

Retrogaming Times

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CCAG Show

The Classic Computer and Gaming Show

May 25, 2002, Cleveland Ohio

The Deep Roots of Classic Video Games

The Role Playing Games

One of the most popular and venerable of all genres is the role playing game. This can be traced back to the game Adventure, possibly the first role playing game. While many of the staples of RPGs were not included, like leveling up, many of the staples of RPGs as well as many action games were started here.

Possibly the most famous puzzle in RPGs is the find the key to open the locked door. Many RPGs, as well as first person shooters, horror games and adventure games have used this time tested method of exploration. Guess which game was the first to use this? Adventure! You had to find the right color keys to get into the different castles. This alone is reason for this game to be a classic and a big source of inspiration.

While the keys was important, it was not the only contribution that Adventure made. Another place where contributions were made was in the choosing of different items to complete your quest. In most games of this era, you had a single weapon to use and that was all you had available to you. Not much planning involved. But in Adventure, there were different tools that were necessary to your success. Besides the sword, you also had a magnet to bring the sometimes hard to reach sword to you as well as the bridge to cross over areas (as well as find the first ever Easter Egg). The use of tools as well as the limited inventory would become staples of role playing games. Once again, it was Adventure that started this trend.

There were other more minor contributions, like exploring a maze and having a set goal to complete (getting the chalice and returning it to the castle). You must remember that most games of the era did not have a definitive ending. They would loop forever and ever, where Adventure had a set goal that you could complete. Pretty innovative for the time. There you have it, the roots of role playing games and adventure games in general. There are literally hundreds of games that owe a debt of gratitude to Adventure. If you add in the introduction of Easter Eggs, then that number could shoot into the thousands.

Game Players Lingo

by Twin Galaxies Referees: Alan Hewston, Robert Mruczek, Stephen Knox & Ron Corcoran

A few of the referees/editors from the Twin Galaxies www.twingalaxies.com staff have contributed to this list of game players lingo. Some of these are obvious or boring, but we

wanted to be fairly complete. I've done these alphabetically, but if you think we missed something in part one, LMK and I'll add it into parts two or three.

[Action Game](#) – A genre of games that requires a lot of skill and movement of the joystick, buttons or combinations of both to make your character move or perform tasks. This is sort of a catch all Genre that often has elements from several other Genres contained within.

[Adventure Game](#) – A Genre of games where exploring and finding things is the key to solving the game. Making or using an on-screen map were important features of these games. Many of the earliest games in this genre were frustrating as there was only one way to win – one sequence of adding and subtracting, trading or using objects to continue the game or get past obstacles. This also lead to many of the companies selling accompanying solutions and help guides, or even 1-900 phone calls to ask for tips, to the adventurer who got stuck and wanted to complete the adventure.

[Bat](#) – Describes or refers to the type of joystick a game uses.

[Bios](#) – The Colecovision and other systems had a built in set of start-up routines that must run before any game can be played. Sometimes these can be bypassed, but then the built-in graphics, sound and other features that are stored in the Bios cannot be used by that game.

[Bonus Points](#) - Points scored that are in addition to those normally scored. Bonuses vary depending upon many factors such as: specific combinations of enemies or objects eliminated, collected or ignored; getting the complete set, or the faster the more points scored, or in some cases by a specified time limit.

[Boss](#) – The significant enemy at the end of a stage or level or end of the game. The Boss often fights alone, or does not attack until his minions are eliminated. A special animation sequence is often found at the start of the battle, or at the conclusion. It is almost always a battle to the death.

[Bubble Switch](#) – A common type of (fire) button that uses a bubble shaped piece of metal that can flex many thousand times. When you press down on that button, it completes the circuit between the wire that is attached to the edge of the bubble with one located directly underneath it.

[Cheese](#) - Cheap, repetitive movement or series of movements that often occurs within fighting games (like "Street Fighter 2") and is employed to wear-down an opponent's energy bar via taking advantage of either poor programming within the game itself, or a movement or combination of movements that is disproportionately powerful to most others or against certain enemies and was not realized by the programmers or play-testers at the game's final release.

[Child's Version](#) – A game variation with a speed or skill level that is incredibly easy to play

or slow. This permits almost anyone (children) to learn at their own pace or be able to play longer so as to not get frustrated.

[Cockpit View or Pilot's Point of view](#) - Similar to a First Person perspective, but the cockpit details such as weapons, shields, or attitude controls of your spaceship, race car, fighter, tank etc. are also visible and sometimes their settings can be toggled or changed as well.

[Codes](#) – Various passwords and sometimes cheats that can be used by Game Genies/Sharks, or by the normal menu choices of some games whereby you can turn on the power and continue a game at the point where you left off, with all your accumulated possessions, skills, mapping, or to begin play at the level you last earned the code for.

[Command Ship](#) - An enemy whose attack pattern includes being surrounded by accompanying flag ships. In many cases, the value of the command ship increases based on elimination of some or all of the flagships first, or during the same pass (Galaxian). The higher number of flagships eliminated typically produces a higher possible value for the command ship.

[Damsel](#) – The damsel or other character that you must rescue or save. Usually only a story device and not a character in the game that responds to or interact with your character.

[Death From Above](#) - A classic programmer coined this term (perhaps Rob Fulop of "Demon Attack" - Imagic). It describes the genre of games where the enemies bring their death from above – ie the top of the screen and you are down below.

[Double-Death](#) – A loss of a life is either immediately followed up by another loss, or the programming does not reset the right parameter and another death or complete loss of the game is inescapable through no fault of the game player. Usually this is the result of poor programming or play-testing but can also be done on purpose whereby a specific sequence of actions or moves or moves done at a specific location cause the Double-Deaths to occur. This is a game players bane, and everyone wants to be warned about this type of glitch or cruel joke.

[Driving Game](#) – A genre of games which may be considered a subset of scrollers, but in this case the game is based upon driving a vehicle on some track or surface and avoiding the obstacles and computer generated opponents who are driving there and/or racing against you.

