

# Retrogaming Times

## Monthly

Issue #50 - July 2008

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### Attract Mode

by [Scott Jacobi](#)

I'd like to start off by giving a heart-felt thank you to all of you who wrote to me in response to last month's attract mode, and letting us know how much you love the publication, and how you don't want it to disappear. Don't worry, RTM isn't going anywhere for the foreseeable future. With that said, I'd like to present our very first guest editorial, written by Bobby Lyle, aka "retro junkie".

I have been playing video games for years. The first home console that I played as a teen was "Pong" hooked up to an old Black and white TV. And I have become hooked on the past, not for nostalgic reasons, but because of the great simple gaming goodness that can be found there. With RTM I find some of the game titles that I did not know existed. I find myself searching for them and purchasing for my own game library.

The old school "Space Shoot'em up" or "SHMUP" is my favorite gentry of video games. I can not get enough of that retro, shoot everything in sight, tons of power ups, lets get that higher score, survival game play. From the bad to the greatest I have tried to find and play them all. And I have found some real gems in the process. From the early Commodore 64, NES, or Sega Master System, to the present day DS, if it has an old school type SHMUP release I will try to obtain it.

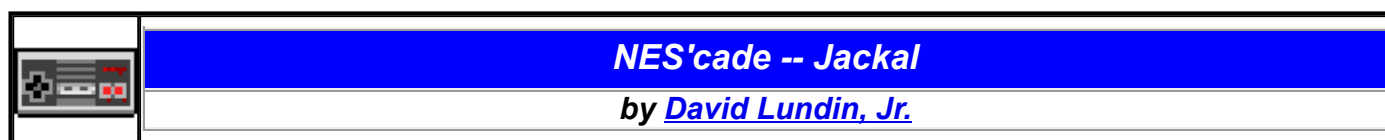
I can remember my first experience with a SHMUP on the Commodore 64. It was there that I first discovered the thrill. Really some of those were home conversions of arcade games like Defender. Those vague memories are also filled with the first Gameboy versions of Gadius. The Turbo Grafx 16 / PC engine became my favorite gaming system, and still is, because of the tons of SHMUPs that fill its game library. The consoles that stand out in my mind, with my favorite shooters, are the NES, Turbo Grafx 16, SNES, Neo Geo CD, and Sega Genesis. And I do love the Jaguar's updated versions of Tempest and Defender. I do acknowledge that the Saturn, Dreamcast, PlayStation 1 & 2, and the Gamecube have their place, but they have very few of the classics that I cut my teeth on. Games that I still play today for example, like Stun Runner on the Lynx, in which I can spend hours on, or Gyruss on the NES, etc.

The gauntlet is filled with the Gadius series, R-type, Blazing Lasers, Thunder Force series, Gun Nac, Crisis Force, Gate of Thunder, W-Ring, Life Force, Zanac, Space Mega Force, Side Arms, Raiden, Paranoia, Last Resort, Super Star Soldier, Rabio Lepus Special, Tatsujin, Tempest 2000, Defender, Super R-Type, and many more, the list is huge. I can still, and do, pick up and play with the same full enjoyment that I did back in the day when they were fresh and new.

And with each generation of newer and more powerful technological leaps in console gaming, I find myself gravitating back to these simple pick me up and play games. I seem to find more satisfaction in these retro blasts from the past than in the modern complex play mechanics found in the present day offerings. That simple adrenaline pushing challenging game play, pushing myself to beat my own high score, dodging and fighting my way to that next boss, grabbing those power ups for that different weapon or for that full potential extreme blast, has gotten me totally addicted. And you, most of the time, only use one or two buttons on that game pad. Sheer genius programing in game play mechanics. And no fancy graphics are needed, only enough to create the atmosphere and to complement the game play.

These games, for me, seem to be timeless gaming fun. Many young modern day gamers will probably never experience many of those classics, or simply don't get it. One lone tiny prototype battle space cruiser against a vast alien armada bent on annihilating our part of the galaxy. They really don't have a clue as to what they are missing. I cherish those memories and relive them as often as I can.

Thank you very much retro junkie. If you'd like to see your guest editorial printed here, please submit them to me. Enjoy the issue!



Games based upon war have always been a core component of the video game industry as a whole. Shoot or be shot has been a fundamental mechanic dating back to some of the earliest video games \both in the arcade and in the home and continues on to this day. One could argue that this is a greater reflection of humanity being based around war and conquest. Or that the natural world instincts of survival of the fittest permeate into all things. However that's something else entirely since we're here to play some video games and have some fun. Konami became known early on as one of the top innovators and refiners of the shooting genre, with games that featured fast action game play along with fluid graphics and memorable sound. While their run and gun opus, Contra, was still a year away, 1986 wasn't without its stellar arcade titles. Building on their already popular catalog of arcade hits Konami offered up a more down to Earth take on combat with Jackal, released in North American arcades as Top Gunner.

