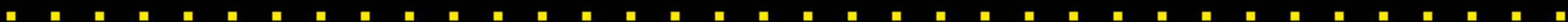




GAME DESIGN AND HISTORY

UNIVERSITY OF WALES
TRINITY ST DAVID





Game History: The 1980s

- Early 1980s
- Videogame Crash of 1983
- Timeline



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EARLY 1980'S



In 1980, **Atari** released *Space Invaders* for the VCS – starting a trend for home conversions of popular arcade games.

By this time, the company was making annual sales of over **\$2bn**, and net profits of \$400m.





As videogames became more popular, the name *Atari* became synonymous with them.

At ATARI®, we've not only developed the video games the world wants most, we've developed more and more of them.

And we plan to keep right on doing that.

After all, when you invest your time and money in a home video game, isn't it nice to know that the people who make the game are doing the same?



ATARI MAKES MORE HOME VIDEO GAMES THAN ANYONE.

HAVE YOU PLAYED ATARI® TODAY?



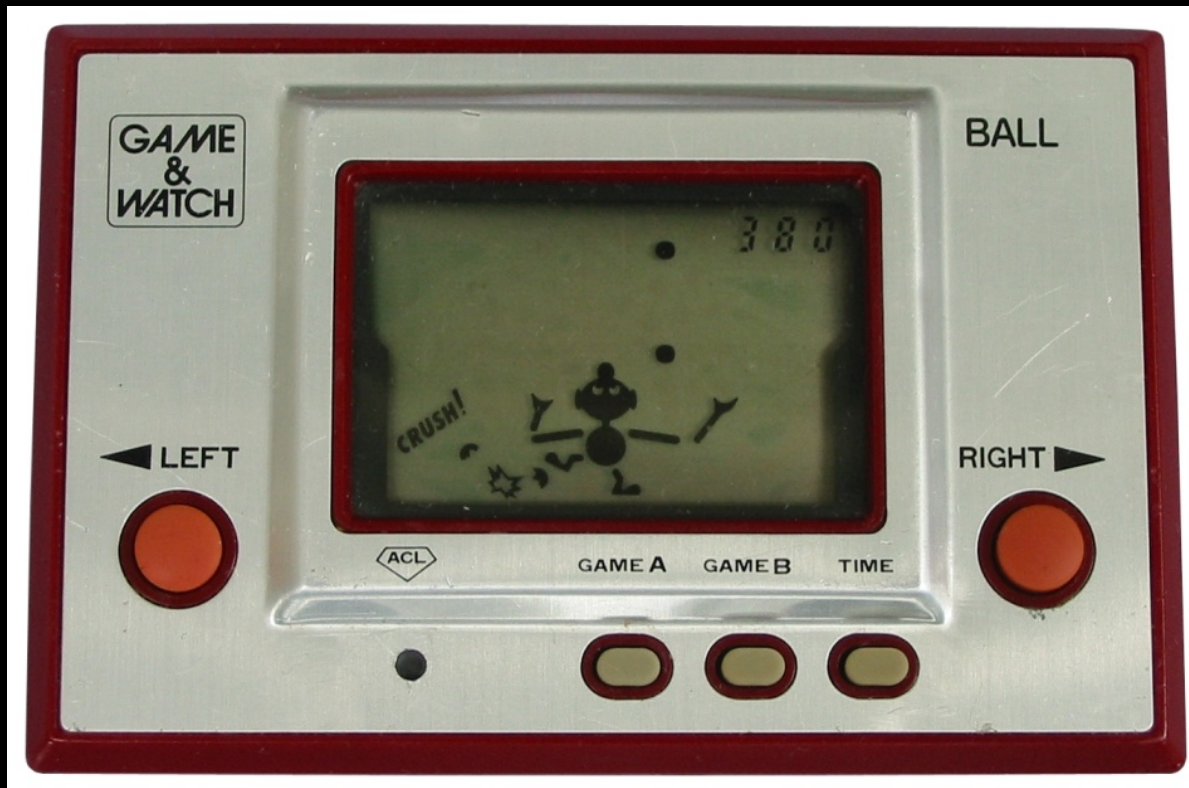


Nintendo's video game business began in the early '80s with the *Game and Watch* series pioneered by **Gunpei Yokoi** - who later created the *Game Boy* and *Virtual Boy*.





