



Printing Help



Retrogaming Times Monthly #84 - May 2011



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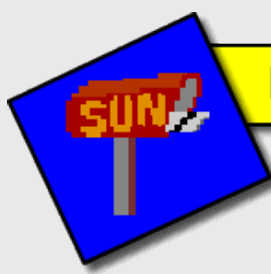
Press Fire To Begin

by Bryan Roppolo



Is it that time again already? It feels like I just put together the April issue of RTM and now it's time for May's issue. Boy does time fly when you are kept busy, and busy I was. Even though the readers and staff of RTM cannot see what has been going on behind the scenes, I have been actively indexing all the back issues in order to allow for sorting and searching. Right now, everything from 2004-Present has been indexed! That's right, 7 years worth of issues all indexed. However, the task is nowhere near done...I have to first put up the issues from 2000-2004 which are not yet uploaded to this site. After I finally get those uploaded, I'll then index them all, which will bring the article index to a total of 14 years, 1997-2011. That's pretty impressive. I hope that when I see you all again in June I'll have these issues all on-line and indexed, which then will leave the task of creating an interface to allow people to search and sort everything. After that I'll open it up to the staff for beta testing, and then finally the general public will get their chance at using the final product. When all is said and done, this will be a vital resource to all of you classic gaming fans out there, as even I have been impressed at the vast amount of retro coverage we have done through the years.

Now, let's get on to this months issue...



Retrogaming News

[Too Many Games 11](#)

Friday, May 6, 2011 - Sunday, May 8, 2011 (Philadelphia, PA)

Gamers get ready! TooManyGames is returning to bring everyone together for another festival of gaming awesomeness! In 2011 TooMayGames is expanding our event from just one day to a three day long extravaganza! More games, more tournaments, more concerts, more vendors, more party!

Start preparing now for the greatest gaming event to ever rock Pennsylvania! TooManyGames 2011 is taking place May 6th-8th at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, PA. We have 80,000 square feet we're packing with games and gaming gear!

In our main exhibition hall you can check out all our vendors in the marketplace and score some sweet games to add to your collections or some awesome arts and crafts! In our 15,000 square foot tabletop gaming battleground you can compete in Magic: The Gathering, Pokemon, and Yu-Gi-Oh tournaments and also participate in RPGs all throughout the weekend! Stop by our console arena to check out gaming's greatest hits of yesterday and today and compete against your fellow gamers for prizes and glory! Stop in the Power Bar to recharge your mana and check out some of our hot bands performing all weekend long! Throughout the weekend stop by our panel and movie rooms to check out great movies and fan-made videos as well as listen to some cool people talk about how awesome it is to be a gamer!

PC gamers, we've got a 17,000 square foot BYOPC LAN room, powered by The GXL, where you and hundreds of fellow PC gamers can fight and quest all day and all night long, non-stop! Stop by The GXL's website at www.thegxl.com for more info and to sign up for the LAN!

Registration for TooManyGames is now open! Just visit our website at <http://www.toomanygames.com> to get more info on what's happening at the show and to register for a pass or to set up in our marketplace!

[Vintage Computer Festival East 7.0](#)

Saturday, May 14th 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM & Sunday, May 15 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM (Wall Township, New Jersey)

VCF is (mostly) indoors and is held rain or shine. Admission is \$10 for one day, \$15 for both days, and free for ages 17 and younger. Parking is free. Here are some of the events that will be held at this years show:

"Build Your Own Transistor-Logic" workshop

Build your own transistor logic gates and learn how a computer is made. Attendees will build a plugin circuit card containing 35 transistors which they can wire into various logic circuits.

"Teletype 101"

Learn the basics of testing and operating a ASR-33 teletype Randomly selected attendee will win a tested and working '33. Also attendees will have an opportunity to buy an as-is, untested unit for \$75 pending availability.

Both workshops cost \$40 and are limited to 10 students.

[Atari Party 2011](#)

All day Saturday, June 11th (Davis, CA)

We'll be gathering at the public library in Davis, California, all day Saturday, June 11.

Thanks to many sponsors who have helped out, we'll be holding a great prize drawing -- you could win a Nintendo DS cartridge full of Atari games, an Atari Flashback 2+ plug-and-play game console, Atari-themed t-shirts, all decals or playing cards, or even a complete Atari 800 computer system with programmable flash cartridge. We'll also be screening the documentary "Once Upon Atari" again, and the 1984 feature film "Cloak & Dagger".

Just like the 2009 and 2010 events, Atari Party 2011 will be free and open to the public!

Lots of info is already up on the website, and more will be added in the coming weeks and months.

Atari's Legendary Star Raiders Now Available on PSN

Atari, one of the world's most recognized publishers and producers of interactive entertainment, is scheduled to release Star Raiders® this month. The return of Star Raiders combines tense aerial assaults and dogfights with a new compelling storyline, striking visual style and exhilarating single player gameplay. Star Raiders is now available on the Playstation Network.

Originally introduced in 1979, Star Raiders blazed an all new trail, becoming the first ever first-person space combat title. The game inspired several generations of "space combat simulation" titles throughout the 80's and 90's. The exciting new take on this Atari treasure pays tribute to the original while ushering in an all new, captivating episodic experience. The game offers familiar battle elements including space warps and galactic tactical maps with all new features like radical battle transformations and customizable ships.

For more information, please log onto www.atari.com or www.starraiders.com, and don't forget to follow Atari on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/atari> and Twitter: <http://twitter.com/atari>.

Rare And Unappreciated Games Book Announcement

Coming Mid-Late 2011 is a book on Rare and Unappreciated Games.

Written by Jeff Wittenhagen from Retrogaming Times Monthly and vgMastersClub.com, this 200+ page book will cover games from every generation in gaming from the old to the new. There will be some games that you might not know and some you might actually own, but all are worth your time. In addition to the standard B&W version, there will also be a limited edition full color variant that will be available on a by an on demand basis. Check back here for updates and availability.

If you would like to have your event featured in Retrogaming Times Monthly, just send an e-mail to Bryan Roppolo at bryan@retrogamingtimes.com and he'll make sure to announce it in a future issue.



A New Beginning

by Donald Lee



After getting laid off on March 31st, I spent plenty of time during my first week off at home. I was taking care of my unemployment, getting some final paperwork done and looking for jobs.

However, while scanning the news one day, I was surprised to see a news brief that the Commodore 64 had been re-released. Obviously, there's huge interest in retrogaming and retrocomputing or otherwise we wouldn't be reading (or in my case writing) RTM.

In doing some further research about the new Commodore 64, I realized that the machine was only a Commodore 64 in name and appearance only. If you look at the specifications below (from www.commodoreusa.net), the Commodore 64 is a modern machine in an old computer's clothing



The machine can have Windows installed and currently ships with the Ubuntu 10.04 LTS operating system on CD for installation. According to the Commodore USA website, there are plans to introduce a new stand alone Commodore Operating System complete with 8 bit Commodore 64 emulation in the near future.

From a user perspective, this seems pretty cool that the Commodore 64 has been upgraded to a modern PC with the ability to have the old Commodore 64 functionality. In regards to the new Commodore Operating System, the Commodore USA website notes:

"Our new Commodore operating system, will be a unique Commodore and AMIGA centric Linux distribution, that will grow over time into something far greater. Commodore OS will not be your run of the mill Linux distribution. Every consideration will be given to retaining the look and feel of the classic Workbench environment, however there are limits to what is possible at this time, and we do not seek to re-invent the wheel. Our sights are set on creating an operating system environment competitive with the likes of those offered by Microsoft and Apple. An operating system that is inviting and accessible to new and old Commodore owners featuring modern day paradigms. With the inclusion of a plethora of the best open source games and applications, we intend to champion the open source movement and show the world what open source is capable of. "

In essence, Commodore USA is trying to introduce a competitor to the Windows and Macintosh operating systems that currently dominate the marketplace. This is certainly an ambitious goal and something the computing world hasn't seen since the late 1980's and early 1990's. Back in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the marketplace featured the Commodore Amiga, Atari ST, Macintosh, Apple IIGS, and PC's (running early versions of Windows) with their own graphical user interfaces.



