

# K&A plus #3

December 2015

English Edition

**JAM IT!  
DARKNESS  
RESURRECTION:  
KARATEKA  
KICK OFF 2:  
WORLD CUP 2015**

**EXPLORING AND EXPANDING  
COMMODORE 128**

**INTERVIEWS:  
JORDAN MECHNER  
DINO DINI  
GIANNI TORCHIO**



# Christmas time...

People are nowadays too often running out of time, they tend to constantly swing into high gear. Some relationships, either with family or friends, are thus dropped due to lack of time or the distance separating us from our closest people. Fortunately, Christmas is fast approaching and we might finally get an occasion to slow down, unwind and spend some more time within the family.

It's also a primary gifting period and we, the editorial crew of "K&A plus", have something new for you: the third issue of our magazine in a totally refreshed visual design! In order to properly prepare ourselves for the Christmas break we also wrote some articles related to this special time of the year.

We also made sure to get some more editorial pieces devoted to Amiga, as some of you pointed out that we focus too much on 8-bit machines. We'll do our best to keep that diversity in the future as well, so that a single issue of our magazine offers articles related to most of the Commodore computers.

I could now go over the contents of #3, like people usually do in the editorial intros, however, I feel that you should discover the articles all by yourself. Get some positive retro feeling, take yourself back in time to the greatest periods of your childhood, and use the Christmas break opportunity to sit down with friends or family members and fire up your retro hardware! You can again enjoy some of the greatest titles from the old days.

I wish you all to stay in the positive sublime mood.

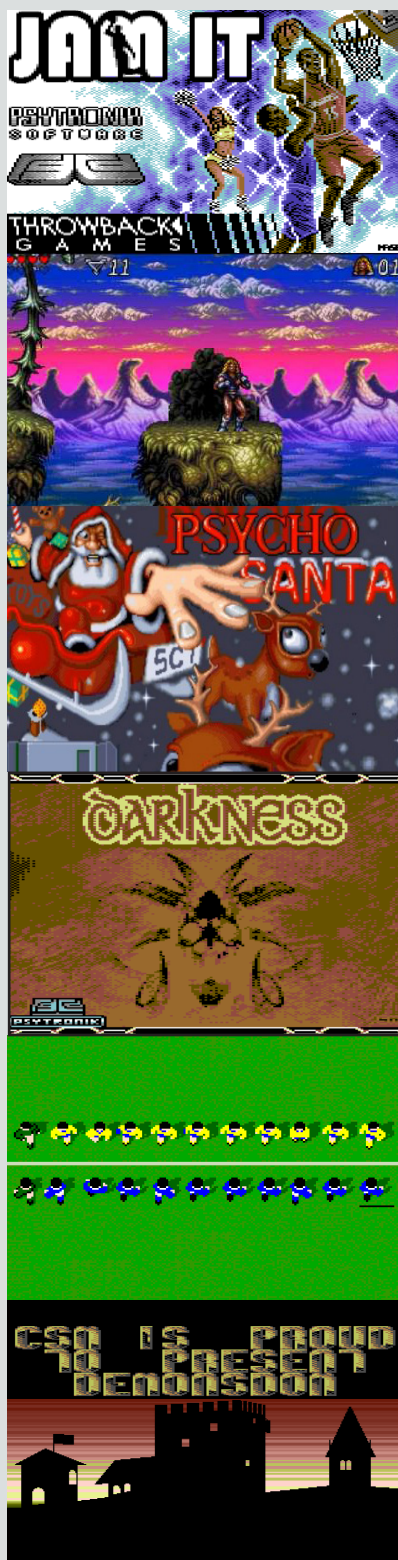
Merry Christmas to everyone!

**Komek & editorial staff**



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autumn/winter 2015



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8 "KOMOD&AMIGAPLUS" NR3
45 "LAZIK-SLAVIA PL" PRG
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576 BLOCKS FREE.
  
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**Komoda & Amiga plus**  
Commodore computers' user's magazine

**Editor-in-chief:** Komek

**Editors:** Ramos, noctropolis, Bobikowoz, Tomxx, Minimoog, Mr. Mat, Don Rafito, c00k, JargoV, GeoAnas, Neurocide, Atreus, Petrichor.

**WWW:** <http://ka-plus.pl> **E-Mail:** [kaplus.zine@gmail.com](mailto:kaplus.zine@gmail.com)

**Design and DTP:** Tomxx, Mr. Mat

**Drawings:** Johnny

**Cover design and concept art:** Ruben Messeguer

**Proofreading:** Agat, Komek, Minimoog, noctropolis, Tomxx, Mr. Mat

**Translations:** Slayerpl, Bobikowoz, Tomxx, Karo, Petrichor, Górka, Michał Sroka, Tomasz Kubisztal

**Cooperation:** MA, Paweł Król, Karo, Uka, Agat, Tomasz Kubisztal, Michał Sroka, Górka, Hery.

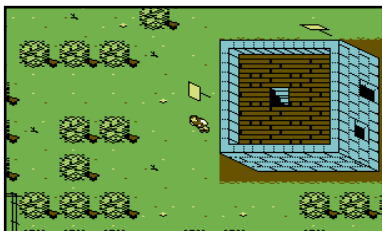


# Fresh News

C64

## TIME OF SILENCE / ZEIT DER STILLE

Claus, 2015



Time Of Silence is an adventure game throwing us in a post-apocalyptic world which is the result of a mysterious plague that decimated humanity. Interestingly, the associated disease, in addition to naturally highly fatal effect is also linked with hallucinations and supernatural abilities. The intro makes a good impression with a very interesting gameplay and expressive graphics, presented in a perspective view from the top. The game has a great, simple and convenient interface (menu interacts with

a nearby object / character by pressing fire). Another advantage is the ability to save the game at any moment. We're embodied in the person of Tom, one of the survivors, who lives together with a group of kindred people in the village of Friedheim, but still cannot shake off the loss of his beloved Sarah. At the beginning, walking around the village is even idyllic, but be assured that soon the atmosphere will change by 180 degrees, and the final chapters of the plot will be really impactful. Unfortunately the game is very short (and simple, but this is just fine) and that's a disadvantage. The game's author has already announced that he is working on the sequel. The game was released in two languages - English and German - hence the double title at the top.

■ noctropolis

C64

## BLAP 'N BASH

TND, 2015



Have you noticed that for some time now there is always a game of the "Break-out" gender being presented here? I think this is quite good because everyone loves "Arkanoid"-styled arcade games. In "BLAP 'n Bash" the player takes the role of an alien who is kidnapped and imprisoned in space. Your task is to clear the bricks in each intergalactic zone, with the traditional action: paddle, ball and break. Good luck!

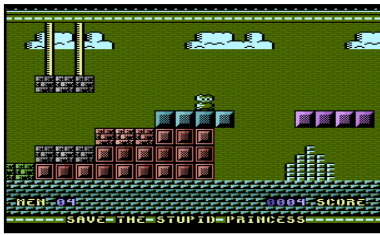
■ Komek



## C16/Plus4

## DORK DAVE AND THE DIRTY TRICK

Misfit, 2015



Oh, that Mikal! Once again he brings us a fun little new game. This time it is something for platform games' fans. Lots of jumping, breaking bricks and avoiding various obstacles... These are the main components of "Dork Dave and the Dirty Trick". If you like playing games like "Super Mario Bros" and rescuing "stupid princesses" all wrapped with good graphics, this game is definitely for you. Check it out!

■ Komek

## C64

## U-91306 EIDOTHEA - THE DAUGHTER OF PROTHEUS

Errazking, 2015



A microscopic submarine is placed straight into the bloodstream of an ill patient. Its aim is to remove the tumor that is located somewhere inside the brain area. Sailing with the lifeblood on your way to your target you will face lots of obstacles, just right from the beginning. In my opinion

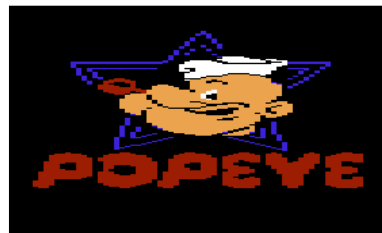
the game is quite difficult, but this should not have a major impact on its attractiveness. Some people may wince because it is a SEUCK game, but for me it doesn't matter at all.

■ Komek

## VIC20

## POPEYE

Beamrider, 2015

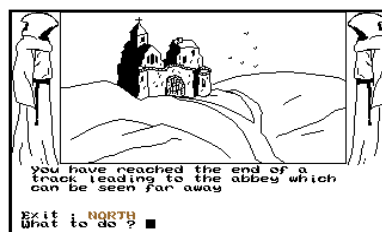


Oh, wow, this took me by surprise! "Popeye" from old arcades has been ported to VIC20. This is a really cool conversion for what a VIC is being capable of. Beside that, is good to again meet Popeye, Olivia and Bluto, even if you are not a huge fan. Such arcade games always offer great playability. I think there is no need to have some special urge to play this game.

■ Komek

## C64

## ATHANOR



SafarGames, 2015

I have some good news for text and graphics adventure

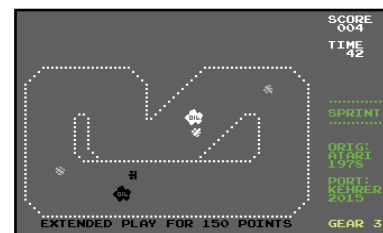
games' fans. There is a new game, or rather a conversion, under the title "Athanor - The Awakening", original created for Oric and Amstrad computers. The game is currently (as of this writing) in preview stage, so the final release will take a bit longer. The author has also announced an up-rising conversion for VIC20 users. To download the game file, please visit: <http://csdb.dk/release/?id=142447>.

■ Komek

## C64

## SPRINT 1

Norbert Kehrer, 2015



A mega minimalistic version of Formula 1 racing game? It must be certainly one of the few remaining parts of the old game called "Sprint". Yes, that's right. In this case we are dealing with the conversion of the original arcade, originating in 1978, created by Atari. Really cool thing, but at the beginning of the game I have been toiling to eventually move my car smoothly. So now you finally know what were "Rally Cross" or "Carnage" games based on.

■ Komek

## VIC20

## MINE SWEEP MINI

Shaun Bebbington, 2015



"Sapper" clones were already released in hundreds (if not by thousands) on a variety of platforms. Despite the great number of appearances this kind of game is always pretty enjoyable. I enjoy playing the very first Windows version whenever I have the opportunity to do it. Now it's VIC20's turn to have its own conversion written in BASIC. Although it hasn't much impressive audiovisual effects, it offers a pretty good gameplay. Of course, we don't need any rules of play or a further description. I will only mention that the player has to administer the coordinates of the selected fields by keyboard strokes (eg. By typing B2, preceded by pressing "F1", we put in place a flag; "F7", on the other hand, checks all the fields across the entire board). We even have three levels of difficulty, but they differ only in the number of available flags to be placed (20, 15, 10), because the dimensions of the board and the amount of mines is always the same (10x10, 10).

■ noctropolis

## Amiga

## DYLAN THE SPACEMAN AND THE SMELLY ALIENS FROM MARS

Camden Town NW11, 2015



If you use to spend a lot of time playing with Dizzy egg-head character, and you are looking by any chance for a title which would potentially refresh these nice moments, then you have to take a look at the game "Dylan the Spaceman and the Smelly Aliens from Mars". Currently there is only a playable demo available, but it seems that it will be a decent and pleasant game at some point. Just as in Dizzy games, in "Dylan The Spaceman" you move from one screen to another, collecting items and helping the characters you meet to solve their problems, making their lives easier, and ultimately save the planet Earth from invaders from Mars. Yes, I know ... Invaders from Mars... again. ■ Petrichor

## MUTANT LEAGUE HOCKEY

Electronic Arts /Scoopex, 2015



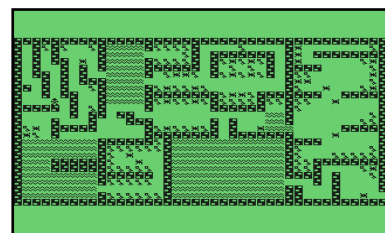
Winter is all around the corner and this game brings up a bit

of frosty feeling as well. Good news for hockey fans and... monsters. Mutant League Hockey from EA was originally released on the Sega Mega drive platform in 1994 and was unfortunately canceled on Amiga following Commodore's demise. It miraculously came back to life this year, thanks to the efforts of Galahad from Scoopex group, who had just successfully passed the port to Amiga platforms. If you fancy playing games like "Speedball" and like icy climate, then "Mutant League Hockey" is a perfect game for you! The game is available for both Amiga 1200 and Amiga CD32. ■ Petrichor

## C64

## DUDE (ŁAZIK)

Slavia, 2015



In the spate of new complex games there is a place for a simple one, written in BASIC by Slavia scene group – "Dude" ("Łazik"). The player is obliged to complete five levels by controlling the Dude – main character in game. Before reaching the end of each level make sure to collect keys scattered all over the screen – they are the main source of points. But be careful! There are lots of fatal enemies! The last level of game is our Christmas gift for you – you can find "Dude" on our cover-disk.

■ Minimoog



# Darkness



■ Review: noctropolis; translated by: Karo

*In the first K&A+ issue there has been a review of a wonderful game produced by cooperating studios - Psytronic Software and RGCD, called "The Vice Squad" (created by Achim Volkers and Sascha Ziedler). Apparently they liked the cooperation because thanks to the same people and studios, only half year later they decided to launch their new product, so intriguingly called "Darkness"...*

*"into darkness i must go  
to find my beloved taken from me  
the jungle deep the rivers flow  
what lies ahead i cannot see*

*into darkness i must go  
this jungle has a thousand eyes  
without a gun or a deadly bow  
i wander under angry skies"*

adventurer stan  
06.11.37

## INTO DARKNESS...

The poem cited at the beginning of the preview, that looks somewhat like a diary entry of some traveler called Stan, is a part of the original game intro. It ends the wonderfully produced (though minimalistic) intro in which we can see the ship piloted by Stan crash in an African jungle after a malfunction. The whole problem is that the second passenger of the ship was his fiancée Megan and while Stan is unharmed after the crash, when he comes to senses he cannot see her anywhere but hears only terri-

fied screams coming from far away... The plot as you can see is really interesting, intriguing and and makes you want to explore the world created by the game.

## STUNNING AUDIOVISUALS

While we can say that in the case of 8-bit computers the graphics are usually not the most important thing in the game, here you notice it right away and it's only natural to start from it. Simply speaking, it's just amazing. A great effect has been achieved by proper "mixing" of colours what creates an illusion of a bigger colour palette. Backgrounds are detailed and fauna and flora met on the way are also very impressive. The graphics are dazzling and

without any doubt they deserve the highest note. Visually, the game is just fabulous.

As far as music is

concerned, while the melody in the intro and menu is rather

so-so, the music in the actual game is really quite good - it connects catchy and murky melodies. I can say that the longer I was listening to it during the game, the more I liked it - and if a looped song listened to for a long time not only doesn't bore you but you like it more and more, it is definitely a positive thing. And that is why my



## FREWARE:

Although "Darkness" has been issued in 2014 as a typically commercial product, since the half of this year it's officially available for free download, e.g. at this link: [http://psytronik.net/downloads/darkness\\_download.php](http://psytronik.net/downloads/darkness_download.php).



evaluation of overall music will mostly concern the main theme during the game. Apart from the soundtrack we can also hear the sound effects - quite basic because they focus mostly on the sounds of weapons and defeated enemies but they

are well made and they go well with the soundtrack. And if for some reason you would like to focus only on the sound effects, there is such option - you can turn off the music pressing F1 but I personally don't recommend this.

### MEGAN, WHERE ARE YOU?

Let us focus on the game itself now. As I already said, it is about saving our beloved Megan. To do this we will be forced to travel through vast areas because we have exactly 100 screens to explore (10x10 maps). So that it doesn't get too boring, the creators made more than just a jungle maps (that are by the way very diverse and full of native people's traces, rivers, etc.) but later on we find ourselves in other, slightly different places like a cave or a temple. While exploring we will find and open green chests containing colourful keys (opening new chests and areas), green masks (necessary to enter the temples), violet masks (needed at the very end of the game) and bonuses like extra

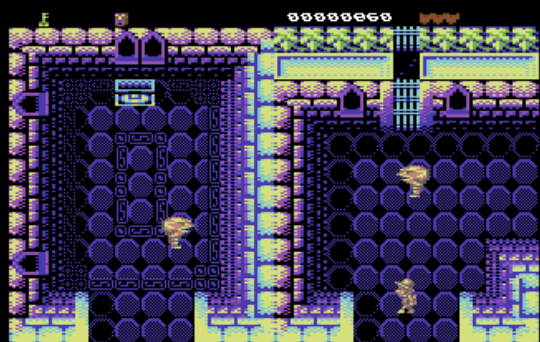
health points. Cutting down bushes and breaking pots allows us to find one of three power-ups: blue is moving faster, white is resistance to damage and violet is a new weapon (we start with only a stone in our hand as a basic distance weapon, the next are a dagger, a shuriken and wolf fangs).

### WILD WILD AFRICA...

On our way we will meet a whole wide range of fauna typical for Africa and that is very good because it adds to the general mood of the game. There are animals like: snakes, spiders, parrots, porcupines, hyenas, wolves, hogs, gorillas or even (beautifully animated and being one of the game's highlights) mighty elephants (there are the only ones you cannot kill but they also won't attack us on purpose) and apart from the animals there are also some not necessarily friendly natives. The difficult thing is that the animals and natives appear again every time we enter the same area, in random places and attack us straight away. But fortunately the game gives us some time to prepare, showing us their spawn places for a while. This leads to a funny (and not a really realistic) situation - we will sometimes enter an area 2-3

### A Game in a game

An interesting bonus has been added to the game - a mini game called "Darkipede". Yes, the connection to "Centipede" is not accidental because it's almost the same with the difference that the graphics and enemies are from "Darkness".





times to get more "favourable" spawn places, far away from us so that we can get rid of enemies easier and without a threat to our health - especially because different enemies have different speeds and endurances. Nevertheless, it's not a thing that annoys, it's rather interesting, really. Yet, we have to watch out - we only have one life and each encounter with an enemy is lowering our health points (by the way, after losing all health points we can see a quite funny death animation). Sometimes it's even better to quickly run through a given location than to get in a fight.

## HAPPY ENDING

It's easy to predict that the game ends when our loved one is saved by us. But how that happens, I will naturally not tell. To find out you have to spend some time with the game and it's really worth it because "Darkness" is simply a wonderful title and definitely high quality. It was actually, just like The Vice Squad, issued in really nice, collector's packs. And now, when you can play it for free without any problems - you just have to do it. The fun is immense and what is interesting, after training a bit and taking a good approach to the enemies, the game is not so difficult. It definitely has great mood, it's involving and just really good.

## DARKNESS

Publisher: **Psytronik Software / RGCD**

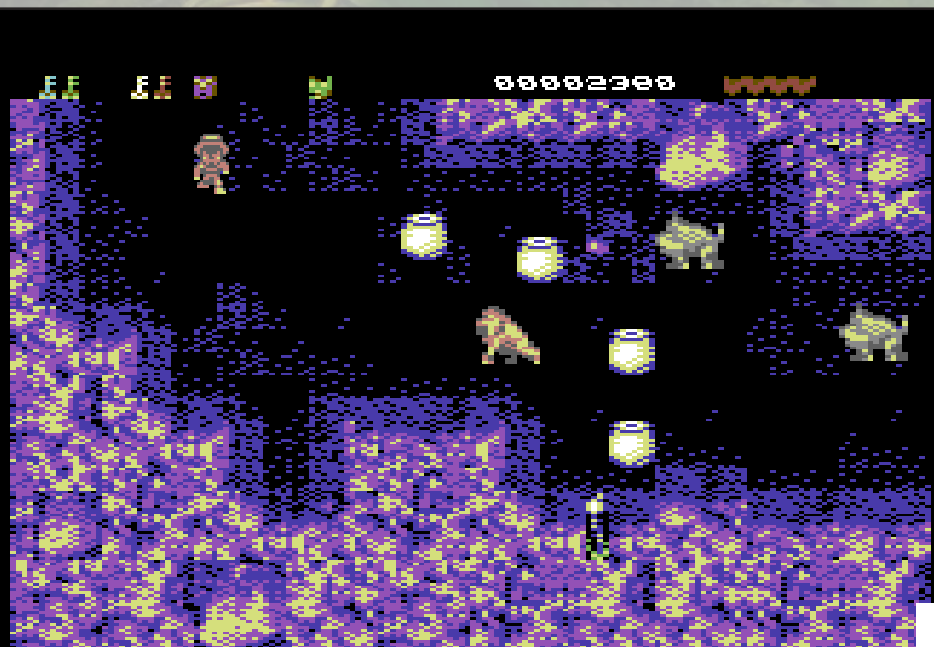
Year of publication: **2014**

Platform: **C64**

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## The map of the surroundings

I was wondering if I should prepare for you an additional map, making it easy to go around the jungle but I don't think it's necessary because a simplified map already exists. Triad have added it to their crack of the game.





# Psycho Santa

■ Review: c00k; translated by: MA

*"Christmas, Christmas..." as a polish kids group "Fasolki" sang long time ago. With it many more symbols, both physical and economical of upcoming holiday time. One of them is definitely an amusing fatty in a red uniform with additional white themes and a white beard. There have been many theories, some said that he is not as nice as he is presented, and if he is it's just because he has to be. Those theories were used by the creators of such movies as "Santa's Slay" or "Rare Export". A similar theme was used by Bullfrog company when they released a game called "Psycho Santa".*

It was released on a cover disc that was a part of "The One" magazine in 1993. As soon as we launch the game we are informed that for 5.5 pound we can become a registered user and get a new copy with ad-

ditional content. There is a legend going on that somebody actually did that. On the cover of the magazine we see a Santa Clause with a semiautomatic gun, who asks us if we were naughty or nice. Our first thought – it will be fun.

and try to catch presents that are placed on a Christmas tree. The biggest difficulty is that you have to press a fire button at the right moment in order to get the gift. Generally it is a boring experience and I doubt that the 5.5 pound version was any different.