Jackal enlisted players in the role of a pair of soldiers in a jeep, dropped behind enemy lines via helicopter. Your mission: rescue your comrades who are being held as prisoners of war. Along the way small helicopter landing pads will be staffed by rescue helicopters to carry away your freed brothers-in-arms. Be careful though, since you're going in as a small invasion and rescue force you'll be up against the entire might of the opposing army. Each jeep is equipped with both a primary and secondary weapon. The primary weapon is a rapid fire machine gun which always shoots upward. It has limited range and firepower, however due to its quick rate of fire it is an indispensable tool for grinding through the masses of enemy soldiers. Also since it always shoots upward it can be used as a strafing weapon while the jeep is driven to the left and right. The secondary weapon is an upgradable explosive projectile. It begins as pineapple grenades which while fire slower and a shorter distance than the machine gun, cause much more damage. The grenades can be upgraded to missiles which fire faster and have greater range. The missiles can in turn be upgraded a couple times, increasing their final blast radius with each upgrade. Only explosive projectiles can be used to blow open buildings which will then allow the rescue of the P.O.W.'s inside. Special P.O.W.'s will upgrade your weapons and of course transporting P.O.W.'s to the rescue helicopters is the best way to gain massive bonus points. Two years after charging through the blockades of the arcade, Jackal appeared on the NES but not without quite a few changes.

Let's start off with what remained faithful to the arcade original. The first thing most players remember about Jackal is the music, that one of a kind tune that plays during the introduction screen and during the first stage. This is completely intact and many will take to the NES instrument reworking more so than the original soundtrack. Control is handled exactly as it was originally with the directional pad replacing the joystick for jeep movement. The B Button fires the machine gun, straight up as in the arcade, and the A Button launches your current explosive projectile. As for the projectiles, they follow suit as they did in the

arcade for the most part although the blast radius upgrading behaves just slightly different. Movement and firing are fast and accurate although while the jeep tends to respond faster on the NES, due to fewer frames of animation for it backing up and turning around, the machine gun doesn't fire as fast as it did in the arcade when the button is held down. P.O.W.'s are rescued in the same way by blowing open their prison buildings, parking out in front to pick them up and depositing them at helicopter landing pads.



Now there are more than a few differences between the arcade original and the NES conversion. While these differences may seem vast, both games stick to the same game play formula and objectives. In that way, they both still feel as cut from the same cloth and don't seem out of place when played back to back. Sure, things are different, but it all flows together much the same way. Originally Jackal played as one long continuous battle from the insertion point to the final base at the very end. There were no breaks, no intermissions, no bonus rounds, no moments to cool off or anything of the like. It was a hard and fast assault from beginning to end. Sure, the music would change as different parts of the game were entered but it was still one long fight. On the NES the game was reworked to fit better for a sit down at home title. The biggest change is the addition of boss battles and clearly separated stages. I suppose this bows a little more toward the convention of games on the NES but it also helps define game play goals and provide objective beyond the high score. After each boss is defeated the introduction screen is presented again with the player's jeep advancing up to the next area. In the arcade original this is only shown at the start and after completing the entire game or to show progress after Game Over. Originally there was only one boss, the fortress at the end. However on the NES you get a variety of different bosses that require different techniques to defeat. Yes, some of them sit a little more on the fantasy side of enemy design, almost looking like something out of Gadius, but for the most part they do nothing but enhance the challenge and variety. Also little intermission screens have been added after the boss battles which allow the player a welcome rest in the action. While the level designs maintain the same basic theming between both versions, the NES conversion takes more liberties due to the addition of separate stages so there's a little more variety in the terrain.

However the biggest change is the removal of large shrapnel in the NES version. Originally when tanks and gun turrets were destroyed they'd explode but leave behind a mass of rubble that would then explode shortly after. The charred remains as well as the second explosion would take out your jeep so you had to be careful to wait for it to disperse. On the NES this has been done away with as what shrapnel there is doesn't damage your jeep. True it makes the game a little easier but I find it a more enjoyable experience with this more forgiving rework. Nice graphic details abound that make every attempt to stay true to the original given limitations of the NES hardware. The biggest compromise has to do with color richness. The super detailed structures and enemies of the original are downgraded to more bland colors that bleed together but are still distinguishable due to their outlines. Enemy soldiers can still be run over with your jeep rather than shooting them, thankfully something Nintendo didn't sensor out. Also enemy soldiers flash before firing which is a nice touch that alerts the player to watch for fire, if they are planning on running a soldier down with the jeep. I also enjoy seeing the rescue helicopters fly over the battlefield shortly before appearing at a landing pad up ahead. This not only adds some authenticity to the mission, it also lets the

player know that a drop off point is coming up shortly.

