

Bit Age Times #6

(The Newsletter for the Second Generation)

Table of Contents

- 01 [Top 50 Games of the Bit Age](#)
- 02 [Site of the Month](#)
- 03 [Magic Engine - The Affordable Alternative](#)
- 04 [Lamentations](#)
- 05 [Neo Geo Game of the Month](#)
- 06 [I Was a Teenaged Altered Beast](#)
- 07 [Battlesphere Press Release](#)
- 08 [Could it be?](#)
- 09 [Conclusion](#)

Top 50 Games of the Bit Age

If nothing else, my top 50 list has inspired people to write. I received over 40 responses from people who either had opinions about the choices or offered their own lists. They ranged from kind to downright vicious, but we gladly accept any feedback. Here is a small sampling of the emails I received:

"Good to see someone who puts some thought in a list and not just choose the most popular games, cannot wait to see more!"

"Your choices are among the most well thought out and interesting ones I have seen. Good to see someone who doesn't just copy from Next Generation."

"If nothing else, your choices are both interesting and unexpected."

"Your Top 50 list is brutal."

"How can you have Wolfenstein and not Doom?"

"I could throw darts at a list of games and come up with better choices."

"My girlfriend could do a better list and she hates video games."

"Where are the shooters? You can't have a list without shooters."

"I made a list of what I expected the top 50 to be and so far, I am way off. Guess I will be redeemed later when you choose Super Mario Bros as #1."

"I had never heard of Championship Manager, but I am going to find it and see what it is about. Great review and it took guts to put that in the list."

"Lemmings rule! They should be higher up."

As I said, that was a sample of the responses I received. It ran about 50/50 between people agreeing with the choices and people disagreeing with them. So either I am half right or they are half wrong, I am not sure which ;) Now it is time for the next ten choices. Let's see if we get even more feedback as we count down. Be prepared for the onslaught!

#40-Ecco the Dolphin-Mix one part side scroller, one part adventure game and add in a universally loved animal and you have the makings of a winning formula. Ecco succeeded in part because of its appeal to both young and old as well as men and women. The game was mostly non violent (a rarity in the video game world) and combined puzzles with some action and great graphics. Who wouldn't want to control a dolphin? Proof that video games can appeal to more than teenage boys.

#39-Metal Gear-In an age of beat-em ups and constant gun fights, a game came along that forced a player to use stealth and cunning over brute force. What resulted was a great game! Too bad it took so long for the third part and for other games to pick up on this. I applaud the game for trying something so risky when the norm was to make games with more enemies, bigger weapons and outlandish amounts of carnage.

#38-Donkey Kong Country-While the basic gameplay was nothing new (one of hundreds of side scrollers), the impact it had was nothing short of amazing! Donkey Kong Country featured 32 bit graphics on a 16 bit system and made many people reconsider upgrading right away. It also extended the lifespan of the Super Nintendo by a few years and helped to push the sales of Super Nintendo past the Sega Genesis, to make it the top system of the 16 bit era. Plus, it featured a stack of sequels and brought the largely overlooked Donkey Kong back to video game prominence.

#37-Virtua Fighter-Sure fighters had been around long before Virtua Fighter and were quite popular and the move from 2D to 3D was inevitable, it took the success of Virtua Fighter to really push the move towards 3D. If it came out and was a total flop, the quick transition may have taken longer. But Virtua Fighter was a success and the market took off and never looked back!

#36-Thunder Force series - Good balance and outstanding controls and visuals made this series stand out. The background animation on certain levels set a high standard for other to live up to. Series was also translated to the SNES and the arcade from the Genesis.

#35-Outrun-This game is the link between Pole Position and Grand Turismo and racers of today. What it did was bring back the fun of a racing game and boost the demand for racing games. While Outrun may not have added alot of new features to the genre, it did make racing games alot of fun! With the choice of different songs, branching paths you could follow and great graphics, it was just a great game to play and spurred a legion of imitators.