And it is fun. The whole game is about making the residents happy, but not in a psycho sense but more traditionally by throwing the presents around. To get those presents we must first fly over the town and kill the ghost with many snowballs. The ghost is not defenseless as it sends flying snowmen who throw carrots at us. When we send enough presents to a house, it gets marked as a happy one. At the beginning of each round we are told about the number of houses that we must make happy. When we do it we are able to take part in a bonus level where you have to jump using a pogo stick

I have no idea where you can find the "psycho" element in that game. So why is it that I decided to review this game? I was supposed to write something about Christmas and since it is little known title I thought it would be a bit interesting. Moreover it was published by Bullfrog, who were the creators of my beloved Syndicate. I present it as something that happened quite often, you just got a nice title and even better cover for the game. The game is a bit positive as it can be funny in its own way.

## PSYCHO SANTA

**Publisher:** The One Amiga  
**Year of publication:** 1993  
**Platform:** Amiga

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# The Official Father Christmas Game



■ Review: Komek; translated by: Petrichor

*Christmas is this time of the year we usually spend with our families. In addition to telling each other best wishes and eating delicious food, we also have a tradition of gifting. A moment in which we open our presents is extraordinary and is always accompanied by strong emotions, where we ask ourselves a question: What can it be?*

At Christmas we also have more free time, which we can spend on playing video games with our family. There are many titles related to the time of Christmas and as the Christmas Day is just around the corner, I would like to recommend a very nice and small game called "The Official Father Christmas Game". Although it has been already 26 years since its release, the game can still be good fun especially for those who have never played it before.

As you can guess from the title, we take a role of Santa Claus. A task that Santa has to perform is not really unique (what would you expect from Santa?). Our

The first stage of the game is to put Santa's sleigh into a working order and to do so he has to find all the sleigh parts that are scattered around his house. Small yet very active elves will interfere in carrying out this task. As soon as the sleigh is in a working order Santa will have to pick six of the fifteen available gifts, and they are as follows: football, computer, doll, teddy bear, cricketing bat, toybox, tank toy, TV, tennis racket, locomotive toy, stereo set, racing bolid, book, roller-skates and dollhouse. Once the gifts are chosen, they will start falling from the top of the screen and Santa must quickly catch those that have been chosen at the beginning (correct gifts are distinguished in yellow colour). Okay! sleigh is loaded and harnessed by reindeers. The remaining task is to distribute all the gifts to their respective houses that have been marked with a moving arrow. Santa's route begins in America. Next continents are: Europe, Africa, Antarctica. The last point of the route is the Northern Europe – Finland to be specific. Everything would be fine, if not for the fact that when Santa is trying to deliver all the gifts, he also has to deal with clouds, birds and airplanes, that are

trying to slow him down in completing the task. Big red guy also needs to remember that his mission is very time sensitive and he is fighting time, which is shown at the bottom of the screen as a vanishing moon and a rising sun.

At the end of the day, the game provides a lot of good fun with catchy festive graphics and music ("Jingle-bells", "We wish you a Merry-Christmas").

Also, it is worth noting that the revenue from the game sales has been used to support international non-profit organisation "Save The Children" to help children and their families around the world.



main goal is to deliver gifts to the children around the world. You may all say: "Hmph, so what! He does that every year." That's right, but you all should know that the task is not as simple as it may sound.

## THE OFFICIAL FATHER CHRISTMAS GAME

Publisher: **Alternative Software**

Year of publication: **1989**

Platform: **C64**







REVIEW

# Piracy

■ Review: Bobikowoz; translated by: Slayerpl

**Anyone who didn't have a bootleg cassette with a set of games, should first cast the stone. These were times, dear children, that the copyright didn't exist and everything was public goods. For the glory of the nation! But I will not write about the political system but about a bootleg game.**

Pirates are not only the players who use the releases received in the shady circumstances, swindles and thieves from a moral point of view, but, above all, sea rovers. This type of rovers, as known, are also morally ambiguous. The described game, according to my knowledge, is completely honest and can be played also by people who despise of every sort of immorality.

The whole game consists of one screen where we can see on both sides two 17th century ships, there are ropes between

them. It can be clearly see that it is time for the boarding. This time the vile pirates will not have such an easy task ahead of them because they encountered a crew of valiant sailors. The captains have to adequately control the attack to take over the enemy's vessel. You will certainly notice during the gameplay that the most important persons on the deck of both ships are reacting energetically to the events that transpire above the water. They jump, make threats and shout, which is worth of mimicking by our computer's screen.

There are not many rules, the level is always the same, but the game is playable and can make us spend some time with it. One condition – two players and not singleplayer with computer opponents. This is the charm of this type of games, where two people compete, the game, in a nice company, becomes more attractive. Because someone has to lose, and then play a rematch. Because if you don't win a rematch, you have to buy a beer for your friend.

Time to explain, how this game appeared in the Christmas edition of our magazine. 20 years after its release on C64, its' boardgame version was released. Every year I write in my letter to Santa Claus that I would like to add it to my collection, but I think I wasn't polite enough. Maybe next year? And if not... I know the rules, I will print the boardgame at my workplace and I will be happy as a small kid from the bootleg version of a boardgame, that previously was a computer game.



## PIRACY

Publisher: **Ace Games**  
Year of publication: **1985**  
Platform: **C64**





# Gilligan's Gold

■ Review: Minimoog; translated by: Karo

*Gold. Lots of gold. Mountains of gold. Wealth and fame. Those were probably the things which Columbus, Cortez or Pizarro have promised for their crews when they were embarking on overseas travels – because let's not lie to ourselves, their aim was not really discovering new worlds. Unfortunately upon arriving to America they haven't found much of gold, nevertheless, the myth of Wild West gold prospectors has been engraved in the cultures of not only United States but also the rest of the world.*

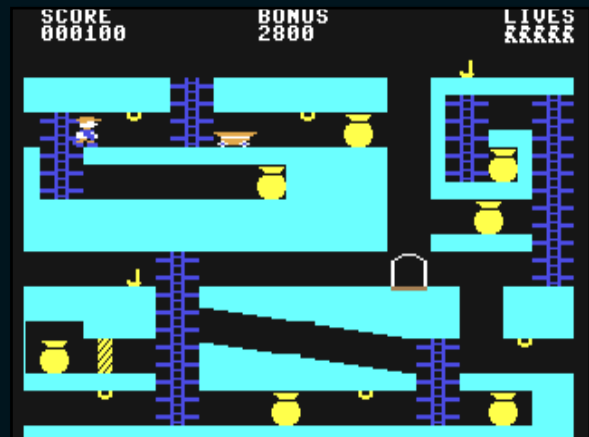
Gilligan's Gold takes place exactly in those "golden" Wild West times. We play as a gold prospector who browses mines to look for gold (already packed into sacks!). Unfortunately our adventures are not easy, for we are constantly chased by two bandits and meeting them end with...a brief moment of suspense...our death! It's easy to lose one of 5 available lives. Agile moving from one ladder to another, manoeuvring your wheelbarrow and avoiding enemies is not easy but feasible.

The game has three levels, each of which has three different screens we can go into. Obstacles, ladders, pickaxes, sacks of gold are randomly arranged in various schemes, all accompanied by cheerful music. The game comes from the first half of the 80s so the sounds might be a bit under processed so they irritate the

ears slightly at times but in spite of that the melody is joyful and suits the game well. The graphics are simple for the same reason but they are also clear.

It's worth mentioning that Gilligan's Gold is a converted version of a French game "Bagman" for automats, created in 1982. It was originally produced by Valadon Automation. Apart from Commodore 64 the game was also converted to ZX Spectrum and Amstad CPC.

I always go back to Gilligan's Gold with pleasure because it's really enjoyable. Intuitive gameplay and clear graphics make a good combination, creating fun and exciting entertainment. A lot of games get boring and lengthy easily but "Gilligan's Gold" is a 10. And besides – who doesn't like westerns?



## GILLIGAN'S GOLD

Publisher: Ocean Software  
Year of publication: 1984  
Platform: C64

9 5 5







# Jam It!

■ Review: JargoV; translated by: Bobikowoz

*When I was younger I was thinking how would it be to become a professional NBA player. Unfortunately neither my skill nor my height was high enough to make this kind of career easy. The plan was abandoned as fast as it came to my mind.*

Sport games give opportunity to find out what it would be like to be a player, but the ones developed for new hardware are not satisfying enough for me. The main disadvantages of these games are complicated controls and the core game-play... I have found a solution

for this problem in a game called "Jam It!", the first production from a one-man studio Throwback Games. A standard arcade game about basketball perfectly fits in what I like. Simple, not too complicated, nice, and what is most important, amazingly fun.

The game lets us play as one of the red team players called "Jammers" or "Slammers" wearing blue uniforms. The game is played as a standard 3x3. Only one half of the court is used, both teams throw to the same basket, and after a successful defence, the ball must go through the half-court



line before the defence becomes the attacking team. The rules are simple, as the other aspects of "Jam It!".

Let me start with the fun coming from the game, as it is, in my opinion, the most important part of every game. The Throwback Games production has a lot of it. The game can keep me occupied for quite a long time, especially in a two player cooperation match with a friend. The game allows also a four player mode, where a lot of good vibes is guaranteed! All of it is a part of a simple but a really good working gameplay mechanics. The author described it in these words:

"In Jam It, just one button with your control stick is enough to make extreme dunks, jump-shots, blocks, passes, post-up plays and steals!"

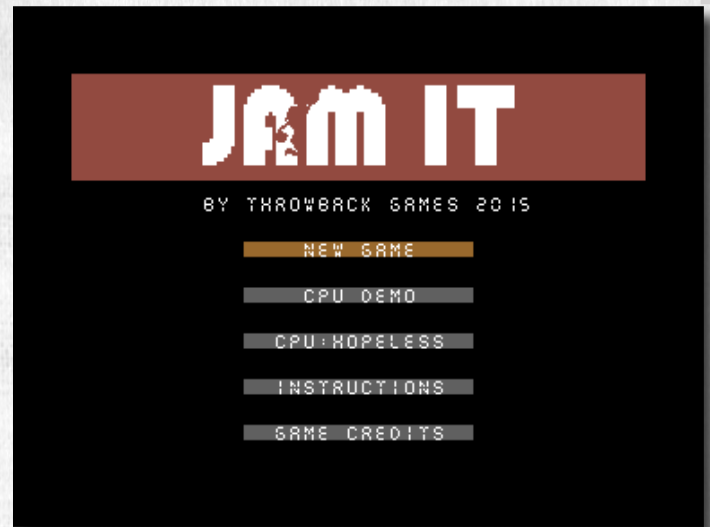
The best thing is, that it really works. With just one joystick button it is possible to throw, pass, steal, block and jump. You do not need to learn complicated keyboard bindings, it is all that simple – one button is used to every single action. During the game our players are depleting their stamina. As the stamina level is getting lower, the player's abilities are also slightly limited, but during the half-time break energy is being restored. Do not be afraid of the 3x3 rules, as the game suggests when you need to "drag" the ball to the other half of the court by changing your team colour. A really nice feature is slow-motion effect, known also as "bullet-time". When the clock shows last seconds

of the game this effect is automatically turned on. This section of the review can be summarized with just two words: Well Done!

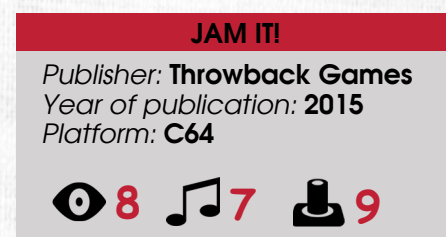
Title screen music is just ok. It is nothing special, just a typical tune, that can be annoying after some time. On the other hand, title screen is not a place to stare at for infinite time. Melody in menu shows a completely different quality. Since the first time I heard it is got stuck in my head and during writing this review it was playing in the back for the whole time. I feel enchanted by it's tranquil pace with a characteristic bass line and percussion nicely integrated into it. I would not complain about other sounds and FX, as they just fit right into the game and are as real as the legendary SID allows to.

Graphics are good, everything is clear, well planned and nothing blurs into another object. I find it important to easily distinguish every core element, like the ball and the player. Design is pleasing to the eye. The teams are coloured in a way that prevents from eye fatigue after staring at players trying to check is he a friend or an enemy. Main screen with logo surprised me in a good way with a really neat design. It proudly represents "Jam It!"

All in all, is a really good the



game. Especially the core mechanics which draws from classic arcade productions and fun coming from gameplay are the biggest advantages. Both sound and graphics are properly done. I am willing to recommend this game, as it ensures a great deal of fun, especially with a friend, when both players are trying to give the best of them. It is worth to mention, that the game is inexpensive, with a price tag set at 2,99\$ on the day I wrote this article.







EDITORIAL

# Best party games on C64

■ Editorial: c00k

*New Year's Eve is coming, week after carnival and thus social pressure for increased partying. For a good party is needed just a lot of vodka, drinks and possibly chips. Other people are a bit more demanding and try to embellish such a meeting, for example, using various electronic forms of entertainment. Seeing that the C64 is generally equipped with controllers on the cables connected to two ports, it becomes a very good tool for such games. In addition, you can take it with you and connect to almost every TV.*

Good game for the event must involve as many people as possible. In our case there are technical limitations, because to paraphrase a classic: "Two shall be the number thou shalt count, and the number of the counting shall be two." Of course there is hardware, and software to break this restriction, but we treat

it as the statistical errors :) There are some exceptions. We can choose a game for one person, but we must have a very detailed point system which helps us in the choice of the winner. Each of these games has to be short enough to rest and don't get bored waiting for our turn. In most cases, I will describe games in which we will compete but as we can see in real life it's better to cooperate so I'll put such titles on my list.

## BUBBLE BOBBLE

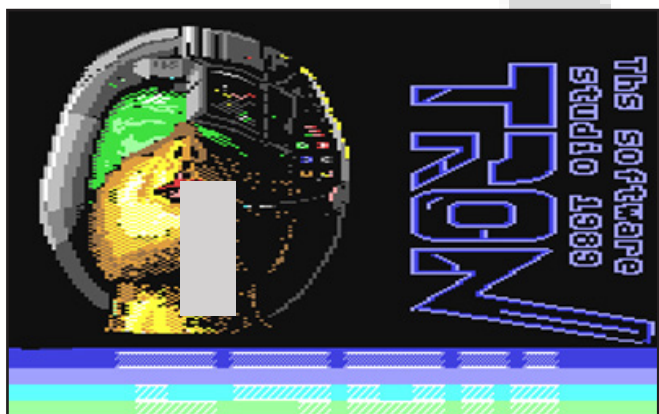
Cult game which we can play even on modern PC. As I wrote, and what people in schools and some large companies do not understand, it is better to cooperate than compete. Two iconic dragons that are jumping on platforms spitting monster bubbles. The monster is trapped in a soap bubble, which you need to cut to complete the task. When you play in "two players" mode you can never finish the game because you can only join the game if your partner is not dead. The best way is to give joystick to another person after losing all the lives.

## TRON

The game is based on the blockbuster from 1982, which has gotten not a very successful sequel quite recently. It's a copy of game that the characters were playing. Actually they were active attenders of this game. Two racers ride on limited field and leave material trace. The trace is made from a material that is hard as a brick wall. The loser is the player who collides with the wall around the trace or field of play. Because the screen is divided into two we can increase difficulty by swapping places before screen :)

## INTERNATIONAL KARATE+

The next edition of the classic game, which went through several parts, known in the eighties on the arcades and promoted by the movie "Bloodsport" with splits champion Jean-Claude Van Damme. Here we can both cooperate and compete, because players are three including one run by the computer. The biggest plus is



## MICROPROSE SOCCER

I didn't want to put here any football game because I don't like football and I think it generates an unhealthy emotions but I know that many of our readers are strongly interested in it, and I don't want to have problems with our magazine team :) What can I say, it's the best football game I've ever played on C64. Graphics is at a very high level, thereby we can see both bad weather conditions and the volatility of the ball when it is closer to the camera :) If we can find big a group of fans large enough (I would have a problem :), we can play pretty cool tournament.



***Each of these games has to be short enough to rest and don't get bored waiting for our turn.***

## MICRO HEXAGON

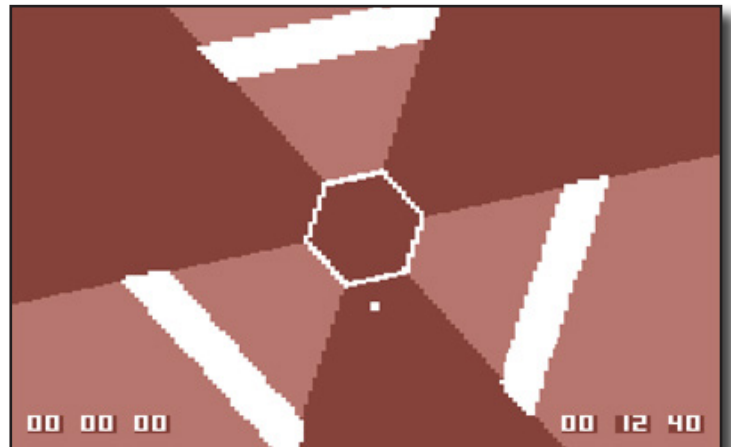
Because of my hobby I should promote martial arts games, but this is my favourite position on the list. Game released just two years ago, taken from multifunctional communications tool called smartphones :) The game is brilliant in its simplicity. You can see the already modern approach to game development. In fact banality. The hexagonal field divided into six equal triangles and a small dot

***Good game for the event must involve as many people as possible.***



***In most cases, I will describe games in which we will compete but as we can see in real life it's better to cooperate.***

located on one of them. Joy-stick movement causes that the dot skips to another field. From the side of the screen obstacles glide that we must avoid when changing field. So it was not easy to do and our brain does a trick, the image is spinning. Over time, various sides :) But this is not the only punch into the brain. Music and flashing colors do the job. That means the game is attractive for those who for some reason are not able to play, and are just watching :) Our points is the time which we spend on battlefield shown with accuracy to hundreds parts of second.







REVIEW

# Destruct

■ Review: Minimoog; translated by: Karo

*Outer space, weird creatures, astronauts... doesn't it sound like one of those cheesy, star game, that can be counted in millions? It does. Yet, in my opinion, "Destruct" deserves some attention in this huge group. Especially because I own the original cassette, the only unpirated game in my collection.*

Flying in the outer space and shooting your enemies is usually called a "shoot'em up" game but the preposition "up" doesn't really mean shooting up, in spite of the fact that you do actually shoot in this direction. Anyhow, "Destruct" is basically a shoot'em up, the only difference is that you... shoot to the right. I was thinking about it for some time and even though I previously stated that "up" doesn't have a connection with the direction of shooting, I am willing to categorize "Destruct" with my new invention – "shoot'em right". And that's essentially the only innovative part of the game.



is really difficult, hence the low points for the gameplay.

The creator of the game is Clark John Denham. I have to admit, his game has good music and it needs to be praised -

are more or less identified flying objects. But our job is not easy, as the enemies are aplenty and in addition, they speed towards our astronaut – so the game

can be called a demanding one. Apart from that we need to constantly control the altitude of the astronaut, who is gradually falling down if not made by us to keep his height. Any contact with the ground ends with – yes, you guessed – death. The whole game made me angry

instead of entertained and walking though even the first level

I recommend "Destruct" as an experiment. It's an interesting but simple and predictable. Nevertheless, only for experienced gamers.



As I said before, our astronaut flew to the right, and our task is to shoot at our enemies who

instead of entertained and walking though even the first level

## DESTRUCT

Publisher: **The Power House**

Year of publication: **1987**

Platform: **C64**



# Pulse



■ Review: Komek; translated by: Slayerpl

*It is obvious that new games for VIC are released quite rarely. Unlike, in the situation of C64, where a couple of new releases very often appear in the span of a month. I decided to visit Richard Legendijk's website to find an interesting game for Vic. I looked through its' content and found a short information about a game called "Pulse". My attention was turned to the screenshot which showed that it is a classic, awesome Shoot'em Up. Was it really so?*

We cannot deny that "Pulse" is based on the huge arcade game hit "Gradius" from 1985. This comparison works in "Pulse's" advantage. Fans of the classic space shoot'em up's will definitely agree.

As every game, "Pulse" also has an introduction, a short nonetheless, but still.... Your planet is in great danger because it was attacked by the hostile's army from the 20th dimension. The Drone was hastily created with a remote control software. You are the sole pilot with an appropriate equipment who can defeat the enemy. Everyone counts on you!

However we know that the most important thing is playability which in this game is pretty big. Of course, graphics and sound and other things have a huge impact on this but the

most important thing is the unforgettable atmosphere which you will experience when playing "Pulse".

When we look at the technical aspects, I will admit that the fluent scrolling makes an impression and we notice it immediately. Moreover, the graphics is neat and made nicely. Sound effects sound dynamically and they match the plot of the game.

The first thing that I liked in the game, was the difficulty level. The author thought about the fact that at the beginning the difficulty should be moderate. It allows us to adjust to the action and to train because later the game will be more difficult. As it is in the games of this type, we encounter a wave of enemy ships, machines, robots etc. The launched here and there missiles are also a threat to us.

Luckily, we can find the so called "power-ups" during the gameplay. And how to get those? You can, for

example, shoot down a fleet of incoming ships and this type of bonus will appear on the screen in the shape of a small rectangle. What do we gain from it? For example, the missiles launched from our vessel have



a bigger impact or they go in different directions and not only forward. Unfortunately, when we lose our ship, we also lose our power-ups. When we collide with an enemy and we lose one of our lives, use a couple of seconds of invincibility to get through a wave of enemy ships.



## PULSE

Publisher: **Sven Michael Klose**  
 Year of publication: **2014**  
 Platform: **VIC20**







REVIEW

# Scrap Yard Scrapes

Review: Komek; translated by: MA

*There are a few ways to encourage an experienced player to deal with a minimalist game. One of them is to compare it to a well-known and appreciated title. "Scrap Yard Scrapes" is a very simple game, but it has a bit in common with such titles as "Bomberland" and "Boulder Dash". Do you see it? It's enough that I mention those two magical titles and I am pretty sure that you are now more curious to learn about it.*

Scrap Yard Scrapes is a quite fresh game as it was published this year. It was written by Steve McCrea who also made a port of "Doom" for VIC20. Generally speaking it is an arcade similar to many other titles but, in my opinion, it is worth playing it.