[Edutainment](#) – Educational games that provide sufficient entertainment and challenge that they can be considered games or a form of entertainment as well.

[Emulators](#) – Emulation of a game system or computer system onto different, usually newer platform or computer. All of the algorithms, graphics, sounds, timing, input/output and controls are mimicked as best as possible to emulate the original. Most often done to play games that will never be found, never released, or too expensive.

[Enemy](#) – The baddies, monsters, and many other terms that describe the Antagonists in the game, which you must race against, outperform, eliminate, defeat, avoid or otherwise conquer.

[Energy Bar](#) – A representation of the life force remaining for a character or opponent, which may increase but usually just decreases in value over time. When it reaches zero, the life or game is lost.

[Extra Lives or Remaining Lives](#) – Lives that your character has earned in addition to what was given. Or the number of lives still remaining. Examples are, heroes, ships, planes, characters, Q*berts, balls, turns, cars, robots and many more.

[Fastest Lap/Race](#) – The time recorded in Racing games which represents the fastest overall single lap within a race, versus the fastest sum time of the minimum laps necessary to achieve a completed race. Usually since the machine was powered on or since the game was last reset.

[Fighting Game](#) – This Genre is self-explanatory. The main emphasis is on your character defeating the enemy through fighting actions. Often times the game is a scroller, where you keep progressing left or right with an occasional boss, a change in scenery and style of opponents, but always getting more difficult. Many of these games are easily adapted to 2 or more players which has significantly helped make this a popular genre. Also there are often some finite endings to these games, or the damsel is rescued, giving the player something to strive for or a sense of accomplishment.

[First Person \(FP\) or FPS](#)- First person perspective games like "Castle Wolfenstein", or first person shooters like "Doom".

[FRPG \(Fantasy Role Playing Game\)](#) – More than just an adventure game. In this Genre you can add or subtract characters, chose the role of your character. Develop skills or special powers, collect valuables and/or trade them in for better ones or decide which to use versus specific enemies. All while your characters progress in experience.

[Frying](#) - Crashing a system for game effects – such as flipping the power/reset buttons quickly or at the same time. Usually considered risky as it may damage the system, but sometimes neat effects can result.

(Alan Hewston, Twin Galaxies Worldwide Vectrex and Odyssey 2 Editor, may be contacted at hewston95@stratos.net If you want to learn more about getting credit for your high scores for any computer or videogame, visit: <http://www.twingalaxies.com> Thanks go to a few of my fellow referees: Robert T Mruczek rmruczek@doremus.com Editor and Twin Galaxies Chief Referee. Ron Corcoran sniper75@earthlink.net Twin Galaxies Worldwide Atari & Intellivision Editor <http://www.snipercade.com> and Stephen Knox, goochmd@yahoo.com Twin Galaxies Worldwide Colecovision Editor <http://www.goochman.com/>)

You Know You are a Video Game Fanatic when.... You see the board games, Mousetrap and Thin Ice and immediately think they are based on the video games of the same name.

TEMPEST HEAVEN

by [Daran Michael Blackwell](#)

INTRODUCTION.

Atari Tempest. Glorious Atari Tempest! Without doubt one of the top 10 greatest arcade games of all-time. Has it's simple but addictive game-play ever been bettered? Equalled; yes certainly by William's Robotron 2084, but not bettered. I consider Tempest to be Atari's equivalent to Robotron. In both games the player has the simple goal of blasting everything that moves (in a confined area). There is a need for a technique, but not for strategy!

I won't patronize anyone by describing Tempest game-play, but suffice to say that if you don't know already then a). shame on you! b). you need to go back to gamers school, as you are definitely not going to pass your exams..... Tempest is simply a classic!

When thinking about what the main body of this article should be about, I decided on reviewing some of the non-M.A.M.E. versions of Tempest available. If you have not played Dave Theurer's masterpiece since the 80's, and you want to rekindle your superzapper technique then read on! Incidentally, I say non-M.A.M.E. (the fabulous multi-arcade machine emulator for PC) because for those without the finances/space to have an original Tempest arcade machine (like me!), PC M.A.M.E is probably the best way to play the original version of the game, using as it does the original ROM files for perfect emulation. However, there is quality to be found elsewhere in other releases, both of original Tempest and in newer updates of the game. This, added to the fact that some people prefer playing on consoles rather than PC, makes the alternatives to M.A.M.E. worth a look (actually as time goes by I myself am less keen on PC gaming - but that's another article!).

The following list of versions is not exhaustive. In particular one I have not had a chance to try is Tempest 2000 for SEGA Saturn. The Tempest rating system I use (TR) is: 1 = dire / 5 = excellent. So here goes.....

THE GAMES

Microsoft Arcade: PC / TR=3 / Features only the original version. Tempest is one of 5 classic Atari arcade games featured in this pre Windows 95 release from MS. Compatibility with W95 is not a problem, but I have found problems with W98. It is a fairly good recreation of the original game (as opposed to an emulation using ROM's), but it does not play quite right. The intensity of game-play doesn't grow as it should when you progress through the levels. You do get lots of configuration options to play around with though, and all things considered the Tempest you get in the MS Arcade package is a good one.

Interplay Tempest 2000: PC / TR=2.5 / This CD features two different OS versions of the

Jeff Minter update for Tempest. A DOS version is included along with a Windows 95 version. Both feature the same 3 Tempest variants: 2K, Plus and Duel. I have only tried the DOS version (which incidentally is now available for full download at www.the-underdogs.org), and I can say that it does have good game-play. Sound effects are rough, but the music soundtrack is good. Graphics are true to what you would expect from a DOS game, but you can recognize the enemies that come down the web at you easily enough. Things do get a bit hectic on screen at times though (by the way, the menu screen features some of the coolest background color effects you will ever see!). The W95 version has a reputation for being a little bit bland and sterile, especially when compared to the Atari Jaguar version. Speaking of which.....