A lot of the casual gamers I've talked to over the years fondly remember Jackal when we start talking about the NES. This always surprises me because it's rare to find this game on many top ten lists or things of the like. It would seem that Jackal is simply one of the forgotten treasures of the NES platform, more than likely a casualty of Konami's success with the Contra and Castlevania franchises, both from around the same time. The name change could of had something to do with it as well as it's not directly linked by name to the arcade title most North American arcade patrons would have seen. Most seem to remember Jackal by another NES game in fact, Blades of Steel, where Contra and Jackal were advertised during intermission. Now there was also a version of Jackal released on the Famicom Disk System in Japan but that was another completely different take on the title. The FDS version is worth taking a look at if you love the game but for those with casual interest let me tell you, this was one of the few times were American gamers got the better build than the Japanese home release. Give this forgotten classic of the NES era a try, if the frantic and unique game play doesn't make an impression on you, the soundtrack sure will.

"InsaneDavid" also runs a slowly growing gaming site at <http://www.classicplastic.net/dvqi>



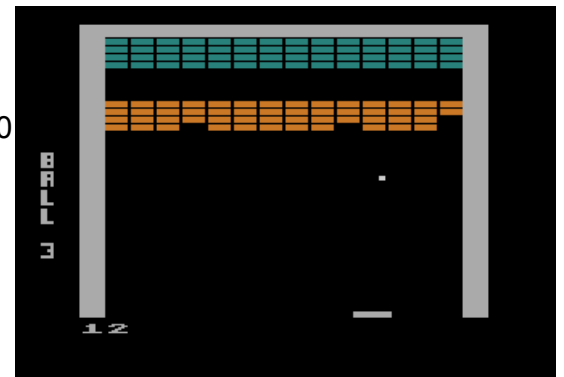
As I write this, it is July 1st! Hard to believe that 6 months of 2008 has come and gone. For me, the month of June was difficult to say the least. I'm going to write up a separate article on my situation, so look out for it.

As far as this month's Apple II Incider goes, I'm going to focus on games that revisit an old Atari classic Breakout. One slight change from previous months though. I'm going to include some thoughts on an Atari 5200 game!

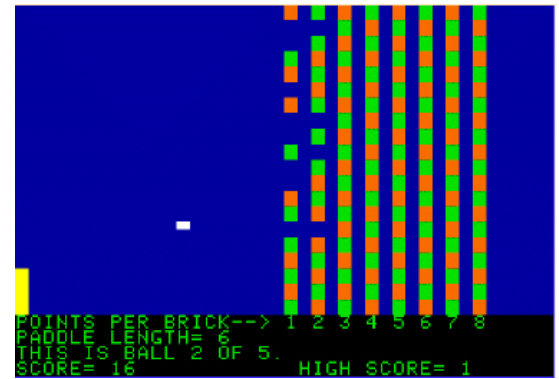
According to Wikipedia, the original Atari Breakout game came out in 1976. I was born only two years earlier in 1974 and didn't start going to the arcades until at least the early to mid 1980's. I don't recall ever playing the original Breakout in the arcade during my youth.

My first exposure to a variation of Breakout was with my Atari 5200. My family purchased the early variation of the Atari 5200 that had four joystick ports and included Super-Breakout as the pack-in game. If people recall, later variations of the the Atart 5200 only had two joystick ports and Pac-Man was included as the pack-in game.

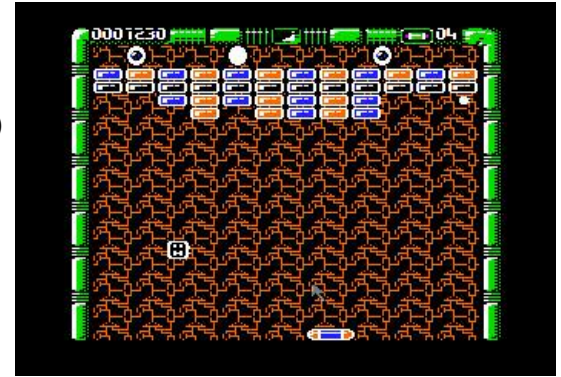
Now, everyone knows the Atari 5200 joysticks were rather filmsy things that broke easily. Well, my parents and I obviously didn't know that. We spent hours at the Atart 5200 playing Super Breakout. I know there are people who were critical of Atari including Super Breakout as the pack-in game. However, I can tell you I wasn't complaining. Super Breakout, with it's variations of screens, was quite fun. My parents and I played it quite often until the Atari 5200 Pac-Man came along.



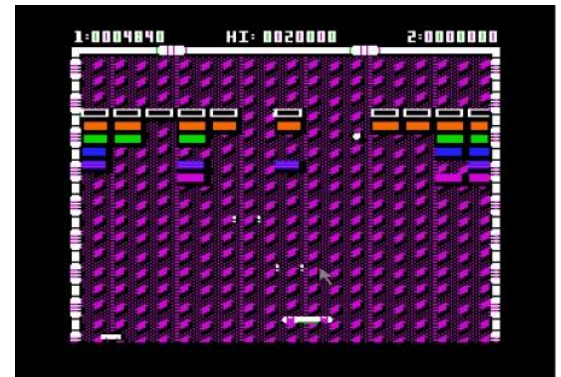
The next variation of Breakout I came across was for the Apple II. It was called Brick-Out. I remember reading about the game in magazines during my youth, but I had never actually played it. However, I seem to recall borrowing a disk from school one day which included Brick-Out on it. I loaded it up and gave the same a spin. It wasn't the easiest game to play as the screen was sideways (see screen shot). Also, the game was programmed for the Apple II paddles. It was an interesting experience, but by the time I came across it, it was also very outdated. I didn't play this game too much at all.