The action takes place in a big scrapyard and your task is to find a way out of it. The task is not an easy one.

You will shortly find out that it is a huge labyrinth and your task is to get to the exit located on the opposite side of the screen. On your way you will find piles of trash that can be moved like to stones in "Boulder Dash". Sometimes that action is impossible so your only choice is to blow it up. In this case it is similar to "Bomberland". It would be all ok if it wasn't for the fact that the number of the bombs in your disposal is

limited. Luckily with each finished level you get two additional bombs. You are not able to detonate a bomb if your character faces the wall. Moreover, you shouldn't stay within the radius of an explosion as it will kill you. During the game you

should take notice of the time counter. If it reaches zero you will see an aggressive dog that will run towards you. If you are not fast enough you are in a big trouble!

While playing "Scrap Yard Scrapes" I was irritated by the fact that I was forced to you the keyboard, and to be more specific I had to use "Z", "X", "O", "K" and "P" keys, which is something I'm not fond of. Generally the games is a quite good, minimalist experience. The idea of a game taking place in a scrapyard is something I hadn't experienced before playing it so I can only invite you to play it.



## SCRAP YARD SCRAPES

Publisher: **Kweepa**  
Year of publication: **2015**  
Platform: **VIC20**

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# Demonsdom



COMMODORE

■ Review: Komek, translated by: Slayerpl

*Labyrinth games are games where the plot usually takes place in some spooky castles, dungeons, pyramids or other buildings. I will admit that I love this type of games. In the past I envied Atari players, because, at the beginning of the 90ties Polish companies released quite a lot of them. You could purchase one of them in almost every shop with computer games. However not everybody liked this. I read in one of the computer magazines, that some people were fed up with labyrinth games. These were fortunately only the opinions of the minority in the players' community and these games were sold with a considerable profit.*

As you probably know, "Demonsdom" is a standard labyrinth game. Its' construction and graphics remind us of Atari releases created by the Polish coders in the nineties. The game appeared during this period – in 1991, and I found out about it recently, while browsing Plus/4 World website.

You would probably like to know, what the game is about? Relax! I'll explain it.

You are in a gigantic, morose castle of Demon. Your task consists of defeating him and escaping from this horrible building. Unfortunately, it is not so simple and the game is quite difficult. Ghosts, apparitions and other creatures await you in every chamber. When you enter the next one, you have to wander without touching any of the creatures and sometimes it is very difficult. Remember also that you cannot touch the walls and the elements protruding from

the walls, but, relax, the longer you play, the more skilled you are. Sometimes there will be a situation when you encounter a closed entry to the next chamber. You have to find the key, which will open the entrance. However the key is guarded by the Demon's guard, who is protecting the key. And what do we do? Do not panic, you need to find a flask of holy water which will cause that the guard will vanish. Next you just have to go around two ghosts, take the key and run away. Generally,

every chamber is a new challenge because they differ in the construction and the placement of the obstacles.

I mentioned earlier that the game is quite difficult. At the beginning this is true. Moreover, when I saw that we only have 3 lives, I was doubting if playing the game was feasible. The game is however so playable that I stopped thinking about this and I concentrated on the task ahead of me. Graphically, "Demonsdom" is OK, but, as far as colors are concerned, monotonous. The music fits the gameplay, especially the spooky beginning. As far as playability is concerned, it depends on the personal taste, but I think that the game is highly playable, even for the players who are not the fans of this genre. If you do not play it, you will not find out !!!!!!!

**Generally, every chamber is a new challenge because they differ in the construction and the placement of the obstacles.**



## DEMONSDOM

Publisher: **CSM**  
Year of publication: **1991**  
Platform: **Plus 4**

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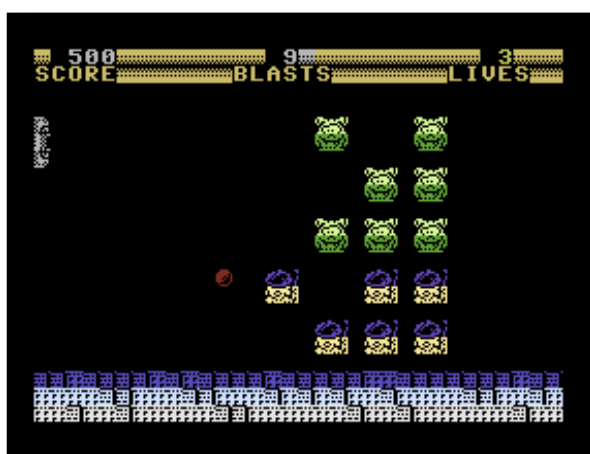


## ■ Review: Komek, translated by: GeoAnas & Tomxx

***All the games of "BreakOut" genre are nothing but classic arcades. Their rules are trivial because all of them rely on a paddle that bounces a ball in order to break various forms of bricks. I first came across such a game back in 1988 and it was the cult game called "Breakout".***

I was on holidays with my parents and sister in Międzyzdroje at the Baltic Sea in Poland. I recall standing in a large queue (as it used to happen in Poland in the '80s) just to buy my favorite chocolate ice cream. I could not stand still and soon got terribly bored. I decided to go for a quick stroll but suddenly my eyes hit a sign shouting: "Gaming Room".

Yeah, great! But... first I had to go back and ask for the permission to enter into the "Temple". - "Mom, Mom! There is a lounge with games, exactly like the one in our neighbourhood! Can I stay there a little bit?"

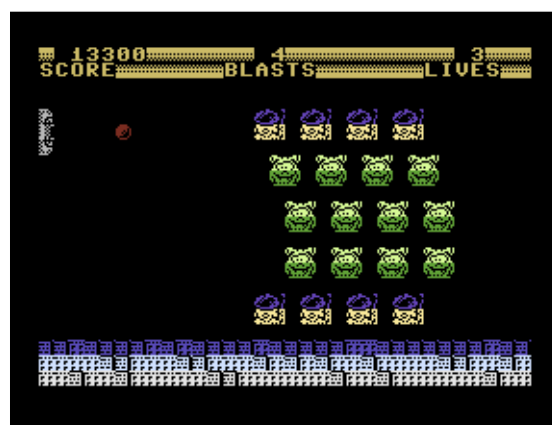


Permission granted and I quickly rushed into the lounge just to check the games. I first discovered "Arkanoid" (Taito, 1986) machine which stood at the entrance. It was my first face-to-

face meeting with this kind of game, and I'm bringing up this story only because ARCOS, the game I'm reviewing today, belongs to the same species.

What is it all about? Your mission is to kill all the aliens (monsters) and keep as many fellow astronauts as you can. You can also use ship-range and a special bullet – called the "Energy Ball", which destroys everything on its path. In addition, your ship is armed with a laser gun. Use it wisely, as the number of missiles is very limited. Fortunately, it is not so bad, because at the end of each level you get extra ammo, which, on the other hand, depends on how many astronauts you manage to keep after each level.

I think there is no need to describe on how the monsters or astronauts look like, because you spot the difference instantly. However, remember that Energy Balls and laser missiles also destroy astronauts, so use it smart in order to keep your buddies alive. The only annoying thing affecting the gameplay



is the speed of ship and ball movement. It's very slow on C16 and the C64 version is much smoother.

Few words about the game quality. As for the graphics: both versions (C16 and C64) look quite similar; nothing fancy but not too boring either. Music exists only in the C64 version. On C16 my ears didn't really register a single quietest sound. Playability? Yes, quite good.

Just to explain the score card: I took into account only the C16 version for my assessment of the game, so the score doesn't apply to C64 one.

### A.R.C.O.S.

**Publisher: Kabuto**

**Factory**

**Year of publication: 2013**

**Platform: C16, C64**





# *XV World Cup: Kick Off 2*



EDITORIAL

■ Editorial: Tomxx, currently rated as 27th KO2 player in the world ;)

***In terms of pure playability and in-game realism "Kick Off 2" is considered to be one of the best football simulators ever published, whether for 16-bit computers, or on any other system. 25 years have already passed since the game launch and the thesis of its uniqueness is best confirmed by the fact that the KO series is still supported by a devoted community. In October, KO Revival for PS4 was announced and in November the 15th World Cup was played, making KO2 a true pioneer of global e-sports.***

The spirit of the game is based on its dynamics, but the key factor is the ability to control the ball, which is extremely well developed for a joystick with a single fire button. It is just this aspect of the game that one can master, and – just like in real football – you can master the skills of dribbling, trapping and passing the ball. Quality, accuracy and effectiveness in the game depend solely on player skill and on, unlike in most modern games, in-game characters' stats. In a nutshell, you can play KO2 at the amateur level, but you might also improve to reach

the standards of pro-players holding the terminology of e-sports. I will not bore you here with KO2 nuances, as you can read more about this in two interviews presented on the following pages.

The fifteenth World Cup tournament was played in Ireland at the former chocolate factory located in the heart of Dublin. The two-day event was attended by 38 players from 11 countries, and the importance of the tournament was underlined by the presence of the two game developers: Dino Dini (designer and programmer) and Steve Screech

(graphics, sound, tactics and production). It was the first time in KO history where two of the game creators jointly participated in the World Cup. The events kicked off in a sublime and somewhat humorous way: with flags and national anthems ripped from





ANCO

ANCO

ANCO

**2015 World Cup stats**

Amount of games played: **384**  
 Amount of goals scored: **2659**  
 Average goals per game: **6.92**  
 New players in tournament: **11**  
 Total free beer drunk: **72** litres!

AMIGA



C64's Olympic Games, players were presenting themselves, sharing greetings and posing for group photos. Applause, short speeches and the ball kicked off on 12 Amiga sets (1200s and 500s) connected to traditional TVs or monitors. Simultaneously the crew started to drink an amazing Irish stout which was gifted by one of the local breweries.

Players were drawn into 4 groups and everyone had to face his opponent once. The top players from the group stage advanced to the next round to play for the Champion Cup, those rated in the middle continued playing for the Silver Cup, and the last ones fought to ... avoid a Shirt of Shame, which initially gave its name to the WC 2015 anthem song performed by Dino Dini himself. The official World Cup game version is called "KO-2CV" ("KO2 Competitive Version", the file accessible from: <http://2015.kickoff2worldcup.com>) and on top of the customized graphics for the 2015 tournament, it also includes some special settings for competitive gameplay. Great

atmosphere and equally great stout immediately resulted in a very positive atmosphere, good humor and lots of loud cheers after the goals were scored.

Football playtime is one thing, but there is something more important to point out: during this tournament I saw a group of 30-40 year old geeks that seemed to be incredibly integrated with each other. I met people gathered around a retro game they have played since their



childhood times that still gives them tons of fun! Just to play some football on classic Amiga sets, they flew in from various countries in Europe and beyond (one of the participants lives in Seattle, USA). Over the years they have formed a hermetic crew (most of them have known each other for years), but on the other hand they are extremely friendly and open to newcomers. Although I was new there I instantly got introduced and enjoyed the friendly and funny atmosphere! This tournament was indeed unique, as there were altogether 11 players attending the WC games for the first time. Such an influx of fresh blood is desirable in each community, and especially welcomed within the groups

connected through a 25-year-old computer game!

The second day of the tournament started with the last games of the group stages and then the World Cup entered its final stage. As always, there were a few surprises, some favorites were knocked out before the semifinals, while others, in turn, presented themselves above initial expectations. The Shirt of Shame winner emerged after a series of penalty kicks. The Silver Cup was won by Lee from England (it was his debut in the World Cup event) and the matches for the world championship, starting with the semi-finals, were shown on the big screen. At this stage the best players in the world showed their true skills, there were lots of goals and the games usually ended with high scores, like 7-5 or 6-9. Two finals were played between Andy G. from England and current champion – Gianni T representing Italy. Two games ended in an unexpected, yet fully deserved victory by Andy – the world champion title went to England and Andy couldn't stop wiping away the tears of emotion.

In one year we all meet again! The discussion on where to play the next year's World Cup has already been kicked off in the community forums (<http://ko-gathering.com/forum>).

**Kick Off 2 World Cup history**

2015 Dublin, Ireland. Winner: Andy G  
 2014 Copenhagen, Denmark. Winner: Gianni T  
 2013 Voitsberg, Austria. Winner: Alkis P  
 2012 Milan, Italy. Winner: Dagh N  
 2011 Birmingham, UK. Winner: Gianni T  
 2010 Duesseldorf, Germany. Winner: Dagh N  
 2009 Voitsberg, Austria. Winner: Gianni T  
 2008 Athens, Greece. Winner: Gianni T  
 2007 Rome, Italy. Winner: Spyros P  
 2006 Rickmansworth, UK. Winner: Spyros P  
 2005 Cologne, Germany. Winner: Gianluca T  
 2004 Milan, Italy. Winner: Gianluca T  
 2003 Groningen, Netherlands. Winner: Gianluca T  
 2002 Athens, Greece. Winner: Rikki F  
 2001 Dartford, UK. Winner: Alkis P

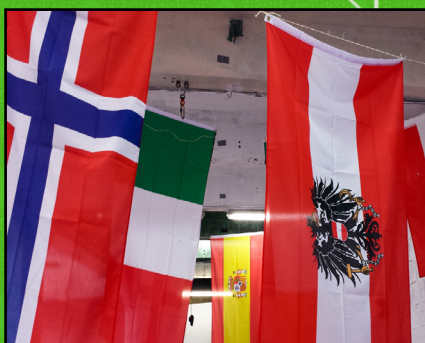
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■ Interview by: Tomxx

# Gianni T. *Kick Off 2* community star



*Gianni T., namely Gianni Torchio, is Milan-based 4-time Kick Off 2 World Cup champion, one of the major figure of KO Association community group, attendant of 8 out of last 10 World Cups. In the interview held during 2015 tournament in Dublin, Ireland, we talk about his early career, long-lasting passion, friendship and the future of KO2 community.*

**Hi Gianni, as the current Kick Off 2 world champion, how do you feel this year on your road to defending the title?**

So far I reached the semi-final stage and I'm excited to again play for the title. The atmosphere over here is very positive and the quality of football is high. Although some great names from the KO scene are missing in Dublin (for instance last year we had 4 previous champions playing for the title and this year it's just me who previously won the cup), we have many players over-performing this year. For instance, in the semifinals we already

have Olivier who reached the big screen games for the first time ever, and Andy, who kicked out Fabio in quarter finals. I know I'm the player they prefer to avoid on the road to the final, but all of the players at this stage are strong and games are going to be intense!

**How did your adventure with KO actually start?**

It all started 24 years ago, in 1991. I started to play KO2 on an extended A500. I was introduced to this game by my friend on February 13th. The day after, at the Valenti-

ne's Day, I took all the money I saved for years and bought both, the Amiga 500 and the KO2 game. It was the best game I've ever seen, purely love at first sight ;) Our KO group started to grow and we ended up with a team of 6 close friends, including my cousin and my brother sometime later.

**Do you practice on real retro hardware?**

I own 5 Amigas and practice at least twice a month. I obviously play more often before the events and world cup tournaments. But I don't call it a "practice". To me personally it's just a pleasure, it's a social fun time where we gather together, play, drink



“I took all the money I saved for years and bought both, the Amiga 500 and the KO2 game. It was the best game I've ever seen, purely love at first sight ;)”





and chat. Identically like going out to the pub.

### Do you consider KO2 the best football game ever created?

So far, yes! There are definitely football games with great ideas, like PES or FIFA, but their problem is the game play and more specifically, the way you handle the ball, which is far behind the KO standards. Sure, they have licenses, awesome graphics and the stadiums appear to live. However, if you score great goal you don't feel it's your own effort. Instead, you say this goal was scored by Messi because of his in-game skills. In KO, on the other hand, everything is only up to you. The main objective is to master ball control, exactly like in the real football. KO has the most powerful ball control system within all sports games and so far it's unrivalled.

“The main objective is to master ball control, exactly like in the real football. KO has the most powerful ball control system within all sports games and so far it's unrivalled.

### What about Sensible Soccer, KO2's main competitor on Amiga?

Sensible has got better graphics and their designers did a really good job on that. But the gameplay is far behind the KO level. For instance, you can steal the ball when running from behind, or you can't trap the ball, so there is barely any challenge with that.

### What do you think of the KO-gathering group?

It's like my family. We know each other for many years and actually grew up together playing this game. I met most of them in real life and it is where some great friendships have been started. Our meeting over here is only partially due to the tournament; another important aspect is that of personal relationships that we're maintaining.

### What is your hope for the future of KO-gathering?

I don't think we will significantly grow, but the goal is fulfilled for many years: to reach membership stability and keep this game alive. World Cup events usually host 40-50 play-

ers, and we tend to see an uptick of players from the countries where the events are being hosted in. We are all constantly in touch using our own forums but also through social platforms, like in Facebook groups or WhatsApp.

▼ World Cup 2015 top 8 players, from left: Jacob, Thor, Fabio, Gianni, Sandro, Andy, Oliver, Chris



▼ KO-gathering community at 2015 World Cup in Dublin. Gianni fourth from right.



▼ 2015 World Cup game: Gianni vs Helmut, Fabio spectating.



▼ WC 2014: Gianni in the middle, on the left Alkis Polirakis, Greek champion from 2013.







# GameDev Story: *Dino* Dini



*Dino Dini, British computer game developer, programming lecturer and original creator of the Kick Off series of football games. In the long interview for K&A plus Dino talks about early game development, rough relationship with the publisher, current relations with KO-gathering community and plans for the upcoming Kick Off Revival game for PS4.*

**Hi Dino, I can't start my interview in any other way but asking about new and shiny Kick Off Revival project. How did it happen that you again decided to refresh the franchise?**

I have been continuing game development ever since the original Kick Off, but with time passing it became very difficult to do independent game development, because of the state of the industry. I was an indie gamedev before it became a thing. That all stopped when the first PlayStation came out. A good business model for indie game development no longer existed. I didn't want to make a game in my spare time and then let it disappear with no marketing and no support from the publisher. A few years ago I tried with a game called "Buggy Wars" that was released in pre-alpha, but I shelved this project because there were not enough people interested in playing it.

Then about two years ago, Sony started communicating with me, and eventually gave me the opportunity and

funding to allow me to do my game my way, where I can call all the artistic shots and not be forced into certain solutions, like 3D realism or commentary - 10 years ago you couldn't do this.

**What is your mission behind Revival?**

I want to keep the spirit of the original game. The primary mission is to make this game with modern hardware and modern controllers, that has the spirit of the original game and takes it further.

**What's your progress so far?**

The ETA of the new game is 2016. For the last 18 months I've been working part time on it, but now it's my full time job. The final product will also use some of my early prototypes, like ball interception and free kick snippets.

**What does your development crew look like today? Are you a solo-development team?**

It's similar to the old KO - although I designed and pro-

grammed the game all by myself, I did have a publisher who provided support in certain areas. They connected me with Steve Screech who provided the pitch and sprite graphics, tested the game, advised on football and helped to devise and tune the tactic files. He had the role of a producer for KO, in the same way Mike Merren helped me on GOAL! It's like with books - you don't do everything in isolation, you have an editor to give you feedback. So even back then I wasn't all by myself and today this surrounding group is even larger. I've got someone to deal with the platform-specific stuff, someone else for special effects, art, animation, testing, optimization, marketing, etc. I've got all of them to help me so I can focus on game programming and game design.

**Who's your publisher and what's the role of Sony on this project?**

Sony is backing up this project financially but it's being published by The Digital Lounge - the French company run by



Abrial Da Costa, who's the guy behind the relaunch of Another World. So it's bigger and more professional compared to the original KO.

### **How did your development environment change over the years?**

Previously it was just bedroom programming and in general bedroom business. It was a 68k assembler vs Unity3d nowadays. But honestly the environment hasn't changed that much; there are obviously different languages giving you the convenience to make the game better, but in the end the whole process is very similar. I sometimes even question how much more productive I actually am nowadays, because I managed to make the original KO1 all in assembler in 15 months and only 3 months to do KO2 on top of KO1 source code. I did rewrite the entire code for GOAL! though.

**Now, lyrics in your KO2 World Cup anthem say: "25 years they've played my game". What do you actually feel seeing all these people playing KO and gathering all together year after year?**

I feel proud! If there is something I want to achieve with any of the art is to stand the test of time. I view what I do as an art form and my games are performances which are presented to the gaming audience thought a technological medium. To me writing a game is like writing a book or song. The ultimate goal is to create something that has a value so that it can be

remembered. This is an artist's ultimate test, isn't it? So yes, I can say it looks like I created something that stood the test of time and I'm proud of that and I'm happy of this achievement.

### **Do you keep in touch with folks from KO-Gathering? What are your relations with the KO community?**

Sure, but I don't have a day-to-day interaction with the group, as I'm a bit busy and also try to keep a little bit of a distance, because I don't find it too healthy to be right in there all the time. But I started to attend the events a few years ago. The first one was in Milan and the community treated me very nicely, they gave me a lifetime achievement award. This is a very precious thing to me and means a lot. Nowadays I'd like to get more involved into community, but the problem is to figure out how to do it so that it all works. I'd like to be involved into the development of the official competition version for Amiga. The current tournament versions aren't being developed by the source code, they are created by just hacking the executable.

### **Isn't it a perfect opportunity for you to get back to the community by offering your help and KO2's source code?**

Yeah, it could! But first I need the community to really want it. The community can be a bit fickle. When I got back to EU in 2002 and I introduced myself to the KO association I was not received in a very

friendly way. We moved on since then, but the community is its own thing and although I don't aspire to be the community ruler I still want to be the owner of the game. I view it as a protection of my moral rights. Strictly, people should ask for permission from me to modify my work. If people are playing with something that I haven't designed then obviously we start to get an issue with creative ownership. It's like people modifying a book to their own taste or editing a film, eg. Star Wars Episode IV, would that be right? It's an interesting question.