Atari Tempest 2000: Jaguar / TR5 / How many classic games have been updated so brilliantly that the new version becomes a classic itself? Not many, but Jeff Minter's original update of Tempest for Atari's last console (the Jaguar) definitely falls into this category. Unlike some other versions of Tempest 2000, the Jag version was programmed by the great man himself, and it shows with all the magical touches that make his games stand out from the crowd, and have made him one of the greatest game programmers of all time. The Jag version is so AWESOME that it is worth buying the console just to play this game alone. The game-play and graphics are fabulous. They scream quality at you, and feature lots of innovative little touches all of which have been put in the game for a purpose by Mr Minter. The sound effects and music are also superb, despite the limitations of the Jaguar 4MB cartridge format. The soundtrack was so good that it actually spawned its own CD release of the music. Perhaps the only negative aspect of 2000 for the Jaguar is the slowdown of the action on screen. When the Jag has to render many enemies on screen at once, the hardware limitations of the console come to the fore, and although the slowdown is not major, it can be annoying. One console that does not suffer this fate however, is Sony's little grey box.....

Interplay Tempest X3 / PS One / TR4 / This PSX CD is the best all-round Tempest package released to date. Here's why: 5 versions available to play all told, more if you count the variations on a theme. Three of these are available to you straight off the bat. They are Tempest Classic, Duel & X. The other two versions available to you after setting high scores are Tempest 2000 and Plus. It's a great version of 2000 as well, not just a tacky version put there as an afterthought. It's not quite as good as the Jag version, but is not far off, and I find myself playing it more and more. Initially the main reason for getting Tempest X3 is its update of 2000, called Tempest X (still following this!). This is in essence Tempest 2000 modified to take advantage of the PSX's extra graphical & audio horsepower. It's visually enhanced by the use of polygon shatter effects and translucent graphics (amongst other things), and this game sure is visual candy for the eye! Redbook CD audio is also featured, and many of the tracks from the Jag version of Tempest 2000 are present. As mentioned, this game has much improved graphics over any other previous version, but it has to be pointed out that there are some graphical bugs present (including a major one during the first bonus round) which should have been spotted and removed before release. A major plus point for Tempest X is the accuracy of the web design. Unlike Tempest 2000, X features the same first 16 web shapes as true to the original. A small detail, but it's nice to see the heritage maintained. Overall I found Tempest X to be a harder game to master than 2000, and the game-play does not reach

the same highs either. Sometimes there is a bit too much happening on screen, and the viewpoint you get of the webs is not always ideal. This makes it difficult to get to grips with the task as all hell breaks loose around you! Summing up then, this is a brilliant CD package. You get every version of Tempest that had been released up to that point in time, and every version featured is at least very good, with some being truly excellent!

Interplay Atari Anniversary Edition: PC, PSX & Dreamcast / TR5 / The latest in a long line of Atari 'Greatest Hits' packages, all of them feature perfect emulation from the masters of the craft; Digital Eclipse (www.digitaleclipse.com). This latest release contains code perfect versions of original Tempest, and new to this release you also get Tempest Tubes (which was a hacked version of the original game, and gives you new web shapes). As these are emulations they are based upon the same game ROMS you would use in PC M.A.M.E. The difference with these Atari hits packages is that you get more options, and an increase in user-friendliness. The Anniversary Edition described here gives you the ability to have the original arcade cabinet artwork around the edge of your TV screen if you want, and add to this the massive library of Tempest memorabilia accessible on disk and you have the PERFECT original Tempest resource. Naturally, as an emulation the game-play is perfect all the way through, the only slight problem with the Dreamcast and PSX versions is that normal TV screens don't always display vector graphics very well. Digital Eclipse have made an allowance for this by including options for screen image quality, but it's a shame you can't always get a top quality web image on your screen. Still, it's pretty brilliant overall though.

CONCLUSION

So, there is my overview of Tempest releases I have tried myself. There is one version I have not been able to try, and that is 3000. This is because NUON DVD players never reached European shores. Now that NUON is dead (even in the USA) it looks like they never will either. Tempest 3000 for NUON is reckoned to be AWESOME (even better than 2000 for Jag). So with this in mind may I make a plea to the good chaps at Digital Eclipse? PLEASE give us an emulation of the NUON version of Tempest 3000!!! Oh, and a version of the Jaguar's 2000 would be good too! In fact, while I am in dreamland (with my mouth watering thinking about my ultimate Tempest package) how about this: Emulated versions of the original, plus 2000 and 3000 on one disk. That would be too much!! I myself would happily pay \$100 for such an item.

It will probably will never happen of course, but a guy can dream of his Tempest heaven can't he?

(My name is Daran Michael Blackwell. I'm a 30 something gamer from England.)

COMMERCIAL VAULT

by [Adam King](#)

Welcome, gamers, to Commercial Vault: The Musical. This month I have two commercials that each feature a weird jingle.

Megamania

My first commercial is for Activision's Megamania, and was suggested by fellow RT Writer Alan Hewston. He figured since he was writing the Many Faces of Megamania (see below) I do the commercial to tie the two together.

Anyhoo, Megamania is Steve Cartwright's awesome shooter for the Atari 2600, later ported to other systems. It's also one of my faves from my 2600 days. Described as a nightmare in space, you shoot at weird flying objects, including hamburgers, tires, bowties, and space dice, which look more like popcorn. The equally strange commercial defiantly seems 1980-ish. It's presented as a music video, with weird images and a band playing on a giant VCS.

Please note I had a hard time listening to the lyrics of the commercial, so the words below are what I could make out. Feel free to correct me if I'm wrong.

"Activision presents Megamania, a new video game for your Atari Video Computer System"

"1-2-3-4! MEGA!

MEGAMANIA! MEGAMANIA!

It's gonna drive you insane.

You got the shootin' design,

you gotta run to stay alive

You may get credit, but they don't get it

It's never gonna let you alone!"

"Megamania is a video nightmare because it's impossible to stop. Designed by Steve Cartwright."