The last two variations of Breakout I played were also for the Apple II. The first was a game called Flobynoid. As you can probably tell, this game was a variation of the arcade game Arkanoid. Flobynoid was a public domain (freeware or shareware) game developed by some French programmers. I accidentally came across the game while going through a software thrift shop during my college days in the 1990's. I bought the game immediately and played it the instant I got home. From the bootup screens to the gameplay itself, I was extremely impressed with Flobynoid. The graphics were very smooth and the sound was solid. But it was the gameplay that really kept my playing. Even using a joystick, the action was smooth, even with multiple objects on screen. The Apple II was never known for it's graphics capabilities, but some developers were really able to push the system to it's limits.



Finally, I can't leave off the Apple II (8-bit) version of Arkanoid. I actually hadn't played this version before. I had played the arcade version and the Apple IIGS version (via emulator) and the game was quite fun. For sake of comparison, I gave the 8-bit version of the game a spin and came away a little disappointed. When compared to Flobynoid, the game play just seemed sluggish. Though the graphics on the surface seemed similar, to me, there was something about Arkanoid that seemed off.



In any case, I hope you enjoyed this trip down memory lane. See you all next month!



## Game Archaeologist

by [Scott Jacobi](#)

Got four interesting batch of games to review this month, some good, some dreadful, so let's hop to it.

The first game is [Castle Excellent](#). I typed up a walkthrough for the game, but I actually translated it from a Japanese site that I found. A lot of walkthroughs that I found for this game fell into two varieties; The insanely hard Time Attack variation that only experts of the game will bother trying, and the "how to beat the game by going into all 100 rooms" method which takes more time than anyone would realistically be willing to put into the game. Fortunately, I found a nice middle-of-the-road alternative that aims to complete the game by avoiding the most fiendish rooms, but not taking you anywhere that you don't absolutely need to go.

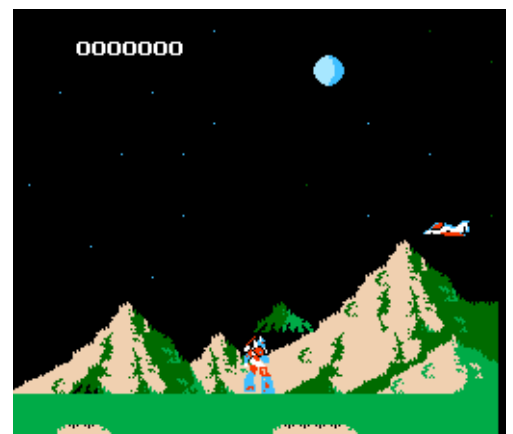


Castlequest was the American name for a Japanese Famicom game called Castle Excellent, which was itself a sequel to a popular Japanese game simply called "The Castle." The original program was the winner in a software contest hosted by ASCII Corporation (you might know them better today as controller manufacturers). ASCII published the game on every available popular Japanese micro computer platform (MSX, NEC, FM-Towns, etc.) and it was a huge success. Fans clamored for a sequel, so they made Castle Excellent for the MSX. Right around that time, the Famicom was hot, so they published a version for that too, although it was rather different from the MSX version.

I would best compare Castlequest to some more American titles such as Shamus or Montezuma's Revenge. You must essentially navigate a 100 room castle (arranged in a 10x10 grid) loaded with different colored doors, respective different colored keys, and loads of traps and enemies. While each room may have a particular puzzle that needs to be solved, the over-arching goal of the game is to find your way from the start to the location of the princess and rescue her. Naturally, there's a butt-load of doors in the way, and a limited supply of keys that you continue to gather. You can end up taking a wrong turn and getting screwed with no choice but the reset the game because you ran out of keys. The game does provide you with a kind of "Undo", but it costs a life, and by the time you figure out that you need it, it may already be too late to use it.

Castlequest was definitely one of those game that was far more suited to the Japanese audience of gamers than Americans. This is a huge generalization, but most Americans don't really have the patience for this kind of game (I certainly didn't). It takes a lot of planning and coordination, and it's not high on the immediate gratification meter. Even the ending sucks. Your only reward really is self satisfaction. Ironically, Nintendo Power didn't even cover this game's release... and they covered EVERYTHING. So to spare you any pain, find the 18 minute time attack on YouTube, and never play this game ever again.

If any of you could take a look at my game room, it would be pretty obvious that I'm a hard core Transformers fan. So you'd think I could find something redeeming to say about this third generation TF game known as [Transformers: Convoy no Nazo](#) but sadly, that is not the case.