***"I view what I do as an art form and my games are performances which are presented to the gaming audience thought a technological medium."***

### **What kind of modifications are you referring to?**

Most importantly, there were already many fixes made to many different versions of KO: starting from the original, through World Cup, Final Whistle, to Return to Europe. There are a whole bunch of data disks that extended and fixed the game. There was also an 'oracle' crack that was much more popular than the official versions, which is probably the most played version of my game (with possibly unknown modifications). It turned out that there was a bug that I fixed, which may have appeared in early versions of the





game. And this is not what I intended as a designer! In a sense there was a version branch and a bug just became a feature. It gets worse.. people play hacked versions of my game and I don't even know whether their bug complaints are related to the version they have been playing, or if the bugs are in the crack.

#### What bug was it?

It was called "Penalty Box Dribbling". It seems it was

a piece of code that was used for Player Manager to make the players more likely to score in the penalty area by allowing them to control the ball better in the box. And I was okay to do this for AI, but absolutely not okay to do that for a player! It goes completely against my philosophy: a player and a ball a separate entities and you don't mess with them. It turned out that, by mistake, it was active also for joystick players and resulted in players being able to

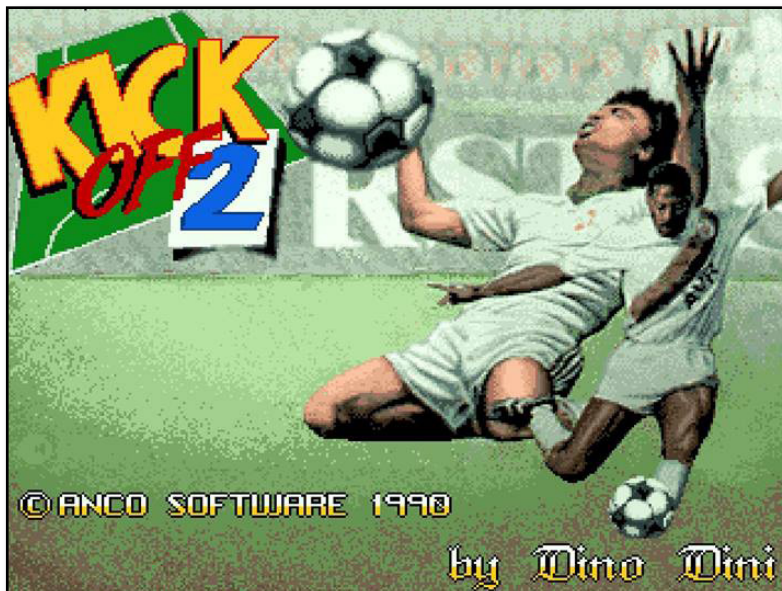
control the ball differently in the penalty box. Some players who got used to this feature really wanted to keep it in and those who didn't use it considered it as cheating.

#### The competitive version actually has the "PBD" toggle feature.

Yes, Steve C made it as an option to be turned on/off individually for players to try resolving this situation.

#### How do you design games? How do you approach the unknown before you hit programming phase of the game creation process?

When someone asks me to design a game based on sport, the first thing I do is to fully understand the concept of what I based my game on. And then I look for the most important design rules for my game, as the game I simulate already has its own set of design rules. So the natural thing is to go to the actual rules of football, which have been chosen as they made this game so exciting. I call it going to the source. Unfortunately, some people making games go to the previous version of the same genre. E.g. by making a racing game they tend to see the previous racing games, and I think this is wrong. Instead they should start by learning about the sport, and trying to understand what's boring and what's exciting. Even the Formula 1 regulators adapt to make their sport more exciting and game designer has to do the same: decide which rules add and



#### The history of Kick Off 2 iconic image

Did you ever wonder on which football characters have been depicted on the Kick Off 2 box cover and game loading screen? The image is quite iconic but most importantly the characters are real and the artwork was inspired by 2 photographs taken in '80s.

The first image on the left presents Mexican super star Hugo Sanchez and the picture was taken during 1986 World Cup played in his home country (the original one below). The second one is Andy Grey playing for English club Crystal Palace back in 1987.

Artwork was created by the 3rd party agency cooperating with ANCO back then and neither Dino Dini nor Steve Screech had anything to do with this work. It's quite important, as rumours say, that these images were just copied from football magazines. Back in eighties the media law was quite liberal and copyrights weren't strictly obeyed, so both players presented in the artwork never got a single penny of their contribution to Kick Off 2.





which diminish the excitement. You have to decide on what you keep and what you throw away. In KO I didn't want to have an off-side rule, because I didn't think it was necessary, but I did want the ball not to stick because I felt it very important.

**The fact that the ball doesn't stick to the foot is the main stamp of KO. Was it your initial concept or was it developed during the design phase?**

Right at the beginning the first thing I built was the pitch and a ball. And I made the ball an entity by itself equipped with physics. I never wanted the ball to stick as it would be like carrying the ball around, and it's not football. The most important parts of the game are the ball and the players' feet, and making it sticky is just breaking the reality and destroying the spirit of the game. It's an identifying feature of the sport, so carrying can work fine in basketball or rugby, but not in football. This is also what makes football a difficult sport.

**Have you ever considered acquiring players' and teams' licenses or was it still too expensive back then?**

There is a whole heap of issues around this. One of them is that you have to pay a license to use real player names, but

then also when you do that, you can end up in trouble if bad things happen in the game. E.g. When working on "Player Manager" I wanted to make random things happening to simulate real life. Like injuries, affairs or player's bad attitude to get him involved into bar fights. Isn't that interesting? This is part of life and it would make for great game play. But clearly, if the greatest star in your game is arrested by police on drugs charges you can get into real trouble. My philosophy here is that the game comes first. If you get yourself involved in the licenses that make sense only from business and marketing point of view, it won't help your game play.

**Did KO make you rich back then?**

No, I didn't have a publisher that was behaving in an ethical way towards me. So no, I never got any major financial reward.

**What was wrong between you and Anco?**

I worked with Anco without a proper contract and without any proper agreement. It all started off as a low risk project, so we had an agreement, but it wasn't anything professional. And to be honest, Anco had done their

### Games in the Kick Off series (1989 - 2016)

Kick Off (1989)  
 Kick Off Extra Time (Data disk) (1989)  
 Franco Baresi World Cup Kick Off (1990)  
 Player Manager (1990)  
 Kick Off 2 World Cup 90 (1990)  
 Kick Off 2 (1990)  
 Kick Off 2 1MB (1990)  
 Kick Off 2: Giants of Europe (Data disk) (1990)  
 Kick Off 2: The Final Whistle (Expansion disk) (1991)  
 Kick Off 2: Return To Europe (Expansion disk) (1991)  
 Kick Off 2: Winning Tactics (Data disk) (1991)  
 Kick Off 2: Super League (Expansion disk) (1991)  
 Kick Off 2: Maths Disk (Expansion disk) (1991)  
 Super Kick-Off (1991)  
 Kick Off 3 (1994)  
 Kick Off 97 (1997)  
 Kick Off 98 (1997)  
 Kick Off World (1998)  
 Kick Off 2002 (2002)  
 Kick Off Revival (2016) - in development

part of the deal by allowing the game to be successful. So I was quite happy to carry on that way and I wasn't as greedy to expect anything else. Until, one day, I went to Japan to help producing KO on SNES and I was presented with a video clip of another football game submitted to them by ... my publisher. It was Sensible Soccer, so Anco was talking to Sensible Software, which made me upset. My publisher that I was loyal to for all these years dealing with the clone of my game? "What about loyalty?", I asked and got an answer: "I don't owe you any loyalty". That was pushing me too far and at that point I said "Okay, then I don't own you any loyalty either". And so I was self-funding the development of KO3 (Goal!) and jumped ship to Virgin Games.

**Anco kept the "Kick Off" franchise, right?**

Yeah, I couldn't take that off

**“My philosophy here is that the game comes first. If you get yourself involved in the licenses that make sense only from business and marketing point of view, it won't help your game play.”**





them, because there was no paperwork. It was a mess. And so I got detached from my creation and it's a painful lesson for me. They then continued to create new games under the same brand. What's worse, some version of them were based on my own source code not authorized by me. The lesson is always make sure that a proper agreement is in place!

#### Was it the case with PC version of KO as well?

The PC version of KO has nothing to do with me. Anco has done it, probably using my source code. The point is that they kept doing KO games without me and it actually caused me damage, as people see a KO game and they think: "Oh, this is from Dino Dini".

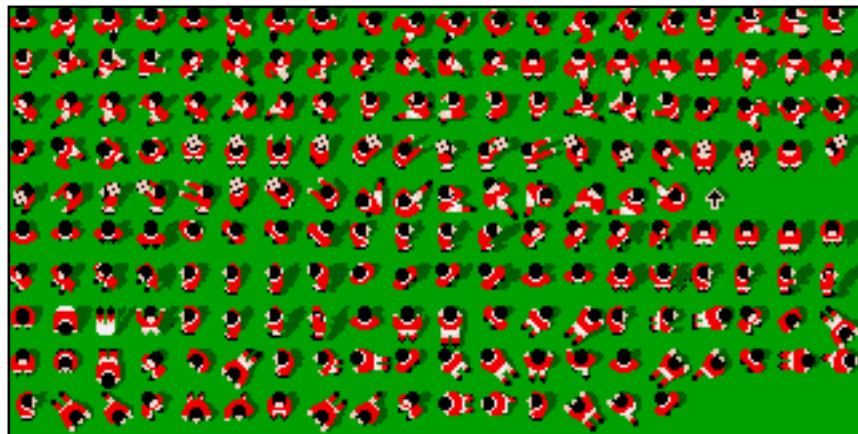


***There was that war that happened between Kick Off and Sensible Soccer. In fact both of these games owed their existence to me, because Sensible Soccer was a Kick Off clone!***

▼ Promotional Dino Dini's Kick Off Revival t-shirt.



▼ Kick Off 2 sprite sheet as seen on Amiga.



#### Do you still recall any funny bugs from the KO2 development works?

There were a few of them. There was a bug that would make a white player to appear on the pitch. These sprites were unused and were meant to appear only in case of an error. This mystical white player that would

because the finite-state machine I was using was not up to the task of creating these complex interactions of logic over time in the robust way. So I had to come out with something better.

#### Can you tell us more about the war between football games back in early 90s?

My relationship with the audience has been very difficult for all these periods. In mainland Europe there is very little bad feeling towards me, but in the UK it has been a bit different. There was that war that happened between Kick Off and Sensible Soccer. In fact both of these games owed their existence to me, because Sensible Soccer was a Kick Off clone! Sensible Software actually acknowledged this in interviews that their game was created on my KO concept, that they played KO and wanted to do their own football. I did not clone their Microprose Soccer, I did not even play it, and if there any similarities they are coincidental. It's difficult, as people just take someone's product in order to release their own, and

rarely appear got interpreted as a ball boy. Another one was the situation when ball would end up on top of the net and everybody was there looking at each other, because the goalkeeper didn't know how to get the ball. Or the one with the strange and annoying bug with the corner kick in practice mode. Sometimes, if the ball goes out with the keeper's deflection but crossing the center of the goal line the corner was called on the other side of the pitch. This is actually why I decided to rewrite everything for Goal!,



eventually they release almost identical one, with few basic changes. I could have lived with it, but then there was this war started off by Amiga Power magazine which later took over the media. I came off really bad, as I had been silent in the media until Amiga Power published a fake letter supposedly from me, which harmed my reputation, and caused me a lot of pain.

**Was there anything not implemented in the original KO that you wanted to see in game?**

There were some features but I kept adding new content in the following versions of this game. At some point of KO2 (around Expansion disks) there wasn't actually much more to put in, and that was actually

one reason on why I rewrote the game completely for "GOAL!", which would have been Kick Off 3. The main feature with "GOAL!" was that I wanted a player to control running speed. And it was something I was missing from previous KOs, but that required a complete rewrite of the game as it was such a fundamental change. So the inertia (speeding up and down) was put in so that one can control player's speed. Nowadays we have analog sticks and it's possible to control it much easier.

**So can we expect this feature in Revival?**

Yes, the intention is to allow you to control the speed of your player, so that you can choose between speed and low ball control or better control but with a slower run. This is true with the real sport. However, because of this can now be done by pushing the stick by different amounts, there is no need for inertia.

**Thank you and good luck with your new game!**



***Nowadays I'd like to get more involved into community, but the problem is to figure out how do to it so that it all works.***

▼ *Dino Dini in front of Kick Off Revival banner. Dublin, 2015.*







# Soccer Kid

■ Review: Don Raffito, translated by: Slayerpl

***It is 1994. Before the World cup in USA a game appears that refers directly to the upcoming tournament. But instead of being a competition for games such as "Kick Off" or later "SWOS", we encounter a game which tells a story that the world cup may not happen.***

**Y**ou can see that you are getting older when you look at your children. As an older guy around forty years old I am fully aware of that. But I'm also aware of another saying: "what youth is used to, age remembers". So

when my older son started to be interested in other things than fairy-tales and wanted to use a joystick, I wanted to show him where his roots are. I presented to him games which I play often and which, at the same time, he liked. Every year there are more

of these games. The favorite one is definitely "Lotus 3" and "Ruff'N'Tumble". But when I see new hobbies of my son, his friends, football, Champions League football cards, I decided to show not Fifa 14 but "Soccer Kid". And it succeeded, because my child inherited my inclination to amiga platform games.

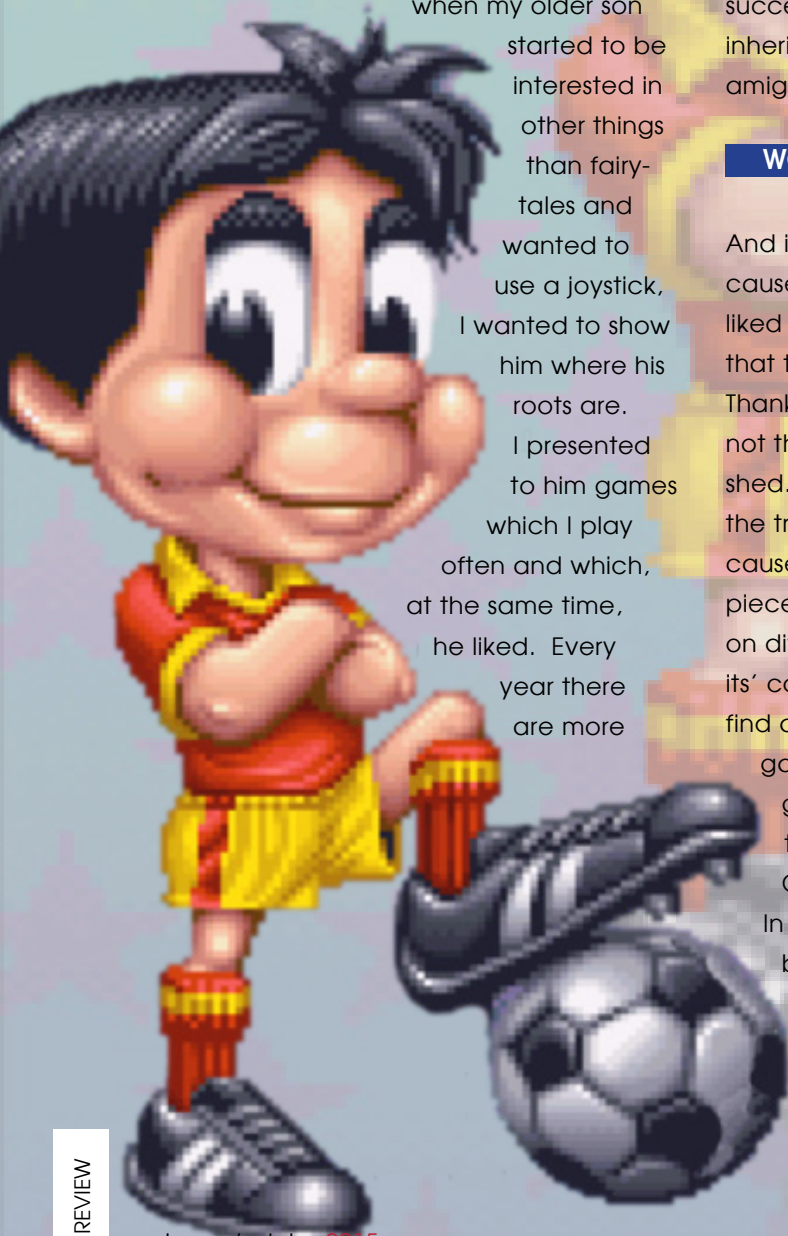
## WORLD CUP IN DANGER

And it all may happen because of..... aliens, that liked FIFA trophy so much that they decided to steal it. Thankfully, our invaders are not the sharpest tools in the shed. When they try to steal the trophy, they destroy it and cause that it shatters into 5 pieces. Falling fragments land on different continents. It has its' consequences. If we don't find a brave person who will gather the fragments and get the trophy back to the organizers, the World Cup will not take place. In this moment the brave person appears, a real tough guy with a gun..... that is the usual approach when

the aliens are involved..... Not this time around. The brave person is a young football fan, who has a ball and is incredibly agile and tries to defy the hordes of opponents, find all the pieces of the trophy and save the human kind and the football championships.

## TALENTED KID

Thanks to the enormous agility the ball in our hands..... oh wait, In our legs is a real rocket. The little kid juggles it and dribbles to aim and give a deciding blow against his alien foes. Besides that, the inflated balloon called ball is useful when reaching upper ledges. But as it is often the case with the balloons, their encounters with sharp objects usually end bad and there are a lot of sharp objects in the game. There is a saying: The ball is round and there are two goals..... When the ball is pierced, or the ball goes away from us, it can happen that we do not have enough balls left. And what we are left with is the kid's agility.





### A SOLID PLATFORM GAME

Good animation of everything moving, fluent scrolling, nice graphics, visible characters and surrounding, we have all the features of a good Amiga platform game. Gen-

erally speaking, it is hard to find the shortcomings of this game. I looked up other platforms (PC, PSX, NES) on which the game was released and it looks almost the same on each platform. As far as graphics is concerned, the

game is really nice looking. Sound is similar in quality to the graphics and it complements the game. Nice to listen to, for an adult and also for a young player..... the modules and samples mix good with the action on the screen. And the typical sounds for football, e.g. referee's whistle, underline the close connection of the game with football.

KRISALIS, who as a publisher was not a company specializing in platform games and their most famous title that I can think about is "Sabre Team", is not similar to the "Soccer Kid". They surprised us with this release just like our national football players with their performances in the qualification game against Germans. So I consider "Soccer Kid" as a successful game for the more sophisticated users. The game can be a little bit too difficult for the young players. As we know, children and also less patient adults can sometimes lose their patience. But the practice leads to the progress. And stubbornness of a maniac creates.... a computer maniac. It is better to start from the beginning..... But wait what was first: a chicken or an egg? Oh wait, wrong magazine!

### SOCCER KID

*Publisher:* **Krisalis**  
*Year of publication:* **1991**  
*Platform:* **Amiga 68k**

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# In the light of the gradients – the most beautiful skies in Amiga

■ Editorial: Petrichor

***"Gradient" - to quote Wikipedia. "The solution used in computer graphics to complete a specific area tonal smooth transition between at least two colors."***

I woke up today in the morning, at about 6am, in some sort of insomnia state or something like that. Brewed myself a delicious cup of morning coffee and with its first sips I started to stare through my window at the beautiful view of the rising morning sun fighting the darkness of night. One simple atmospheric phenomenon filled with a parade of colors combined with all-encompassing silence of the morning worked for me in some magical way and brought back many memories of the time that I spent with my "dear

friend". How many beautiful sunrises and sunsets I had seen with "her"? The most beautiful one was stored on two floppy disks.

While enjoying my morning coffee I started to wonder why these simple graphic effects called gradients, that are nothing more but smooth transitions between at least two colors, play such an important role in video games? For me, the answer seems to be quite simple: these effects make the world of the video game we play more alive and true. Take for example a game Shadow

of the Beast 2, an excellent side-scrolling platform-adventure. After a brilliant intro, we are finally in the game and what draws our attention? In the foreground we see the main character finding his way through the dark land of Karamoon, fighting and resisting dangerous enemies and solving simple puzzles. But what attracts the attention of an inquisitive player, is a beautiful gradient sunset full of sinister outlines of mountains and mysterious shapes in the far distance that show a full picture of this dark world. When I played this game for the very first time, I kept asking myself - what lies beyond the horizon and what adventures still await me? I felt like being a part of this land and that my journey had a purpose.

“How many beautiful sunrises and sunsets I had seen with "her"? The most beautiful one was stored on two floppy disks.





Would you like to see another example? Sure! Let's take a look at a game called Agony – an amazing scrolling shooter with graphic artistry which delights us even today. The burning glow gradient in one of the last stages of the game is so well made that you could feel the fire consuming this beautiful land. Again, in the foreground we have the main character and right behind him we can see the burning trenches of the trees and, in the distance, a fiery glow of the burning sun.

I could give you hundreds of other examples and although the gradient works best with 2D games, it is not limiting itself to the over-mentioned. Just imagine that Lotus III Ultimate Challenge, one of the most popular racing games on Amiga, doesn't have the gradient effect. You're riding one of the curvy roads in the Alps, you pass other cars, taking another corner and go down the hill towards ... a simple, flat and one-coloured background, instead of the colorful setting sun and the mountains. Would the fun be the same? I am sure, it would not!

Or would you feel the same atmosphere in the game "Dune", when upon visiting Fremens on the desert instead

of the beautiful colors of the rising sun in the distance you would only see limited cold blue color imitating the sky? It would not be the same.

I think the above examples give you a broader picture and illustrate the importance of gradient and how it changes the perception of the games we play.

To create a good gradient often requires a lot of work and optimal Amiga resources management. Sometimes it may seem that using gradients is just a simple trick, where one simply needs to select two matching colors and make a smooth transition between them. But to get a great result, which for example can be seen in such a masterpiece like "Jim Power", you have to use a few extra tricks like sprites techniques to manage the effect.