"MEGAMANIA!"

From Activision"

PICTURES:



"Get ready to jam. It's Megamania!"



Check this guy out. He's the one singing this commercial.



This guy doesn't need a ship to fight the evil tires.



"There's diamonds in the sky. That could be another song."



Remember the name: MEGAMANIA!

[Mario Bros \(Atari\)](#)

My next commercial, which many of you older readers may remember, is for Atari's Mario Bros on the Atari 2600 & 5200. Here we find Mario's brother Luigi being attacked by weird creatures coming out of the pipes. This is the commercial where you hear the immortal, "MARIO! WHERE ARE YOU?"

"Something's gumming up the plumbing
Poor Luigi's in a bind
Giant turtles out to get him
Creepy crabs are right behind
Fighter Flies! Jeepers Jipes!
They're all coming out the pipes!
MARIO, WHERE ARE YOU?!"

"It's Atari Mario Brothers with Mario from Donkey Kong, his brother Luigi, and lost of crazy creatures. And it's twice the fun when two play at once, 'cause you need all the help you can get."

"MARIO, WHERE ARE YOU!?"

"Mario Bros., new from Atari."

A magazine as took the same approach, but the lyrics differ slightly than on the TV spot.

PICTURES:



"It's the turtle I flushed down the toilet last year!"



Somebody needs a giant can of Raid.



"Hey Mario! A little help here."



"Aaagh! They got me."



"Where are you indeed, Mario?"

Man, I'd never leave my brother high and dry when he's being attacked by sewer dwellers. What kind of jerk is Mario anyway?

That'll do it for this month. If you gamers out there have a suggestion for a commercial for this column, shoot me an e-mail and I'll see if I can find it. Until next time...MEGAMANIA!

The Many Faces of...Megamania & Mr. Do!

by [Alan Hewston](#)

Sticking with our 20th anniv. celebration, both titles were released in 1982. "Mr. Do!" was a huge arcade hit which has been emulated, copied, cloned and ported to more than half of the know gaming/computer systems - through today. Not to mention its 3+ sequels. "Megamania" was the second of five Atari 2600 Activision titles by Steve Cartwright & probably the most well known.

Megamania

This game caught plenty of TV air time with a couple different "Megamania" commercials loaded with rock and roll music and the game's graphics – pretty much like an MTV version of a 30 second long VG infomercial. The game did not fail to meet that hype either. Although it was a "death from above" shooter type game, it was unique in how the bonus lives were awarded to keep bringing you back for more. After several dozen games you'd still be finding ways to boost that score to make just one more attack wave than the last time. Not to mention that a very achievable goal of 45,000 points would earn you an Activision patch.

"Megamania" is insane!!!! With colorful but deadly enemies; 8 distinctive attack waves; they repeat infinitum; enemies from the left; enemies from above; dropping more bombs each wave; faster & faster they come; to & fro; off the screen & back; changing tactics to confuse you; and hurry to score more bonus points!!! Order by midnight tonight!!!

From the bottom of the screen, you must send one missile at a time to defend the Earth from a horde of weird invaders. Your options were to use a straight or guided missiles (the default). You could not move U/D and had no other attacks or defenses other than to dodge them L/R. Your short-term goal was to survive long enough to earn yet another life (every 10K), but ultimately to make it to 1,000,000 points and roll the score/freeze the game. My PB is 300K, so I'm one awesome game away from getting there. I suggest playing a version with a pause if you tackle this ~ 3 hour tour.

Arcade: None – first created for the Atari 2600

Home Versions: Atari 2600 ('82 Steve Cartwright, Activision), Atari 8 bit & 5200 ('83 Glynn Anderson, Activision), Commodore 64 ('84 Tony Taylor pack-in with Activision's Game Maker)

Categories: Gameplay, Addictiveness, Graphics, Sound & Controls

[Click here to see a cool Megamania ad!](#)

The 8 attack waves of enemies are: Hamburgers, Ice Cream Sandwiches (or in one manual Cookies – but really look like glowing green goo), Refrigerator Magnets (but listed as and look exactly like Bugs), Radial Tires, Diamond Rings, Steaming Irons, Bow Ties, and Space Dice.

Have Nots: Commodore 64 (32)

A pitiful official port for the C64, but this was due to Activision releasing this game to demonstrate how quickly one could assemble a cool game like Megamania. Our UK C64 aficionado Mat Allen gave me the complete rundown from the Gamemaker manual. It included on disk: “Chopper” by John van Ryzin (of “H.E.R.O.” fame), “Archery”, “Doggie”, “Draw Poker”, “Megamania” and “Pitfall”. OK, now I know why I do not like C64 “Pitfall” – its done by Gamemaker. OK, so the C64 Gameplay is mediocre (5) but at least it plays like “Megamania”. Here’s a quick rundown of the problems: it lacks enemies (only 6 or 7 instead of 10-15), the sprites & bullets are jittery; poor sprite collision detection; enemies go off screen and do not reappear; or stay off screen for an entire pass; sometimes appear below you on the scoreboard; the speed is too slow; their shots drop slower than they can move downward (ha ha - even gravity sucks); killer moves – ie they can move all the way L/R across the bottom of the screen and waste you – giving you NO chance; too much bonus time allotted; very cheap one color sprites and hard to tell what they are; and worst of all NO BONUS LIVES. Yecch. The Addictiveness (6) was good enough, but no pause, no bonus lives means no chance to play for a million – as if you’d even want to. The Graphics (5) are acceptable and the Sound (6) good, but awkward & missing effects. Controls (10) were excellent. This poor man’s version of the original Atari 2600 game is available only on the Gamemaker disk.

Bronze Medal: Atari 2600 (39)

The original is great, but improved in later releases. The Gameplay (7) is pretty good, but options and more game elements could have easily improved upon it. The Addictiveness (8) is enjoyable as you can keep getting a little better each time. A pause would have really help in this intense marathon game. The Graphics (7) are effective but boring compared to later releases. The Sound (7) is very good, but no music or enemy sound effects. The Controls (10) are perfect.

