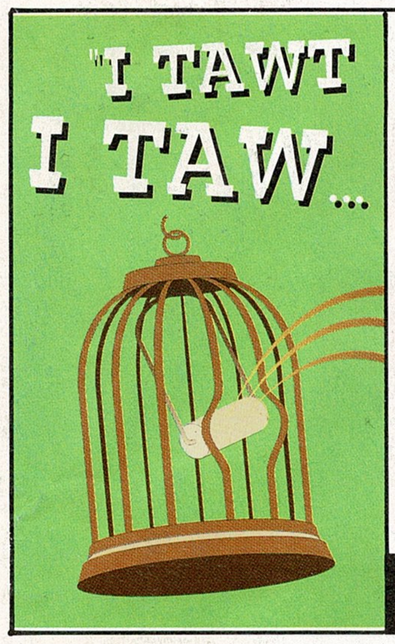
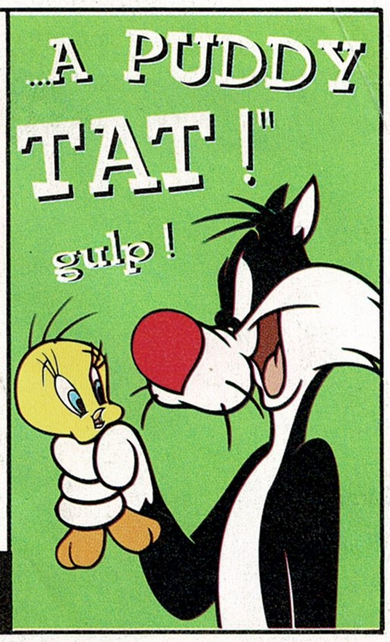


CTW

15.8.94 EUROPE'S ELECTRONIC GAMES TRADE PAPER Issue 500



Amstrad MD to make Sega switch?

Current Amstrad managing director Malcolm Miller is on the verge of becoming Sega Europe's new boss, *CTW* can exclusively reveal.

Whilst Sega was not prepared to confirm that any appointment had been made, *CTW* believes that Miller could be in place at the Japanese giant's Earl's Court HQ by November — taking over from interim European managing director Frank Herman, who will retain a senior executive role.

Sega in Japan has been edging nearer to a choice on its new man for the past few weeks. Herman has steadied the rudder considerably since the shock of losing several key management in the spring — including longtime boss Nick Alexander — but , of his own volition, has always been an interim MD.

Miller's arrival will stun onlookers from both sides. As one observer noted: "He's been at Amstrad since the year dot," being chairman Alan Sugar's right hand man since the early '80s, when the UK firm was a force in the games market (CPC, Sinclair Spectrum) and virtually owned the home office sector (PCW, PC1512 & 1640).

He is currently MD of Amstrad Consumer Electronics, a major part of the Amstrad group's increasingly diversified business.

As much as a decision to leave the fold will shock those who know Amstrad, it will surprise many on the inside of the games business. Miller, whilst boasting great experience, is of a different culture to those that will have gone before him. He is known to be a no-nonsense character who is unlikely to let Sega linger too long over its recent icon-busting brand-building past.

Priorities for Sega in Europe from late '94 onwards are building a business that can successfully introduce new platforms such as the 32X Mega Drive add-on and, later, the Saturn system. This will be in a games market vastly different to the Sega Vs Nintendo days of yore, with many new hardware players vying for market share, and rather more attention being paid to profitability.

CTW was unable to contact either Miller or Alan Sugar, both being on holiday at time of press — and no one else associated with the company was aware of any imminent move. Sega confirmed that progress regarding an appointment continues to be made, but refused to confirm Miller's arrival.

"We are down to a very, very short short-list, but until everything is signed, sealed and delivered that just isn't a fact," responded Herman to *CTW*. "A decision will have been made by the end of this month."



Miller: Could be heeding the call to run Sega

Ultimate launch ready for autumn

Future is lining up its biggest launch for two years, with a plan to take the next wave of gaming direct to the core games public.

Ultimate Future Games will be unveiled in October at the firm's very own Future Entertainment Show, with a streetdate of November 1st. It is pitched as a "smarter, younger, brighter" version of high-brow/low sales flagship *Edge* — informing 15 year-olds upwards all about the exciting developments in games technology.

Future has been working on the title for some time, and will drive it home in vigorous fashion. The initial print-run is 130,000, with issue one boasting an £85,000 cover promotion.

Ads will run in some 650,000 Future titles, supported by 400,000 8-page samplers circulated at the BBC's Big Bash in October.

The title will major on 'previews' of games for the next generation of hardware.

Frank O'Conner will be editor, with *CTW*'s contributing editor Dave Roberts taking a senior consulting role.

"Future is gearing up for the next generation of gaming in the same way as the industry at large — and, as always, we are in there first with the magazine that will set the pace," commented publisher Colin Campbell.

Network off to a flyer

Independents and suppliers are flocking to the newly formed buying group for small games and computer shops.

Full details of the Network Computer Buying Group were exclusively revealed in *CTW* last week, and it has been staggered by the response.

Over 30 retailers made specific enquiries about joining up in the two days following *CTW*'s story, accounting for around 40 shops. There were also numerous calls from suppliers interested in doing business with the group.

"To say we are 'gobsmacked' would be an understatement. We knew we were on to a good thing, but the response to the initial announcement has been phenomenal to say the least," commented Network administrator Mal Thomas.

The Network already boasts 13 charter retail members, numbering 20 stores, with a trade purchasing power of £13 million. New members have to be invited to join, paying £200 for shares in the group and agreeing to adhere to strict guidelines — such as placing a set amount of their orders through official Network suppliers.

Virgin takes on key JVC batch

Virgin has tied up exclusive distribution on a series of major JVC titles.

The firm, which is growing into a powerful sales, marketing and distribution force for third parties across Europe, has taken on four Nintendo games in the UK and France. It also has French rights on one Sega Mega CD title, *Rebel Assault*.

Each of the four Nintendo titles are set to appear on the SNES, comprising *Magic Boy*, *Ghoul Patrol*, *Super Return of the Jedi* and *Indiana Jones' Greatest Adventures*.

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A series of features looking at the games market's development over the past 10 years, comprising 500 issues of your favourite trade paper

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MK: Doing it all over, all over again...

The second coming of *Mortal Kombat* is edging closer — backed by a $10 million global marketing budget.

Publisher Acclaim last week unveiled part of its massive campaign for the blockbuster sequel, including a stunning TV ad. The details come as 'the battle of the beat 'em ups' kicks off in earnest, with Sega shipping *Super Streetfighter 2* on Mega Drive this Friday (August 19th).

Last year the original *Mortal Kombat* was the unrivalled top-selling game of 1993 in all markets. Official sales across a variety of Sega and Nintendo formats have now topped six million units.

Acclaim is well aware that a repetition of such success is tough for any sequel, let alone one released on fewer formats (SNES, Mega Drive, Gameboy, Game Gear) and into a flat 1994 marketplace.

Yet *Mortal Kombat II* will still surely see the biggest marketing commitment for a single software release this year, and the firm is refusing to accept that the Midway coin-op's popularity at street level may have waned over 12 months.

The home versions will once again be released way in advance of the Christmas market simultaneously in the US, Europe and Japan. With TV, cinema, print and billboard support, Acclaim intends to drive sales right through into the New Year if possible.

"With *Mortal Kombat* we set the industry standard for creating events to launch outstanding products," said Acclaim Europe's president Rod Cousens.

"Next month, we're planning to raise that standard even higher with *Mortal Kombat II's* global marketing campaign and impressive martial arts video gaming experience."

Street release and the TV ad's debut is set for 'Mortal Friday', September 9th. A 30 second version of the one minute ad will also appear in cinemas, placed next to *True Lies* and *Speed*.

UK print advertising includes lifestyle titles such as *Select*, *Sky*, *The Face* and *Loaded* as well as the standard channels, and a high budget national poster campaign.

Retail promotions are also being planned.



Mortal Kombat II: TV ads break on September 9th

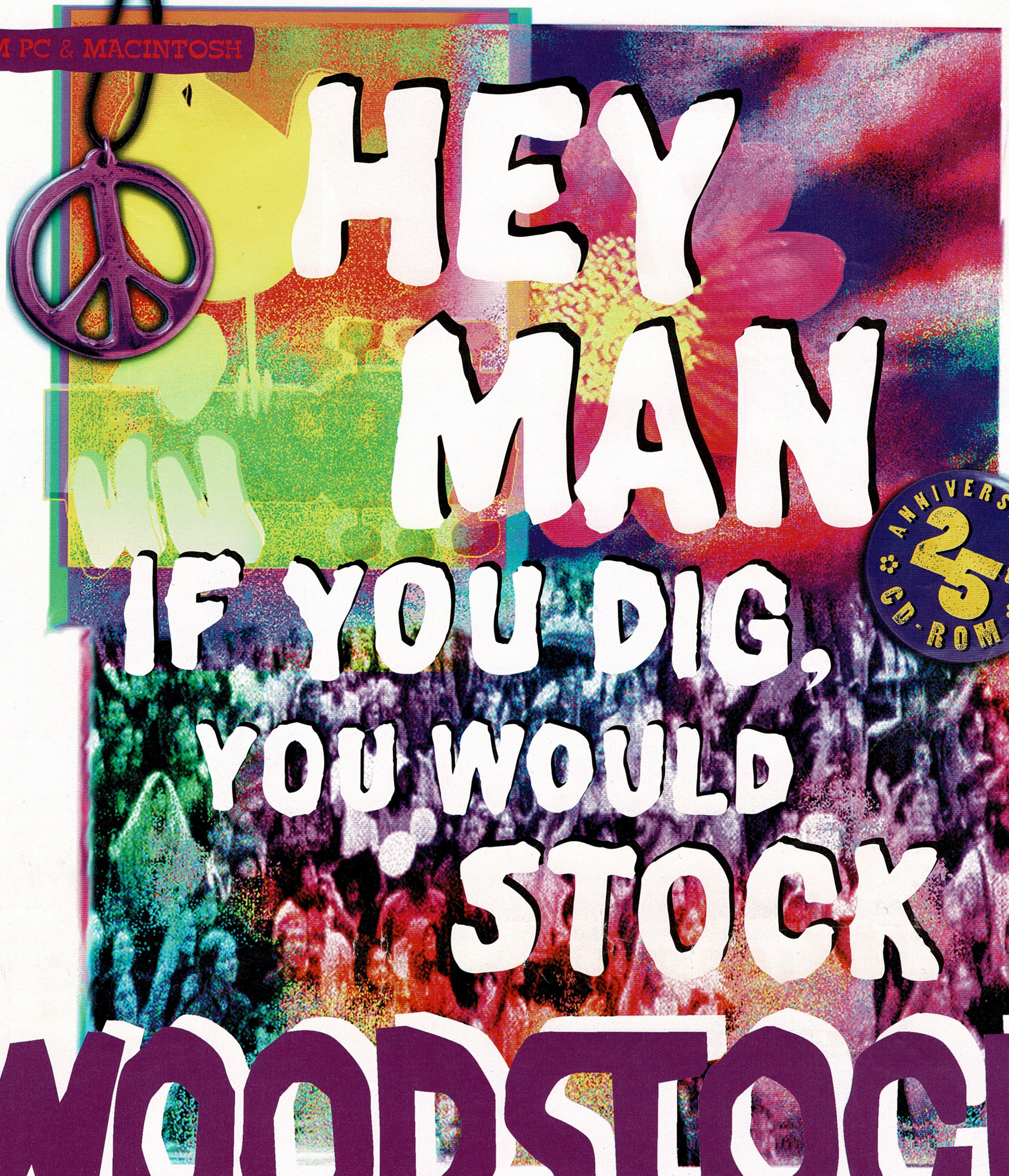
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That's all folks until September 22nd !

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CD-ROM PC & MACINTOSH



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CTW

Europe's Electronic Games Trade Paper

EDITORIAL
Tel: UK 0462 442472
International +44 462 442472
Editor: Stuart Dinsey
Deputy Editor: Lisa Foster
Reporter: Ian Lynch
Contributing Editor: Dave Roberts

CTW Europe
Newsdesk Tel: +44 462 442472

ADVERTISING
Tel: UK 0462 442471
International +44 462 442471
Advertising Manager: Russell Beadle
Advertising Executive: Alexandra Jarvis

PRODUCTION & ADMINISTRATION
Tel: UK 0462 442470
International +44 462 442470
Publisher/Managing Director: Tom Stock
Production Editor: Lesley Hunt
Accounts Manager: Suki Kang
Credit Controller: Michael Mason
Production Manager: Pete Minney
Production Assistant: Lynn Tarrant

CIRCULATION
Tel: UK 0462 442486
International +44 462 442486
Subscriptions Manager: Yvonne Mackintosh

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CTW
Europe's weekly trade newspaper covering developments in the electronic games, leisure computing and low-end business marketplace.

With a controlled circulation of 6,500 it covers the entire UK retail marketplace for this sector. It reaches all leading hardware and software buyers, from electrical and toy multiples to mail order catalogues and specialist computer stores.

CTW EUROPE
On the first Monday of each month, all subscribers to *CTW* receive a dedicated *CTW* European supplement. This concentrates on non-UK events in the games market, with news, features and specialist advertising.

For more information, or to supply editorial material, call:
Stuart Dinsey **+44 462 442483**

FAX
Tel: UK 0462 442489
International +44 462 442489

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Sega increasing UK lead, says Nielsen

Latest research from Nielsen asserts that Sega has increased its traditional hardware sales lead over rival Nintendo.

Figures from the toy monitoring specialist, which Nintendo may or may not accept, show the virtual disappearance of the NES from the UK marketplace since last autumn, the Mega Drive outselling the SNES by more than two to one and the Game Gear — whilst still lagging behind the Gameboy considerably — making upward progress.

Nintendo's decision last year to sell-through remaining stock of the NES and not launch the re-style US NES machine has left the Master System with a hardware market almost to itself.

According to Nielsen, Sega's machine had a 52.1 per cent share by value against the NES in October, but this had risen to 93.6 per cent by June. In unit terms, the Master System rose from 51.1 per cent of all sales in the sector to 90.1 per cent during the same period.

Nielsen states that in the key battleground of 16-bit consoles, the Mega Drive rose from 67.8 per cent (value) and 64.1 per cent (units) to 71.8 per cent and 71.0 per cent respectively during October-June.

And, finally, in the Nintendo stronghold of handhelds, Sega's Game Gear saw its value share rise from 19.5 per cent to 31.3 per cent during the period. By units, it made progress too — up from 10.0 per cent to 19.4 per cent.

This week Sega looks to bolster Mega Drive software, which has seen its overall Gallup market share dip for several months consecutively, by unleashing *Super Streetfighter 2*. It is being backed by radio and TV ads.

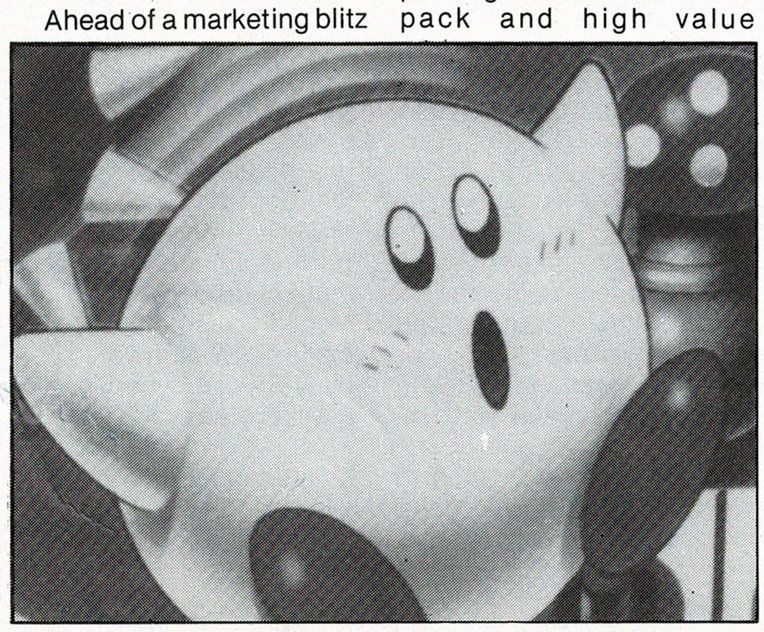
Also, the firm has continued its history of strategic sponsorship tie-ups by hooking into the British leg of the O'Neill Windsurfing World Cup due to hit Brighton beach from September 6th-11th.

The event coincides with the release of *Ecco the Dolphin* on Master System and precedes the arrival of *Ecco 2* on Mega Drive in November.

Mario and Kirby pack new punch

Nintendo rolls out two new hardware propositions to retail this week.

Ahead of a marketing blitz currently being lined up for the last third of the year, the console manufacturer has put together a new SNES pack and high value Gameboy promotion.



KIRBY: New Gameboy freebie

For the first time, Nintendo is officially adding the *Super Mario World* cart to its *Super Mario All Stars* SNES pack, whilst holding the keen recommended retail price of £99. A new push on the £39.99 Gameboy solus machine, meanwhile, will give retailers the chance to offer consumers a free copy of the hit game *Kirby's Dreamland*.

"These are more examples of our intention to provide the trade with terrific products at great value-for-money price points," commented Nintendo UK's head of sales Robert Cooper.

"It shows the might of the world' biggest video games manufacturer, as we begin the build up towards a very busy season for Nintendo."

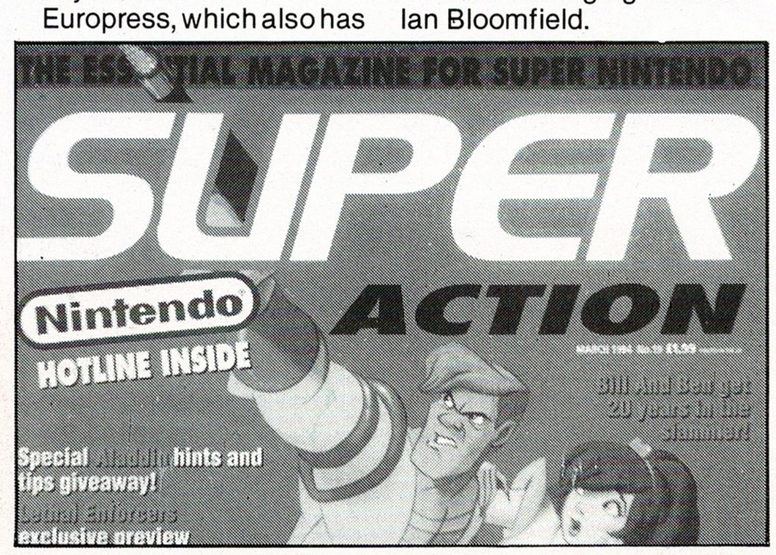
Super Action closes

The struggling console magazine market has claimed another victim — Nintendo title *Super Action*.

The decision to close the monthly leaves publisher Europress without any specific 16-bit console coverage. Gameboy title *GB Action* and multi-format TV tie-in *Movies, Games and Videos* are its only titles covering Nintendo and Sega in any fashion.

Europress, which also has a separate software division, has undergone several changes over the past months. Since the beginning of the year, its three magazine divisions have merged into one, Europress Publications, with *PC Action* and *Mega Action* also being closed. The new closure, however, won't result in further job losses.

"The market is shrinking and we decided to shift our human resources onto our exciting new MGV launch," offered managing director Ian Bloomfield.



ACTION STATIONARY: Europress pulls the plug

VAT man on the gift trail

A recent ruling by the European Court of Justice could have major ramifications amongst games firms that offer free gifts.

Mail order firm Empire Stores has been forced to pay the full VAT on the free gifts it offers as incentives to potential customers. The Court decided that the goods were not free gifts because they were given in return for the consumers' business.

The goods were not items in the current catalogue and it was ruled their supply should be valued as 'the amount Empire Stores was prepared to spend for the purpose of obtaining the introductory services'.

According to HM Customs & Excise, the Court's decision will affect the VAT treatment of all non-catalogue goods given by mail order companies as incentives or rewards. But could also affect free goods and services given as introduction rewards by other kinds of businesses. This could mean that even a free binder offered with magazine subscriptions could be liable for VAT.

"At the moment the judgement really only affects mail order catalogue companies," a Customs & Excise spokesman told *CTW*. "But we are looking at the ramifications of the incident. It depends how broadly the judgement can be interpreted as to whether this is going to have an effect on other markets. Whatever happens we will issue relevant guidelines for businesses."

Mail order businesses which believe they may have underpaid or overpaid VAT on incentive or reward goods are advised to contact their local VAT office.

Now UK firm hits home VR trail

Yet another home VR system has emerged — this time with a £299 price point and major High Street aspirations.

The latest arrival in this ultra-competitive 'vapour market' is a UK product. Manufactured by Magic Media and launched on September 1st, the as-yet-unnamed unit comes with a custom joystick and game, retailing from £299 (plus VAT). It requires a VGA to PAL conversion card, an optional extra in the retail package.

In the past few weeks, US firms Forte Technologies and VictorMaxx have lined up headsets for the market too — priced at £650 and £499 respectively.

Much hyped as 'the next big thing' such units have only previously been available in specialist electronic centres — where prices of $5,000 per unit have led them to be adapted into coin-op systems for the public.

Set up at the beginning of 1993, the London-based Magic Media has been working on development of the headset for 15 months, committing over £500,000 to the project so far.

The firm is currently concentrating its efforts on the UK and Europe, although US and Far East distribution deals are currently being negotiated.

Negotiations are currently going on with retailers and, although nothing can be officially confirmed at present, Magic Media believes its product will appear in at least one major chain soon after launch.

"Our unit is the cheapest on offer and is the only one to receive backing from the High Street. With full volume being available from the end of October, we're looking to ship 100,000 units by the end of January," offered Dean Adams, Magic Media's marketing manager.

Also compatible with home VCRs Magic Media's unit boasts a 60 degrees field of view, four times magnification and a single Citizen LCD 3.8 inch screen.

The firm also claims to have signed an exclusive deal to use the Meerkat tracking system.

Some £250,000 has been earmarked for marketing, with scheduled TV appearances on *Bad Influence* and *GamesMaster* spearheading a campaign that also takes in national newspapers.

Unlike other headsets, the unit's UK debut won't be at ECTS but at its own launch on September 1st.

"By opting for a private launch, we make sure the product stands apart" commented Dean Adams.

The firm also claims MicroProse and Psygnosis have agreed to provide software support, although no specific details are yet available.

500 AND COUNTING...

The fact that *CTW* has reached its 500th issue is testament to our commitment to all sectors of the home computer and video games market. Our business is your business — not a peripheral market, or occasional profit opportunity.

We publish every week, high season and mid-summer. We cover everything, from UK retail to Japanese hardware developments. And we thank everyone who has supported us since *CTW* rolled out Issue 1 back in late summer 1984.

From Monday September 5th (Issue 503), *CTW* will be the same key trade weekly that it has always been. No wholesale changes, but increased content and improved design will be evident.

As well as our standard 6,500 copies, we'll be distributing a further 4,500 at ECTS — the premier trade event which *CTW* proudly sponsors exclusively.

Over the past three weeks, we have detailed the arrival of new coverage for retail, home office/education, media and product. The chart section will offer unbeatable weekly information, and *CTW* has recently tied deals with the National Association of Specialist Computer Retailers and merchandising firm ISM to keep us close to the High Street.

As of September 5th (Issue 503), *CTW* will also introduce:

New columnists: Mat Toor, formerly of *Marketing* and currently features editor for *CD-ROM Magazine,* will share a fortnightly column with Andy Storer, respected computer journalist who has worked for a stream of successful Future Publishing titles over the past eight years.

Media Tracking: In an exclusive tie-up with pioneering firm Media Research, *CTW* will offer a weekly update of game exposure on UK TV and radio.

CTW is changing, but remains the trade publication that is committed to the business, knows the business and is part of the business...

CTW

EUROPE'S ELECTRONIC GAMES TRADE PAPER

Taking Games Seriously

Imagineer passes KO3 to Tokai

SNES and Mega Drive versions of *Kick Off 3* will finally arrive in late November — but via a different publisher than expected.

Imagineer has pulled out of publishing the troubled console versions of the game, with fellow Japanese games firm Vic Tokai taking over.

The latest in Anco's hugely successful *Kick Off* range first hit the news last year, when author Dino Dini departed mid-development.

