



GAME DESIGN AND HISTORY

UNIVERSITY OF WALES
TRINITY ST DAVID





PDF Video Links

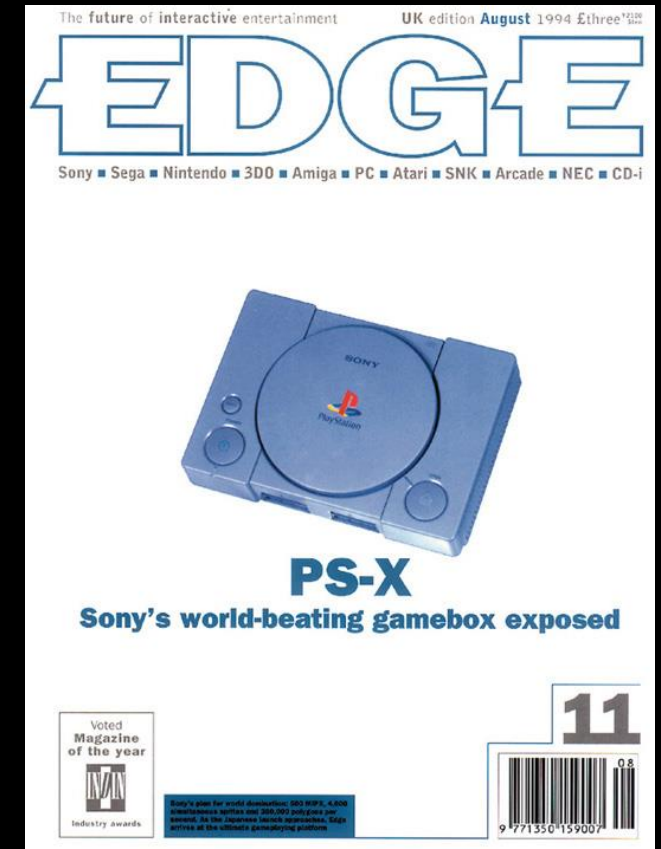


Look out for the icon above throughout these notes – clicking this on relevant slides will provide you with an online link to embedded videos.



Game History: Mid to late 90s

- The Playstation
- Sega Strikes Back
- Gunpei Yokoi's Virtual Boy
- An Apple Console
- Nintendo Returns
- PC Gaming – Late 90s
- Gotta Catch 'Em All
- Sega: Into Dreams



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THE PLAYSTATION

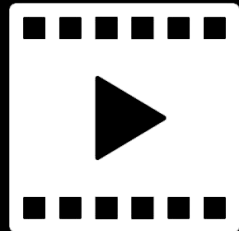


Sega and Nintendo's long-standing monopoly of the games market since the late 1980s was overturned by Sony's release of the *PlayStation* in 1994.





In Europe, the *PlayStation* also benefited from being marketed to a slightly more mature audience to broaden its appeal.

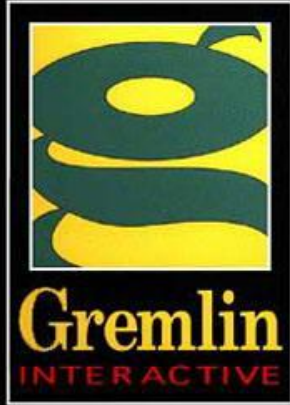




ELECTRONIC ARTS™



PSYGNOSIS™



In order to mount a serious challenge to Sega and Nintendo, Sony offered third party developers a **more favourable licensing agreement** to help reduce production and manufacturing costs.

namco

This helped to increase software support for the **PlayStation**.



ACTIVISION®

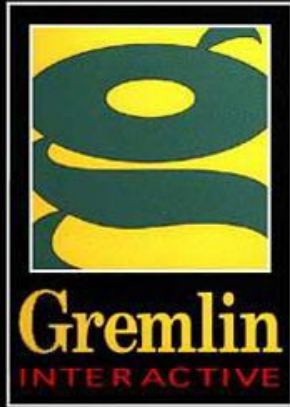




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These licensing agreements proved especially important for Sony since they did not initially have in-house, first-party software.

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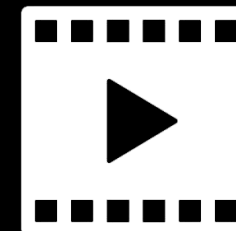
ACTIVISION®





Eventually, highly successful multi-million selling titles emerged for the *PlayStation*.

These games helped it to become the dominant platform in the market.





As momentum gathered for the PlayStation, **in-house titles** began to establish Sony as a formidable software company.

During the mid-to-late 1990s many successful game series such as *Gran Turismo*, *Crash Bandicoot* and *Wipeout* were released.