Unfortunately, as someone who wasn't a Commodore 64 user back in the 1980's, I don't think nostalgia is a compelling enough reason for me to pick the machine. However, if the new Commodore Operating System takes off, then perhaps I will take a look at what it can do. Commodore USA certainly has a lot of work ahead for them and I wish them the best of luck!

PROCESSOR: Intel Atom D525 1.80GHz (Formerly Pineview-D)

CHIPSET:

Intel NM10 (Formerly Tiger Point)

Next-Generation NVIDIA ION Graphics (ION2)

MEMORY:

2 x DDR2 667/800 Single Channel DIMM slots (up to 4 GB)

GRAPHICS:

Next-Generation NVIDIA ION Graphics Processor

AUDIO:

Realtek ALC662 6-CH HD Audio

Nvidia L-PCM digital audio (HDMI 1.3) can support 7.1 output with external decoder

LAN:

Realtek RTL8111DL PCI-E Gigabit Ethernet

STORAGE:

Intel NM10

2 SATA2 3Gb/s ports

JMicron® JMB362 SATA controller

2 Internal SATA2 3.0Gb/s port with RAID 0, 1, JBOD.

FEATURES:

- ACPI S3 Compliant
- ECO-design for EuP Standard
- 12 VDC jack on back panel for external power supply
- Dedicated DDR3 512MB Graphics Memory Onboard
- Premium DirectX 10 graphics with advanced digital display connectivity
- PureVideo™ Full 1080p HD video and Blu-ray playback
- NVIDIA® CUDA™ technology to accelerate the most demanding applications
- Premium Windows experience with Windows Vista and Windows 7

ONBOARD I/O CONNECTORS:

- 1 mini PCI Express x1 Slot
- 1 Serial header (RS232)
- 4 SATA2 3Gb/s Connectors with RAID 0, 1, JBOD functions (SATA#3,#4)
- 2 USB Pin Headers for up to 3 additional USB 2.0 Ports
- 1 8 bit GPIO header
- 1 CIR header
- 1 9-pin Audio Connector
- 1 Front Panel Connector
- 3 Fan Headers
- 1 4-pin Power Connector

BACK PANEL CONNECTORS:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| - 1 12V DC Jack | - 1 VGA |
| - 1 PS2 KB/Mouse connectors | - 4 USB 2.0 |
| - 1 HDMI | - 1 RJ45 LAN (10/100/1000) |
| - 1 DVI-D | - 3 3.5mm Audio with S/PDIF out |





Apple II Incider

by Donald Lee



Apple II Easter Eggs

Happy belated Easter everyone! As I write this, it is Sunday evening on April 24th, 2011. I was out with friends and played a few hours of basketball before heading home. Unfortunately, the month of April has been a little brutal to me. While there have been a few things that have happened, the major thing was that I got laid off from my job on March 31st, 2011. If this sounds familiar, all one needs to do is look at the RTM archives from around the same time in 2009.

At this point, I am taking some time off to decide my next steps. I am fortunate to have no family or other financial obligations (mortgage or loans) to worry about. So I have some options I am considering including going back to school.

In the mean time, I haven't really been playing with any Apple II games though a few came to mind as I was putting this month's article together. I haven't really written about a game in a few months so it will be good to get back into that particular groove.

To keep in the spirit of Easter, I have done some research on some Easter Eggs that I thought were interesting for Apple II games. I was able to verify some of the Easter Eggs but not all of them. Even if these particular Easter Eggs aren't that interesting to you, I am sure there are plenty around for other games on other platforms.

KARATEKA

If you look the back of the original disk for Karateka, you'll get a nice surprise as highlighted by this YouTube video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVqSHLjiJCA>

SKYFOX

Hitting Control-G while flying will give you an additional hidden game as highlighted by screen shot.

DONKEY KONG

Pressing 1 during game play was supposed to give you extra lives and pressing 3 was supposed to give you invincibility. Alas, I tried this out on the emulator and the Easter Eggs did not seem to work.

LODE RUNNER

Hitting Control-@ during game play will give you extra lives while hitting Control-^ will advance you to the next level. I tried it on the emulator and it worked.

KUNG FU MASTER

Hitting Control-J during the demo will bring up a secret screen with some additional information about the game. See screenshot at top of article for what that information was!



Kung-Fu Master Screen Shot



The extra game in Skyfox

PAC-MAN

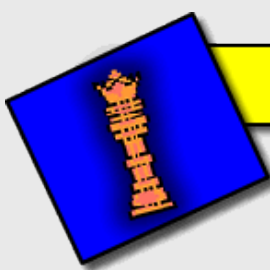
When you are asked for the number of players, you are supposed to hit Control-V and then Control-C. At this point, you will be asked what game level you want to start at or if you want to see the intermissions. Alas, I couldn't get Pac-Man up and running to verify if this worked. I really wanted to see all the intermissions from the Apple II version.

RESCUE RAIDERS

Rescue Raiders was one of my favorite games during the 1980's and I managed to complete the game without resorting to any of the Easter Eggs. In fact, after I had completed the game, I heard about the Easter Eggs and tried them out so I know they worked. I just tried the Easter Eggs again on the emulator and they still worked:

Type "ZIPPY" during game play to invoke the following cheat commands:

```
Press '/' for extra helicopters (up to 255)
Press 'J' to place your helicopter at the far left of the battlefield
Press 'K' to place your helicopter in the middle of the battlefield
Press 'L' to place your helicopter at the far right of the battlefield
Press [RETURN] to toggle a bullet-proof shield on your helicopter on or off (normally off)
Enter '-' and then a number (1-9) to jump to that level of play
```

Move 1 Space Forward

by Jonathan Imberi



Pac-Man The Board Game

From the box:

"As much fun as the action-packed arcade game of the same name. Collect the most marbles by the end of the game. Ages 7-14, for 2 to 4 players. Race around the gameboard moving your silly Pac-Man playing piece along the path ... gobbling up marbles as you go. Avoid the two Ghost pawns, if you can. If one lands on you, you'll be penalized by the loss of two marbles and a retreat back to your Home Space. If you are lucky enough to collect the most white marbles at the end of the game you'll win."

Contents of the game:

- 1 gameboard
- 76 marbles
- 2 Ghost pawns
- 4 plastic trays
- 1 label sheet
- 2 dice
- 4 Pac-Man playing pieces (to be assembled)



Rules of the game:

[Click to view the Instructions \(in PDF format\)](#)

Review:

Upon first inspection it is easy to see that most of the familiar elements from the arcade game are also present in the board game, sort of. The maze is here, although the pattern is altered to fit the square board game and to allow for four player game play. Pac-Man's primary food source is also present, and I have to say that the realization of the pellets and power pellets in the form of white and yellow marbles is nothing short of awesome.

Pac-Man is here too in yellow....Red?.....Green?!?....and Blue?!?! That's right, there are four Pac-Man playing pieces all molded to resemble our chomping hero. The Pac-Man pieces bear a great likeness and even include the chomping action allowing them to gobble up the marbles on the board. Why Milton Bradley chose to mold the entire piece in separate colors instead of making all of the Pac-Men yellow with a colored marker indicating which player it belonged to is beyond me. It takes away from the overall feel of the game, but it is not as distracting as those teeth! They gave Pac-Man teeth! Everyone knows he does not chew his food, he just gobbles it down.

It would not be a party without those pesky ghosts. There are two ghost pieces included with the game which are molded to resemble Pac-Man's arch enemies, however they are both the same color. In my case I got two red ghosts.