Eventually 'finished' earlier this summer, PC and Amiga versions have gone to the top of the home computer charts despite mediocre reviews from the specialist press. Console versions were originally planned for July, but developer Anco, unhappy with the quality of the game, decided to delay release and re-write the Mega Drive version. Imagineer, it seems, has simply lost patience.



Delayed Kick Off causing switch

"Having disappointed distributors once, and with the company switching to PlayStation and Saturn development, there was no way we could fit *Kick Off 3* into our schedule — we wish Vic Tokai and Anco all the best," commented Garry Williams, Imagineer's marketing director.

Vic Tokai is upbeat about prospects for the delayed game and is planning to spend £200,000 promoting the title.

"This is the best soccer game we have seen and we just had to sign it. We believe it has the potential to outsell any soccer games this year and our promotional spend reflects that," offered marketing director Terry Fujioka.

The 8-Meg cart will be priced at £49.99 (SNES) and £44.99 (Mega Drive). Official release date is now November 26th.

BMG makes Wright move

BMG Interactive Entertainment has proved it means business with the appointment of Sega man Andrew Wright.

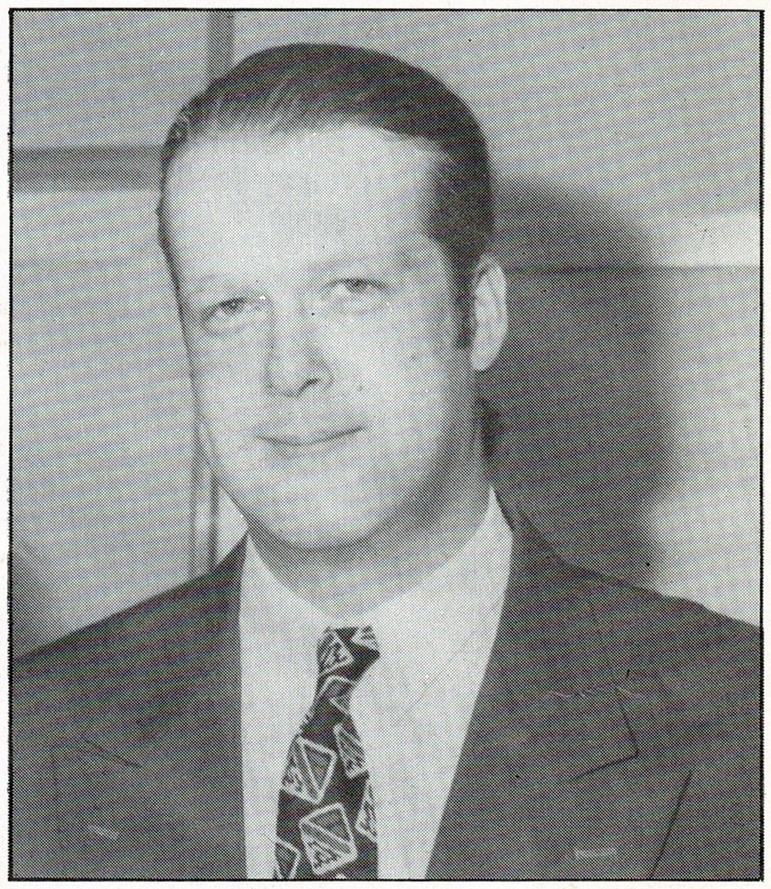
Wright is leaving his post as software marketing manager at Sega later this month. He will join the new BMK division as communications manager.

Prior to his 18 months at Sega he worked for five years as European marketing manager at Virgin, receiving an award for trade marketing along the way.

"BMG's wide-ranging interests in the entertainment and music markets make it potentially the most powerful force in the interactive entertainment software industry," said Wright.

"The company has just launched into the multimedia market and already we have a strong product line-up. The opportunities for exploiting the company's existing products, artists and software, as well as developing and acquiring new products are clearly immense."

As *CTW* reported back in May, Bertelsmann, the second largest media company in the world, plans to compete with the major games brands such as Acclaim and EA, as well as offering sales, marketing and distribution to third parties.



WRIGHT: Popular industry veteran

BMG Interactive Entertainment, Bertelsmann's multimedia arm, has already signed a distribution agreement with software company Crystal Dynamics.

With offices in New York and London, sales, marketing and distribution services will be offered locally in over 39 countries. In addition, six dedicated operations have been established in the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Japan.

According to the firm, BMG Interactive Entertainment will be able to capitalise on the increasing overlap in music and software distribution with BMG's existing music accounts, which range from specialist music retailers to entertainment megastores.

'Next Doom' hits UK

UK distributor Arcade International has snapped up UK rights to 'the next *Doom*'.

The Milton Keynes firm has agreed a deal with US shareware publisher Epic MegaGames to handle CD-ROM versions of two of the surprise hits of the year — *Epic Pinball* and Sonic clone *Jazz Jack Rabbit*.

Out at the end of the month and following in the bloodied footsteps of mega hit *Doom*, PC-only title *Epic Pinball* has previously only been available in the UK as shareware.

Despite receiving scores as high as 92 per cent (*PC Format*) Epic has decided not to launch a full version of the title, as happened with *Doom*, but rather to revamp the game as a full price CD-ROM title.

Marketing for the two titles includes a special two disk cover-mount on the September issue of *PC Format.*

Sega confirms UK retail tour dates

Sega has confirmed the venues for its forthcoming retail roadshow.

The tour, which aims to brief retailers on its autumn/winter software plans, begins at the Hilton Hotel at Manchester Airport on Tuesday August 30th and moves on to the Glasgow Hilton Hotel on Wednesday August 31st.

On Thursday September 1st the roadshow heads south to the Hilton National in Leeds, and from there goes to the Forte Crest in Belfast on Monday September 5th. The Hilton National in Bristol hosts the show on Thursday September 8th and the London Regents Park Hilton is the venue on Monday September 12th.

The tour ends up on Tuesday September 13th at the Hilton in Coventry.

All retailers — large or small — are being invited to the roadshows, which will take place from 7.30pm to 8.30pm at each venue. Full information on new products, marketing and merchandising will be provided, along with demonstrations and an information pack to take away.

For further information contact Sega on 071 373 3000.

Lazer thrusts into indies

Lazer Distribution has been appointed distributor of ThrustMaster games peripherals to the UK independent market.

Paperlogic, the exclusive UK agent for Thrustmaster, has appointed Lazer to increase the presence of the products in High Street independent retail outlets. Paperlogic will continue to distribute to the multiples and key accounts.

"We chose Lazer Distribution for this role as they have been supporting the independent channel with ThrustMaster for some time. And with their pro-active, focused team, they already have a head start over other distributors," commented Steven Markham, Paperlogic's MD.

ThrustMaster manufactures a range of PC and Mac hardware peripherals designed to enhance the realism of simulation software. These include joysticks, rudder pedals, driving controls and flight controls.

Aztech makes Sound start

Audio peripherals firm Aztech has begun pushing its latest product range through new UK distribution channels.

The firm behind the succesful Sound Galaxy range of sound cards and add-ons recently opened a UK office. It is currently distributed by SDL and Asahi, whilst negotiations with two further companies are on-going.

The first of a planned series of launches before Christmas, and out later this week, is the snappily-titled CDA 268-03I IDE Double Speed CD-ROM drive.

Priced at £109 plus VAT, the new unit meets MPC level II specs, is fully compatible with audio CDs and supports MPEG video.



Aztech makes its UK push

TV features boost Olivetti

Olivetti is launching a PC that allows home users to watch TV, videos or teletext.

Out in October, and part of the firm's expanding PCS range, the new machine uses an add-in card with a special tuner which fits into the video adapter.

Priced at 'about £250 more' than standard machines (currently starting at £899 ex. VAT), the firm hopes to take advantage of the growth in family use of home computing.

"Computers have become a way of life and we expect to see a boom in the home computer market similar to the demand for video recorders in the 1980s," offered retail marketing manager Mike Chandler.

Promotional activity includes specialist, trade and national press campaigns plus £230 of bundled software.

Hols lift sales

The UK games market has gained a welcome boost from the school holidays, with total sales jumping by nearly a third.

After a miserable summer so far, all sectors of the market except CD, which is dominated by older users, saw an improvement in fortunes during the week ending July 30th, according to chart research firm Gallup.

Total leisure software units rose by 30 per cent during the period, with value up 20 per cent. The biggest (and most needed) jump came in the cartridge market, which rose by 41 per cent. Full-price computer games were up eight per cent and budget by 26 per cent, whilst CD as a whole dipped by seven per cent.

The best performers were the older, entry level formats, with particularly notable increases in stock movement for the Master System (+66 per cent) and NES (+47 per cent).

Lightwave dials up a modem bonanza

The current growth in the PC market has sent modem sales rocketing, says cable and accessories company Lightwave.

It claims that the number of modem cables it is selling is currently growing out of all proportion with previous experience.

"We used to sell a modest amount, but now we are having to re-write our production schedules to accommodate the orders," Lightwave's boss Steve Atkinson told *CTW*.

"I think that the market can only keep growing. If you look at the US, the modem market is huge out there. Of course, the fact that they have free local calls is a bonus. If British Telecom introduced that here, it would give a dramatic boost to the modem business."

Meanwhile, following the firm's British Standard BS5750 accreditation, Lightwave has signed a deal with retail chain Game to supply cables and accessories.

"Although some companies don't rate receiving BSI certification as being top priority, more and more large companies and organisations are insisting on the accreditation," offered Atkinson.

Lightwave is currently in the process of signing a supply deal with another major multiple.

Multimedia at vanguard of TBD's new indie push

TBD has set its sights on becoming a distribution force in the fast-growing CD sector.

The firm has been distributing video games to the independent trade for the past two years, but is moving steadily into multimedia and recently became the second Philips CD-i distributor.

Other products in TBD's portfolio include Video CD, PC and Mac CD-ROM products, multimedia upgrade kits, joysticks and sound cards. The firm claims to stock over 1,000 CD-ROM titles.

"Multimedia is the way forward, as we see it," said Brian Dunn, TBD's video games and multimedia buyer. "It is still early days for us, but the business is building up nicely. We expect the video games market to slow down, and multimedia will be where the activity is in the future."

TBD is one of the largest home entertainment distributors to independents. Its main activity is in the video and audio markets, with games and multimedia accounting for around ten per cent of overall business.

However, according to Dunn, TBD is expecting this sector to be the fastest growing part of the firm's business. He also reported that the firm will be making some major announcements about its further plans for the multimedia market in the near future.

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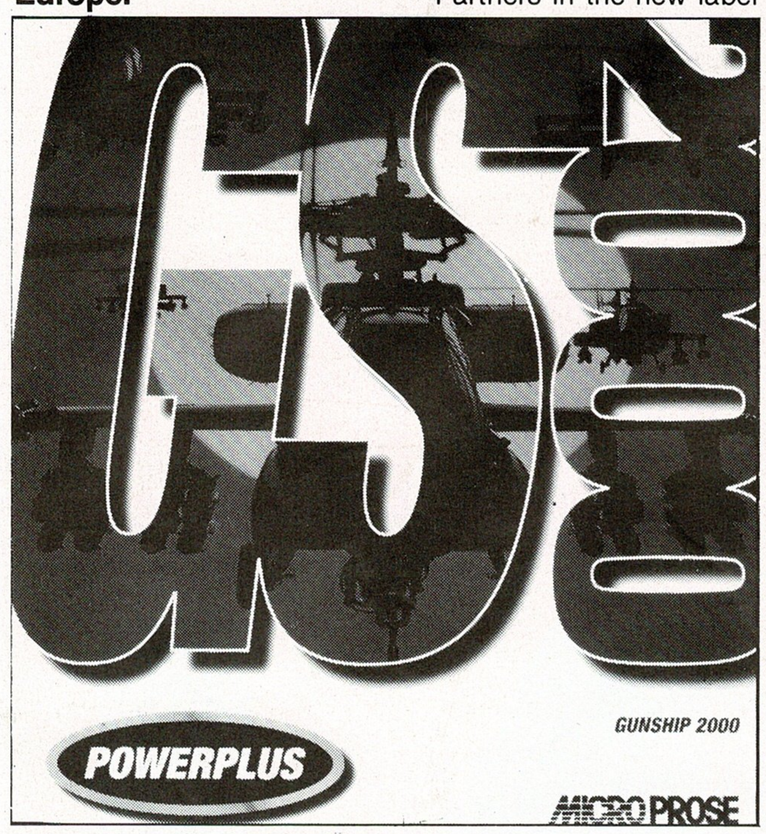
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MicroProse powers up budget

Two UK publishers have teamed up to launch a new budget label aiming to be one of the top brands in Europe.

The new Power Plus brand covers Amiga, PC and CD-ROM formats, with a £16.99 price point. The first wave of titles is due out in September.

Partners in the new label are MicroProse and Digital Integration. It will feature MicroProse products, with Digital Integration — which also markets the Action 16 budget range — responsible for sales and marketing activity.



ALL GUNS BLAZING: Prose and DI team up

The move represents a change in direction for MicroProse, which has previously only licensed individual titles for budget release.

Initial titles include *Gunship 2000, Formula One Grand Prix* and *F15 Strike Eagle 3* (PC/CD-ROM only).

The brand launch will be backed by consumer advertising and POS promos, with subsequent releases coming out every six weeks.

"The time is right to take control of the entire life-cycle of our product. The titles scheduled for release are proven winners, and with the expertise of Digital Integration on board the decision can only be good news for distributors and retailers alike," offered Rob Davies, MicroProse's European marketing vice president.

CCA proffers DIY PR disc

A new 'teach yourself PR' package is being launched for games firms chasing publicity.

DIY PR for Business has been produced by Cape Cowley Associates, which has worked in the computer market for many years.

It claims the PR package is essential for the small businessman with big ideas, who cannot yet afford to employ his own PR agent.

Included are guidelines originally used to train the firm's own PR people plus press release templates to deal with 100 different scenarios.

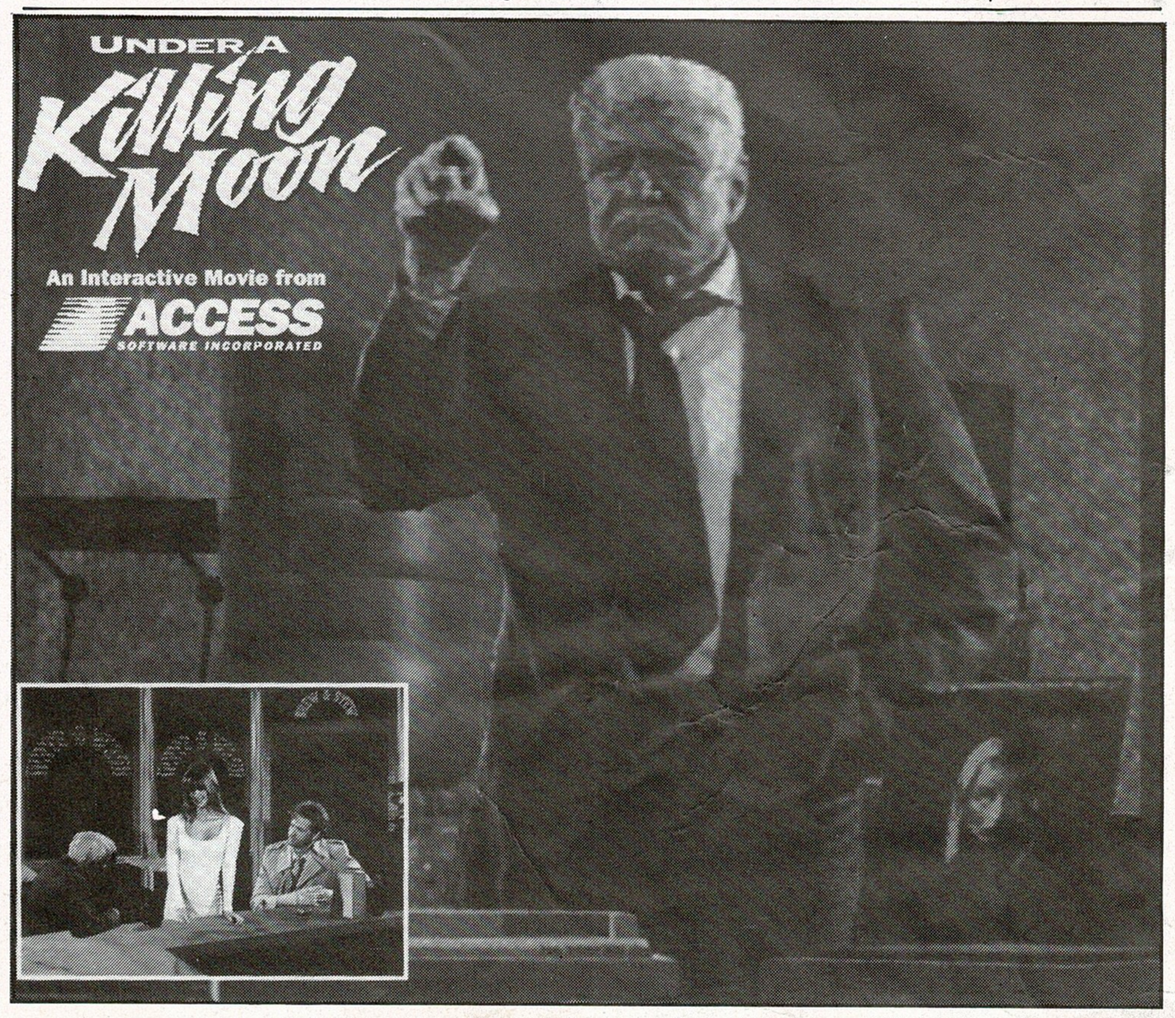
Also included is simple advice like which members of the press to send releases to.

"We have felt for a long time that it was unfair that only big business could afford PR agencies like ourselves," said CCA boss Mike Cowley.

"*DIY PR for Business* will let small businesses realise the benefits available to them from effective PR, and all for the cost of an ad in their local paper."

The package is only available direct from CCA, although the company hopes to announce a distribution deal in the near future.

Price is £49 plus VAT.



Last week saw the official launch of US Gold's hotly-tipped *Under A Killing Moon* 'interactive movie' (above). Developed by Access Software, the mystery spoof movie comes on four CD-ROM discs and stars Brian Means, Margot Kidder, Russell Means, James Earl Jones, plus Access' vice president Chris Jones. The game, which has a retail price of £59.95, was launched last week at a lavish 'premiere' at London's Planet Hollywood restaurant.

Frey drives off

Ahead of an expected staff shake-up, Emap Images' publishing director Mike Frey has moved up to the parent firm's successful stable of car magazines.

After three years in control of *The One, PC Review, CU Amiga* and *PC Games*, Frey is joining Emap National Publications in Peterborough. He will be publisher of *Classic Car Weekly, Practical Classics, Popular Classics, Land Rover Owner International* and a number of licensed 4-wheel drive titles.

"I'm really sad to be leaving the industry. Although it's clearly having difficulties at the moment, I'm sure it will soon regain momentum and grow larger than ever before. But I just love motors," he told *CTW*.

Frey leaves at a time when historical flagship *C&VG* has parted company with editor Paul Rand, and *NMS* launch editor Tim Boone has opted to leave indefinitely.

Several announcements are due shortly, with Andy McVittie expected to take the vacant *NMS* editor's chair, following a brief stint at Sales Curve Interactive.

CTW

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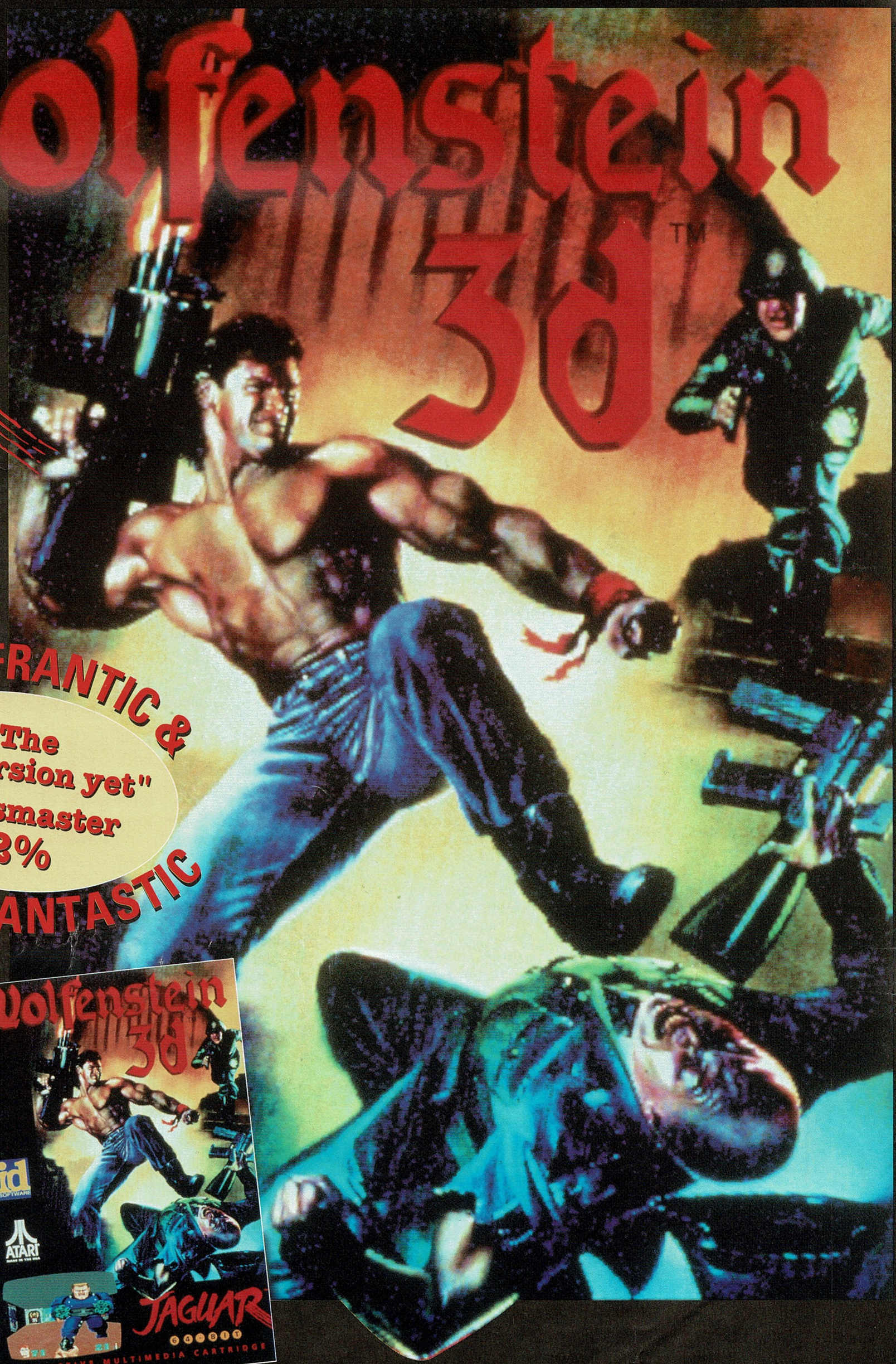
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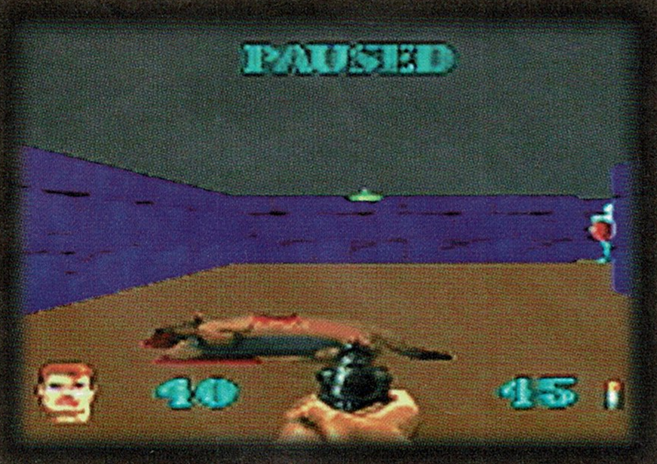
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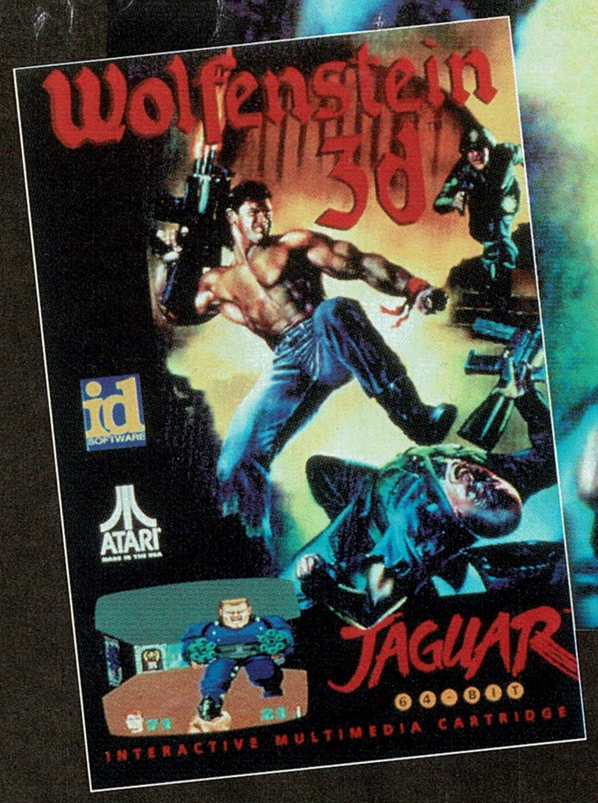