Game and Watch also introduced the standard directional pad (**D-pad**) layout still found on modern controllers.





At this time, **personal computers** were also growing in popularity but they were still too expensive for most people to purchase.

Bally's Professional Arcade was intended to be a game machine that could be upgraded to a computer.





APF MP-1000



The only computer with color, sound, user programmability and expandability at \$599.

A built-in, dual-track cassette tape deck with 1500 baud rate, for APF's digitally recorded, "saturated," tape programs. A built-in sound synthesizer. And two, built-in, game style controllers, with joysticks and numeric keypads.

When you want to go beyond APF's library of educational, home-and-personal management or entertainment programs... when you want to create your own programs... you can. The Imagination Machine is programmable in BASIC and 6800 machine language. The Imagination Machine

is also expandable. Just add our "Building Block", an optional, four-port expansion device, and you can hook up a printer, telephone modem, and additional memory cartridge or mini-floppy disk drive. For the name of your nearest Imagination Machine dealer call, TOLL FREE: 1-800-223-1264. (New York residents call: (212) 758-7550) or write: APF Electronics, Inc. 444 Madison Avenue, N.Y., N.Y. 10022.

\$599. Manufacturer's suggested retail price.

APF electronics inc.

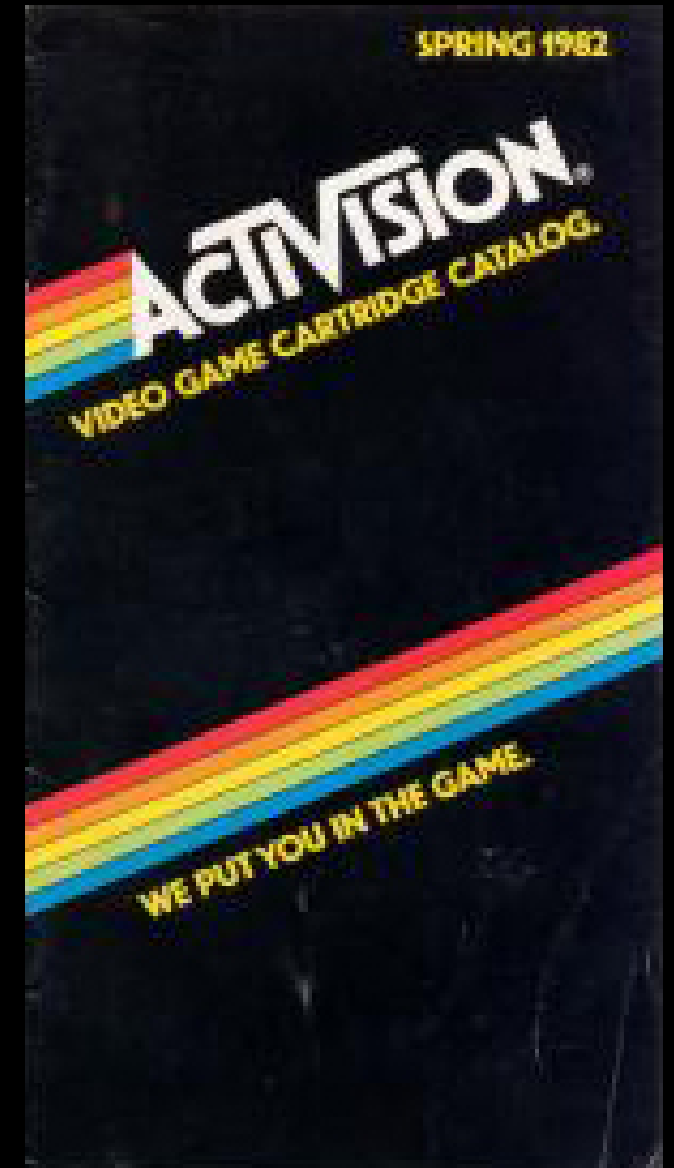
"YOUR LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME!"