The masters of using graphical capabilities and pushing Amiga to the limits were, without a doubt, guys from Psygnosis. Through various treatments and graphic tricks (raster lines, halfbrite graphic mode, etc.) they were able to create a graphical masterpiece, such as Agony game, which I mentioned earlier. I can say without a doubt that the best gradients I've ever seen were in their games.

Using all these graphic tricks in the backgrounds combined with what the game itself offers when it comes to the gameplay, creates a con-

sistent and living world that we - the gamers - can identify with. That's why the sunrise I was looking at this morning had brought such vivid and strong memories and prompted me

to write this text.

I hope that after reading this article and then looking at a spectacular sunset you'll mutter under your nose, "Ha!

In what game have I seen this sunset?".

*"The above examples give you a broader picture and illustrate the importance of gradient and how it changes the perception of the games we play."*



### Top 10 of Amiga sky gradients

1. Shadow of The Beast (seria), Psygnosis
2. Agony, Psygnosis
3. Gods, Renegade
4. Unreal, Ubi Soft
5. Lamborghini American Challenge, Titus
6. Dune, Virgin
7. Soccer kid, Krisalis
8. Lionheart, Thalion
9. Lotus III: The Ultimate Challenge Gremlin
10. Elf, Ocean





# Resurrection: *Karateka*

■ Review: Bobikowoz; translated by: Slayerpl

*Jordan Mechner is famous in the world of electronics because of two releases: Karateka and Prince of Persia. The second title is a world known brand which exceeds the game industry. Beside computers and game consoles Prince of Persia appeared in the cinemas, comics and also in the special edition of LEGO. The elder brother of the Prince, pundit of the Japanese martial art, is not that famous. He was not however completely forgotten. After almost 30 years after the debut on the Apple II Mechner prepared an updated version.*

## SAVE THE GIRL

The story told in Karateka is not so original. The village, where you have lived, was burnt down and your fiancée Mariko was abducted by the local warlord Akuma. As the sole survivor, you have to do something. You have to free



the princess from the dungeon and cause that the vile warlord pays for his sins. The way to the palace is not easy, the palace is placed on the mountainous island and terrain obstacles are not going to stop you. When you reach the coast, Akuma knows about your presence. His men, one by one, follow your footsteps. Be careful and concentrate on every target. Those are the principles in which Karateka believes.

The gameplay begins when the warrior ends the climb on the treacherous cliff close to the palace. From this moment on, his every step will be a test of skill of fighting against the Akuma warriors. Here the differences the classic game from the middle of the 80ties and their updated 2013 version begin to appear.

## BEAUTIFUL JAPAN

The change in the graphics is obvious. The years go by and the technology also progresses and the author didn't want to use the popular in indie circles pixels. New Karateka is not one of the high budget productions so it doesn't astound us with a huge number of effects put on every polygon. However we cannot deny the game its' beauty. A little bit overdrawn, unproportioned characters, together with cellshading, give the comic style to the game. This form does not age too quickly. Everything, just like in the original is clear and neat.

30 years ago it was difficult to talk about special graphics effects, minimalistic interface consisting of two energy bars is not interrupting. Sporadically, the time elapsed and the amount of points appear. The

## Screenshots

All the pictures, which are not from C64, were downloaded from karateka.com. These from C64 are my own screencaps.



graphics of Karateka can be considered nice looking. The seen, far, far away apex is the metaphor of the objective of our warrior. The whole time it is in the range of our sight and it does not let us forget about it. Even though it is far away, it is not moving, it does not change with the elapse of the time. Minimalistic graphics could enchant us on the day of the premiere, even though when we look at it from today's perspective it can be too monotone and static, especially when we enter the dungeons. When the far away mountain disappears, the screen is filled with black which is limited only by the doors, which hide probably next dangers. The darkness which is omnipresent in the underground, tries to take away our confidence, destroy our concentration and hide the road to the objective.

The characters with the full range of their moves can give an impression of a foto-realism. Nowadays, to make the computer characters move in the way similar to reality, the motion capture technology is used, which scans the movements of the actors. Jordan Mechner also used this technology to capture the reality but in a different way. Rotoscopy is a solution which uses manual drawing of film captures. The effect that he achieved, satisfied him to such an extent that he used this technology in his next production – Prince of Persia.

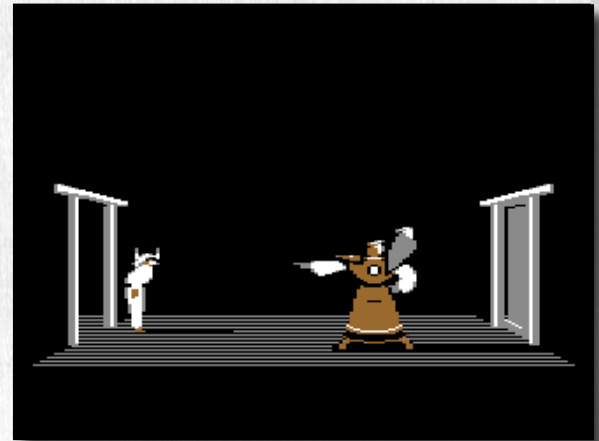
### IS IT A GAME OR A MOVIE?

To cause that the game would not be the series of senseless fights, Mechner uses between the fights short cut scenes, in which angry Akuma appears and sends the armed guards in our direction. In the 80ties of the last century we could say that we were a part of interactive, film adventure. In the new version we can see the animated scenes between the fights. To keep the game's premise not even a word is said during the game. The authors decided to use the animations based on the games engine, because of that new Karateka is unique in comparison with other small productions. In the majority of small games plot cut scenes are limited to single pictures, with a small amount of animation.

Only two games, but five different endings are to be discovered, counting of course only the ones you can see after defeating Akuma. The game industry in many games gives us ability to end the game in a couple of ways. In the beginning of 80ties the end of the game with something more than a screen with congratulations was a rarity. The game which had a two endings, was a novelty.

### HIGH FIST, LOWKICK

The gameplay has undergone certain changes during the years. 8bit Karateka gave the full control into the hands of the player. Using the keyboard, you could deliver six different types of blows and precisely choosing the range and the



placement of the punch. What is left from this sort of gameplay? Not a lot. Characteristic triangles symbolizing the level of health is the only element which didn't undergo the modification. Modern Karateka is focused on blocking the punches and requires from the player the focusing on the rhythm of the opponent. Before the opponent attacks, we hear in the background the series of sounds which indicate how long the attacking sequence of the opponent will be. If we succeed in blocking the attack, then we can perform the counterattack.

### Anecdote

Version for Apple II was on a one side of a diskette, but trying to load the game from the other side was also possible. Switching the sides of diskettes caused also turning the world of the game upside

In both releases the player and Akuma's guards automatically





## NOSTALGIA VS. MODERNITY

From the contemporary point of view, the predecessor seemed to be monotonous. Small variety of opponents and the environment causes that the schematic fights can seem boring. You become more bored when after the exchange of punches automatic regeneration of health appears. The fights are not that dynamic. This old release requires from the player not only the agility, but a big dose of

regenerate their powers. Just like in the shooters from last years, you need to avoid the blows of the opponents for some time to regain your health levels. In the 80s it was an another argument to say that Karateka was one of the pioneer games.

In the remake the health regeneration lost its importance and the valiant warriors find on their way healing plants. Plural in the world warriors is not an error. Not only the fiancée tries to liberate the princess – an-

other novelty. There is a trio of karateka's who try to help the player with freeing the princess. When one of them dies, another one appears in his place. The switch of the karateka additionally causes lowering of difficulty. Every next fighter controlled by the player can hit harder and has higher level of health.

patience. The aforementioned problems were eliminated in the new version. Instead of patience, the concentration and timing is being tested.

After many years not only the refreshed reedition appeared but also a variation on the theme of the original. Both games can be finished by an experienced player in less than

half an hour, which causes that if we have a moment of time, we can try to play a classic game and also check if the modern style didn't destroy the premise of the original, born in the centre of the feudal Japan.

# Karateka

Copyright 1984 Jordan Mechner





# Jordan Mechner



INTERVIEW

■ Interview by: Bobikowoz & Tomxx



*Developer, producer, screen-writer and writer - man of many talents, jack of all trades. Designer and creator of the famous Prince of Persia video game franchise; the movie based on his IP is the highest-grossing film based on a video game. Exclusively for K&A plus Jordan speaks about resurrected Karateka, technology limitations, Hollywood perception, friendships in gamedev and famous floppy disk reverse side joke ;)*

**Hi Jordan! Your early game development days are strongly related to the Apple II computer. Do you sometimes get back to retro-gaming on your first platform?**

The last time I plugged in my old Apple II, a few years ago, I was happy to see my kids (age 8 and 10) delighted by games like Choplifter and Serpentine. There's a tactile charm about the 1980s keyboard and joystick that even kids who grew up in the modern touchscreen era can appreciate.

**The games you have developed are often described as unique and well executed and thus are considered to be the classics of the industry. What games do you personally call classics? Are these the games you played as a kid or something else that impacted you later on?**

So much of the impact depends on what age you are when a game comes out, and which ones you put time into playing! A few that stand out

for me, in no special order: Super Mario 64, Ocarina of Time, Ico, Shadow of the Colossus, Grim Fandango, Journey, Limbo, GTA V, Beyond Good & Evil, Rayman Legends, Choplifter, Asteroids!

**Characters in your early products are animated with rotoscoping - the technology that wasn't widely used in game development back then. How did you come up with such a unique idea?**

I did it because I wasn't a very good animator, and my first attempts to animate the figures in Karateka looked completely unconvincing. So I cheated.

**Did you use any vendors while creating the first Karateka or were all aspects, including graphics and sound, completed by yourself?**

My dad composed the music. My mom's karate sensei modeled the fighting. Broderbund's in-house artist Gene Portwood drew the castle graphic. Roland Gustafsson

did the copy protection, and taught me a lot about Apple II programming. So did Robert Cook, who did the ports to Commodore 64 and Atari 400.

**After playing both versions I feel that the original Karateka was presented in realistic graphics matching those days' hardware abilities; however the remake is more of a comic book style design. Why did you go for such a change?**

The story and game play were so simple, I thought it would fit well with a more stylized look.

**Did you have any ideas that weren't implemented in the original Karateka (because of the technology limitations, for example) but were eventually used in the remake?**

The greatest technology limitation on the Apple II was the sound and music. When my dad played the score on a Steinway grand piano, it sounded thrilling. In my imagination, I heard a whole orchestra, like the soundtrack to a Kurosawa film. Unfortu-



nately, the Apple's built-in speaker could only play one note at a time, so it was a bit of a let-down for my dad. For the remake, Christopher Tin took the original themes as a starting point and composed an amazing original score. You should have seen the smile on my dad's face when he heard it.

**How do you recall your input on The Sands of Time movie? Is Hollywood your dream destination?**

I wrote the first screenplay for the Prince of Persia movie, and I'm proud and awed that it brought so many talented people together for such a lavish production--but in terms of shaping the final product, the director and

writers who followed me had more of an impact.

I love games and I love movies, but I can't pick one over the other. I keep going back and forth between them.

**How was your relationship with your publisher back in the 80/90s? Do you keep in touch with the ex-members of Broderbund? Are there any other friendships you started at your early days of game dev that you've keep alive till now?**

Doug Carlston, who founded Broderbund, is still a close friend. So is Robert Cook (Gumball, D/Generation). As a programmer in those pre-internet days, I didn't get out much to meet game developers outside of Broderbund, so most of my friendships with other game developers happened later. I met John Rome-

ro about ten years ago in an elevator in GDC, when he told me he'd written me a fan letter about Karateka when he was 17 (and I was 19).

**Can you share any cool stories related to Karateka's development processes?**

As a joke, Roland Gustafsson and I inverted the lookup table so the entire game would play upside down. We walked into Doug's office, showed him, and suggested that we put it on the reverse side of the floppy disk, so that people who accidentally put the disk in upside down would get a surprise. I never thought he'd say yes, because it added something like 25 cents to the cost of goods, and publishers are in business to make money. But he did.

**You have already succeeded in multiple creative fields. Do**

**you feel it's time to rest or do you still believe that your greatest achievement is still to happen?**

The greatest achievement is always the one that's ahead. And the resting and enjoying need to happen all along the way.

**Thanks and good luck with your further projects.**

▼ Jordan Mechner at his Apple in '80s.  
Photo courtesy of: MyGaming (<http://mygaming.co.za>)





### The Strong - US National Museum of Play

The Strong is an interactive, collections-based educational institution in Rochester, New York, USA, devoted to the study and exploration of play. The Strong collects and preserves artifacts, documents, and other materials that illuminate the meaning and importance of play. The hundreds of thousands of objects in The Strong's collections comprise the world's most comprehensive assemblage of toys, games, dolls, electronic games, and other items related to play.

The International Center for the History of Electronic Games collects, studies, and interprets video games, other electronic games, and related materials and the ways in which electronic games are changing how people play, learn, and connect with each other, including across boundaries of geography and culture.

**Jordan Mechner** also has his own special place at The Strong as part of the 2014 Collection. The image on the right side presents the animation reference footage for Prince of Persia. Photography below shows developer's materials, sketches, drafts, music notes and multiple of Mechner's releases on various platforms: from Apple II to Xbox. Let's keep fingers crossed, so that the collection of The Last Express, Karateka and Prince of Persia gets larger in the upcoming years.

Both images are courtesy of The Strong, Rochester, New York.







# Le Fetiche Maya

■ Review: Petrichor

*The world of computer games knows several prominent archaeologists, starting from lovely Lara Croft, a recalling troublemaker Nathan Drake and ending with a brave and funny Rick Dangerous. Among all these adventurers and scientists, there is also Michael Fairbanks, hero of the game "Le Fetiche Maya", published by the French studio Silmarils. Let's look at his persona a little closer ...*

**L**e Fetiche Maya" is an adventure game with very simplified arcade elements. The game's story-line is not very clear from the beginning and, unfortunately, the further we go into the game the less important it becomes. We step into

the shoes of the above-mentioned Michael, who is the game protagonist and a protegee of Professor Edward Halifax, a famous archaeologist who has been killed under mysterious circumstances somewhere in the Jucatan jungle. The professor

the hidden treasure of the lost Mayan civilization. Unfortunately for Michael, his arch-enemy Olrik Karloff is also on the track to find the hidden treasure.

**“Michael takes on the task of continuing the work of his mentor, but on top of that to also discover the truth that stands behind the death of his teacher...**



has been looking for a mysterious artifact that, according to the local beliefs, leads to the hidden treasure of the Maya. Michael takes on the task of continuing the work of his mentor, but on top of that to also discover the truth that stands behind the death of his teacher and which connects directly to

The gameplay in "Le Fetiche Maya" is composed of two elements - the adventure part and the arcade part. The adventure part focuses on the exploration of ancient ruins in search of clues related to the treasure, dialogues with the local population, on solving strange and obscure puzzles, and on avoiding dangers in the form of traps and wild animals. The second part of the game is a very simple arcade mini-game, where we have



to drive Michael's SUV and take him from point A to point B while avoiding various traps like boulders and gaps or by selecting the appropriate turns at different crossroads, while ensuring that we have enough fuel and oil to get to the destination point.

The Repeatability of the game -play and very awkward control system of the main hero combined with poor animation (It has always been the weakest point of Silmarils games) makes it very

It's really difficult for me to re-view this game. On one hand, the continuous irritation caused by the way the main character moves and acts has put me off from playing Le Fetiche Maya, on the other hand exploring places such as Chichen Itza or Uxmal gave me a lot of fun, so I wanted to push further

**“If you are interested in the fallen civilizations and logic puzzles, but do not pay much attention to the actual gameplay, you should give this game a try, even just to climb the famous pyramid Cuculcan.**

annoying and not entirely satisfactory. In the game there are often moments where a player dies just because they put their feet in the wrong place because of the poor animation. On the plus side are well prepared, although still quite similar locations which, despite their simplicity reflect the mystical character of destinations we are visiting on our adventure. They definitely give this game a charm. Unfortunately, there is no music to give the game proper atmosphere, we are only accompanied by simple sound effects.

to push story -line forward even though I still wasn't sure what this game is all about.

The game is very specific and aiming at those who will appreciate the game's atmosphere. If you are interested in the fallen civilizations and logic puzzles, but do not pay much attention to the actual gameplay, you should give this game a try, even just to climb the famous pyramid Cuculcan. Other gamers can rather skip this title.



### LE FETICHE MAYA

Publisher: **Silmarils**  
Year of publication: **1989**  
Platform: **Amiga**

5 2 6





# Jaguar XJ220

■ Review: Don Rafito; translated by: Slayerpl

***"It all depends on which side of the fence you are standing". When I put that popular saying into an image search engine, a variety of weird things appeared. A huge chunk of them was utterly sexist and chauvinistic (not exclusively male). So, having acquired a point of reference, I started my comparison. But is it even possible to have a proper comparison without innuendos and allusions?***

Not according to a certain commercial for some car insurance price advisor, which teaches you that all men are: a) drivers who pay for car insurance, b) thinking with their crotch, c) such simpletons that only a half-naked actress (who sometimes has to take some common cold medicine) can

persuade them to buy something. Is it me, or have we really sunk to such depths? How far is going to get in the future, e.g. at the time of our retirement? Oh, I forgot, most of us, i.e. people of my generation, thanks to ZUS, Fiskus and NFZ (polish social security institutions) won't survive long enough to retire. So no worries.

I'm far from doing irrational comparisons, since I try to approach everything in life in equally objective manner. However, each time someone says "Jaguar XJ220", I want to reply with "Lotus". That's probably what most Amiga racing games fans would have done in 1992 and would still do today.

Back in the day, it was said that "Jaguar" was the main competitor of "Lotus". Each of these games had, and still has, a slew of fans and opponents. It can be witnessed nowadays just by looking at the comment sections under various articles about the games, where fans argue about superiority of their beloved title.

In spite of my fondness for "Lotus", "Jaguar XJ220" still has a relatively high position on

my "The Best of" list, so I'll try to review it as objectively as possible.

The game greets us with an option to select one of four available languages: German, English, Italian and French. After that we are transported behind the wheel of the titular Jaguar XJ220, the fastest serially-produced car of the early nineties. Other brands like Ferrari, Porsche, Lamborghini or Bugatti still appear in the game, but their cars are driven exclusively by your opponents. The game offers a career mode that can be played alone or in local multiplayer. Thirty-two available tracks faithfully represent the atmosphere of their real-life counterparts with effects such as rain, snow or fog that accompanies the player while racing in England, Switzerland, Japan or Egypt.

I swore not to make direct comparisons, so I'll avoid creating the "better/worse" type of review. Known from the rival game, the track editor makes an appearance, but allows the player for a better control. Instead of an auto-generated track restricted only by a few sliders, the player can manipulate a large number





of parameters, from the decorative bushes and the number of turns to the placement of the whole scenery. Another feature absent in the competing game is the economy system. By finishing races on a high enough place, the player is awarded cash, which can be used to repair the Jaguar after each race. This money is also used to pay for the flights, if the player chooses to continue their career abroad. The farther the player's destination is, the more cash is the flight going to require. The game can be controlled by a joystick or a mouse instead of a keyboard (e.g. for the second player. This is also a new feature, which is unavailable in "Lotus"). The game also introduced the ability to save player's progress after each race. Save files are stored on floppy disks, even if the game is launched from Whdload.

It is said that "Jaguar" surpasses its opponent in the graphics department. I think that's because of all the well done details, which are sharp and consist of a large number of frames that help the game feel smooth. Some digitized graphics add to the attractiveness of the game. The colour scheme, on the other hand, is in my opinion too grey. The backgrounds are bleak and not diverse enough, which detracts from my final grade.

The humming of an engine, melodic soundtrack and an option to choose a song and sound effects before the race are all made well enough, but in my opinion lack the overall-

### Running the game under WinUAE

I used to have some problems with "Jaguar". Every time I started the game through Whload on Emu-Ami (configured as an expanded A1200 with a fast 040 and a graphics card) it would run so fast that the game would end before I even had a chance to control the car. I tried changing the Whload settings by editing the parameters through the tooltype icon to no avail. As my high school maths teacher used to say: "the best solution is always the hardest." It turns out that all I had to do was to turn off JIT in the WinUae options, even when AmigaOS was loaded. But... it had to be turned off just before I ran the game.

dynamism. The songs don't live up to their full potential. Some claim that this soundtrack is nothing short of a masterpiece, but I'm going to expose myself to their wrath by saying that I don't find it captivating. It is pleasant to listen to, but it doesn't sweep me off my feet.

In my final comparison I'd like to say that "Jaguar XJ220" is a game dedicated for more advanced players. It's more realistic and sports a better physics engine, which translates into higher difficulty level than in "Lotus". The aforementioned ability to control the game with a mouse is quite unique when it comes to racing games, but serves its function perfectly.

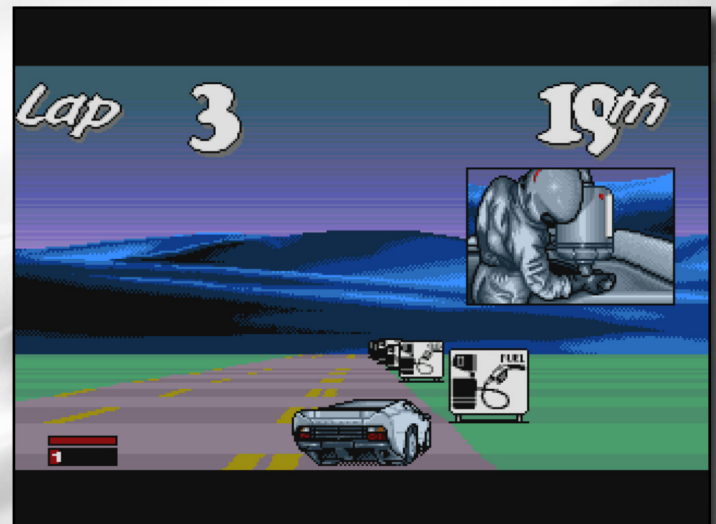
Regardless, "Jaguar" is considered to be one of the best racing games for Amiga and every fan with a dose of self-respect should not only have it in their collection alongside

competing titles, but also coming back to it whenever they please. So, pedal to the metal.

