

myatari

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# ATARI

## UNDERGROUND COMPUTING



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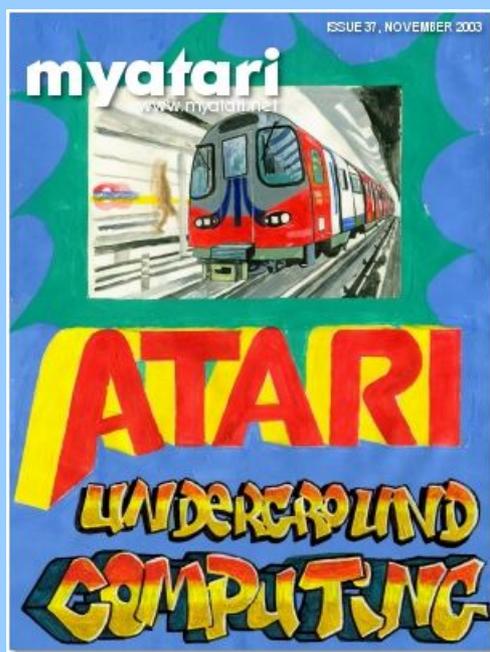
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## Atari Is Underground Computing!

by Ian Smith



I got into Atari at the age of 17. I wanted a new computer to relive my Spectrum 48K days. It was my birthday Christmas Eve, so a few days before, my dad took me to Dixons. It was a toss-up between buying a Commodore Amiga or an Atari STE. All my friends had Amigas, so I really wanted one of those. But I had heard of Atari because of its video games from the eighties. So now I wasn't as sure what I wanted.

At first sight the Atari and Amiga looked pretty similar. The same all in one case with a sloped keyboard and disk drive at the side. They even both had a fairly same looking operating system at first glance with their disk icons. The Atari though was

slightly cheaper than the Amiga. Since my dad was buying and I wanted a monitor with the computer, well the fates decided - actually my dad's wallet did. I ended up buying the slightly cheaper STE and Phillips low/medium resolution monitor. A fairly standard set-up for the day.

All these years later having bought two Falcons and two STEs, various hardware add-ons and loads of software, I'm glad I originally bought the cheaper option. In many ways it was the better long term investment and it's good it sparked in me an interest in Atari. I actually have two Amigas as well, bought second hand out of curiosity about a year and a half ago. I still haven't unpacked them, my space is devoted to Atari machines.

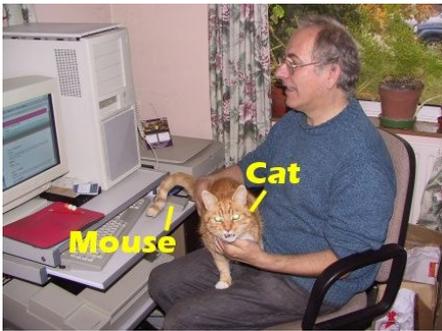
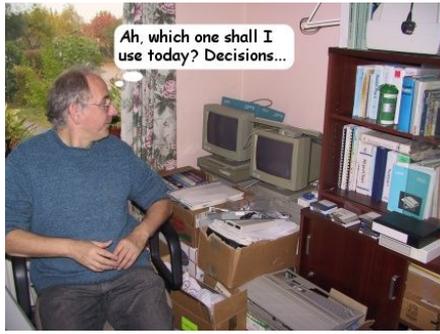
I'm glad now to be part of a computer scene which is very much keeping the machines we love alive today. I've always been part of fringe things, either getting into them at their birth or when they're old. At the age of 11 I was into Hip Hop which was unusual considering that's almost 20 years ago. I embraced rave and dance music at its inception around 1988, much of it made with Atari machines. So I suppose it's only natural now that Atari computers being old (not passé though) and more of a fringe thing that I should be interested in them more than ever.

If you think about it, if the modern "Atari" games company turned around and said it was going to start making STs and Falcons again, well, there wouldn't be the same mystique about these machines, would there? The way it is now with ST emulators written for most modern machines and Atari bargains on eBay and such, now is the exciting time. Which is probably the reason why people collect antiques. Modern things might do the same job, or do it even better. But how much greater when you know your Atari was doing that thing before some modern day computer users were even born.

So that's why I painted the picture for MyAtari and gave it the slogan, "Underground Computing". Some people might consider our scene dead and our machines obsolete. And I attend the Cheshunt Computer Club which I think is the last Atari-oriented computer club in Britain. But the scene still lives on in many new and exciting ways, all be it in the domains of the underground.

