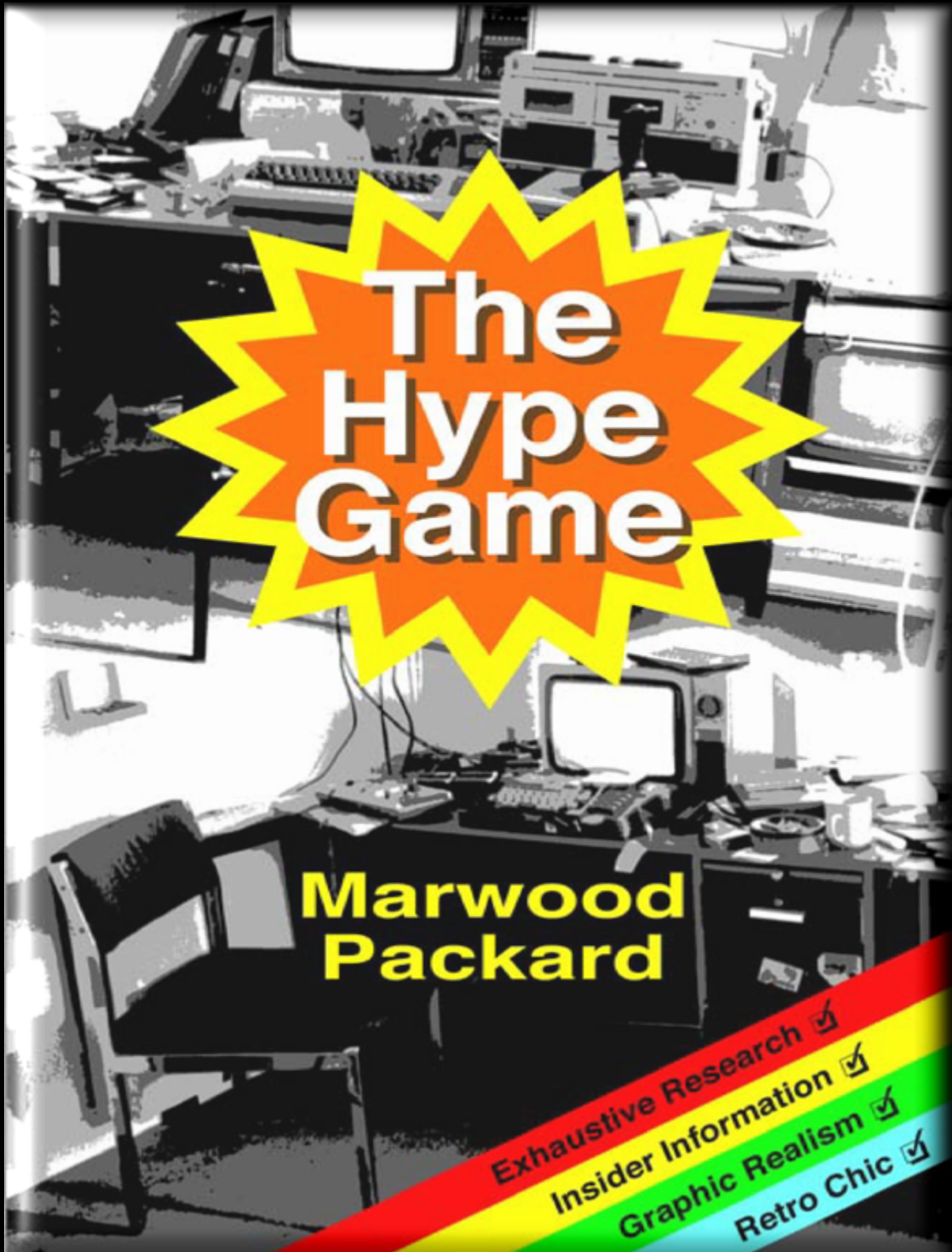


COMMODORE FREE

A free to download Magazine dedicated to Commodore computers.

Issue 69



**The
Hype
Game**

**Marwood
Packard**

- Exhaustive Research ✓
- Insider Information ✓
- Graphic Realism ✓
- Retro Chic ✓

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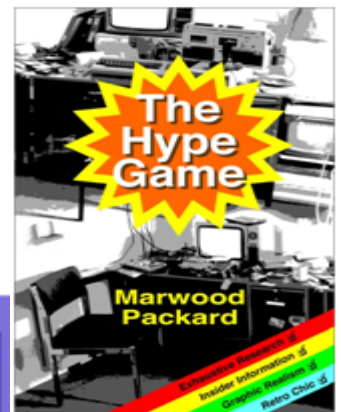
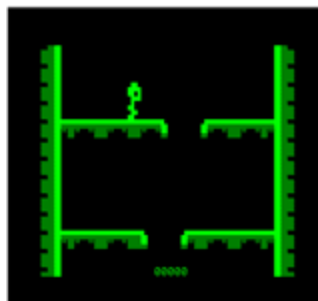
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Editorial

I was recently lucky enough to be in contact with someone I hadn't seen for a long, long time. We used to work together, and before that he was a reviewer for some of the well-known computer magazines of the time. I won't mention the name: let's just say we all know who he is. I don't want to name him in case it damages his laughable career. Sorry buddy!

I was walking down the street in my usual dazed bubble of confusion, when I heard a familiar voice calling me; "Hey, Nigel" (or something similar, though in stronger language). So we exchanged niceties and caught up. It turns out he is still working as a freelance writer, and had just been commissioned to write about Windows 2012 server. Now this guy doesn't know the first thing about the Windows operating system, so I was curious about how he would write such a review, also bearing in mind he hasn't a clue how to install or configure windows, and doesn't know what Active Directory is. All he said was "Easy. I just Googled the comments of other users and then averaged out their experiences into a review!"

While this isn't exactly something you could call a 'full review', it did remind me of when he was reviewing some games; at a time when we worked together in a computer shop. He didn't actually have copies of the games! To write the reviews, all he did was phone up the software house for the press notes about the software, add some comments from the programmer (sometimes they would put him through to a programmer), and then request some screenshots of the game! When these arrived, he would sit at his computer and re-work his notes, read the programmer's comments and the software house's Hype, and then create some sort of half made-up 'review'. When I asked him about this, he said that he didn't "have time to review the actual game because the deadline for the magazine article was tomorrow" and he "had to write X amount of words to fit in the space left for him in the magazine". "Chill out!" he would add, as if this is the way all reviews are done. I never trust a review in a magazine to this day. Even some of the screenshots he received were 'mock-ups' because he was writing so far in advance of the finished games!

Cutting back to the present, he said he "had reviewed printers and input devices recently" and that the magazines he worked for "really liked" what he had done. So how or why read a review even today? How he installed the drivers for the hardware with his limited PC skills is a mystery, unless, as I suspect (and the cheeky grin suggested this), he hadn't even unboxed the items!

Well personally, I can't comment about which magazines work like this, but I can tell you that in this one, every review is of an actual game that is physically loaded onto a machine and then extensively play tested. I may not be the best 'games player', and the game may not have been tested to death, but it has been lived with for at least a month. Any book that is reviewed has really been read. And any hardware reviewed has been plugged in and tested. So while other magazines may have nicely laid-out, wordy explanations of products that are typeset by semi-professionals:

Commodore Free has real reviews and real facts about real products

Onto this issue then.