Silver Medal Atari 8 bit (41)

The Gameplay (7) matches the original. The Addictiveness (9) is superb – thanks to a pause button. The Graphics (8) are crisp and even more colorful. The Sound (7) is very good – but still no music or sounds by the enemies. The Controls (10) are perfect and this version is available on both cart and disk – but no Gamemaker SNAFU.

Gold Medal: Atari 5200 bit (42)

This is NOT an April Fool’s joke. Those identical cousins can be different. On other games, I’ve documented minor differences at best, but this time it is quite clear that the 5200 was upgraded from its 8-bit cousin. The most obvious are more and better sounding audio effects – like when you die, or the alarm when your timer nears zero and then there’s

the bonus life chime. The chime is sweet – it contributes to the Gameplay, Addictiveness and Sound, so I increased the Sound score to (8) impressive. Otherwise all the other scores match the 8 bit. Wait a minute – the Controls Alan. You forgot the Controls! OK, I hope that I do not lose my credibility, but they were perfect. Activision programmed them well so that you move where you want when you want, or not at all. I cleared more than 8 waves before I lost my first life. So now you know that I don't just cut & paste those 5200 scores without trying it first.

Mr. Do!

Take 1 part 'shooter', and 2 parts 'dig your own maze', and throw in an EXTRA bonus and you've got "Mr. Do!" How many times back in the early 80's did you play "Pac-Man" or a similar maze game and wish that you could be on the offensive? "Mr. Do!" and "Dig Dug" both came out in '82 & are remarkably similar, but probably didn't have time to copy off each other. The most important similarity that was new to the VG world was that the hero inside a dig your own maze was not defenseless, but could now fight back & score points for doing so. "Dig Dug" earned points for digging, whereas Mr. Do only did for digging (collecting/harvesting) the cherries. Maybe we can call this hybrid a collect-the-objects-in-a-create-your-own-maze-shooter. Hmmn. Maybe not. But it fits the bill.

I'll assume that you know the mega hit "Dig Dug", so let me tell you mostly what is unique in "Mr. Do!" The maze is cherry orchard owned by a clown, Mr. Do!. Neither game allows diagonals, only L/R/U/D movement and weapons. The enemies are not deployed on the screen in isolated air pockets, but a fixed number of monsters emerge one at a time from a centrally located house (monster generator). The monsters cannot regenerate, so once all monsters are out, the house becomes a bonus prize that remains until claimed. Upon claiming the prize, Mr. Do is rewarded with a brief freeze for all of the monsters and usually causes the emergence of the Alpha Monster (see below) and his entourage. All monsters travel around the orchard trying to catch Mr. Do, but only along the pathways. Anywhere that Mr. Do travels will become a pathway for the monsters to follow.

Each orchard has several 2x4 clusters of 8 cherries and a handful of Apples. As in "Dig Dug", the Apples could be dropped like rocks to crush any monsters below. To complete a round, your task is to either harvest all the cherries in the orchard, or eliminate all the bad guys. You earn bonus points for collecting (non-stop) all 8 cherries in a clump. The monsters can be eliminated if you hit them with your ONE and only Power Ball. But you must wait for it to reload and return to you – done via both an audio and visual effect whereby its pieces dramatically implode from the edges of the screen to the point where Mr. Do is. The Power Ball can then be fired again in the direction Mr. Do! faces. Be careful not to get it stuck in an infinite loop as it will bounce forever along a path until it hits an apple, enemy, or returns to Mr. Do!. Crushing multiple monsters with the same Apple earns huge bonus points. An EXTRA life can be earned (and the level ends) by spelling out "EXTRA" by getting each of the 5 lettered Alpha Monsters. An Alpha Monster enters the playfield when the score hits multiples of 10K, but only if you need that letter. When you collect the prize all starting monsters will freeze but then 4 (3 on home versions) fast moving Blue Chompers will emerge from the Alpha Monster, wherever he is. If he's outside the maze, then he'll follow his entourage inside it to chase you. Any monster can

now be shot and once the 3 Chompers are eliminated the other monsters become unfrozen. Unfortunately, the Chompers can dig through anything, the grass, cherries and apples in hot pursuit of you and can even catch and eat falling apples - yikes. Alas, once the Alpha Monster is killed, he and the remaining Chompers turn into Apples or disappear. If you wait too long to clear a level, the bad guys or the Alpha Monster if still around can turn into Diggers and come right through everything.

A fourth and final way to complete a level is to collect the very rarely seen diamond. A 10,000 point (free game at the arcade) diamond can appear (N/A on the 2600 & unsure if on C64/Atari) when an Apple is dropped at just the right time/place/height. This is a mystery, but some game player or hacker may have figured it out. There are many different patterns and levels in all the home versions (the Apple 2 boasts 99 levels).

Arcade game by Universal (not the movie company) 1982

Classic Home releases: Colecovision (? , Coleco), Commodore 64 (Troy Linden, with music by John Fitzpatrick '85 Datasoft),

2600 (Ed English '83 Coleco), Atari 8-bit (Tim Ferris '84 Datasoft), Apple II (Rick Mirsky, Datasoft), Intellivision (rumor mill only – never made production by Coleco)

Categories: Gameplay, Addictiveness, Graphics, Sound & Controls

Arcade Sequels: '83 "Mr. Do!'s Castle", '84 "Mr. Do!'s Wild Ride"; and '84 "Do! Run Run". There was also a laser disk game – like Dragon's Lair, for the Adventures of Mr. Do! that was planned to come out in '85 before Universal folded.



Wouldn't you just love to have the arcade version in your home?

Kudos to all the programmers for making sure that no double-deaths can occur. If you dislodge 1 or more Apples and get killed, yet an Apple is about to fall or still falling, there is a pause for your death, then another pause for the apple to fall and then a pause before your next life begins. Yes, I just had to try this.