### Tip Of The Day

As Junk Secretary of the Cheshunt Computer Club, Mark Branson has rather more than his fair share of Atari stuff. You'd think his CT60 Falcon would be enough to satisfy his craze but this man also has Mega STs coming out of his ears!



### Foreword

by Shiuming Lai

#### Case of bad timing



In the week running up to Jaguar Connexion in France, I managed to get two hefty parking fines on my company car, for which I'm responsible. It's not even that glamorous, so no consolation there, it's more like a smelly old tractor. I changed my Euros left over from Unconventional to pay the fines - they were originally intended for my journey to France. Fear not, however. We twisted the arm of Nick Harlow at 16/32, who made the trip to Paris with his Atari wares, and he was good enough to record us a photo diary in between raking in the millions.

Even though I missed Jaguar Connexion, you'll notice this month's issue is late. I think everyone is still catching their breath after last month's mammoth anniversary effort! Read the feedback from the survey, in this issue, we answer some of your most common questions about the magazine.

#### JagFest Micro!

My mishaps last month should be redeemed by going to JagFest Micro with the MyAtari gang and Peter West of Cheshunt Computer Club and DDP Translations. It's at the end of this month, at the Birmingham NEC. Don't be fooled by the Jaguar-oriented title, it's going to be a general Atari area covering all platforms, as part of the retro exhibition section in the Micro Mart Computer Fair. 16/32 Systems will be supporting the gaming competitions with hardware and prizes as well as selling its usual range of Atari goodies. Familiar faces from JagFest earlier this year will be present, too.

## Contents

Mailbox – Page 4



Jaguar Connexion 2003 – Page 6

Review -Zombie Apocalypse – Page 8



MyAtari Survey Feedback – Page 9



Introduction To The MiNT Operating System – Page 11

News – Page 11

# M@ilbox

## Atari Chimera portable gaming device

I stumbled across a thread on myatari.net posted by one of my lecturers at college, regarding my current project, the Atari Chimera.

While my designs are pretty much finalised and in production, I have to start thinking about my next assignment which is an advert for the Atari Chimera.

In your initial reply you said "if you like I can dig out some Lynx advertising material and scan it for you to study" would it be at all possible for you to send me this, I would find it very useful and it would be most appreciated.

As it is not too late for last minute adjustments to my system specs I wondered if you wouldn't mind having a quick look at them and pointing out anything that I could possibly think about improving or implementing.

Specs:

- 128bit
- 733mhz Processor
- 64Mb Ram
- NVIDIA graphics
- 8 GB hard drive
- 4x Mini DVD drive
- Bluetooth compatible (multiplayer)
- Headphone socket 2.0
- Speaker (mono)
- 2 joy sticks
- 8 analogue buttons (6 + 2 Shoulder)
- Backlit flat screen
- mp3, div-x, mpeg2, compatible
- Li ion battery

Special Atari Mini DVDs are needed to play games, these are high density and will retail at a premium price, writeable once only, you download 1 game onto a disk via Internet.

Standard Mini CD, DVD can be used to record mp3, div-x, mpeg and will be read by the Chimera as raw files.

Games: All Atari (and subsidiaries) games will be available for download as well as many others.

I have included my logo in jpeg format again, any feedback would be most appreciated. Thank you for you time.

Tom Long UK



## Shiuming Lai replies:

Wow, you've really given us food for thought! Taking your points in order, first of all, no problem about the Lynx advertisement scans, watch your mail box soon. Now let's have a closer look at the system specifications. While I realize this is a product design course and not computer system architecture, I'll comment anyway. At a glance, the specs read like a recipe for the Microsoft Xbox! With respect to the NVIDIA graphics, I'm reminded of drivers who put stickers on their windows telling the world what make of car stereo they have. I personally think creating a strong brand identity and image that will make its own case is more important than who supplied the graphics chip. The number of people with a true appreciation for the technical details are a drop in the ocean of the mass market.

What purpose would the 8 GB hard drive serve? A bit further down the list you mention various digital media formats - is your device intended to be multi-functional and compete with the likes of Nokia's N-Gage and Apple's iPod? What's a headphone socket 2.0, or did you mean USB 2.0? One thing I found lacking in the original Atari Lynx in both incarnations was a TV output. Various third-party upgrades have been

rumoured or shown in prototype form, but none have made it to the market due to the cost of the development work needed to integrate the solution with the complexity of such a miniature device. It should be easy, if done from the start, and a necessity to incorporate some form of general purpose A/V connector, because a portable gaming device is no longer just portable in a compromised fashion. Modern technology allows vastly superior processing speed and resulting

graphics and sound, to deliver very sophisticated gaming capabilities indeed. That means it's not just something you play under the sheets in bed

or on the back seat of a car, but something you take around and connect to other entertainment systems to expand the scope of its usefulness.

