

## Bit Age Times

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### Neo Guide

by [Bob Johnston](#)

*I would strongly advise gamers with addictive/obsessive tendencies to skip this article, collecting Neo games is extremely damaging to both your social life and to what is probably an already mangled bank balance. It can also however be very rewarding and provides the finest 2D gaming you're going to find anywhere. It was always regarded as an underground or cult system, due the huge mounds of cash required to join the ranks of Neo owners. Times have changed however and it's now possible to build an impressive and enjoyable collection without selling a kidney or peddling your ass on the streets.*

*There are 3 distinct avenues to collecting/playing Neo games: Home-cart, CD and MVS. I'll run through the pros and cons of each briefly.*

*CD: Definitely the cheapest route to Neo goodness, hardware-wise you have a choice of 3 consoles. Neo CD Front Loader, which was the original Neo CD, released in limited numbers (25,000 units and only in Japan) before the change to Neo CD Top Loader, (Jap, US and Euro versions) which is by far the most common. The CDZ was released in parallel with the Neo CD towards the end of its life span (Japan only), it has slightly faster loading times than the normal CD unit. Software is very cheap, most titles can be picked up for \$20 or less (a few like Brikinger/Ironclad run to the hundreds though). OK, so its cheap, but there has to be a catch right? Right, software releases stopped at King Of Fighters '99 so you are missing out on stuff like Metal Slug X/3, Mark of the Wolves etc. That's not the biggest drawback though, the loading times are an absolute bitch on the later releases. The Neo CD has a single speed CD-Rom, you will be waiting up to a minute between rounds in games like Last Blade which IMO completely spoils the flow. The Neo CD itself is a beautiful piece of hardware though, huge, very black and well built with the best joypads ever (seriously). Price-wise you're looking at about \$150 for top loader, \$200 for a front loader and probably \$250 for a CDZ.*

*Homecart (AES): First, let me say this option need not be as expensive as you may think. Games all cost \$260+ when new but most drop in price substantially after release. You can pick up quality games like Samurai Shodown 1 and 2, Magician Lord, Baseball Stars 2 and King of Fighters 94 and 95 for about \$50 each. The console itself is going to cost at least \$150 for a loose system, don't even think about picking up a new machine, when a new one does surface the money involved is just silly (up to \$1000). You should be able to pick up a nice boxed example for around \$200 though. Like the Neo CD there are regional differences but I'll get into that later. Neo games may be expensive but SNK realised that if you are going to charge such a huge sum for a videogame there is no point in skimping on quality. Home carts are produced to the highest standards, inserts,*

cart stickers, manuals and cases all reek of tastiness, not to mention the carts are as big as your head and stuffed with ROM chips so you DO feel you are getting something for your money. These high quality standards are probably the main reason the Neo is so collectable, a mint home cart is indeed a thing of rare beauty. The other reason is, of course, the games. If you enjoy pure 2D gaming this is the best system EVER. Like all systems the Neo has its rare games that fetch a premium over more common titles, it's just that it's much more extreme here. A few rare games include US Metal Slug 1 (\$2000+) and Euro Kizuna Encounter (\$4,000-\$10,000+) Yes, I am talking about a video game cart costing \$4k+ and that is not based on a couple of freak eBay auctions. If another copy of Kizuna Encounter was to surface there would actually be a queue of people with \$5k waiting to buy it. Basically you can get a very nice rack of games and a stunning console for the price of an X-Box collection. The thing is though, it will be very, very difficult to stop there. Your price limit for carts will slowly rise, your other collections will be sacrificed to feed the Neo need and as previously mentioned your bank balance will be savaged. It's not all bad though, the games are very unlikely to drop in value unlike your copy of GT3 or MGS2 for the PS2, you can always sell out and get all your cash back (even make a profit if you have bought wisely).