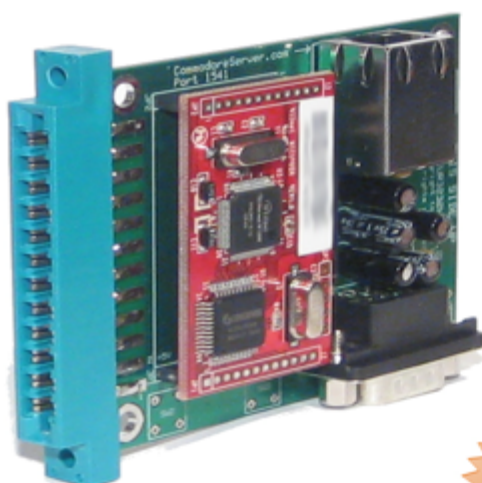
More news and reviews about some of the latest titles to enter the Commodore world, and by the time you have read to this line you may be feeling I should just "get on with it" so

Regards

Nigel (EDITOR) N other stuff for
www.commodorefree.com



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INSTEAD OF TELEPHONE LINE**

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Simply open an RS-232 file and then send data.
For example:

```
10 OPEN 2,2,2,CHR$(10)  
20 PRINT #2, "MY DATA"  
30 CLOSE 2
```

FIND OUT MORE AT:

<http://www.CommodoreServer.com>



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CBM PET - VIC-20 - COMMODORE 16 - COMMODORE 64

News

VCF E WAS CANCELLED THIS YEAR

-----Original Message-----

From B. Degnan

To: Commodore FREE

Subject: Mid-Atlantic Retro Open House Weekend - Swap and Workshop 5/18-19/13

As you know VCF E was cancelled this year, but now that power will be available we're going to hold an "open house" May 18th and 19th.

WHERE: InfoAge Science Center (infoage.org) in Wall Township New Jersey
9032-A (same as last VCF Exhibit room)
WHEN: May 18th 9AM through May 19th until ??
WHAT: A combo-swap meet and workshop (a.k.a. vintage computing hackfest)

Half the room will be tables for working on computers. Half the room will be for consignment.

We'll charge \$5 if someone is merely attending, or \$10 if they're bringing something to sell or repair. We'll also take 10% of sales as a consignment fee. (This income is for the club's general budget, not for food.)

What we will NOT do is let strangers drop off computers for us to repair. This isn't a free service weekend. Instead, if non-MARCHins bring period-appropriate gear, we'll assign them a learned partner and * teach * them how to do things.

We will expect the MARCH veterans to serve at least some of their time during the weekend as mentors.

So basically it's just like our standard work weekends, except it'll be open for outsiders to join in, and we'll formalize the "stuff available" tables so the club makes some money.

OMARC's hamfest is May 18, down the street at the TIROS dish campus, from 7-11am. Our event will start at 9am. Both events will refer people to each other.

As with our past work weekends, this also isn't a party. We'll make some plans for light meals, but food/drink is strongly discouraged in repair/sales tables. Also discouraged are people who attend just to hang out. We might have some sort of evening "thing" TBD (We have a lot of good ideas that we'll announce soon).

Just for extra caution, all attendees in the work area will sign a liability waiver. I know you're all smart and careful, but who knows with the general public...

Some people may choose to bring their own items to repair. Others may opt to work on MARCH systems (you must have permission). Still others may want to be open for helping everyone else, or some combination of the above.

Let me or Evan Koblentz know if you have questions - I can be reached via

<http://www.vintagecomputer.net/contact.cfm>

Bill

VintageComputer.net

AMIWEST 2013 ANNOUNCED

The 16th annual AmiWest Computer Show has been announced for October 18-20 at the Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Blvd., in Sacramento, California. Also the AmiWest Programming Conference will be held October 16-18 at the same location. For more details as they come in, watch the blog at

<http://apps.amiwest.net/blog/>

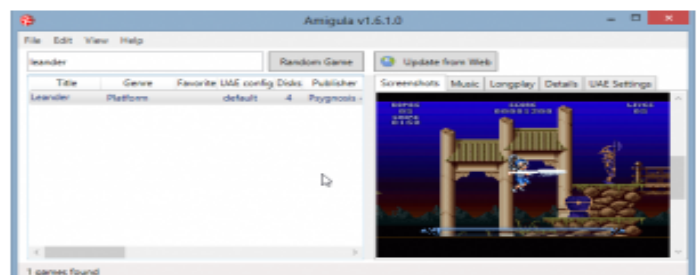
Truly,
Robert Bernardo
Fresno Commodore User Group
<http://videocam.net.au/fcug>



AMIGULA V1.6.1 AVAILABLE

Amigula (Amiga Games UAE Launcher) is a Windows application for managing and your Amiga games collection. With the software you can Search for games and quickly add them to a library, search for metadata (which could include screenshots and long play videos etc) listen to music and easily launch them. The designed of the interface has been as easy to use as possible, click on the link for more information and to download the software.

[Download Amigula v1.6.1](#)





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News

RETRO INNOVATIONS: NEW PRODUCTS

06 March 2013, 09:33:45

[UV EPROM](#)

06 March 2013, 02:00:37



For those looking for UV-erasable JEDEC-standard EPROMs in DIP packages, look no further.

Price: \$2.00

[PCB Edge Connector](#)

05 March 2013, 23:57:13



PCB edge connectors are expensive when found, and can be hard to source. Thus, we've purchased 1000 to bring the costs down and ensure adequate supplies. These are brand new, double-sided card edge connectors with PCB-installable leads (.6mm width for .100" connectors, 1mm width for..

Price: \$2.00

QUADPORTIEC FREOM RETRO INNOVATIONS

Price \$30.00

Product Description

Do you lament the lack of a second IEC port on your favorite Commodore printer interface or the 1541 Ultimate or SD2IEC? Do you regularly need to access IEC cables for various Commodore peripherals? Must you dig around behind your computer desk to turn off peripherals when a game demands only 1 1541 device be on the IEC bus? If so, then you are a rare and wonderful person and you must buy a QuadPortIEC to address these issues!

The QuadPortIEC, as the name so non-creatively suggests, expands a single IEC port into 4 electrically connected output ports. The device introduces no load on the bus, does not need to be powered, and contains no intelligence. Switches on the front of the unit allow optional disconnection of the ATN lines on the respective ports. This will render all devices on that port "invisible" to the computer without requiring physical power be removed or cabling be disconnected.

<http://store.go4retro.com/quadportiec/>



MUIBASE V3.0 RELEASED FOR AMIGAOS, MORPHOS

MUIbase (Magic data BASE with User Interface) is a relational, programmable database with graphical user interface and available for Windows, Mac, Linux and Amiga. MUIbase is open source distributed under GNU General Public License (GPL). visit <http://sourceforge.net/projects/muibase> for more information.

MUIbase is a fast and flexible database system. It is targeted for advanced desktop .usable to manage any data project. The power of MUIbase is in its easy to use, powerful graphical user interface along with extensive programming capabilities. Allowing automatic calculations from user input, and the generation of reports, it is also possible to import and export of data.