#33-Gradius series - Firmly established the concept of power-ups in a shooting game. It also gave you the choice as to which power up to choose.

#32-Koei Simulators-Simulations and war games were essentially games for the computers. They were mostly based on Civil War and WWII battles and were fairly basic. Then came the Koei games which not only went in a different direction with the Chinese history, but it also added in economic and social aspects to the game. Now you had to not only build an army, but you also had to balance an economy and keep the people happy. There were heirs to raise and treaties to make and break. Each game added more and more choices and responsibilities. Before the Koei games you either had economic simulations like Hammurabi or military ones like Gettysburg. But with the advent of Koei games, you had it all and then some!

#31-Elite-This was the game that bridged the gap between Star Raiders and games of today like Colony Wars and Homeworld. It took the space exploration and space combat game from the crude stages of the classic age and expanded it out. For the first time, you could choose your own path. Did you want to go the straight and narrow and be a trader or live life on the edge and choose the life of a pirate? A truly innovative game and one that deserves to be on any list.

Come back next month for the next group of games! As we run down the list, the choices get both more controversial and more interesting. From here on in, most of the games you will probably know and not as many surprises. But what order will they be in as we delve deeper in the list?

Site of the Month

When I first found this site, it was nothing more than just a home page. But since then, they have expanded it dramatically! One of my favorite third party companies, Cinemaware is back and has a wonderful website to feature both their past games and new ones they are working on.

For anyone who never heard of Cinemaware, they were a company that tried to make video games that were more like living a movie. With innovative box design and great titles that really drew you in, they came pretty close. Plus, they made a wide selection of games that would appeal to any gamer. From the hilarious hijinks of the Three Stooges to the thrilling adventures of Rocket Ranger to the noble battles of Defender of the Crown, they created a large and diverse selection of games.

Here is the URL: <http://www.cinemaware.com>.

Now if we could only get them to do a compilation CD for the PC Computers, I would be in heaven! So go ahead and take a look at a company that has risen again and hopefully will create more magical games.

Magic Engine - The Affordable Alternative!

While nothing can replace owning an actual game system, sometimes the price and scarcity of an item, forces one to look into alternative. Anyone who spends any time on eBay or other auction sites, knows that a Turbo Grafx still commands a high price and many of the games command an even higher price. So if you cannot afford to spend the few hundred dollars it would take to get a decent system with CD and a handful of games,

then Magic Engine is for you! Magic Engine is an emulator that allows you to play most of the Turbo Grafx games by downloading roms. It also allows you to use the actual Turbo CDs on your PC!

Unlike many emulators, Magic Engine is not free. You can download a free trial that will allow you to play for 5 minutes at a time, before the game resets. If you like it, you go to the site and pay about \$15.00-\$16.00 for a key that unlocks it and allows you to play for as long as you like! I personally think it is a deal as almost any Turbo game, with the exception of a handful, will sell for that much alone! I especially like the CD feature as now I can get some of the CD games I want and finally play them. I have already bought the "Dungeon Master" and I am in the process of getting "It Came From the Desert" and "Lord of the Rising Sun", two Cinemaware games that were not available for the Atari ST I once owned.

A few of the nice features of this emulator is that you get full screen, great sound and it is easy to use! I have tried some of the other Turbo emulators and they either only emulated in a very small screen or certain games wouldn't work on them. I have yet to find a game that doesn't work on Magic Engine.

If you are interested in trying the demo of Magic Engine, here is the URL:
http://www.magicengine.com/uk_news.html

Lamentations

By [Fred Wagaman](#)

I began thinking the other day (as some may say, "Why start now?") about the current state of magazines covering our favorite hobby. I was looking over the cast of editors of the Official Dreamcast Magazine and I thought how young they all looked. Most all of them appeared to be in their early 20s. It appears that most of the gaming magazine editors, writers, and art directors are around that same age. I looked at a couple of other game magazines and saw that this appeared to be the case in those magazines as well. And I thought...

Is video gaming a hobby for the young ?