Will your DVD media be the same as those used for DVD camcorders? Will they be protected in a hard shell like Mini Disc or Sony's proposed UMD format for its forthcoming PSP handheld?

Screen technology is very important, what sort of resolution are you thinking about? In the past, portables have had resolutions to match the available screen technology (in terms of cost - no point putting an ultra high resolution screen on a portable if it quadruples the price and/or chokes the graphics processor in keeping up generating pixels) but once again, things have moved on. Back lighting is great for playing in the dark but the opposite conditions should also be considered. The reflective colour LCDs used on the Game Boy Colour and Game Boy Advance were disastrous, as were backlit screens for the battery life of earlier machines, but better technology is available now. How about a hybrid, transreflective screen? 4:3 aspect ratio? 16:9?

The aforementioned digital media formats shouldn't be set in stone if you have a very powerful media processing

engine (with a suitably imaginative name!), which can adapt to different formats through software. Of course, compatibility with the most popular formats could be a selling point, for example, the ability to play MP3 music files would be an attractive feature, but by no means the limit of possibility.

Lithium ion battery technology is a smart idea. What form factor will it take? A proprietary shape, or one that can be filled with off-the-shelf AA or AAA cells when you're not near a charger?

Finally, I like the name Chimera, it suits the idea of the project. The logo could probably use a little more exploration. First thing is the Atari logo is out of proportion - the Fuji symbol looks way too large for the Atari lettering. Usually, the form would be the Fuji on the left and the Atari name on the right. Refer to the article on the Atari logo in issue 32 of MyAtari, published in June this year. This is important if the feel and image of Atari is to be retained. On a more general note, with respect to your combining of the Atari Fuji symbol into the Chimera logo, this is a nice idea but maybe it could be more subtle. I think this would only work well if the letter you're replacing with a symbol is very close in style to the symbol itself. Otherwise generally, if you study lots of different corporate and product logos, you rarely, if ever see the manufacturer logo combined within the product logo. The product name is made into a brand of its own. PlayStation is a good example - its branding consists of its own name in a special font, and the combined "P" and "S" symbol. Another clever branding move was using the four shapes on the right hand buttons of the controllers. The manufacturer logo simply isn't used. Atari might be a little different in that it's known primarily as a games company, and won't have this image diluted by other product lines, but I still think it's cleaner to not incorporate the manufacturer logo in such a way. This would also liberate you to be more creative with the style of the product name logo. The Courier style font you used looks a little dated and not especially bold, high tech, or more importantly, fun. What do you think?

### Enter the Matrix PC

I wonder... did you have any difficulty moving around in Enter the Matrix PC? I recently bought the DVD version of the game, and not only can't I patch it yet, but I can't move forward or backwards in first person, and I can't even escape first person view. When I go to try and rebind my keys, the game refuses to recognize my keyboard inputs.

I'm wondering if you had the same problem... I've e-mailed Atari tech support, and the reply I received was an insult to my intelligence; even though I clearly stated my problem whenever I tried to.

Anyway, please reply if you find it isn't a total waste of your time, I'm just curious to see if, perhaps, the DVD ROM version was a waste of money.

Stephen Schnare,  
Canada.

### Matthew Preston replies:

Hi Stephen, firstly I must say that replying to any member of the Atari community is never a waste of my time. It dis-heartens me to think that Atari tech support are just reading off cards and don't know their own products anymore. I don't own the DVD version yet, but methinks maybe they do listen a little. After all I can't be the only one to think that four CDs to install a PC game is a bit much!

The problem of re-binding the keys is a curious one and I had the same problem. I checked the support web site and found nothing, but I see that the problem has not gone away. The process is not as straightforward as they make out. In fact I gave up to begin with and just used the key maps they provided, just did the usual and pressed loadsa keys until I found the ones that worked okay, the manual is a little wrong in some of the bindings.

My advice is this at the moment: remove any joysticks, game-pads and anything else that you have, including steering wheels as the game will try and use these before a keyboard input. Make sure you have the latest working updates for your sound card and video card. Sometimes the latest drivers are not always the best and the conflicts mess up the game. When I first installed the game it would not run at all, let alone play it!