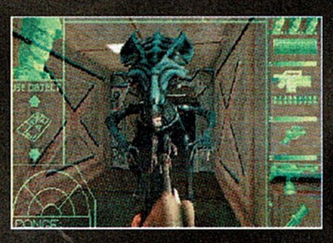








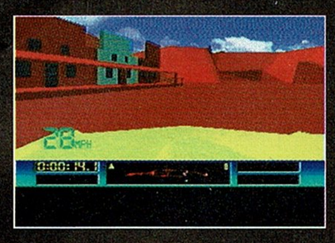
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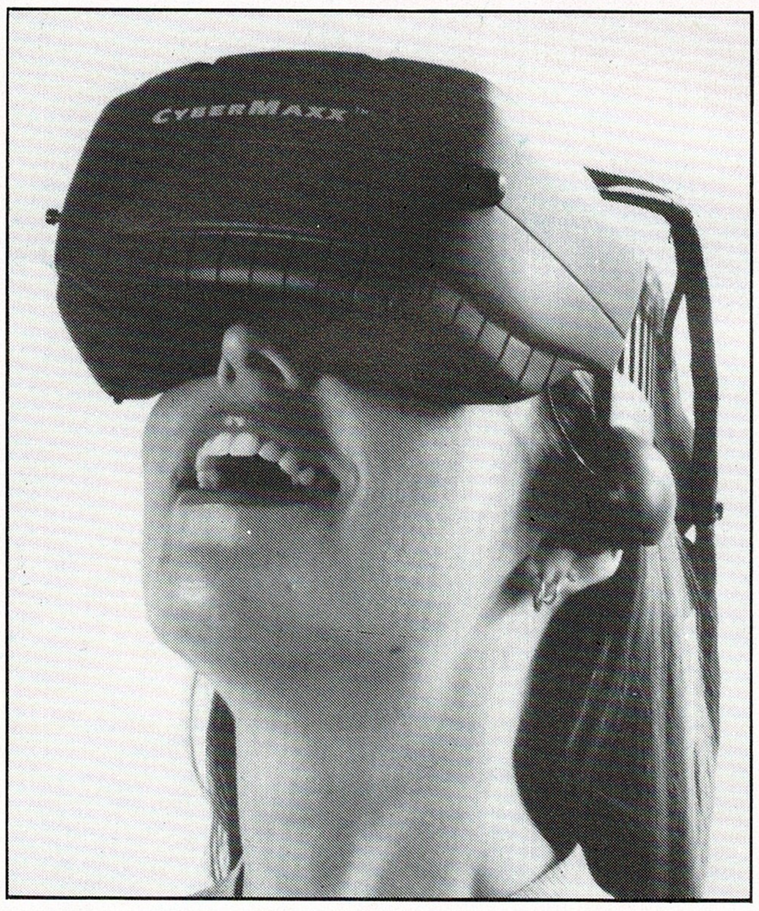
Following news of the first degree course on games design, another focusing on Virtual Reality has emerged.

This October, the University of Teeside begins its BSc (Hons) course in Visualisation. A four year sandwich course, it will teach students how to create 3D worlds by combining virtual reality, computer graphics animation, movie special effects and stimulation.

The VR degree will begin at the same time as Middlesex University kicks off its MA in Design and Production of Interactive Games.

"Careers are opening up all the time for those with the ability to use software for creative graphics and scientific visualisation. Students will actually design virtual reality applications, initially on screen using 3D models," offered Janice Webster, course leader at Teeside.

The BSc has a strong emphasis on design and Webster expects it to take off in a big way — and not just with computer games enthusiasts, although she claims they will be most welcome.



VR GOES TO COLLEGE: Teeside course in October

"We are not looking to specialise in any particular areas. The course will teach students to create virtual reality worlds, and this application could be used in many different sectors."

For more information on the degree course in Visualisation contact Janice Webster on 0642 342659.

Jaguar dials up for success

Atari has announced two different ways for US Jaguar owners to indulge in multi-user gaming within the next four months.

Sales of the Jaguar (now 70 per cent of all Atari machines) should be boosted by the new add-ons — a voice/data modem and a networking system.

The new voice/data modem, utilizing new technology developed by Phylon Communications, will allow two rivals to compete on one phoneline. Using stereo headsets, users will be able to enjoy games such as the hugely popular *Doom*, as well as *Club Drive* and *Iron Soldier* by Christmas.

Taking the technology one step further, Atari has also revealed plans for a networking capability, supporting as many as 32 users, to be available in the US within the next four months.

UK Jaguar owners will be able to enjoy the two new add-ons by the spring of 1995. *Doom* will again be the first game compatible with the new add-ons.

FX guru switches to games

The lines between the film and games industries continue to blur with LucasArts' appointment of a new chief technical officer.

Douglas Kay was previously senior manager for digital operations at Industrial Light & Magic and was responsible for the stunning special effects in movies such as *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator II*. He will now shift his focus away from film and toward interactive entertainment.

Kay was a founder of ILM's computer graphics department in 1985 and has played a role in the continuing development of the firm's computer graphics abilities.

Doug was critical in making ILM the premier special effects house in the country," said Randy Komisar, president of LucasArts. "We're thrilled he will be turning his attention to LucasArts and eager to tap into his technical know-how and ingenuity. His initial priorities will include staffing for many projects we're preparing for launch and identifying and creating those new technologies that will lead to the next generation of great games."

Kay cites several reasons for his move to LucasArts. "The fields of film making and visual effects are converging with interactive entertainment, particularly in the areas of production tools and values," he offered. "Powerful work stations like the kind we used at ILM to create dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park*, are becoming most cost effective and therefore accessible to game developers.

"Additionally, the machines on which people play games are becoming more sophisticated and able to handle high-end graphics. At LucasArts I'll have the chance to apply what I've learned in 16 years in the visual effects field to an emerging industry where the possibilities are unlimited."

5-12 + 1

5-12 Fun Learning is to open its second education-only retail outlet later this month.

Like the original store opened in Kingston last year, the new shop in Watford's Harlequin shopping centre will be dedicated to educational multimedia — combining books, computer software, audio, video, educational toys and games under one roof, aimed largely at primary school children. However, at 2,500 square feet the new 5-12 is bigger and the extra space will provide more opportunities to expand the computer and video games department.

"We are very encouraged by our fast-growing educational software sales and the ever-increasing interest in CD-ROM, and we will be giving ourselves more space to demonstrate it as well as a more exciting layout for the hardware," commented 5-12 boss Clyde Hunter.

Philips fast forwards VCD

Philips is driving on with Video CD, further bolstering its catalogue with a trio of major releases later this month.

A Fish Called Wanda, The Naked Gun and *Sliver* will appear on August 26th. They have all been made to the Video CD standard which allows them to be played on Amiga CD32, 3DO, PCs and consoles with DV cards, as well as Philips' own CD-i machine. They will also run on the dedicated Video CD players due to arrive in the autumn.

Philips already has a powerful catalogue of over 180 Video CD titles, following distribution deals with Paramount, MGM/UA and PolyGram.

On November 1st, Philips releases *The Firm* on Video CD, at the same time as the film is released on VHS sell-through — a first for the new format.

Music titles from PolyGram and EMI are also available, including *Bryan Adams: Waking Up The Neighbours, Keep The Faith: An Evening With Bon Jovi* and *The Cream of Clapton*.

At the moment, Philips claims to be concentrating on the sell-through market, although the company is looking at the rental sector and is talking to Blockbuster about a rental scheme.

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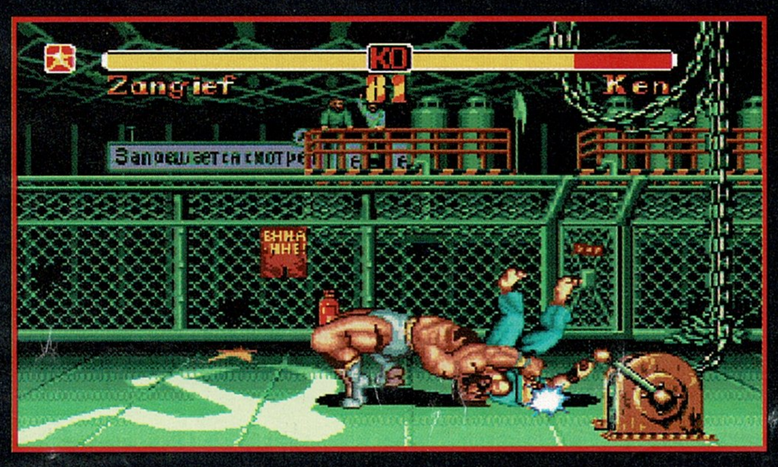
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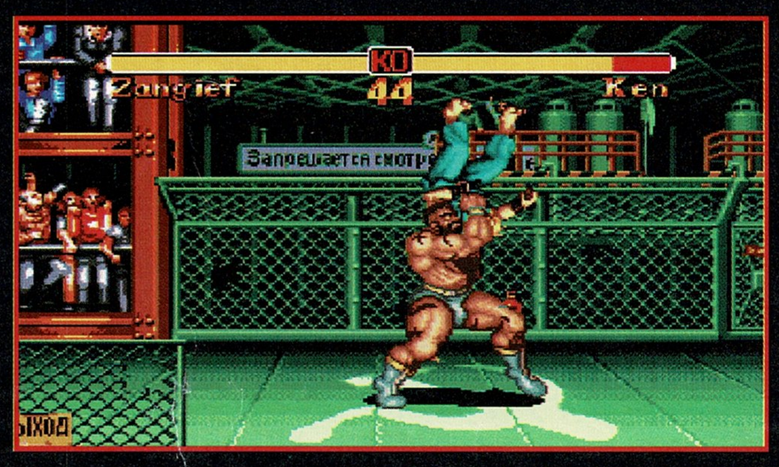
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TO BE THIS GOOD TAKES 500 EDITIONS OF *CTW*

CTW DECADE

IN THE BEGINNING

Nintendo and Sega hadn't arrived, there was no Amiga and PCs still had IBM written on them. The big games were made by small, mostly British, publishers and the core market was sad kids who wore flares and liked science. Meanwhile, *Home Computer Trade Weekly* was launched. Some 500 issues later, *CTW* reflects on where we were in 1984, where we are now and where we might all be headed...

The market into which *CTW* launched was dominated by curious things called home computers. In its first year, the paper surveyed UK dealers and discovered the most popular machines were the Spectrum, C64, BBC and CPC.

The 'Speccy' and C64 were actually some way ahead of the others and were the dominant formats of the mid-eighties. Other contenders such as the Oric, the Enterprise and the Dragon came and went rather rapidly.

All were fuelled by a desire to repeat the trick of the man who dominated (possibly even invented) home computing, Clive Sinclair.

That 1984 survey also revealed the most successful software houses of the time: Ocean, Ultimate, US Gold, Software Projects and Melbourne House.

Generally software houses were run on pretty parochial lines, rarely looking hard into Europe, let alone the US. It was also a time of staggeringly crap licences with everyone from SuperGran to Roland Rat being considered worth a gamble.

A concerted attempt to break the Spectrum/C64 stranglehold was made by a group of Far East giants supporting the MSX standard. It failed miserably.

Hints at more significant hardware developments were seen in 1985, with the launch of the ST in the US, and 1986, when *CTW* mentioned Nintendo for the first time — revealing that toy manufacturer and distributor Mattel was preparing to launch the NES in the UK in November (although in the end it was delayed) with a rumoured price tag of £300.

These, however, were just brief asides in an area more typified by furious budget rows between Mastertronic and Firebird and a baffling series of claims and counter claims that became known as The Modem Wars. Dark days, dear reader, dark days.

In late 1986 the market began to wonder if these Sega and Nintendo chappies could possibly pose a threat to the 8-bit micros. There was also much debate about whether or not Atari's ST and Commodore's Amiga would ever really take off.

Towards the end of the year, Atari's new UK boss Bob Gleadow presses the fast forward button by admitting that so far ST sales have been "pathetic" and deciding that what's needed are dramatic price cuts. He turns out to be spot on.

In 1987, the ST and the PC (thanks to 'The Amstrad Effect' and subsequent clone wars) become seen as the sexy, aspirational games machines.

1987 was, in fact, a vital year in the games market's development. It was when publishers and retailers first started really taking notice of 16-bit machines. It was also the year that Sega and Nintendo both hit Britain.

Neither console entry was particularly smooth. Mattel's NES launch was delayed by nearly a year and then fell rather flat while Sega's chosen European partner, Ariolasoft, reconsidered its position in the games market early in the year and pulled out of the deal.

Budget king Mastertronic stepped into the breach, but, like Mattel, didn't make a huge impact with the new 'plug in and go' hardware straight away.

The UK market looked at the Nintendo explosion in the States, saw a pale imitation of a shadow of a fraction of it in Europe. Scepticism began to take hold. The Amiga and ST, meanwhile, both spurred on by price cuts (and entrenched, intense rivalry), began to emerge as the hot formats of the late '80s.

In 1989 consoles finally began to make some headway. More specifically, the Master System began to make some headway. The NES was still stuck on the starting blocks; Mattel was dropped, NESI was established, then closed, Nintendo distribution was in a mess and Mastertronic (by now 45 per cent owned by Virgin Games) revelled in the situation.

Even so, 1989 wasn't the year of the consoles. It was the year of the Amiga. With Steve Franklin in charge and the Batman pack performing superheroics, Commodore began to pull away from Atari.

As the '90s arrived the situation seemed clearer, Sega was winning the console war while Commodore was dominating the home computer scene. The market began to despair of Atari and Nintendo.

Both console companies were spending big money on marketing, but Sega (with Philip Ley and his team now on board) seemed sharper. Toy firm Serif (of *Trivial Pursuit* fame) had taken over Nintendo distribution, but seemed to be struggling as much as any of its predecessors.

Software publishers were busy supporting the Amiga and a select few began third party cartridge publishing, but for either Sega or Nintendo. At the time the choices were more or less mutually exclusive.

The timing of the introduction of 16-bit console technology becomes crucial. Sega and Nintendo opted for two very different strategies. Sega decided to go early, bringing the Mega Drive to Europe in summer (£189) and risks sacrificing some 8-bit sales. Nintendo waited.

Sega's gamble paid off. In late '90/early '91, the firm seemed in complete control of the European console market (with the exception of Germany). But then Bandai finally began to build some momentum behind the Nintendo brand. Both firms talked of selling between 500,000 and a million machines in 1991.

This intriguing head-to-head (with a supporting cast of tens of millions of pounds) became the main focus of the industry, with even the Amiga taking a back seat amid talk of the consoles damaging Commodore.

The battle was about image as much as anything, so sales claims and forecasts became crucial. Huge figures were thrown around wildly and the console boom was finally upon us.

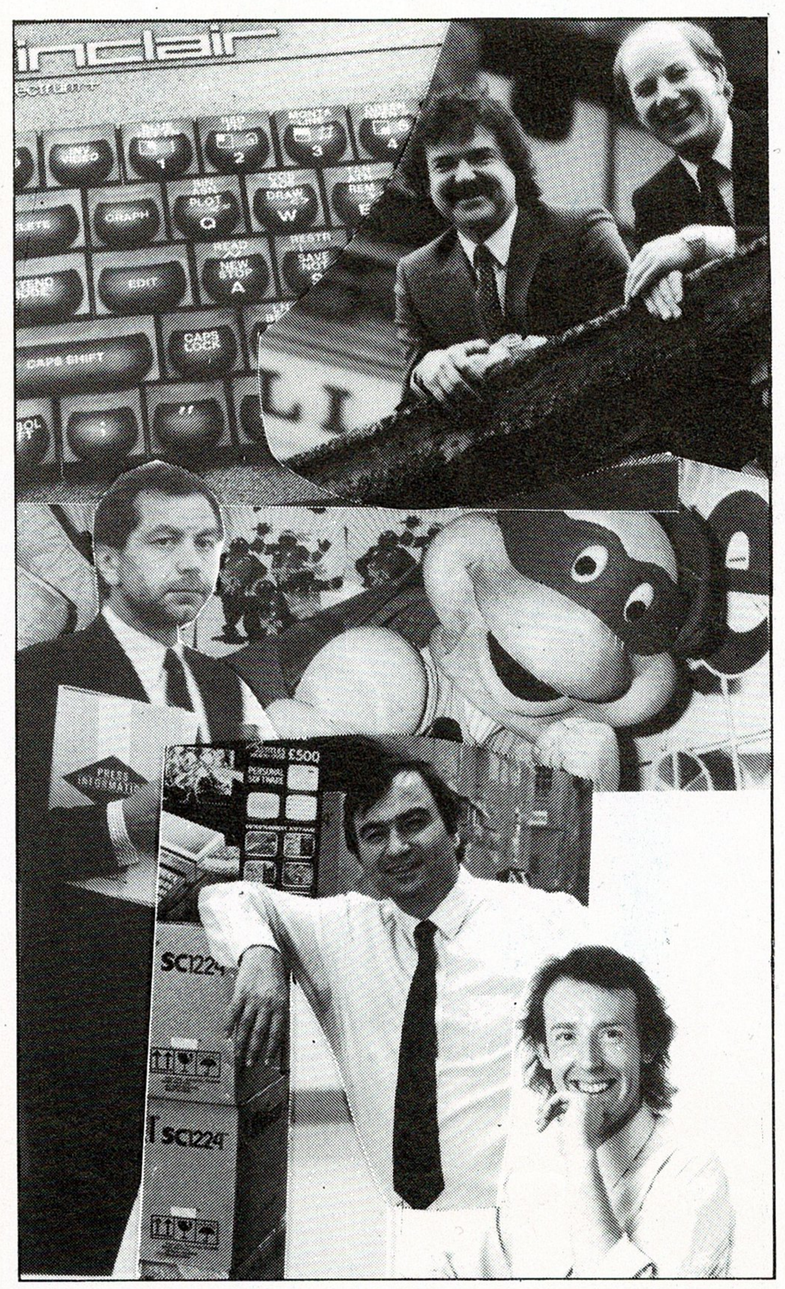
The *zeitgeist* of the times was captured on one day: November 24th, 1991 — Sonic 2sday.

In 1992, the battle of 16-bit was intense, but Nintendo (which only launched the SNES in April that year) was always playing catch up.

Both firms claimed to spend around £20 million on marketing and both firms kept increasing their sales forecasts in a game of corporate brinkmanship that eventually sent the whole market over the edge.

In the end Nintendo was talking about 1992 SNES sales of 700,000 while Sega claimed over a million for the Mega Drive. Both were questionable, and neither bear any resemblance to actual sell-through figures achieved by Jan 1 1993.

And, of course, with 1993 came the backlash. The OFT questioned pricing, the tabloids milked epilepsy scares and overstocks clogged all channels. We even took to calling ourselves the interactive entertainment industry in the hope no one would recognise us. It didn't work.



It all seems so long ago...or does it?

Price cuts on hardware were inevitable and a number of major chains became disgruntled. The odd software bright spot (*Starwing, Aladdin, Mortal Kombat*) and some stirring words from the likes of Nick Alexander and Rod Cousens occasionally lifted the gloom.

But with more and more multimedia giants (Sony, MCA/Universal, 20th Century Fox, Disney, etc) getting more and more involved in games and the promise of a new generation of (largely) CD-based games machine whetting appetites of trade and public alike, it's now apparent that the collective Cassandra syndrome was as much an over-reaction as the original world-domination-in-three-months stage.

Dave Roberts

1994: THE HIATUS YEAR

So, after 500 issues, ten years and around 15 million words, welcome to wherever we are. The fact that this is *CTW*'s most significant landmark thus far suggests this a good time to take stock of exactly where we're up to in the games business. Which is rather unfortunate really, as everything else indicates that it's a good time to keep schtum.

The best days of 16-bit hardware and software are behind us, that's clear. The odd big name game such as *The Lion King* or *Mortal Kombat 2* will probably still achieve something like the sort of sales that were possible a couple of years ago, but generally less games (and certainly less machines) are being sold.

Some stop-gaps such as Sega's Mega Drive 32 will provide minor blips of interest along the way, but the real race is towards the next generation of standalone games machines.

The main contenders are Sega's Saturn, Nintendo's Ultra 64 and Sony's PlayStation. 3DO's in there pitching but its golden image has been undeniably tarnished by a lukewarm reception in the States and trade concerns about Panasonic's enthusiasm for a European launch.

Another factor against 3DO is that the games market tide seems to have turned against the once popular multimedia concept and is now lapping towards high-tech custom built games machines. The recent arrival of Trip Hawkins' right hand man Bob Faber, as MD of a new 3DO Europe, can only help.

Sony is already being praised for taking the games-only option. Indeed, without too much obvious activity from the firm itself, there seems to be some sort of momentum building up behind Sony and its PlayStation already. Hardware cosmetics and software demonstrations have impressed. There's also clearly a desire amongst many to find an alternative to the Sega/Nintendo duopoly.

It is next year, however, when launches, prices, marketing and software support become reality rather than promises, that the shape of gaming in the latter half of the '90s should become clearer.

In the meantime, the software houses will continue to battle for membership of the global publishing elite. The rules of entry into this Super League have never actually been defined, but it's generally accepted who's in and who's out — and who's knocking on the door.

Firms like Electronic Arts and Acclaim are founder members, Sony Electronic Publishing qualifies automatically, Virgin Interactive Entertainment has forced its way in and firms like Ocean and US Gold are using all their resources to establish a foothold.

All of the above will have roles to play in the establishment of the fabled 'next generation'. Thankfully, they will not have to try and pick the winner, as lavish projects can be spread relatively easily and cheaply across all the competing formats.

The risk comes in the funding of the development of these games — meaning that the outcome (i.e. whether or not the investment pays off) is dependent largely on the quality of the end product and so is in the hands of the publishers themselves — surely a preferable situation to the softies being reliant on backing the right runner in a hardware race which is ultimately out of their control.



Retail sales, and confidence, have suffered in '94

Dave Roberts

Championship MANAGER™

END OF 1994 SEASON DATA UP-DATE DISK.

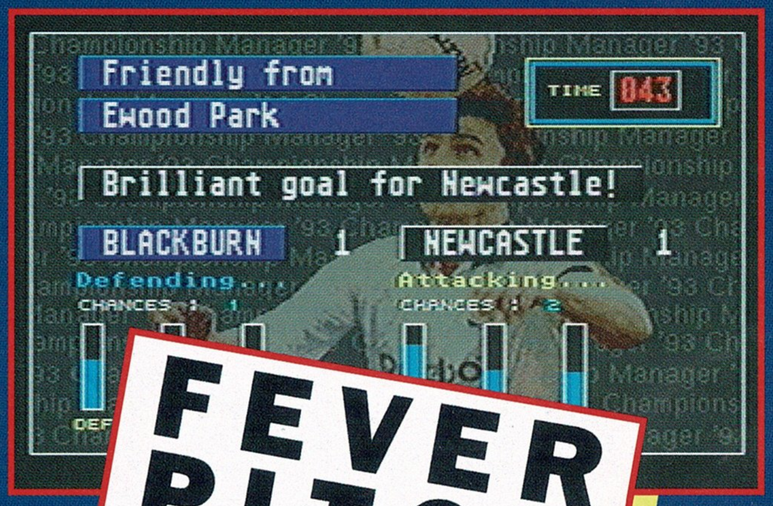
Championship Manager '93 has spent 57 weeks in the top 40.