Coleco and Datasoft versions differ in the gameplay as follows: Coleco allows you to get stuck under an Apple, (move down first then L/R to escape), the Chompers always eat through anything, but can be crushed by Apples. Datasoft Chompers cannot eat through

anything but the Apples (both falling and still); and I have yet to see any monsters become Diggers. Every three levels there's a short intermission, and a similar intermission when you earn an EXTRA life.

Have Nots: Apple II (N/A)

As usual, my apologies – I have no Apple II or CoCo system – so no review. But if I ever get them I'll go back and generate scores for them.

Have Nots: CoCo (N/A)

Coco owners found it to be one of the best games on that system up to that point in time.

Have Nots: Atari 2600 (30)

This version is extremely limited in Gameplay primarily due to the smaller sized 16x8 orchard, compared with 19x9 (other versions) and 12x13 for the arcade. There are also shortfalls with: limited number of enemies; no house for the monsters or prize for you; the final (I think?) enemy emerges as the Alpha Monster, not by some other means; which obviously means no Alpha Monster queue outside the maze; you cannot hold an Apple, it starts to fall immediately; no entourage of Chompers, and no Diggers other than the Alpha Monster; Mr. Do! always faces the same direction so you do not know where you are throwing the power ball; the Apples do not break, just lie there after impact; and probably a few more problems. This all makes for a simplified yet bizarre Gameplay (4) weak, to say the least, but all 4 Coleco difficulty options are available. The Addictiveness (6) is decent with a sufficient (hardest of all versions) challenge and still a lot of variety. But there is no pause button and you'll need to be patient while you learn this game. One thing to get used to that I may not describe so well is that digging causes the entire block to disappear, not just the middle. So instead of allowing the monsters to move in either L/R or U/D depending upon which direction you went, it allows monsters to enter that square from any direction. So the monsters get right on top of you right away – no hiding. The Graphics (5) are barely acceptable, but you can tell what everything is. The Sound (5) is fair but limited effects and music only for the beginning and end of each game. The Controls (10) are perfect.

Bronze Medal: Colecovsision (41)

This version is good and I've played it the most, but not quite as much as the world record holder Robert Mruczek who tells how a glitch occurs every game - near 655K. Around that score the game resets to zero points, but keeps on playing. So if you do play a marathon game, you'd better videotape it to prove your score. The Gameplay (8) is impressive and complete, including the 4 difficulty options. The Addictiveness (8) is enjoyable, but loses a point for not being able to (or easily) use the pause and at the same time have a perfect (use Atari) stick for Controls (10). I recommend starting the game with the CV controller then switching out or using a Y cable to use the Atari stick to play, but it will still be hard to quickly use the pause. The Graphics (7) are effective, but a huge disappointment with monochromatic & bland enemies, plus the Power Ball reload implosion is missing. The Sound (8) is crisp and no effects are missing.

Silver Medal Atari 8 bit (44)

The Gameplay (8) is impressive and complete but could be improved (yes all versions

have the boring 1 and 2 player modes). The Addictiveness (9) is wonderful and thanks to a pause button, you'll enjoy playing this a lot. The Graphics (8) are nice, more colorful than the CV, but still a little fuzzy compared to the C64. The Sound (9) is fantastic with a couple nice pieces of music and all the effects, plus a music toggle on/off in case you do not like music. The Controls (10) are flawless, plus Datasoft added in a toggle for either player (both joystick ports) to use a left-handed joystick – ie rotate Atari stick 90 degrees clockwise – how politically correct for that era.

Gold Medal: Commodore 64 (45)

No Gamemaker here! The C64 is programmed to use all of its graphics & sound here. The Graphics (9) are superb and the Controls (10) are excellent (and include the L/R handed stick control). The Sound (9) is fantastic – with the same music toggle on/off. The Gameplay (8) is impressive, matching everything from the Atari 8 bit. The Addictiveness (9) is outstanding with a pause and all three medal winners have a lot of variety to keep you coming back to try a new strategy or hone your skills.

There are plenty of lessons learned in what can go wrong which should also improve your scores. This version is only on disk.

Come back next month: Just in time for the Indianapolis 500, for the long awaited review of the Many Faces of “Pole Position” on the Atari 2600, 5200, 8-bit, Commodore 64 (1 to 4? versions I'm still counting), Vic 20, Intellivision, TI-99, Apple II and Vectrex oh my. I better start my engines right now. I may also sneak in another driving game, Bump and Jump (2600, CV and Inty) if I get lucky.

(Alan Hewston, can be reached at: Hewston95@stratos.net and here's your chance to help him to obtain some 1982 carts before 2002 is over: Dragonfire & Threshold [CV]; SW ESB, & [Inty]; Robotron 2084, Joust & Dig Dug [TI-99]; Mountain King, Moon Patrol, Serpentine, Protector II (if made) & Dig Dug [Vic 20]; Buck Rogers, Tutankham & Miner 2049er [TI-99 & Vic 20]. See http://members.core.com/~hewston/Hewston_vg.html)

And I'm Better Because Of It

By [Fred Wagaman](#)

Video Games. Huh ! What are they good for ? (Absolutely nothing) Yeah ! Say it again. (with apologizes to Edwin Starr)

Well they may be better than the average person thinks.

I was thinking about this the other day. I'd read an article about how music can affect a person's psyche. How music can be used to promote healing in stroke victims. And I began to think, what practical purpose do video games serve ? Sure, they entertain , but could they be used to help people ?

Why not ? Certain areas of the brain are stimulated when music is heard. Couldn't more areas be stimulated with music and images ? Could even more area be stimulated by music and images and requiring some sort of input ? Even if that input is just a single

button push, why not ? I'm not in a position to pursue a study of something like this, but if anyone out there is looking for a doctorate thesis subject, feel free to use this. Just be sure to send me a copy of the results. I'd be very interested.

But do video games have the ability to improve an individual in general ?

Let's look at sports games. Specifically, golf games. (I hesitate to use the word "sport" and "golf" together, but here we go.)