### You know you're an Atari nut when...

I recently had a discussion with a friend of mine about Atari, and it soon went like, "Is this thing still steam operated or did they put a diesel engine in it?" or, "How many bits?" And other similar questions.

Of course it didn't take time to me to show how wrong he was, but this is not the point. The point is that I believe we Atarians know how to laugh at ourselves, so here are the *Top ten signs you are a true Atarian*

10. Every time you hear the word "landfill" you think of "E.T. - the video game"
9. You can't name more than 16 colours
8. You are a busy bee
7. You just need cartridges for games and floppy disk for programs
6. Your mouse pointer is "mind driven"
5. Jaguar isn't a car company and Lynx isn't an animal
4. One fire button is more than enough
3. Your PC is only needed for boiling



water and reaching high shelves  
2. Your MIDI keyboard only accepts  
MIDI flows coming from your ST

...and the number one sign that you are a true Atari fan is: You can't wait for those "system shutdown" procedures to complete, so you just turn off your PC.

Paolo De Felice, Italy

#### Shiuming Lai replies:

Ciao Paolo, quello e veramente cool!



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#### VCS troubles

I hope you don't mind me contacting you, but I came across your email when searching for info on the Atari VCS. I recently bought a vcs (in its box, all the packaging, it even has its bubble wrap), but for the life of me I can't get any TV to perfectly tune into the signal from it. I've tried three TVs, a two year old 36 inch Sony wide screen, which tunes in the picture more or less ok (tested with space invaders), but has no sound, then I tried an old Sony portable (probably 80s), which again tuned in the picture but no sound, but also tuned in the sound with no picture! Lastly another TV about 10 years old, that wouldn't tune into it at all. Now I'm not sure if the vcs is faulty, or it's just my TVs not being able to pick up the signal well enough. I've noticed that there's some tape over a part of the TV lead, if there's a small break in that, would that affect anything? Make the signal weaker? And if so how could I fix that? If you don't think its that, any other ideas? Sorry to take your time up, but it would be a shame to just box it up, and stick it in the loft!

Phil Maxey, UK

#### Shiuming Lai replies

Too right, it would be criminal to box it up, but before I could even start to answer your query, the rest of the MyAtari team beat me to it!

#### Matthew Preston replies

I always find it's a good idea to check the leads of such a classic piece of hardware. Over time the coax tends to break down and become unreliable. The same I'm afraid can happen to the electronic components inside the VCS console. Another thought occurred to me as well, is the VCS PAL/SECAM or NTSC? If the console is a different TV standard to the country you live in, then you will have little chance of getting anything without a converter. A modern television is capable of dealing with most TV standards, however it may be a manual setting. Also remember that the VCS never won any awards for picture quality, age has also not been kind to the RF stages of these consoles. If you still feel that you are getting nowhere, then you can give your VCS a new lease of life with a new plug-in board to give it S-Video. Check this link for more details:

<http://www.atari2600.com/news.php>

#### Uncle Harry replies

Please check the video system of the VCS: NTSC or PAL. There are different sound carrier frequencies in the composite video signals of these systems. For instance you might get a black and white picture but no sound when plugging a NTSC VCS to a PAL TV. When slightly de-tuning the TV you can get the sound but the picture is bad. If it is a defective cable only, there

should be at least the sound even with a bad picture. The worst thing possible is that your VCS is defective. Maybe this can help you.

#### Thomas Wellicome replies

You could try changing the TV lead, in the early VCS it's just a normal lead which is actually connected inside the console. Unscrew the case and swap it for another, it's pretty simple. Also you could try cleaning the contacts on the cartridge and the console itself, this might help. Finally try it with another cartridge, Space Invaders may have had it...

#### Christoph Brincken replies

Tune in, get the channel and enjoy the vibes. There is only one wire cable transporting everything together, color and sound. The thing is, the channel on the TV set has to be tuned in correctly. You might for example get a perfect picture - without color. Same thing with sound. Find the right channel in with the TV set and you are fine. It cannot be the cable, if you get a picture, the cable must be OK. Love, peace and ColdFire Atari clones.

PS: Upgrade from punched-card technology, get an Atari ST 16-bit computer with a graphic environment manager (GEM), with mouse, 512 Kilobytes or even more and 3.5" disk drive which holds over 360,000 bytes, or even a thrilling 720,000 in the double-sided version. No tape drives or plugging cartridges any more!

# Jaguar Connexion

by Nick Harlow and Richard Stevens

Talk about Lost in France (hit single for Bonnie Tyler for those who don't know), this was set in rural, I mean very rural Ile de France, or was it Picardy, or was it Champagne? I didn't know, both my navigator (Richard Stevens) and I were lost.