Now I'm not talking about your Nintendo targeted young. I'm talking about the 16-24 age bracket.

I'm a member of the turbolist (<<http://joyce.eng.yale.edu/~bt/turbo/>>), a mailing list dedicated to the PC-Engine, Turbografx, Turbo Duo and PC-FX. A few weeks ago, a thread ran through concerning the makeup of the list. People were encouraged to give census-like information (Name, Age, Marital Status and the like). About 50 to 70 people responded out of around 400 people on the list. The average turbo list member seemed to be around 22, just as likely to be married as not, and if they had children, they were age 2 or under. There were a few of us "senior" members (35 or older), but not many.

After more thought, I think I'll rephrase my question.

Is video gaming a hobby for people without responsibilities ?

As a parent of two small children with a job, house, outside interests and the like, I'm finding I'm having less and less time to spend on my hobby. And I can see that it's going to get worse. Once the kids start getting involved in soccer, T-ball and roller hockey even less time will be available.

I've seen complaints in some of the video game magazines about how awful the state of gaming must be since titles like "Big Game Hunter" and their ilk are top sellers. Or titles like Frogger or Pong are even released. In some ways, I can see where they're coming from. But as my life reaches a certain pace, I can begin to appreciate why those games are such big sellers.

Resident Evil, Metal Gear Solid, Final Fantasy are games that are in my library. They have all been well received by the critics and appear to great games. At least for the few minutes I've been able to play them.

What do I end up playing ?

Quick games. Games that I can spend 10 minutes with and have a satisfying game session. Classics (Robotron), Puzzlers (Bust a Move), fighters and games with small scenarios (Xena for Playstation) take up what little time I have for gaming.

I can appreciate why the Gameboy continues to be a success.

And, if you are lucky enough that your kids enjoy games, you become limited on what they can be exposed to and, at younger ages, what they can play. The N64 gets most of our family playtime.

So what's a guy to do ? I've got quite a few Role Playing games in my library. Do I save them for my retirement ? Do I unload them ? How about those Mature titles ? Save them for after the kids go to bed ? That's usually when I get other work done.

So what about the you ? Are you in the same predicament as me ? If not, you will be.

Fred has been playing games for over 25 years and actively collecting them for over 10. The 2400 + games that he has takes up most of his home office and living room. He lives in Denver, PA with his understanding wife Jennie, his 4 year-old, button-loving son, Max and his newly acquired 4th player, Lynzie. If anyone is interested in starting a video game playing parent support group, he can be reached at fcw3@postoffice.ptd.net



Neo Geo Game of the Month

When you hear people talk about the Neo Geo, they always seem to bring up the game, Metal Slug. Over and over again, I would hear about what a great game it was and how it is a must have game. I thought about trying it for a long time, but the cost of it and the large size made it prohibitive to me. But I was at a friend's store (<http://www.videogameconnection.com>), visiting Mike and he had a few Neo Geo arcade systems set up. I noticed he had Metal Slug in one of them and asked to try it. Let me say that I was blown away! This game is awesome!

When you first see Metal Slug, you will think it is just another side scrolling shooter and you are half right. While it is like a lot of other games where you move across the screen and kill everything, it offers a lot more! To start with, the graphics are drop dead gorgeous! There is tons of detail and you could just walk around and stare at all the pretty pictures. But the graphics are only the beginning, there is also great animation and incredible sound. But what makes the game really special is the amount of hidden things. There is stuff all over the place that pops up. You never know what you will find next.

Another great feature of the game is the humor. This is one game that doesn't take itself too seriously. There are neat animations for people and things as you shoot them (it is a bit morbid, but who cares) and some of it will have you laughing out loud. I especially like the flame throwers. This game is just filled with surprises!

The end of the level bosses are also a sight to behold and some of them are just amazing! Talk about the impossible challenge. Then there is also the ability to have two players and some cool vehicles that you can jump into to complete the game.