Game play follows as close to the arcade game as possible allowing for alternate play. Players take turns rolling both dice and using one die to move Pac-Man and the other to move one of the ghosts. Movement on the board follows the same rules as the arcade in that you cannot cross a blue divider line and cannot leave the board, with the exception of

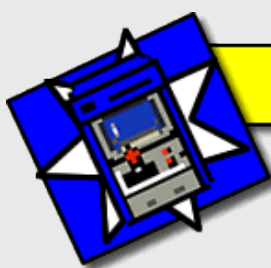


the tunnels. The only added rule is that you can only move in one direction and not double back. The object of the game is to collect as many pellets as possible while trying to use the ghosts to thwart the other players attempts to do the same. If a Pac-Man encounters a ghost he must return to his starting point on the board and turn over two marbles to the player who was controlling the attacking ghost.

Overall I think this is a great arcade game to board game conversion. Milton Bradley managed to capture the essence of the game and game play while allowing up to four players to play at the same time. I think they deserve a Power Pellet Bonus for the realization of pellets into marbles and for not forgetting that Pac-Man's favorite pastime is chomping. The chomping Pac-Man pieces and marbles are almost as fun as the game itself.

This game being as true to the arcade as it is as will have a great replay value with Pac-Man fans of all ages. Any Pac-Man collector will be proud to have this board game in his or her collection.

Hey if I'm the star, it has to be good! Wocka! Wocka!



MAME Reviews

by Mark Sabbatini



I, Robot

It's a classic by Atari's greatest programmer that introduced the world to 3D polygon gaming 15 years ahead of its time. It's an all-time disgrace that suffered a death more mortifying than those E.T cartridges.

If this were "Jeopardy!," Alex Trebek would probably have a better chance of hosting a contestant who broke Ken Jennings' record of 74 consecutive games than one with the right question to that pair of answers. Given the video game's doublethink essence, it's fitting George Orwell's "1984" plays a major role.

The again, with I, Robot just about any analogy is fitting.

The 1983 Atari coin-op by Dave Theurer, mastermind of Missile Command and Tempest, is in the simplest of terms a shooter starring a robot battling foes in stages alternating between space stations and outer space. As for its worthiness of your MAME time, the simplest answer is it's a fascinating game to study, if not quite as exciting to play.

Its biggest claim to fame is being the first commercial 3D game to use polygon graphics, a decade before Wolfenstein 3D took the world by storm. Not only that, but I, Robot features shading and user-controllable camera angles, which didn't become common until shortly before Y2K. The camera is not just a visual feature – it affects point totals and eventually is a necessary move to avoid being killed by a specific enemy.

But the console was exceptionally expensive to manufacture and suffered horrible breakdown rates in arcades. Factor in bizarre gameplay unlike anything gamers were used to and it's easy understanding the machine being a commercial flop. Rumor has it 500 of the 1,000 units went unsold and were put on a ship, ostensibly to be shipped to Japan but with secret orders from the company to dump them into the ocean halfway across. That was a bad thing when Atari was undergoing a complete collapse during the Great Video Game Crash, and shortly afterward the decree from new company tyrant Jack Trameil was arcade games needed to eat quarters quickly and support multiple players. Hence the release of games like Marble Madness and Gauntlet.

Before going any further, part of I, Robot's lore is an Atari 2600 prototype with that name exists, roughly the equal of those mock-up Doom screenshots turning into something you can actually boot in an emulator. You'll have to read to the end to see how *that* turned out.

I, Robot began its franchise life as a series of nine short stories by Isaac Asimov detailing a fictional history of robots, with the theme focusing on humans, robots and morality. Younger gamers may know it only as a 2004 movie starring Will Smith that has a "splat" rating of 58 percent at Rotten Tomatoes (hey, a bookstore employee was recently asked "Are they going to turn those 'Lord of the Rings' movies into books?"). Lest you think I'm making fun of the popcorn-movie masses (OK, I am), I knew the name I, Robot primarily as a 1977 album by The Alan Parsons Project, whose music occupied a hefty percentage of my listening time during all-night study sessions all the way through college. For what it's worth, the album makes great background music while playing the video game.

Theurer had a thing for 3D (you may recall Tempest started out as "First-Person Space Invaders"), so there had to be



eager anticipation about his ambitious plunge into the world of polygons. Unlike programmers who launched 3D poly gaming on computers blessed with 16-bit 50 MHz processors, Theurer had to make do with an eight-bit 6809 CPU running at 1.5 MHz. Moving all that geometry around at blazing speeds is a bit like Honda designing a 1.0-liter four-cylinder engine capable of 500 hp at 15,000 rpm.

The game began life with the name "Ice World," but was rebadged after Asimov's series for what presumably were the usual profit-minded brand tie-in reasons. The full-size upright model has a mildly futuristic block-C shape. It has the usual joystick/button controls, with the joystick surrounded by an upside down block-U molding upon which the fire button is mounted. There's also one other notorious feature: the game-start button is used to alternate between ground and overhead views during play.

I, Robot has a rarity rating of 20 on a scale of one (rare) to 100 (common) from The Killer List of Video Games, which also is the source of the cabinet image seen here. Interest in the game among collectors has increased as its influence on modern gaming becomes more known, with the KLOVG listing 11 members interested in buying and five sellers. A collectors' discussion forum places the value of an upright model in good condition at \$1,400-\$1,900.

The DIP switches allow starting with up to five lives, adjusting the points needed for an extra life, and either normal or easy difficulty of play. I had no trouble maxing my lives and minimizing the difficulty the first few games, since the learning curve is huge.

I can't say I was a fan of Asimov or the sci-fi series whose name this game shares. In fact, I always thought he was kind of an idiot since when it came time to endorse a computer he picked Radio Shack's MC-10, a near-universal pick on everyone's top-10 list of the worst computers ever. But it's fitting his massive collection of writings appear in all ten categories in the Dewey Decimal System, since this video game has so many personalities describing it is confusing as playing it. Calling it a space shooter, as I did above, is grossly simplistic. It's also a platformer, puzzler, dot-eater, lander, maze and doodle game. That's right – long before iPhones this coin-op introduced doodling in the most literal way possible.

Inserting a quarter (or not, thanks to MAME) and pressing the start button results in the player being offer two choices: "I, Robot: The Game" or "Doodle City: The Ungame." Picking Doodle City results in a blank screen where the player (if that's the right word) can draw for three minutes using the game's polygon images. The player can switch between the modes at will, with one life deducted for each minute of doodling. I didn't find doodling too interesting, unable to draw anything attractive with those large polygons, but I suck with all computer-drawing programs.

Starting a regular game brings up Atari's then-standard level-start menu. The plot, as if it matters, is the player is "Unhappy Interface Robot #1984" rebelling against Big Brother. There are 126 levels where the objective is to shoot out Big Brother's massive Eye within a limited amount of time. Doing this basically involves changing all the floor spaces on a space station platform from red to blue (a.k.a. Amidar and/or Miner 2049'er). This destroys a shield protecting the Eye, allowing the player to jump onto a second main platform and shoot the Eye out.

There are, of course, impediments. If you get lost trying to follow them in this description don't worry – the feeling won't go away for some time while you're playing it. The first platform has all kinds of gaps that must be "jumped," although Big Brother frequently issues a "no jumping" decree and will kill the player if he does so. Next, an increasingly weird collection of enemies from birds to giant soccer balls attack the player. And, of course, that blinking Eye isn't just going to sit still and unarmed when you jump onto its platform.

But wait, there's more. The platforms get more complex and every third wave the player needs to enter a red pyramid to eliminate the Eye. Inside the pyramid the robot must collect all the jewels scattered about (a.k.a. Pac-Man) while dealing with hazards such as enemies, mines and a buzzsaw destroying the surface as it tries to catch up to the robot from behind.



That adjustable camera determines how many points everything is worth, with more being awarded for surface-level views since some parts of the platform are hard or impossible to see (a.k.a Crystal Castles).

And all of this is just one of the two stages.

The second stage is simpler in concept and bears a vague resemblance to the asteroids scene from *The Empire Strikes Back* (with elements of Zaxxon thrown in). After shooting the Eye the robot flies through space avoiding and/or shooting meteors, polygonal tetras and enemies to reach the next platform. Shooting all the tetras results in bonus points. The player can also earn an extra life by shooting letters spelling "I, ROBOT" as they appear sequentially. At the end of the space journey you'll need to land on the new platform safely (a.k.a. Lunar Lander or Moon Cresta).