We had merrily set out to catch the 02:00 ferry to Calais and have a nice gentle drive down to Paris, then turn east and viola we should have been there. Needless to say while we came off on the right junction of the A4, I took the wrong turning off it. After driving around for a while we were tempted to ask for directions as the whole of the region was covered in very dense fog, which was slowing our journey and making road signs difficult to read. But after spotting two locals with bloody big guns we decided to move on. Shades of The Hills Have Eyes or what.

Anyway we found the place and well sited it was too, the village can't have more than 250 people living in it, but the hall was really well designed and had easy loading access. Pocket (organizer) helped and arranged the unloading of the Tardis (some of you who know me, know what I mean).

Just at the entrance was a bench showing off several games mags edited fully or in part by Pocket and very interesting they looked, too. I wonder if they would be worthwhile translating into English?



On display were two (yes count 'em) CT60s. Not bad out of only 150 made. One lucky person owning one is Jean-Paul Marie also known as Protos. It seems after talking to both Jean-Paul and his friend Lucas they have had a

interesting time getting the CT60 compatible. Jean-Paul has a 72 MHz CT60 and can't seem to run MiNT but Lucas has an accelerated 100 MHz CT60 and can run MiNT.



Other little problems have arisen but on the positive side running MP3 and DivX has to be seen to be believed. Also for programs like Inshape and Neon, extremely fast performance. I think both gentlemen are very happy with their purchases and are spending a lot of time finding out what does and doesn't run. For example, MetaDOS will not run unless you remove TT RAM flags but hey that's half the fun of owning the CT60. You will get dirty (metaphorically) getting to know the quirks of your baby. The baby is always growing with new patches and fixes from a host of loving parents. This baby (OK last time for that metaphor)

is going to grow, let's keep watching. So keeping this in mind I played a very impressive Quake on his CT60 with frame rates between 8 and 22 frames per second. Nice!



For those with Jaguar and Alpine interest, we had a couple of programmers showing their demos and ideas which included a very nice texture mapped 3D floating environment just begging for some sprites and action as a background. More demo stuff was shown and hopefully we might see some results commercially at a later date. Of course, Jaguar games were in abundance and most popular seemed to be Power Drive Rally and Cannon Fodder.



## My Atari Magazine – Issue 37 – November 2003

Falcons were in evidence but apart from one constantly formatting a hard disk I didn't see too much of them.

A Lynx table also allowed you to play solo or networked practically any Lynx game you could think of. Also by the side of the hall was a very interesting display of Atari style goodies from the 2600 up to 800 and ST and Lynx and Jaguar. A couple of very interesting boxed items caught my eye, an original boxed 2600 and a specialist joystick (flight, I think).



Unfortunately I wasn't able to check this out more closely as the display went on Sunday. Should have been quicker. But I did see a nice display of Lynx badges displayed, plus some interesting CDs on Atari game music.

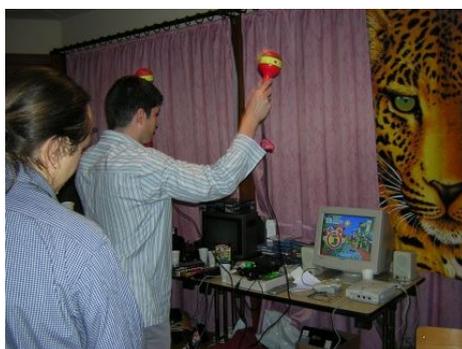


A modified (OK, hacked) Xbox with practically every game environment you know was claiming a lot of attention and I discovered a sneaking liking for Puzzle Fighter, which I am still trying to

work out. The game didn't look difficult maybe one for the Reservoir Gods to look at for the Falcon.



Competitions included Battletris, which had a strong competitive field lead by Kad and I. If I stayed longer it probably would have been us in the final especially since we both had highest scores. Less worthy of mention from an English point of view was Warlords, one person slaughtered and I came second in my group, didn't continue with this as I felt somewhat outclassed. We did have Nuon games, and 2600 classic games as well, in fact anything you fancied could be played. The most attended game was Samba De Amigo on a Dreamcast played at 02:00 showed the rhythm of the night in a way I don't really want to remember.



The Highlight for me was finally meeting Jean Marie Rocque, founder of Silmarils. We talked for a little while and he explained French bankruptcy

law to me. Gave me a couple of ideas which I will talk about to relevant people later and maybe, just maybe we might have some Jaguar/Atari news.



