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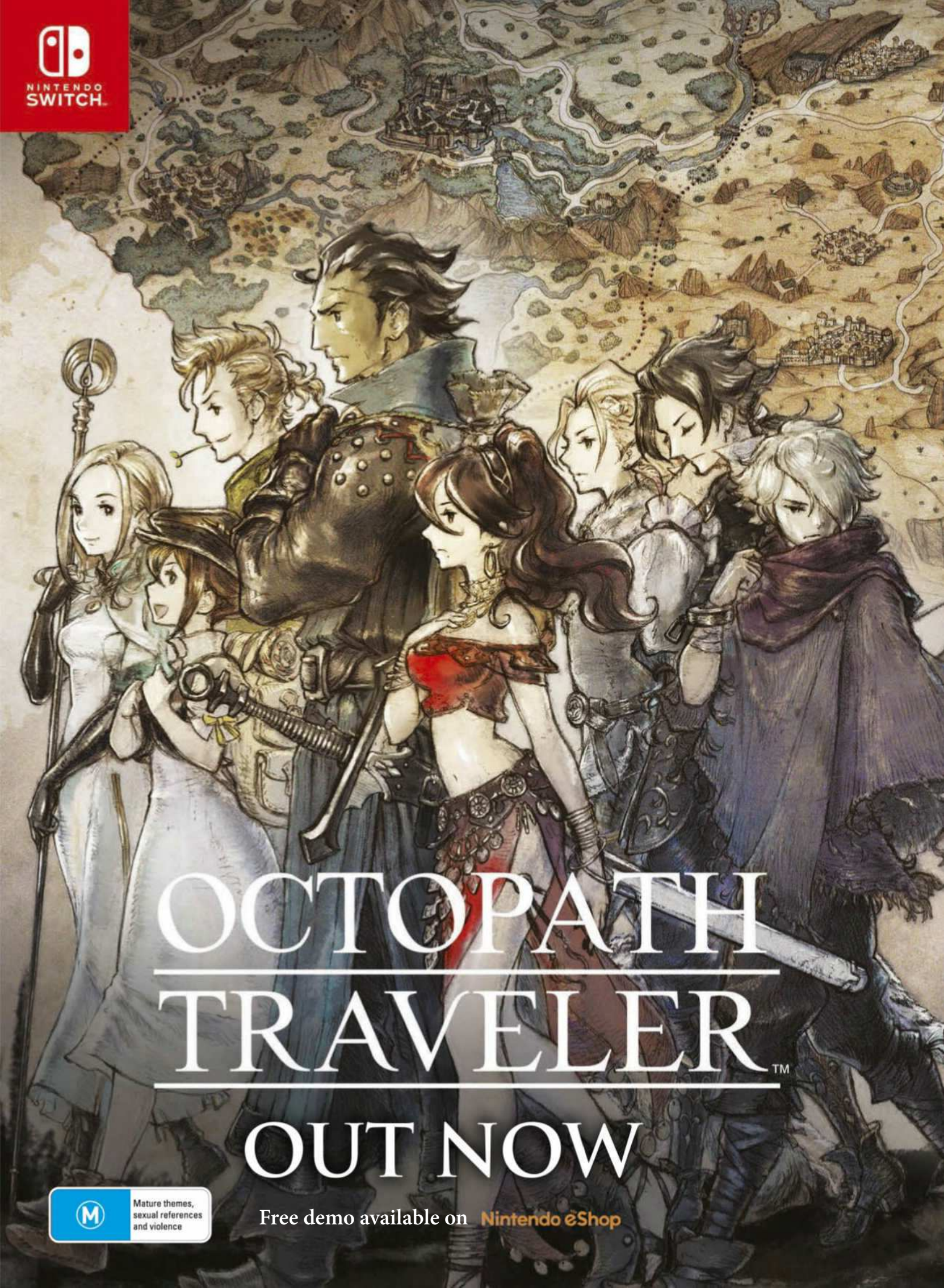
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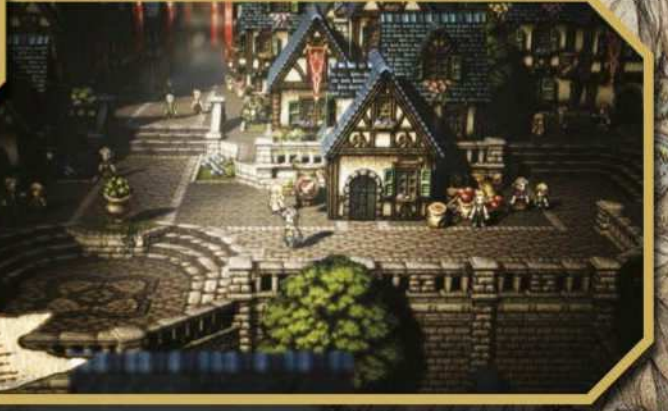
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I had the fortune to hand over nearly all of the writing of this issue to some of the most well-informed and passionate Nintendo fans I have ever met. Or, well, emailed with, since they all live in another state! But the magazine we've put together is, I think, a marvelous mix of the nostalgic, the forward-looking, and the technically impressive... so, a wonderful summation of all the things that makes Nintendo such a driving force in gaming. I hope you all enjoy the ride - I know I have!