Changes:

- Optional logging of changes (adding, deleting and changing of records) into a system log table.
- The counting of changes can now be disabled for a complete table including the table's attributes.
- New dialog editor for table display objects.
- Panels are now part of the table display object.
- Possibility of defining record descriptions which are used when logging changes and when listing records in list view popups.

- Record description can be computed by a trigger function. This addresses feature request 2491815.
- New menu item for viewing all records of a table in the query editor.
- Updated license to GPL-3.
- Use GTK 3 on Linux.
- Use global menu for all windows on Linux if gtk-shell-shows-menubar is set, e.g. when using the Unity desktop.
- The geometry layout on GTK (Windows, Mac OS and Linux) now better matches to the one generated by MUI (Amiga).
- New demo project 'Yam-Link.mb' that demonstrates how to interface MUIbase with Yam for storing the message IDs of emails in a MUIbase project, and showing the corresponding Email in Yam (Amiga).
- When started from Workbench, use the search path from Workbench for starting other processes (Amiga).
- Several bug fixes.

Download link

<http://www.os4depot.net/?function=showfile&file=office/database/muibase.lha>

News

UNP64 2.28 RELEASED

UNP64 v2.28 - Generic C64 prg unpacker (C)2008-2012 iAN Coog

Original source and idea: testrun.c, taken from Exomizer 2.0b7 by Magnus Lind. Converted to a generic prg unpacker by iAN Coog. Being a derived project, Exomizer' sources used for UNP64 are included and modified where needed.

The idea is simple: to simulate the C64 memory/processor, run the program until it reaches the unpack routine, usually relocated to an address lower than \$0800, then to continue execution until the Program Counter returns to a normal address usually higher than \$0800. At this point, save all the memory. I normally do this process in emulators by setting breakpoints but an automatic program that does it for me is handy. PUCrunch and Exomizer 2.0Beta7 already have their own decrunch commands. This program should cover those 2 and almost all the remaining ones.

Main changes applied to Exomizer sources:

- Many undocumented opcodes added to 6502emu.c to unpack more packers/coders.
- Fixed handling of some opcodes (indirect JMP, JSR, BRK not stopping, ADC/SBC)
- Better sysline detection and parameter to force entry point.
- TrilogicExpert/ActionReplay/SuperSnapshot5/FreezeMachine/Final Cart II & III scanner, should cover every known (to me) version.
- Action Replay 4 & FreezeMachine Split freezes are detected and a onefiled prg will be generated. Then you can unpack the result or crunch it.
- Scanners to get exact unpack address from MANY difficult unpackers. See Unpackers section later in this document for a list.
- Tries to identify also entry point in SYS-less packers.
- Added some memory init values before running. A C64 minimal environment is replicated so many unpackers can act as on the real one.
- Added handling of some Kernal calls which return modified regs.
- Simple \$01 banking implemented: writing to I/O area for example is handled only when RAM is visible there, else writes to I/O are skipped.
- Simple raster (\$d011/2) handling, enough to avoid hanging some unpackers (AR)
- Faked keyboard checks to bypass many intros/trainers.
- Warnings are given in Verbose mode if vectors from \$0314 are modified, so you'll know if an IRQ or something else should happen.

http://csdb.dk/getinternalfile.php/114798/unp64_228.7z

```
UNP64 v2.28 - Generic C64 prg unpacker - (C)2008-2012 iAN Coog [Oct 29 2012]
Based on Exomizer 2.0b7 sources by Magnus Lind.
usage: UNP64 <packed.prg>{[,|@]Addr} [-parameters]

-a      Save all mem instead of $0800-$ffff.
-t$Addr Truncate mem at Addr before saving. ZP Addr used as lo/hi pointer.
-e$Addr Specify entry point address in case SYS detection fails.
-d$Addr Unpacker address = Addr; default: first address < return address.
-r$Addr Return address from unpacker must be >= Addr. (default:$0800)
-R$Addr Return address from unpacker must be == Addr.
-u      Clean unchanged memory.
-l      Clean leftover packed data copied at end of memory.
-s      Use a zero-filled stack on loading + SP=$FF, else like on C64.
-fXX    Fill memory with byte XX instead of 0, before loading.
-i      Identify only.          -c      Continue unpacking until error.
-v      Verbose output.        -x      Trace for Debug.
-B      Patch original Basic ROM at $a000, if prg is shorter.
-K      Patch original Kernal ROM at $e000, if prg is shorter.
-o Name Force output filename as "Name"
Default output filename is packed.prg.XXXX where XXXX is the hex JMP address.
Use packed.prg,Addr to relocate loading at Addr instead of .prg loadaddress.
Use packed.bin@Addr to load at Addr raw binaries without loadaddress.
```

News

SPECIAL VIC20 C16 GAME/COMPILATION

Title: Special VIC20 C16
 Category: Game/Compilation
 Release Date: 1986
 Language: Italian
 Size: 16K
 Machine: PAL Only
 Distribution: Commercial/PD
 Retail Price: 14000 Lira
 Published by: Pubblirome
 Notes: Newsstand release as special compilation from a C64 oriented publisher. TAP image courtesy of MassiCadenti/Bubusan/Edicola C64.

http://plus4world.powweb.com/software/Special_VIC20_C16



This Compilation Contains

- Il Legionario
- Scimmia Magica
- La Morte Nera
- Corsa Sul Fiume
- Il Pizzaiolo
- Astronave Talpa
- Missione Su Marte
- Meteorite (Pubblirome)
- Lupo Di Mare
- Invasione 2000
- Biss
- Autostrada
- Le Chiavi
- Il Pittore
- Scacchi
- La Spia
- Tennis (Pubblirome)
- Il Ladro
- Agente Segreto
- Velocipede

FFMPEG 1.1.3 HAS BEEN PORTED TO AMIGAOS4.

Released for Amiga Os the software contains improvements and support for a lot of new decoders, encoders, muxers and filters. ffmpeg is a very fast video and audio converter that can also grab from a live audio/video source. It can also convert between arbitrary sample rates and resize video on the fly with a high quality polyphase filter. The command line interface is designed to be intuitive, in the sense that ffmpeg tries to figure out all parameters that can possibly be derived automatically. You usually only have to specify the target bitrate you want.

Amongst the features are;

- ability to burn-in subtitles through the use of the new subtitles filter (via libass),
- support for converting and playing MOD/MED modules (via libmodplug).
- audio resampling from any format to any other
- scene detection
- volume detection
- super2xsai scaling
- logo removal
- deshake
- temporal deinterlacing
- smart blur
- and many more.

downloadable from OS4Depot.

C128 mentioned in History of Computers (Croatia)

Boris Jagačić gives a shout out to Commodore - <http://zg-magazin.com.hr/miroslav-kocijan-pionir-hrvatskoga-racunarstva/>

Source

<http://c128.com/c128-mentioned-history-computers-croatia>

Website

<http://zg-magazin.com.hr/miroslav-kocijan-pionir-hrvatskoga-racunarstva/>





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More Information: www.mcc-home.com



News

ASTEROIDS EMULATOR TO WORK WITH THE SUPERCPU

Hi Nigel,
Norbert has adapted his Asteroids emulator to work with the SuperCPU - it means that the screen does not slow down when there are a lot of splinters and smaller boulders on the screen, so it's probably as close to perfect as the Commodore 64 can get to the original arcade game, or at least it is by Norbert's method of 'emulating' the arcade game inside the host hardware.