Other machines, such as the **APF Electronics Imagination Machine** adopted similar approaches with upgradable systems.



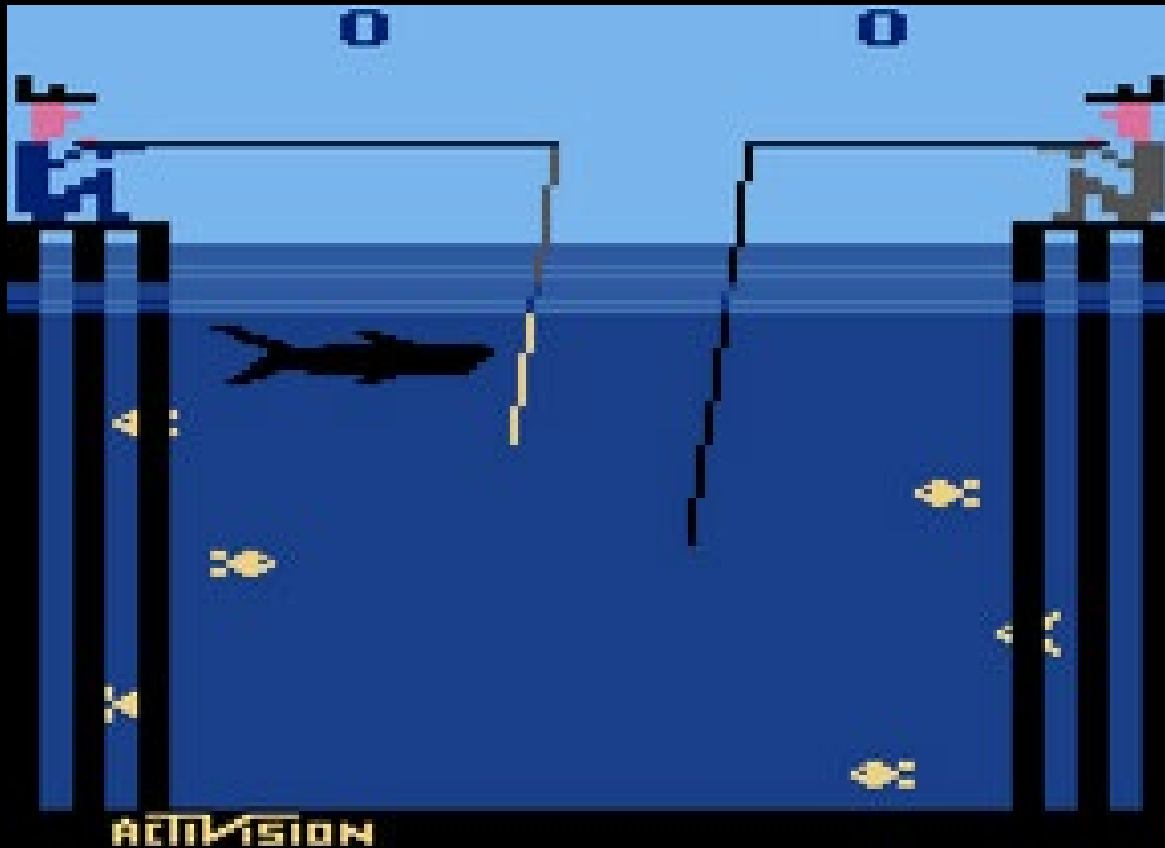
On April 25, 1980, an announcement was made about the formation of a new company called **Activision**.

Activision was started by four former disgruntled employees of Atari who were **unhappy about the lack of credit they were getting for their work.**





Activision intended to sell software for Atari's **VCS**, due to its established user base. Gamers always knew they were playing an Activision game because the **logo** was constantly displayed somewhere on the screen.





Mattel Electronics introduced the *Intellivision*, a competitor to the Atari VCS, to the US market in 1980.