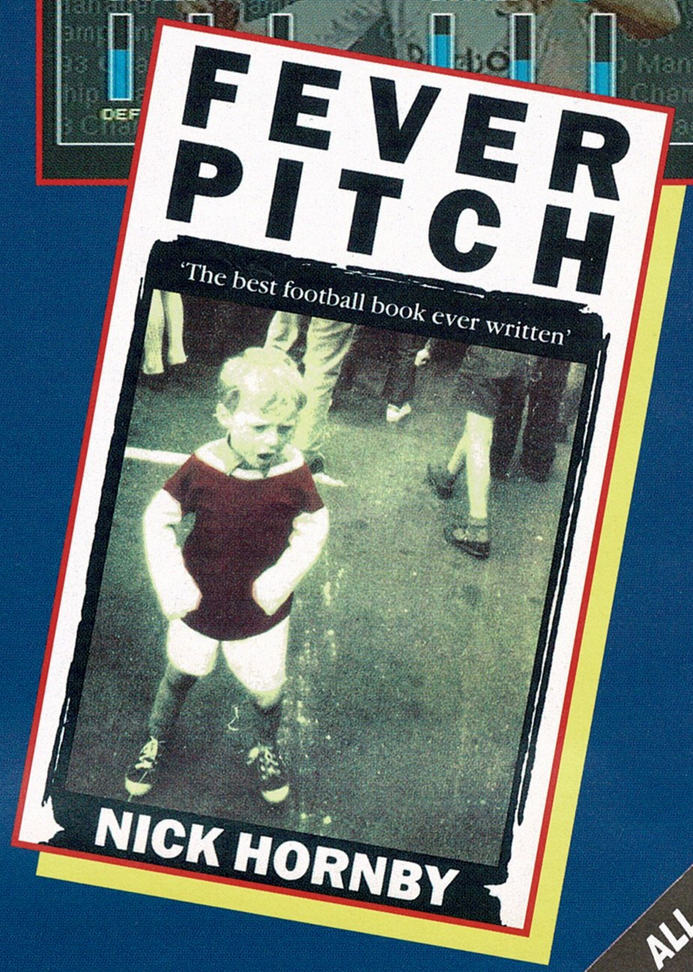
Over 50% of Championship Manager '93 owners purchased the first up-date disk.

The Championship Manager End of Season Data Disk will be available on PC, Amiga & ST in early July, RRP £15.99!!









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CTW DECADE

2004

The future comes soon enough. For most businesses, maybe. But not, it seems, for the one which has taken to calling itself interactive entertainment.

A trawl through 10 years of *CTW* back issues has left one thing clear. This market always yearns for what's around the corner — 16-bit home computers, consoles, real marketing support, high levels of consumer penetration, increased memory capacity, CD-quality sound. Trouble is, like a keen teenager groping with his love life, we've rarely been satisfied, and even if we have (anyone remember the console boom?), other beauties have soon turned our heads.

The promise of a somehow more realistic, more sophisticated, 'next level' of entertainment in the not too distant future has left many within the market — from developers to journalists — sighing 'is that it?'. At the moment, it would be a perfect epitaph for this business.

Thankfully, we're not about to be buried (but mind that leaning tower of NES carts). It is our impatience that both drives this business and makes its output lurch from 'hot' to 'not' in the space of a Christmas season or two.

I'll leave the musing on the market's technical evolution by 2004 to those who will already have seen more of it than most of us — the likes of Ian Hetherington, Nick Alexander, Rod Cousens, Mark Lewis and Tim Chaney have their say later.

No, I'll avoid the theorising. Nothing about flat screens in every room, with a *Windows*-style interface which can pipe in anything from *True Lies IV* to *Sonic Classics* on demand. No extinction of retail and little about a growing convergence of distribution channels that sees only the most global and giant of global giants owning 'content' and bringing product to market.

It's not that none of this will necessarily fail to happen. It's just going to take time — probably a long, long time — and there will be many more unimaginable changes to this business during the wait.

More easily predictable is that a 'games market' is here to stay, whatever its dynamics. The PC sector, once called 'hobbyist', but now more like 'home enthusiast', will continue to thrive. The big hardware numbers will definitely be driven by Sony and Nintendo, until technical innovation reduces the need for a single games box, that is. Sega too, but perhaps steering more of a software course in future, with its arcades becoming the real profit centre.

Give it another year or so and Sega might even start developing for the PlayStation. Far, far stranger things have happened.

Stuart Dinsey

YOU DIDN'T HAVE THEM THEN...

Consoles

In 1984 the market didn't have consoles as we know them now. It had the remnants of a previous era in the Atari VCS (which were mostly bad memories and vast repositories full of crap software). The 'boom and bust' years had claimed a lot of victims and taught a lot of lessons, although the last two years suggest that not all of them were remembered.

In 1984 what we had was a home computer market, and launched to service it was *Home Computer Trade Weekly*. The Spectrum, C64 and even the Acorn BBC were the main concern of all publishers. It would be around four years before either Sega or Nintendo began to play any significant role.



MASTER SYSTEM: The machine that brought Sega into our lives

Streetfighter

Not quite the mother of all beat 'em ups, but the first to make kids think they were really landing those punches. The first in a long line of clones (which has included Capcom itself rolling out countless *Turbo Nutter Bastard* and *Tournament Stuff Which Makes It Sound Different* versions). In 1994, the likes of *Streetfighter* and its muscle-bound big brother *Mortal Kombat* have parents worried. In 1984, rather more sinister business was afoot — Shakin' Stevens scoring another three top 10 hits.

Future Publishing

In 1984 Chris Anderson was working on a weekly VNU consumer title called *Personal Computer Games* (yes of course it failed). In June 1985 he formed Future Publishing. It now boasts 30 magazines, sales in excess of £40 million and 400 staff. Oh, and it's up for sale.

Games TV Shows

In the early days, the closest the games market got to national TV exposure was a dreadful BBC effort called *Micro Live.* It was presented by arch weird-beard Fred Harris and was ridiculously biased towards Acorn, the firm that just happened to make BBC computers. Dominik Diamond, incidentally, was just starting the fourth year of senior school in September 1984. For the record, now we've got *Games-Master, Bad Influence, Games World, Movies, Games & Videos, Head to Head* and an embarrassing geek on *The Big Breakfast.*

ECTS

The mid-eighties' show calendar was dominated by the *PCW* (*Personal Computer World*) Show. This sprawling beast, organised by Montbuild, took up most of Olympia, then was transferred to Earls Court. It attempted to be host to everything to do with computers. It became massively unpopular in the leisure market, which moaned about everything from the concept to the drains.

Many leading companies began to question the need for any sort of consumer show. What they all agreed on was the need for a trade event; a place for firms to meet and for business to be done. *CTW* publisher Tom Stock took them at their word and, in conjunction with Database (now Europress), organised the first European Computer Trade Show in April 1989. These days it is organised by Blenheim and takes place twice a year. *CTW* is still exclusive sponsor.

CD

In 1984 the storage medium was cassettes. Loading games was a tiresome task and reliability was erratic. Then came disks. They were a darn sight better than tapes, but as games grew in size and new Sierra games began to feature regularly in Strong Man contests, their inadequacies became apparent. Cartridges were up next, but cost proved a problem. There's still more games sold on cart than any other medium, but the CD is the choice for almost all of the next generation of machines.

Nostalgia

This probably has something to do with the fact that in 1984 we had nothing to be nostalgic about (although there were undoubtedly some sad bastards even then harking back to the golden age of the ZX81). Now some sort of mass hypnosis seems to have convinced everyone that things ain't what they used to be and that modern life is rubbish, with every reviewer and columnist bemoaning the demise of gameplay and banging on about when all this were fields. The sooner this dewy-eyed, easy-copy nonsense is stamped out the better.

Beer Guts And Double Chins

It's true! Look, most of the captains of our industry can be seen in early issues of *CTW* — and they are *so* thin. It may be good living or just the ageing process but now beer guts and double chins seem to be far more prevalent. And some of the men haven't fared too well, either.

Suits

This isn't strictly true and we're dangerously close to the nostalgia trap here. People did go to shows and meetings in suits in 1984, it's just that it was almost always the same, not particularly good suit. Now most of the industry is on first name terms with Paul Smith. (This is true of everyone except the top management at Virgin who are still just too darn crazy too wear suits and ties — but God those shirts are expensive.)

Rod Cousens

Just kidding.



The suits take over...



ECTS: The trade show everyone wanted

CHARTS '84

Commodore 64

1.	*Hektik*	Mastertronic
2.	*Gilligan's Gold*	Ocean
3.	*Squirm*	Mastertronic
4.	*The Election Game*	Mastertronic
5.	*Trashman*	Quicksilva
6.	*Sheep In Space*	Llamasoft
7.	*Encounter*	Hi-Tech
8.	*Incredible Hulk*	Adventure Int.
9.	*Space Walk*	Mastertronic
10.	*Son of Blagger*	Aligata

Spectrum

1.	*Match Point*	Psion
2.	*Jet Set Willy*	Software Projects
3.	*Blue Thunder*	Richard Wilcox
4.	*Lords of Midnight*	Beyond
5.	*Jack and the Beanstalk*	Thor
6.	*Chequered Flag*	Psion
7.	*Mugsy*	Melbourne House
8.	*Psytron*	Beyond
9.	*Zaxxan*	Starzone
10.	*Sabre Wolf*	Ultimate

Week ending August 8th 1984 (Popular Computing Weekly)

CTW DECADE

THE YEARS IN WORDS AND PICTURES

COMPUTER TRADEWEEKLY

INSIDE

British Telecom Games!!
MSX Roadshow — details
Cries and Whispers
Essential Phone Numbers
New Commodore Machines
Star Spot: A Legend Speaks
How to Save your Shop MONEY

ISSUE 1 — BRITAIN'S NO. 1 TRADE NEWSPAPER- 3rd SEPT. 1984

LAYOFF!

Oric defend their corner

Embattled Oric Products International are to continue the manufacture of the Oric Atmos for distribution in the UK despite the fact that home sales have slumped and Oric — who are embroiled in a bitter litigation struggle with their advertising agency KMP — have no plans to advertise in the run-up to Christmas.

Oric's Marketing Director Terry Shurwood has blamed the disastrous home run on High Street Multiples discounting "a sensibly-priced product that has a very similar specification to the CBM64 and yet is £60 cheaper."

Oric's is a success story abroad — the Oric-1 was the best-selling machine in France in 1983 with about 70,000 units and currently 57% of French hardware sales are for the Atmos. Advertising will continue in France, Germany and Italy, and Oric have won European orders worth £2.1 million.

"Diverted"

"We have shifted our emphasis, marketing and advertising abroad," confirmed Shurwood. "But we are still getting UK orders — Smith's have just ordered 500 units which we diverted from a foreign order."

Shurwood said that as a "hardware manufacturer at the top of Division Two" Oric's problems centred on "unnecessary panic decisions" which had affected hardware and software manufacturers alike in the UK this summer. "Our only problem is in the UK," he stated. "Our advertising budget for the first six months of this year was low — £1 million."

Power

The KMP drama — Oric are the first company to challenge the enormous power of advertising agencies by preparing to sue KMP for "wrongful advice" — continues. KMP were not available to comment on the situation and Shurwood in turn made no comment regarding Channel 4 advertising for Oric in February and March of this year — "those decisions were all made before I arrived," he said.

Bob Simpson joins Tiger — 'expect changes'

Bob Simpson, founder-member of PCS Distribution and Chairman of the Guild of Software Distributors (GOSD), has left PCS and joined Tiger Distribution on 1st September to spearhead "an aggressive sales drive."

The move is certain to give currency to speculation about PCS's future in the distribution market. Bob Simpson joined PCS when it was a small retail outlet on 14th February 1983 and became the backbone of its wholesale service — and saw its turnover leap from £600 a week to nearly £50,000 a week. But the company has become very embattled recent months.

Explaining why he made the move to Tiger Simpson said: "I was made an exceptionally good offer by Owen Hargreaves and Adrian Fisher" (Tiger Chairman and MD respectively). "There is no doubt in my mind that Tiger are one of the Top 5 distributors in this country. I am certain that within a few months you will see us going up a couple of notches."

"Healthy"

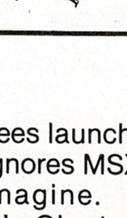
Simpson made no attempt to cover up Tiger's problems over the summer. "They stemmed from earlier in the year when retailers had drastically overordered. [illegible] to bring to fruition and we started the whole process by signing up John Menzies again. We will be supplying Menzies for the next 12 months on an exclusive basis. It remains an exceptionally healthy account and the outlets will be supplied in the same way as any other — by personal representation, van service and over the phone."

Tiger will be expanding in the near future. Simpson plans an aggressive search for new dealers and will make it more attractive for dealers to move into the computer market with an "actual service" to ensure that retailers buy the right product and present it well in a profit-conscious marketplace. More than that he would not say, other than that Tiger had no plans to get into publishing or importing software.

WIN A MILLION BUBBLES

See Page 2

Who is this man?



Problems and confusion surround the supply of the Amstrad CPC 464 to small dealers. And it looks as though those who haven't placed their Christmas order by the end of September will have to miss out.

The troubles stem from the finite number of machines some 200,000 — which can be brought in during the next few months from Korea, where they are manufactured. The majority of these have already been signed up by the multiples Comet, Rumbelows, Dixons, Boots and John Menzies.

But the number left for independent retailers is in some doubt. Amstrad itself which handles the multiples' accounts — claims that 25% of the production total, or 50,000 will be available. Yet its own distribution arm, Europa Electronics (which Amstrad bought in June to deal with independent retailers), pitches the figure much lower at 20,000.

The man in charge of Europa's sales, Ray Cope, claims that his firm has already opened up more than 240 accounts, and has another 70 pending.

He adds: "I'm confident that we'll be closing the order books by the end of September. I believe that we shan't be able to accept any orders after that."

For more on Amstrad's independent dealer marketing, turn to page 14

AMSTRAD — THE QUESTIONS REMAIN

COMPUTER TRADEWEEKLY

In this week's CTW:
- Major US Gold feature
- Sinclair – The end of an era
- Software distributors guide
- A guide to all those at CES
- Jack defends late releases
- Chartwatch
- Playing by Mail

£1.50

AMSTRAD SNAPS UP SINCLAIR

Amstrad is set for a plethora of meetings with manufacturers, distributors and key multiple accounts following its scoop £5 million purchase of the beleaguered Sinclair Research.

The firm has given itself a six week deadline in which to sort out its long term plans for the Sinclair range, and its boss Alan Sugar has appealed for the trade's patience in the interim.

First call

Amstrad has acquired all of Sinclair Research's computer interests and will have first call on any future computer products. Further, it will be honouring all existing manufacturing and guarantee agreements.

Though it means that Amstrad will have upwards of 65 per cent of the market – just over one hundred weeks after entering it – it is unlikely to attract any significant action from the Office of Fair Trading or from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Divest itself

In the history of both bodies, no precedent has been set for a firm having to divest itself of assets acquired instantly.

A decision on whether the swoop for Sinclair should be the subject of a referral by the OFT is due to be made shortly. Amstrad is likely to emerge with a minor verbal reprimand at worst.



Alan Sugar: "We are a computer manufacturer – not a benevolent society."

Sir Clive Sinclair was putting a brave face on the decision to sell off his company – once valued at £15 million – for just £5 million to his arch rival. He repeatedly insisted that Sinclair Research was not forced into the move, and that at best one other refinancing deal was available to it.

"We pioneered the market and handed it over – perhaps a little late in the day – to the expert international marketeers, he explained.

It leaves Sinclair Research as a rump firm with a future seemingly far away from the low cost, high volume consumer goods arena of the home computer industry.

And it leaves Amstrad with a set of key decisions to be made about manufacturing, marketing and distribution.

Likely approach

Though the company stresses that it is still very early days, several indications already point to an approach based around Amstrad's likely approach emerged from the lengthy joint press conference where the deal was announced.

● *QL:* Amstrad is almost certain to drop the QL, though it is committed to take on all the existing inventory – which amounts to a few thousand units. Sugar noted: "We cannot deny that the product has not done well, and so we'll be seeing a decision to kill it. I really don't see a future for the QL."

"Read snippets"

He acknowledged that Amstrad would sell it, though "we haven't really looked at it closely yet – I've only read snippets in the press."

● *SALES:* Amstrad sold some 750,000 of its own computers worldwide last year, and is anticipating one million for the current twelve months. With the addition of the Sinclair range, if things go according to plan we could add another 3,000,000 pieces, Sugar said.

The Sinclair Research Sugar is anticipating that the year's biggest seller will be the Spectrum 128. However, ITHD has reported that orders have dropped off, after a useful first few weeks.

Sugar confirmed that Amstrad has no intention of dropping any machines this year – with the probable exception of the QL.

● *PANDORA:* This is one of the few areas essentially still under the aegis of Sinclair. The two firms will be working closely on the machine, and it has not been decided which firm will be bearing which hefty costs.

Continued on page two

Gold turns to budget

US Gold boss Geoff Brown has finally unveiled his plans for a budget label.

Americana will be launched in May, and will feature mostly US sourced software from Epyx, Access, Datasoft, Synapse and other independent US authors.

Direct bid

The move is seen as a direct bid by Brown to win over a segment of the huge budget sales, up till now dominated by Mastertronic. Brown also plans to strengthen Americana further by re-releasing some full price games under a Golden Oldies badge.

"We've seen an opportunity to be part of another aspect of the software market, and decided now is the right time to obtain market share and positioning for Christmas 1986," Brown told *CTW*.

Gallup

"Golden Oldies is for product that should have done better – I mean I wouldn't want to put out something like Enduro Racer on it."

He defended his decision to plump for a £2.99 price tag, and confirmed that he still believes in a split Gallup chart for budget and full priced software.

Profitable

"A £2.99 price will also make our range more profitable for the retailer, as a majority of Mastertronic sales are at the £1.99 price point," he said.

He would not be drawn on projected sales however, and would only say that he did not have a crystal ball to look into.

"Leg work"

Initial primary distribution will be handled by US Gold itself, although there will be talks in the near future with the Leicester based budget distributor Richard Bichby.

Sales promotions for the product will be handed over to the recently recruited sales and marketing form Aztec. "They'll be doing all the leg work," as Brown put it.

He went on: "We are currently opening up new areas of sales and expect to see Americana sold in all outlets where existing budget soft

Continued on page two

ARE YOU GOING TO STRAWBERRY FAIR?

use the token to park the car in the car park
The car seems much happier now.
SAAB CARS
You are standing at the entrance to a large hall. A sign above says 'C.E.S.'. People are shuffling about all around you and there is a beggar in one corner with a sign around his neck. He is eating a newspaper. A burly doorman stands in front of a glass door.
spread the sign
Which one? There are many.
offer one around the the beggar's neck
The sign says 'Genuine, but needy reader'
ask the beggar about life
The beggar laughs and, continuing to eat the newspaper, he burbles the words "Mel Croucher"
open the glass door
As you walk toward the door the beggar's head explodes in a ball of fire revealing an emptiness within. A flash bulb fires to capture the spectacle on film. A burly doorman bars your way.

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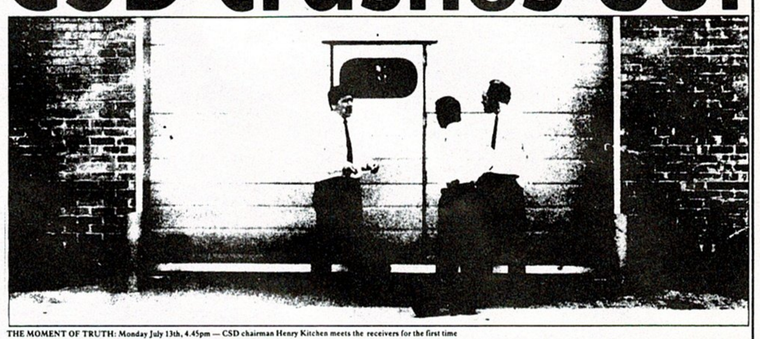
THIS WEEK: CONTACTS: All the useful numbers in the industry usefully collated in an at-a-glance guide

20–7–87

ISSUE NO. 145 BRITAIN'S TOP COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY

CTW

CSD crashes out



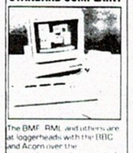
THE MOMENT OF TRUTH: Monday July 13th, 4.45pm — CSD chairman Henry Kitchen meets the receivers for the first time

INSIDE:

TAKING THE TRIP? 10
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THIS EXPORTING LIFE 18
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Electronic Arts boss Trip Hawkins gives an exclusive interview to *CTW* about his firm's plans to sign up UK software houses.



The BMF, BML and others are at loggerheads with the BBC and Acorn over the corporation's endorsement of Archimedes. We take a look.

Creative Sparks Distribution was placed into receivership on Monday of last week with total outstanding debts estimated to be £1.5 million.

Stock with a book value of close to £1.2 million was on the premises when the decision to call in the receiver was made. Following a board meeting, on the advice of its bankers National Westminster, chartered accountants Robson Rhodes was appointed to handle the company's affairs. CSD is still trading and at least three firms — including Software Limited — are known to have been interested in part or all of its manifold businesses.

The decision comes as no surprise to a trade seemingly expecting it almost daily since the spring. The reasons are officially attributed to a stock control problem (of which the Boots sale or return agreement formed a large part); serious over-buying in the spring; and the failure of the stock control computer just prior to Christmas.

Within the trade, two other factors were put-forward. Firstly, that CSD attempted to handle too many different areas of the micro/computing industry without sufficient expertise, and secondly that it continued a big company attitude inherited from its Thorn EMI days when a pragmatic, modesty was more appropriate.

It CSD should eventually fall — the receiver put it no higher than 50/50 that a purchaser would be found (and others suggest that this is optimistic) — this is likely to prove the largest collapse in the industry's history.

CSD had the widest software activities of any firm, though not necessarily the deepest. It had both budget and full-priced business and leisure software which it both published and distributed. It published Creative Sparks, Mikrogen (which has also gone into receivership) and Trust; had the UK rights to products such as the Samna range; and distributed to one third of the Boots stores, all of Larkeys and Tandy, and to numerous independents.

On hardware, it handled the full Atari and Tandy ranges, together with Miracle's modem products. Additionally, it had at least two retail sites, large training facilities and a noted interest in book distribution.

Reaction to the firm's predicament has largely fallen far short of the "sad day for the industry" sort of collective sentiment. Instead, quite abusive comments and charges have been levelled at CSD's chairman Henry Kitchen in particular. His continued insistence that everything was all right with CSD and that cheques would be paid evidently irked numerous business contacts. One said he had been promised seven times by the financial director Ron Moore that a cheque really was in the post. It wasn't.

In Kitchen's particular case, his own high profile as an industry figure — via such trade bodies as the Guild of Software Houses, the Guild of Software Distributors and the British Micro Federation — has contributed to the degree of vituperation.

CSD went into receivership at around 4.45 on Monday July 13th. Neil Cooper and Ken Jones, the partners of Robson Rhodes, have been appointed as joint administrative receivers, and they are seeking to sell it on as a going concern. Some 15-20 of the previous staff of 50 are being kept on to aid the process.

Cooper told *CTW* that in very round terms, the unsecured creditors were owed around £750,000. A similar total was owed to the various secured creditors, to the bank and to CSD's former parent company Thorn-EMI.

Current stock holding is "in excess of £1 million", with one source specifying it to be £1.2 million. Just three weeks before the demise, Henry Kitchen had mentioned to *CTW* that he had some 700,000 units of software in the warehouse. Though this figure has evidently declined since then – in part because some fleet-footed companies extricated their games in time – it gives some indication of the physical level of the stock holding.

This also explains the fear expressed last week by both distributors and software houses that should CSD slide into liquidation, it is likely to mean an absolute glut of very cheap games finding their way to the market at a time of traditionally low sales.

But Cooper stressed that receivership did not "quite sound the death knell" for a firm. He said that a number of companies had already made tentative approaches for various parts of the CSD business.

● **Suitors:** Principal interest is being shown by **Software Limited** — hitherto known very much as a business software distributor only, though it has recently taken on Commodore hardware (*see page two*).

CTW can reveal that Software Limited was involved in abortive discussions with CSD immediately prior to its move into receivership. These discussions are understood to have taken place on Thursday July 9th, and the failure to conclude terms meant that the demise was inevitable.

A clearly taken aback Software Limited managing director Alistair Handyside acknowledged that his firm was "very seriously interested" in taking on *all* of CSD's business.

Though he preferred not to be pushed quite that far, it appears that Software Limited is effectively now in a bidding situation. And is in fact from baulking at the prospect of becoming a games distributor, with some 40 per cent of the Boots business.