Have a look here:
<http://supercpu.cbm8bit.com/games.htm#adapt>

Regards,
Shaun.



New articles on Obligement

The following articles have been added to the website of the french Amiga/MorphOS magazine Obligement (<http://obligement.free.fr>) during the last two months :

- January/February 2013 news.
- Old articles from A-News 21 to 24: Report: CeBIT 90, Interview with Jean-Michel Forgeas, Hardware: VESone, Review of Voyageurs Du temps, Review of Bars & Pipes 1.0d, Hardware: Hurricane 2800 Mk2, Review of Deluxe Video 3, Hardware: Digi-View 4.0, File: Tripos, etc.
- Interview with Jacek Piszczek (MorphOS developer).
- Interview with Richard Costello (programmer of Mortal Kombat).

- Interview with Katalin Ogren (actor in Mortal Kombat 2).
- Hardware: Retro Joystick Adapter 2.0.
- Hardware: ACA 620EC.
- Review of FS-UAE 2.1.23.
- Review of Roadshow 1.5 68k.
- Review of Erik.
- Review of Goblins 2.
- Review of Screen Switching Done Right.
- Review of Smash.
- File: Amiga shoot'em ups (1995-1999).
- File: the Amiga games list (update).
- Tutorial: prepare of a CF card/harddrive on WinUAE to install AmigaOS 3.x.
- Tutorial: connect a RGB source on a 1084S monitor.
- Tutorial: installation of Geek Gadgets on AmigaOS 3.x.
- Special quizz about main events in 2012 on Amiga



Turbo Chameleon - Minimig Joysticks

AMR is working on the Minimig core for the Turbo Chameleon. You can read all about the progress on his blog. The latest changes are: The Commodore C64 joystick ports are now usable from the Minimig core. A problem with the Extended Fast RAM is resolved. And in the OSD menu you can now select 24 Mbyte of Fast RAM.

http://retroramblings.net/?page_id=276



Commodore Computer Club UK.

We have set up to support all popular Commodore 8-bit computers, from the Commodore (CBM) PET range, through to the C128, so if you have a C64, VIC-20, C16, Plus/4 or even a C64DTV, and would like to know more about the club, please read the [club FAQs](#) or visit [our forums](#) if you have any further questions.

<http://www.commodorecomputerclub.co.uk/>

News

Revival Studios PRESS UPDATE

Revival Studios released a new game for the Commodore PET computers, called Down! The game down is a fast-paced action/arcade game that sees the player descending into a neverending cavern. Relying on gravity, the player has to navigate through the platforms as they move upwards. Grab the various pickups for bonus points. The game is definitely up to par with its celebrated ZX81 counterpart and plays very well on the PET (both on 40column and 80column displays).

Game features:

- Available on Tape and as Digital Download
- Addictive arcade gameplay
- Works on all PET models (except 2001)
- Flickerfree gameplay

The game is available on cassette tape and as digital download. For more information and screens from the game, check out <http://www.revival-studios.com/?page=151>

Air Assault

Revival Studios is proud to present its new game for the Philips Videopac and Magnavox Odyssey2 consoles, called: Air Assault. Air Assault sees you controlling a stealth plane. Your goal is to bomb different cities while your plane flies across the sky, descending with each passing. The game is simple to control, but much strategy is needed to survive! Missing that key building will cause your plane to crash!

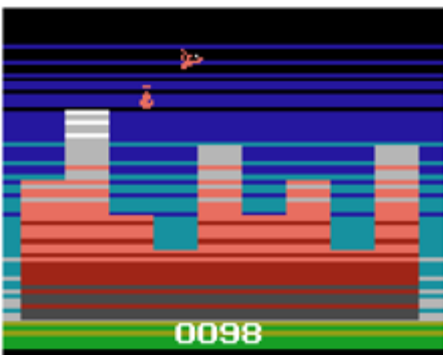
Game features:

- Playable on Videopac and Odyssey2 consoles
- Advanced multicolor graphics on all systems
- Enhanced Title screen on Videopac+ consoles
- Digitized speech using the Voice add-on
- Internet highscore uploading
- Online rewards system

Screenshots

Release information:

- A limited run on cartridge of 100 copies.



For more information, check out the game's web page: <http://www.revival-studios.com/?page=150>

Revival Studios - Game development for Classic systems such as the Atari , Colecovision, Commodore, MSX , Sega ,

Videopac/Odyssey2 , Vectrex , ZX81 and more. <http://www.revival-studios.com>

[COLECOVISION / SEGA SG-1000] - Astrododge update !

For those who haven't received or paid for their copy of astrododge, no need to worry you will be contacted shortly. Here is the update.

Colecovision - The game is currently shipping and the first few batches have been shipped out. The rest of the games will be shipping out end of february/early march. All people that reserved copies will be contacted shortly. the next week. Photos of the final packaging are currently available on the revival-studios website.

Sega SG-1000 - Cartridges are finished and on their way from new-zealand to the netherlands. All orders will be contacted early march. Note: There are a handful of copies left for this game (it has a limited run of 50 serialised copies). Reply this email if you have not reserved a copy yet and are interested in this game. For those that haven't preordered/registered their interest yet, now is the time to do so!

[TAPE-A-TON] - Combined shipping and discount on all cassette tape orders.

Did you know that if you are buying multiple cassette tape-games you will get a discount as well as combined shipping? This goes for all tape games for any platform, old and new releases

- 2 tape games - 15 euro + 5 euro S&H
- 4 tape games - 30 euros + 8 euro S&H

Note: The ZX81 titles are currently low on stock, but register your interest and i hope to have them back in stock soon.

[GAME REVIEWS - Avalanche (VIC20) & Mayhem (ZX81)]

The reviews keep coming in, luckily all of them good.

Avalanche (VIC20) got reviewed in Retro gamer Magazine, issue 112 "A no frills game we found difficult to put down" - 86%

Also, Both Avalanche (VIC20) and Mayhem (ZX81) got reviewed in the popular german magazine: RETURN Magazine. Their reviews don't award scores, but both reviews were very positive about the games.

[COMING SOON]

Here's a sneak peak of what is coming up.

February:

- Shipping out all the remaining copies of Astrododge for the Colecovision
- Start shipment on Astrododge / SG-1000.

Rest of Q1-2013 (March/April):

- Finishing development on my new game Shifted for the Colecovision and MSX.
- Releasing Stairrunner for the Commodore PET computers
- Releasing Shifted for the Sinclair ZX-81
- Developing Astrododge for the Sega Master System.

That's it for now, more news next month!

Kind regards, **Martijn / Revival Studios**

Revival Studios - Game development for Classic systems such as the Atari , Colecovision, Commodore, MSX , Sega , Videopac/Odyssey2 , Vectrex , ZX81 and more.