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SEGA STRIKES BACK

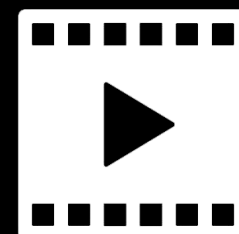


Following the highly successful *Mega Drive*, Sega followed up with the 32-bit **Saturn** in 1994. Although it received success in the east, the *Saturn* did not perform as well internationally.





SEGA™





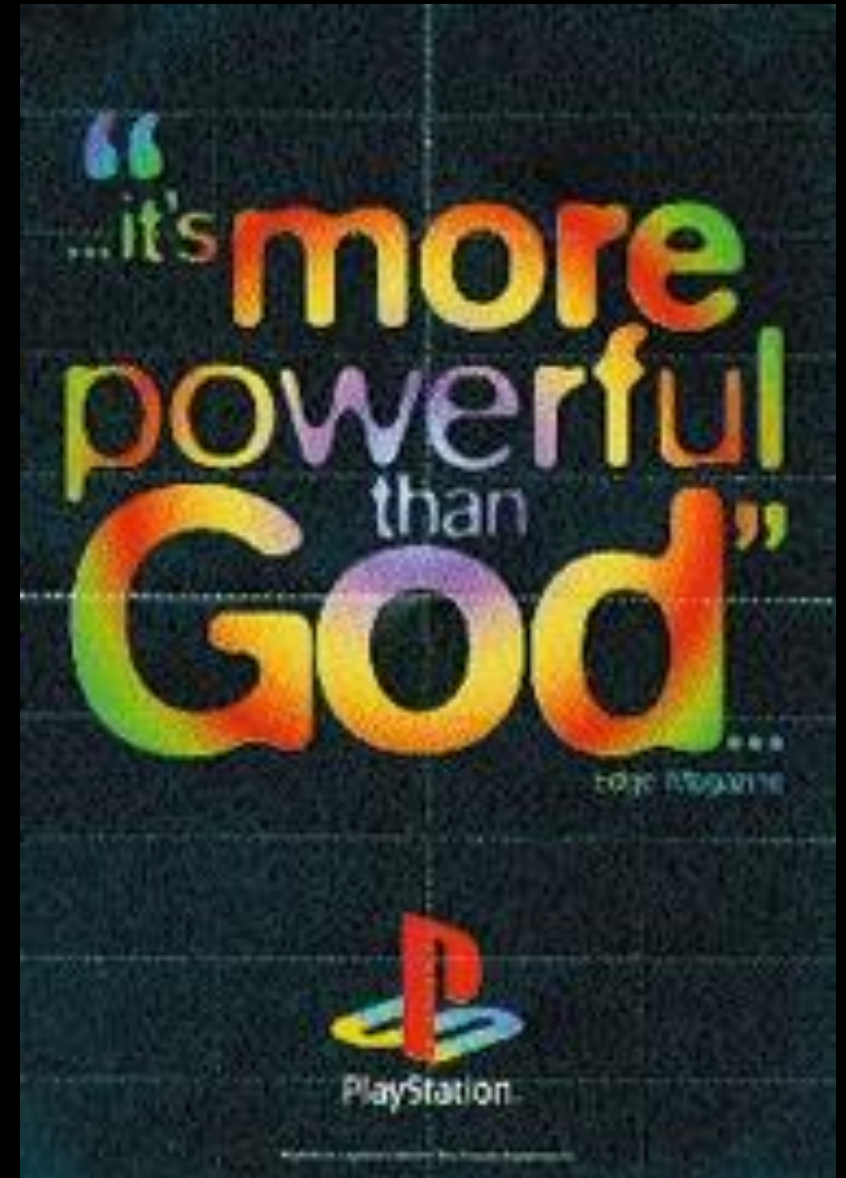
Sony's new venture into the games market with the PlayStation, which possessed superior 3D graphics as well as **retailing at around \$100 less than the Saturn**, also affected Sega's sales.