There's additional features such as a level warp and bonus waves. There's 26 level designs and after completing all of them the game returns to the first design at a higher level of difficulty and with a new color set (a.k.a. Tempest). Also, somewhat like the pulsars in *Tempest*, after the first cycle of waves the player is chased by Viewer Killers who can only be avoided by changing the playfield perspective.

Whew. if all that sounds exhausting and disorienting, be assured that's what it feels like to play it. Without MAME I'd be among the overwhelming majority of gamers who walked away after wasting a quarter or two on games lasting a few second. With MAME, it's intriguing to progress far enough into the game to see what elements are used by those that followed many years later. Just a few of those mentioned by various sources (easier than my trying to come up with a list) are *Virtua Fighter*, *Hard Drivin'*, *Tomb Raider*, *Super Mario 64* and *Super Monkey Ball*.

Now, about that rumor half of the I, Robot machines made are now rusting at the bottom of the ocean:

Longtime Atari employee Russel "Rusty" Dawe, who helped develop games like *Marble Madness* and *I, Robot*, wrote in a 2009 chat session with readers of *Rotheblog.com* the rumor is a "total myth."

"I would have LIKED to dump about 500 I Robot controls into the Pacific – they were a nightmare, but that didn't happen," he wrote.

That said, there is a true story nearly as strange.

"We had an arcade in Seattle we were testing and it was playing itself sometimes!" he wrote. "Turned out the arcade was next to a scrap yard with a monster crane magnet – was playing the game from 100 yards away! Turned out the control needed to be separately grounded (and shielded) to the PC board."

Finally, a brief word about that Atari 2600 project.

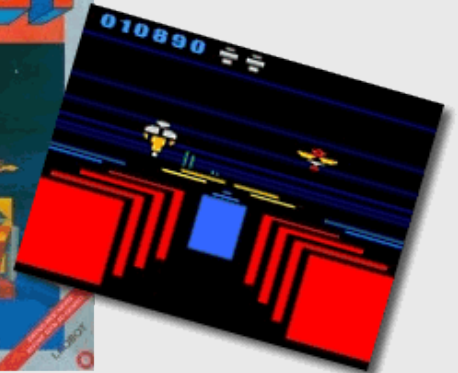
Atari Age says development was dropped when it became obvious the coin-op wasn't a commercial success, but "the game was far enough along in development that box artwork and labels had already been created." A ROM image is available at the site, with the warning "don't get your hopes up too much, though, as it looks like there was still a lot of work remaining to be done."

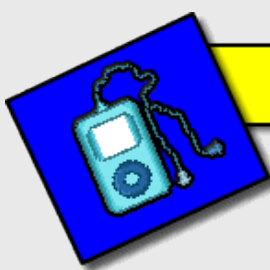


There's no much to say about the conversion except, as expected, it's a complete joke. Load it into Stella and try it for yourself, but expect to endure a long time (as in starvation-induced hallucinations) before experiencing anything like the arcade game. Then again, since the coin-op feels like the product of LSD or Alice in Wonderland hallucinations, maybe that's appropriate.



**I, ROBOT BOX AND
SCREENSHOT**





iDreams Come True

by Mark Sabbatini



Atari's Greatest Hits

You'll love it. You'll hate it. But ultimately you gotta have it.

Atari in its latest corporate incarnation is again milking the good ol' days with another bundle of Atari 2600 and coin-op arcade remakes called Atari's Greatest Hits, this time for the iPhone/iPod/iPad. It's basically a 100-game collection (18 arcade and 82 for the 2600) for \$15, although the basic app itself is free and include the arcade version of Missile Command. There's also the option of purchasing four-game "theme" packs for 99 cents each instead of snagging the whole bundle at once, a money saver if you're certain Video Checkers and Chess are the only titles you'll ever play among those available.

The full package is a decent deal from a price perspective, since it's almost the same collection in the AGH's Vol. 1 and 2 cartridges recently released for the Nintendo DS, which each sell for about \$15 on Amazon. The list of titles includes plenty of classic and obscure gems (including unreleased and prototype games for the 2600), some painful omissions due to copyright restrictions, and more than a few that most gamers will wish had been replaced with more worthy choices. The full list is after the main text of this review.

Plenty of negatives are mentioned in this review, but it's worth stating up front this is one of the best multi-game retro emulator packages for iOS devices. A brief summary of others I'm aware of is at the end, but the only ones I'd put in AGH's league are the ZX Spectrum Elite Collection for its huge collection of generally playable titles, C64 for its decent library of often-classic Commodore 64 hits and – major shoutout – iDOS if you know the secret to loading your own MS-DOS programs (only a true retro gamer will understand when I say playing Infocom's text-only "A Mind Forever Voyaging" may be the most fun I'm currently having with my iPod).



The most enjoyment I'm getting from AGH isn't replaying old favorites, mostly because of the control problems mentioned below, but the dozen or so quality games I overlooked previously due to their obscurity, bad word-of-mouth reviews or other reasons. Stellar Track, for instance, is a take on the text-based Star Trek simulation written in 1980 for the 2600, which plenty of people understandably called a laughably disastrous idea. It's also one of a number of titles in AGH originally sold only through Sears, limiting the number of gamers exposed to it then. But it's a reasonably well-done version and the concept of a text-game on the 2600 is so bizarre I'm actually enjoying playing a timeworn genre I grew bored with about the time this was originally released.

The biggest problem with AGH, as a flood of negative reviews in Apple's App Store indicates, is the touch-screen controls make the playability of titles a hit-and-miss proposition. Retrogaming fans hesitant about buying the package on that basis might want to read reviews and comments at dedicated sites (Atari Age and Touch Arcade, to name a couple besides this one), since they're more objective and specific than modern-day gamers who find the titles a primitive bore to begin with.

For those inclined to buy the package on spec, here's a few title-specific examples before scrutinizing the app as a whole:

- The coin-op Tempest is too imprecise for even a reasonably skilled player (me) to advance more than a few waves. The inclusion of the unreleased Atari 2600 prototype of Tempest, on the other hand, is greatly entertaining even though it's an unfinished and unplayable mess, at least for the few minutes it takes to experience a bad idea gone

completely awry. It takes stones for a company to be willing to showcase its worst failures.

- The coin-op Millipede controls reasonably well (if not to the precision offered by a Trak Ball). The otherwise stellar Atari 2600 version suffers greatly, since the already-mediocre joystick movement is poorly implemented on the touch screen. This problem plagues a lot of the 2600 games, although there are surprising exceptions.
- One of those exceptions is Battlezone, where both versions play well (and, wow, did I underrate the Atari 2600 version as a teen when I bought Activision's Robot Tank instead).
- Both versions of Warlords suffer from somewhat imprecise controls, but are enjoyable anyhow simply because it's such an inherently great game.



Since it's an Atari release there's obviously no third-party titles such as Pitfall or Demon Attack in the collection. It also turns out a hefty number of Atari-released titles are omitted due to copyrights held by others, which Atari presumably didn't want to pay for (with us presumably paying more as well). So no coin-op favorites like Star Wars or landmark 2600 titles like Space Invaders. Plenty of gamers won't miss the infamy of Pac-Man and E.T., but I wouldn't mind seeing them included so the modern crowd can judge for themselves if the titles were so awful they deserve credit for causing the Great Video Game Crash of 1983. An amusing result of this limitation is the inclusion Video Olympics under its Sears-label title. Hard to blame Atari, given how the advocates of international gaming goodwill go to militant extremes like trademarking the word "winter." Similarly, Championship Soccer avoids its 2600 name change to Pele's Championship Soccer when Atari was trying to cash in on his celebrity status (computer opponents with names like "Lumpy" Duran are retained, so presumably "the clumsiest player in the world" doesn't want to sue for exclusive rights to that distinction if he exists).