Golf has a lot of ways to keep you from playing well. Not keeping your head down, or keeping your left arm straight are just 2 of them. Poor club selection is another. When I played golf more regularly, I found that the advice in the area of club selection in a good golf game helped me make better choices when I went out and played for real. I originally found that I played video game golf as poorly as I played real golf. But as I allowed the game to teach me more, I found I did better (not good mind you) at both.

Story time.

Back when the Sega Saturn was a viable machine, I picked up a copy of Sega Rally. I played that game to death. I kept running the main rally and trying to shave seconds off of my time. Several friends had copies of the game and we often compared times.

That winter, I was out driving during my lunch hour. It had snowed the night before but the roads were clear for the most part. I was driving on one of those highway off-ramps that wrapped around 270 degrees onto another highway. Truth be told, I was probably traveling a little faster than I should have been, but the snow had not been cleaned off this particular ramp too well. As I hit the sharpest part of the curve, there was probably 2-3 inches of slushy snow covering most of the road. I could feel the car begin to slide. If you drive a front-wheel drive car, you know you are in trouble if you feel the front wheels begin slide. I was in trouble.

But it was a familiar trouble. Like when going around the sharpest curve on the first track of Sega Rally. Instead of braking (like I instinctively wanted to do), I steered out of the slide, got off the gas, and then accelerated my way out of trouble. Just like I did in the game. It felt just like the game. I credited Sega Rally from keeping me off of the concrete barrier that day.

Did the game make me a better driver ? Maybe.

Can you learn to drive from a video game ? Not yet. But it may be coming.

As the newer machines gain horsepower, the idea of building a realistic city with real-world rules and populated by a realistic population reacting as they would in real life could become a reality. No, Really !

If you've played Grand Theft Auto 3, you see the start of that. Within that game, cars react to traffic lights and other characters drive almost like you'd expect them to.

The hardest part of making a driving game that would improve your driving skill or to be

used to teach driving skills would be the user interface. The controls. I've yet to find a steering wheel that gives me all the information that I get while driving a real car. Or the feel of the car as you sit in it going around a curve. Nothing has, as of yet, addressed that short of the multi-thousand dollar racing simulators. There is a NASCAR racing game at the arcades that comes very close when it comes to the feel of the steering wheel. Once that technology hits home, the ability to learn to drive or be a better driver may readily available at home on your TV.

I can only hope it hits before my son turns 16.

(Fred has been playing games for over 25 years and actively collecting them for over 10. The 2500 + 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 6 year-old, button-loving son, Max and his 2 year-old, 4th player, Lynzie. Your "I'm a better person because of video games" stories can be sent to him at fcw3@mail.ptd.net .)

That's Incredible News Blurb

NEWS BLURB:

ABC-TV's "That's Incredible" broadcasted history's first video game world championship in February, 1983 to an international audience. It was filmed at Twin Galaxies in Ottumwa, Iowa on January 8-9, 1983.

A movie clip of this entire show has been placed on the Twin Galaxies web site for public enjoyment. It can be viewed at :

http://www.twingalaxies.com/Thats_Incredible.html

Sites of the Month

Time to jam you with not one, not two, but three notable sites! That's right, more great gaming for you to check out! So grab your mouse and get ready to click away!

Super Console Wars

Here is one of the best made of the movies on the net. Think of blending video games with Star Wars and a huge dose of humor and you get The Gamepire Strikes Gold! This hilarious video has a ton and I do mean a ton of visual and aural video game references. But that is enough reading about it, go check it out at the following URL:

<http://www.discomedia.com/consolewars/>

Cart Commander

Have you ever wished for a software program to keep track of your video game collection? Are you tired of buying the same game over and over? Are you cheap and want some great software, but don't want to spend money? Then download Cart Commander and you can register it by paying with classic video game carts! How cool is that? This program is chock full of features and really needs to be seen to be believed!

You can find this incredible program at the following

URL:<http://www.arcaderestoration.com/index.asp?OPT=3&CBT=20>

Obscure Pixels

Ever wanted more information about really obscure video game systems? How about some games from across the sea? Then check out this great website that features video games systems from the United Kingdom and New Zealand (a place that I would not mind living). This is probably the only place on the net, where you can find out about the Waddington's Video Master or the Voltmace. So go to the following URL for more info:

<http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~pinwhiz/weird.htm>

The TI 99/4A More Words on Emulation

by [Jim Krych](#)

Again, I would like to thank all of you out there who have sent your very kind and encouraging words about these TI articles! Send me ideas I am also open to suggestions for future TI articles!

As usual, I am the anchor for this latest issue of Retrogaming Times. Sorry about that Tom. I guess I've been quite busy. As I write this, I will be seeing my son soon, so I am really looking forward to that! I am also going with Tom and his brother and a couple of friends to the upcoming Philly Classic. I have a couple of Devastator's made out just for the show, including one with a push button joystick!

Emulation for the TI community has had its share of controversies. Obviously, TI still guards the copyrights. Although, if one does go through proper channels they are more than reasonable, as experienced by me with the Asgard Peripherals Game Card, and PC99. Our "license" fee was only \$1.00 per unit.

VT9 was shutdown by TI early on. More so for the GROMS and ROMS Edwards was sending with each emulator package. A small one-man outfit can't compete against a large firm like TI.

But, much has happened in the years since the early 1990's and the first attempts at TI emulation. First is computing power, second, is the Internet and the explosion of available information on emulation techniques.

As stated in a previous article, there are quite a few good to excellent emulators for the TI enthusiast, on several platforms and different OS's too. MESS uses the MAME32 GUI, which allows for a great deal of flexibility. Recently, SuperAMS support was added to the TI driver for MESS! With some further refinement, they can use the MSX2 V9938 emulation and also have the 80-column features.

Let's face it the hardware does have a finite lifespan, no matter how ruggedly built. And, developing new hardware is not cheap, with all of the associated costs with that as well. Emulation will serve as a great way to enjoy the machine, as well as take advantage of the

features that only emulation can provide.