<http://www.revival-studios.com>

News

VAMPIRE A600 FPGA ACCELERATOR PROJECT

NEWS from the website

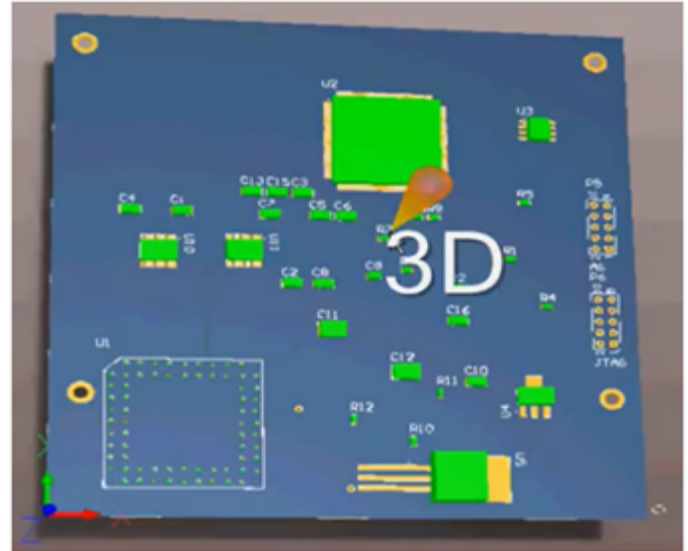
First Amiga600 FPGA Accelerator project

I'm talking about creating the world's first FPGA Amiga accelerator, and I'm working on this project more than 2 years. The idea is to create an open hardware database, where everyone can build an accelerator for their Amiga computers, also improve some characteristics and propose some ideas so we can bring old computers into life so they can act like modern computers supporting some new standards. Why, you may ask, just because of that feeling you can't find with modern computers. You are feeling alive and able to accomplish anything, work with any part of that hardware, change it, improve it, to be one with that hardware. Also, that hardware I need to create is related to VHDL programming language so it can become also open software so anyone with some knowledge of VHDL can get higher speeds with that open hardware. At the end, we can have old computers who can support anything like modern ones. So I think that this could bring something to the large Amiga community and that they need that website with open hardware and software for Amiga. Also, I have major support from some large electronic companies because there are also some nostalgic people who would like to see my project is working. I had some

offers to sell my schematics, codes to some German and American companies but I say no because this needs to be an open hard&soft platform free for everyone who likes and lives for old nostalgic computers!!!

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COMMODORE FREE GAME REVIEW

DOWN FOR THE PET

Ahh! The humble pet! Suddenly it's all a flurry, with new game releases, and here is yet another Revival-Studios game for said machine. The last game Commodore Free reviewed (Avalanche) is a quality release that is still fresh in my mind. Was it a 1 hit pony for the company? Could it be all downhill from there?

Well, NO! The game is a conversion of the ZX81 version (from the same company), and yet again, it's another quality release. It's another game that's so simple in its design, so elegant in execution, and some other analogy that I can't actually think of in its programming and technical do-dah-what's-its-face that makes it up there with something else that I can't think of at this moment in time! (The reviewer now takes a break and has a hot cup of tea, sighs and continues his game review.)

Moving on then

Avalanche was absolutely great on the PET, so it was with great excitement I received this game to review. Loading up, we have a stark menu with just the words:

DOWN
And
START GAME

Now I did ask Martin about why no high score table was implemented in these fairly basic screens, and he said that he wanted it to work on all versions of the PET, so this was all down to working with the lowest amount of memory. Carrying on...

Down! (2013)

Your village is under attack! Fleeing into the depths of the caves, there is only one way to go: Down!!!

How to play:

Use keyboard (O,P) to navigate. Pick up items to gain bonus points!

Game features:

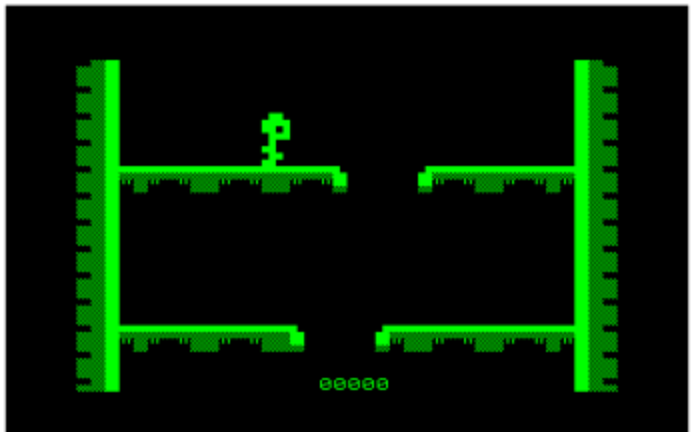
- Available on Tape and as Digital Download
- Addictive arcade gameplay
- Works on all PET models (except 2001)
- Flicker-free gameplay

Release info:

You can order the full game on cassette tape for 7.99 euros, or as digital download for 3.99 euros by emailing: sales@revival-studios.com

If you buy the tape version, you will of course get the digital download for free.

The game sees our hero at the top of the screen that slowly scrolls upwards while our hero has to wander through the



gaps (he is always trying to walk down so you need only move left or right). You can collect various bonus points along the way. The game starts off easily enough, and you will soon be at the bottom of the screen in no time, but slowly things start to speed up, and the whole thing eventually makes survival difficult.

With smooth gameplay and a well animated character, this all makes for a quality release, so my comments are the same as the other releases. A menu on the title screen, along with a high score screen would complement the game so much, but I know that memory is tight. Also, it would be nice to see some sort of trip hazard that would slow our guy down rather than just bonus points to collect. Otherwise a very competent effort.

Graphics	7/10	Overall 7/10
Sound	7/10 Not Too Much You Can Do Really	
Gameplay	7/10	

Summary

I would love to see a menu and high score, but smooth graphics and frustrating gameplay make this a very worthwhile release.

AMIGA FOREVER AND COMMODORE 64 FOREVER

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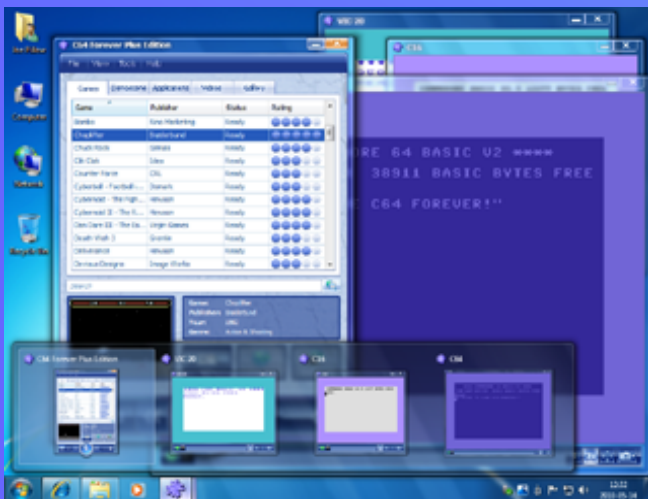
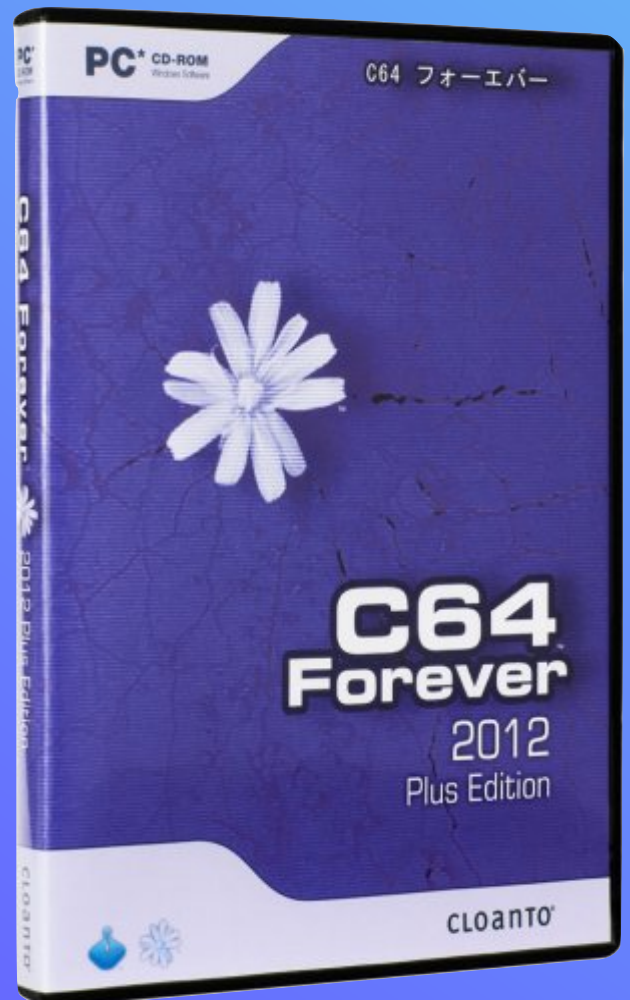
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<http://www.retroplatform.com>