**MVS:** SNK's Multi Video System was revolutionary in its day. It consists of 1,2,4 or 6 slot motherboards that could plug into any Jamma arcade cabinet. As the name suggests multiple carts can be slotted into the motherboards allowing the player a choice of games in one cabinet. The game cartridges are about the same size as the home carts but the two are not directly compatible. There is no known way of plugging a home cart into an arcade cabinet, although there is an adapter to allow MVS carts to be played on a home system. MVS and home cartridges contain exactly the same information, for example plugging a Mark of the Wolves MVS cart into a home system via an adapter will allow you to play survival mode and access the sound test which is impossible in an arcade cab - cool huh? This is a great loophole if you aren't swimming in cash, loose MVS carts are very cheap i.e. Metal Slug on MVS costs about \$50 (a saving of about \$1950 over the home cart) and can be played on your home system using the adapter mentioned above. The downside is that MVS carts generally aren't pretty, most carts have had a fairly tough life in arcades through the years, you can expect torn labels and scuffed shells. An MVS cart leaves the factory as an MVS kit - including box with matching serial number, flyers, mini marquee and sometimes a set of stickers. As you can imagine these other bits and pieces don't last long in the hands of the average arcade operator. These complete kits are becoming quite rare and seem to be following the home carts into the realms of damn-expensiveness. A supergun and MVS motherboard is the cheapest route, shouldn't run much more than \$300. The MVS adapter for the home machines costs about \$200 but works very well from all accounts. The other option is of course an arcade cabinet, if you have the space this can be the ultimate way to play. An official SNK cab will probably cost \$400+, however you can put an MVS motherboard into any jamma cab (a 1 slot motherboard is about \$70).

Neo Geo CD, Home carts and MVS carts have no regional lockouts. A game from any region will work on hardware from any region. It's not quite that simple though, some games have regional differences. The differences depend on the motherboard/console you are playing on, some games are censored for the US market. A last blade cart (any region) will have white blood and English text when played on a US machine but the same cart will have red blood and Jap text when played on a Jap console. For this reason Japanese consoles and motherboards are more desirable, very few games require an understanding of Japanese to be played (apart from a few obscure mahjong and quiz games). MVS motherboards have an option screen where you can turn blood off or on so it's not so much of an issue.

Many beginners will start with a Neo CD due to the fact the software is so cheap and this is fine but please bear in mind those tedious loading times. If you are an impatient sort you are quite likely to throw your console out the window. Neo CD games often feature arranged music that is superior to the original home cart, which is some consolation. I would recommend going for a loose home cart system and a copy of Samurai Shodown 2 or Magician Lord as a starter pack. And please don't base your opinion of Neo software on the hideous travesty that is NeoRageX or MAME, these are both admirable pieces of software but aren't a shadow of the real thing. Games like Last Blade 1 & 2, Metal Slug 1, 2, X, 3 & 4, Samurai Shodown 1-4; The Fatal Fury series (particularly Garou: Mark of the Wolves), Blazing Star, Pulstar, Neo Turfmasters, Viewpoint and of course the King of Fighters series (KOF '98 widely regarded as the pinnacle) are just some of the titles that are choc-full of creamy Neo deliciousness. If you are a fan of fighters, shooters, puzzle games or platformers you will be in heaven.

On a final serious note please take every precaution if you are shelling out for the rarer, more expensive games. Because of the large amounts of folding involved there are a few unscrupulous types who will try and rip you off. It is possible for example to take the ROM chips from an MVS Metal Slug cart, solder them into a common home

*"sacrificial" cart, print out an insert and manual and try to pass it off as the real thing. Don't forget Metal Slug MVS costs \$50 while Metal Slug homecart costs \$2000. This exact rip-off was perpetrated on an unfortunate individual a few weeks ago. Before handing over serious amounts of cash DO YOUR RESEARCH. Check the forums at <http://www.neo-geo.com> the folks there will be only too happy to advise, these forums are the best source of SNK related info on the net. There is also a useful price guide on that site that will help you judge whether or not you are getting a good deal. It's worth bearing in mind that the prices quoted are for mint carts, condition is hugely important for serious Neo collectors. Certain companies have a policy of stamping inserts and manuals with their logos or applying damaging stickers to the cart and manual. If you ever intend selling your games at a later stage do not deal with these people, a stamped/stickered (usually referred to as "freaked") cart is considered worthless by the majority of Neo collectors. So, ask the seller if the cart, insert and manual are genuine and if there are any stamps or stickers anywhere (incl. the back of the insert) if anything is amiss or the seller seems unsure just walk away. As you can see, homecart collecting has become a bit of a minefield recently and it's quite common for people to bail out, sell their collections and switch to MVS carts. The ideal set up for the gamer on a budget is a home system with MVS converter, common titles in homecart format and MVS for the rest. There are even custom cases available for MVS carts and fan-made inserts to go with them, it's now possible to have an MVS collection that looks good.*