In 1986, health meters weren't unheard of, but they weren't the norm either. There were plenty of successful games without health bars, but the trick was to make them playable by giving the player the ability to dodge oncoming attacks, and only cause a lose of life if a mistake was made. In TFCnN, you are the victim of a one-hit kill system that shows no mercy to you from the minute the game starts.

You wouldn't believe that you can be so weak, being the mighty and powerful Ultra Magnus. Ultra Magnus has been depicted in many ways by the various TF continuities, but the one consistency between all of them is that Ultra Magnus is one of the greatest and bravest soldiers on the battlefield in the entire Autobot army. In this game he is conducting a solo mission to find out who killed Optimus Prime (aka Convoy).

You see, the animated movie didn't air before the third season of the cartoon in Japan like it did in the United States. You know, the one that had all of us kid bawling when Optimus Prime died and turned charcoal gray. So all of a sudden, Season 3 starts in Japan with this new crazy cast of characters from out of no where, and all the kids there are

like, "Wait... what happened to Optimus Prime? Who's this Rodimus guy?" So Takara made this game to fill in the blanks... another thing which this game fails at miserably (it answers nothing.)

So you are forced to play through ten levels of side-scrolling hell, where one shot is all it takes to kill Magnus, while he needs to shoot his enemies two or even three times typically to defeat them. According to Ultra Magnus' tech specs, he can fire his rocket propelled missiles over 30 miles! However, in the case of this game, it's more like 30 feet, and they land with a disappointing poof. The cast of attacking Decepticons is marginal at best with color problems all over the place, and such uninspired bosses like a gigantic Decepticon logo.

Other bosses include Stunticon gestalt Menasor and Combaticon gestalt Bruticus (no sign of Devastator anywhere), a way oversized Megatron (like four times as big as Magnus) and Trypticon as the final boss. That's great if you can ever survive long enough to see them. The typical first game lasts less than a minute and doesn't get you half way into the first board. Even transforming is a chore, taking up to two seconds, during which you are immobile and defenseless.

A Time Attack for the game has been recorded at around seven minutes for the whole thing, blowing your mind with dexterity and almost impossible to reproduce jumping skills. If the game were worth watching, I'd link to the video here, but the stages are all so uninspired and repetitive. But don't take my word for it. Check out the fan reviews on GameFAQs.

Granted, the worst game in history is a very subjective thing, but I'm pretty sure when someone actually set out to create the worst game in history, they pretty much deserve the title. The someone in question is Japanese comedian Takeshi Kitano (better known as Beat Takeshi). And the game in question is [Takeshi no Chousenjou](#).

Here we have a game that was developed by a comedian who specifically intended to confound video game players with completely unintuitive solutions to a very absurd situation; one in which Takeshi is a workaday salaryman who dreams of quitting his job, leaving his wife, and going in search for treasure so he can live the rest of his life out in the lap of luxury.

You may not be familiar with the title of the game, but it's very likely that you may have heard something about it's ridiculous solution techniques, such as leaving the controller untouched for 60 minutes in the middle of the game, screaming into the microphone (of the second player Famicom controller) at particularly inappropriate moments, and clobbering a man who provides you with a treasure map to death. You cannot win unless you divorce your wife and quit your job. The box itself claims that "common sense is dangerous."

Yes, this is that game, and I feel that it's safe to say, with relative confidence, that I have written the first English walkthrough ever for this late 1986 game. At first, I really didn't think I was going to attempt it, but I found a few good Japanese web sites about the game and set about translating them through babelfish, @nifty translations, and Jim Breen's WWWJDIC. Eventually, I managed to piece a walkthrough together, complete with appropriate menu options in Japanese, to guide non-Japanese speakers through the game. Although most of the humor will be lost on those who can't read Japanese, at least you can claim you played through the game that is known as the worst game in history (but was later nominated for a Japanese retrogaming award in 2007)

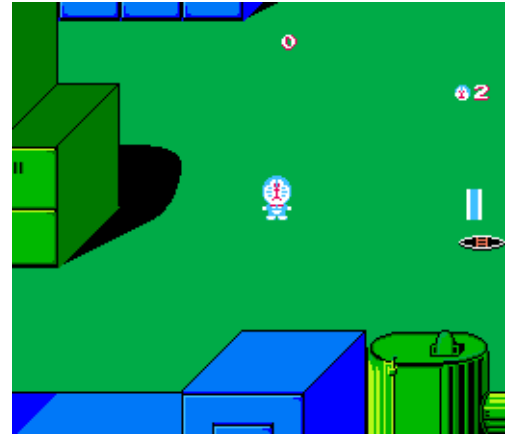
Most of the game's zaniness is in the first half where you wander through the streets of Japan, utterly destroying your former life and burning bridges (figuratively) wherever you go. The second half of the game seems more like a punishment to people who actually bothered to get that far. The Hang Gliding portion of the game contains one tiny portion of land that you can actually land on, and most of the final section of the game can only be accessed by squatting over a tiny sliver of pixels, so you must know exactly where they lie or you will spend forever searching for them. I just want to make sure that you know what you're getting yourself into if you sit down and attempt to play this game.