"Our two business areas are really not that dissimilar any more. Mass high-street retailers have £1.99 cassette games and also have the low price business software. It's just a question of more stock, more products for us — there's no real reason why we shouldn't be able to operate to the same stock control system for both," Handyside said.

Software Limited is understood to be the frontrunner of those sounding out CSD, though all parties are keen to stress that this still leaves it a long way short from making a firm deal at this stage.

One other named suitor is the **Pergamon Group** — part of the Robert Maxwell empire. It is known that Henry Kitchen has had tentative discussions with another Maxwell subsidiary Waterlows in the recent past. This was left at the "Give us a call if you want to talk further" stage, according to one close observer.

Kitchen apparently did not make that call, but it has been confirmed at the highest level that the Pergamon Group has expressed interest in the CSD business and is watching the situation closely.

This information disconcerted Lee Ginty – the boss of **Microdealer** which itself is a software distributor within the Maxwell Group. He noted: "Microdealer is very definitely not bidding for CSD or for any part of it. Neither to the best of my knowledge is the Pergamon Group. Possibly it's just the book business that they're after."

One firm definitely not in the running is American leisure software publisher **Electronic Arts**. It has only just finalised its UK distribution

Continued on page seven

Survey reveals retail optimism

Final results of *CTW*'s 1992 Specialist Electronic Games Retailer Survey show that 92 per cent of stores believe that their overall business will increase during this calendar year.

The encouragingly high level of optimism is 10 per cent up on last year, and comes as Nintendo and Sega start looking towards a crucial autumn/winter season where they must sell over two million machines between them to hit targets set earlier in the year.

Regarding the video games sector alone, 87 per cent of retailers expect an increase in business, with the arrival of numerous games-selling stores and cartridge rental causing the very slight drop in confidence.

Hopes are high in the computer games sector too, with 82 per cent expecting a year-on-year increase — thanks largely to the emergence of high priced Amiga and PC products being sold to older consumers.

Elsewhere in the survey, Ocean and Sega pick up the software and hardware gongs for Most Effective Advertising and Most Effective General Promotional Activity, whilst Future's *Amiga Format* is the Most Read Consumer Magazine and Consumer Magazine Most Aiding Stocking Decisions.

Full results and analysis from the Advertising, Magazines and Future section of the specialist stores survey appear on pages 6 & 7 of this week's issue.

Future heats up games content

Future Publishing has tied up with Virgin Retail to stage the heats for its National Computer Games Championship.

The final itself will take place at the Future Entertainment Show, 15th-8th November at Earls Court, co-sponsored by the new Yorkshire Television games show.

The heats will happen at six Virgin outlets in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Newcastle and Bristol. Future is hoping that the YTV show and local television will cover the events.

Meanwhile, Yorkshire Television has told *CTW* that it is just as likely to cover the Gamesmaster Live event as the Future Entertainment Show.

1984

Europe sees launch of MSX. Europe ignores MSX. Ocean buys Imagine. Sinclair Research's QL struggles to establish itself — and fails. The Spectrum and C64 have a grip on the market that cannot be broken by long-forgotten rivals such as The Enterprise and The Oric.

1985

Atari ST launched in US. Oric goes under. Rod Cousens quits Quicksilva after its sale to Argus, joins Activision label Electric Dreams. CND demonstrates outside US Gold's offices over planned Raid Over Moscow game. A deal for Robert Maxwell to buy Sinclair Research falls through at the last minute. First Atari STs arrive in Europe. Chris Anderson establishes Future Publishing. BT buys Beyond Software.

1986

Maxwell buys distributor Microdealer. Atari launches monitorless 520ST at 'staggeringly low' price of £399. Amstrad buys Sinclair Research. Cousens joins Activision proper as European boss. Amiga launches at £1,475. Amstrad launches Spectrum 128 + 2 with 'glued on' datacorder. Amstrad launches PC1512. Bob Gleadow becomes Atari's UK boss.

1987

US software 'giant' Electronic Arts ($15 million sales) sets up in the UK with Mark Lewis at the helm and plans to sell direct. Commodore unveils Amiga for the home (A500) at £499 + VAT. Mattel's launch of Nintendo's NES is constantly delayed. Sega/Ariola deal falls through. Amstrad launches Spectrum + 3 at £249. Steve Franklin arrives to take over Commodore UK. Mastertronic signs up European rights to Sega. First Segas go on sale in UK. Virgin takes a 45 per cent stake in Mastertronic.

1988

Nintendo sets up NESI after Mattel fails in Europe. Atari bundles the ST with countless free games — it seemed like a good idea at the time. US Gold's *Outrun* on ST becomes the first ever 16-bit game to top the individual format chart. CBM cuts Amiga to £399. Mindscape sets up in Europe. Mastertronic cuts Sega console to £79 while Nintendo pledges to spend millions kick-starting the thus-far stalled NES. Amstrad launches Sinclair PC200 games computer. It bombs. Virgin buys up the remaining 55 per cent of Mastertronic. Sega advertises on TV for the first time.

USD

NEW RELEASES:–
★ BAAL ★
★ CAPTAIN FIZZ ★
★ GARFIELD – A WINTER'S TAIL ★
★ MILLENIUM 2.2 ★
★ ROCK STAR ATE MY HAMSTER ★
★ SILKWORM ★

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CTW

29.5.89 BRITAIN'S TOP COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY ISSUE 238

POWER
THE JOYSTICKS THAT SELL
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Virgin scoops Sega for £100m

Virgin Mastertronic has signed what is believed to be the biggest ever distribution deal in the UK leisure computer market's history.

The firm has secured the exclusive rights to the Japanese Sega console in the UK, France and West Germany for five years and claims to have made minimum order commitments covering £100 million.

Virgin boss Richard Branson completed the deal with Sega's president Hayao Nakayama whilst celebrating Virgin Atlantic's inaugural flight to Tokyo earlier this month.

The firm's minimum stock commitment over the five years covers a claimed 1.25 million units of the Sega Master System and Megadrive, plus some seven million pieces of software. The UK's current installed base is put at just over 1,000,000 units and is hoped to top 2,000,000 by the end of the year.

Virgin Mastertronic will have to ship over 83,000 units a year into each of the three territories to hit the target, but the firm is confident that this will actually be exceeded by some way.

Mastertronic has been handling the Sega since Autumn 1987, with Virgin becoming involved just prior to its full Mastertronic buy-out a year later.

The deal came after some lengths negotiations in Japan. The deciding factor was Virgin's apparently successful track record with the product, which has only been hampered by occasional stock shortages.

Long-term distribution agreements on hardware are very rare in the computer market generally, and particularly rare on the leisure side. Virgin Mastertronic's managing director Nick Alexander, however, is supremely confident their potential sales in Europe.

Many UK software houses are known to be worried about the breath of control wielded by Sega, which currently dominating the market because they only grant a limited number of third party publishing licences. Virgin, however, feels that it is now safe from any such

Continued on back page



Virgin boss Richard Branson seals the five-year deal with Sega's Hayao Nakayama

Leisuresoft loses Impact

Impact, the latest leisure sales and marketing outfit, last week broke away from Leisuresoft and left a big question mark over the future of the distributor' operations director Tony Adams.

It was originally intended for Impact to be a wholly owned subsidiary of Leisure soft with its own separate identity. The fledgeling firm found, however, that it was being labelled as the distributor's on the road sales force, and the split has been caused directly by that image.

The result is that Impact is now a jointly owned partnership of John Parker, who left Bullet to head the venture, and Adams – whose future at Leisuresoft is under review.

At the time of going to press Adams himself was unsure of his ground at Leisuresoft but did concede that he could not easily carry on in the same role with such a strong outside interest. Leisuresoft boss Al Taylor was unavailable for comment.

Adams' only official comment on the state of play was: "Leisuresoft has been restructuring its middle management which would leave me free to concentrate on outside concerns such as Impact. Whether that outside interest takes up too much concentration to continue in his present post will emerge very soon."

Meanwhile, Parker was obviously pleased to be free of the Leisuresoft sales team. He commented to *CTW*: "There has been a lot of speculation in certain areas of the trade that we are too closely tied to Leisuresoft. My aim from both believe in this concept of Impact very firmly and we don't want it ruined by stupid speculation. We are now the only team on the road that has no conflicting interests."

Comet fires IBM salvo

Subject to IBM approval, Comet is set to take low-end IBM machines in at least 80 of its top stores.

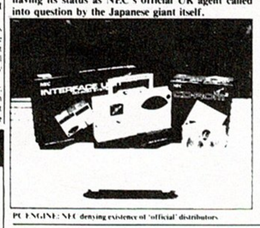
At the time of going to press details of the placement were scarce with Comet anxious not to say too much before the deal has been rubber-stamped by IBM.

It is understood, however, that the commitment from Comet will be to more than just

Continued on back page

NEC works up speed over Engine

Micro Media last week announced the first of its long awaited distribution deals for the PC Engine, whilst having its status as NEC's official UK agent called into question by the Japanese giant itself.



PC ENGINE: NEC denying existence of 'official' distributors.

Any move to bring over the Engine with the weight of NEC behind it will not materialise for some time, but until then the line is that "there is no official importer of the PC Engine". Whether or not NEC will be sufficiently annoyed as to consider legal action remains to be seen and Yassui would offer only a firm "no comment" on the possibility.

Micro Media boss Andrew Smales seemed unperturbed by the development and reiterated his claim that an agreement had been reached with the Japanese firm. He did concede, however, that the relationship was stumbling and is perhaps not as secure as he had first appeared.

Smales offered: "I must admit that we've been getting a

Continued on back page

Harangued Atari rethinks pack attack

Atari's just launched ST Powerpack could be the firm's last ever software-led bundle, *CTW* can reveal.

The firm is reconsidering future ST marketing methods following trade criticism that too many bundled games dampen high margin software sales.

Many dealers and distributors, whilst noting that the latest bundle is very high on consumer value, were dismayed to find so many top-selling titles in the Powerpack OK, the 20 included games such as *Xenon, Double Dragon, Dr0id, Buggy Boy, Beyond Zork, Backlash, Xybots* and *Space Harrier* were all agreed to be selling well in their own right, and as a consequence many have been left as dead stock on retailers shelves.

Atari has become increasingly worried by the criticism, particularly after reading a recent Dealer Focus in *CTW* (May 19th) where some stinging retailer opinions.

We've had minor grumbles from the independents before, but that last article in *CTW* showed that there is now a significant groundswell against it," commented Atari UK managing director Bob Gleadow to *CTW*.

We're going to take time out to evaluate the whole thing. If people are saying that the software market is being affected and we think they've got a valid point then we'll sure render the bundle idea.

The Powerpack would be a good way to close out – we'd be doing it in a blaze of glory.

Atari currently intends to market the Powerpack right through the Christmas season.

Continued on back page



POWERPACK: Could be played out in September

MIRROR IMAGE

MIKE DITKA ULTIMATE FOOTBALL

An ETP Publication

2.12.91 EUROPE'S ELECTRONIC GAMES TRADE PAPER Issue 365

OUT NOW

Super NES to spring into UK

Nintendo's 16-bit Super NES games console will be launched into the UK next spring, *CTW* can exclusively reveal.

The news finally ends weeks of speculation about the Japanese giant's plans, and will surprise many. Though the machine has been on sale in the US since the beginning of September — and in Japan for well over a year — Nintendo had previously given the distinct impression that a move into the UK was far from imminent.

But Nintendo's exclusive UK distributor, Bandai, told *CTW* last week that the machine would definitely arrive in mid to late spring, priced at £149.

Bandai's Nintendo boss Mike Hayes admitted that such a launch was somewhat ahead of any previous schedule — but would not comment on whether it was particular pressure from his firm that had led to the change in policy.

"We're in a very, very fast changing marketplace, and because the UK consumer has become so sophisticated in his demand for new products, we have reviewed the situation. It was a consensus decision, coming from our close and harmonious relationship with the licensor (Nintendo)."

Nintendo's UK thinking has previously been that it would be unwise to risk clouding a still developing market with a new machine which carries a higher price and runs completely different software.

Hayes himself argued only a couple of months ago (*CTW* October 10th) that there was still a considerable amount to be achieved with the NES. That view remains. But, with the NES and Gameboy now both established, he thinks that Bandai can successfully cope with a third Nintendo product.

"The UK marketplace has an ability to absorb new technology. We've got the handheld market and we own the 8-bit market, so now we want the 16-bit market too. We've said before that we will only launch a product when it is commercially viable on a mass market scale, and the Super NES now fits the bill."

An important factor in Nintendo's decision would appear to be the success of Sega's flagship 16-bit Megadrive in the UK, but Hayes countered: "I don't think it's got much to do with that at all — it's about the consumers' ability to take the next generation of products."

Even so, Hayes does concede that, due to its under-12s pitching of the NES, there is a major market where no standard Nintendo games console is currently on offer.

"There will always be a certain element of overlap when two machines are on sale, but when the Super NES arrives it will appeal very much to the older consumer. We are not bastardising our business at all, we're just opening up a new market — a market where we already have brand strength thanks to the Gameboy, which appeals to all age-groups."

Price: The proposed £149 pricepoint immediately puts the Super NES at £20 above the current Megadrive bundles. By the time it is fully available in the UK, Sega may even have responded by bringing its machine down to below £100 — but this is unlikely to force any Nintendo re-think.

The important thing is not to look at the price of the competition but the value of our brand and what the consumer wants. £149 is the right price for a Nintendo consumer who want to purchase a Super NES," added Hayes.

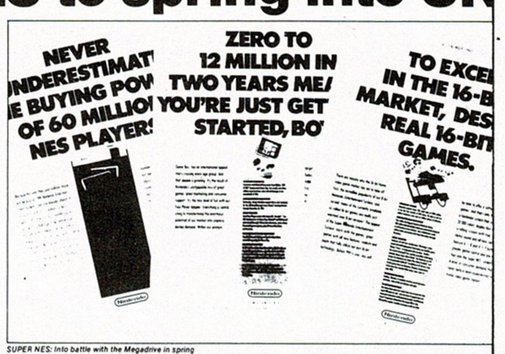
Software: Details on software support haven't been finalised as yet, but the machine is almost certain to ship with *Super Mario World*. A batch of Nintendo's own top titles — such as *F-Zero, Zelda III* and *Sim City* — will also be made available, whilst third party outfits such as Accolain, Konami and Ocean will all have product ready and waiting for release.

Marketing: Nothing is being given away until the New Year, but Hayes did note that the Super NES' arrival would not effect planned NES and Gameboy budgets in any way.

Distribution: Few surprises are expected here, key accounts being told about the new arrival last week. Hayes promises that sufficient quantities will be guaranteed to meet initial UK forecasts, but shortages during the early stages would not be a surprise — Bandai's main aim presumably being to have everything running smoothly come autumn/winter next year.

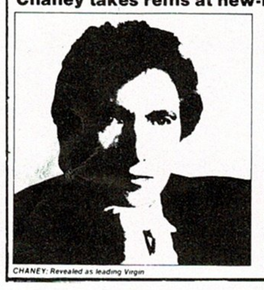
In the US, the Super NES is apparently going a storm at present — recent Nintendo bullishness revealing that units are being sold at a rate of 12 every minute of retail opening. In all, the firm expects to sell two million hardware units and six million software units. Stateside by the end of the year.

At the moment, only the UK launch of the Super NES has been confirmed, but a full European roll-out is expected. Specific territory details will follow in *CTW* shortly.



SUPER NES: Into battle with the Megadrive in spring

Chaney takes reins at new-look Virgin



CHANEY: Revealed as leading Virgin

Tim Chaney last week emerged as the man to lead Virgin Games through a programme of major European expansion during 1992.

He has been appointed European managing director, with parent company Virgin Communications keen to build on what has been a successful year for the label. He joins officially on January 1st, relinquishing his role as European boss of Sega third party publisher Tecmagik.

Chaney's appointment means that erstwhile UK managing director Gerry Tucker takes over the new role of commercial director, with Robert Devereux (chairman of Virgin Communica

Continued on back page

CBM lines up PC pack

Having toyed with the idea in 1991, Commodore has now decided to launch its PC leisure bundle in early 1992.

Details are extremely thin on the ground, but the smart money is backing a 286 machine running at a minimum of 16MHz, with 1Mb of RAM and a 40Mb hard drive.

No definite price point has yet been fixed, although £899 seems likely. It's a shade higher than comparable offerings from rivals such as Amstrad and Goldstar, but Commodore could gain an advantage by producing a knockout bundle with big name games — a trick which has served it very well in the 16-bit market so far.

Commodore's sales director Kelly Sumner was not prepared to confirm or deny the story when questioned by *CTW*. He offered simply: "We are always looking at new hardware opportunities."

The PC leisure boom has, to date, been very much a software phenomenon, with more and more adults buying high end games to play on their business machines.

The hardware fraternity is now trying to get in on the act by making games part of the marketing mix when selling DOS machines.

Amstrad led the way with the PC5286 Games Pack in September and Goldstar has also been aggressive in the emerging market.

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MIRROR IMAGE

OCEAN Presents THE GAMES

An ETP Publication

27.7.92 EUROPE'S ELECTRONIC GAMES TRADE PAPER Issue 397

MP calls for cart price probe

Sega and Nintendo's software pricing policy is to be investigated by both the Government and The Office Of Fair Trading, *CTW* can exclusively reveal.

With cartridges averaging at a cost of about £35, pressure has been steadily growing from both outside and within the industry for some reduction in retail price.

The latest and by far the most significant development to date is that Labour's consumer affairs spokesman Nigel Griffiths is currently looking into the matter.

He will bring it to the attention of both The Office Of Fair Trading and the trade and industry secretary Michael Heseltine.

Griffiths has already been responsible for launching a similar campaign to bring down the price of audio CDs, which is being investigated at the moment.

He told *CTW*: "I'd certainly be interested in pursuing cartridges. I will be able to take it up with the minister — Michael Heseltine — and The Office Of Fair Trading. So we will be firing with both barrels if you like. I will ask the director general of The Office Of Fair Trading whether the prices are justifiable and whether or not a monopoly exists here.

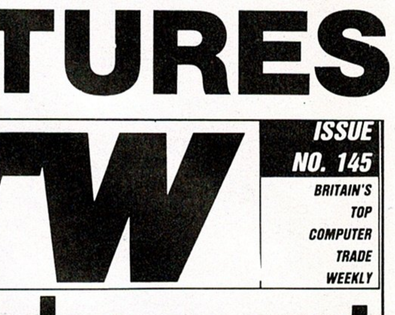
"Michael Heseltine has extensive powers, he can order price reductions if he wishes and he doesn't even have to hold a hearing."

Meanwhile, Sega and Nintendo are remaining adamant that their European cartridge prices are well balanced, despite the fact that they are dearer than both Japanese and American prices.

Sega's European boss Nick Alexander said: "It's all a bit of a red herring actually. When you get down to comparing our selling prices and the US selling price on the same product there's only about 5-10 per cent difference. We pay more here, there's a 17.5 per cent sales tax and US dealers work on an average margin of 15 per cent — compared to an average retailer margin here of 25-30 per cent."

Bandai's Mike Hayes attributed the price anomaly to economies of scale and said: "In the UK we sell four games for every piece of hardware, while in the US we sell 10."

It seems likely that the case will be easier to investigate than CD pricing with only two firms involved. It also means that there's scope for arguing that both Sega and Nintendo have created a monopolistic situation.



HESELTINE: Can order cartridge price reductions at a stroke

Video show finds games angle

The video industry has thrown out yet another welcome mat to the games world, with its premier trade event changing both name and role.

Rushman Communications has organised a video-specific show since 1988, culminating in Video Showcase '91 last year — which attracted over 4,000 visitors in two days.

This year's event will be called simply Showcase '92, and whilst still largely biased towards video market matters, it will attempt to style itself as more of a catch-all home entertainment event.

A smattering of exhibitors from the games industry are expected to take space — including *CTW*. There will also be a number of seminars specifically targeted towards video dealers who want to know more about the games market.

"What a lot of rental and sell-through video dealers want to do is make use of their retail shops and have additional profit centres to develop. In a few years' time, video game software and CD-I may actually be more important to them than video itself," commented Showcase's project director Nick Brookland to *CTW*.

Around 60 exhibitors are expected in all, with the show running from September 9th-10th at the Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London.



VIDEO: The games crossover grows

Ocean tucks into Euro McDonalds deal

Ocean has sealed a major licensing deal with fast food chain McDonalds.

The firm has been in delicate negotiations with both the US giant and worldwide software rights holder Virgin Games Inc for some time, with an agreement only being finalised last week.

Virgin is not currently active in the Nintendo market in Europe and this latest deal giving Ocean European and Australasian NES and Gameboy rights is testament to the strong relationship the two publishers have had for many years. Indeed, Ocean is currently in the process of launching another Virgin licence — *Caesar's Palace* on Gameboy — into Europe.

An NES title called *MacDonaldsland* will be published by Ocean in the autumn. The game will, in effect, be the same as Virgin's successful US release *MC Kids*, with sundry mutually agreed marketing changes for the new territories. A Gameboy version should follow at the turn of the year.

Details are scant at present, but it is understood that Ocean is also expecting to utilise the excellent promotional potential of the licence via tie-ups with the chain's franchise operations in the UK, France and Germany.

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Sega and Amstrad join forces

Sega has formed yet another of its 'strategic alliances', teaming up rather unexpectedly with Amstrad to produce a Megadrive compatible PC.

The two firms will combine PC and Megadrive technology to produce a dual chip machine called the Mega PC. A UK launch is expected as early as

CTW DECADE



CTW

21.3.94 EUROPE'S ELECTRONIC GAMES TRADE PAPER Issue 479

Alexander ready to quit Sega?

Rumours were circulating last week regarding major changes to Sega Europe's management — with chief executive Nick Alexander set to leave the company for a new post within the industry.

No one at the Japanese manufacturer was prepared to comment and Alexander himself was uncontactable. By time of press, however, gradevine news of his possible departure was causing a real commotion within the European trade. Indeed, word was even drifting back direct from Japan.

Alexander has been in the games business for over 10 years, setting up Virgin Games in 1983. It was the Virgin Mastertronic group, under his leadership, that launched Sega into Europe so successfully from 1987 onwards and he has been chief executive of the standalone Sega Europe subsidiary since its formation in July 1991.

Thanks to the surge of the yen throughout 1993 and a market over-pumped with stock in Christmas 1992 (stunting last year's sell-in) Sega Europe is believed to have lost some £100 million on sales of £500 million in its financial year to the end of February.

In terms of hardware unit sales (over four million last year) and market share Sega Europe has been massively successful. A toughening, maturing market and Japan's insistence on ever increased performance, however, has left the firm feeling somewhat unloved of late.

Alexander is believed to be moving of his own volition, to a major new post somewhere in the interactive entertainment business. He may not be the only senior management figure to depart in the coming months.

ALEXANDER: Strong rumours of departure

Time eyes Atari Games buy-out

Time Warner looks set to significantly step up its ever-increasing involvement in the interactive entertainment market by completing a total buy-out of Atari Games.

As well as being one of the biggest arcade companies in the world, Atari Games is also the parent company to Sega and Nintendo licensee Tengen.

Time Warner already owns 80 per cent of the firm but 20 per cent is held by individual directors and it operates more or less independently.

The deal has not yet been confirmed by either party and it is not clear whether or not Atari Games would be merged with the existing Time Warner Interactive Group which publishes Mac and PC CD-ROM titles but has no real presence in the games market.

Time Warner also owns a minority stake in hardware manufacturer Atari Corporation and is an investor in 3DO.

Malinsky quits Sony for MCA

European marketing director Meir Malinsky has quit Sony's European games operation.

MALINSKY: Off to MCA

He had been at Sony Electronic Publishing for just over a year, operating ahead of the firm's formal launch into Europe late last year.

He is moving back to his music industry roots by taking up the role of vice president of special marketing for MCA Records.

Malinsky is the second major departure from Sony in two months. After a brief stint as UK marketing manager Simon Jeffery was poached by Virgin Interactive Entertainment Britain. Cameo Group account director Chris Meredith has recently been appointed in his place.

Virgin buys Revolution stake

Virgin Interactive Entertainment has taken an equity stake in UK development firm Revolution Software.

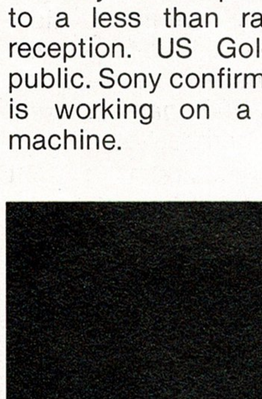
In a deal effectively worth over £1 million, Virgin has bought 25 per cent of the Hull based outfit, and signed up four new titles.