I must mention the hard work done by the organizers of the show, especially Arethius who organized the food. It was superb, we had a buffet lunch with salami, meats, vegetables and fresh bread and for dinner at 22:00 we had an absolutely unbelievable mixture of beef, rice and vegetables (I wonder if this was in honour of Les Rost Bif, who were visiting? No I didn't think so), the show has given me some ideas for JagFest UK. Thanks guys.



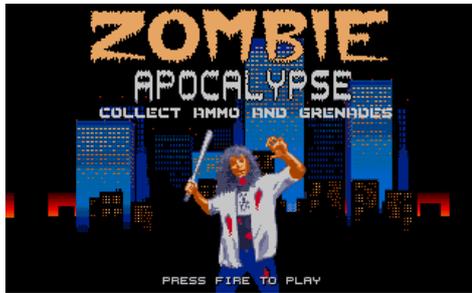
The trip home, we set out late but made up some time on the toll roads and then about 150 miles out of Calais I got stopped on the A4 for speeding. Not too much in the way of defence, 180 km/h in a 130 zone. But the nice officer mentioned cent trente km/h and let me on my way. Result or what!

# Zombie Apocalypse

## Shiuming Lai goes beast busting

A crunchy and delicious YM chip tune accompanies the STAX loading screen of this game, originally released 11 years ago on the Amiga, by New Zealand based Vision Software, which also released the frenetic Defender-esque Cybernetix for the ST. It arrives on the ST this year missing Hallowe'en by a few days. Still, a new game to play is always nice, isn't it?

The chip music stops abruptly then the title screen comes up, the graphics are of a high quality and we get some slightly fuzzy digital music that is rather more creepy and tense.



Any notion of scariness is quickly dismissed in the first level. The music changes back to a chip tune in the same style as the loading music, and it's not technically bad, but doesn't seem to suit the game subject. I can imagine it playing in the background of a disk magazine menu, it's too jolly for blowing the guts out of monsters! The screen looks like it might scroll or the baddies might come towards you, but they are simply lined up across the static screen, waving their arms and occasionally lobbing grenades at you. Every few seconds, a confused looking guy in a blue suit runs like a headless chicken from one side of the screen to the other. He has to be shot as well otherwise you lose energy.

This is like a simplified version of the STE game, Operation Garfield, itself a parody of Operation Wolf. You shoot anything that moves, making sure to keep your ammo topped up, and you can lob grenades back at the opposition when the going gets tough, it acts like a smart bomb. Control is entirely by

mouse, moving the cross-hair to aim and the buttons to pump lead and launch grenades.



The graphics are generally average, nothing that even mildly stretches the ST, in fact it's plain to see it has lost a bit in the translation to 16 colours. The sprites especially look a little pasty, though I suppose your common garden zombie doesn't usually have a rich complexion!

I find the mouse tracking a little coarse, and perhaps a tad sensitive (but that could just be me, getting old). If it tracked exactly like it does on the GEM desktop, I'd rule this game!



When the energy bar at the top-right of the screen is depleted, it's game over. Unfortunately, while you can replenish your weapons, the same cannot be done for your health. This would be a

great game to play at conventions, easy to pick up and instant gratification. I only wish for more suitable music and some sampled screams, explosions and gun-fire.



I don't quite understand why this game (supplied in MSA format) unarchives to bootable disk form, and not just a file so it can be installed on hard disk. Apart from all that, it's good for a quick blast from time to time.

## Download link

[http://files.dhs.nu/files\\_game/zombie\\_apocalypse\\_by\\_stax.zip](http://files.dhs.nu/files_game/zombie_apocalypse_by_stax.zip)

Verdict	
Name:	Zombie Apocalypse
Author:	Bod of Stax
Requires:	ST/STE with 1 MB or higher
Price:	Freeware
Pros:	Blow stuff up!
Cons:	Game design could have been enhanced for this conversion.
Rating:	★★★★★

# MyAtari Survey Feedback



**Name:** Paolo  
**Favourite issue:** 33 - July 2003  
**Why:** Excellent JagFest reports  
**Favourite article:** Issue 33 - JagFest UK 2003

**Why:** Great report, and it is difficult to recall all the great reviews and articles in the back issues.

**Favourite review:** Issue 28 - Reservoir Gods



**Why:** Good to see people programming Atari.

**Birthday message:** Keep going.

**Like most:** It is a real serious and wide spectrum Atari only magazine. It should be glossy printed and every other computer specific magazine would pale.

**Like least:** Sometimes it is not on time but I think I can live with this. Sometimes the closed latest issue is not online well it is but for a couple of hours.