*Currently the Neo is limbo to a certain extent, when SNK went bankrupt the rights to its intellectual properties were bought by a Pachinko company called Aruze. Aruze were incapable of doing anything useful with the SNK licenses (they released Samurai Shodown pachinko machines - doh!) and promptly went bankrupt themselves. Games are still being released (not bad for a 12 year old system) through a company called Playmore which seems to consist mostly of former employees of SNK. Metal Slug 4 was released in arcades recently and the home cart version is due June 12th and will be followed by a promising looking fighter called Rage of the Dragons at a later stage this year. English packaged releases of Neo titles are organized by Shawn, webmaster at Neo-Geo.com and owner of the Neo Store (and an Audi S8, reg NEO GEO - lucky dog). These runs usually consist of about 500 units and are sure to become collectors items. New hardware is being released from 3rd party !arcade! (also responsible for the phantom MVS converter) who are currently developing a mutant arcade MVS motherboard that can be played on your home TV. The scene is still very much alive, entertaining and vibrant - check it out.*

#### **Useful links:**

[www.neo-geo.com](http://www.neo-geo.com) - the centre for all things Neo

[www.hardmvs.com](http://www.hardmvs.com) - all the MVS info you can handle

[www.neogeousa.com](http://www.neogeousa.com) - home of !arcade! and his phantom MVS convertor and lots more

[www.netreach.net/~scop/](http://www.netreach.net/~scop/) - Big Bear's super cool custom MVS cases

[www.neogeoforlife.com](http://www.neogeoforlife.com) - Kazuya's UK based Neo site, great for reviews

*(Bob Johnston is a 27 year old government desk-monkey and video game addict. From the ZX81 to the Gamecube and almost every system in between, the more obscure the better. Currently deep in an SNK obsession and always a die-hard, bitter, anti-Sony Sega fan boy. He lives in Ireland with his partner, a 6-slot MVS cabinet. If you happen to have found a box of Euro Kizuna Encounters drop him a line to [evillittlegoat@hotmail.com](mailto:evillittlegoat@hotmail.com) and he'll come round, murder you in your sleep, steal them and sell the lot on eBay.)*

### **The Online Battle is Coming**

The big talk out of E3 is the talk of online games for the three consoles. Microsoft debuted their very exciting and promising X-Box Live, while Sony and Nintendo showed their plans. On paper, the X-Box shows the most promise, with the headphones, the whole community thing and the set pricing. But as we all know, the best laid plans can go awry.

Once you get past all the talk of broadband, 56k, monthly plans and other stuff, we come down to what is the most important aspects to having a successful online gaming plan. That is simply, the games. Granted, having a strong network that is reliable is very important as is an easy to understand and affordable pricing plan, but the bottom line is people will get online to play games only if there are games they want to play. This is where things get interesting.

The first thing you need to do is toss out the following game genres: sports games, first person shooters and driving games. Every console, whether it is the Playstation 2, X-Box or the Gamecube will have their share of football, baseball and the rest of the sports games that are online. They will also have their share of Quake, Unreal and other first person shooters. And there will be racing games aplenty to choose from. These are givens and for the most part, the differences when playing online will not be that great to really sway most gamers. An online football on any of the consoles will be comparable to the other consoles. Yeah, the graphics may be a bit different or the playbooks

may be more more customizable, but for the most part, there will not be much a difference. Ditto for a FPS in deathmatch mode. All three consoles will offer lots of different arenas, great graphics and lots of weapons, but when you boil it down, they are all pretty similar. No matter if you are in space, the wild west or in an urban setting, it comes down to outshooting and outmaneuvering your opponents and this is pretty much the same. Likewise for racing games, you are going around a track and trying to outrace your opponents. Sure you may be in a Nascar setting or Indy or even futuristic cars, but racing is pretty similar and only real differences is whether or not you can do online betting of cars, game money or accessories.

With this in mind, the genres that are going to really make a difference are RPGs (role playing games), real time strategy games and unique games. These are the areas that will make or break a system. And in this area, the Playstation 2 has the advantage, right now. Granted there are many games for the X-Box and the Gamecube that will feature online play, but we do not know of right now. But just from what we know, Sony holds a sizable lead.