**DAVID HOLLINGWORTH**  
*Editor*



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# HYPER

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FEATURE

# Nintendo All-Nighter At James O'Connor's Place

*Nintendo's rise and fall in  
the living room.*

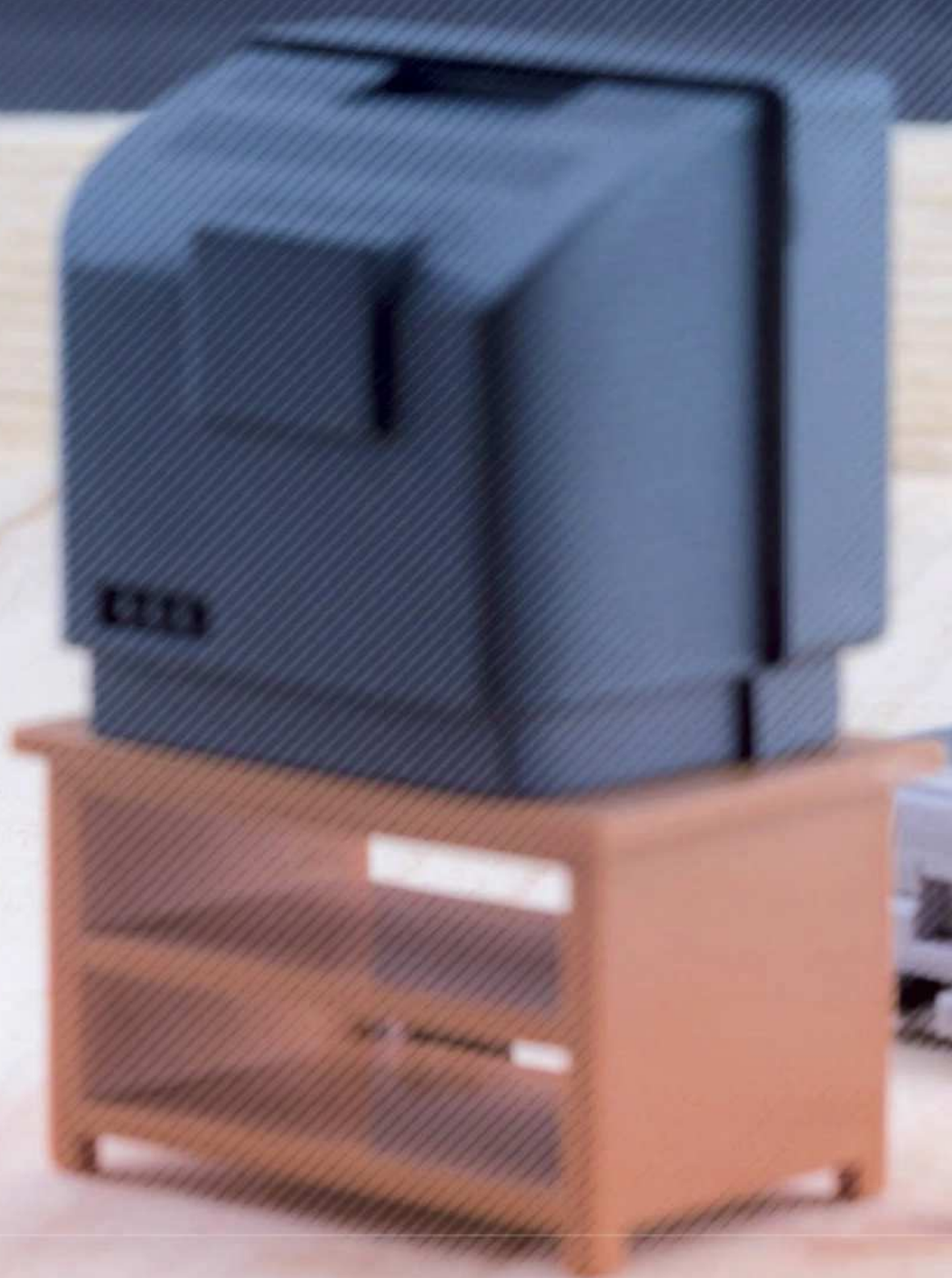
I spent my 1999 school holidays trying to pull all-nighters with friends. It was very important to us ('us' being the rotating group of me and Matt and Sam and Dan and the other Matt) that we play Mario Party, San Francisco Rush, and Goldeneye for as long as possible. Our goal was always to forego sleep entirely, and damn the consequences. We never quite made it - typically we'd be protesting that we weren't tired at 3, and asleep by 3:30 - but the ambition to play multiplayer games for as long as we could manage was pure.