Protip: To see the ending of the game right away, all you have to do is tap the punch button 20,000 times on the title screen. Easy.



When I sat down to start writing a guide for [Doraemon](#), I originally thought this was going to be an unpleasant experience. No such luck, I actually started to enjoy the game somewhat once I figured out what the heck I was doing.

Doraemon is a bit of a quirky game. The game has three worlds, and each world was handled by a different lead designer. So while you have to complete all of the worlds linearly to progress through the game, each world essentially belongs to it's own little game genre. The first world is a four-direction scrolling action game where you roam through a city, the second world is a shmup with secret pathways, and the final world is a room-by-room underwater exploration adventure. If it sounds wacky, that's because it is. Ordinarily, I wouldn't think that it would work, but it really fits Doraemon's style of presentation (read: one that is suitable for kids with ADD)



The first world just kind of drops you off in the corner of some industrial complex in the middle of a city. There are manholes which lead down to the sewer. In these sewers is where you find most of the good stuff like weapons and health upgrades. The problem, most of the really useful manholes are hidden, so you have to fire randomly throughout the world in hopes of noticing that your shots happened to hit something invisible, and then blast away at it until it materializes. Once you find the hidden door that can advance you to the final portion of the city, you take another sewer tunnel to a completely new part of town; an unappealing brown region complete with a cemetery and a large factory where the boss of the level resides. I assure you, I'm not creative enough to make this stuff up.

When you beat the boss, you'll move on to the next world which is a side-scrolling shooter. But at times, the path bends and you find yourself scrolling vertically as well. As the terrain scrolls by, you may notice gaps in the floor or ceiling, and if you're curious enough to investigate them, you may find that you have accessed a secret pathway. These pathways are the only places where you can acquire assistants in the form of Doraemon's owner's friends. They tend to fall away if Doraemon takes too much damage, but if you hold on to them, you can get really good items that will help you stay alive long. The stage is broken up into three sections, each with it's own boss. The final boss is the face of a bull dog, and is actually one of the easier bosses in the game.

The last world is more like a giant Zelda dungeon, only underwater, where you have to swim from room to room to find and unlock three treasure chests that contain Doraemon's friends. The problem is that in order to do that, you need to make use of a couple of items, but you can only hold one item at a time. One item in particular, a bag, lets you cart two other items around with you to make things easier, but a ghost has a habit of appearing and stealing one of your items away so that you have to relocate it. It's not too hard to accomplish, but it does take a bit of thinking and wit to solve the puzzle in a timely fashion.

All in all, it's not a game that I would recommend anyone rush out and find or play, but if you've got some time to kill, and the only thing that you have access to is a NES emulator (and doesn't that happen all the time?), you could pick worse games to play than Doraemon.



I had planned to cover Midway Arcade Treasures this month, but I have just managed to acquire a copy of the recently released SNK Arcade Classic: Volume 1 collection for the PlayStation 2. I cannot pass-up the chance to review an actual new retro-game collection.

Collectors may wish to consider grabbing an extra copy as this may very well be a scarce title in the future. It is supposedly a discount or budget title, but around here prices range from \$25 to over \$50 - and most stores do not even have it in stock! I had to visit several places until I managed to find a single copy. EB Games does not stock this title (at least not in Canada). One local, independent retailer told me that he simply could not get it from his supplier.

This retro collection includes 16 Neo Geo arcade games from the early to mid-1990s. These titles range from the well known (e.g. Metal Slug) to rather more obscure releases (e.g. Neo Turf Masters). World Heroes is initially locked, but it can be easily unlocked.

The collection skews towards fighting games; 7 of the titles (e.g. Art of Fighting, King of the Monsters, King of Fighters '94, Samurai Shodown) are of this genre. The balance of the collection consists of platformers and three sports games (golf, baseball, and soccer).



There is a substantial amount of unlockable content. This includes game-related art and music, move lists for the fighting games. Unlocks are accomplished by way of collecting medals. Medals are ranked according to difficulty (from Green to Black) and are they awarded for various accomplishments (e.g. beating a high score, passing a level without dying). Some are really easy to obtain, while others are nearly impossible.

My biggest complaint about this collection is the horrendously long loading times before starting a game. It reminds me of an early PSX game. There are also delays in saving settings, etc. (progress is saved automatically at a pre-set checkpoints, usually at the end of a level or round). It also appears that settings (e.g. custom controller mapping, difficulty level) can only be saved for one game at a time. Medals accumulated and unlocked content is saved for all titles, however.

This is a decent collection of retrogames, but many of the titles are not well known. As I am not a fan of the genre, the emphasis on fighting games is a negative for me (though I do really like King of the Monsters). The production quality could also be higher. I doubt anyone but hardcore collectors (or fans of a specific included title) would want this collection. Combined with its limited distribution, this collection has potential as a future rarity. I do not anticipate that Volume 2 will be released anytime soon - at least not in North America.

Next month, we really will cover Midway Arcade Treasures (volume 1). Feedback on this column is always welcome. Please send e-mail to [jhd@interbaun.com](mailto:jhd@interbaun.com).