Revolution is an adventure game specialist, lottily pitched by Virgin as Europe's answer to established genre leaders LucasArts and Sierra On-Line.

Formed three years ago by former Activision and US Gold development boss Charles Cecil, Revolution has already had its debut title *Lure of the Temptress* published by Virgin — with its follow-up *Beneath a Steel Sky* due shortly.

The equity deal adds a further four titles to Virgin's catalogue, covering a lucrative part of the market currently dominated by US firms. Having completely acquired US developer Westward Studios last year, Virgin will review the level of equity interest it has in Revolution as the relationship develops.

"This has been done from a position of strength on both sides. It offers us the opportunity to exploit new technology and fulfill our ambitions in state-of-the-art games design," commented Cecil to *CTW*.



CECIL: £1m ViE tie-up

Mega upgrade unveiled

Sega will launch a Mega Drive supercharger that turns the machine into a 32-bit platform later this year — as revealed by *CTW* in a worldwide exclusive last week.

The Mars' code-name has been dropped but otherwise the specifications of the Mega Drive 32 are as previously detailed. It contains two 32-bit RISC chips and a video processor, meaning that not only will it offer faster gameplay but also massively improved 3D graphics capabilities.

Mega Drive 32 is expected to hit the European market in time for Christmas, with a price tag of around £150.

There are 30 titles in development to support the add-on. The initial line-up is expected to include *Virtua Fighting* and *Virtua Racing Deluxe* — although Sega has not released any details as yet.

The firm hopes that third parties will release around 30 Mega Drive 32 titles within a year of its launch. The titles will not run on ordinary Mega Drives but are expected to retail at a similar price to the current line-up.

Sega has not yet confirmed that an all-in-one Mega Drive with the 32-bit technology built-in is to be launched in early '95 with a price tag of around £200, but *CTW* understands that such a product is definitely scheduled.

European product director Barry Jafrato offered: "This is the news consumers have been waiting for. Mega Drive 32 will give consumers access to the 32-bit gaming experience at an affordable price and in a way that allows Mega Drive owners to use their existing systems."

Sega's US president Tom Kalinske added: "This is great news for Mega Drive owners because, at a low cost, it will give them some of the basic experiences our yet to be introduced Saturn hardware will provide.

THIS WEEK:

Two more join 3DO bandwagon

The 3DO Company significantly stepped up its global assault last week with three major announcements — including news of two more hardware licensees.

3DO is committed to establishing a new interactive entertainment platform with a CD-based technology claimed to outperform current games systems. It arrived in the US last autumn via Panasonic's Real FZ-1 multiplayer and wants, at least towards its core publishing machines.

Sanyo and AT&T have long been 3DO supporters, both showing prototype hardware at the Las Vegas CES during January. Now as widely expected, Korean firms Samsung and GoldStar have come on board.

Details are scant, but both will be producing compatible machines for launch in Japan and the US at least and possibly Europe too. Increased competition should help 3DO overcome one of its largest problems, price point in order to achieve real volume sales. The Panasonic machine has already fallen from a launch price of $700 to $499, but further cuts are expected as the market develops.

3DO has also signed a deal with Creative Technology for the joint development of a PC plug-in card. This will enable DOS-based computers to play 3DO software titles.

Lastly, 3DO has also announced that it intends to become a publisher of software itself. It already has an open door licensing policy for third parties to go ahead and support the format, but now it will actively bring products to market too.

Called Studio 3DO, a new division of the firm will both develop its own products and distribute externally designed software.

SAMSUNG GoldStar

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ocean MR NUTZ HOPPIN' MAD on the AMIGA ocean

1993

3DO unveiled in Las Vegas. The Mega CD is launched. Sony buys Psygnosis. CBM announces losses of $177.6 million in one quarter. CD32 launched at £299. Mortal Monday. 3DO ships in the US to a less than rapturous reception. US Gold goes public. Sony confirms that it is working on a games machine.

1994

MCA/Universal takes a stake in Interplay. Nick Alexander quits Sega. Commodore slips into voluntary liquidation. Sega unveils 32X hardware stop-gap. Sony's PlayStation is revealed. Nintendo's Project Reality changes its name to Ultra 64. Blockbuster takes 75 per cent of Virgin Interactive Entertainment. Future is up for sale.

THAT WAS THE WEEKLY THAT WAS...

...And still is. Over 10 years and 500 issues, *CTW* has established itself as the leading trade newspaper for the computer and video games market — with an influence which travels as far as Nintendo of America in Seattle, Sega in Tokyo and, of course, Peek & Poke Computers in Bolton. DAVE ROBERTS traces the history...

On September 3rd 1984, a newspaper called *Home Computer Trade Weekly* emerged. It was owned by retail franchise The Spectrum Group and conceived as very much an adjunct to its successful software distribution arm Microdealer. The launch editor was Mike Scialom.

Issue one declared: 'LAY OFF — Oric defend their corner'. Observers might note that Oric, despite such defiance, swiftly disappeared. Company plurals suffered a similar fate.

That first week also saw big changes at Tiger Distribution, plus a story about Mastertronic boss Martin Alper who "last week denied he's in the market to make a quick buck and get out again".

Issue 4 saw the first ever Rod Cousens interview in which the great man offered: "I believe the market is grossly overstated and it's going to be very tough for some companies over the next 18 months."

Greg Ingham arrived as editor for Issue 5 and over the next four years led a team that saw off all rivals and pushed *CTW* to the very heart of the games business. Ingham's effusive, irreverent style became the paper's trade mark, gaining it respect as a genuine source of news and opinions rather than a platform for press releases and platitudes.

Other landmarks in this first chapter of *CTW* include Tom Stock being promoted to general manager (Issue 6), the arrival of Simon Harvey as reporter (Issue 16), Russell Beadle as credit controller (Issue 65) and Stuart Dinsey as staff writer (Issue 82).

Erstwhile editor

In those first years, *CTW* was very much a home computer paper. It covered business almost as much as games. It reflected the market of the time, with most of the important hardware companies (particularly Amstrad) having interests in both areas and the majority of dealers stocking a wide range of machines and software.

Bosses said what they liked, on the record, to *CTW* in those days — and it often included the word 'bollocks'. There was Bruce Everiss and William Poel. There was also limitless coverage for a firm called PSS. If it released a fighting game, it was 'PSS off to war', if it supported the CPC it was 'PSS off to Amstrad'. What larks.

In the late summer/early autumn of 1988, three things happened, *CTW* went glossy, Greg Ingham left to become a publisher at Future and Stuart Dinsey took over as editor.

Dinsey was the natural choice, Harvey having left the paper a year earlier to take over Headlines PR (later to become the Barrington Harvey empire). Worries about the transition of power were soon wiped away with *CTW* remaining as essential as ever. Well-educated in the ethos of Ingham and with his own ideas to add to the mix, Dinsey came to represent the paper (and vice versa) as strongly and successfully as his predecessor.

Exclusively revealed

In April 1989, *CTW* became exclusive sponsor of the first ever European Computer Trade Show, which went on to establish itself as a vital event in the global games market. Later that year, *CTW* was bought out of the Spectrum Group by Europress — but no move up north, thank God.

In the early '90s, the last vestiges of low-end business coverage were all but blown away by the arrival of the console boom. At the start of 1992, Dinsey came up with the idea of *CTW* Europe, a monthly insert rounding up all the non-UK news and trends. By the end of 1992 it was clear that the addition was a monumental pain in the arse to put together alongside the punishing deadlines of a weekly. Still, the market seemed to like it, so Dinsey remains lumbered.

In September of that year, Tom Stock successfully completed a management buy-out, taking ultimate control. Later, Beadle and Dinsey joined the board.

And in September 1994 the *CTW* team took a wise and responsible decision to avoid marking its 500th issue with a few hundred words of self-indulgent nostalgia.

Then it changed its mind.

CTW

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MEMO

TO: STEVE WILCOX

FROM: ALL OF YOUR STAFF

SUBJECT: ELITE'S 10th ANNIVERSARY

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&

WELL DONE

STEVE

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on

14th August 1994

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CTW DECADE

SPECIALIST CONSUMER PRESS 1984-1994

Round and around and around it goes, where it will stop, even the mag publishers don't know. Keeping up with the consumer magazine whirl has severely tested *CTW*'s editorial tenacity. But here it is, the incomplete list of every magazine that's been launched, swapped and closed over the past decade...

BIRTHS...

'85: *Computing With The Amstrad CPC* (Database), *Zzap 64* (Future), *Amtix* (Newsfield), *Amstrad Action* (Future)
'86: *Your Sinclair* (Sportscene), *Amstrad Professional Computing* (Database), *8000 Plus* (Future), *PC Plus* (Future)
'87: *LM* (Newsfield), *ST Update* (Sunshine), *ST User* (Database), *Computing With The Amstrad PCW* (Database), *The Games Machine* (Newsfield), *ACE* (Future)
'88: *Computer Shopper* (Dennis), *ST Action* (Gollner), *Amiga Computing* (Database), *Your Amiga* (Argus), *ST/Amiga Format* (Future), *The One* (Emap), *Computer Gamesweek* (Focus), *New Computer Express* (Future)
'89: Future splits *ST/Amiga Format, Amiga Action* (Gollner), *Zero* (Dennis)
'90: C64 title *Commodore User* (Emap) becomes *CU Amiga, PC Leisure* (Emap), *Let's Compute* (Database), *Mean Machines* (Emap), *Raze* (Newsfield), *Commodore Format* (Future), *Sega Power* (Future)
'91: *Games-X* (Europress, formerly Database), *Amiga Power* (Future), *Amiga Shopper* (Future), *The One* splits into two for ST and Amiga, *PC Format* (Future), *Game Zone* (Future), *PC Review* (Emap), *Megatech* (Emap), *Commodore Power* (Lime Lizard), *Total* (Future), *Sega Force* (Europress/Impact)
'92: *ST Review* (Emap), *Console XS* (Paragon), *GB Action* (Europress), *N-Force* (Europress/Impact), *Control* (Maverick), *M.A.G.* (Maverick), *Super Action* (Europress), *Mega* (Future), *Superplay* (Future), *Amiga Force* (Europress/Impact), *NMS* (Emap), *Commodore Force* (Europress/Impact), *Super Pro* (Paragon), *GamesMaster* (Future)
'93: *PC Zone* (Dennis), *Super XS* (Paragon), *Sega XS* (Paragon), *Mega Action* (Europress), *SNES Force* (Europress/Impact), *Sega Master Force* (Europress/Impact), *Mega Power* (Paragon), *Edge* (Future), *PC Player* (Maverick), *Mega Machines* (Europress/Impact), *PC Action* (Europress), *PC Gamer* (Europress), *Sega Magazine* (Emap), *PC Power* (Paragon)
'94: *Super Pro* (Paragon), *Super XS* (Paragon), Impact *World* (Paragon), *Internet Magazine* (Future, October), *Internet & Comms World* (Paragon, October), *Hands On* (Northern & Shell/Retail Revolution), *Games Review* (Northern & Shell/Retail Revolution)...and a few more by Christmas

DEATHS...

'85: *Personal Computer Games* (VNU), *Computer Age* (Emap), *QL User* (Emap).
'87: *LM* (Newsfield)
'89: *Computer Gamesweek* (Focus)
'90: *The Games Machine* (Newsfield), *Popular Computing Weekly* (Maxwell)
'91: *Let's Compute* (Europress), *Raze* (Newsfield), *Your Amiga* (Alphavite), Newsfield goes bust, *PC Leisure* (Emap), *Your Commodore* (Alphavite).
'92: *ACE* (Emap), *The One for ST Games* (Emap), *Crash* (Europress/Impact), *Games-X* (Europress), *Zero* (Dennis), *Zzap* (Europress/Impact)
'93: *Console XS* (Paragon), *N-Force* (Europress/Impact), *Your Sinclair* (Future), *ST Action* (Europress), *Sega Master Force* (Europress/Impact), *Sega Force* (Europress/Impact)
'94: *Super Pro* (Paragon), *Super XS* (Paragon),Impact Magazines — which had only recently completed a management buy-out from Europress — goes out of business (*SNES Force, Mega Machines, Amiga Force* & *Commodore Force*), *PC Action* (Europress), *Game Zone* (Future), *Super Control* (Paragon), *PC Player* sold by Maverick to Future, one issue to come then closure

...AND MARRIAGES

'85: Scot Press buys *Popular Computing Weekly*
'87: Newsfield sells *Amtix* to Database, Focus buys *Popular Computing Weekly*
'89: Focus and Database sell, buy and swap loads of different boring magazines. Most of them are about the CPC and none of them are around now, Future sells *ACE* to Emap
'90: Dennis sells *Your Sinclair* to Future, Database buys Gollner Publishing, Focus folds, all titles bought by Maxwell Consumer Magazines, Argus sells *Your Commodore, Your Amiga* and *Commodore Disk User* to Alphavite
'91: Europress buys Newsfield titles
'93: Europress buys *ST Review* from Emap, Future buys *Game Zone* and *Sega Zone* from Dennis
'94: Emap sells *Megatech* to Maverick, Future sells *Sega Zone* to Maverick, Future sells *Mega* to Maverick



So many have come and gone...and more on the way

NOTE: This reflection of CTW's coverage in the consistently hectic and occasionally baffling games magazine market is as accurate as possible. Not every single launch, closure and deal will be listed. So, if you remember a launch that's missing or spot a mag listed as launched in the table, but then never closed even though you know it has ceased to exist, well done. Just resist the temptation to share the joy of your discovery with us.



MARK HUGHES
"I have played all over Europe but I've never come across a team like the Hurricanes!"



PAT BONNER
"The Hurricanes - they're our nightmare team".



BRYAN ROBSON
"Roy of the Rovers has nothing on any of the players who play for the Hurricanes, what a team!"

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CTW DECADE

AND 10 YEARS FROM NOW...?

Ian Hetherington
Joint Managing Director
Sony Electronic Publishing Ltd

Within the next 10 years we will witness technological advances in the interactive landscape which will be of an order of magnitude far greater than at present. The current restrictions to creativity — the technological limitations — will disappear, enabling owners of 'content' to become media giants. Companies that can cope with rapid change, whilst maintaining an existing business, will survive.

Generically compatible hardware will be capable of rendering 100m polygons per second (equivalent to rendering a human form indistinguishable from a captured image).

The industry will become dominated by 'Interactive Directors', who will not necessarily come from film or games backgrounds, but who will be the identifiable talent.

All primary distribution will be electronic, with significant secondary markets in sell through packaged media. Electronic delivery will be through local and global networks, all inter-linked and customised to suit the technological demands of the consumer (creating Power Users).

Rod Cousens
European President
Acclaim Entertainment

The industry has advanced as technology has evolved. To experience interactive home entertainment in the year 2004 is to experience Virtual Reality on a pay to view basis. The delivery or distribution channel is optic fibre telecommunications networks or satellite transmission.

The content will include entertainment, information, education and home shopping provided from the metamorphosis of media broadcasting emerging through growth, mergers and acquisitions.

It heralds a very dynamic future.

Mark Lewis
Senior Vice President International
Electronic Arts
Stardate September 4th 2004:

Woke up this morning and immediately downloaded *Computer Trade Weekly* from my Earth On Line Services. Quickly scanned the market reports and noticed (with a sigh of relief) that the Universal Hardware Alliance had finally adopted a multi-lingual video interface standard for all user units.

Ever since the software publishers moved to downloaded transmission code that was machine independent, interactive software has really taken off. Why, just yesterday I was able to explore the Machiavellian Outerworlds of *Ultima XX* with some geriatric old gamers from the mid-90s and we were able to converse in real time fully translated in Japanese, English, French, German and Spanish.

Voice recognition, wireless communication, video interfaces and ROM implants were once the dreams of technobrats, but today are part of our daily lives.

My personal transporter alerted me that it was time to beam down to Earth to attend the European Computer Trade Show being held somewhere on the New Orbital London Highway. I must remember my shades.

Nick Alexander
Chief Executive
Pearson New Entertainment Europe

It's 2004 and telecommuting has become commonplace. Rather than fighting their way through traffic every day to get to work, most people now spend much of their day at home on their own in front of an intelligent VDU that responds to human voice commands that have made keyboards obsolete.

The drive to make software and on-line services user-friendly has resulted in most of them looking and operating like video games. IBM's slogan introduced in the year 2000 'If you can't do it with a joystick — don't bother' has gone into the vernacular.

Since people now spend their working time at home in front of screens and on-line, they want their leisure activities to be very different. As a result, a new phenomena has come to the fore and the latest form of interactive entertainment takes people out of their homes to places where they can meet and 'interact' with other people in a convivial atmosphere. These new entertainment centres are called 'pubs'.

Steve Jarratt
Editor
Amiga Format

From: InterNewsNet*f* CIA.INN.aZone;TemporalDownshift 30/07/2004 to 30/07/1994.
Message follows...

This week marks the tenth anniversary of the demise of *CTW* — the cult computer trade journal which mysteriously ceased trading the day after its tenth anniversary issue back in 1994.

Of course, these days there's no *Computer Trade Weekly*, because there's no computer trade. Computers and video game shops are a thing of the past and retailers went the way of the elephant some time ago.

Anyone wanting to indulge in interactive entertainment simply has to turn on their TV set-top box (which must operate under the Global Int. Ent. specs as laid down by the 4DO Company), access the Central Software Repository and download the file of their choice.

Top billing this month is *True Lies 3* — the very latest MPEG3 GameVideo from Sony. Most GV companies operate on a pay-per-play system which automatically debits your account during the course of the game. However, a drastic reduction in download charges coupled with a strong yen meant that several *TL3* players inadvertently became millionaires overnight, until Sony noticed and altered their tariffs.

Most GV companies have adopted the World Standard Fibre-Op Network to distribute their product — apart from Nintendo, of course, which has doggedly clung onto the CD as its preferred storage medium. The Japanese republic of Nintendo (which celebrates its first Independence Day anniversary next month) has promised new oct-density double-sided CDs with around two Gigabytes of storage — *DK Country 2* will be the first game on the new format, which Rare began coding back in the mid-90s.

Since Sega was forced to merge with Atari back in '03, when it was found that its 128-bit Jupiter VR system infringed no fewer than 174 different Atari patents, the joint US Corporation has been unusually quiet. However, this month sees the release of its famed Hologram 2000 hardware (so-called because the initial ship-out was due to coincide with the New Century celebrations). The first product — a Surroun3D version of the Atari classic *Asteroids* has been billed as 'awesome' by members of the on-line news network.

Bob Faber
Managing Director
3DO Europe

One of the things that is just beginning to become evident is that home entertainment is taking on much greater realism. Before, everybody always talked about graphics getting better, but it was always graphics. They were never like TV or movies — engaging in a way that creates an emotional attachment for the consumer.

In 10 years' time we'll be at a stage that is more like 'real life in a box'. There probably won't be much differentiation between communicating with people in real-time and playing a game in real-time.

There will always be a games industry. It changes broadly over the years, but always exists. It will be a part of the overall entertainment and communications fabric — but it will always be distinct. □

PSYGNOSIS

DISCWORLD

Indisputably the premium licence of '94, Discworld brings best-selling fantasy humourist Terry Pratchett's amazing creations to the PC. With Pratchett's full commitment and co-operation, enjoy the interactive Discworld experience, with this, the first in a major series of graphic adventures.

NOVASTORM

Novastorm is the jaw-dropping, awe-inspiring, stomach-churning mother of all blasters. From its stunning Silicon Graphics rendered backdrops to the 'in your face' frenzy of its gameplay, Novastorm has class stamped through it like a stick of rock.

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... and while we're not on the subject

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* Source AGB programme profiles 27/6/94 ©1994 DIC Animation City, Inc. and Scottish Television PLC.

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FOR TEN YEARS

CTW

HAVE BEEN FIRST WITH THE BIG NEWS

NEXT WEEK IS NO EXCEPTION

WATCH OUT FOR



AND THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

SPOTLIGHT: VIDEO GAME IMPORTS

GLAD TO BE GREY

The last couple of years has seen a major decline in the video games import business — hit by the weakness of sterling, lock-out chips and, sadly, a lack of 'hot' games coming from Japan and the US. But new machines and a more robust pound could bring it bouncing back to life through the last third of the year and beyond. LES ELLIS reports...

Back in the days when Take That were searching for that first hit and Liverpool still had one decent football team, the nation's streetwise youth began grasping at the very latest in 'arcade-quality' hardware.

Strange new devices started appearing from Japan. These machines heralded the return of the video game, dead since the days of the VCS. For a while (and rather surprisingly really) they were about the coolest things around. Even more surprisingly, the early supplies of these machines didn't come from the UK divisions of the big Japanese companies. A new industry was born. The age of the importer was here.

Sega launched the Mega Drive in Japan at the end of '89 and thoughtfully delayed the US launch, and then the UK launch for even longer. This practically gave the importers a licence to print money as they alone supplied the growing demand. Companies were setting up all over the place to bring over first the Mega Drive and then the Super Nintendo. These companies had it good for an awfully long time. Kids wanted these machines badly and were prepared to run the gauntlet of dodgy cowboy importers to get them.

Even when Sega and finally Nintendo wised up and got round to official UK launches things stayed good. Machines and games were cheaper through importers thanks to the almighty pound giving the dollar and yen a good seeing to.

Both the Mega Drive and SNES suffered badly from a lack of great software when they were launched. Where else could kids turn to? The importers, that's where. Magazines soon found their ads pages bustling with companies offering all sorts of exotic sounding games at low cost.

Many of these games were pretty lousy but the chance of getting some hot title that your mate would never get proved too tempting for most. There were also some titles that weren't getting officially released over here that should have been. *Devil Crash*, for one, was a fabulous pinball game that was around on the import scene for two years before Domark finally picked it up to release properly.

Cowboys and injuries

So if everything was so good for so long, what the hell went wrong? Speak to the importers. They'll tell you why so many went under. The big two video games manufacturers hated it. Sega even went so far as to withdraw support from magazines that covered import games (which at that point was most of them). It also sent letters to importers 'encouraging' them to stop their antics.

Perhaps Sega and Nintendo's knee jerk reaction to the import scene when it bloomed was a bit of a smoke screen though. After all, Sega and Nintendo are little more than importers themselves. Their argument that they were the ones losing money pales into insignificance when you think that so much of the money they make goes back to Japan or America to bring in more games.

Just think, how much more they would have needed to spend on marketing if there hadn't been thousands of kids raving on about these new gaming systems they'd got from Japan. By the time Sega and Nintendo launched, most kids (potential customers) knew how good these machines were already. It's so much easier to sell to kids when they are already clamouring for the product.

Dozens of companies set up to cash in on the scene, but to date there are only a few left. In any other industry this would be a sure sign that something was desperately wrong, but not here. Mail order is a business played by cowboys, more so than even the building trade or second hand car sales. A killing was there to be made by firms offering the goods, taking the money and running. As the market 'matured', even the bigger, more reliable import business were hit because consumers didn't want to get ripped off any more.

Copiers also started to emerge. So much for car-

Continued on page 23



Importing games, and breaking 'lock-out' carts, is still big business

KEY UK IMPORTERS

Company	Tel.
Console Concepts	0782 207151
Zap Computers	0532 590077
Raven Games	081 663 6810
Telegames	0533 516861

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For more information, contact Roger Bennett, ELSPA, Suite 1, Haddonsacre, Station Road, Offenham, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 5LW. Tel: (44) (0)386 830642

FROM ***BMX SIMULATOR* (1986)** THROUGH TO ***PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS* (1994)**, IT'S MADE MONDAY MORNINGS SEEM A WHOLE LOT BETTER.

