

arcade express

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INTELLIVISION III ASTOUNDS GAMERS

A new progressive spirit animating Mattel should keep the Southern California manufacturer making a steady string of headlines throughout the coming year. In the next few months, the company will introduce, among other products, the Intellivision II (a revamped, more economical version of the original system), the keyboard module for the Intellivision I and II, the Aquarius computer and tons of software for its own and other companies' systems.

The biggest bombshell, sneak previewed to a few select journalists at the Consumer Electronic Show, won't hit until the third quarter. That's when the Intellivision III, the latest entry in the "ultimate videogame" derby, is expected to reach market with its initial selection of six to eight games. The expected pricetag of slightly under \$300 isn't cheap, but there's little question that the Intellivision III has some pretty marvelous features to justify its cost.

The first thing worth nothing is that it is going to be software compatible with the Intellivision and the Aquarius. Through use of a special module, the new machine has a built-in voice synthesizer, which means it can play Mattel's voice carts without any sort of adapter, and remote control command devices that incorporate -- hurray! -- the company's version of the traditional joystick. The controller will also include the keypad and overlay system familiar to current Intellivision owners and a quartet of action buttons. A stereo output jack will permit the new home system to offer the option of super sound for those who own music systems.

With its (approximate) 12K of ROM and 10K of RAM, Intellivision III's graphics are truly sensational. Resolution is 320 x 190 pixels, and it can display an infinite number of different colors on the screen simultaneously. The large amount of screen RAM makes it possible to manipulate 64 objects on the screen at the same time. Design advantages make it possible for the Intellivision III to create multi-colored objects much more easily than with other game-players, opening the door for some of the most incredible animation ever seen on a video screen.

The games used to demo the system were far from completed, so it is very difficult to compare actual cartridge quality with existing systems. Based on sample games which a Mattel spokesman terms "20% of the finished product", the newcomer looks ready to challenge current champion ColecoVision for the graphics crown. One game, "Air Ace", involves flying a fighter plane over a full-screen landscape seen from three-quarter perspective. Dangers include flocks of fully animated birds in flight and a train with missile launching weapons that chugs along on a railroad track over which the aircraft flies during the contest. Other projected titles lean toward multi-screen adventure games with a first-person view of the action.

Undoubtedly, changes and improvements will occur before the Intellivision III finally appears on retail store shelves. But even in its prototype form, this is a system calculated to draw gasps of admiration from even the most jaded home arcader.

RESEARCHER PREDICTS COMPUTER BOOM

William Donnelly, speaking for Young & Rubicam, has some predictions to make after completing his analysis of the electronic scene. He predicts 20% of all U.S. households will have at least one computer by 1990. A larger number, roughly one-third of all American households, are expected to own programmable videogame systems by the end of this decade.

U.S. GAMES FINISHES FACELIFT U.S. Games has new packaging graphics for its library of Atari 2600-compatible cartridges. Each box has the new U.S. Games logo across the top against a light blue strip with a thin red line below. A cartoon drawing with a white background depicting the game scenario illustrates the box front, and the back of the container has a playscreen plus a written description of the play action. Jack Dews, Executive Vice President of the company, had this to say about the changes: "Our games are designed for family play and the graphics give them a friendly look that invites people to play."

IMAGIC INTRODUCES INTELLIVISION TITLES Intellivision owners can look forward to playing eight new cartridges from Imagic during the first half of the year. "Ice Trek" is a northern adventure that requires the gamer to cross frozen wastelands, avoid charging caribou, build an ice bridge and attack the Frost Giant's fortress. "Dragonfire" requires a hero to battle the serpent. Dragons are everywhere this spring: "Swords & Serpents" uses a wizard and knight team to battle the beast and win his treasure. "Dracula" casts the player in the role of the thirsty Count, who must eat and run back to his crypt before dawn. "Tropical Troubles" is an island adventure for a shipwrecked hero. Adventure and danger also abound in "White Water", a jungle river thriller. "Truckin'" is a race between two rigs requiring strategic choices of what cargo to drop and what to pick up as they roar across the nation. And last is "Safecracker", an outstandingly beautiful cops and robbers game.

COLECO SALES SOAR Coleco's fourth quarter results for 1982 were even better than originally expected by that company. "1982 sales crossed \$500 million, compared with \$178 million for 1981," Coleco President Arnold Greenberg announced to stockholders. Greenberg attributed this increase to the new electronic products. Coleco shipped roughly 550,000 ColecoVision systems, over 8 million software units, and nearly three million table top games in 1982.