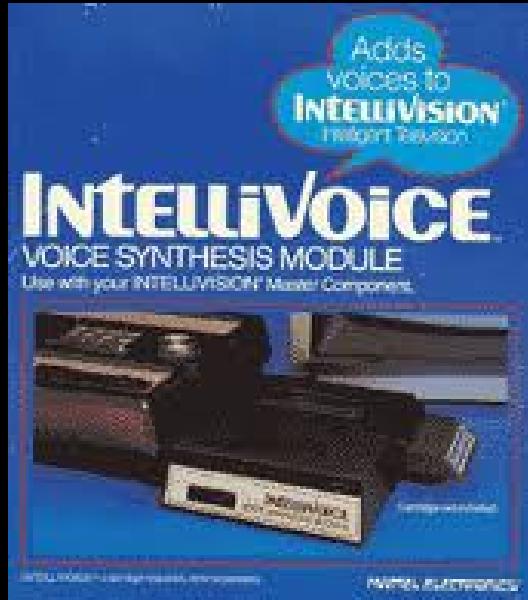


The *Intellivision* appealed to gamers because of its crisp graphics that seemed to be light years ahead of anything that Atari and Magnavox had produced.





Intellivoice Module



Intellivision with Intellivoice Module attached



Playcable – Videogame subscription service (1981)



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In 1982, **General Consumer Electronics** released the *Vectrex*.

This system differed from its competitors as it used its own monitor that displayed **hi-res vector images** — like many popular arcade titles at the time.





Like the original **Magnavox Odyssey**, The *Vectrex* used **screen overlays** to add colour to games.



Coleco released the *Colecovision* in July 1982.

Falling prices of technology meant that the console generated near-arcade quality images which were vastly superior to the **VCS**.

Coleco also unveiled an additional module that enabled *Colecovision* to play Atari VCS games!





GAME DESIGN AND HISTORY

EARLY 1980'S





To compete with newer and technologically superior rivals, **Atari** needed to produce a new console and the **Atari 5200** was released in 1982, priced at **\$250**.





Though reviewers were initially impressed with the 5200, the system's graphics were not as attractive as the *Colecovision* and the 5200's controller soon proved to be **very unpopular** amongst gamers.





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A legal battlefield



A legal battlefield

Atari vs Magnavox – copyright infringement (K.C Munchkin)





A legal battlefield

Atari vs Magnavox – copyright infringement (K.C Munchkin)

Magnavox vs Mattel – patent infringement





A legal battlefield

Atari vs Magnavox – copyright infringement (K.C Munchkin)

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Astrovision vs Atari & Commodore – copyright infringement





A legal battlefield

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Atari vs Commodore – joystick manufacturing





A legal battlefield

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Atari vs Activision – dispute over production of VCS games





A legal battlefield

Atari vs Magnavox – copyright infringement (K.C Munchkin)

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Atari vs Coleco – Expansion Module 1 (VCS converter)





A legal battlefield

Atari vs Magnavox – copyright infringement (K.C Munchkin)

Magnavox vs Mattel – patent infringement

Astrovision vs Atari & Commodore – copyright infringement

Atari vs Commodore – joystick manufacturing

Atari vs Activision – dispute over production of VCS games

Atari vs Coleco – Expansion Module 1 (VCS converter)

Coleco vs Atari – countersuit: antitrust laws



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THE VIDEOGAME CRASH
OF 1983



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- Increased competition from the introduction of home computers (including the **Commodore VIC-20** in 1981, and **Commodore 64** in 1982)



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All of these factors gave rise to the **US games industry crash of 1983**.



Poor home conversions of high profile titles such as *Pac-Man* and *ET*, the **overproduction** of these and other third party games led to a **huge fall in consumer confidence**, resulting in severe damage to the industry's reputation.





Atari, unable to sell the vast quantities of stock that had been produced, reportedly **dumped millions of unwanted games cartridges** in a landfill site in New Mexico.

City to Atari: 'E.T.' trash go home

By M.E. McQUIDDY
Daily News Staff Writer

The Alamogordo city commission is taking a strong stand against "extra-territorial" garbage, and will be considering an ordinance to limit the amount of out of area dumping in the sanitary landfill at its meeting tonight.