COMMODORE FREE BOOK REVIEW

THE HYPE GAME

by MARWOOD PACKARD

Novel Synopsis on Amazon

The programmers and designers at Exactamundo, a software house in the 1980s, dream of blowing the competition off the retailers' shelves with mega-games. The owner and Managing Director, Dallas, cajoles his developers to package their puerile ideas with his savvy for marketing. But are they too late? Their plans are confronted by an over-crowded market, arguments over ideas and money, and, worse of all, a new brand of charlatanism in the freelance world that threatens to infect the company from the outside. The question is, can they stage-manage their averageness enough to survive, let alone thrive? Compiled from insider information, [The Hype Game](#) is a situation tragedy that mixes nostalgia with its antidote to unpick the ways in which technology and self-promotion shaped the workplace we know today. Commentaries entwined within the novel ask how it and further historical fiction should explore technology's impact on culture.

Contains some profanity and adult themes.

UN THEN REPUBLISHED

Shortly after publishing, the author decided to unpublish the book because he thought there might be more interest outside gamers if it were re-written. I happened to have been elite in that I was one of the first to read it, and as I say; I actually do; in the editorial: page-to-page, front-to-back, electronic cover-to-cover; all 279 pages (said the Amazon page). I gave feedback that a lot of readers love this sort of thing, so the author has re-published. So Commodore Free has actually brought you a book (in a way)!

SO HERE IS A REVIEW OF THE - ERM - NOW RE-AVAILABLE BOOK!

The first thing to say is that it's made out as if it's a novel, but it's more like a fly-on-the-wall documentary. It follows a 17 year-old programmer as he joins what seems to be a cut-throat industry (probably something we all wanted to do or dreamed of at the time we went to purchase a game!). This isn't the glamour and fast cars story that you would expect. How much have you heard about how easy and glamorous the industry was? Aren't we told that you just created a game, sold it, went to launch parties (with free food), got offered lots of free stuff from companies, then went home and reaped the rewards?

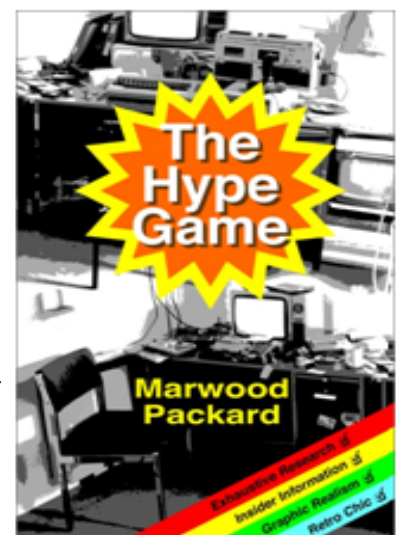
Imagine then working for a software house with all these dreams of glory and massive wages only to find that none of this is attainable in the industry anymore. Imagine that the company you work for needs to release anything just to survive! Some of the major players in the industry, by the time the story is set in, had already hit financial trouble or closed down completely. So these guys decide they need to make a

'mega game'. Yet is it possible to create such a title on such lowly hardware because the management can't or won't invest in high-end development equipment?

Personally, I think history has given these guys an era of mystique that shouldn't have been earned. Well this book is about games production in the real world, a real-life adventure; you could say it's 'more real than real-life'. Our young man is an in-house programmer in a games company that didn't seem to care too much about quality of the games. Even bugs would be explained away as 'special features' or 'hidden extras' if they didn't cause a crash. And what if the games weren't any good? Well maybe they could be hyped up to cause enough customers to feel a need for them! It's a bit like when the double-glazing salesman calls round and sells you a complete set of replacement windows you didn't know you actually needed. The hype is something that the industry has perfected over time; along with children's toys and electrical items of dubious value like the 3-in-one vacuum!

So our software (anti?)hero spills out his life endlessly in text about the team fighting to stay awake for very long hours in badly cramped conditions, and sleeping where they can. It almost paints the picture of digital tramps who live on takeaways and smoke too much while digging around for ideas. Then there's the attempts to get press from journalists and documentary-makers who visit the company; and a boss who thinks they can hype up anything into a picture people would want to part money with. At one point they take to lifting code from people's demos on Compunet. It's something they worry will become commonplace. Maybe 'reverse engineering' has!

My complaint about the book is that it doesn't say much about the connection between gaming and developing. Why did programmers join the industry? The main character was hired because his friend already worked there, and he can program in a competent fashion, but he doubts he (and even the company) is really good enough. So how did they know what was good enough? How did they know what gamers wanted? And did they even like games? The nearest we see is the graphics



COMMOODRE FREE BOOK REVIEW
THE HYPE GAME
 by **MARWOOD PACKARD**

guy, Jim, enjoying *Pole Position* and *Arkanoid*.

That said, this warts-and-all book doesn't just show a world cut-off from gamers, because although it sounds like a serious documentary, it has dark humour that increases as it goes along. It almost revels in how rubbish things were! Well, what is there ever to laugh at when everything's hunky-dory?! Their failures and lifestyles are the butt of gags -

Living out in the margins of an advisable diet has brought us to the discovery that cigarettes and fizzy drinks are a two-part formula for a dental adhesive. Maybe our disgust at this kept the realisation of it under wraps as a shameful secret? Now it's out, we're liberated - no, fixated: we give each other demonstrations of how sticky our teeth are. We go up to each other, press our top and bottom sets together and try to get the loudest unsticking sound from pulling them apart. It's almost competitive. It could be a level in our mega-game. Get your teeth as sticky as you can from fags and fizz without killing yourself in the process. It's a bit like those zoo elephants you hear about who eventually starve once they've lost enough teeth. A game of competitive self-annihilation.