The company expects 1983 to be another banner year, predicting first quarter earnings to be approximately three times the same period in 1982. Coleco will double the ad budget for 1982, to produce the biggest advertising outlay in that company's history, starting in the first quarter and continuing through the year. Ads will feature the ColecoVision game system, game cartridges for ColecoVision, Atari and Intellivision, as well as the portable arcade games. An additional new commercial will star Coleco's "Perma Power Battery Eliminator/AC Adapter".

CALIFORNIA STUDENTS TO GET HEAD START WITH THE APPLE The folks at Apple Computer would like to give an Apple to every teacher in the land. What Apple would get out of it is a nice tax deduction for the donated materials, plus a lot of good will and (one hopes) future customers. What students would get is an Apple computer in every classroom, to help them study the basics of computer literacy. So far, Congress hasn't passed the bill that would grant the tax deduction to the company, so it's anyone's guess if this good idea will ever come to pass. But meanwhile, California students may reap the benefits, since that State offers a 25% state income-tax credit for gifts of computers and scientific gear to California schools, if the gift is presented before June 30, 1984. So California students may get a big head start over kids in the rest of the country in learning all about computers.

EDITORIAL STAFF: Arnie Katz, Co-Publisher; Joyce Worley, Editor; Bill Kunkel, Editorial Director
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF: Jay Rosenfield, Publisher; Rena Adler, Subscription Manager; Janette Evans, Business Manager

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BRODERBUND GOES MULTI-COMPUTER Broderbund is becoming multi-lingual, as software originally designed for the Apple II is translated and released in adaptations for other computers. Broderbund Software will now be available for the Atari computers, and the first titles are "Choplifter", the helicopter rescue game; "Serpentine", a maze-fight against snakey opponents; "Stellar Shuttle", another rescue game, but this time in alien climes; and "Genetic Drift" requiring the arcader to zap unstable life forms and mutate them into tiny t.v. sets.

Broderbund is also moving into the VIC-20 market. "Martian Raider" is a deep space rain on Mars that casts the gamer as the bad-guy invader of that planet's cities; "Shark Trap" pits man against fish with nothing but an atomic net to help. Finally, "The Multi-sound Synthesizer" turns the VIC into a playable musical instrument and white sound synthesizer, with five octave range, multiple voices, and special rhythm routines.

ATARI OFFERS DIAGNOSTIC CENTERS; HOME REPAIR KITS Atari spokesmen say the company wants the consumer to get even greater values for their money, and this is the reason they are giving an "Accessory Test Console" to qualifying dealers at no charge. The consumer can take his suffering equipment to the test console at his favorite videogame store to learn what, if anything, is wrong with the ailing machine. This should save time and effort in obtaining repairs for any equipment problems that might arise.

In another bid to help the gamer, Atari recognizes that joysticks do sometimes break, so introduced the "Atari Joystick Repair Kit". It contains all the necessary replacement parts and easy instructions, so that arcaders can repair the damaged controller rather than buying a new one.

COLECO UNVEILS GAMES FOR VCS, INTELLIVISION Coleco plans seven new Atari VCS-compatible cartridges during the first half of the year, including "Donkey Kong Junior", "Looping", "Mr. Do", "Zaxxon" and "Turbo", all licensed versions of coin-op hits; "Rocky Battles the Champ" and "Smurf Rescue in Gargamel's Castle", licensed from the popular movie and t.v. show, respectively.

Intellivision owners will have eleven new Coleco titles to choose from in the first six months of 1983: "Donkey Kong Junior", "Looping", "Pepper II", "Mr. Do", "Turbo", "Mouse Trap", "Zaxxon", "Lady Bug", "Venture", "Cosmic Avenger" and "Smurf Rescue in Gargamel's Castle".

Additional releases for both systems will be announced later in the year.

GOOD GRIEF! IT'S PEANUTS! Atari has a new licensing agreement with United Feature Syndicate and Charles Schultz, for videogame software based on "Peanuts" characters. Shultz, the creator of the popular comic strip, says, "I'm delighted to be working with Atari's talented design and marketing groups on the development of these unique games." So far, Snoopy hasn't said anything, but we'll keep you posted.