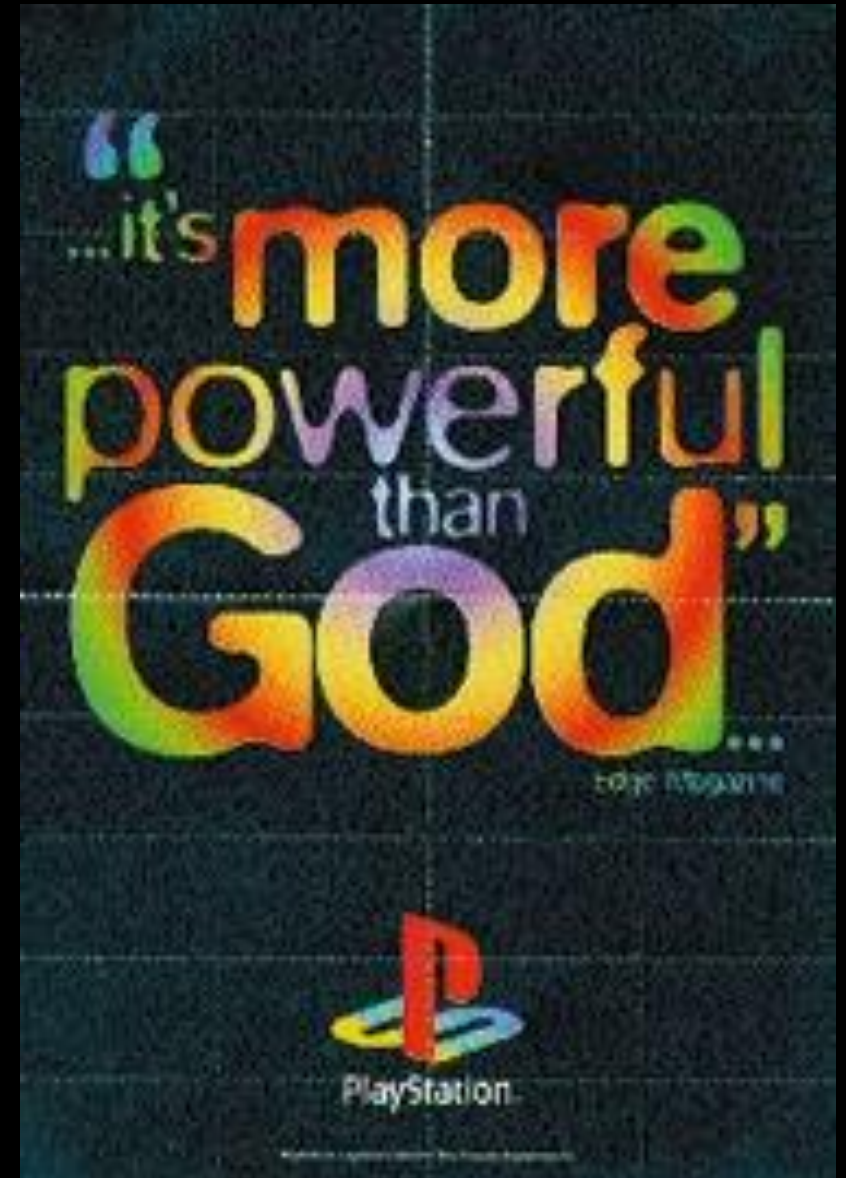
The *Saturn* was also considered to be much harder to develop for than the *PlayStation* due to the complexity of balancing two CPUs and six other processors.

Unfortunately, this also restricted *third party support* for the Saturn.



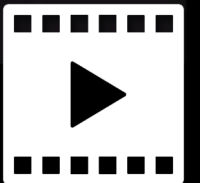


Coupled with an apparent inferiority in 3D capabilities and a relatively high price of around \$400, Sega's machine was quickly overtaken in western markets by the **PlayStation**.





In the east, however, the **Saturn** maintained a somewhat cult following for hardcore gamers, with titles such as *Radiant Silvergun*, *BorderDown*, and *Panzer Dragoon Saga* becoming extremely rare and desirable collectors' items.