Also inevitable is the omission of lots of coin-op titles whose rights belong to Atari because of the relative few in this collection. It's understandable favoring older classics like Lunar Lander, Asteroids and Missile Command, but since there's 2600 titles released into the current millennia it's reasonable to assume fiscal motivations for withholding arcade hits like Gauntlet and Marble Madness. Such titles would likely sell well as stand-alone offerings, especially since Namco still has the gall to charge \$5 for an iPhone version of Pac-Man that has no significant extra features (they just released Mappy for "only" \$3, which I'm finding much more enjoyable anyhow).



Again, however, the obscure titles somewhat compensate for some of the copyright deficiencies. Pole Position is missing, for instance, but hunting around to see what driving games are included led me to the 2600 title Fatal Run. It has the distinction of requiring 32K of ROM, the most of any single-title commercial game except for a trivia game released only in Brazil requiring 64K, according to AtariProtos.com. The reviewer at that site also slams it as boring, writing "maybe there was a reason Fatal Run was only released overseas," so I never bothered trying an emulated version. But it's basically the 2600 Pole Position engine with some added features and, while I didn't think much of that game as others, is certainly an adequate substitute.

The initial iPhone version of Atari's Greatest Hits suffered from a huge flaw in that an imperfectly emulated version of Pong was the free pack-in game, which may have deterred many potential buyers. An update released just as this article was going to press that replaces it with Missile Command and fixes a screen-size issue on iPods is a big improvement.

There's not much initial guidance when you start the app, although figuring out the interface takes only a few minutes. Games can be selected by rotating images of the coin-op consoles or 2600 cartridges with a finger swipe, but the less

flashy text list (broken down by category as well as A-Z) is a lot more practical. Options usually include adjusting the difficulty and number of starting lives, plus selectable methods for the touch-screen controls in many cases.

Many also offer a multi-player option, but only using Bluetooth. This is a serious bummer, since opening it up to anyone looking for opponents via wi-fi or 3G would massively increase my chances of finding someone who likes playing the original Atari 2600 Football. Selecting a two-player game with no connection results in the player controlling both tanks/paddles/whatever simultaneously which, while mostly worthless, does add a strange element of playability to certain titles like Demons to Diamonds.

Another major hitch that should be fixed with an upgrade is games can be paused, but the only options at this point are resuming the game or exiting to the main game-select menu. An option allowing players to revisit the configuration menu and either resume or start a new game is sorely needed. This would allow changing the control scheme or difficulty level to something more suitable. Even more useful, especially for Atari 2600 titles, is instructions could be looked at in the middle of a game. I'm finding the late-era 2600 adventure Secret Quest rather engaging, for instance, but resorting to keeping the manual open in a Safari browser window and toggling between the apps when guidance is needed.

The modernish background music is bland and badly out of character for a retro package (fortunately it can and should be turned off). Obviously Atari wasn't going to pay to license a jukebox of John Cougar and Men At Work tunes, but a user-library option so I could play my a-ha collection would be nice.

Retro purists alarmed by the "imperfect" emulation mentioned above should know it only applies to Pong, presumably because it's the only game in the collection that has no microprocessor to emulate. The programmers also "enhanced" it with colorful border graphics and a computer opponent, while doing a less-than-great with the precision of the touch-screen paddle controls.

All of the other games, including Missile Command, appear to be exactly emulated, including the quirks and bugs. Missile Command also retains the coin-op's DIP switches that adjust the number of starting cities (four to seven) and how many points are required for each additional city. The virtual trackball offers "relative" and "absolute" configurations, with the latter providing good precision, if not quite to arcade standards. The fire buttons for the three bases, however, are too small and close together on the iPhone for the rapid use necessary as things speed up. iPod users will be free of such handicaps on this and many other games.

Also included in the app are image galleries for coin-ops and instruction manuals for 2600 cartridges that you've purchased. Missile Command's six-image gallery is average, with a couple of photos of different cabinets, a collector's pin and three advertising/dealer fliers. As a relatively early game in the Golden Era, it's worth noting the latter lack a detail that soon afterward became a major point of emphasis for Atari. (Hint: rockhounding. Answer is two paragraphs below.)

I've already recommended paying for the entire package, even if a lot of the titles can't help being doomed to eternal awfulness. There's no way I'm going to test my endurance or your patience by reviewing every game, but having played most of them what follows is a decent representation of what to expect, starting with the arcade titles and wrapping up with the 2600 collection.

The galleries are worth perusing, especially for the dealer fliers that tend to emphasize "operator profit" features (a.k.a. shorter/pricier games) you didn't see in magazine and catalogue ads as a kid. It's well-known Asteroids Deluxe, for instance, programmed the UFOs to shoot rocks so gamers couldn't play indefinitely by "hunting." But I didn't realize



Atari was promoting a new option requiring players to purchase a minimum of two games, which obviously never gained much acceptance in the market. One of their most notable successes in this area was the "skill-select" feature allowing players to choose their starting level which, as a Tempest fanatic, meant I fell hook, link and sinker into the "endless profit opportunities" trap.

More configuration of options would be nice, since a lot of tweaks promoted in those fliers are missing. The coin-op Millipede, for instance, features separate easy/hard settings for millipede heads, beetles (who affect the number of flowers on-screen) and spiders. The app emulation reduces this to a single easy/medium/hard option. Most coin-ops offer a choice of English, German, French or Spanish text (no Japanese? Hmm...), which is retained in the app. The starting/extra lives options are mostly, but not always true to the originals. The app version of Lunar Lander, for instance, offers up to 1,800 starting fuel units, compared to a maximum of 900 on the coin-op unit, but there's no option to add more fuel by cashing in virtual "credits." As an intrepid pilot able to deplete Alaska's North Slope oil reserves during a single flight, I miss MAME and its unlimited virtual coins.

The main disappointment beyond the missing titles is those where the controls don't allow personal favorites to be played with much enjoyment. I find Crystal Castles unplayable using either the "absolute" or "relative" touch-screen setting. Centipede's virtual Trak Ball is more vague than Millipede's for some reason (and the response of the fire button on both leaves something to be desired). Asteroids offers an option where rotation and thrust are combined into a virtual "disc," which should be avoided by anyone not looking for an excuse to die quickly (hey, kids not sharing dad's fanaticism might want to get back to their Wii's).

My disappointment at not being able to enjoy Tempest did mean the silver lining of spending time with titles I had little or no previous experience with. I'd only briefly observed Black Widow, for instance, but if I had known then it was essentially a vectorized take on the Robotron concept I'd probably have hundreds of fewer hours of productive time credited to my youth. Major Havoc, another vector game that basically alternates space-shooting and platform stages, is another real find, although the controls during the platform stages could use some improvement.

Some of the included games were tepid then and remain so now, but are worth a brief visit for their contextual value. Red Baron is essentially a cousin of Battlezone taking place in a plane rather than a tank, but it suffers from poor flight physics and repetitive gameplay where you feel like you have less control of movement despite navigating in three dimensions. Liberator is sort of the reverse of Missile Command, where your four starships at the corners of the screen try to destroy bases on rotating planets at the center of the screen, but it belongs firmly in the large attic of games lacking an addictive hook.

Moving on to Atari 2600 titles, the saying about higher highs and lower lows applies due largely to the sheer size of the collection. The lows, unfortunately, are in the majority since a lot of the titles were horrible then and remain so now (i.e. Basic Math). Many of the good titles also didn't make a smooth transition into app form. But that still leaves enough quality titles left for 2600 fans to spend plenty of hours exploring. Also, I'm not going to pretend I don't already have the Stella emulator and a ROM download of every Atari 2600 game available on the 'net on my Mac laptop. So being limited to a handful of personal favorites on my iDevice hardly means not reliving the others regularly. I just can't do so while in the loo.



The menu screen options for each game include the manual and multiplayer connections (when applicable), but no custom settings. Those are, naturally, selected using the virtual console once you "boot" the virtual cartridge. The bottom of the screen can be toggled between the console switches and a virtual joystick (or slide lever for paddle games). Unlike the arcade titles, you can change your options mid-game.