The first category is role playing games and Sony is offering two of the biggest. With the most popular console RPG series of all time (granted it can be argued that Legend of Zelda is) in Final Fantasy, you have instant name recognition and a world that people are already familiar with and want to play in. Then add in the other big hitter in Everquest, the most popular online RPG and a game that has been called virtual crack and you have a one two punch that will be hard to beat. The other big thing is that Final Fantasy XI will come out this year, so it may be the first online RPG to be released in the USA (it is already out in Japan, but with the high costs of going online, it is not a big hit).

Microsoft really does not have any major online RPGs in the near future. There are some really intriguing ones down the line, especially Project Ego, but that is not until next year. There is also Phantasy Star Online, but with it also coming to the Gamecube, it loses its exclusive appeal. The last one could really be a big game, but it is too early to tell. It is a Star Wars Galaxies online RPG. It has the potential to be a real system seller as well as a way to convert gamers to become online gamers. Problem is first, Star Wars games do not have a great track record for quality. For every great Star Wars game, there are two less than expected games. The second problem is there is no set date for the game. While I have read that Star Wars Galaxies will also come out on the PS2 and PC Computer, I think it will work better on the X-Box than the PS2, with the hard drive, more horsepower and the broadband connection. It does not look like a 56k modem game. The last game is Dominion, which shows alot of promise. Hopefully it will make it out this year.

Nintendo on the other hand has the least amount of information on their online plans. They will have Phantasy Star Online, but that is all for the RPGs for now. Granted, they have a large library to choose from and the thought of running around in Zelda's world or even an online Mario RPG would appeal to many gamers, there is no word of anything like these.

The other are of interest is the real time strategy games. People enjoy war and waging it. From the Warcraft to the Command and Conquer games, the demand is there and the thought of taking your skills as a general as well as a resource manager online to squash the unpredictable humans is an enticing thought. To be honest, none of the systems really show much in this genre. There are some squad based games like Socom for the Playstation 2 and Ghost Recon for the X-Box, but most of the traditional games are not there, yet.

The last is unique games. These are the ones that don't fit into any of the above genres. These are important as they offer the variety that is necessary to attract the casual gamer. These are also the area that Sega really missed out on. The most important and most overlooked are the simple games. These are card games, board games and traditional games. While games like Monopoly, Poker and Checkers may not seem like the ideal use for your online time, there are many people out there that would really enjoy these types of games. Believe it or not, but the most popular online game is cards. It far exceeds anything else out there, including Ultima Online, Everquest and any sports games. It is also the one major area that Sega completely overlooked with their online plans. While it may not seem like a big deal, it is much easier to get the wife/girlfriend/mother to agree to an online service to play games, if you have games they may want to play. I don't know about you, but my wife has zero interest in playing football or quake online. She may have some interest in an RPG, but with their large commitment of time, I doubt it. But to be able and play cards online or a game of Monopoly would appeal to her. And it would appeal to lots of other men, women and children who may have a say in how the household budget is spent. It is even more appealing with speech.

While these traditional games are important, it is also important to offer unique game experiences. Whether it be an online Sims type game or a Magic: The Gathering type game, people need choices. The more choices and the more varied the choices, the better. This is the area that will really have an impact, but we may not really see or feel it until next year. I really did not see too much in this area yet. There is the Tony Hawks 4, but it will probably be on all three systems, making it a moot point. Sony has announced Frequency as an online game, but not sure if it has enough appeal to really make any difference. There is talk of Resident Evil Online as well as Grand Theft Auto

Online, both of which could make a big difference, but without any knowledge of when they will arrive, it may be a moot point for this upcoming holiday season.

In conclusion, Sony has the upper hand for this holiday season. While Microsoft does have a great network plan, it will need the games to sell it. And these need to be games that are not on other systems and offer something different. But no matter which system you choose, you will have online options aplenty.

## More Video Game Ideas

Once again my fevered brain is brewing up strange video game ideas. If you remember from a few issues ago, I spoke of my Warriors, Dawn of the Dead and Sega Amazon Fishing games, well I have some more.

### Crazy Deep Sea Taxi

Maybe it is just me, but when seeing the information for Crazy Taxi 3, the words ho-hum came to mind. Same game, different city was another way to describe it. This got me thinking about a more unique way to liven the game up....Crazy Deep Sea Taxi!