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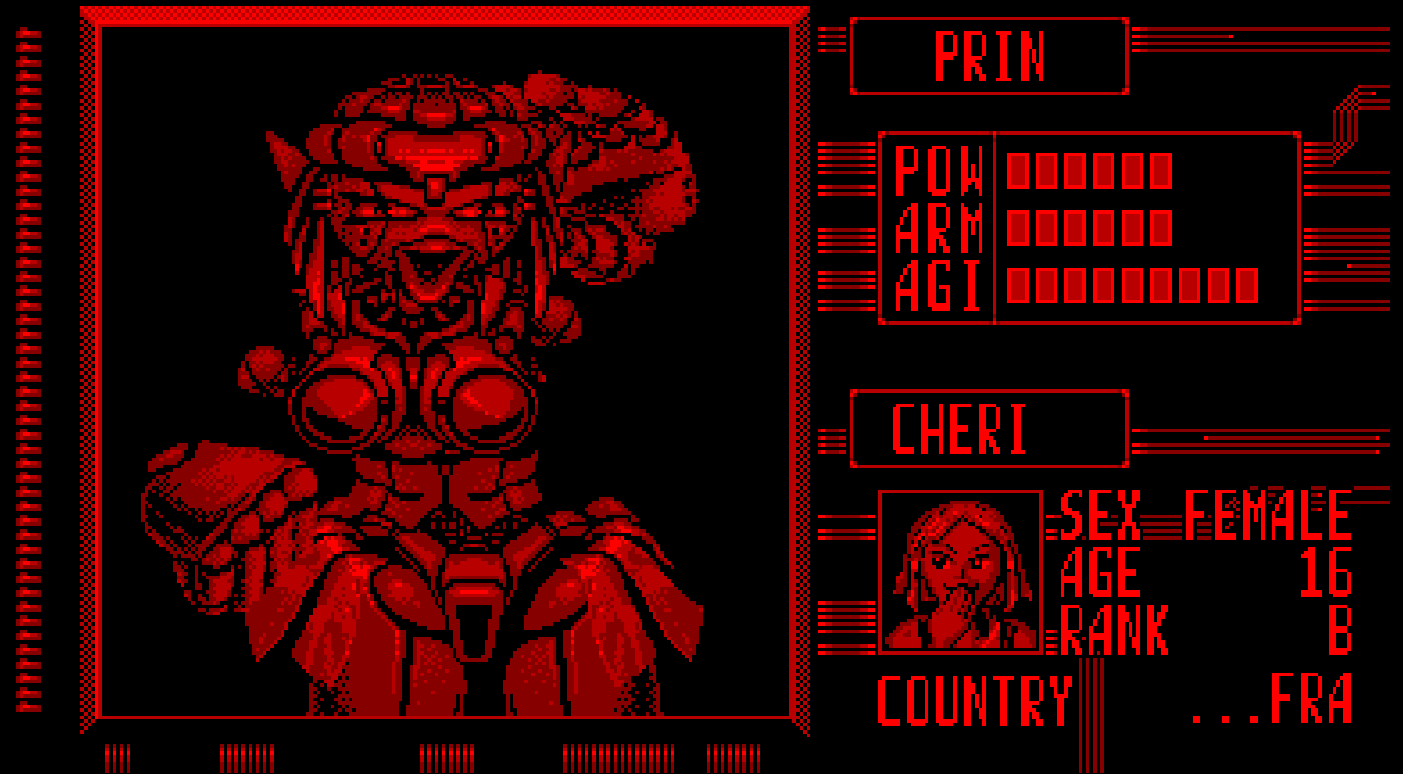
GUNPEI YOKOI'S
VIRTUAL BOY



GAME DESIGN AND HISTORY

GUNPEI YOKOI'S VIRTUAL BOY

In 1995, Nintendo released the *Virtual Boy*, spearheaded by **Gunpei Yokoi**, creator of the D-Pad design, Game and Watch, Game Boy, and helped to produce titles such as *Mario Bros*, *Donkey Kong*, and *Metroid*.





The **Virtual Boy** had an original release price of around **\$200** with games including *Mario Tennis*, *Telero Boxer*, and *Galactic Pinball*.

Not being released in Europe, importers were charging around **£200 - £300** in the UK.



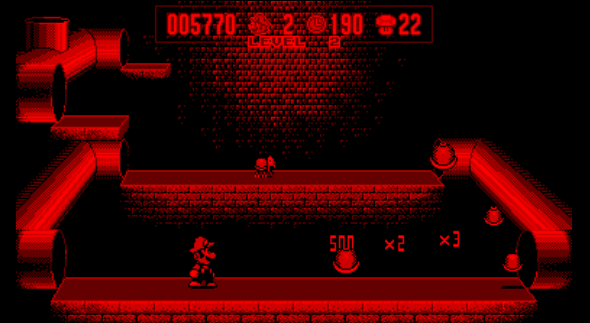
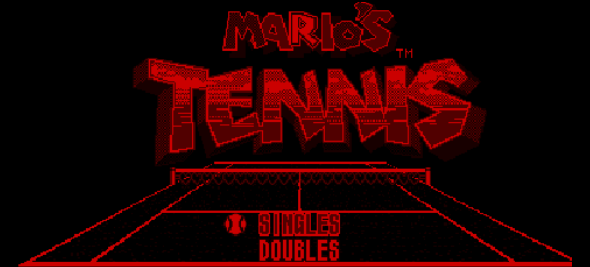


However, after a year the machine was heavily discounted and eventually discontinued.