### JAGUAR XJ220

Publisher: **Core**  
Year of publication: **1992**  
Platform: **Amiga mk68**

8 7 8







# Skunks

■ Review: Don Rafito; translated by: Slayerpl

*You shouldn't start an article with a question, but I will ask something. What has in common a black and white small animal, which, when endangered, is famous for its' disgusting way of defending against the predator (secreting a horribly stinking substance) with a car racing?*

Completely nothing, except for the name of the presented game. The aforementioned Skunks is a pretty and a smart mammal but its' name, especially used in a Polish everyday language, is not so nice. It sounds bad: "You skunk", or "You stink like a skunk", etc. If the

authors of the game knew how this name is perceived in Polish language, maybe they would thought about changing it. Soo.... I will propose a new saying: "What are you doing? Oh, I'm playing Skunks!", let's get into details.

The presented car racing game, immediately after launching, is similar for me to the known from Amiga and old PC's "4D Driving Sport". It refers to it very often and it is too bad that the authors didn't name the game similarly (I understand that adding a number 2 to "4D Driving Sport" would require complicated procedures, when we take into the consideration that the title is not commercial). But we have "Skunks". We can say it different: the game is in English, so maybe we should pronounce it <skʌŋk>? Maybe it is better ??

After we unpack the archive anywhere and launch the game, we are asked which vehicle we choose. There are 7 vehicles available, among other sedan, 4x4 jeep or the truck with

a trailer. Why is it important? Because the author writes in his manual that there are elements of physics and the way the car moves on the road. Next question is about the choice of the circuit. There are eleven circuits and every one of them has a different scenery, amount of turns and the colours. Either way, the circuits are varied. Then we sit behind the wheel and.... drive.

Steering the vehicle is pretty simple (it is also included in the manual). The pointers plus the chosen keys. For example: left pointer (and keys O and Y) make the car turn left, right pointer ( and the keys P and U) cause our car to turn right. We accelerate by using the up pointer (and the keys Q and T), and we use brakes with the down pointer (and analogically keys A and F). We push the key R to use reverse gear when we went the wrong way and we want to get back on the circuit. The key C is used to change the way of viewing the race, the keys M and N rotate the point of view. ESC makes us leave





the race and we can look at the replay of our performance ( here we can use also keys C,N and M, with which you can change the cameras).

With its' appearance and the gameplay the game visibly refers to the aforementioned classic, for example with the possibility of opening our own performance as a film. I will say even more, it is better. Completely 3D vector graphics, in a full 24bit colour palette. Pretty gradients, visible objects and scenery. The game may lack the introduction, GUI or something, known from the predecessor.



#### Skunks:

Some biological data about the skunk. I couldn't keep myself from adding this. A skunk is a mammal from the family of Mustelidae. Its' stinking substance is a secretion, which is used by the skunk to attack the eyes of the attacker, when endangered. Earlier this animal was hunted because of its' quite beautiful fur and to make perfumes from its' perfume glands (yeah, the same where this horrible secretion is created). Fortunately, nowadays, besides the skunks in the wilderness, the skunk is bred as a fur bearing animal. We don't know whether to smile or cry. When you yell at your dog, who does not listen to you, he can bite you, but skunk...? You make your decision yourself.

Unfortunately, as far as the sound is concerned, it really is as bad as skunk secretion. Besides the simple hum known from the old PC's I didn't hear anything. Of course, we can understand when the car accelerates, brakes or hits an obstacle, but it is all. For godsake, Aros supports AHL. Couldn't

they add a couple of nice samples and a dynamic module? Oh well, we can only launch our Mplayer with our favourite mp3, that way we will not hear the constant hum.

"Skunks" is a typical SDL game port, which has already debuted on Linux. It says in the manual that the game supports also joysticks but it is not com-

pletely true. Maybe this is true for Linux, but in Aros we have to configure our joystick to work (that's why we mentioned earlier the additional, besides the pointers, steering keys). If someone does not know how to do it, read my article about it "Receptanasukces, czyli mojeboje z joyem w Arosie", in

C&A Fan 9). Even though the sound leaves a lot to be desired, I think the game is worth launching, playing and dreaming how fine would it be if they issued the game as "4D Driving Sport 2



AKA Skunks" (there appears sometimes by the name of the first games second title "AKA Stunks", so maybe "Skunks" is a deliberate typo?).

#### SKUNKS

Publisher: **Matei**

**Petrescu**

Year of publication: **2015**

Platform: **Aros**







# Star Wars



■ Review: Don Raffito; translated by: Górká

*When Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope was released in 1977, George Lucas had no idea of how powerful machinery he initiated. Up till now, there are only few sagas which apart from movies have got such a huge media franchise as books, comic books, stories, gadgets and... games. One of them is for sure a juvenile wizard whom my older son adores (Star Wars comes on the second place). Although I'm not fond of Harry Potter, I value it a lot mainly for its soundtrack. Why is that? Do you know that the well-known "Ta daam, ta da da daam..." as composed by John Williams? Indeed, the same composer wrote music both for "Star Wars" and Harry Potter. I remember listening to these soundtracks while playing "Napalm".*

Alright! Let's leave Harry Potter and Amiga RTS alone and move to our Jedi. When I found out that Lukas sold his copyright to Warner Bros, I was wondering what the experts of Micky Mouse and Donald Duck would invent. And they

did invent. I'm writing this in September 2015. When you read it, it will be after the premiere of the recent Star Wars: The Force Awakens which is released on 12th December.

When I found out about continuation of the famous saga, my reaction was quite skeptical. I was wondering what kind of hybrid it might be: combination of Micky Mouse and Darth Wader. I wasn't the only one that had doubts. The web was flooded with a huge number of extremely funny demotivatos for example Micky Mouse with the Jedi sword, Donald Duck in Jedi Order suits, or as a Yoda with huge round ears....not to mention Princess Leia as Hannah Montana, no comment... When the trailer was released, one of the most anticipated premiere of the year, I had the urge to watch it for myself. So had my son. We're going to the cinema in December for sure. My son is going in order to watch a spectacular

show (as he is only 7) and me to decide if Warner Bros managed to pull it off after obtaining the copyright. I do hope the money won't be wasted. My curiosity is even more fueled by the fact that Harrison Ford performs again in it. As he's an almost retired-actor, it worked out for him in the last part of "Indiana Jones and the



Kingdom of the Crystal Skull", so I think that comeback did him well. Besides, the director was a remarkable Steven Spielberg and George Lucas had a hand in it too. Mainly thanks to LucasArts, which deals with creating videogames based on movie sagas (mainly for Star Wars).

The title I'm heading at had not much in common with





Lucas. However it refers inseparably to the famous saga. Although the game was released 11 years after the first part of the saga had been released, it let the fans of it and computers games contribute to the whole machinery I mentioned at the beginning of the article.

"Star Wars" was one of the first games based on the movie 'Star Wars', which started a new era of media business connected with creating software based on blockbuster movies.

I played "Star Wars" for the first time on C64. One of the few games that overwhelmed me with its 3D possible on Commodore. On Amiga there wasn't such oohs and aahs but I was satisfied with the better qualities samples coming to my ears.

Coming to the point. It's a typical shooting FPP. We're standing at the helm of X-Wings Rebellion and we're heading towards Stars of Death. So that it wouldn't be so smooth, we encounter hostile units of the Empire. Our task is to shoot the hostile objects and to avoid being shot by our opponents at the same time. If we are hit by a missile, we don't die straight away. Our shields get weakened until they fall apart. A few such cockups and we'll see the well-known inscription "game over". At last we see our target, we aim precisely at the reactor of Death Star and boom! We start our mission from the very beginning but on a higher level of difficulty.

And that's on and on again until we reset the score.

I mentioned the graphics earlier. On C64 it's a wow, on Amiga- superb! Black background imitating the space, among which there are vectorial 3D shapes reproducing Empire ships. Big plus for the effect of the hostile units falling apart after they're being shot. Although the shapes look as if they were just their outlines, they are still pretty clear, even though the player is not bombarded by the great amount of colours. It reminds me the geometry from the primary school. The animation is quite decent too, even on C64.

The comparison of C64 samples with Amiga would be as if we compared black-and-white artistic photo of a beautiful woman with the vivid mountain landscape. Both are a feast to our eyes and a pure delight. It is the same with the soundtrack. Within its category, both Amiga and C64 are kept at a high level. The samples on Amiga are a bit better due to the better equipment itself but there are less of them. However, they are well performed and they harmonize with the action on the screen giving the impression of a real battle in space.

"Star Wars" is a typical action based on reflexes. The Commodore version is controlled by a joystick, on Amiga by the use of a mouse. In both cases your hand is in action. After all, every fan of 'Star Wars' or games based on movie series should try this game. As the game is nice

and easy (well not so easy at higher levels), it switches off a constant thinking and makes us react straight away it is unrivalled in its category. As it comes to the



choice of a version, I'll leave you with the dilemma. I have to admit though that when I want to play this game, every time I grab it on C64. Maybe it's due to the sentiment.



### STAR WARS

**Publisher:** Vektor Grafix (C64), Brøderbund – USA, Domark - Rest of the World (Amiga)  
**Year of publication:** 1988  
**Platform:** C64, Amiga-m68k





# Aladdin

■ Review: Don Rafito, translated by: Petrichor

***We've heard about games based on various movies on many occasions already, so there is no need to dwell on this subject, however there are these special kind of games, that even though are really good, have never made it into top lists.***

That was precisely the case with "Aladdin", a game based on the Disney's movie with the same title. The studio had tried to get some extra funds and released a series of cartoons about the adventures of Alladin, but if I think of the quotes and "funny" moments...oh, well, perhaps there was something wrong with the Polish dubbing.

Anyway, the game was been released when players preferred different types of games (and the possibility of getting them into their Amigas). And what about "Aladdin"? Just another arcade game. Kinda cool and that's it. Bit of a shame, because it's actually a pretty well made video

game. And why have I decided to look into this title in the first place? Some of the games that get hooked on, are the pieces already tested by my older son. Instead of feeding his mind with

The game is strictly connected with the movie plot. Thus, we have the game's main protagonist Aladdin, his main rival, the Vizier Jaffar's, the beautiful Princess Jasmine (who our hero falls in love with) and of course in Genie of th magical lamp. Oh, and lets not forget the clever monkey Abu. Our hero is definitely not one of the Turkish dignitaries, he's just a wanted petty thief in a city of Agrabah. So in addition to evil Jaffar's minions we have to struggle against law "enforcers". Well, both have a lot in common, as Jaffar is one of the main advisers, of very naive and blind Sul-tan (who of course is expecting a betrayal from his vizier). Aladdin must not only fight for



modern, aggressive and bloody games, I encourage him to try good old Amiga titles. "Aladdin" fell to his liking, and I am not surprised because the title is quite good. With its fairy-tale like and positive approach, the game influences the young one and I believe it should be at least in the top 20 of Amiga platform games of all times.

his survival, but also protect his beloved Jasmine and future father in law. In addition to the monkey's agility, our main character can fight with apples and a sword (he throws them into enemies, or inflicts painful blows with the sword). And so he goes through various levels - and during one of his adventures he visits Cave of Wonders where he finds the magical lamp and gains an ally, the Genie,





he also finds himself in Sultan's Dungeons and finally ends at the Jaffar's Palace, where he eventually has to fight the final battle. There is also an element of gambling here. After each stage, the player runs a draw, in which he can win e.g. An extra life or diamonds (quite a valuable resource that can be ex-

The title brings the traditional arcade games movement from left to right or from right to left to the next level. Developers used everything that Paula's can provide. As the sound effects are also well made. Each sample, every sound, or each theme music; Everything is well balanced, pleasant to the ear

your children and yourself in front of an Amiga screen (even one from the emulator), instead of spending the whole day in front of a TV and watching "Home alone", but

before all that retro gaming, take a walk. It's definitely a must!



changed for a lot of useful items). Alright, that's enough blabbering about the gameplay as I might have already revealed too much.

Lets talk about the technical side of this title. Graphics and animation in the game are really impressive. The game is intended for Amiga with AGA chip-set. I will not lie, AGA shows all the potential here when it comes to arcade type of games. Graphic is full of details and character animation contains a lot of frames. And the backgrounds are clear and varied. The scrolling is also quite smooth.

and in sync with the action on the screen. Some sounds are also quite humorous, which increases the attractiveness of the game.

"Aladdin" is one of the iconic titles, which in the Amiga glory days was converted to other platforms (usually it was a PC and some consoles, in this case the Sega Genesis). Currently the game, like many other great Amiga titles can be launched from a web browser. But it is not always the same. So, instead of lying belly-up after Christmas cooking experiments (I mean, happy feasting of course), get



### ALADDIN

**Publisher: Disney Software**

**Year of publication: 1994**

**Platform: Amiga 1200**







TUTORIAL

# Exploring and expanding an untested

# C128

■ Tutorial: GeoAnas

*A few months ago, I became a happy owner of a Commodore 128. It was the “flat” model, the one without an internal floppy drive. Its price was very tempting. I bought it immediately for only 30 EUR. What was the catch? It was untested. The seller of course did not give anything to help the poor buyer (in that case, me (!) to find out what its real condition was. No power supply, no AV cables...absolutely nothing.*

An experienced Ebay buyer is always suspicious of this kind of auctions that could be a big flop. “Untested” usually means broken. Sometimes this could result to purchase just an empty case without any electronics inside! Frankly, I decided to take my risk. I was so desperate to own one

Commodore 128. I couldn’t afford it in such a steep price they usually reach. I have so many, fond memories of it, lots of sweet memories from my childhood. A very good friend owned one back in the days and I still remember how many endless hours we were spending, playing games and watching old school demos. It was always turned on 64 mode!

Commodore 128 is actually a “3 in 1” micro; A fully compatible and ready to play C64, a more professional 128 and thanks to Z80 CPU, a computer capable to run CP/M OS with a ton of applications ready-made for this system.

intact. I immediately thought that this was a good sign and how lucky I was with my smart purchase. I rudely tested the keyboard springs by simply pressing the keys...quite soft but responsive, everything in order! It was the perfect time for cleaning and tidying up. I had first to dismantle the computer.

There are several screws to unscrew. I had to be very attentive during the process, paying a diligent attention to the one screw that holds the grounding harness of the keyboard. (Image 1).

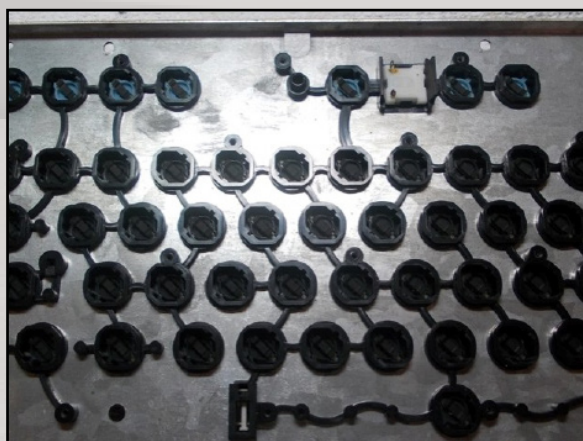
Within some minutes, I was standing in front of a huge metal cage serving both as interference shield and a giant heat sink. There are several metal clips on direct touch with many chips (like SID). The design or better the concept of shielding and heat dissipation is way more professional here than to his little brother’s; C64.

The keyboard is sturdy and heavy. There is a huge metal plate underneath it, with little black plastic “beehive” like

▼ Image 1



▼ Image 2



## STEP 1. Cleaning the computer – Recaping the board

When I received the package I was fairly surprised to notice that the machine was in a fantastic condition. Some yellowish on its cover and keys was the only proof of passing of time. As a matter of fact, it had never being opened since the guarantee silver sticker at the bottom was

cells, containing the springs and rubber contact pieces of each button (Image 2).

As an observer of such a quality construction, I couldn't help to think to myself: "They just don't build computers today, like they used to..."

After some good metal "twisting", I managed to remove the frame. That revealed a huge motherboard, fully populated with all chips in place, all in perfect order, ready to power on and run!

After a good cleaning and recapping of a motherboard but before proceed any further, I would like to dwell on solving some puzzles, explaining some "mysterious" signs, left on the board by the designing team of engineers.

There is an inscription at the bottom of the pcb, to some early revisions of the motherboards (as in mine), writing:

"RIP: HERD / FISH / GUAY / PAR" (Image 3).

What do these initials really mean? Let's ask Bill Herd ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bil\\_Herd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bil_Herd)) to explain:

"The syntax refers to an inside joke where we supposedly gave our lives in an effort to get the FCC production board done in time, after being informed just the week before by a middle manager that all the work on the C128 must stop as this project has gone on far too long. After the head of Engineering got back from his business trip and inquired

as to why the C128 had been put on hold, the middle manager nimbly spoke expounding the virtues of getting right on the job immediately and someone else, \_his\_ boss perhaps, had made such an ill suited decision. The bottom line was we lived in the PCB layout area for the next several days. I slept there on an air mattress or was otherwise available 24 hours a day to answer any layout questions. The computer room was so cold that the Egg McMuffins we bought the first day were still good 3 days later..."

Another Easter Egg pops up after typing in following command: "SYS 32800,123,45,6". If you still get booted to the monitor prompt, try first entering "BANK 15" before the SYS command. It displays the engineers involved into C128 designing process (Image 4).

## STEP 2. Assembling a DIY power supply to "feed the beast"

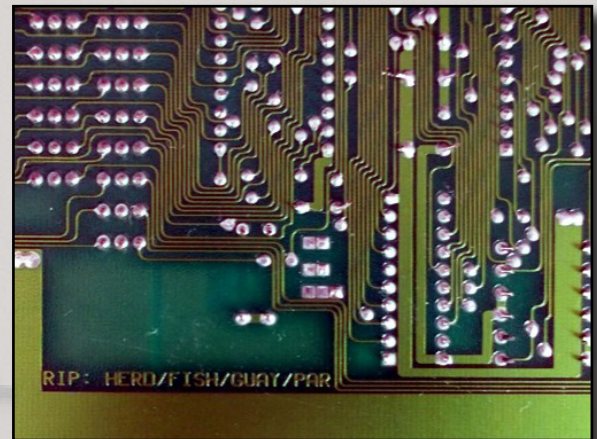
The C128 I purchased was lacking for a power supply. I had two options: either to buy one in a very dear price, or to build one from scratch. The US power packs give an output of AC 9V-1A and DC 5V-4.3A.

In USA, Commodore 128 was marketed as a system for professional applications and business use. The concept of a stronger power pack was perhaps based on the possibility to use more peripherals attached to it. The designer engineers might think that potential buyers were going

to use it together with a REU memory unit. That would draw additional power from the computer so they had to offer a more powerful psu, able to cope with all future expansions.

The European power supplies were a bit fainter, with outputs of AC 9V-1A and DC 5V-2.5A (Image 5).

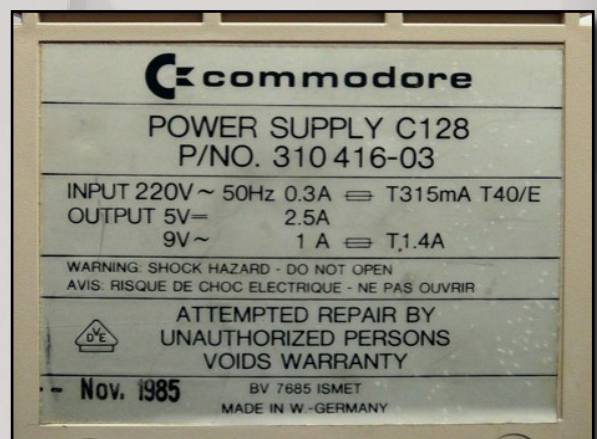
▼ Image 3



▼ Image 4



▼ Image 5

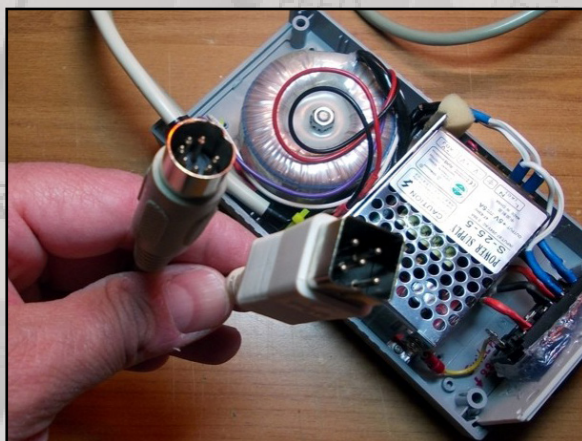




At a first sight I thought it was a direct replacement....Same size, same box shape, even the same square metal plug. So why to assemble a new power supply and not grasp and use the Amiga's, that was lying on my desk instead?

That could be a lethal mistake leading up to a fried motherboard and a nervous break-

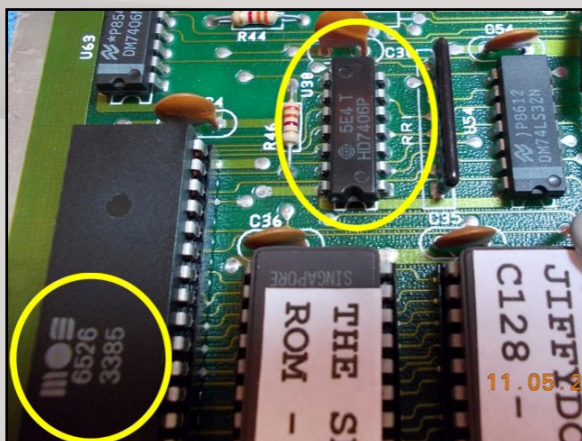
▼ Image 6



▼ Image 7



▼ Image 8



down. Amiga's power supply outputs DC 5V and 12V, while the one of 128 outputs DC 5V and AC 9V!