Everyone will, of course, want to know how Adventure plays and the answer is: not as well as I'd like. The virtual Atari joystick is essentially a d-pad layout with a big dead center, making quick or precise moves difficult. Too many times a move didn't register or went in the wrong direction because my eyes were on the game and not the control below it. The original cramp-inducing joysticks weren't great, but certainly better than this. Also, in truth I've become spoiled

using Stella thanks to the the pain- and error-free response of my laptop keyboard (or X-Arcade joystick/trackball combo, a must for all serious retrogamers).

(Hardcore fans of Adventure almost certainly know about a free iPhone remake released in 2008 by Peter Hirschberg, who's also the programmer of the LEDhead emulator of 12 Mattel handheld games I've raved about in the past couple of issues. Hirschberg's Adventure is an exact replica that uses tilt control for movement. I'm generally not a big fan of tilt replacing traditional controls in an established game, but they work well and are more precise than the AGH version.)

Some Atari 2600 favorites I enjoyed at least reasonable success with in AGH include Asteroids, Gravitar, Night Driver, Star Raiders (once I got use to toggling the virtual keypad icon at the top of the screen) and Super Football (largely because the game is so quirky a few momentary delayed or erroneous moves aren't fatal). Among those I abandoned in disappointment are Basketball, Pong Sports (the virtual paddle sends the player in the opposite of the expected direction) and (major bummer) Yars' Revenge.

As with the arcade titles, I'm discovering (or rediscovering, as in the case of Battlezone) surprisingly good games I've heard about but never played for one reason or another. The unreleased prototype Save Mary! generally gets good reviews in 2600 fan forums, although I'm suspecting I ignored it for no reason beyond its title. The forum chatters are spot-on: the seemingly simple concept of dropping blocks from a crane to allow Mary to escape a quarry filling up with water is more fun and complex than I imagined. Return to Haunted House, a fan-made sequel to the original, certainly deserves a place among the 2600's best adventures, except the AGH version inexplicably lacks instructions (a nicely illustrated PDF manual is in the fan forums at AtariAge.com, locatable with a simple Google search).

Some less-great titles also have first-timer value for novelty, weirdness or awfulness. I'm fine not being able to revisit Raiders of the Lost Ark in exchange for the hard-to-find SwordQuest trio, since I'm not a big fan of the former and never bothered until now to see why the latter were such a flop. Sentinel is "Atari's only game released for the 2600 that features a light gun." AGH replaces the gun with a touch grid at the bottom of the screen that obviously makes it an entirely different experience, but since the game is mediocre (at best) a brief sampling is more than sufficient.

As for the plethora of card/board/gambling/brain games ... what the hell. If you don't already have one of the gazillion free iPhone versions of chess, blackjack, Mastermind or Simon this is at least a novel way to play them as long as you're OK with not being able to save games in progress.

If you've read this far, it'd seem you're maniacal enough about retrogaming to have already purchased the full AGH package (yes, I'm also one of those who reads reviews of things already acquired to affirm my good judgment). Holdouts should take the plunge, remembering gaming was filled with disappointments back then as well. We were forking over \$20-\$40 for dogs like E.T and Pac-Man, and paying that much for even best-ever titles makes most modern console games an astonishing bargain in comparison. If you find 15 in the AGH worth playing often, it seems fair you're well ahead of the game compared to the old days.

As for other retrogaming emulation packages, it's a lot easier sorting out the cream of the crop than the never-ending battle for supreme bragging rights regarding actual hardware (Baer/Bushnell, Atari/Intellivision, C64/Spectrum, ST/Amiga, PC/Mac, iPhone/Android ... obviously it'll never stop). The following are virtual console collections for the iPhone that I know about, excluding those requiring jailbreaking, listed and graded roughly in descending order of quality:

ZX Spectrum: Elite Collection ([A-](#))

\$2.99 for initial 12-game collection, \$1.99 each for nearly 20 six-game add-ons, Elite Systems Ltd.

The ZX Spectrum may not be your thing – in fact a compelling army of retrogamers snorts in derision at the Speccy's color-starved and often glitchy games even trying to compete on the same field as real computers like the Commodore 64 and Atari eight-bit series. But for reasonable people able to put away their partisan blinders will find this the best overall iPhone emulation package in size, quality and playability. The initial package comes with a dozen games, at least half of which are winners such as Chuckie Egg (landmark platformer), Saboteur 1 and 2 (great ninja platformers) and Turbo Esprit (a Grand Theft Auto racer ahead of its time). The rest are more likely to be average than awful (kudos to Elite for largely weeding out the admittedly huge amount of crap in the Speccy's portfolio). The add-ons generally feature one or two landmark titles like Jet Set Willy or Manic Miner, but usually at least a couple of the others are lesser-known gems that are at least as fun. Two things elevate this above every

other package in these capsule reviews. First, the touch-screen controls are responsive and the user can fully customize their layout, along with various other system parameters such as memory and speed throttling. Second and more important, Elite is the only company regularly offering new game packs, with 18 as of this writing and four more in the wings, making for more than 100 titles as of now. Yes, the complete collection costs more than \$30, a small fortune on the App Store scale. But considering it'd take years to master all the ones worth playing, it beats polluting the planet with half a tank of gas instead.

Commodore 64 (B+)

\$4.99 for initial collection of eight games and Commodore BASIC, 11 additional games available free, \$0.99-\$1.99 each for about 30 additional titles, Manomio LLC

This is likely the first package most retrogamers will want, seeing as how the C64 is the best-selling computer of all time by a huge margin, assuming one doesn't factor in the multitude of PC and Mac models that change significantly with each new release. It's hard to argue against them and this bundle should satisfy, if sometime more for reasons of nostalgia than execution. Controls for many games are dodgy and I've encountered periodic crashes, although updates have remedied some of this. There's so many C64 games any collection of 50 titles will be missing what lots of people consider essentials, but I still find those available in this app largely disappointing. Sometimes it's just bad selection (Jupiter Lander, International Basketball), other times it's control or other issues plaguing a good game (Paradroid, Attack of the Mutant Camels). But I came away with enough hits in my pillage of the in-app selection to feel OK, starting with Jeff Minter's classic madcap shooter Iridis Alpha. The inclusion of BASIC is more novelty than practical, although there appears to be a virtual disk you can save/load programs with (pity you can't share them or load the gazillions already written). There's are a couple a clever features, including the ability to submit high scores to an online vanity board and a "trainer mode" for many titles. A better selection of games would put this in first place among the capsule review contenders, even with fewer titles and higher prices than the Speccy Elite collections, but this is one instance in the Homeric battle between the two machines where it has to settle for a very respectable second.

iDOS (A+ for savvy users; B for others)

Free, Universal. NOTE: MAY NOT BE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

This freeware PC-DOS emulator, which comes with six shareware games including Wolfenstein 3D, is third on the list solely due to Apple forcing the developer to change it so users can't load their own software. At least not officially, but it turns out doing so is fairly easy as long as you're not a bumbling idiot with simple file-management software. Sadly, this eliminates 95 percent of consumers who will be wary or unaware the option exists. Otherwise I might be shouting from the rooftops that this is the essential emulator for all iPhone-carrying retrogamers. Besides an endless range of old-school hits like Duke Nukem 3D and the Ultima series, you can use emulators written for MS-DOS to play your entire Atari 2600, MAME, MESS and other retro ROM collections (including one of the better emulators for my beloved TRS-80 Color Computer). Some users of this app have even loaded various versions of Windows, including those in use today, but this seems more about bragging rights than practicality. The initial release of iDOS came with versions of Dig Dug and Ms. Pac-Man that weren't great, but you could use other programs by dragging their files into the app using iTunes. Now you get the shareware games in a much more friendly user interface (no using the DOS prompt unless you want to), but the file transfer feature is gone. All that's needed to overcome this is to use the freeware Windows/Mac application iPhone Explorer (www.macroplant.com/iphoneexplorer) to drag files into iDOS' Documents folder (I won't give step-by-step instructions – if you can't figure out the relatively simple program you shouldn't be messing with your iPhone's memory). The good news in the updated version is it adds virtual game controllers that work far better than the customizable keypad in the original release, plus better screen configuration options for iPod users. A full touch-screen keyboard and other functions are also available, although this crowds an iPhone screen since the keys overlap most of the virtual monitor. Luckily there's a variable transparency option, so I can play the text adventure "A Mind Forever Voyaging" by making the keys just barely discernible. Finally, it should be noted I've seen nothing about iDOS being removed from the App Store again, but couldn't locate it shortly before I submitted this review. Whether this is a temporary situation remains to be seen.