Why race around cities, when you can race around the ocean. From shipwrecks to underwater cities to the Great Barrier Reef, you can have a ball in Crazy Deep Sea Taxi. While you may think there is a lack of passengers under the waves, a little creativity can change that. From divers who are too tired to swim, to mermaid who want to get to a hot date to a pregnant sea turtle who wants help getting to the beach to lay her eggs, there can be plenty of different characters to pick up. But that would not be all, there would also be a new type of passenger...the dangerous passenger. By picking up one of these passengers would send you on a unique mission. Not only do you have to get your passenger to their destination in the allotted time, but there would be some type of obstacle to avoid. Whether it be a lobster that wants you to free his friends from lobster traps to a diver who has a great white shark on his tail to a pirate's ghost who needs you to recover his treasure from a sunken ship that is protected by a giant octopus.

With a ton of material at your disposal and a huge amount of sea creatures, both real and imaginary, the game offers alot. From the ruins of ancient civilizations to tuna nets that block your way to imposing sea monsters, there is no shortage of people, places and things to choose from. And with a little humor, the game can be a huge hit! Sounds alot more interesting than another city to race through.

### Monster Hunter

With the huge number of monsters and imaginary beasts that mankind has created, there would be plenty of adversaries for this game. The basic idea of the game is that you get missions to eliminate different monsters. From there, you set up your fee, choose your weapons and prepare to fly off and fight the monster.

The game would have a ton of different missions to choose from. The order you get them would be random and depending on how well you do in other missions, your fame or notoriety would open up other missions. You may start off with a werewolf elimination mission in Europe and if you did a good job, you may be offered a vampire elimination one in Transylvania or a capture a Yeti mission in Tibet.

Once you accept a mission, you have a set amount of time to complete it. The longer you take, the more the mission costs, which means less money for you. Also, your rating as a monster hunter increases or decreases, depending on your success and how quickly and accurately complete a mission. Also, if you are taking too long, they may send in a rival monster hunter to finish the mission. As you land at your destination, you will talk to people to get an idea of where the monster may be and its strengths or weaknesses. You also look around for clues, check out areas where it been and try to find it. You can try to set a trap, hunt it or whatever you want to find the creature. Once you do come across the creature, you need to do whatever you can to take it down. If it is a capture mission, you have to be careful not to kill it or maim it. If it is a destroy mission, you have a little more leeway, but you need to kill it before it kills you or other people. Once you make a creature angry, it may go on a rampage.

The game would probably best work in first person mode. You would have your office, where you get all your calls. You would also have your arsenal, where you keep all the different weapons. From there, you would go to dozens of different locations. From the Himalayas to the jungles of Africa to the Loch Ness, you would travel the globe, fighting monsters. You would even have a trophy room to keep track of all your accomplishments. Here you could choose to stuff the creature, hang up its head or just put a plaque signifying your defeat of the creature.





## CD Games, The End of an Era or the Beginning of a New Age?

One of the biggest innovations of the Bit Age was the introduction of CD Rom games to the video game market. After nearly 15 years of cartridge only games, CDs slowly worked their way into the industry. While the PCs were the first to offer CD Rom games, we are going to look at the consoles. The first console to offer CD was the Turbo Grafx. It brought on some new games like Sherlock Holmes, which featured live action characters. This was not possible before on the very small carts of the times. With games holding anywhere from 4 Meg to 32 Meg, the jump up to 650 Meg of possible space was enormous. Suddenly you could have real voices, full motion video and full soundtracks. The dreams of endless levels and tons of options was enough to get people to take the dive into CD Rom format.

The Sega Genesis soon followed with their CD-Rom. With full motion games like Sewer Shark and Night Trap, it offered players a chance to be part of a movie, or so the claim was. Soon, more and more games popped up as the Sega CD was a big success. It quickly became apparent that CDs were here to stay.

While the popularity of CDs and now DVDs have ushered in a new age, is it a better one? Granted, you could not make games as large and with as many features as today's games on cartridge. It would be too costly to come even close. The Nintendo 64 showed us that while great games were possible, the cartridge was too limited a format. But what the cartridge did offer that the CD or DVD cannot is instant loading games. For a society that is obsessed with fast service and instant gratification, the CD format can be quite annoying. Long load times and constant loading throughout the game is enough to make any gamer wish for the simple days of carts.