HAPPY 500TH

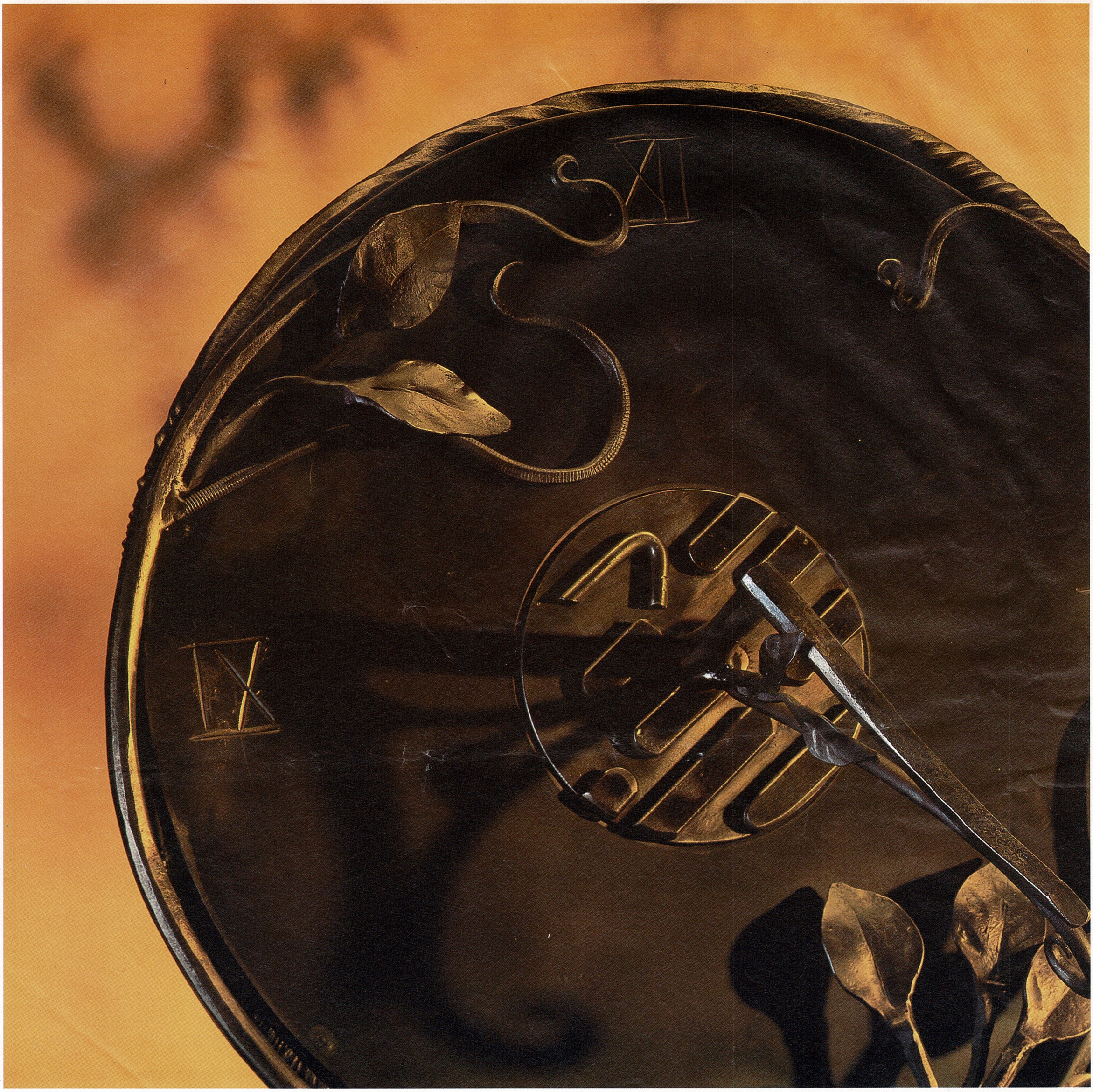
CTW

EUROPE'S MOST GORGEOUS ELECTRONIC GAMES TRADE PAPER (but not as funny as it used to be)

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SPOTLIGHT: VIDEO GAME IMPORTS

GLAD TO BE GREY

Continued from page 21

tridges being piracy free, these devices were becoming a common sight in kids' bedrooms everywhere. This hit sales badly — more so than Sega and Nintendo are ever likely to admit.

But then our almighty bulldog pound became more of a whimpering puppy of a currency against the dollar and yen. If this was a masterplan by Sega and Nintendo to wipe out the importers it very nearly worked. Games prices steadily rose making the official carts seem better value.

All this aside though, one of the main reasons for the decline of the import is protection. Sega and Nintendo's attempts to block out the importers has also led to a whole new industry. They put in lock-out chips to protect their games, someone comes out with an adapter to get past it.

Datel, for one, must be rubbing its hands with glee. Literally within days of a game becoming available on import, these guys can come up with a way past the protection. How long is it going to be before someone gets seriously hurt when their stack of adapters comes toppling out of their SNES on top of them? Adapters are big business, and they're just about keeping the importers alive.

Review to a kill

Naturally, thanks to globalisation of the market and all that, more and more titles are being licensed and brought to these shores. But this often leads to no end of problems for the software publisher.

Firstly, while Company X is busy translating the game into English and building its marketing strategies, the magazines are busy trying to beat each other to get the game on import. Of course, heartbreaking pleas to editors might put the magazines off for a while but sooner or later the software firms find their plans blown right out of the water. This means that by the time they start hawking their game round the mags all they come across is the old, 'No thanks, we reviewed this months ago on import, we're not going to do it again'.

Whilst several firms still have a useful business bringing carts into the UK (and software publishers still get their knickers into one hell of mess when mags write the reviews) importing, as whole, has waned somewhat in the past couple of years.

So, with so many companies going to the wall in that period, does it mean that Sega and Nintendo have finally won the battle?

The simple answer is no.

Sure, they've got rid of the small timers and cowboys but that's just doing the bigger companies a favour. Companies like Console Concepts have been around for years, and are planning to stay around for a few more yet. While these players are the first to admit that things have been going through a bad patch lately, they are positively rubbing their hands with glee over the thought of the next year.

Sega and Nintendo are due to lose their monopoly on the games market soon. Companies like Atari, Sony, 3DO and NEC are all launching new machines. Best of all (for the importers) they're all delaying the UK launch (and in the case of NEC, no one is sure if it'll launch at all over here).

As far as the importers can tell, it's time to clean up again. Enquiries for the PS-X are running at an amazing rate. Everyone wants to get *Alien Vs Predator* and *Doom* for the Jaguar, 3DO software is speeding up nicely. And, of course, Nintendo and Sega will no doubt manage to avoid launching their machines simultaneously worldwide, undoing all the work they've done in the past to wipe the importers out.

To put it in plain and simple English, there is no way the import scene will die out and if the truth was to come out you would find that Sega and Nintendo, for all their shouting, don't want it to.

The die hard gamers who don't object to paying up to twice as much for their games just to get them early do a great PR job. They're the ones who create the interest for the big titles early. They're the earliest of early adopters, absolute game fanatics.

Then the magazines spread the word and by the time the game appears officially the hype is at fever pitch. It's like having a homegrown test market without having to pay for it. If a game bombs on import, a firm can better forecast its 'official' sales, or pull out of releasing it altogether.

With protection either beatable (Sega, Nintendo) or non-existent (Jaguar, 3DO), new formats, sterling ready to bounce back and worldwide simultaneous releases still an idle fancy, import is ready to return in a big, big way.

Now then. Can I interest you in a couple of PlayStation demos, direct from Japan? Send your cash to... □

THE EARNINGS OF BEING AN IMPORT



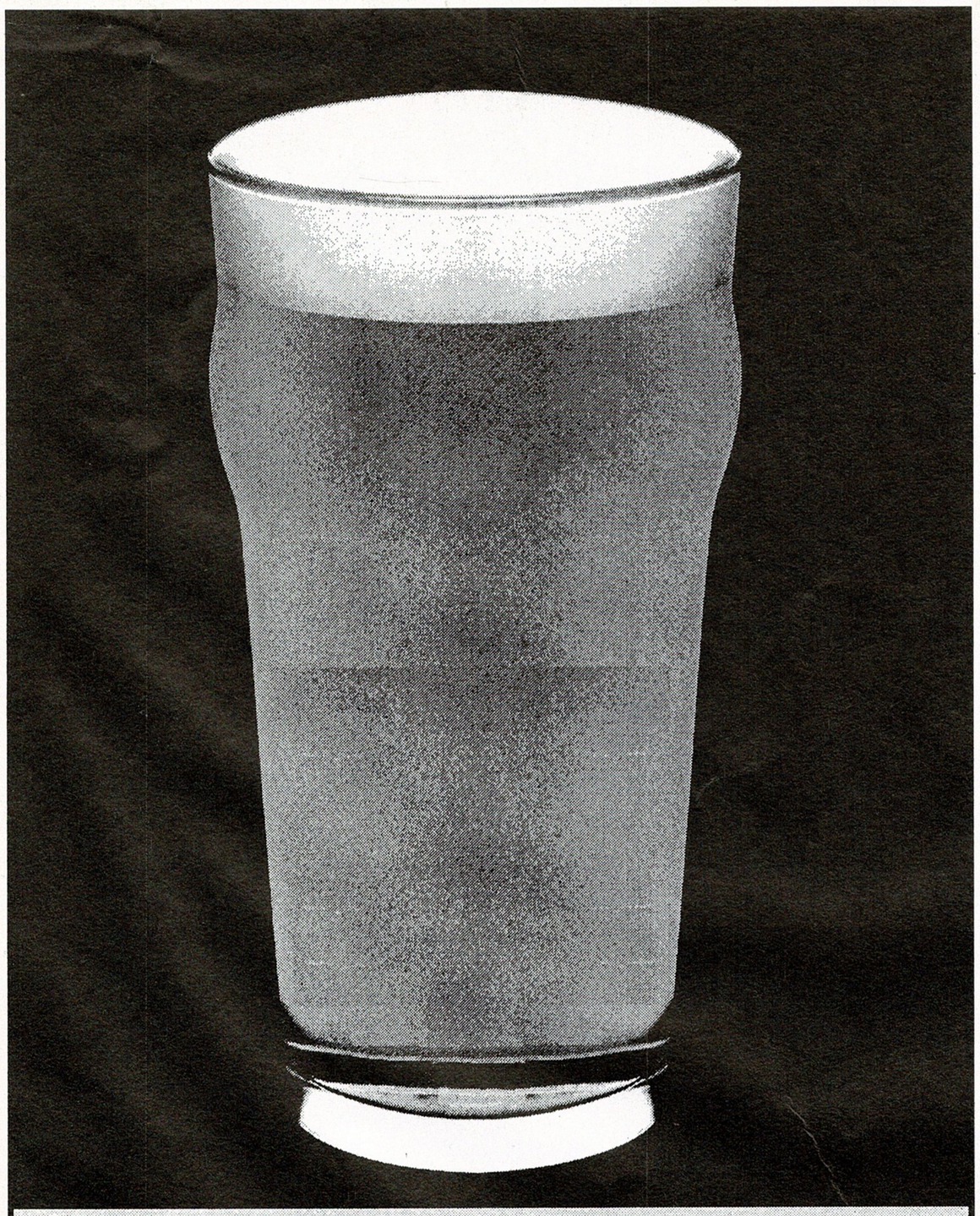
Case study: *Streetfighter 2*

Capcom's incredibly successful bruiser is a prime example of how the importers can cash in on a publisher's reluctance to organise a worldwide simultaneous release.

The first game in this series came out three years ago. The price was a staggering £110 but, amazingly enough, almost every one sold out. One supplier even had 200 copies stolen as they waited for clearance at customs.

Streetfighter 2 Turbo was another success. It didn't sell anywhere near as well as the first game, due to the fact that copiers were starting to get a grip. Sell-outs were still common though, even at the £110+ mark.

Super Streetfighter, the latest (and hopefully the last) in the series, has boosted sales of the latest adapters as it managed to lock out the old ones. Prices were still ridiculously high, but as news filtered through that Nintendo was deliberating over any official release 'sold-out' signs started appearing again.



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Electronic Arts,
established in Europe since 1983,
would like to congratulate
CTW on their 500th Edition.

CentreGold plc and its subsidiaries, CentreSoft, PDQ, U.S.Gold and ISM send their congratulations to all at CTW who have promoted the industry in the last 10 years.

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THE CIARAN BRENNAN COLUMN

INDEPENDENTS EN VOGUE

Fashions and trends have a funny habit of coming and going, and then coming back again. But one of the strangest at the moment, says CIARAN BRENNAN, is the industry's re-discovery of specialist retailers...

"For an idea ever to be fashionable is ominous, since it must afterwards be old-fashioned."
George Santayana, US philosopher

It's not that often that I remember a particular cartoon from a newspaper, but for some reason there's one that's stuck in my pea-sized brain for years. So, in an attempt to exorcise it forever, I'm going to share it with you.

Picture the scene. A shabby-looking old man in a string vest is sitting in front of the TV reading the newspaper. He turns to his equally shabby wife and says, "I'm not sure, Mavis, but I think there's a cult springing up around me".

There, am I glad I got that off my chest? Okay, so it's not particularly funny, but it does (in a vague and roundabout sort of way) lead me quickly along to this week's topic, which is... the current and inexplicably elevated status of the independent retailer.

Not that I would suggest for a minute that independent retailers should not enjoy an elevated status within the business (some of my best friends... etc.) but it just seems a little strange that after the best part of three years in the wilderness, indies are suddenly being welcomed back into the fold like a group of prodigal children.

Nor am I suggesting that there's anything novel about anything moving in or out of fashion. After all, flared trousers have been making comebacks since 1990, and even Tottenham Hotspur has suddenly become glamorous all over (even if this has come about through the rather unlikely act of signing an elderly German acrobat).

No, what I find odd is that, out of the blue, the world and his mother have decided that the independent retail network is, after all, the place to break new product.

Some of us, of course, have always known this, but now that we've been joined by such notables as Atari, 3DO and even the mighty Philips, maybe we'll be taken a little bit more seriously from now on.

Special addition

Of course, there might be a few cynics out there who will argue that this sudden re-awakening of interest in the interactive entertainment market's equivalent of the corner shop has only come about because of the complete indifference of the major chains, but this we'll dismiss as churlishness and folly.

No. These people are genuinely interested in the independents because they can do a better job of explaining the features and benefits of a new and untried piece of hardware (or, indeed, software) than some semi-interested, part-time employee of a multi-product superstore.

Or something.

Anyhow, who cares why these publishing giants are interested in your shop? Isn't it enough that they are interested? Shouldn't you roll out the red carpet and welcome them onto your premises with open arms and pre-cleared shelf space?

Of course you should. But while you're doing all of this, take care to remember the harsh lessons of recent history.

It may be an exciting and fulfilling life being on the cutting edge, being a pioneering 'early adopter' type who's willing to take a few risks and reap a few rewards as a consequence. But just remember, as soon as the market becomes 'mass' once again, you'll suddenly find that you're about as fashionable as a Bros record.

I just thought that I'd mention it.

Whatever happened to?

As *CTW* is 500 issues old, I thought I'd join in with the current wave of trade paper nostalgia by looking back over my own fond memories of everyone's favourite trade paper. But to be perfectly frank, I didn't exactly come up with a great deal.

The problem is that I remember this paper when it was truly great (in the Cecil B de Mille meaning of the word) when it was staffed by fearless lions and edited by a larger-than-life patriarch of an editor who was as wise and talented as he was pleasing on the eye (not like the current incumbent, it must be said).

Come to think of it, whatever did happen to that once great man? Surely he couldn't have thrown it all away in favour of some shallow and ultimately unsatisfying pursuit of filthy lucre, could he? □

SPEAKEASY

Yes, we're the great pretenders

Keith Smith (*'Fighting fit, and proud of it' — CTW August 8th*) found Arron Rouse's preceding article on violence in games alarming, but naive. However, if anyone's naive, surely it's your regular correspondent from Cambridge.

Unfortunately, I suspect that he represents the majority view within our industry. Let's face it, when we're raking it in we're too blasé to worry about moral issues; when times are hard we can't afford morality. Either way, the tendency is to deny that people can be adversely affected by playing games.

Consider the moral dilemma faced (or ignored) by another, even bigger, industry — the cigarette industry. It took a long time to prove that smoking caused cancer, and even now there are a few people (most of whom, coincidentally, work in or for tobacco firms), who argue that the link is unproven.

One of the reasons it took so long to prove the link is that cancers develop over the long-term. You don't smoke your first packet of cigarettes then drop down dead.

Similarly, the cancers in society grow surreptitiously. It may be 5 or 10 years before it can be proved that violence in games directly causes violence in society, but by then the damage will have been done.

A key problem is that in the 20th century, industrial and social change has occurred more rapidly than ever before. Instead of changes occurring gradually across generations, major changes are occurring within generations, and society is unable to respond sufficiently quickly to the challenges that this represents.

We in the games industry are ideally placed to shape the way in which interactive entertainment develops and influences both the present and future generations. But are we able to consider the arguments sufficiently objectively to make a reasoned and responsible judgement?

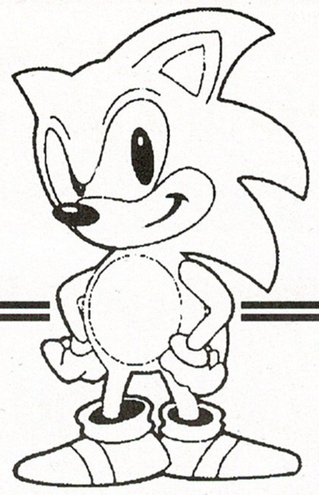
I wonder.

Peter Calver
Audiogenic
Wealdstone

— And, of course, our own judgement regarding whether or not that ancient-sounding word 'morality' comes into play with leisure software cannot be made in isolation. 'If it's good enough for the movies etc.' goes the argument.

Perhaps the software bosses will learn the hard way, when the disenfranchised youth march on their mansions with a bewildering array of weapons and carefully rehearsed death moves.

Or perhaps, like The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers, it's all harmless escapism...with added blood, of course.



Sega is looking for enthusiastic developers to help build games for the North American and European markets. Our particular desire is to meet with programmers and small development teams, that is, the people who actually do the work.

We'll be holding meetings in the Sega area at the Design Centre during the ECTS on 4, 5 and 6 September.

Designers and developers looking to build the next hit on the Game Gear, Genesis, 32X, Sega CD or Saturn are invited to stop by to discuss these opportunities.

If you have relevant experience and a passion for games, we should be talking.

Interested parties should contact one of the people listed below for an appointment.

Mike Brogan
Dir. of Development
Sega of Europe
081 995 3399
081 996 4499 (fax)

Judith Nybo
Sega of America
0101 415 802 3927
0101 415 802 3963 (fax)

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CHARTS COMPILED BY GALLUP

ELSPA — European Leisure Software Publishers Association Ltd

WEEK ENDING July 30th 1994

ALL FORMATS TOP 30 — COMPUTER GAMES

RANK TW	LW	TITLE	LABEL	FORMATS
1	14	FRONTIER: ELITE 2	GAMETEK	AG, PC, ST
2	2	TIE FIGHTER	LUCASARTS	PC
3	1	INT. SENSIBLE SOCCER	RENEGADE	AG, PC, ST
4	7	FIFA INT. SOCCER	ELECTRONIC ARTS	PC
5	—	LEMMINGS	PSYGNOSIS	AG, PC, ST, AR
6	3	TACTICAL MANAGER	BLACK LEGEND	AG, PC; ST
7	5	THEME PARK	ELECTRONIC ARTS	PC
8	6	PREMIER MANAGER 2	GREMLIN	AG, PC, ST
9	9	SIM CITY 2000	MAXIS	AP, PC
10	—	ON THE BALL: W'CUP ED	ASCON SPORTS	AA, AG, PC
11	15	G GOOCH W'CLASS CRICKET	AUDIOGENIC	AG, PC, ST
12	10	CANNON FODDER	VIRGIN	AG, PC, ST
13	11	JURASSIC PARK	OCEAN	AA, AG, PC
14	4	KICK OFF 3	ANCO	AA, AG, PC
15	12	THE SETTLERS	BLUE BYTE	AG, PC
16	17	WORLD CUP YEAR 94	EMPIRE	AG, PC
17	16	X-WING	US GOLD	PC
18	13	WORLD CUP USA '94	US GOLD	PC, AG
19	—	GENESIA	MINDSCAPE	AG, PC
20	20	K240	GREMLIN	AG
21	18	A-TRAIN	HIT SQUAD/OCEAN	AG, PC
22	8	SENSIBLE SOCCER 92/93	RENEGADE	AG, PC, ST
23	—	BRUTAL FOOTBALL 94 ED	MILLENNIUM	AG
24	24	TFX	OCEAN	PC
25	19	EMPIRE SOCCER	EMPIRE	AG, PC
26	40	RYDER CUP GOLF	OCEAN	AA, PC
27	23	BENEATH A STEEL SKY	VIRGIN	AG, PC
28	25	INDY CAR RACING	VIRGIN	PC
29	22	STARLORD	MICROPROSE	AG, PC
30	33	CHAM'SHIP MANAGER 93	DOMARK	AG, PC, ST

ALL FORMATS TOP 30 — VIDEO GAMES

RANK TW	LW	TITLE	LABEL	FORMATS
1	1	FIFA INT. SOCCER	EA/OCEAN	MD, SN
2	2	SUPER MARIO LAND 3	NINTENDO	GA
3	4	WORLD CUP USA '94	US GOLD	GG, MD, SG, SN, GA
4	5	SUPER METROID	NINTENDO	SN
5	7	COOL SPOT	VIRGIN	GG, MD, SG, SN, GA
6	8	STREETS OF RAGE 3	SEGA	MD
7	26	ZOOL/JAMES POND 3	VARIOUS	MD
8	9	PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS	CODE MASTERS	MD
9	38	SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2	SEGA	GG, MD, SG
10	15	SENSIBLE SOCCER	RENEGADE/SONY	GA, GG, MD, SG, SN
11	10	STARWING	NINTENDO	SN
12	20	MICRO MACHINES	CODE MASTERS	GG, MD, NI, SG
13	—	SUPER MARIO LAND	NINTENDO	GA
14	12	JURASSIC PARK	OCEAN/SEGA	GA, GG, MD, NI, SG, SN
15	16	THE CHAOS ENGINE	MIRCOPROSE	MD, SN
16	23	JUNGLE BOOK	VIRGIN	GG, SG, GA
17	28	LEMMINGS	VARIOUS	GA, GG, LX, MD, NI, SG, SN
18	14	PGA EUROPEAN TOUR	ELECTRONIC ARTS	MD
19	22	SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3	SEGA	MD
20	—	SONIC THE HEDGEHOG	SEGA	GG, MD, SG
21	33	KIRBY'S PINBALL LAND	NINTENDO	GA
22	—	SONIC CHAOS	SEGA	GG, SG
23	13	NBA JAM	ARENA/ACCLAIM	GG, MD, SN
24	30	ROBOCOP V TERMINATOR	VIRGIN	GG, MD, SG
25	17	ALIEN 3	LJN/RENA	GA, GG, MD, NI, SN, SN
26	—	MICKEY MOUSE	NINTENDO/SEGA	GA, MD, SG
27	—	VIRTUAL RACING	SEGA	MD
28	19	MORTAL KOMBAT	ACCLAIM/ARENA	GA, GG, MD, SG, SN
29	—	SUPER MARIO KART	NINTENDO	SN
30	32	ALADDIN	SEGA/CAPCOM	GG, MD, SG, SN

FORMATS KEY: MD (Sega Mega Drive), SG (Sega Master System), GG (Sega Gamegear), MC (Sega Mega CD), PR (PC CD-ROM), CD (Amiga CD32), SN (Super Nintendo), NI (Nintendo Entertainment System), GA (Nintendo Gameboy), LX (Atari Lynx), CI (Philips CD-i), AG (Amiga 500/600), AA (Amiga 1200), CO (Commodore 64), PC (IBM PC-Compatible), AP (Apple Macintosh).

GALLUP SALES PANEL STRUCTURE — The Gallup figures above are based on retail sales recorded through Comet, Dixons, Currys, PC World, Future Zone, Game Ltd, John Menzies, Our Price, Virgin, WH Smith, Woolworths and independent specialist stores. A number of key chains, such as Boots, Argos and Toys R Us, do not currently supply sales information. Thus, companies who are particularly strong in such stores are understated.

All Gallup software charts are the copyright of ELSPA. The charts published weekly in *CTW* are extracts from 'CHARTALK' which is compiled in report form both weekly and monthly by Gallup on behalf of ELSPA. There are 25 charts in 'CHARTALK' covering all formats, price points and with market share statistics. 'CHARTALK' is available from the general secretary at ELSPA on 0386 830642/831223 — or write to him at Station Road, Offenham, Near Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 5LW.

CTW GAMES GUIDE

To ensure inclusion in *CTW Games Guide*, product details should be sent to *CTW Games Guide*, Troopers Yard, 23 Bancroft, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, England SG5 1JW — or fax us directly on 0462 442489...

Game of the week

Super Street Fighter II (Mega Drive) Sega

The kids are all on holiday (at last), the market was up 30 per cent last week (at last) and *Super Street Fighter II* is out on Friday. Sounds good, doesn't it?