HERE'S ANOTHER KIND OF PEANUT IBM will enter the low-priced computer market this year with the "Peanut", a \$600 to \$750 full-keyboard computer designed with the home in mind. The company is keeping mum about specifics, but "Peanut" will probably have 64K memory, which could be expanded to 128K, and most likely will be program-compatible with the IBM Personal Computer.

ITS HANDS ACROSS THE OCEAN FOR DATAMOST & ENGLISH SOFTWARE Datamost and English Software Company have an agreement to combine efforts on computer software development. English Software, the first independent British computer software firm to come to the US, is best known for Atari-compatible titles. The most popular game to their credit is "Air Strike". The two companies haven't said what projects are on the drawing board but predict that this arrangement will produce "even more outstanding quality home entertainment computer software".

INDEX OF REVIEWS Arcade Express has just completed its first half-year and this issue starts the beginning of the second half of the publication year. Following is an index of the items reviewed during the first 13 issues. The entries all follow the same simple format. First is the name of the item, then the manufacturer, and finally, the category of the item or (if a computer or videogame cartridge) the system or systems for which the item was reviewed. Finally, there's the issue number that the review appeared in.

VIDEOGAME CARTRIDGES:

Airlock/Data Age/Atari 2600	5	Infiltrate/Games by Apollo/Atari 2600	4
Atlantis/Imagic/Atari 2600	4	K.C.'s Krazy Chase/Odyssey/Odyssey-2	7
Attack of the Time Lord/Odyssey/Odyssey-2	11	King Kong/Tigervision/Atari 2600	6
Baseball/M-Network/Atari 2600	7	Lock 'n Chase/M-Network/Atari 2600	12
Bugs/Data Age/Atari 2600	8	Marauder/Tigervision/Atari 2600	10
Commando Raid/U.S.Games/Atari 2600	3	Missile Command/Atari/Atari 5200	4
Cosmic Ark/Imagic/Atari 2600	5	Nexar/Spectravision/Atari 2600	6
Cosmic Avenger/Coleco/ColecoVision	4	Pitfall/Activision/Atari 2600	2
Dark Cavern/M-Network/Atari 2600	9	Real Sports Volleyball/Atari/Atari 2600	9
Defender/Atari/Atari 2600	7	River Raid/Activision/Atari 2600	12
Donkey Kong/Coleco/ColecoVision	4	Room of Doom/CommaVid/Atari 2600	6
Donkey Kong/Coleco/Atari 2600	5	Shark Attack/Games by Apollo/Atari 2600	5
E.T./Atari/Atari 2600	10	Sky Jinks/Activision/Atari 2600	9
Earth World/Atari/Atari 2600	5	Smithereens/Odyssey/Odyssey-2	9
Encounter at L-5/Data Age/Atari 2600	7	Space Attack/M-Network/Atari 2600	4
Fast Food/Telesys/Atari 2600	6	Space Cavern/Games by Apollo/Atari 2600	2
Football/M-Network/Atari 2600	6	Space Jockey/U.S.Games/Atari 2600	1
Freedom Fighter/Odyssey/Odyssey-2	1	Space Spartans/Mattel/Intellivision	5
Frogger/Parker/Atari 2600	3	Star Strike/Mattel/Intellivision	1
Galaxian/Atari/Atari 5200	7	Threshold/Tigervision/Atari 2600	6
Gangster Alley/Spectravision/Atari 2600	1	Turbo/Coleco/ColecoVision	12
Gopher/U.S. Games/Atari 2600	6	Venture/Coleco/Atari 2600	7
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COMPUTER GAMES:

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Aztec/Datamost/Apple II	10	Mole Attack/Commodore/VIC-20	11
Bandits/Sirius/Apple II	4	Monster Mash/Software Farm/Apple II	9
Deadline/Infocom/Apple II, Atari 4-800	3	Nautilus/Synapse/Atari 4-800	4
Free Fall/Sirius/Apple II	7	Omega Race/Commodore/VIC-20	11
GFS Sorceress/Avalon Hill/Apple II, Atari 4-800, TRS-80	5	Radar Ratriace/Commodore/VIC-20	12
Galactic Gladiator/Strategic Simulations/Apple II	9	Repton/Sirius/Apple II	12
Guardian/Continental Software/Apple II	1	Sea Fox/Broderbund/Apple II	7
Jigsaw/EMI Thorn/Atari 4-800	8	Star Cross/Infocom/Apple II, Atari 4-800	11
Juggler/Innovative Design/Apple II	5	Star Maze/Sir Tech/Apple II	8
Lovers or Strangers/Alpine Soft/Apple	10	Super Slot/Commodore/VIC-20	12
Mask of the Sun/Ultrasoft/Apple II	10	Teleport/Cavalier/Apple II	6
Miner 2049/Micro Fun/Apple II	12	Tharolian Tunnels/Datamost/Apple II	8
		Tubeway/Datamost/Apple II	11
		Zenith/Gebelli/Apple II	6

(The index is continued on the next page of Arcade Express.)