One must ask if there is some way that we could fuse the two formats together to come up with one great format. Much like the hybrid cars that use gasoline to charge the batteries, thus making a car that can get 80 miles to a gallon, but do not have all the limitations of an electric car, there should be some type of cartridge/CD hybrid. Maybe games could come with a smart card of sorts. It would act much like a cache file on a computer. It would store all the most basic information to speed up loading. Or it could be a rewritable memory type that would automatically load the next few sequences into storage to speed things up. It would work a lot like RAM. I know that the X-Box with its hard drive has capabilities like this, but maybe with another cart, one that is specific to the game, you could make loads a thing of the past. It could plug into the memory card slot or possibly they could create a slot just for it, either on the system or even in the controller.

While this is probably too far fetched to work as well as too cost prohibitive, it is a suggestion. If you are anything like me, you hate the load times. And as the games get bigger and feature even more elaborate graphics, sounds and effects, those load times will become even longer. While I would not want to give up the near limitless space of DVD, I really miss the days of instant loading carts.

## Confessions of a RPG Fanatic

Out of all the video game genres, role playing games (RPGs) are by far my favorite. I don't know if it goes back to the days of playing Dungeons & Dragons as a youth (yes, I was a D&D fanatic) or my fascination with monsters as a kid (I was a Godzilla fanatic too, go figure). But there is just some certain fascination with creating characters and taking them down into a dungeon and killing all the creatures and stealing all the loot. There is the fascination of leveling up, learning new spells and finding better weapons and armor.

From the days of Tunnels of Doom on the TI computer to Bard's Tale on the Commodore 64 to Final Fantasy on the Nintendo 8-Bit, I have been playing rpgs for three decades and have yet to tire of them. As long as there is one more land to explore, one more town that needs to be saved, I will be there.

Out of all the years, I have come to list a handful of role playing games as my favorites. While there are so many great ones, these are the ones that I really enjoyed. These are the ones for one reason or another are among my favorites. Part is the gameplay, part is the nostalgia that goes with the games. But here are my top ten favorite RPGs of all-time.

10. [Tunnels of Doom](#)-My first real RPG! On the old TI 99/4A computer, it offered all the stuff that you dreamed of in a RPG, but just wasn't available back then.

09. [Final Fantasy VII](#)-While the final boss was way too hard and the spells took too long to hit, it was a great game. I still have to play #8 and #9 (everytime I pick them up used, they don't work right).

08. [Diablo](#)-While the second game was much bigger, there is just something about the first one. I really enjoyed the story and it was just the right length.

07. [Phantasy Star](#)-I still enjoy the original the most. It may lack the graphics and size of the others, but it was just a great game and the best reason to own a Sega Master System.
06. [Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time](#)-While I did not play it as much as my family did, I still enjoyed the game. Much better than the sequel. Cannot wait for the Gamecube version.
05. [Skies of Arcadia](#)-Another great story. I can still remember the first ship battle and the rumbling through the controllers. It was then that I knew I was in for a great ride.
04. [Chronotrigger](#)-Great game, great story and one of the pinnacles of the Super Nintendo. If it wasn't for the re-release of this and Final Fantasy II on the Playstation, the Super Nintendo would have gone down as the best RPG system of all-time.
03. [Record of Lodoss War](#)-I am not sure what it was about this game, but I just loved it. Sure, the fighting got a bit tedious at parts, but with so much to explore and find, it was a great game. And it was one of the few games that really made dragons a very worthy opponent.
02. [Daggerfall](#)-The first open ended game. Go where you want, kill who you want, it was a great game. Cannot wait to play Morrowind one day.
01. [Dungeon Master](#)-Still my all-time favorite game. The first RPG to use real time and it really made a difference. I can still remember how much I enjoyed this game.

### **The Depreciating Life of a Video Game**

One question that I am asked on a weekly basis is why don't I sell new video games? People cannot believe that I have a site that sells video games and yet there is no Playstation 2 or Gamecube or X-Box games. Heck, I don't even have Nintendo 64 or Playstation. It puzzles them that I am not part of the new game market. As much as I would like to sell new games, the bottom line is that it is a very costly endeavor with a very small window of opportunity. I am here today to tell you about the Depreciating Life of a Video Game.