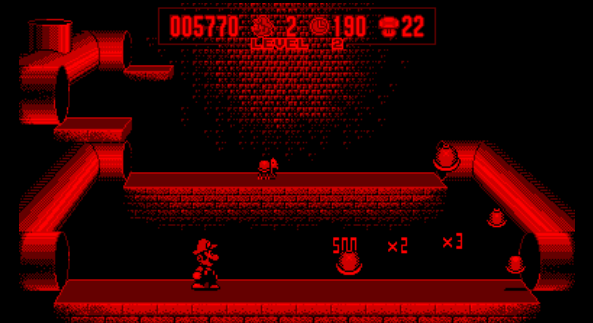
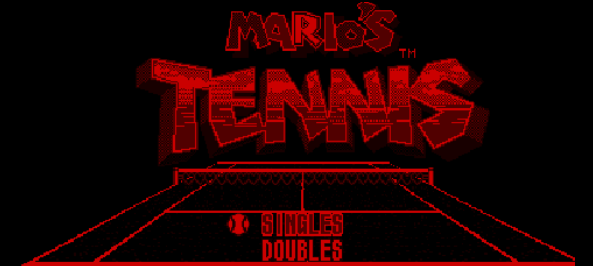
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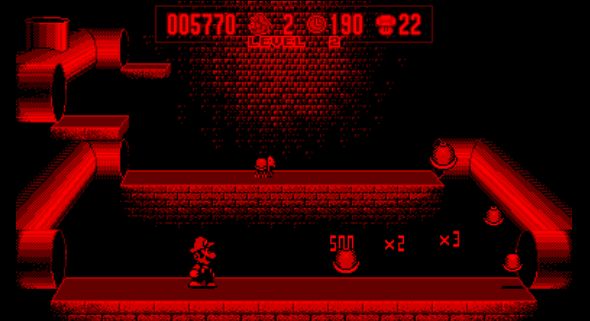
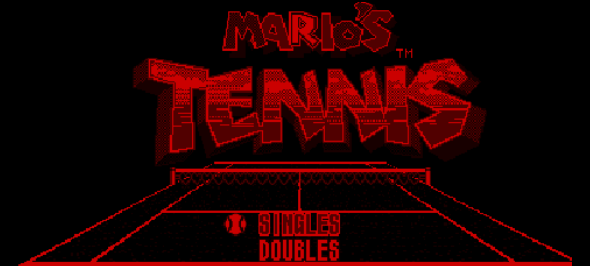
- High original retail price





The Virtual Boy is believed to have failed for **several reasons**:

- High original retail price
- The headset caused headaches and eyestrains, particularly with the rigid set-up



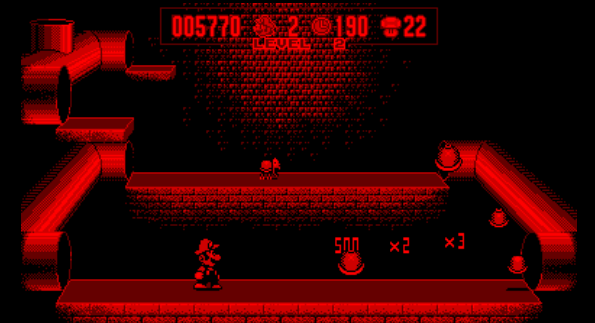


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- The lack of established and high-quality titles (only around 22 games were released)



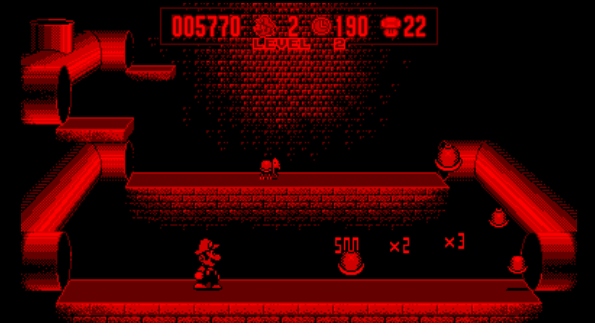
© 1995 Nintendo





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- High original retail price
- The headset caused headaches and eyestrains, particularly with the rigid set-up
- The lack of established and high-quality titles (only around 22 games were released)
- Lack of multiplayer and other players could not watch the game being played





Tragically, **Gunpei Yokoi** was killed in a car accident in 1997.

Yokoi suggested that toys and games do not necessarily require cutting edge technology - **novel and fun gameplay are more important.**

Game Boy inventor killed in car crash

Gunpei Yokoi, the inventor of the Game & Watch, the Game Boy and the Virtual Boy, has been killed in a car crash. Yokoi left Nintendo after the failure of the Virtual Boy, set up his own company, and was producing a pocket LCD 'snake' game.

Yokoi's death followed a minor accident in which he collided with the car in front. While inspecting the damage beside the road he was hit by a passing car, and died in hospital a couple of hours later.

While Yokoi left Nintendo under something of a cloud last year, it's his greatest invention, the Game Boy, that is currently keeping



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AN APPLE CONSOLE



Bandai released the Apple-developed *Pippin* in 1996 and pointed out that this new console could also **access the internet** and play multimedia CD-ROMs.