TurboGrafix (C+)

Free for base app with one game, \$2.99 each for 20 additional titles, Hudson Entertainment

This gets some serious love from fans of the console, but the larger gaming community (including myself) is decidedly less enthusiastic. The two primary reasons are a generally tepid selection of games and the \$2.99 cost per title. That pricing is out of line by both App Store and retro emulator standards. The free game, World Sports

Competition, is a lousy Track And Field imitator despite featuring 18 events. The good news is the playability of games with the touch-screen controls is generally decent, and there are titles such as Bonk's Adventure and R-Type that gave featured titles on competing platforms a run for their money. Five of the games were added not too long ago, so it's possible the developer will keep to a promise the library will keep growing.

ZX Nostalgia, Arcade Edition (C)

Free 15-game package, Manuel F. Garcia

Games for the ZX Spectrum are largely unknown in the general gaming community, but the titles in this collection will be largely unknown even to Speccy users beyond those who made the computer popular in Spain. The games from The Mojon Twins represent a good mix of fighters, platformers, shooters and RPGs, and are roughly of average quality for a Speccy release (as long as you're not bothered by the large number of semi- or mostly-naked women in the title and background art). There's also a completely-out-of-place non-graphics text adventure, and even that is useless to most because it's in Spanish. The virtual joystick works well and you can save multiple games. But there's no obvious way to exit a game, forcing you to exit the app and reboot to start a new one. The instructions are a mess, requiring an online connection to access them and displaying sections in alternating Spanish and English. Furthermore, I experienced a few random crashes for actions that would be OK one session and not another. But a huge offset to any negatives is the collection is free, so users come out ahead no matter what. They'll either find one or more games worth playing or they'll reaffirm their belief the Speccy was a loser machine with loser software.

ZX Nostalgia Adventure Edition Vols. 1- 4 (C-)

99 cents for each collection of about a dozen titles, Manuel F. Garcia

These probably deserves a split grade, since they're the only real option for fans of old-school graphic/text adventures and nearly a non-starter for everyone else. They're also what I'd consider in the second tier of adventures for the ZX Spectrum, well below standard setters like Lords of Midnight and The Hobbit. Most of Volume 1, for instance, is Lord of the Rings spoofs (i.e. Fuddo and Slam) using recurring characters. The interface is clumsy – you type commands into the standard iPhone text box, then the app slowly types the command into the emulated program. Also, it's great you can save and load games, but you have to exit the app altogether to quit some adventures and start another. Finally, I ended up having to go online to look up instructions for a lot of the games as well as hints, since a lot of the solutions to puzzles aren't exactly logical and/or rely on obscure commands. On the positive side, it's hard to argue with the price, especially since each edition will occupy a huge number of hours if you play all the games to completion.

Intellivision (D+)

Free for base app with one game, 99 cents each for five additional titles, VH1

This is a huge letdown due to its tiny library of questionable games and dodgy touch-screen controls. Fans of the console can at least grab the free version and play Astrosmash, which if not the greatest game is one everyone is familiar with. The only other ones that are playable and worth paying for are Thunder Castle and Chip Shot Super Pro Golf, with Thin Ice, Skiing and Night Stalker ranging from poor to abhorrent. Omitting the huge range of games, from Major League Baseball to Utopia, that made the console great makes the experience all the more painful. One redeeming feature is two-player games are possible using both Bluetooth and wi-fi.

Games in Atari's Greatest Hits, listed by packs selling for 99 cents each (MP indicates multiplayer):

Asteroids PK

- 1.Asteroids
- 2.Asteroids Deluxe
- 3.Asteroids 2600
- 4.Canyon Bomber – MP

Battlezone PK

- 1.Battlezone
- 2.Red Baron
- 3.Air-Sea Battle – MP
- 4.Submarine Commander



Centipede PK

- 1.Centipede
- 2.Millipede
- 3.Centipede 2600
- 4.Millipede 2600

Black Widow PK

- 1.Black Widow
- 2.Space Duel – MP
- 3.Desert Falcon
- 4.Space War

Crystal Castles PK

- 1.Crystal Castles
- 2.Crystal Castls 2600
- 3.Surround – MP
- 4.Maze Craze

Gravitar PK

- 1.Gravitar
- 2.Gravitar 2600
- 3.Radar Lock
- 4.Demons to Diamonds – MP

Star Raiders PK

- 1.Star Raiders
- 2.Liberator
- 3.Star Ship – MP
- 4.Human Cannonball

Pong PK

- 2.Pong -MP
- 3.Missile Command 2600
- 4.Fun with Numbers
- 5.Flag Capture MP

Lunar Lander PK

- 1.Lunar Lander
- 2.Sky diver MP
- 3.Video Pinball
- 4.Code Breaker

Super Breakout PK

- 1.Super Breakout
- 2.Breakout MP
- 3.Off – the - Wall
- 4.Circus Atari MP

Tempest PK

- 1.Tempest
- 2.Tempest 2600
- 3.Outlaw
- 4.Atari Video Cube

Major Havoc PK

- 1.Major Havoc
- 2.Secret Quest

- 3.Sentinel
- 4.Yars Revenge

Warlords PK

- 1.Warlords MP
- 2.Warlords 2600
- 3.Combat MP
- 4.Combat 2 MP

Adventure PK

- 1.Adventure
- 2.Haunted House
- 3.Return to Haunted House
- 4.Save Mary

3D Tic-Tac-Toe PK

- 1.3d Tic-Tac-Toe
- 2.A game of concentration
- 3.Backgammon
- 4.Brain Games

Fatal Run PK

- 1.Fatal Run
- 2.Dodge 'Em
- 3.Night Driver
- 4.Street Racer – MP

Quadrup PK

- 1.Quadrup
- 2.Slot Racers – MP
- 3.Stellar Track
- 4.Math Grand Prix

Casino PK

- 1.Casino MP
- 2.Slot Machine
- 3.Video Checkers
- 4.Video Chess

Swordquest PK

- 1.Swordquest Earthworld
- 2.Swordquest Fireworld
- 3.Swordquest Waterworld
- 4.Sprintmaster

Championship Soccer PK

- 1.Championship Soccer MP
- 2.Golf
- 3.Double Dunk
- 4.Basketball

Football PK

- 1.Football MP
- 2.Home Run
- 3.Minature Golf
- 4.Bowling

Realsports Basketball PK

- 1.Realsports Basketball mp
- 2.Realsports Boxing mp
- 3.Realsports Tennis mp
- 4.Realsports Baseball mp

Realsports Football PK

- 1.Realsports Football mp
- 2.Realsports Soccer mp
- 3.Realsports Volleyball mp
- 4.Video Olympics MP

Super Breakout 2600

- 1.Super Breakout 2600
- 2.Battlezone 2600
- 3.Super Baseball
- 4.Super Football

Hangman PK

- 1.Hangman
- 2.Black Jack
- 3.Steeplechase



The Pixelated Mage

by Jeff Wittenhagen



Marvel Land

Platform: Sega Genesis / Mega Drive
Developer: Namco
Release Date: 1991
Genre: Platformer
Game Modes: Single Player, 2-Players Alternating
Tag Line: "Unique platformer that takes games with similar themes and beats them out with solid controls and a few very entertaining levels."

Marvel Land

Synopsis

Marvel Land is another cookie cutter platform game that came to us in an era when they were still extremely popular and being produced in droves. There are a bunch of unique powerups included in Marvel Land to keep things fresh and interesting. The story in Marvel Land is simplistic as you play as Prince Talmit who is attempting to save Princess Wondra from the tyrannical Mole King. There are four worlds total in which obstacles obstruct your progress that you must pass in order to move on. There is also an added bonus target to jump through at the end of each level in order to garner extra points.