The first thing you must understand about new video games is that they have a very short shelf life. With new games and new systems always coming out, a new game becomes obsolete very quickly. The average video game has about three months where it will sell for the full retail price. Granted this is the average as some games will go much longer and others will go on sale almost immediately (for a game that has serious legs, you have Grand Theft Auto 3, which still sells for full retail in many areas, almost a year after release). But generally, you have a good three months to sell the game. This means that the game you invested in, better sell in those first three months or you will see your profit diminish very quickly. While I am sure there are some return policies in place in the industry, you still have to have a lot of money tied up in inventory. Plus, the profit margin is not among the best out there.

As the life of the video game continues, so does the depreciation. After about a year, the game generally sells for about half of what it used. In two years, it is completely obsolete and will end up selling for about \$10.00 or less. From there, it takes a few years for it to end up for a few dollars at a garage sale, as most stores have long cleared it out. Once it bottoms out, at anywhere from \$1.00-\$3.00, it stays there for anywhere from one to five years, before it becomes collectible and starts to slowly ascend in value. Once again, there are exceptions to the rule. Games like Panzer Dragoon Saga experienced a very short depreciation period, before shooting back up and far exceeding the original retail price. But for most games, it takes a good five years or more before they bottom out. And if you are a game like Super Mario, you may never gain value. While a great game, it is still too plentiful to have much more value than a dollar.

Here at Tomorrow's Heroes, I try to buy games when they reached the bottom. Once they have leveled off, I buy them and then resell them as they slowly rise in value. This way, I have little money invested in the games and my inventory will appreciate in value, not depreciate. So that is the reason that you will not see new video games for sale. The large investment, strong competition and small window of opportunity is too much for me to compete against. I am a small time dealer and happy to provide the vintage games to game players who yearn for games from their past.

### **Wanna Invest in Video Games?**

I get people who always want to know what games will be the next ones to go up. My philosophy is that if you are going to invest, buy stock in the companies, instead of the games. But since I get so many emails on the subject, here are some games that may or may not go up in the future. The only sure thing in video games is that sports games almost always become worthless. That and RPGs tend to go up more than any other genre (with shooters coming a close second). With this in mind, here are some games to keep an eye on.

[Dead or Alive](#)-Now that this series is becoming a staple of video games and with Dead or Alive 4 as well as Dead or Alive Beach Volleyball coming, expect the value of the original PS1 version to soar. It currently sells for about \$15.00-\$25.00 on ebay. Expect that number to double in the next few years.

[Tony Hawks Pro Skater](#)-The original one is all but worthless (selling for \$10.00 if you are lucky) for the Playstation version. One thing to remember is that this series is not only huge with the fourth one on the way, but it also kick started the whole genre of skateboard/surfing/snowboarding games out there. While the genre was around before Tony Hawks, it is his series that really took it to the next level. You may say that the game is too plentiful to be valuable, to that I give you Final Fantasy. Both games are plentiful. Of course you could get the much harder to find Dreamcast version, which is probably the hardest of the three versions to find (remember there was a Nintendo 64 version).

[Soul Blade](#)-What most people do not realize is that this is the prequel to Soul Calibur, considered the best fighting game on the Dreamcast and among the best fighters ever made. The game only gets around \$15.00-\$20.00 on ebay and that price could easily double as Soul Calibur 2 hits the market this holiday season.

[Grandia](#)-While many of the other RPGs on the Playstation have taken off, this one has remained low in price. Even with the excellent Grandia II for the Dreamcast and later re-released on the Playstation 2, the value has remained at \$20.00 or less. And with Grandia Extreme coming soon, this game may just start to climb in value.

[John Madden Football](#)-The first in the series of the most successful sports game franchise ever! Madden is the end all for most football game players and doesn't show any signs of slowing up. The original one was made in 1990 for the Sega Genesis and right now will set you back about a dollar. A boxed one may fetch up to \$5.00. While it may sound ludicrous to you, the day will come when people will want to go back and play the original Madden Football and the value will go up. Considering how worthless it is now, it can only go up!

## Conclusion

Took a month off, but a new issue is now done! Thanks for reading and hope you enjoyed the issue. Keep those emails coming and as always, we are in need of contributors. So feel free to send any articles that you want to write, we will gladly accept them. Take care and keep those fire buttons pressed!

[-Tom Zjaba](#)

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