With the *Pippin*, Bandai hoped to **target households that wanted internet access** without the expense of getting a computer.

PIP
PIN





PIP
PIN

Unlike the *Playstation* and *Saturn*, the *Pippin* lacked a dedicated graphics chip.

The *Pippin* sold for \$648 on release – less than 100,000 were produced.



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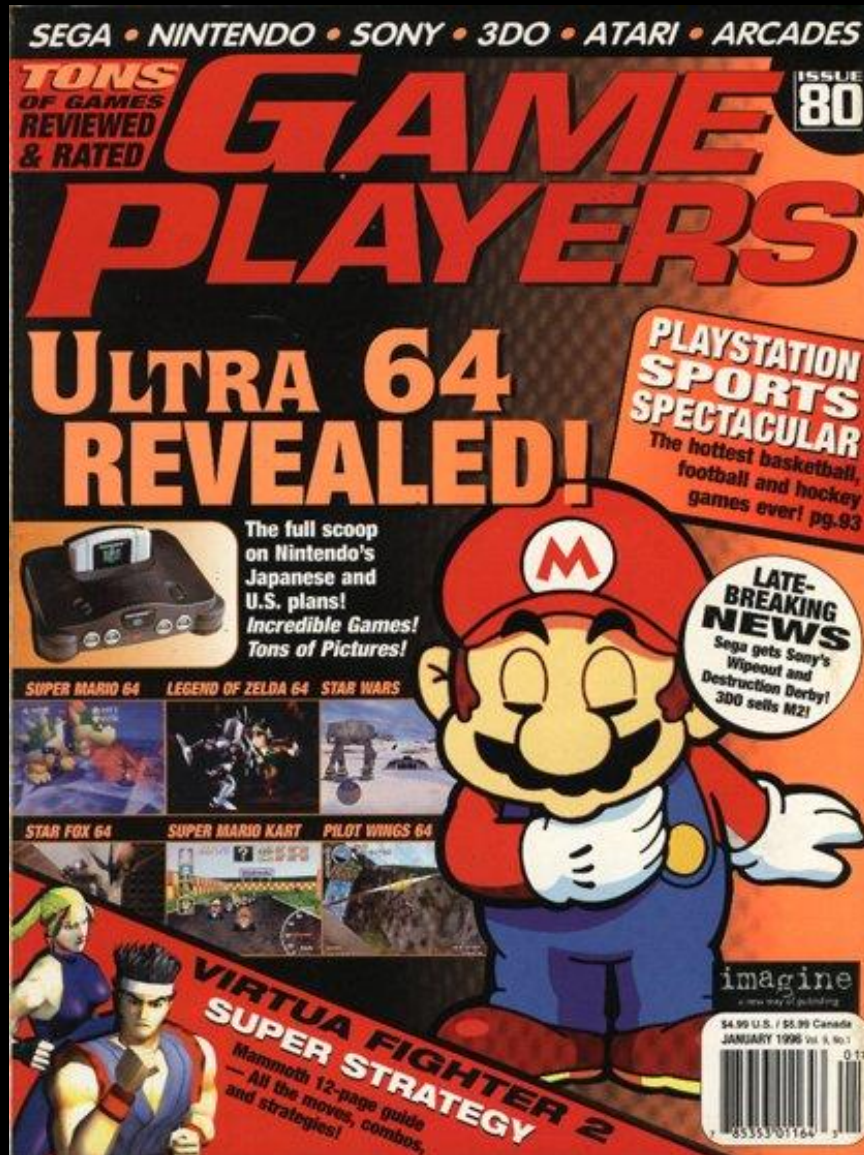
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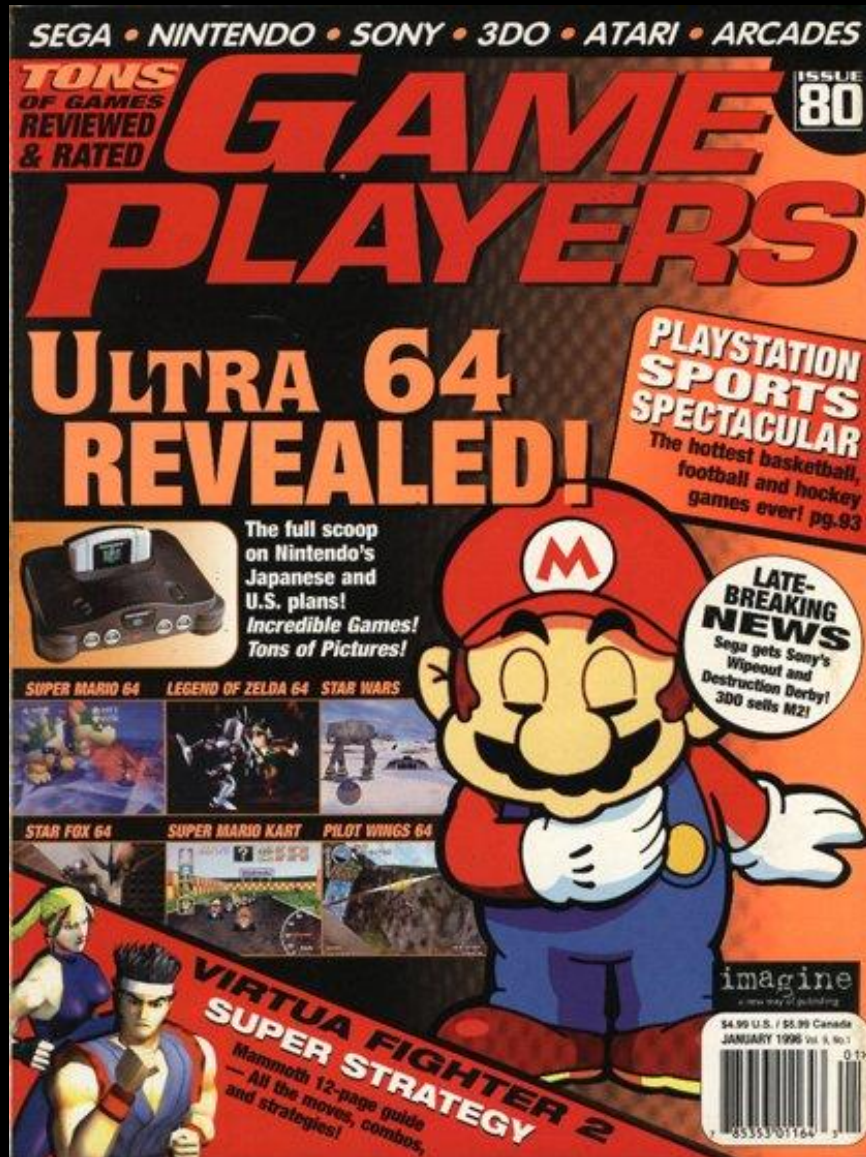