If you own a Neo Geo, you owe it to yourself to find this game. Sure, it will set you back a bit, but you should be used to that with a Neo Geo. You can also buy the game for the Playstation as an import. But whatever you do, try this game. Especially try it with a friend and see if it doesn't win you over too!

I Was a Teenaged Altered Beast

Chapter Two

That night I packed my meager belongings and prepared for the long and dangerous journey. I packed a change of clothing, some food staples and the dagger that my father

had given me as a present. It wasn't the best, but it was better than nothing and I had to hope it would protect me from the many dangers that awaited me in the coming days. As I packed the bag, I said a prayer to the Gods, even though I know they didn't bother to listen to mere mortals. I wanted to go to the temple and make a sacrifice, but I had nothing to sacrifice. I decided to instead get a good night sleep. I was going to need it.

The next morning as the cockatrice crowed, I was awakened to be greeted by a scorching sun. I pulled myself from my bed and grabbed my bag. My knees were shaking and excuses were running through my head. I could think of dozens of good reasons to climb back in bed and go back to sleep. I could only think of one reason to get up and venture forth, but that one reason was much greater. The love of a good woman was the only reason I needed. Just thinking about her lovely face and the softness of her touch (not that I ever touched her, but I just knew she was soft as the wool of a baby lamb), were enough to give me courage.

As I headed into town, there was a crowd of people there to send me off. Penelope's parents stood there, along with the prominent people of the village. As I walked up, her father walked over and handed me a sword. "Son, take this weapon with our blessings and use it to carve a path to my daughter and bring her back safe." He then handed me the sword and hugged me. Next her mother came over and handed me a sack of food and drink. Then she gave me a kiss on the cheek and wished me a safe journey. I waved goodbye to the people and left the village. As I walked out, I overheard the local guys wagering on the odds of my coming back alive. The odds were up to 200 to 1 as I was leaving. Nice to see that I have their confidence.

As I walked in the heat of the sun, I tried my best to convince myself that I was doing the right thing. A little voice in the back of my head kept saying "Ugnalia isn't that bad. That is why the God's gave man wine. Better to be a miserable man than a dead man." I almost turned around, until the thought of the wedding night with Ugnalia was enough to spur me on. The troubles ahead didn't seem so bad after that. Rumors still persisted that Antilles the Mad was quite sane before he spied upon Ugnalia bathing. They said that from that day forward, he tried to claw his own eyes out and had to be sent away.

Enough prattle, I had a mission to do and I intended to complete it. But as I came to the Forest of Doom and Gloom (named for the keeper of the forest, a two headed ettin named Doom and Gloom), I started to have my doubts. This was a place that mortal men avoided, but it was the quickest and only way to reach the wizard's lair. It was that or traveling hundreds of miles to the sea and taking a boat around to the other side and then having to climb a tall mountain. But since I had neither a boat, nor have I ever climbed a mountain, I figured I would take my chances in the forest.

So I walked along the path, through the forest. As I looked around, I noticed that there were stone pillars along the pathway. I thought this was odd, but maybe they were to mark the path or maybe they were the remnants of a lost civilization. As I looked at the ornate carvings, I heard the howl of a wolf in the distance. Rumors persisted that among the wolves that protected these woods, were the great white wolf. He who killed such a beast

could capture its life essence and gain great powers. I didn't know if this was true or not, but I would rather stay weak and puny and not have to deal with such a creature.

