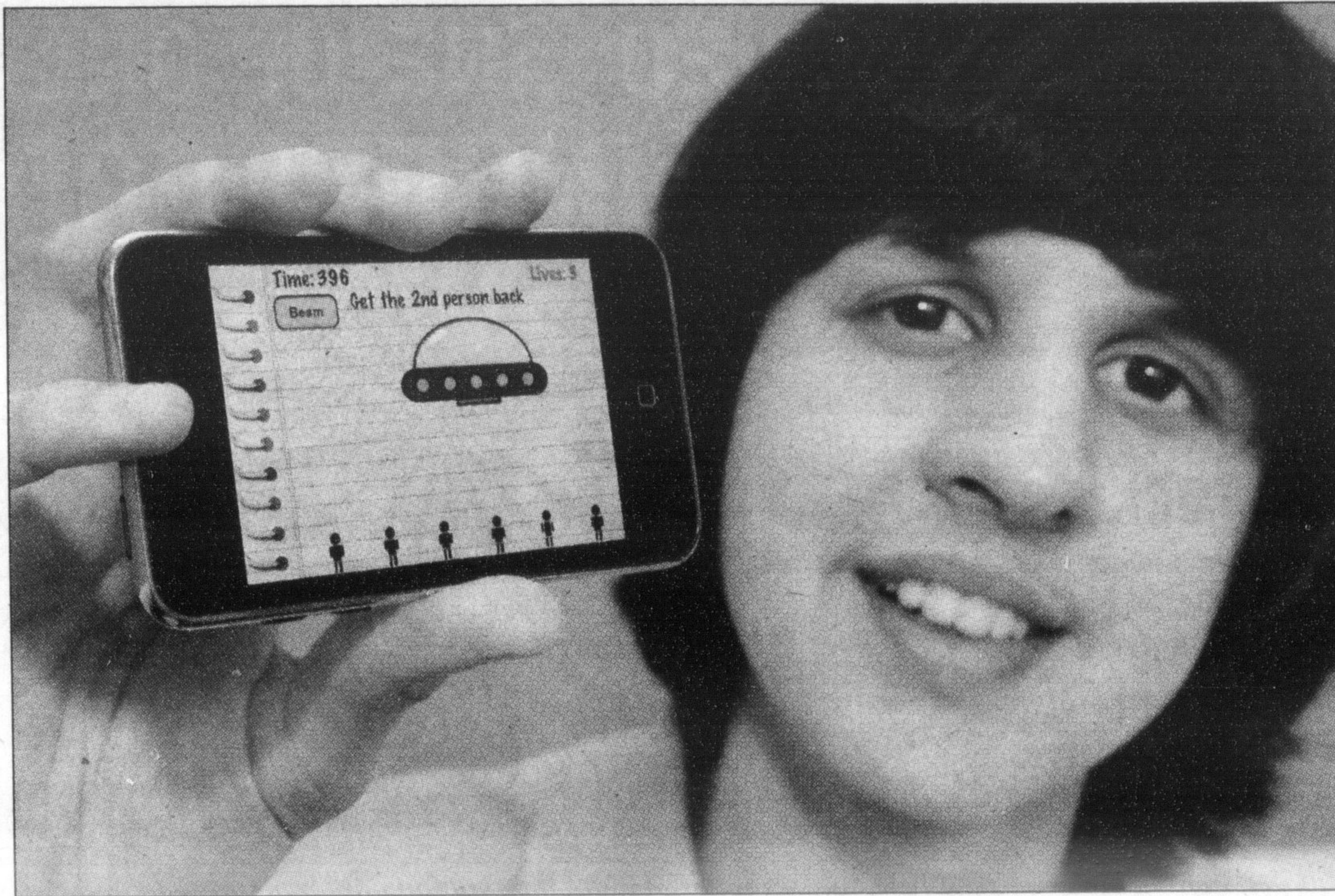
He's also 18 and lives with his parents.

The Milton teen started his own company, PixelCUBE Studios (www.pixelcubestudios.com), and created The Impossible Test last summer. As of last Thursday, it had been downloaded by more than two million people.

The game consists of interactive graphics with random, head-scratching instructions. For example, one question says to "touch the green water droplet" — but the only image on the screen is most definitely a sky-blue rain drop.

This causes some players to shout out, "There IS no green water droplet!" (Hint: Stay calm, do nothing, and you'll make it to the next question.)

Sidhu originally charged \$0.99 and then \$1.99 for the app, which works on an iPhone or an iPod Touch, but decided to offer it free for a single-day promotion on March



POPULAR GAME: Naveen Sidhu shows his iPhone app The Impossible Test, which is gaining widespread popularity.

30. When 28,000 people took him up on the offer, he decided to extend it. Now, The Impossible Test is averaging 200,000 to 250,000 free downloads a day and for the past nine days it's been the No. 1 free app downloaded worldwide.

Despite its name, the game isn't actually impossible. "I can do the whole thing in 100 seconds, just under two minutes," Sidhu says. "But if it was your first time playing ... it'd probably take you at least an hour."

Sidhu's budding career began after he downloaded an app called The Moron Test. "I got it, I played and I decided I could make a much better game than that," he says.

He taught himself how to program with the few written and video

online tutorials available at the time (he has since created his own, which have been viewed 40,000 times on YouTube).

He created his own graphics and tested the product on his parents and two younger brothers. They thought it was too hard, so he made it easier. His mom, Sukhpal Sidhu, thought the game needed some "cute little things" to make it appeal to both genders. He adjusted.

The result was an interactive game you touch, tap, shake, swipe, tilt and sometimes stare blankly at.

The secret, Sidhu says, was how he worded the 65 questions or puzzles. "Every question, I write exactly what you're supposed to do, but I write it in a way that people have to think about it," he says. "If you think logically, it's the easiest game ever."

Even though the app is free to download, users can also buy \$0.99 answer sheets — but Sidhu won't say how much he's made.

Sukhpal says her eldest son gets straight As and has "always been sharp."

"He's always doing these things on his own."

After Sidhu graduates from high school, he hopes to study computer engineering at the University of Waterloo, although he hasn't received an acceptance letter yet. He also dreams of joining the mother ship.

"I want to work at Apple in California, but my mom, she's against it," he says. "She wants me to work locally and live locally. I want to work at Apple."

— Torstar News Service

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