I wonder what neat demos have been written to take advantage of the speed of these emulators! And now, with SuperAMS support, what large demos will be done???

But, in addition to emulation of released machines, there is also the possibility of the never released machines, i.e. the 99/2 and the 99/8.

The 99/2 doesn't have the complexity of the 99/8, so that would be an easy attempt.

The 99/8, however, entails quite a bit more, with the memory mapper system, the new ROMS, Extended Basic II, the built-in P-CODE, etc. But, it's one that is not entirely impossible, given what has been done already in the emulation field.

But the problem is this, TI never released the 99/8. And they are quite loath to let anyone reverse-engineer the computer. But, emulation efforts are underway, if a little slow right now.

I for one, having seen the 99/8, examined the source code for the entire 99/8 system, would very much like to see at least a MESS 99/8 driver written. And, I am certain that many others would love to play with a 99/8 emulator.

I am not certain how TI would react, especially if a well-done emulator is written, and then passed around first, then the emulation sent to TI. Trying to stop the distribution of the emulator reminds me of the little Dutch Boy story. There are simply too many websites to look, contact, and shut down.

Copyright laws need to be looked at again, in this age of Information. Especially in the field of electronics and computers. You can read a book that is 50 or so years old, in thirty or so more years you may be VERY lucky to still get an original 99/4A to work at power up.

The intent of the MAE project is not so much to provide free arcade games to PC users, as it is to be a way to preserve technological history. When you emulate a 15-20 year-old machine, there doesn't seem to be so much trouble, only when you emulate a very new system, do you have the Empire sending Darth Vader and the Storm Troopers down your alley.

In short, I think that for the sake of technological history, and a real way to play "what if", emulate the 99/8!

Musings from the Yahoo Group:

Different RGB Monitors. Big Grin here!

New front-end for MESS

SAMS schematics wanted

TIM questions

Volunteers wanted for converting disks!

(Hi, my name is Jim W. Krych. I am a 32 year-old electronics technician. My products that I currently work on are the SMU models 236,237, and 238. I am also a 13+ year veteran of both the USCG, active, and the Ohio Army National Guard, reserve with B Co. 112th engineers. I can be reached at: jwkrych@adelphia.net or jwkrych@n2net.net I have a two-year-old son, Treyton, and he is the CEO of Treyonics! I have founded my own business and, of course, I named the company after my son Treyton! Our product is the Treyonics Home Controller System Model 9908. Better known as the...

Devastator

"Serious Gaming")

Letters to the Editor

Time to answer a few more of the interesting letters that are electronically sent to me. Enjoy as I try to answer to questions of a gaming community.

Do American Commodore 64 carts work on a European system? signed C64 fan

This was one that I did not know. So I consulted the all wise Classic Game Newsgroup and the answer was a resounding "YES"! Great to know there is a place you can go, where everybody knows your name....wait that's Cheers. I mean it is great to be able and go to a place where just about anything can be answered.

Was the Colecovision, Coleco's only game system?

Depends on how you define game system. If it is a system that plays games, you could list some of the different pong systems like the Telstar. Also, there is the Coleco Adam computer, which could play Colecovision carts as well as the data packs from Coleco.

What was the first handheld video game? The earliest one that I can find is Auto Race from Mattel, made in 1976. Was there anything older?

That is a good question and one that I am not sure of. So readers of this here newsletter, can you tell me what was the first of the video game handhelds?

Phillyclassic Preview

With less than a week from the start of the biggest video game show in the East, I thought I would take this time to give you a little preview of what I am bringing to the show. I should have a total of 5,000 items at the show. This includes loose and boxed games, loose manuals, overlays and boxes as well as some other items, like a big selection of handhelds and tabletops. Here is a brief rundown of some of the items:

-Atari 2600 Loose and Boxed Games, manuals and empty boxes

- Atari 5200 Loose and Boxed Games, manuals and overlays
- Atari 7800 Loose and Boxed Games, manuals and empty boxes
- Intellivision Loose and Boxed Games, manuals, overlays and empty boxes
- Colecovision Loose and Boxed Games, manuals and overlays
- Odyssey 2 Loose and Boxed Games and manuals
- Nintendo 8-Bit Loose and Boxed Games, manuals and empty boxes
- Super Nintendo Loose and Boxed Games, manuals and empty boxes
- Sega Genesis Loose and Boxed Games and manuals
- Nintendo Gameboy manuals
- Sony Playstation manuals
- Over 30 tabletops and handhelds, including a full set of the Coleco tabletops
- Some unique items like classic game cups, glasses and more

By the way, my table will be right next to Jim Krych, who will have his Devastator joystick on display and set up to play! Also, we will have a television and VCR set up with classic video game cartoons playing. These include Dragon's Lair, Saturday Morning Supercade and Pacman! There may be some other surprises as well! So stop over and check out the huge selection of games and more. All will be in alphabetical order and everything will be priced, so shopping will be easy for you.

Conclusion

Even in the midst of all the work I have been doing to get ready for Phillyclassic, I still found time to get out another issue of Retrogaming Times. I know that I did not contribute as much as I usually do, but with so many great contributions, I do not need to!

Look for a new issue of Bit Age Times to come out. It may be a few days late as I will be just getting back from Phillyclassic, but part of it is already done.

Also, you can read my video game reviews at the following website, [Gaming World X](http://www.gamingworldx.com) (<http://www.gamingworldx.com>). My Playstation 2 review of Drakan should be up shortly and a review of Wizardry will be up soon. You can also check out some articles that I have written for [MacEdition](http://www.macedition.com) (<http://www.macedition.com>).

See you at Phillyclassic and keep gaming!

-[Tom Zjaba](#)

This issue was done while listening to the Pacman Fever CD (trying to get into the spirit for Phillyclassic) as well as Nimoy's timeless classic, "The Ballad of Bilbo Baggins."