Isn't this about reflecting the times? If it had portrayed 17 year-olds who didn't swear and question management, then maybe that wouldn't paint the correct picture, and you'd end up with a distorted

image of how things were, something most people like to paint when they write these sort of 'I was a retro programmer' books. Of course, when companies were going out of business faster than titles were emerging, the next title that flopped could lose you your job, so the pressure to cut corners must have been immense. There are parts about the team members' feelings towards their peers and their bosses. But there is also talk about how the bosses had to cope with managing a team of teenagers that mucked around.

The guys have incredibly long days at work. They help with setting up shows, loading display stands into the back of vans; they blag customers with demos of titles not written yet, and it's all part of being a jack of all trades. At the end of the month they at least get a reliable if modest wage, and then argue about royalties. If you're lucky you could earn something from a title that sells well. And if you're a freelancer, you don't know where the next penny will come from, if at all. Freelancers only took a commission and a small one at that: remember everyone had to take a cut: cover artists, duplication processes and marketing all sucked earnings away from the games creator. Here's a hopeful freelancer visiting -

For the second time today Morris asks me to abandon my machine to accommodate a freelance we've found on Compunet. The guy stands behind Morris, fanning the air in front of him with a 5 1/4" disk,

looking slightly lost. Freelancers' nerves are so acute with self-management that they typically employ a bravado act that in-housers with the security of full-time jobs don't need. The act is possibly revved up by the schadenfreude in their seeing a friend or two getting thank-you but no thank-you letters or just plain silence for their submissions. This guy's one of the lucky few: he's already proved himself if we've invited him in. He hasn't figured this out yet, so for now, the cockiness and bravado mask his quaking soul.

It's towards the end of the book that more freelancers appear who aren't quite what they seem. One of them in particular confirms what you might have already heard about the scams that happened in the industry at the time. Then, when this software house is under the pressure of closure, their dream of a mega-game turns into a nightmare of considering putting out something so bad and hyped that it would be a true 'hype game'. All this and the affectionate portrayal of the cast of characters had me wondering all along which software house it's about. It got me thinking on other things too...

That said, this warts-and-all book doesn't just show a world cut-off from gamers, because although it sounds like a serious documentary, it has dark humour that increases as it goes along. It almost revels in how rubbish things were! Well, what is there ever to laugh at when everything's hunky-dory?! Their failures and lifestyles are the butt of gags -

Living out in the margins of an advisable diet has brought us to the discovery that cigarettes and fizzy drinks are a two-part formula for a dental adhesive. Maybe our disgust at this kept the realisation of it under wraps as a shameful secret? Now it's out, we're liberated - no, fixated: we give each other demonstrations of how sticky our teeth are. We go up to each other, press our top and bottom sets together and try to get the loudest unsticking sound from pulling them apart. It's almost competitive. It could be a level in our mega-game. Get your teeth as sticky as you can from fags and fizz without killing yourself in the process. It's a bit like those zoo elephants you hear about who eventually starve once they've lost enough teeth. A game of competitive self-annihilation.

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REMEMBERING the PAST

THE HYPE GAME REFLECTED

Why was *The Hype Game* put out? And why now? Is it there to ask how we should remember the past? If *The Hype Game* was turned into a movie, then it would be all loose cars and fast women (maybe that's the other way round, but I never found any fast women, only loose ones!). There would be cool computers and slick gameplay meticulously engineered by computer scientists in white suits all rolled up in a Hollywood blockbuster. The programmers would be Hollywood heartthrobs. And don't forget the ecstatic customers clambering and cheering for the next release of a bug-free, expertly designed, meticulously engineered software title. Then fast forward to the present day with middle-aged men fondly reminiscing about how games were all better in the old



crash again? Why is the disk drive dancing all over the table as it loads a game with super-high copy protection?

Should the past be remembered with rose-tinted spectacles; or should the past be remembered for what it really was: kids coding under enormous pressure from management to create another money-spinner for the company? The early days would have seen pioneers of programming emerge, but as business took off, the inevitable happened, and the software creations were just another saleable commodity. Of course we do have exceptions to the rule, the unique games that still emerged; just look at Llamasoft (although even some of Minter's games can be linked to copies of



days, how the gameplay was king, and how the graphics, although blocky, were far more advanced than the photorealistic animations of today. Oh how great life was back when everything worked, looked and played better!

WAS IT ALL GOOD?

Do you remember the games you used to play? How many were actually really good? And how many were just utter tripe or worse still, a copy of a game you already had. How many copies of space invaders can a machine really have before the whole thing is totally and utter stale? Isn't one platform game just the same as another, albeit with differing graphics and sound track? How long can you sit in front of a datasette and keep totally calm when you realise the computer has crashed for the 3rd time in a row? How long is it going to take to do a tape alignment and hope the thing won't



REMEMBERING the PAST THE HYPE GAME REFLECTED

other titles). If you found something strange and playable, then it was usually Llamasoft's.

So was it actually *all* hype? Were any games at all ever any good or did we just play them because we had been marketed into buying them? Did we simply justify buying them, maybe even to ourselves, so that we didn't feel as though we'd wasted our pocket money on a marketing ploy? Were we just lapping up anything that was slickly marketed; or, on the other hand, was there truly a digital revelation, a time we should embrace with affection? How many of what you could call 'the youth of today' would sit and play these games? And for how long before becoming bored? Is it not the test of a great game that it's playable through all decades, both in the past and the present?

Personally, I realise that some software houses were just knocking out another title that was basically different graphics and music. The engines behind the games had been honed to perfection to squeeze everything out of the machine. The missing thing was the game and the gameplay. Once the chicken and egg of engine and gameplay had been reversed to put the engine first, didn't things get samey?

As we look on with nostalgia now, should we only think about how great everything was and how these people were gods of programming and never to be bettered, to be worshipped for the digital history they provide? Or should we also remember the bad bits behind closed doors? If you want my opinion, the book highlights the fun to all the rubbish. Yes, I like that retro warm feeling when loading from tapes. It takes me back to when I was a child; however, even I can't sit for 20 minutes while "arcadia" loads (or doesn't as

the case may be)! But I could sit for 3 minutes or so while a speed-loader does its thing, displaying either a picture or a countdown until the game starts. This I feel is part of the gaming fun! The rubbishness is something that can work you up to anticipate the game, while at the same time, some of the games were pants, laughable clones, sometimes even of themselves. And the actual number of really exciting and imaginatively created programmes was small.

Isn't life just like this? Everything we buy is over-hyped. We're told wondrous things about a product, but once we get it home, we realise that it actually doesn't work as well as our old product it's replacing. Do we really need a special vacuum for laminate floors, or is a common brush good enough? Should everything really be 99% sanitised from bacterial infection?

I think our memories gloss over with age, but it's good to remember the bad as well as the good. We can't just remember history as being good *or* bad: we need a sort of grey in-between area where all the facts combine. The book leans more towards the dodgy end of stories, but perhaps it's trying to make up for lost time, to redress the imbalance of hype a bit?

For retro to celebrate the good and the bad, the truly great and the utter dross, we really need to celebrate the grey. What do you think? Send in your comments about what you think retro should mean remembering.