THE HOTSEAT

Reviews of New Products

- RATINGS: 10 - Pure gold and about as good as a game could be. A rare rating.
 9 - An outstanding, state-of-the-art game.
 8 - A very good to excellent game.
 7 - A good game.
 6 - Better than average, but maybe not for everyone.
 5 - An average game that does what it promises.
 1-4 - The item has serious flaws.

KEY: The information which heads each review follows the same simple format. First comes the name of the item, then its classification and, if it's a home arcade software program, the system/s with which it is compatible. Finally, the manufacturer's name.

MAR TOSORO (SEA TREASURE)/Computer Game (Atari 400/800/1200)/Syncro Software

An intriguing, thinking-gamer's contest in which you start life as a salvage diver, searching the sea for various types of booty. The player begins with enough money to buy either a skin diving suit (can't dive too deep but it's cheap!) or a diving rig for going further down. Gamers can also bring along the Historian, who'll tell if the piece you just recovered is a true treasure or just fool's gold. Once you've made your purchases, play begins with an overview of your craft and the island you're departing. The game takes everything into account, even inquiring how much loot you plan to share with the crew (this has a definite impact on their cooperation level.) There are also loan sharks for quick money, but failure to pay back these skeavey types gets your legs broken.

Begin exploring the shallows near the beach, then once enough money has been accumulated, pick up a diving bell and go into the deeps. It might take some time to adjust to the spare graphics and intricate play of this off-beat simulation, but the time is well worth it. Rating: 8

DRAW POKER/Computer Game (VIC-20)/Commodore

The player is allowed to bet up to five coins on his five cards, telling the machine whether to hold, discard or double. A chart of the odds on different hands tops the playfield, where the cards are turned over individually. The graphics are attractive, although someone got carried away with not one but two too-long introductions. Basically, if you like the card game, you'll like the video game. Rating: 7

ADVENTURE LAND/Computer Game (VIC-20)/Commodore

This is one of five Scott Adams Adventure Games designed for the VIC-20. It's set in the great outdoors, opening in the middle of a dense forest. A lake, meadow, quicksand bog, marsh and bottomless pits are a few of the locations the player can visit. Giving the adventure its mystical slant are magic words, dragons and similar mythical creatures, as well as interesting items found along the way. Describing this in much more detail would give away the plot, but fans of text adventures should find this fairly entertaining. Rating: 7

STAMPEDE/Videogame Cartridge (for Intellivision)/Activision

This is the Intellivision edition of the riding and roping contest previously issued by Activision for the Atari 2600. It has all the fun of the original cartridge, enhanced by slightly cleaned-up visuals and even faster play action. The intent here was, quite clearly, to emulate the 2600-compatible cartridge as closely as possible, and the Activision design staff deserves a round of applause for such an excellent translation. Rating: 8

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS/Videogame Cartridge (for Intellivision)/Mattel

The much anticipated cartridge based on the world's most popular non-electronic role-playing game proves to have been worth the wait. The gamer moves a three-person team of intrepid explorers over a mountainous terrain map, periodically delving into the mysterious labyrinths that lie beneath some of the peaks. This is without a doubt the best Intellivision cartridge produced by Mattel in some time, and it is the most impressive transposition of the "Dungeons & Dragons" concept to the programmable videogame cartridge format. A first-rate job all around. Rating: 9

CENTIPEDE/Computer Game (Atari 400/800/1200)/Atari

This is the home computer edition of the coin-op game which rode a combination of invasion game action and cute game graphics to outstanding public success in 1982. The home edition, on ROM cartridge for the three Atari computers, should do no less well in 1983. The player controls a shooter which can move back and forth across the bottom of the screen or vertically within the lower quarter of the playfield. Multi-segment insects slither down the display between rows of mushrooms and must be blasted away piece by piece. Meanwhile, there are other dangers, including a spider that periodically bounds across the lower portion of the playfield with lethal intent. The visuals are excellent -- and quite evocative of the play-for-pay original. Rating: 9