Years later, when online services had expanded to the point where even Nintendo, somewhat begrudgingly, had to start offering them, the company was still focusing a lot of its energy on the lounge room and other shared gaming spaces. Now, with the Switch upon us, we're being encouraged to take our consoles with us into other people's homes. Nintendo has always wanted to bring people together and make them play their games together, although whether they've succeeded or not has shifted on a console by console basis.

**The Enduring Life Of  
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Never Truly Die**

*Super Smash Bros Melee  
Super Monkey Ball  
Timesplitters 2*

*The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords  
Adventures  
F-Zero GX*







# NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

The NES Mini comes with thirty games. Of those thirty, ten feature simultaneous two-player modes, while six feature alternating multiplayer. These are the cream of the console's crop, but only a handful of them are really better with two players. The NES isn't typically thought of as a party console, and had less of a multiplayer focus than the consoles that followed. Many of the games that allowed for multiplayer did

not let players play simultaneously - in Super Mario Bros 1 and 3, for instance, competing was simply a case of taking turns, with progress for each player being tracked.

While games on the NES may not have often offered multiplayer options, but they still often encouraged players to come together. Try beating The Legend of Zelda or Metroid without the Internet, and without talking to anyone about

what to do or where to go - it's very difficult. At the same time, Nintendo was fostering an image as a family-friendly company, an image that would stick with them for years to come. Back then, it was extremely uncommon for kids - the NES' target audience - to have their own televisions separate from the family unit, so the system needed to appeal, on some level, to all ages. This would turn into a guiding philosophy for Nintendo.



**Top 5 Multiplayer Games**

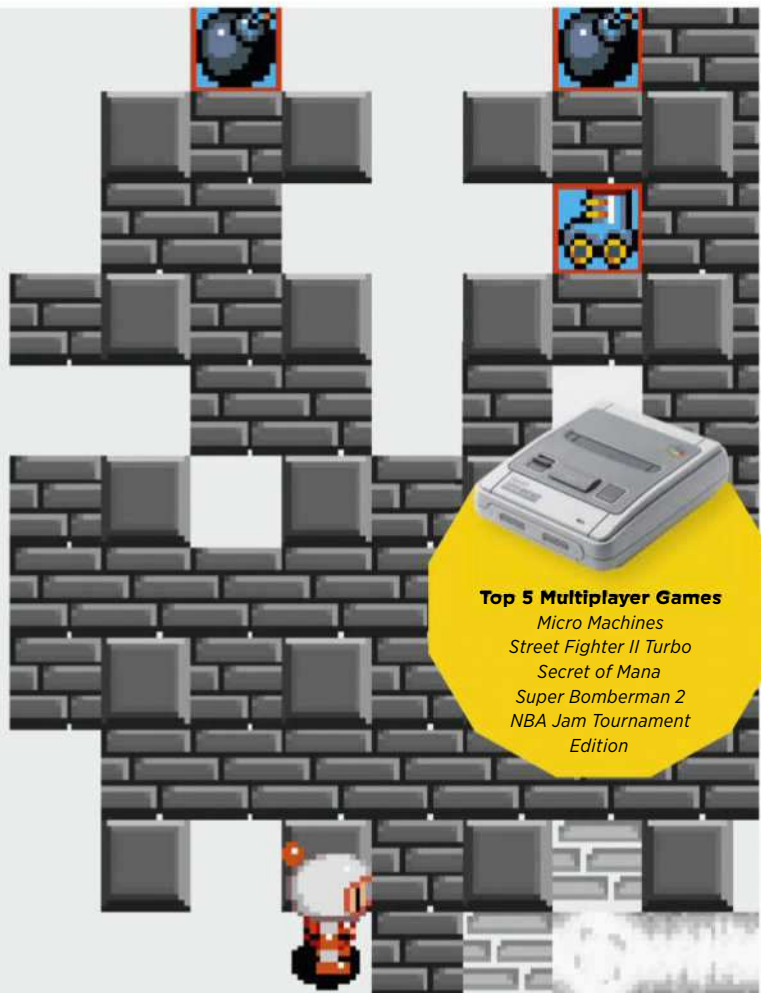
- Battletoads*
- Bubble Bobble*
- Contra*
- Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers*
- Tecmo Bowl*

# SUPER NINTENDO

Street Fighter II is an important game, pioneering a style of fighter that still endures today. The SNES would eventually host four iterations of Street Fighter II, generally released at a premium price. The Switch is getting its own, original version of the game this year, such is the game's endurance.