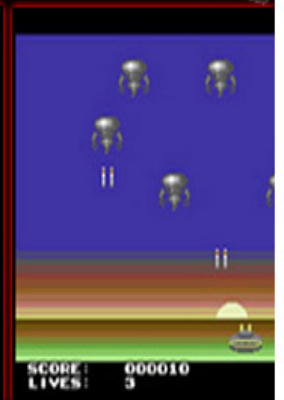
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COMMODORE FREE REVIEW

LITTLE SARA SISTER FROM FLIMSOFT



Firstly, this seems to be a Great Giana Sisters remake for the Commodore 64; Great Giana Sisters was removed from sale mainly because it resembled a well-known title by a large games company. I think they had to go for a Wii when they saw it. Although the company didn't sue, it put pressure on the release, saying it was too much like their version. So it was decided to remove the title for fear of legal action. However, it does seem that a large number of copies exist in the wild because the original title does crop up on eBay from time to time, often selling for hundreds of pounds.

THE GREAT GIANA SISTERS

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Great_Giana_Sisters
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMTdr026bZU>

Back to the Present day

This Flimsoft version is actually 3 versions all rolled up into one package. Added to this, you also have access to an editor for the levels. The Flimsoft version has version 1, 1.5, and finally version 2. Some of these have been knocking around for a while on various sites, but to have them finished and made into a single release with professional packaging will be welcomed by many users.

Starting with version one, you can use a joystick in port 2 to select your version, then pressing fire starts the selected version to play.

A brief loading-screen sets the scene for our heroine. Pressing fire then takes us onto the game



**COMMODORE FREE REVIEW
LITTLE SARA SISTER FROM FLIMSOFT**

It's obviously a platform game then



You collect the white diamonds and jump on, or avoid the nasty creatures, at which point the music starts to play. The music is actually a nice tune for the game, while the graphics look quite crude, with plain backgrounds and a few clouds on level 1. The animation is fairly minimal.

The music is bouncy and jolly, but the graphics remain the same, as does the gameplay. Jump on or over aliens and collect diamonds, and through this you will eventually come to a door and reach the next level. The levels are different to the first version.

Most platform games are of course the same idea, jump over things or on them and collect things. It's nothing that hasn't been done before a number of times. I also found it quite tricky to master the game with the speed and accurate jumping that's needed. I found that some of the creatures seem to stick in places so that it became impossible for me to move past or over them.

Version 2 is more of the same?

Version 1.5 is more of the same



We start with another custom loading screen. Pressing fire then takes us to the main game. The music for this version is credited to Richard Bayliss. The fire button then takes you to the game playfiled



COMMODORE FREE REVIEW LITTLE SARA SISTER FROM FLIMSOFT

However this version does have a useful feature, you could say it's a self-cracked version, because it has a trainer built into the game. Just before the main loading screens, you get options to have unlimited time, lives, an option to make the enemies harmless, to transform platforms into solid items, to start at a specific level (from 1 to 8), to skip levels with the c= key, and even to see the ending before you play the game!

Personally I think the music on this version is the best for the game.



Apart from that, it's more of the same. It's a nice trilogy of games, however it's no Giana Sisters killer. The games play well enough, but it could just do with an extra bit of polish to the graphics and the backgrounds. You will soon know if you will like the game, but complements to Flimsoft for professional packaging.

playing a level that spells out your name or some swear word!

You can watch the game being played here

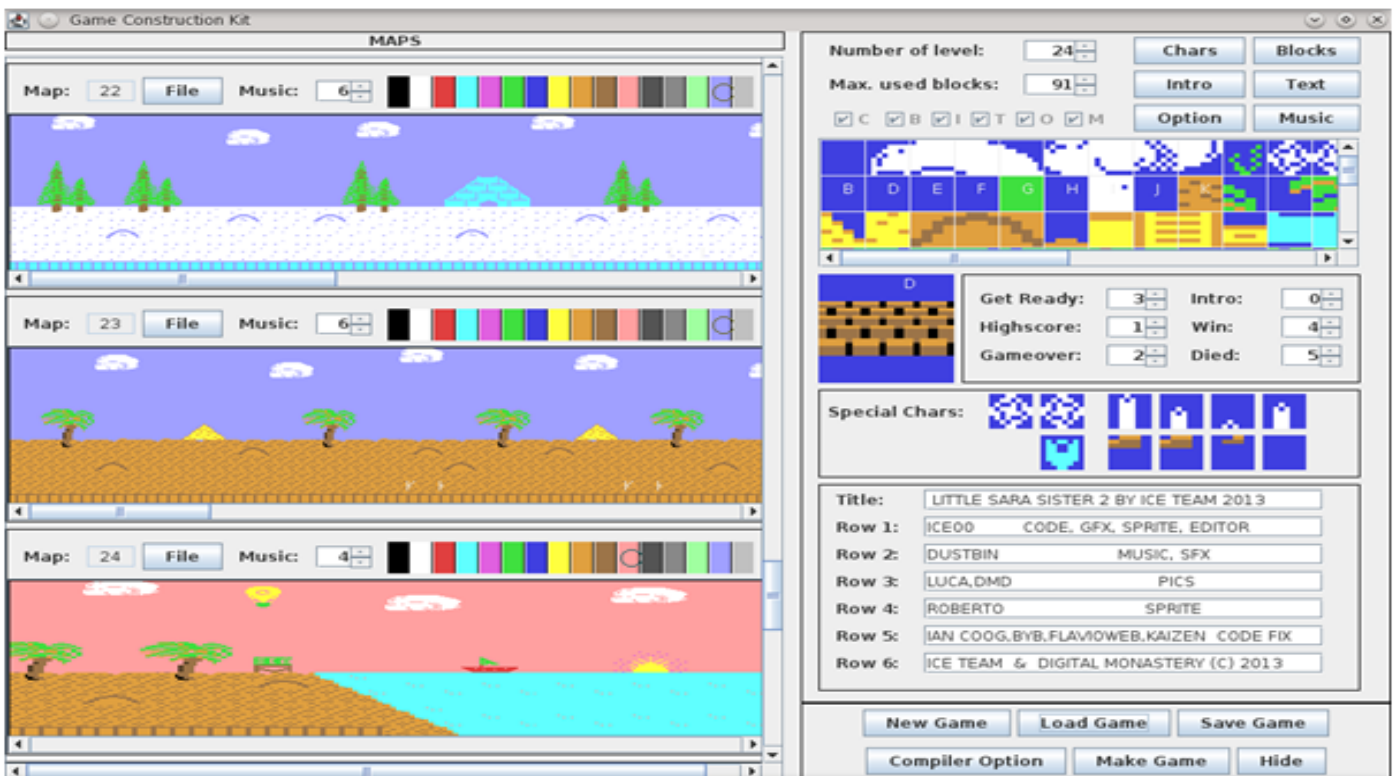
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Ni8V4-Pjdo>

Graphics	5/10	Overall 6/10
Sounds	7/10	
Gameplay	6/10	

The game is also available as a digital download for £1:99 so you can't really use the excuse that it's too expensive.

Maybe this could set a trend; just think if all releases had a crack intro where you could select infinite lives, time etc. And they all had some sort of level editor included either as an extra that ran on another machine or even better within the game itself. My thoughts are that this would be a welcome addition to all future releases. What do you think

How long will it be before you're



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