MS. PAC-MAN/Videogame Cartridge (for Atari 2600)/Atari

Many will find it hard to believe that the same company which staggered us with the VCS "Pac-Man" cartridge last year is capable of producing such an excellent edition of Bally Midway's sequel to the super-hit gobbling game. Believe it. Essentially flicker-free animation is but one of the pleasant surprises that await purchasers of this title. Another major improvement over Atari's ill-starred "Pac-Man" is that the bonus items which pop up at intervals look like their coin-op counterparts instead of the uniform square-inside-a-square shape that replaced the cherries and keys in that earlier release. Atari has given the gallant gobbler's wife the four-star treatment. Rating: 9

SERPENTINE/Computer Game (for Apple II)/Sirius

David Snider, who wrote the 1983 "Computer Game of the Year" Arcade Award winner ("David's Midnight Magic") turns to the maze-chase genre for this new 48K disk. The arcader pilots a small blue serpent around the maze, doing battle with larger, computer-directed snakes. A larger snake always eats a smaller one if they meet head-on, but the player's on-screen representative can whittle the opposition down to size by chomping segments one at a time from behind. When an enemy snake turns green with envy, it signifies the fact that it can be successfully attacked from the front. "Serpentine" boasts a variety of different labyrinths, a frog which can be eaten for bonus points, eggs that can hatch into new friendly or evil serpents, and a nice audio-visual package. Rating: 8

PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET/Computer Game (for Apple II)/BudgeCo.

Bill Budge's last major work, "Raster Blaster", ushered in the era of outstanding video pinball simulations, and now his newest goes one step beyond. This time, he's produced a simple-to-use program that allows anyone who can manipulate a cursor with a joystick to design a pinball contest replete with such features as thumper bumpers, ball catchers, drop targets, spinners, knockers and rollovers. The creation process is lots of fun, and proceeds at a satisfyingly rapid pace as the gamer assembles his or her dream game one little piece at a time. There's even provision for painting the playfield and the various points of interest on it. Best of all, there's absolutely no knowledge of programming required. "Pinball Construction Set" is a true delight that stimulates the mind while it entertains. Rating: 10

COMING NEXT ISSUE will be lots more news of the new products, games, computers and other tidbits we saw at the Consumer Electronics Show, and reviews of the best of them.

READER POLL RESULTS
CONTINUED

This is a continuation of the Electronic Games reader poll results which started on an earlier page in this issue. Below are the most popular coin-op videogames as picked by the EG readers.

"Donkey Kong" continues to hold on to the coveted first-place position again this month, and "Tempest" and "Centipede" are going through another flurry of popularity, reappearing on the list after short absences.

POSITION		GAME	MANUFACTURER
THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH		
# 1	# 1	Donkey Kong	Nintendo
2	2	Tron	Bally-Midway
3	3	Zaxxon	Sega
4	5	Dig Dug	Atari
5	10	Donkey Kong, Jr.	Nintendo
6	4	Ms. Pac-Man	Bally-Midway
7	6	Robotron	Williams
8	-	Tempest	Atari
9	9	Joust	Williams
10	-	Centipede	Atari

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE: Mike Staup is the newly appointed Vice President and General Manager for ODYSSEY, replacing David Arganbright who has returned to RCA. Mike's most recent position was Vice President of Product Development for Odyssey...Keith Schaefer has been promoted to Senior Vice President of Sales for the Home Computer Division of ATARI, where he'll be responsible for national sales of Atari's home computers, accessories and programs...Richard B. Fried is the new Marketing Manager for the home video division of WALT DISNEY. He'll assume all responsibility for marketing strategies. Fried was formerly with Marantz Co., but some folks may remember him as Editor of the New York Poetry Quarterly...William Toutz is the new Corporate Director, Organization Resources, for BALLY Manufacturing. Toutz will be responsible for all compensation benefits and organization plans and analysis for Bally. Toutz was formerly with Bally's Six Flags Corporate Office...There's a new Board of Directors for AUTOMATED SIMULATIONS/EPYX. The new board members are Sam Bernstein, an independent marketing consultant, James Connelley, the founder and president of Automated Simulations, Joseph Horowitz and William Lanphear, both venture capital inventors.

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