Some of the enemies in Marvel Land are the mole-ish looking subjects of the Mole King, but there are also a wide array of other baddies to deal with. There are some classic boss fights in Marvel Land and each defeat of a boss allows you to rescue a fairy and eventually Princess Wondra herself. Before you begin the next world you get to play a bonus stage mini-game catching falling stars in a nighttime parade. There are multiple opportunities to warp throughout the game, but if you happen to bypass one of the bosses, you go into the final boss much weaker and thus have a much more difficult time.

Gameplay

Marvel Land is chalked full of side scrolling platforming classicness with very responsive and accurate controls. At the peak of your jump there is a little bit of flying or hovering which helps control sporadic jumps. Instead of simply jumping on enemies, to attack you use a trail of spirits which you must spin to dispose of your foes. After each attack a spirit off the trail is removed in order to add in a bit of challenge. The boss battles use a rock, paper, scissors format which adds a little depth, but the difficulty is much too easy.

Each of the levels in Marvel Land, even though set in an amusement park, surprisingly have some variation. Unfortunately, many of the levels are bland and even frustrating which is disappointing as other levels are amazing. The Ferris wheel and roller coaster levels are some of the most unique and creative levels that I have played in a 16-bit game! Marvel Land is as cut and dry linear as you can get and there is not much of a reason to replay the game after you beat it, besides for an increase of difficulty which should have been there from the get go.

Graphics and Sound

The graphics in Marvel Land are colorful, cheery, and bright. Each character sprite is very detailed and the backgrounds have a high level of polish applied to them. Unlike most games with a happy undertone, the graphics are very easy on the eyes which adds to the overall enjoyment of the game. The music



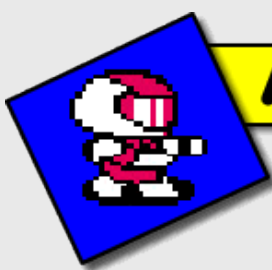
isn't the best that's available on the Genesis but you will find a few catchy tunes to tap your toe to. Overall the music will feel a bit repetitive, but nothing that should detract from the overall experience. Each of the various sound effects add a lot to the gameplay and makes things a bit more exciting. Environment interaction is met with subtle sounds that makes it feel like you are really a part of a real world.

Why You Should Play It

Marvel Land is a pseudo-unique platformer that takes games with the same type of themes, like Aero the Acrobat, and beats them out with solid controls and a few very entertaining levels. There is something about Marvel Land that just stands out and makes it seem fresh and fun. While you'll be hard pressed to find this one in the wild, as it didn't have a high release rate, you can typically find Marvel Land for under \$20 online which won't hurt your wallet too badly.

Rating = 3 Pixelated Mages out of 5





A Pixelated 21st Century

by Paul Zimmerman



Hello Pixelated fans. Did anyone go to the Midwest Gaming Classic in March? It was awesome! On Saturday at the event I had a combined Donkey Kong Jr. tournament with Star Worlds Arcade called "It's On Like Donkey Kong Jr. – Arcade to Home." Players had to play the Donkey Kong Jr. arcade game in the Star Worlds room first. After that the top 8 players played the Wii/Virtual Console/NES version. In the finals the top 4 players had to play a mystery game in the Star Worlds room. That mystery game was Donkey King Jr. On Sunday I made some Donkey Kong Jr. world record attempts on the Wii/Virtual Console/NES for a couple of hours. I am currently placed 3rd on the Twin Galaxies scoreboard. At the event I beat my 3rd place score, then 2nd place. While I did not beat the world record at the show, I just recently did beat it at home. The score will be official with Twin Galaxies very soon.

So, on with the games...

March was a great month to be a Pixelated fan, at least if you own a Dsi (Wii side was lacking). Here are some of the retroware highlights for the month of April:



Nothing from WiiWare this month, sorry guys.



Airport Mania First Flight ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Land different planes, buy upgrades and avoid delays. 8 airports with multiple stages. Looks bright and happy. But, is it?

Anonymous Notes Chapter 1 From The Abyss
(Video to the right)

A 16-bit RPG with an ever changing dungeon, so it is always a different game. Hack, slash and magic.

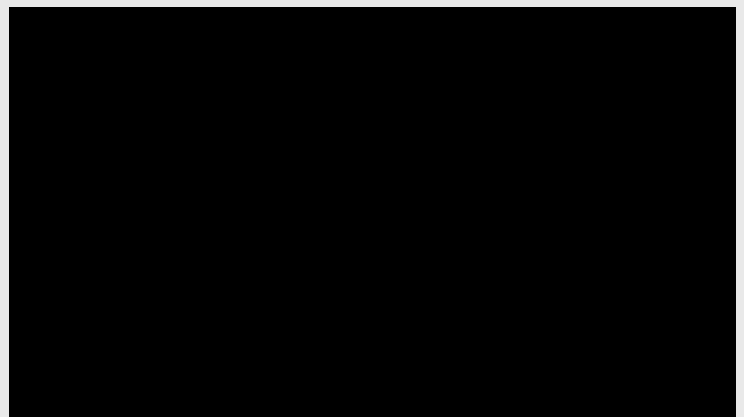
DodoGo Robo ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Guide robo-eggs through different environments. Change the environment with your toolbox to bring the robo-eggs to safety.

Fairy Tale ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

A match-two puzzle game with 100 levels and power-ups.

GO Series Captain Sub ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))



Dash through caves, shoot the monsters with your torpedoes, find the treasure and bring it back to your ship. A puzzle, shooting, adventure game.



Note: most of the videos for the games below are of the originals (meaning they not being played on the Wii). This is because the Virtual Console is emulating the original system and therefore they are identical.

Mega Man X (SNES) (Video to the right)

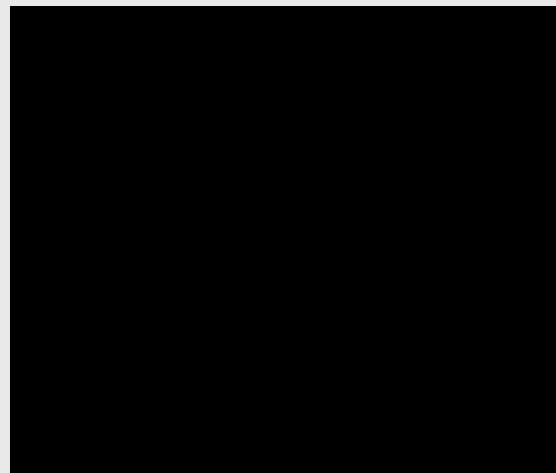
Mega Man is back! Back in the future! Destroy the Reploids and then their leader Sigma before the humans are wiped off the planet. Do it now!

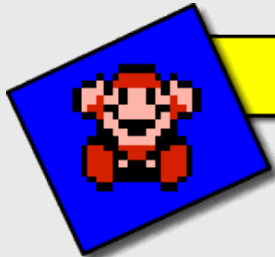
Super Bonk (SNES) ([Click here to see a video of the game](#))

Super Bonk needs to Bonk through the streets, caves and outer space and find his way back home to good old prehistoric times. Excellent game!

As always, send me an email and let me know if you purchased any of these games and what your thoughts are about them. Also, let me know your thoughts about any games I did not list.

I will see you next month for hopefully some more retroware goodies!





Game Over

by Bryan Roppolo



I hope you all have a great Memorial Day weekend (for those of you in the U.S.) and may the warmer temperatures bring you more happiness! Between now and Memorial Day I'll be working steadily on that article index and hope to bring you all some good news in June's issue.

By the way, if anyone decides to go out and buy that new C64 computer that was mentioned in Donald Lee's column, we'd love to hear from you and what you think of it. It seems pretty neat and it would be great to hear how it functions as a modern day computer...hmmm...Maybe that should become the modern computer of choice for all of us classic gaming collectors...Just a thought...Anyway, see you next month!