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NINTENDO RETURNS



When Nintendo eventually released their next hardware iteration in 1995 / 1996, they went against their competitors and stuck with **cartridge format** rather than CD-ROM for the new console - the **N64**.



Considerable excitement was created for the platform at the time, as the **N64** would contain a modified version of the 3D technology used by **Silicon Graphics**.

This was the company responsible for special effects in recent popular films at the time such as **Terminator 2** and **Jurassic Park**.



The ability of Silicon Graphics was demonstrated in games such as *Killer Instinct* and *Cruis'n USA* in the arcades, which despite flaws in gameplay, were visually superior to the competition at the time.





Despite being technically superior to its competitors, the *N64* ultimately suffered from a **lack of third party support**.





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- Cartridges offered much **lower storage capacity** than CD (though more protection against piracy)
- It was more **expensive** to develop for than a CD-based machine
- Nintendo had already **given Sony a three-year head start** in the market with the *PlayStation*





In choosing the cartridge format, **Nintendo** could keep in place their **licensing arrangement** which required would-be game developers to purchase cartridges from them.

This increased the risk for developers as **cartridges were more expensive** than CDs.





However, the advantages of cartridges include **instant load times**, **lower exposure to piracy** and **better durability**. Nintendo was also more familiar with cartridges at the time.





Nintendo's choice to stick with cartridges was heavily dented by **SquareSoft**'s decision to part company with them in 1997 - to develop *Final Fantasy VII* on the PlayStation.



The game turned out to be a major success for Square (and the *PlayStation*).



This caused severe damage to Nintendo's reputation and their ability to attract high-profile developers.



Nevertheless, Nintendo continued to produce high-quality software for the *N64*, with highlights such as *Mario 64* and *Goldeneye*.





These games are still considered to be amongst the best games in their respective genres.



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PC GAMING - LATE 90'S



During the 1990s **PC games** continued to grow in popularity and offered an **alternative** to console gaming.

Input devices such as a **keyboard and mouse** allowed some game genres to become incredibly popular on a PC platform.





Unlike console platforms, PC gamers were unhindered by the limitations of **pre determined** hardware set-ups.

The ability to upgrade hardware also gave players the potential to increase the quality of their game experience – albeit at a considerable cost.





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GOTTA CATCH 'EM ALL



POKÉMON®

The *Game Boy's* success was given a massive boost in the late 1990s with the *Pokemon* franchise.





In 1997, the year before the release of *Pokemon* in the US, handheld sales were approximately **\$294m**.