**Like topics:** Promoting and reviewing standard applications for every body to understand that it can be used in everyday job as well.

## MyAtari replies

Many readers have suggested or asked for a printed version of MyAtari, or maybe a special edition containing the "best of" articles. The reality is that it's a lot of extra work which we don't have time (or money!) to do. We hope everyone can enjoy what we manage to produce. The best way for people to see the magazine "on time" is to help! At the last count there were almost 800 subscribers on the mailing list, we imagine there are

many more who simply haven't bothered to subscribe but still read the magazine. That's a lot of Atari fans and a lot of potential contributors!



**Name:** Christian  
**Favourite issue:** 27, January 2003  
**Why:** Because I had birthday there.  
**Favourite article:** Issue 32 - Atari Logo Evolution

**Why:** Very interesting to look at.

**Favourite review:** Issue 29 – ScatBox

**Why:** So good that I just bought it.

**Birthday message:** Stay cool, stay Atari.



**Like most:** Very nice website, downloadable issues and it's free.

**Like least:** The site doesn't work on my Falcon with CAB... maybe you can make an extra Atari compatible version

**Like topics:** More games... sure depends on the scene... competitions and stay like you are.

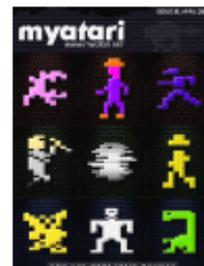
## MyAtari Replies

Thanks for your feedback. This is the first time we've heard of MyAtari not working on CAB. Every month we test the completed issue in CAB 2.7 on a Falcon, so we know it works, please make sure your version is up to date. The current format of MyAtari gives us the best balance of compatibility, file size and page layout control we want to achieve, it wouldn't be practical to make several different versions. We've actually gone to great lengths to make sure MyAtari works on Ataris (CAB being the reference point), that is why the page fits on a 640 pixel wide screen without any horizontal scrolling.

**Name:** Mark Bedingfield

**Favourite issue:** 30, April 2003

**Why:** Interesting techy stuff.



**Favourite article:** Issue 34 - Aighternet Party

**Why:** There are no coding or hacking conventions in Aussie. It is cool to read

about them.

**Favourite review:** Issue 29 – ScatBox

**Why:** More interesting techy stuff.

**Birthday message:** MyAtari is getting better and better, I hang for more news reviews and articles. Keep it up.

**Like most:** It is informative yet, entertaining.



**Like least:** Would be nice to download in PDF.

**Like topics:** More Techy Stuff.

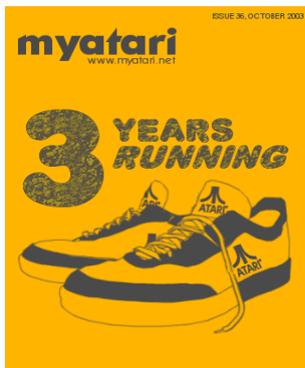
**MyAtari replies**

G'day mate. Do we detect a certain bias in your interests?! As for the PDF suggestion, it would be nice, but MyAtari was designed for the web first and foremost. PDF allows for a far higher page layout precision and graphic resolution, but we don't have the resources to produce it at that level, certainly not every month. It would require full-time professional DTP skills, and the file sizes would be much larger, too. No conventions Down Under? Do something about it! Even if it starts off small, you have to start somewhere. Take ideas from what you read in MyAtari, take photos and write reports, then we'll publish them and help spread the word. There must be so many people thinking the same thing, they have ideas but think they're the only ones interested. Get together and great things will happen!

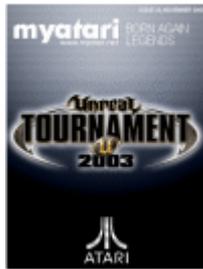
Hi!

Happy birthday for the best Atari online magazine:-)

Bee bee, France.



**MyAtari replies**  
Merci beaucoup!



**Name:** Uncle Harry

**Favourite issue:** 25, November 2002

**Why:** This issue has a great mix of feature subjects (software,

hardware, event and report) and a big bunch of reviews.

**Favourite article:** Issue 29 - Atari Day in the Netherlands

**Why:** I appreciate the organization work and the idea of this event. The photos show the mood and spirit of this Atari meeting, really enthusiastic.

**Favourite review:** Issue 28 - Lords of Chaos

**Like topics:** What I would like MyAtari to cover in future issues: There could be something like an 8-bit corner from time to time if articles are available or even in a certain sequence, like every quarter. This basic idea is also applicable for other subjects: emulation resort, hardware workbench, Jag-Zoo...