So, let's build one! I found many schematics on the net to help me with my plans. I decided to use two kinds of transformers for my new unit. For the DC 5V current, I placed one "switched" type trafo, with a maximum power limit of 5A.

For the AC 9V, I purchased a toroidal trafo with 2 separate AC outputs up to 1,67A each one. Toroidal trafos are well known for their excellent efficiency so for me it was simply a one way decision. You can google to find out their benefits.

You will be surprised for their quality features! I also had a dead power supply for my C64s. I was planning many years ago to make a heavy duty psu to replace the old ones, but I always postponed it. I grasped now the opportunity and killed two birds with one stone. Adding a secondary output using the output lead from the dead one was a piece of cake (Images 6 and 7).

### STEP 3. Repairing unresponsive keyboard strokes (Replacement of 6526 CIAs)

Plugging the power in and turning the switch on, brought life to the 128 circuits... "Success!", I shouted very loud! It was a pleasure to watch the jolly, green welcome screen of the computer! It was finally alive...or not?

I pressed a random button on the keyboard without any response...and another...and another. After all, there were still some more problems to solve. I had to find out the reason of this misbehavior.

Unfortunately this is a glitch that occurs very often to 64s, since the 6526 CIA chips that control I/O processes are very sensitive. It's been rumored that even a slight touch to the joy port with statically charged fingers could kill them.

According to Ray Carlsen's troubleshooting manual: "... Swap U4 with U1 to check. Check also buffer IC U30". The chip at U30 is one of 7406 family series, namely the HD7406P (Images 8 and 9).

Fortunately I was able to load the diagnostics from my "Easy Flash" cartridge. However, despite all my work, "swapping" the CIA chips unfortunately wasn't fruitful. I had nothing more than a still unresponsive keyboard and a persistent indicative message, of a bad chip U1 (CIA) (Image 10).

The only available replacement I could find was a pair of 6526B (with a 3 MHz clock). My board was an initial production version, so it had two plain 6526 (1 MHz), installed on. That didn't prevent me to try. I went ahead and swapped the busted chips with the faster replacements I had handy. I replaced the HD7406 as well and soldered a new socket. 7406 sat "comfortably" on it and... Presto, my problems have vanished! Further tests showed that both of the CIA chips were busted.



I was anxious and in a rush to get my computer working again and had already desoldered the 7406 chip. That impetuosity left me with no option, but to replace this one as well. For more info about CIA chips revisions take a look at the following link:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MOS\\_Technology\\_CIA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MOS_Technology_CIA)

Final touch was a very meticulous keyboard cleaning, spring's lubrication etc, etc...in a "key by key" approach. This is only for the undaunted users though ;)

- Text mode: Fully programmable, typically 80×25 or 80×50, 16 RGBI colors (not the same palette as the VIC-II).
- Graphics modes: Fully programmable, typical modes are 320×200, 640×200, 640×400 (monochrome, interlaced).

If you have a flat model C128, please do yourself a favor and upgrade the internal VRAM, from the factory installed 16K to a whole bunch of 64K ram. Your computer will appreci-

“Your computer will appreciate such a gesture and you will be able to enjoy its graphics capabilities and extra video modes to the max!

#### STEP 4. Upgrades...

##### 1. Upgrading the VRAM

With all malfunctions fixed, it was time for an internal research. Time to make some upgrades! Commodore 128 has two video chips and is able to display many video modes:

1. **MOS 8564/8566 VIC-II E** (NTSC/PAL) for 40-column composite video (for a TV-set use):

- Text mode: 40×25, 16 colors.
- Graphics modes: 160×200, 320×200.
- 8 hardware sprites.

2. **MOS 8563 VDC** (or the 8568 chip in C128DCR) for 80-column digital RGBI component video:

ate such a gesture and you will be able to enjoy its graphics capabilities and extra video modes to the max! All you need is to desolder both 4416 ram chips inside the metal armored box at positions U23 and U25 (**Image 11**).

Those rams are soldered straight to the board. You have to be careful because your working space is narrow. This mod job requires some soldering skills and patience not to destroy any tracks. The end result will justify your hard work!

Once desoldered, please check for track continuity and then install two (preferably socketed) 4464 ram chips (**Image 12**).

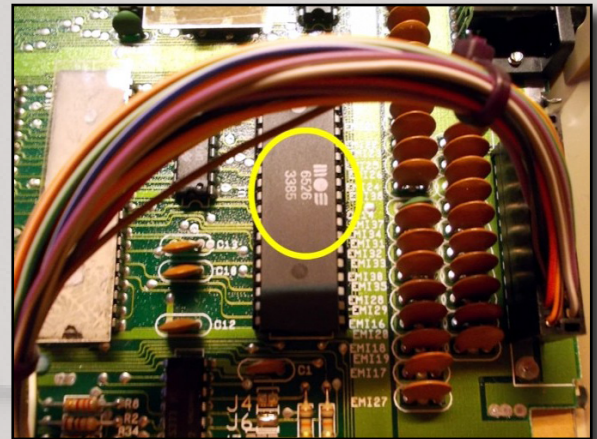
According to Ray Carlsen one can test the results by typing in the following line in a 80

#### Demos to watch

3 high-resolution demos listed below are ranked as true masterpieces. Make sure to play them on your C128:

- VDC Mode Mania V1.1 (2015, Akronym Analogiker)
- Risen from Oblivion VDC V2 (2006, Crest and Oxyron)
- Risen from Oblivion (2001, Crest and Oxyron)

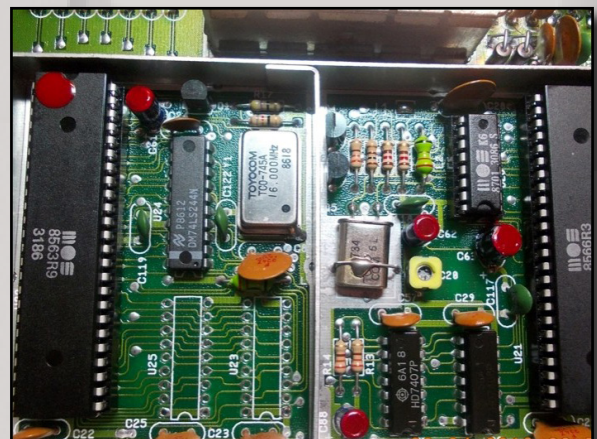
▼ Image 9



▼ Image 10



▼ Image 11





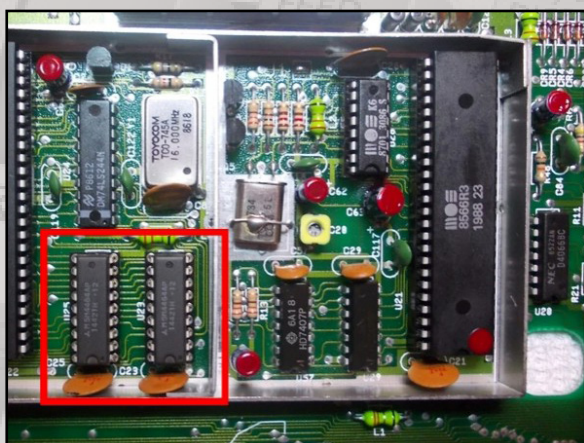
column display mode:

**POKE DEC ("D600"), 28: POKE DEC ("D601"), 63: SYS DEC ("FF62"): SCNCLR**

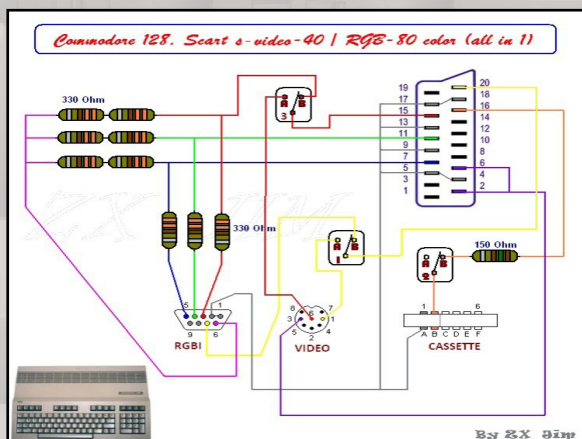
If the screen responses with a READY message and looks normal, you have 64K of VRAM installed! If you had only 16K, the screen will fill up with zeros.

Now it is time to build or pur-

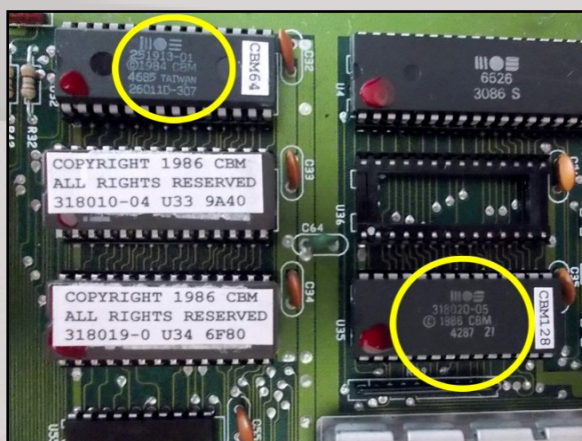
▼ Image 12



▼ Image 13



▼ Image 14



chase a special RGBI cable (or adapter) to enjoy some hires graphics and demos that require this amount of up-graded VRAM. You also need a CGA standard compatible monitor. Monochrome display is also possible on composite video monitors; usable with TV sets only when the set has SCART and/or baseband video-in sockets in addition to the antenna connector. Color is possible through SCART, only monochrome through baseband video-in.

I built my own adapter based on schematics I "nicked" from the blog website of Sinclair Jim (aka ZX-Jim) (†, 2015) <http://zxjim.blogspot.gr/2011/12/commodore-128-scart-4080-color-all-in-1.html>:

*"For those who want the best picture in all modes, I suggest the following connection, which replaces the AV40 with s-video40 signal"* (Image 13).

Jim was a real pro, a great teacher giving us all his help without asking anything for exchange. We'll miss him for sure.

## II. JIFFYDOS Installation

JIFFYDOS is a great alternative Kernal for all Commodore computers. Its power is the time enhancement of disk "load" and "save" functions. JIFFYDOS is still a commercial product, meaning that you have to pay a small fee to use it to your machine. You can order it either in eeprom or download the ROM overlay image at Retro Innovations: <http://store.go4retro.com/>

[categories/Commodore/Firmware/JiffyDOS/](http://www.geneb.org/jiffy-dos/).

For those who are eager to make their own adapter, here is a quick guide how to make one. This is also available at: <http://www.geneb.org/jiffy-dos>. This procedure is only for flat models. Others like C128D need a different approach. You will need:

- Two (2) 27C256 or 27256 EPROMs
- Two (2) 1/4 watt carbon resistors, 4.7K
- One switch and some wire

There are two Kernal proms on a stock C128, located at U32 and U35 (marked with a yellow circle) (Image 14).

You first have to download or find the suitable JIFFYDOS images for both C128 and C64C. Then you will need the original Kernal images for C128 and C64C. You can find these, easily at: <http://www.zimmers.net/anonftp/pub/cbm/firmware/computers/c64>. You have to program two 27256 EPROMs.

First EPROM will contain both the JiffyDOS 128 code and the original Commodore 128 Kernal ROM (P / N 318020-05). The other one will be used for "64" mode. It will consist of the JiffyDOS 64 Kernal and the original C-64 BASIC plus C-64 Kernal. Both the original C64 BASIC interpreter and Kernal are included in the file named "64c.251913-01.bin" that can be downloaded from <http://ftp.zimmers.net/anonftp/pub/cbm/c64> server.

After EPROM programming,



bend the resistors in a U shape and solder them to pins 27 and 28 of each EPROM chip. Solder a piece of wire to pin 27 and then carefully clip it just a little bit, to prevent the chip from touching the socket on the board. Solder a second piece of wire on (ground) pin 14 of each EPROM. **(Image 15)**. Take a switch and solder the middle (common) pin to the ground wire. Solder the other free pole of the switch to the wire you have soldered the EPROM's pin 27. Follow these steps for the other EPROM as well.

One last step is to find jumper 6 (J6) on the motherboard and bridge the edges with some solder. With J6 closed, the computer is ready to use a 27256 EPROM. By default J6 is open because C128 is factory configured to use 27128 chips.

### III. Filling "the gap" at U36

The U36 in a stock Commodore 128 is vacant. This allows the placement of an extra EPROM as an add-on. User has to select between those:

**BASIC 8** – Advanced and enhanced BASIC for programming VDC, without loading diskettes. Just turn on the computer and hold CONTROL key. This is how it works!

**GEOS 128 2.0 Desktop** – Do you use GEOS? Are you tired of handling all of GEOS DESKTOP diskettes? Not anymore. Free some disks and use this instead.

**KeyDOS** – Disk speeder with

some new commands. It's a cheaper alternative of JiffyDOS.

**Turbo Assembler 128** – As the name suggests an assembler for C128.

**Servant** – This is THE absolutely -all in one- mega utility for your C128. File manager, disk utilities and many more.

You can find all these rom images, ready to download and program your own EPROM at "Tips and Tricks for Commodore 128 computers" web site: <http://commodore128.mirko-soft.sk/enhancements.html>.

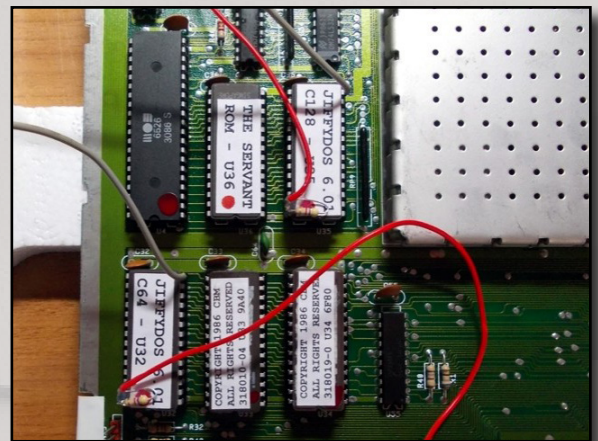
Servant is my cup of tea... Which is yours? :)

My "untested" Commodore 128 is ready as never before and has just passed a bunch of diagnostics written especially for it! Although I successfully managed to restore and upgrade my 128 **(Image 17)**, my last thoughts are somehow bitter and sad.

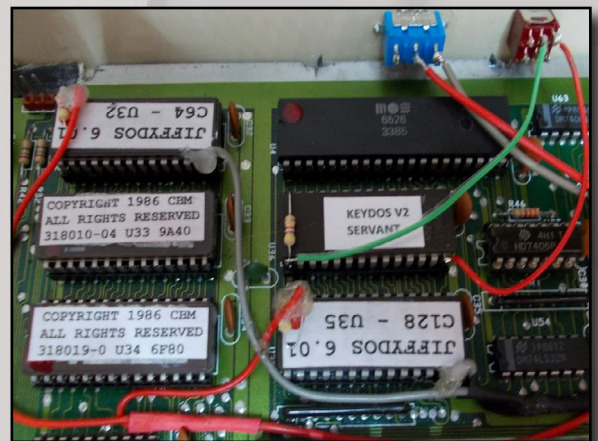
Unfortunately C128 didn't make to earn the commercial success it deserved, doomed to a rather quick and sudden death. I only hope to see, in near future, many quality productions coming out from many talented members and groups of CSDb, specially tailored for it, capable of unleashing the power, well hidden into its circuits.

“Unfortunately C128 didn't make to earn the commercial success it deserved, doomed to a rather quick and sudden death.”

▼ Image 15



▼ Image 16



▼ Image 17







# Random WB Patt

■ Tutorial: Don Rafito; translated by: SlayerPL

This article almost didn't appear. But it was created and an interesting and extremely important fact was revealed. Before I talk about this subject I have to thank two persons who caused that this text was written properly. The first person is Norbert, one of the users of PPA.pl forum. He, as the first person approached us with the help. The second person is the author of the aforementioned text (Roland Heyder). I send greetings to both persons. Thanks to their hints, I managed to launch the program called "Random WB Patt" successfully. I also managed to provide my input to the configuration, guaranteeing that an example of the installation of the aforementioned program will work 100 percent sure, at least on the classics with the 3.9 system. Unused organs disappear, as one of the medical facts says. This adage can be used in relation to all the other parts of human life, for example..... the knowledge of foreign languages. English, as we all know, is the international language of the programmers, IT persons, players and everyone that has a contact with a global cyber village more than one hour a day. And it does not only include liking of the pictures of your girlfriend on FB. So let's agree that everyone knows this language to some extent; so many words from the English came into everyday Polish vocabulary. In this group there are also

people that acquired these skills during their education. However, because of their current professional – private situations, they do not use the learned foreign language, letting this ability to fade away. And when they encounter a program manual, which is, because of the aforementioned standards written in English, they read this and think that they understand everything. And, in general, this is true. So why doesn't the program work? It appears that there is a problem with small details, which during the analysis of the foreign language manual are not so visible. And what's next? Internet forums...

It is not the first time that the programmers prove that Amiga, thanks to its' open and flexible build, can be really close in quality to other platforms. This happens because of the developed software, which is not the integral part of the system and it needs to be installed from the outside, but, thanks to that, the ability of the platform are broadened as far as the build and functionality is concerned. And no one is surprised. Thanks to the described „Random WB Patt“ the automatic change of wallpapers on the WB and in the windows is possible in AmigaOS a couple of years earlier than by the dominating competition where this option, as system option, became available four year after the appearance of the first version of the reviewed application.

So we begin the work. After the download and the unpacking in a random place of the archive with the program, we copy from the archive to system catalogues two things; to the "C:" executable file "RandomWB Patt" and to "LIBS:" catalogue we copy the library with a name "extra.library". In the catalogue „SYS:Prefs/Presets/" we have to create two text files with the names : "RndPattFiles-WB" and "RndPattFiles-WIN". The first one is a list of pictures with full paths to the catalogue with the graphic art for the desktop and the second one is for the windows.

We can create them in two ways: we can open random text editor and wrote manually everything without making typos because, if we make errors, the picture won't appear or we can use the system command "LIST". Here we also should not make typos, because the list may not open, or it will open with a lot of unnecessary, often erroneous entries. So we open CLI/SHELL and we write:

```
List >SYS:Prefs/Presets/
RndPattFiles-WB sys:gra-
fika/obrazkiWB ALL FILES
LFORMAT %f%n
```

and:

```
List >SYS:Prefs/Presets/
RndPattFiles-WIN sys:gra-
fika/obrazkiWIN ALL FILES
LFORMAT %f%n
```

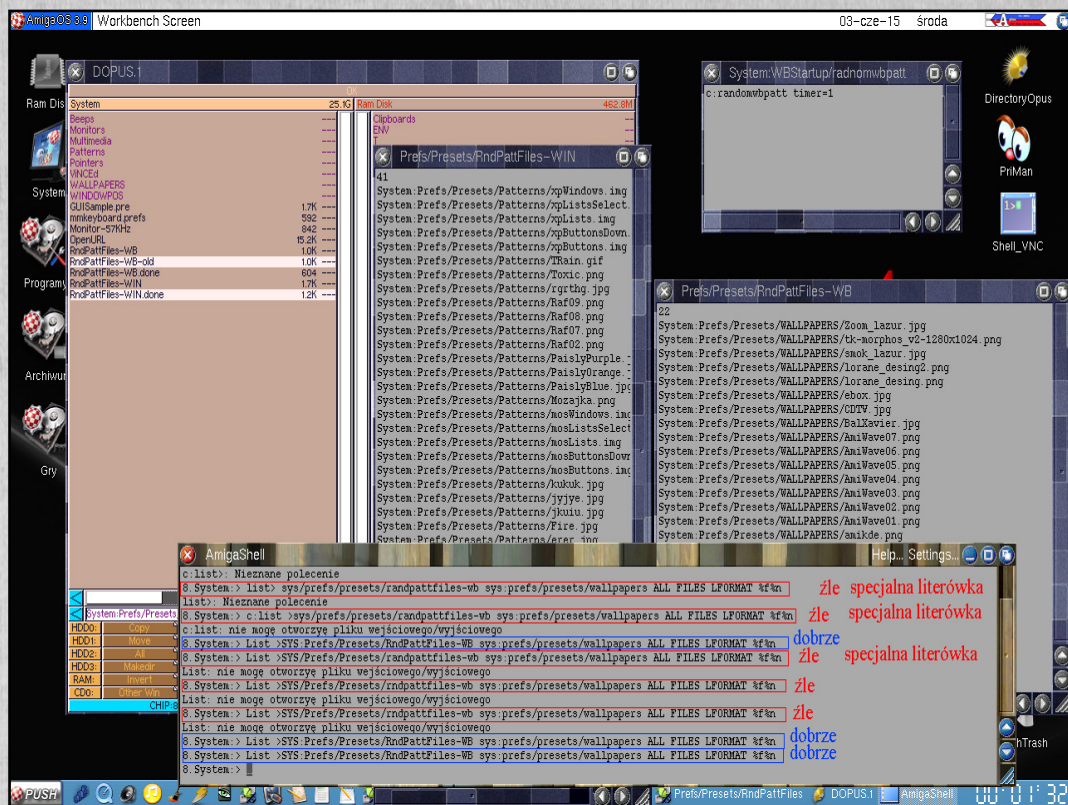


when, "sys/grafika/  
obrazkiWB" and "obraz-  
kiWIN" is an example path  
where are our graphic arts  
are. In my situation the  
entries were like this:

```
List >SYS:Prefs/Pre-
sets/RndPattFiles-WB
sys:prefs/presets/
wallpapers ALL FILES
LFORMAT %f%n
List >SYS:Prefs/Pre-
sets/RndPattFiles-WIN
sys:prefs/presets/pat-
terns ALL FILES LFOR-
MAT %f%n
```

The command needs to  
be written Just as the au-  
thor advises, you need to take  
into consideration small and big  
letters. If we do not do this, the  
command "LIST" won't find us  
the catalogues with the pictu-  
res. The typos are of course not  
acceptable. When we successfully manage  
to go through these obstacles,  
two text files will be created.  
Now we have to count the  
number of the graphic arts  
which a given list has, for instan-  
ce by using a file manager and  
write this amount on the begin-  
ning of the command text.