But, it's a measure of how quiet the Mega Drive market has been over the past three months that there are such high expectations for what is, after all, yet another *Street Fighter* game. At £59.99 it is forty quid more than Sega's budget releases, launched just a week ago. Whilst it'll no doubt manage to sell well, don't expect another bonanza of Sonic 2 or Mortal Kombat proportions. For the moment, those days are over — whatever the product.

The specialist press has predictably lauded the game, with scores starting at 90 per cent (*Sega Pro*) and ending up a dragon punch away from 100 per cent (*Sega Magazine*, 96 per cent). But, some reviews have also queried whether £60 is good value for a few new *SF* characters and some extra special moves.

Sega is confident the game will do well and is backing the title with a sizeable marketing campaign. Highlights include TV ads, the first of which break on August 25th and 26th, plus spots on Atlantic 252 radio. Also available are oodles of bright and cheerful POS goodies, including posters, banners, badges and stickers.

Go on — stock it, you know you want to.

AUGUST

Title	Publisher	Style	Formats	£RRP	Release
Arcade Pool	Team 17	Spt	CD 32	14.99	Aug 15
Big Sea	Krisalis	Arc	PC	29.99	Aug 15
Bubble & Squeak	Audiogenic	Arc	Am 32	25.99	Aug 15
Formula One Team Man'	Krisalis	Spt	Am PC	29.99	Aug 15
Int. Tennis Open	Philips	Spt	Ci	39.99	Aug 15
Micro Machines	Codemasters	Arc	PC	29.99	Aug 15
Perfect General 2	Mirage	Str	PC	44.99	Aug 15
Rugby League T.S.M	Alternative	Spt	Am PC CD	24.99+	Aug 15
Uridium 2	Mindscape	Arc	32	24.99	Aug 15
Crime City	Impressions	RPG	Am PC	7.99+	Aug 16
Discovery	Impressions	RPG	Am PC	7.99+	Aug 16
Detroit	Impressions	Sim	Am	34.99	Aug 16
FIFA Soccer	EA	Spt	CD	39.99	Aug 16
Fort Apache	Impressions	RPG	Am PC	7.99+	Aug 16
Paladin 2	Impressions	RPG	Am PC	7.99+	Aug 16
Beneath A Steel Sky	Virgin	Sim	32	29.99	Aug 17
Summer Olympix	Microvalue	Spt	Am	25.99	Aug 17
Tie Break	Buzz	Spt	32	14.99	Aug 17
Blade Warrior	Zeppelin	Arc	CD	14.99	Aug 18
Ch'manager: end'season	Domark	Spt	PC ST	15.99	Aug 18
Alien Olympics	Ocean	Spt	GB	24.99	Aug 18
Darkseed	Cyberdreams	Arc	PC Am	15.99	Aug 18
Inferno	Ocean	Adv	32	29.99	Aug 18
Kid Chaos	Ocean	Arc	Am 32	25.99+	Aug 18
Match of the Day	Zeppelin	Spt	PC	19.99	Aug 18
Micro Machines	Ocean	Arc	GB	24.99	Aug 18
Smash Tennis	Virgin	Spt	SN	49.99	Aug 18
A.Dampier Ice Hockey	Merit Studios	Spt	PC	39.95	Aug 19
Animals	Mindscape	Arc	MC	39.99	Aug 19
Chaos Engine	Mindscape	Arc	PC	29.99	Aug 19
Fortress of Dr Radiaki	Merit Studios	Adv	CD PC	44.95	Aug 19
MegaRace	Mindscape	Arc	MC	39.99	Aug 19
Star Wars Chess	Mindscape	Str	MC	39.99	Aug 19
Super Street Fighter 2	Sega	Arc	MD	59.99	Aug 19
Complete Chess 15K/35K	Oxford Softworks	Str	Am	29.99+	Aug 20
Eagle Eye Myst: London	Electronic Arts	Adv	CD	39.99	Aug 23
Theme Park	Bullfrog/EA	Sim	Ma Ap Am	34.99+	Aug 23
Universe	Core	Str	Am PC CD 32	34.99+	Aug 23
Warplanes Vol 1	Mindscape	Ref	MP Ap	54.99	Aug 23
Wild Blue Yonder	MicroProse	Sim	CD Ap	49.99	Aug 24
Falcon Gold	MicroProse	Sim	CD	44.99	Aug 24
Alien Legacy	Sierra	Str	PC	39.99	Aug 26
Dampier Ice Hockey	Merit Studios	Spt	CD	44.95	Aug 26
Global Golf	Codemasters	Spt	GG	TBA	Aug 26
Sim Classics	Mindscape	Str	PC Am Ma	44.99	Aug 26
Wing Armada	EA/Origin	Sim	CD	TBA	Aug 28
Blues Brothers 2	Titus/Telstar	Arc	GB	24.99	Aug 29
Monster Max	Titus/Telstar	Arc	GB	29.99	Aug 29
11th Hour	Virgin	Adv	CD	59.99	Aug 31
Benefactor	Psygnosis	Arc	Am	25.99	End

CTW GAMES GUIDE KEY

Games Styles: Arcade (Arc), Simulation (Sim), Strategy (Str), Role Playing Game (RPG), Sport (Spt), Adventure (Adv), Compilation (Com).

Machine Formats: Mega Drive (MD), Game Gear (GG), Master System (MS), Mega CD (MC), Super Nintendo (SN), Gameboy (Ga), NES (Ni), CD (CD), Amiga (Am), CD32 (32), Acorn (Ac), Mac (Ma), Commodore 64 (64).
Please note: An addition sign (+) in the RRP column means that higher price points apply to different formats.

CTW EVENT CHECK

CTW Event Check welcomes details of any shows or conferences being planned for the leisure/low end business marketplace. Please address all correspondence to CTW EVENT CHECK, Troopers Yard, 23 Bancroft, Hitchin, Herts, SG5 1JW. Or fax us on 0462 442489.

SEPTEMBER
ECTS Autumn '94: September 4th-6th, London Design Centre, 081 742 2828
1994 VR User Show: September 13th-15th, London Novotel, 081 996 3632
Live '94: September 20th-25th, Earl's Court, 0891 500103
San Diego Computer Fair: September 22nd-25th, San Diego, USA, 0101 619 427 6626

OCTOBER
The BBC's Big Bash: October 6th-9th, NEC, Birmingham, 081 943 5000
Screen Entertainment 2000: October 20th-21st, Inter-Continental Hotel, London, 071 637 4383
Future Entertainment Show: October 26th-30th, Earls Court 2, London, 0225 442244

NOVEMBER
London Effects & Animation Festival: November 7th-10th, Wembley, 081 995 3632
Computer Graphics Expo: November 8th-10th, Wembley, 081 995 3632
PC North '94: November 11th-13th, G-MEX Centre, Manchester, 061 476 4169
World of Amiga Exhibition: November 18th-20th, Wembley Exhibition Centre, 0462 480024
Supergames: November 30th-December 4th, Paris, 010 331 42 00 33 05

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SPEAKEASY

Every Prose has its thorn

I am writing in reply to the letter from Mr. Wright of Software Emporium (*'Failure irate' — CTW August 1st*).

Two of our recent releases were specifically cited as in error and I will response specifically:

Gunship 2000 on A1200 was indeed shipped with a fault, due to a duplication error in one disk — although I must stress this was not a result of poor quality assurance from our games testing department. Replacement disks were available five working days after we were made aware of this problem.

Secondly, *Starlord* Amiga is compatible with the Amiga Plus (1 meg upgrade), as clearly stated on the compatibility label.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Wright cited MicroProse products as unreliable — I think many retailers and consumers would agree that we have a very good record for product quality and after sales support with our long established Customer Services Department offering technical advice and game tips free of charge.

This, together with a no quibble faulty returns policy to the trade, shows a commitment to our product, as well as our customers, both trade and consumer.

I do appreciate retailers' concerns on faulty product — given the increasing number of releases each month from so many publishing houses, individual instances do add up. For our part, MicroProse have released 50 SKUs over the last 12 months. One duplicating error in that period is not reason to suspect a downward trend in the quality of our product.

In the event of a post-testing problem, it would greatly help us to remedy the situation promptly if retailers would advise us as soon as they detect a fault. Our Customer Services Helpline is 0454 329510.

David Burton
UK sales manager
MicroProse
Chipping Sodbury

— Thanks for the response David. Any publisher that takes time out to explain itself to the High Street — its philosophies, procedures and, very occasionally, oversights — has to be commended. Retailers using the Helpline effectively can also keep things running as smooth as possible.

Viva Amiga

Over the past few weeks there has been considerable speculation surrounding Commodore UK.

It is a shame, therefore, that when there is some firm news of a positive nature you should print an article which is, to say the least, confusing. Please will you allow me to put the record straight?

I confirm that an Amiga exhibition with a firm retailing bias has been booked in November 1994. The name of the exhibition is The World of Amiga. The event takes place from November 18th-20th at the Wembley Exhibition Centre.

The price per square metre has yet to be confirmed, but will be significantly lower than any comparable event.

The results of our early sales efforts confirm the support for an event timed to meet the needs of the Christmas market.

We will keep you informed of developments. If any further information is required I can be contacted on 0462 480024.

Peter Brameld
Organiser
World of Amiga Exhibition
Letchworth

— Hopefully the future of the Amiga will have finally been resolved by the time World of Amiga comes around.

Let's hope the victor in the current tug-of-war for rights to the machine is committed to manufacturing and marketing it for some time to come. It's still the UK's favourite entry level home computer and, whilst its glory, glory days may have come to an end, it could still be an important High Street offering for a long time to come.

And whatever the machine's fate, the Wembley show will no doubt be of major benefit to Amiga users and trade alike.

Elsewhere in the Hitchin mafia

The first time I saw *CTW*, the headline was — as I remember — 'Sinclair Speaks' (*Issue 11*).

At this point I also met Tom Stock — a bloke in a very dodgy suit who smoked a lot.

Luckily for me, he decided to give me a job. A few days later I met another bloke in a tank top who was, I think, 23. This was Greg Ingham.

Several hundred companies all then seemed to go bust, and I remember being amazed when we made it to issue 50.

But *CTW* has reached 500. It's a corker!

The rest is, I suppose, history — except to say that Greg, I and Stuart never made anything up editorially, despite all the complaints, and there were a lot.

Congratulations to the whole team and long may it continue. And congratulations to Tom for improving his dress sense over the last 10 years, and to Stuart for his great work over the last few years.

Sycophancy is alive and well, and living in Hitchin.

Simon Harvey
Barrington Harvey
Hitchin

— Great letter. Funny how the complaints subsided after you left, Simon.

Sing a song of CTW

Ode to a newspaper on its 10th anniversary. Original lyrics by Julio Iglesias and Willie Nelson. Read to the harmony of *To All The Girls I've Loved Before...*

To all the games we've launched anew
And may I say there's quite a few
They found initial fame, time and time again
Through *CTW*

To all the ads that made us friends
After sixty score amends
From Gremlin, Vulcan, Kixx, with graphics or with pics
To all the ads that made us friends

(Chorus)
Deadlines are always Tuesday
But we need just one more day
Our designer's changed his mind
And Account Exec's away

To full page spreads that raised aplomb
PC, Amiga, CD-ROM
From *Leaderboard* to *Zool*, we've always kept our cool
Though the client's dropped a bomb

(Chorus)

Good rates are always guaranteed
In mono, trim or spot or bleed
Time Warner, Storm and US Gold
T.N.T. have biked with speed

To all the staff we send the best
Wit, charm and patience, they've been blessed
Lesley, Russell, Stuart
For them there's nothing to it
See y'all at ECTS

Lisa Gill
Camel Advertising & Marketing
Sheffield

— And we've never loved anyone more than you, Lisa.

ESSENTIAL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

CTW will be publishing its bi-annual guide to key companies in the home computing and video games market on Monday September 5th (Issue 503). To ensure that your company is included, please fax us on 0462 442489. The information should be headed 'ETN LISTING'. Also, please tell us whether your company should be listed under Software, Distribution, Hardware, Ancillary or Magazines. The deadline for inclusion is Monday August 22nd (be sure to give us your prefered fax number too, as if space allows, we'll run an Essential Fax Numbers page in the same issue).

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If you feel that the time is right for a career change or simply want more information, then give Darren Karp a call at the number below. All discussions will be dealt with in strict confidence.

We are an equal opportunity employer.

If you prefer you may send or fax your CV to :-

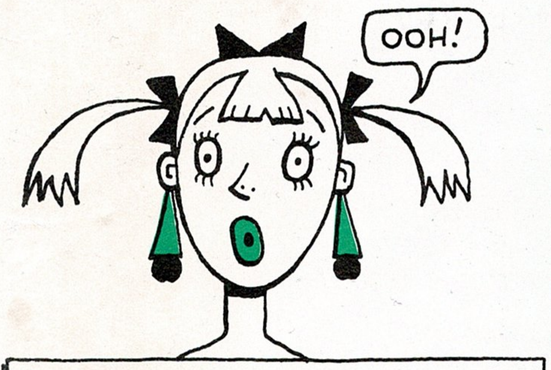
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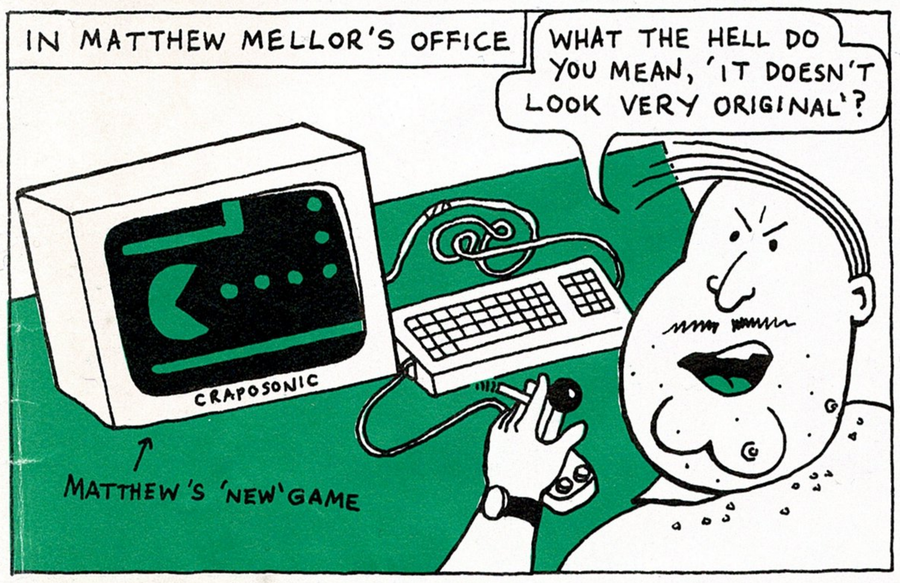
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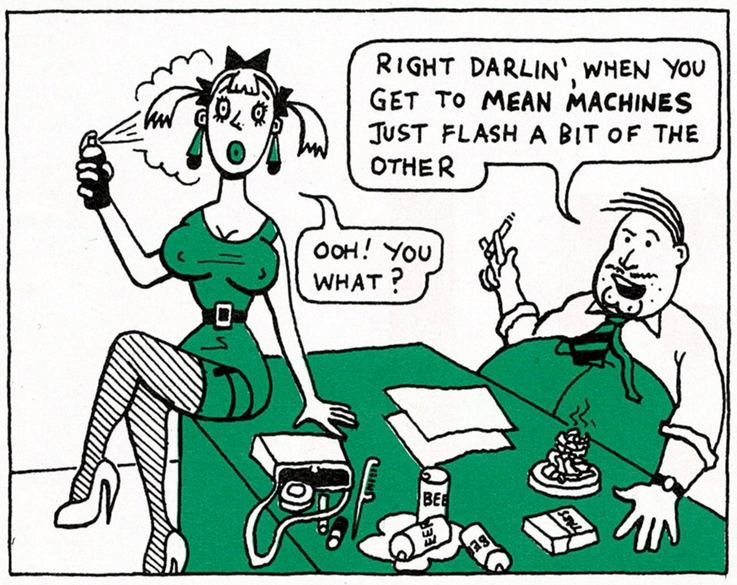
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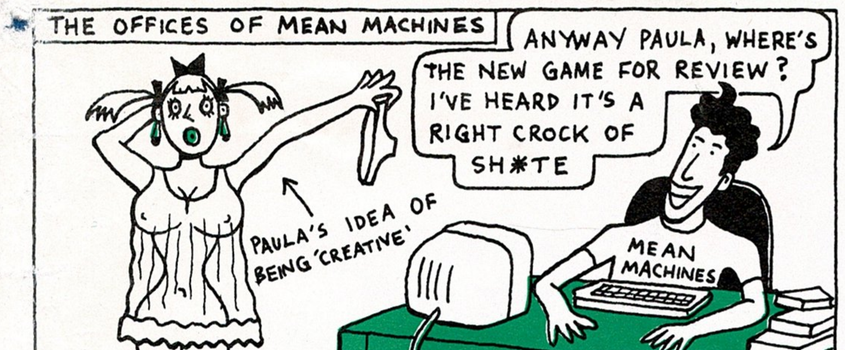


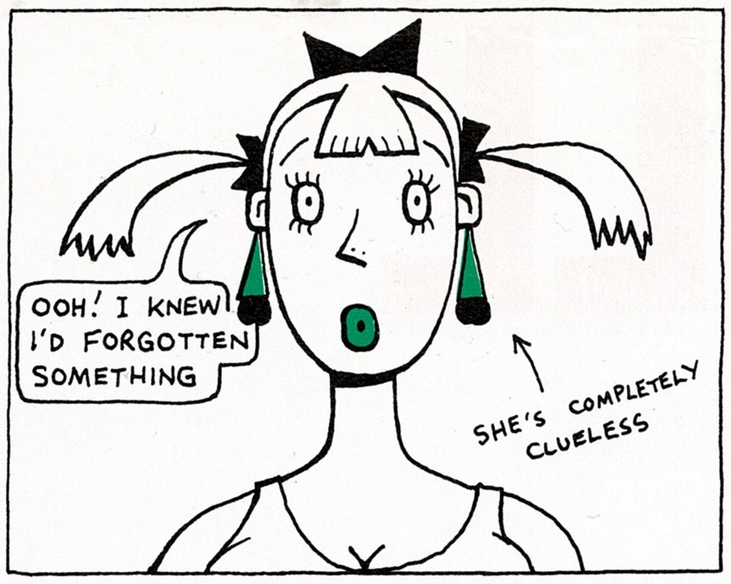


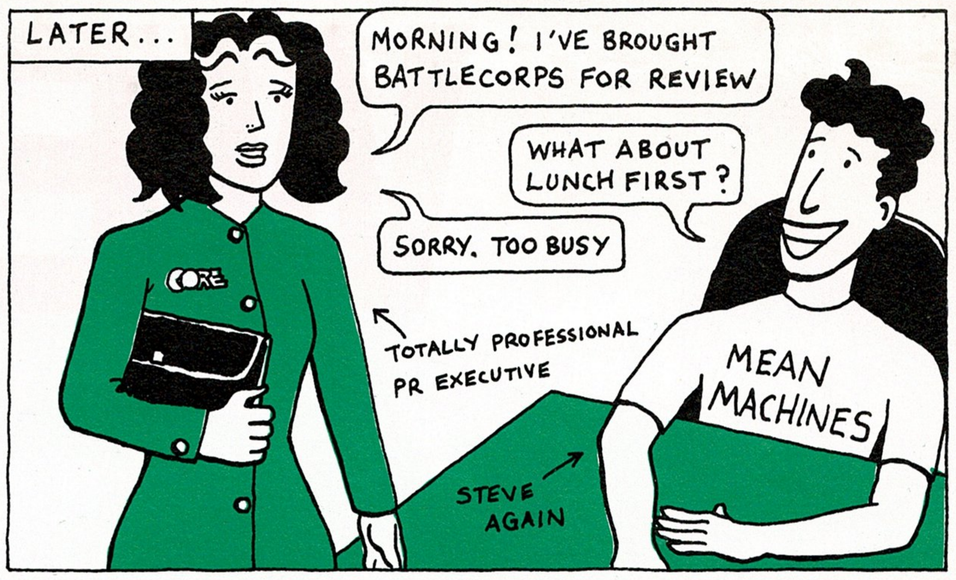














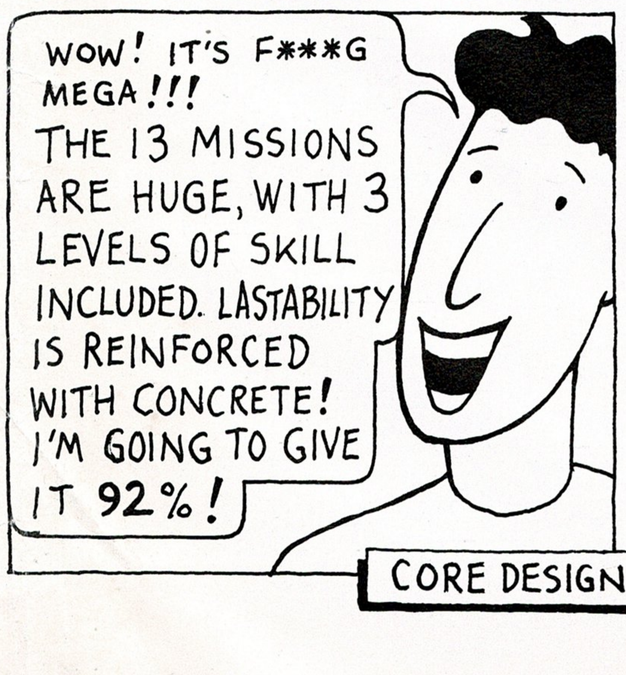


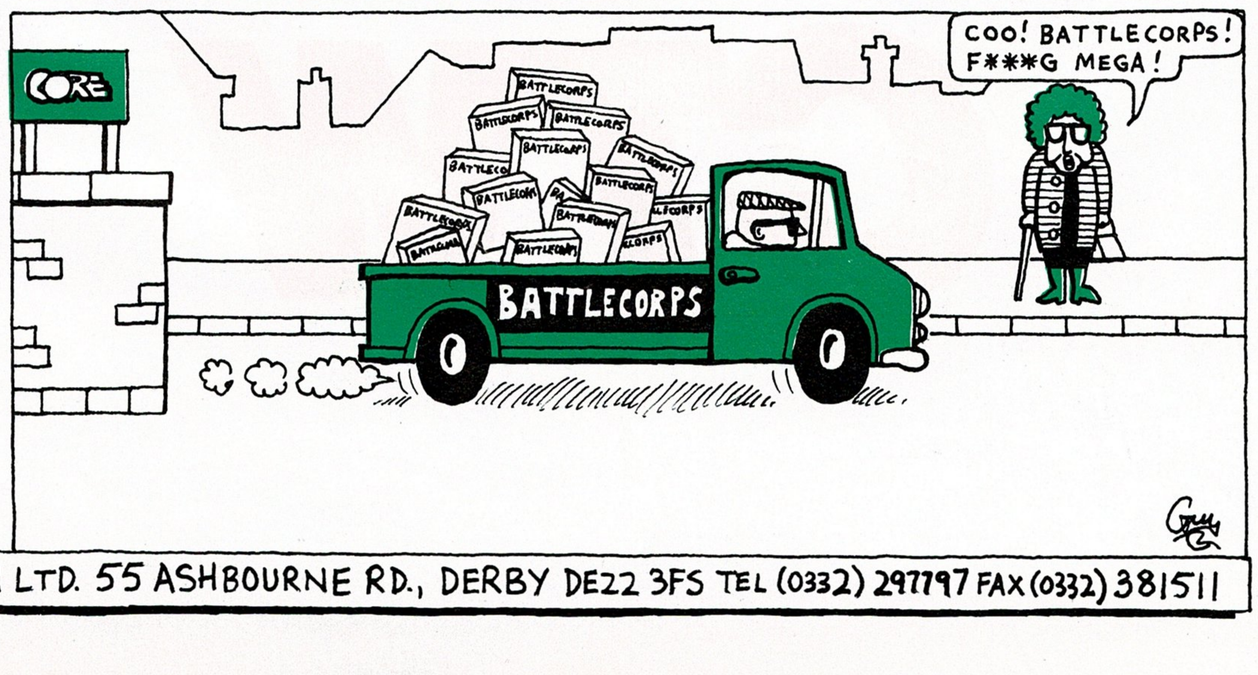
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