In 1998, this rose to \$466m, and in 1999, following more sequels, it rose to **\$1.26bn** with **18%** of the entire games market.





Pokemon spawned an animated series, movies, merchandise and has become an international phenomenon that is still a familiar name nearly 30 years on.

Most students on this course born between the late 1980s and early 2000s have some form of *Pokemon* memories of their childhood.



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SEGA: INTO DREAMS



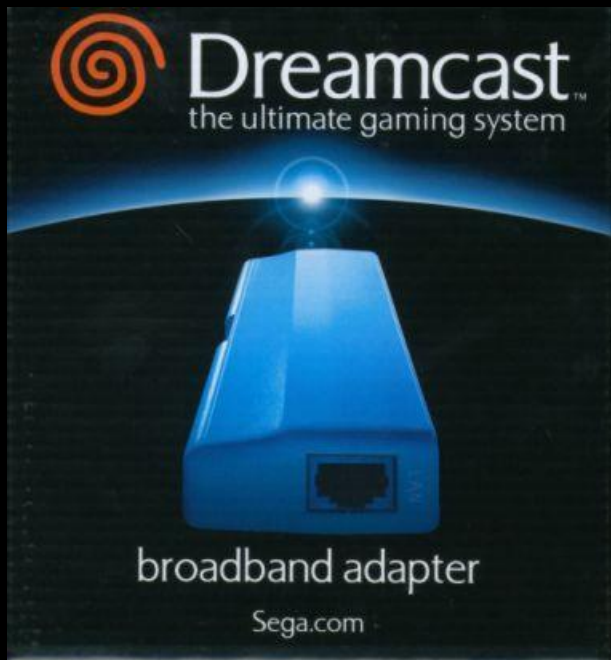
With the disappointment of the *Saturn*, Sega attempted to recapture the market with the *Dreamcast* in 1998.

The president of Sega at the time, **Isao Okawa**, personally injected over **\$400 million** into the *Dreamcast* project to try to wrestle market share back from Sony.





As the successor to the *Saturn*, and with an earlier market entry than Sony's *PlayStation 2* and Nintendo's *GameCube*, Sega was hopeful of re-establishing themselves as a dominant force.



Most significant of all was that Sega was promoting the *Dreamcast* in Europe and the US as an **online games machine**.



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- Online facilities
- A mouse and keyboard for internet access
- A memory card which could contain minigames
- A GD-ROM drive which enabled games of up to around 1.1 GB to be stored on a single CD





Unfortunately, the *Dreamcast*'s online play never materialised to the extent that Sega had hoped – only a handful of online games were actually popular in Europe (e.g. *Chu Chu Rocket* and *Phantasy Star Online*).





The *Dreamcast* also suffered from shortages of NEC's graphics chips early in its life – Sega believes they lost 200,000 to 300,000 in unit sales.





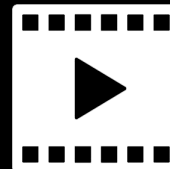
Though it was a competent platform with many popular titles (*Soul Calibur*, *Virtua Fighter 3*, *Sonic Adventure*, and *Shenmue* to name a few), the Dreamcast was overtaken by the *PlayStation 2* and *GameCube*.





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The console failed to obtain the success Sega had originally hoped.



INSERT COIN TO CONTINUE



1994 -

Nintendo releases *Donkey Kong Country*, retaking control of the US console market.

Sega releases the 32X add on for the Mega Drive.

Sega releases the *Saturn* in Japan.

Sony releases the *PlayStation* in Japan.

1995 -

Sega releases the *Saturn* in the US.

Sony releases the *PlayStation* in the US.



1995 -

Nintendo releases the Virtual Boy in the US.

Nintendo unveils the *Nintendo 64* console in Japan.

1996 -

Nintendo sells its billionth cartridge worldwide.

Nintendo releases *Nintendo 64* in the US.

Nintendo discontinues *Virtual Boy*.

Sony releases *Crash Bandicoot*.



1997 -

Sega discontinues *Saturn*.

Gunpei Yokoi, creator of the *Game Boy*, dies in a car accident.

Nintendo releases *Goldeneye 007* for the N64.

Square Soft publishes *Final Fantasy VII* for *PlayStation*.

1998 -

Nintendo releases *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* for *Nintendo 64*.



- 1998 - *Pokemon*, a hugely successful series of role-playing games for the *Game Boy* in Japan, comes to the US and starts a similar craze.
- 1999 - **SNK Corporation** brings the *Neo Geo Pocket Colour* handheld game system to the US.
- Sega** releases the *Dreamcast* in the US.



Hardware examples:

- **Sega Saturn**
- **Sony PlayStation**
- **Nintendo N64**
- **Sega Dreamcast**



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