## Who'd Win: Star Wars vs. Star Trek

by [Andrew Vrba](#)

Hello again, readers! With another RTM comes another installment of "Who'd Win?", and this one is gonna be a good one! This month I will be pitting arcade games of the two greatest sci-fi franchises of all time! Star Trek, and Star Wars! See there was a time when movie license games were very good! So let us punch up coordinates for the hyperdrive, and do a slingshot effect around the sun back to the 1980s! Engage, and may the force be with you!



The sights:

Both games using 3D vector graphics, both of them use approximately the same color palette, but with Star Wars there is just more action going on. While Star Trek, is a fine(for its time) graphical representation of the Star Trek universe, things just look livelier on Star Wars, and there is just more to it from a graphical stand point! You have space, with the the Death Star in the background, you have the surface of the Death Star, and you have the famous trench run, which is captured beautifully with vibrant early 1980s technology! Star Trek on the other hand gives you a mostly empty starfield with a star base, and a map to show you were everything is, sometimes some mines to shoot at. But what is there, especially the Klingon ships, looks great! But in the end Star Wars ends up looking better overall.

The sounds:

Oh BOY! Both of these games have speech! When you sit down in the Star Trek cabinet and start a game, you are greeted with a computerized "Welcome aboard Captain!" Pop a coin into Star Wars and you hear a digitized Luke Skywalker clip of, "Red 5 standing by!" They both have little tunes that play when your game starts, as well as musical cues here and there. Star Wars has actual digitized samples, where as Star Trek's is simulated. Star trek has a bigger variety of sounds, one of the most impressive being the photon torpedo. Both games sound so good that is no winner in the sound department, it's a draw! Hats off to the developers of each game!

The substance:

Star Wars is a bit of a rail shooter, you are never completely in control of where you fly, but you use the flight controller to dodge incoming shots, and aim your lasers. In Star Trek, you are in control of both where you go, and how fast(impulse or warp). But you are limited to a 2D plane. You can't go up and down. You rotate the trackball to change your facing, and use buttons to issue different commands; Phasers, Photon Torpedoes, Impulse Power, Engage Warp. Star Wars has you fighting ties, blowing up towers, and planting a shot into the exhaust vent of the Death Star Trench. Star Trek has you defending Starbases from Klingons, and shooting at mine-layers. You can even restock your compliment of torpedoes, and repair your ship when you dock with a base. Both games feature two kinds of cabinets, a stand up version, and the more luxurious sit-down cockpit style. Nothing is quite as fun as sitting in the cockpit of an X-wing, or the Captain's Chair of the USS Enterprise! Star Wars does get the nod here, you play Star Trek until it's game over, but Star Wars actually has an end(though the game loops over after you beat it.), you even get introduced to another level or two as you do multiple play throughs. There is also an easter egg on the Death star as you are fleeing it's impending explosion.

The cartridge cabinet:



Having a hard time deciding which cabinet is better? Me too. Both feel good, and both look good! Yes, both of these sit-down cabinets are graced with lovely artwork done with the kind of detail that was done away with by fancy CG renders long ago. I would have to say that this is really a draw. You don't feel like you're sitting in something made of wood, and plastic, cabinets like these were so much better than their stand-up counterparts.

Who'd Win? This is such a close one! I love both of these games so much, but there does have to be a winner doesn't there, so I am going to give this one to Star Wars. At the end of the day this one delivers more of that fast paced arcade rush that we all long for, and it has a bit more substance. Sorry my fellow Trekkers, but the Force is strong with Star Wars this day.

Well now that I have incited World War III between the Trekkers and Star Wars fans, I sign off! Next month two brawlers for the NES will be facing off, "Bad Dudes" Vs. "Double Dragon".

	<p><b><i>Fun Arcade Games That Never Came To My Arcade And Thanks to MAME, I Finally Played Them!</i></b></p> <p><b><i>by <u>Coffee1970</u></i></b></p>
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Growing up in a small Ohio town, we had the usual convenience stores such as 7-11 that carried a couple of classics, or the ever popular department store lobby arcades that housed maybe three or four games...of course one of these always was so old and beat up that the color usually consisted of a lovely monochrome green or red. You could always find Asteroids, Pac-Man, Galaga, Space Invaders, etc, etc. Maybe even get lucky and find a Pole Position where the steering wheel actually worked and wasn't covered with gum and other assorted stickiness...ahhhhhh, fiery pixilated wheel bouncing crashes!

Step up a level to a mall arcade and now we're talking a Tempest or possibly a sit-down version of Star Wars. The sights and sounds could attract kids from the parking lot and off I went while Dad browsed the hardware aisles at Sears and Mom tried on more clothes and shoes that I cared to sit through. A quick plea for a few one dollar bills and I was gone.....damn the little orange light on the token machines that cried Out Of Order! Where's that clerk again....doesn't he know that they are supposed to stay behind the ticket counter in case someone has 300 tickets to redeem for that shiny plastic ring?