As I continued the journey, I heard the howling getting closer. I pulled the sword out and held it with both hands. I made sure to have the dagger ready. One can never be too careful. I started to walk slower and keep a sharp eye out. If something was going to attack, I was going to be prepared. After many steps, I heard something ahead. It sounded like a rustling in the bushes. I moved forward, very slowly as I held the sword out in front of me. Then like a flash, I saw the creature of legend! The great white wolf! It leaped out onto the path and snarled at me. Common sense told me to run as fast as I could, but my legs were frozen stiff. It moved a step closer and growled at me. I took a step backwards, not realizing that there was a bump in the road. I fell backwards, just as the creature jumped at me. Fate was on my side because as I fell, the creature imbedded itself upon my sword and the weight of it knocked me to the ground and held me firm. At first the creature howled in pain as it thrashed around, trying to remove itself from my sword. But soon the injuries were too great and the beast's head fell lifeless upon my chest. I pushed the great beast off me and stood there as I saw something that I had never seen before. As the great beast exhaled its last breath, a glowing orb rose from its chest and floated towards the trees. It must be the life essence that I heard of and rose to my feet and grabbed it. As I touched it, I felt my entire body go icy cold as it was absorbed into my body. Then a rush of fire ran through my veins as I felt a surge of energy. I fell over in pain and screamed as my body transformed. After a few minutes of agony, I felt relief from the pain and soon felt better than ever. As I stood up, I felt a great strength oozing through my body. I looked down at my arms and noticed that they had expanded in size. I was buff! But I had to stop admiring myself for a few minutes, because I knew that Penelope needed my help and now I had the power to help her!

SCATOLOGIC RELEASES THE LONG AWAITED BATTLESPHERE(tm) FOR JAGUAR AND DONATES ALL PROFITS TO DIABETES RESEARCH

February 29, 2000

For immediate release:

CAPITOLA, CA -- Scatologic Inc. is pleased to announce that the long awaited BattleSphere(tm) for the Atari Jaguar platform will soon ship, and that all profits from the game will be donated to diabetes research.

BattleSphere(tm) is the awesome full 3D networked action shooter for the Atari Jaguar. The game was developed by renowned Jaguar, NUON, PSX2 and PC developer 4Play, which recently merged with Scatologic Inc. to form the newest industry powerhouse development team.

The highly anticipated BattleSphere(tm) combines the fast-action gameplay of a first person shooter with the nonlinear aspects of a strategic campaign simulator. Also included on the same cartridge are several additional play variations which range from a pure classic arcade action game to a multi-player networked deathmatch mode, where up to 32 players can dogfight for control of the Universe. The game garnered acclaim from players

when it was demonstrated at the World Of Atari show in 1998, and it has received glowing praise from industry leading publications like Next Generation Magazine and

Diehard Gamefan magazine.

BattleSphere(tm) was completed several years ago, but the release has been pending for some time due to the fact that the Jaguar ceased to be a mainstream platform, and the software, tooling, and procedures required to produce cartridges were lost and had to be recreated.



The Mad Bomber of Kaboom



The Mad Bomberman

Could it be?

Many people take on new aliases and start new lives. But they usually have some habits or mannerisms that make people realize who they are. Well, the same goes for video game characters. Take for instance, the Mad Bomber from Kaboom, a classic video game from Activision. He had a calling card of sorts, his bombs that he dropped with wild abandon. Even wonder what happened to this villain of the classic era? Can you say Bomberman?

Think about it. Bomberman wears a helmet, so we cannot see who he really is. Why do you think that is? Sure doesn't protect him from the bombs. Bomberman is an explosive expert, ditto for the Mad Bomber. Both worked solo. Get the picture?

I know you are thinking that Kaboom came out for Activision and Bomberman is from Hudson. Did you think that possibly the Mad Bomber fulfilled his contract and became a free agent? There was no sequel to the successful Kaboom. Or maybe he wears the helmet as a way to get around a restrictive contract. Very interesting, isn't it. So next time you are playing a little Bomberman, think about Kaboom and the forgotten Mad Bomber. He just may be the man behind the mask!

Conclusion

Six issues down and many more to go! Keep the letters coming and let me know what you want to see and what you don't. Also, submissions are always welcomed! Just remember the three basic rules:

#1-Keep is short

#2-Keep it clean

#3-Keep it relevant

That's all! So if you want to see your name in print, then this is your chance. Reviews, stories, tips, whatever. Just email it to me and I will gladly include it in the next issue. That should do it for this issue. See you in 30 days and keep playing those games!

[Tom Zjaba](#)