Generally, after adding in  
w "User-startup" a line "c:  
C:RandomWBPattern", Or "C:Run>-  
NIL:C:RandomWBPattern" and  
after launching computer  
once again and the program,  
we can be satisfied because  
the wallpaper is automatically  
changed. In my situation, it did  
not happen. After relaunching  
the computer a yellow screen  
appeared with an information  
„>>>RandomWBPattern/Unexpec-  
ted Runtime Error<<<“, or



nothing happened at all.  
And In this situation a person  
begins to doubt its' abilities to  
read a foreign language ma-  
nual. But as it happens, some-  
times the coincidence rules the  
world, so I coincidentally laun-  
ched the program from the afo-  
rementioned above CLI/Shell in  
the already launched system. It  
worked. So I was not left with  
another possibility than to make  
a short AmigaDos script, insert it  
in: "SYS:WBStartup", attach it to  
the command "IconX", instead  
of editing the mentioned "User-  
startup". Done.

When we look at the adventu-  
res with the configuration of the  
aforementioned program, we  
can say that the author did not  
provide us with the GUI to the  
program which after choosing  
the paths and the parameters  
does everything by itself. But  
the author notices that after  
one time configuration, we  
do not have to change some-  
thing in the settings, besides  
additional adding to the list of  
subsequent pictures. So GUI is

not needed. And I agree with  
this, even though during some  
moments I regretted that this  
option is not available. No-  
netheless, "Random WB Patt"  
became the integral part of my  
version of AOS 3.9 and it works  
properly. Additionally it is great  
that the effort and the help of  
Norbert and the author made  
progress. Configure, launch  
and use the program!  
The aforementioned paramet-  
ers, for example "TIME", written  
after the command allows us to  
change the wallpapers in the  
given time intervals. Additio-  
nally, in this system, we need to  
have adequate datatypes for  
our graphic arts and the con-  
figured settings in the system  
"WBPattern". The application  
will take this into consideration,  
during the changing of the  
wallpapers on the "WBPattern"  
pattern and in the windows.

### Random WB Patt

Author: **Roland Heyder**  
Year of publication: **2002-2015**  
Platform: **Amiga-mk68**  
Distribution: **Aminet.net**





# Tools Menu

■ Review: Don Rafito; translated by: Karo

*Some time ago I read a really interesting article on one webpage. It was about some gadgets, solutions that were used in sci-fi movies by the heroes and that now have become reality. My attention was drawn by a couple of things: a tablet a TV, a computer reacting to gestures or a hoverboard ("Back to the Future"). The last thing was the most interesting for me.*

And that is only because I recently watched an episode of a show called "Sonda", created by the sadly deceased Kurek and Kaminski. The episode was about fast Japanese vehicles. It seems like an ordinary thing - everybody knows that Japanese trains are famous for being the fastest on Earth. But the

show mentioned special trains that don't touch their tracks (no friction = great speed). This technology was an absolute novelty back in the times when that show was created. Just as the aforementioned hoverboard, which now actually exists, thanks to very strong electromagnets and superconductives. Just like the trains, the

hoverboard goes on a special track, not touching it.

A similar analogy can be made in relation to the mentioned program and the way it works, taking into consideration 8-bit computers or the first Amiga systems.

Tools Menu is simply a commodity application that adds a list of indicated programs to the right menu on Workbench.

There are loads and loads of programs that can broaden the list of system tools in the mentioned menu. But the configuration method here is totally ingenious, just like in sci-fi movies.

After opening the settings window, we are can search for programs that we want to include in the list, through the choice window (e.g. through PatchASL or system) but we can also do it through the graphic interface. It's enough to find the file, click its icon and drag it into the configuration window. The drag&drop function makes this program simply brilliant in its field. Moreover, the settings are saved in tooltypes of icon, not in files that you would have to look for in system catalogues.

Simple, easy and nice. It's enough to put in only the executable file with the icon to WB-Startup. And then you can do whatever you want to.

Thanks to this app it has been proved once again that there are still many possibilities of expanding Amiga systems. And if you are using similar programs that are not so easy in use and you have a classic Amiga system (2.x or higher), change it for Tools Menu. You won't regret...

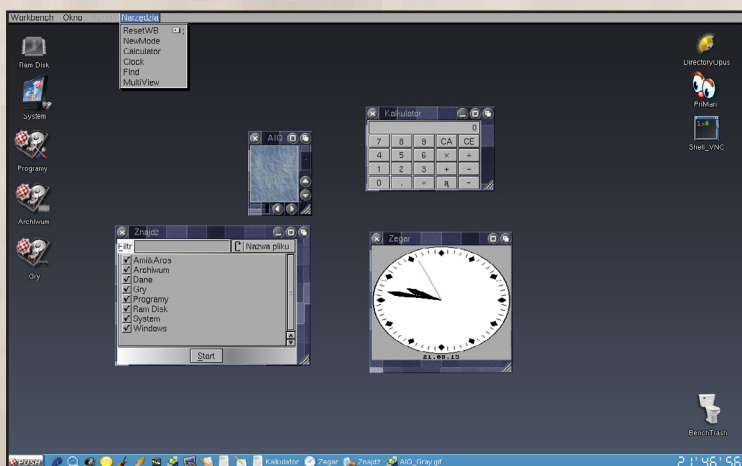
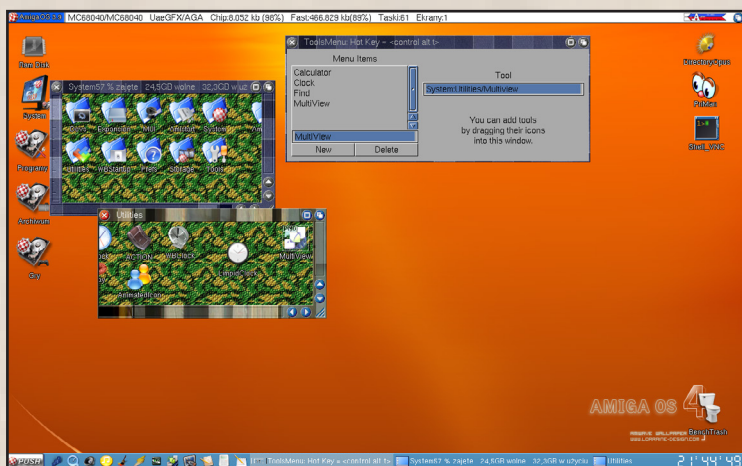
## TOOLS MENU

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# Happy birthday, happy birthday, happy birthday to you!

# Magnetic Tape

■ Editorial: Komek; translated by: Tomasz Kubisztal

***Any die-hard Commodore 64 fan should probably own a couple of programs stored on magnetic tapes (Commodore Datasets). This "wonderful" device is capable of storing data which can be accessed after even tens of years – provided that it is being used and kept in a right way. In this article I will describe how should we care for our beloved tapes so they will serve us as long as possible.***

I must admit that for a while I've been making a few mistakes regarding storage and use of tapes even though I was sure I followed the rules. Luckily, I realized it and eliminated harmful factors before it was too late. How can we provide our tapes with optimal conditions?

Probably everybody is familiar with concept of "electromagnetic field". Being exposed to it has a negative influence on our bodies. The same goes for magnetic tapes, which lose their capabilities due to such exposure. The main source of electromagnetic field in our homes are functioning electronics and home appliances. Tapes shouldn't be stored in near proximity of: TV and radio set, computer, washing machine, fridge, microwave or similar appliances.

The next factor on the list is sunlight—it's influence on magnetic devices should be completely eliminated and it's best to store them in dark rooms.

Temperature also plays an important role in terms of tapes longevity. Most optimal temperature for their stor-

age is between 15 and 20 °C. Because of this, it's best to exclude rooms which are intensively heated by sunlight during the day. During the wintertime we should make sure that the tapes are not stored near heating devices.

Next factor that should be taken into account is air humidity. It shouldn't exceed range of 30-40% RH. Let's keep in mind not to use any humid basement rooms or those used for drying laundry as storage space.

When it comes to dust – it should be avoided as well. When we're done using the datasets let's remember to rewind the tape to it's very beginning. After that, it should return to its box. This way we're minimizing the threat of dust or any other pollution affecting the tapes.

Rewinding the tapes from beginning to an end is an important element of proper exploitation and has positive effect on the stored data. It is advised to perform it once in a while (once a year should be enough). Let's make sure

that the hardware used to play the tapes is free from any pollution as well. They not only shorten the longevity of the tape, but also pose a risk of it getting stuck inside the recorder. Oh, and one more thing: keep fingers away!

I have presented a couple of most important factors which have negative influence on longevity of magnetic tapes. If, after reading this article, you'll realize that you're storing your datasets in a wrong way – please, react as soon as possible and eliminate harmful factors.

I hope and wish you that your tapes will serve you as long as possible, dear readers.





# TALKING HEADS

## Commodore Christmas?

**Tomxx:** From all the gifts I have ever received, I think about two of them with a special sentiment. I received both of them around Christmas, these gifts were really a fulfillment of my dreams. Something about which I dreamed and waited for many years and something which I won't leave after a couple of hours of playing. These presents were perfect and they made a mark on my adult life.

The first was a PIKO train set with additional tracks, cars, bridges and stations. The second – which I received in the beginning of 1990 – was a Commodore 64c with a 1541 disk drive. My own computer changed everything: it created a hierarchy of my hobbies, it influenced me to study computers, it changed my way of thinking into zero-one model. But, above all, it created a passion in me which exists even today, however today it is characterized by the adjective "retro". Even today I remember with sentiment the Christmas when I finished together with my dad all 100 levels of Bubble Bobble. With immortality turned on, with a Christmas atmosphere, with snow outside my house. These moments you remember very long and soon I am going to repeat it with my son.

And do you have some special Christ-

mas memories? Perhaps you have also received your first computer as a Christmas gift?

**noctropolis:** I didn't receive my computer as a Christmas gift because I bought my beloved C64 as a kid from the Holy Communion money. Back then, when I had this computer, a great surprise for Christmas were cassettes with C64 games – a compilation of different games. Honestly, a word "surprise" is an exaggeration because in most cases I expected it – when I saw a gift wrapped up with a specific shape I knew what was happening and every time I was so happy ;) I received this type of gifts from my older brother, who was often playing C64 games with me. I remember one gift fondly: it was a compilation of many games with a game called Hobbit in Polish (among many others, but bought by my brother because of this game). After reading a review and reading a manual of this game in one of "Bajtek" issues, I was very surprised with information about the possibility of text communication with a computer in such a complex way and in Polish – of course, I needed to see it for myself. My brother had to try really hard to buy this game (he said about this later), but my later happiness was priceless,

My own computer changed everything: it created a hierarchy of my hobbies, it influenced me to study computers, it changed my way of thinking into zero-one model.  
- Tomxx

and there is a sentiment even now. Even though the game proved to be too difficult for me, this type of interaction was something special, a long remembered Christmas gift.

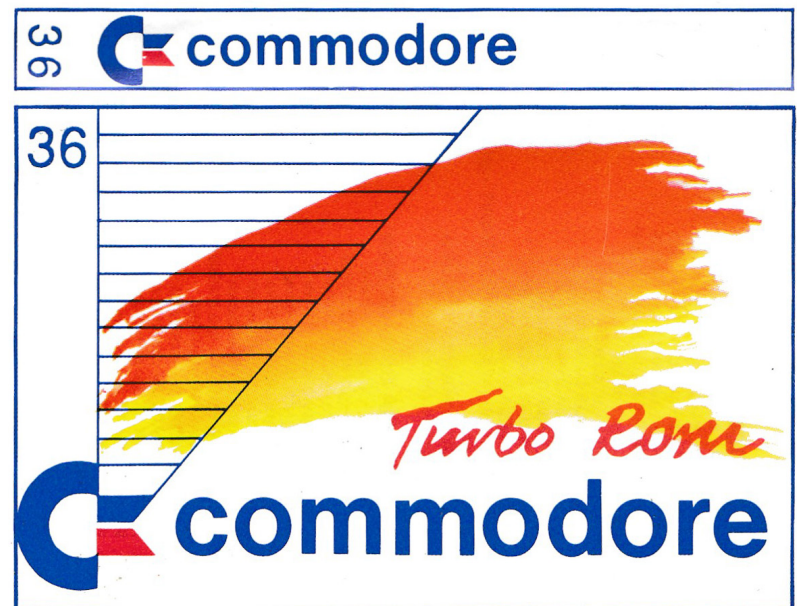
**Komek:** As far as I am concerned, a situation with a computer Christmas gift was similar to the one of Noctropolis – cassettes with a compilation of games. I'm not 100 percent sure but I think that these were the cassettes from Robex in Pabianice. I really loved their cassettes, because, thanks to them, I had an opportunity to enjoy great titles such as The Great Giana Sisters or Hard'n Heavy. I remember it very fondly.

**Minimoog:** In my case, the situation with computer Christmas gifts is quite different. I received PC games. I bought my C64 in June, during summer and not during Christmas during which I watched tv and ate a lot, and the computer was not used – even though one time my grandfather played Arkanoid! I was probably a little bit naughty because my requests to Santa Claus for C64 diskettes and cassettes weren't fulfilled, I'm not saying however that my other gifts weren't nice.

**Bobikowoz:** I also will share one of my Christmas gift memories connected with C64. One Christmas I found, as one of the gifts I received, a mysterious tape which I didn't have in my big collection. Colorful cover with a drawing instead of a list of games suggested that maybe it is some music connected with C64, but upon further inspection it was Master Head, a C64 game. The first genuine game in my collection. Frankly, if Master Head wasn't my first genuine game I wouldn't even remember it because I wasn't back then a huge fan of logical games. What is important is the fact that I realized that quantity and the number of

The cartridge amazed me with the speech synthesis feature. After some time I knew all the commands of the system and I didn't need to look it up in the manual which got lost somewhere.  
- Atreus

**Atreus:** I received my C64 during Christmas of, I think, 1990. It was Night Moves compilation. Additionally, there was a Black Box V8 cartridge from the Rom/Bit company in the box. Unfortunately, I couldn't connect C64 on myself and I was helped by my father. He also figured out the way using the games from the cassettes because the manual was only in English and I started learning this language a couple years later. The only help was a Polish manual from the Black Box, unfortunately not



games I have is not the most important factor and genuine games started to become a part of my collection (with my favourite "The Curse").

I will mention another tradition, in some sense christmas tradition connected with C64. Back then I used black and white TV and a Unitra cassette player to play. The lack of colour wasn't such a huge problem, but once in a while I had the opportunity to use the C64 in the living room where I could connect C64 to a color TV which also played sound without the help of an additional cassette player. In most cases this situation happened during the free days, when I didn't have to go to school, that's why the association with Christmas.



too long. We played with my father every game from the received set. I remember that we couldn't play Trivia Pursuit because of the language barrier. The better games for us were Sly Spy Secret Agent, Confuzion and Splitting Personalities. It was really fun, we stopped playing around 2 am when I fell asleep with my head against the table. I remember that the biggest obstacle was learning the steering with joystick and finding out what is the objective of the game. After some time, it became less difficult. The cartridge amazed me with the speech synthesis feature. After some time I knew all the commands of the system and I didn't need to look it up in the manual which got lost somewhere. After the purchase of the disk drive, when I was using C64 for a couple of years, I started drawing in Amiga Paint. But it is another story :)

**c00k:** I got my own C64 just like a lot of my peers for Holy Communion. A computer is a computer, but we needed to upgrade it. The weakest link, what we can see also now, were controllers. These included in the set weren't of the highest sort. I remember when the company Quickjoy entered the market with their Topstar model. In hindsight I don't know how true was that but the

I remember when the company Quickjoy entered the market with their Topstar model. In hindsight I don't know how true was that but the story was that they include titan parts and the joystick was very durable.  
- c00k

story was that they include titan parts and the joystick was very durable. I asked for this joystick as a Christmas gift and the joystick really was durable. Unfortunately, the "fire" button was its' Achilles heel what you could find out after a couple of days.

**Neurocide:** Beginning with the 1991 Christmas I find my mother a really cunning person. She made me think that I and my brother would get fan ice hockey set for Christmas. She said: two sticks, eight pucks and ice-skates. I was seeing myself holding the Smolen stick – the winter dream of every friend from the neighbourhood. And then it happens – just like with a puck against the unprotected teeth. We couldn't be happier when we saw the set mentioned earlier by Atreus. NightMoves (plus Mindbenders) and everything was as it was said: 8 games, 2 joysticks and in place of ice-skates 8bit and his friend cassette player. I played C64 with my cousin and a friend so I was a little bit disappointed that the games loaded too long (of course, genuine games), especially Sly Spy was painful because you died too quick, and the loading took ages. There was TrivialPursuit on the cassette of Split Personalities and we played it even though we knew no English. We were amazed by Confuzion. Fortunately, after the Christmas my dad bought cartridge PLUS and compilation cassette with such hits as Panther, Express Raider or Ninja – the Christmas break was saved.

**JargoV:** In my case, just like in Minimoog's, the story of Christmas computer gifts looks quite different. It was 32bit, the first Playstation but it does not change the fact that there is a Christmas story connected with my C64. I remember vividly when one Christmas day we sat with my father by the TV and we looked at the blue screen where turbo loaded...yes, we didn't have any car-



tridge, so we had to regulate the head by intuition :) There was time after the turbo for the colorful stripes when finally Out Run appeared which we played for some time. I remember this view with accompanying SID sounds. Several years later I reminded myself these moments when I bought C64.

**Don Rafito:** I don't have some specific memories connected with the Christmas, gifts and C64 or Amiga. The only documented memory is connected with the Christmas use of the application Notebook on C64 implemented in Final Cartridge III. In this program I created a diary where I decided to write about my life ups and downs. Then I started using AmiTekstMini on A500, and then A1200 and AmiTekstPro. Currently I returned to the emulated version of A500 and AmiTekstMini. Yes, yes, beginning with that moment, I write my diary. Who knows, maybe a nice biography will come out of this one day... :)

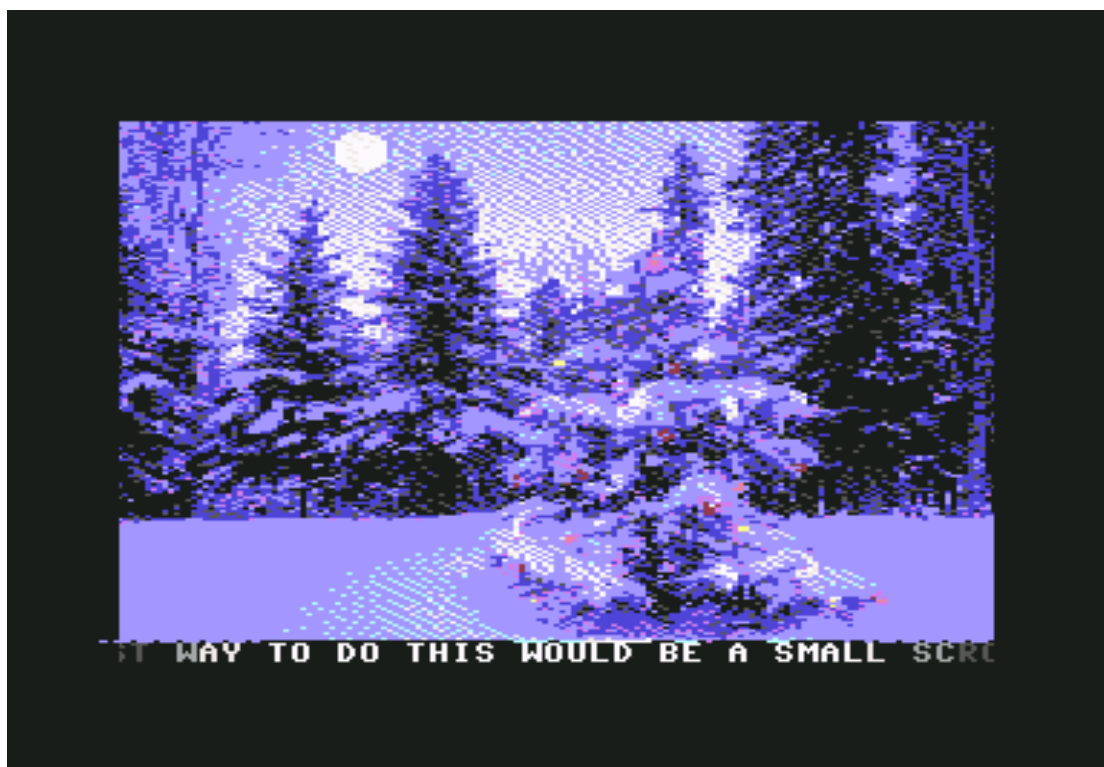
**Mr. Mat:** I remember that during the Christmas I didn't receive presents connected with computers because of one simple

reason; only I was interested in this topic in my household and no gift could be good. Before Christmas I got money "from the Santa Claus" and I spent it the next year. During the beginning of the 90ties I was spending it in the market square and then, when the prices of genuine software weren't worth a couple of average salaries, I saved up to have more money and I invested it by upgrading the hardware. My Santa Claus could visit me, for example, in the beginning of summer holidays :)

**GeoAnas:** Christmas was always my favorite time of the year to fully enjoy my C64. I was always looking for some extra pocket money to buy special distinguished games that I was checking all the previous months by reading their reviews in mags and leaflets. I remember myself playing endless hours my top hits, "Blackwyche", "Fist II", "Cauldron", "Wizards Lair"... My bias for graphic horror adventures is obvious! I was only making a rest for Christmas dinner or when this smell of burning plastic underneath my computer was so obvious :-D

*Translated by **Slayerpl***

▼ Screen from *Commodore 64 Christmas Demo*, 2011.







JOHNNY PRESENTS

# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

A gift

KTOŚ PAMIĘTAŁ,  
ŻE W DZIECIŃSTWIE  
LUBIŁEM SMURFY.



JAN LOREK  
2015

**Translation:**

Someone knew, that as a child I really enjoyed Smurfs.