The ordinance has been proposed in the wake of the dumping of 11 semi-trailer truckloads of Atari computers, cartridges, and assorted parts from an El Paso warehouse in the dump since last Thursday.

Apparently BFI had told the city after being pressed on the issue, it was expecting three truckloads a week. However, no one is exactly sure how much trash will be expected before the operation is completed.

El Paso Atari officials apparently refused to confirm or deny the dumping, and referred any queries to California.

Bruce Enten of Atari in California said today Atari is sending scrap merchandise to the Alamogordo dump. "It is by-and-large inoperable stuff."

He explained sometimes people send back merchandise, which for one reason or another does not work.

Enten said the Atari plant in El Paso has shifted from manufacturing to recycling "scrap and defective merchandise from across the country. Conceivably, a tape sold in New York could turn up in Alamogordo."

That which cannot be fixed is destroyed.

"After we finish this operation, we will have to determine where we do it in the future. I won't tell you there may not be some of that stuff that's good in the items sent to Alamogordo, but most is not," Enten said. "The majority of the stuff is cartridges."

Atari has different procedures for disposal, sometimes recycling and sometimes destroying, but it needs to be done. "For instance, if the grocery has bad vegetables on a Sunday you might see cartons of the stuff out back. We've got to dispose of the stuff."

"This is the first time we've come into your area in New Mexico," he said.

Enten said he did not know how much Alamogordo would expect in the dump before the current

operation is completed.

"We did not ask the city manager to invoke the emergency clause," said commissioner Guy Gallaway. "We also didn't want to exclude the city manager being able to help the county or other communities within the county in the case of an emergency. But we don't want to be an industrial waste dump for El Paso."

BFI officials had said their rationale was that Atari was paying them from \$300-\$500 a truck to dispose of the trash.

City fathers wondered about the new trench at the dump. "It is mammoth," Gallaway said.

The ordinance will be up for first approval tonight.



This was **widely disputed** at the time, with Atari employees unwilling to confirm whether these reports were true or just a myth.

However, the rumours were confirmed in **April 2014** when the landfill site in New Mexico was excavated and Atari products were discovered that had been buried for over 30 years.





In 1983, Atari had lost \$536m, Mattel (maker of Intellivision) lost \$201m, and Activision around \$4m.

The ageing technology of consoles was being superseded by new, relatively inexpensive, and more flexible home computers such as the Commodore VIC-20, C64, Atari 400, and Sinclair ZX81.





These problems eventually led to the demise of virtually **every major company** – Mattel, Magnavox, Coleco, and even Atari – that had entered the home console market since its inception in the 1970s.

Atari VCS & 5200:



Fairchild Channel F II:



Mattel Intellivision:



GCE Vectrex:



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GAME OVER

INSERT COIN TO CONTINUE



- 1980 - Atari releases *Space Invaders* for the VCS. The practice of selling home versions of arcade hits is started.
- Renegade programmers fleeing from Atari create **Activision**, the first third-party game publisher.
- Minoru Arakawa opens **Nintendo of America**.
- 1981- Atari releases *Pac-Man* for the VCS.
- 1982 - Coleco releases the **Colecovision** games console.



1982 -

Atari wins lawsuit accusing Magnavox of infringing on its *Pac-Man* licence with *K.C. Munchkin*.

Atari releases *E.T.* for the VCS.

Activision releases *Pitfall* for the VCS.

Atari releases the 5200 game console.

General Consumer Electronics releases the *Vectrex*.

Warner stock drops 32 percent after announcements that Atari sales have not met predictions.



1983 -

Yu Suzuki Joins Sega.

Many software developers go out of business due to a glut of titles oversaturating the games market.

The games industry crashes – hundreds of millions of dollars in losses are reported throughout. Some hardware developers withdraw from the industry or go out of business entirely.



Hardware examples:



- Philips G7000 / Magnavox Odyssey II (1978)



Hardware examples:



- Mattel Intellivision (1980)



Hardware examples:



- Coleco Colecovision (1982)



Hardware examples:



- GCE Vectrex (1982)



Hardware examples:

- Sinclair ZX81 (1981)
- BBC Micro Model B



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