With the introduction of MAME, one can easily replay all their favorites from yesteryear, as well as find some new favorites that they never knew existed.....

**BLASTER**



A 1983 Williams game that focuses on quick reflex action throughout various stages. Sounds similar to Defender and I think that the graphics are very cool for the time period. Highly recommended.

## I, ROBOT



This 1983 Atari classic has the player controlling a robot through various 3-D platforms to destroy the eye sentinel as well as shooting enemies in space stages. What makes this game even more unique is that you could pay a quarter to just doodle on the screen with shapes if you didn't want to play! Very cool game.

## DISCS of TRON



Weighing in at over 700 pounds, this cabinet was huge and most likely very expensive. Surround sound, speech and great action with Tron effects make for one great game. Defeat your enemies without falling off.

## THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK



The vector-based Star Wars game could be converted to this 1985 Atari quarter stealer. Featured some fun new levels as well as a stupid avoid the meteor level that was just lame. Never played the real version....go MAME!

## JOUST 2 SURVIVAL of the FITTEST



1986 sequel to the classic Joust by Williams. Features new levels and enemies and is based on the classic's battle formula, yet only about 1000 of these were ever made. Worth checking in my opinion.

## ATARI ARCADE CLASSICS



This prototype from 1992 was never released. If this game had been released on schedule it would have commemorated Atari's 20th anniversary. It has two games on offer, "Super Centipede" and "Missile Command II". They are both re-makes of the original classics but with enhanced graphics and sound.

These games represent just a few of the many long lost arcade gems that you can play in MAME. There are so many others I haven't even mentioned, so download MAME and check some of these classics that you miss or maybe never got the chance to play.....all without that damn orange light on the token machine!

Game on,



## Real Life Games

by [Donald Lee](#)

Life can be full of fun and games at times. But sometimes, life can throw you a real curve ball. As I mentioned in my Apple II Incider column, I didn't have a particular great month of June. Here's a brief synopsis of what happened.

On June 9th, 2008, I received a call from my boss at work. Unfortunately, I was actually talking to a co-workers that worked out of the country so I didn't take the call and listen to my boss's voice mail until later that evening. My boss left me a somewhat cryptic message which hinted to me something was up. Since he was in the Eastern time zone, I would have to wait until the morning to call him back.

At 1 AM that night (June 10th now), I was still up and taking a LATE shower. All of a sudden, I heard a loud noise. It sounded like something had fallen or been dropped. I quickly got out of the shower and looked around my house and didn't see anything out of the ordinary. I did notice some commotion outside and suspected something was wrong. However, I didn't really see anything so I put it out of my mind.

Since it was late, I decided to hop into bed and go to sleep, but then my doorbell rang. At that point, I knew something was wrong. It turned out my parked car had been sideswiped by another car and damaged rather severely. Fortunately, the driver stuck around. So, at about 1:30 AM in the morning, I was now suddenly trying to gather information from the driver. That took about an hour or so. Once I got the information, I immediately called my insurance to report the accident. That took me another 30 to 45 minutes.

By the time I was done with reporting the accident, it was about 3:30 AM. Since my car was not in a drivable condition, I decided to send an email out to my co-workers about my car situation and let them know I might be late. After this was done, I went to take a brief nap.

At about 7:30 AM, I got up to call a tow truck to take my car to the body shop to begin the work of estimating the damages. Once this was completed, I had to get a rental car as well. By the time I got my rental car, it was around 10 AM in the morning.

Since I was already going to be late, I decided to get some breakfast before heading into the office. Before I went to get breakfast, I remembered that I had to call my boss back. Unfortunately, it was just bad timing all around as my boss was giving my notice that I was to be laid off. I'm sure my boss and others felt bad with the crazy situation with my car, but there was no choice.

I worked my last day on June 19th, 2008 and the past couple of weeks have been a bit of a blur. I've filed my unemployment papers, talked to the unemployment agency and try to get my affairs all squared away as this was my first time being laid off in my career. I've worked on my resume and talked to a few recruiters about job leads, but nothing has come up yet. As I write this, my car is still in the shop and I'm still driving a rental.

In the meantime, I've taken this transition period to study some technical subjects more. My first task was to study Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). I've used HTML a lot but used CSS sparingly. Studying CSS has been pretty fun so far and I look forward to gaining more knowledge. I plan to study XML and Javascript as time permits.

But the past few weeks haven't been all about work. I'm playing in a summer basketball league with my friend's church team (my 17th season). To keep things somewhat game oriented, I picked up a copy of Command and Conquer: The First Decade for my PC. I enjoyed several of the Command and Conquer games in the past and wanted to give some of the other titles a run.

It was definitely a brutal last few weeks, but thanks to friends I've managed to keep a level head. I'm optimistic that things will improve in the coming months. Thanks for reading and see you all next month.



## Game Over

Wow, despite the concerns I spoke of last month, this month's issue really came together. However, we're always looking for more contributions, so if you want to see your writing published here, all you gotta do is send it in. See you next month!

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