**MyAtari replies**

Hallo Uncle Harry! Thank you for your great support on the magazine. Due to its entirely voluntary nature, usually we have to publish whatever comes, although the team has been helpful and managed to produce specific articles when requested. We already have some semi-regular features but we realize everyone is busy and only contributes out of generosity. Without that, there would be no magazine. Watch out



**Why:** All important aspects reviewed for the potential game player. Good text work, clear pictures.

**Birthday message:** Thank you for the very good work to the editors, for the helpful support to the team members, for the great articles of the contributors and the loyalty of the readers in the last three years. Happy Birthday!

**Like most:** The wonderful web site design/layout, the conceptual continuity and the people.

**Like least:** There is only one issue per month.

for future issues, there are many more nice things planned!

Please keep sending in your surveys!

# MiNT

An Introduction To The MiNT Operating System. by Bohdan Milar

## What is MiNT?

I would like to be concise but understandable for common users. I hope that coders won't criticize me for some simplifications and users for the number of technical terms. So I would try to define MiNT as an interesting combination of TOS and Unix. To understand this definition we must say what exactly TOS and Unix are and what sort of combination it is.

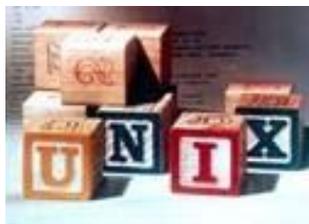
TOS is The Operating System that most Atari ST and all Falcon and TT computers have burned in their ROMs. It consists of several parts and I will use the Atari Compendium definitions of them:

GEMDOS - file system management routines that provide access to all of the basic devices supported by Atari computers.

BIOS - system for the lowest level of device communication. It is used by GEMDOS to accomplish many of the file system operations.

XBIOS - control of the hardware-specific features such as the floppy drive, video controller, DSP, MFP and sound system.

This is the part of TOS which most users do not know very well. They are more familiar with the graphical environment called GEM. I will talk about it later.



Now a few words about Unix. It is an operating system developed in the

1960s by Ken Thompson and Dennis Ritchie. The main idea was to write a small and effective operating system kernel. In 1978 Bill Joy and Chuck Haley improved Unix to achieve these attributes:

To be expandable by loadable modules (device drivers).

To control the access to the computer's resources (CPU, memory, disks...) with user names and passwords (multi-user).

To be able to launch and control other programs with the possibility of running more than one program at the same time (multi-tasking).

To allow users to select different environments to work.

To support networks.

To be portable to many types of computers.

This system was called BSD and it was later released as open source.

The development of TOS was very slow. Functional changes in new versions were rare if one compares TOS 1.0 (1985), 2.06 (1991) and 4.04 (1993). Atari Corporation stopped all work on it in 1993, but the source code was never published so further development was not possible. Most improvements of existing TOS versions were done through software patches (such as FPATCH) or by replacing obsolete parts of it in memory (like Winx).

This was the situation when many people thought about the future. Especially GEMDOS needed to be replaced because it did not allow use of long file names and other useful things. Also the multi-tasking through accessories was not sufficient any more. It wouldn't be wise to write a whole new system because hundreds of great programs were already written for TOS. And then Eric R. Smith came with a great idea. He took parts of the BSD source code, modified it and compiled on the Atari ST. He replaced relevant parts of TOS with the result and thus MiNT was born.

In 1992 Atari bought MiNT and used it as a part of the MultiTOS project. Nevertheless it was stopped in 1994.

Fortunately, unlike TOS, the sources of MiNT were released freely so potential developers could take them and continue. Such people appeared so MiNT has been kept alive. Now Frank Naumann and a group of his colleagues continue the development under a new name: FreeMiNT.



## News

### More 8-bit products at DGS

Dean Garraghty, 01 November 2003

I have been able to combine most of the contents of my two Atari 8-bit CDs into one single product at a much reduced price. The new CD is US\$9.99 including shipping to any country.

This new CD includes everything from the original CD1 plus Print-Filer from Rambit, the 22 minute AMS 96 video in MPEG1, and 13 PD disks. More information at <http://www.dgs.clara.net>

I am now directly selling Atari 8-bit SCART and RCA cables, too. A 1 m SCART would be £5 plus postage, a 1.5 m RCA would also be £5 plus postage. I will ship to any country. Cables can be made between 1 and 5 m in length, and can be straight Atari to SCART, Atari to RCA, or Atari to both (combo cable).