While the NES hosted many arcade ports, it was the SNES that best showcased how consoles could capture at least part of the experience of heading down to Time Zone with a friend and a pocket full of shiny dollar coins (even if no console would host a perfect port of Daytona USA until the Dreamcast years later). Street Fighter would eventually drift away from Nintendo consoles - in the next console cycle, the PlayStation controller and the system's audience were a much better fit for fighting games - but the system's ability to bring (at the time) relatively complex arcade games into the home was a big plus. Of course Nintendo was infamous for toning down the content in their games back then, which meant that several arcade ports had content changed or removed. Their game content guidelines at the time stated that no games that "depict random, gratuitous, and/or excessive violence", nor "depict graphic illustration of death", would be allowed. Consequently, the SNES Mortal Kombat experience wasn't ideal.

Nintendo themselves weren't responsible for most of the SNES' best multiplayer games, though (the main exception being Super Mario Kart). Aside from a handful of sport, racing, and puzzle games, Nintendo largely focused on the big-ticket single-player experiences - still a big focus today, of course, but they've expanded their repertoire and their ambitions somewhat along the way. It wasn't until the N64 that Nintendo would really get a reputation for their devotion to same-room multiplayer.



**Top 5 Multiplayer Games**

- Micro Machines*
- Street Fighter II Turbo*
- Secret of Mana*
- Super Bomberman 2*
- NBA Jam Tournament Edition*



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## NINTENDO 64

If you were an Aussie kid in the '90s, there's a good chance you remember A\*mazing, a game show for children that aired on Channel 7 five nights a week. The second-to-last round, which determined the team that got to enter the eponymous maze, featured a videogame showdown between the two competing schools. The players would face off across various games and consoles donated by Nintendo.

If you stuck around for long enough, you saw the show progress from NES games in the early years, to a SNES, and finally an N64. It was smart marketing on Nintendo Australia's part: at the time, kids were very much Nintendo's target audience, and the show made competing in these games look exciting.

The Nintendo 64 was the family-friendly party console. Even its more violent games – most notably Rare's shooters – were fairly light on graphic content and adult situations, and most of the system's more popular 'adult' games seemed to come from a single publisher, Acclaim. You could have a perfectly good time with the N64 if you stuck to the games with cute mascots.

The PlayStation may have beaten it in sales, but it was the Nintendo kids who were getting together for gaming focused sleep-overs. The four controller ports helped – four-player gaming required an additional device on the PlayStation, so few games on the system supported more than two. Nintendo themselves published 37 multiplayer games in the west, along with their third-party titles. For many, this is still looked back at as the golden age. Goldeneye and Perfect Dark are remembered with exceptional fondness (even if neither has aged as well as you might like) as are the likes of Mario Kart 64, Diddy Kong Racing, and the Mario Party series (despite the game's proclivity for injuring players – see boxout).

The N64 was also, of course, the machine where Nintendo's sales and popularity dipped dramatically. The machine garnered a reputation as a machine for kids, which was far more damaging a reputation than it had been previously. If you wanted serious multiplayer, well, online play was starting to take off on PC. Why gather your friends together, some asked, when you can play Quake II against anyone in the world online? This sentiment would spread over the next several console generations, as online play became an exciting prospect, and eventually an essential function.

For many, the enduring legacy of the N64 were the real technical marvels, the Super Mario 64s and the Ocarina of Times and what-have-you, the single-player experiences that showed off the machine's abilities. But to really understand what the N64 achieved, bring up Goldeneye or Mario Kart 64 in a crowd of people aged between 23 and 35 and watch how many eyes light up.



### The Dreaded Mario Party Palm

*The very first Mario Party for the N64 was a gem of a game, except for the mini-games within it that focused on spinning the stick as fast as possible. The best way to do it was to use your palm, which resulted in so many injuries that Nintendo was forced by the court to offer players a protective glove. Seriously, ripping your hand open on an N64 controller really burns.*



### Top 5 Multiplayer Games

*Mario Party 2  
Goldeneye 007  
Perfect Dark  
Super Smash Bros  
Mario Golf 64*



### Top 5 Multiplayer Games

*Super Smash Bros Melee  
Super Monkey Ball  
Timesplitters 2  
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures  
F-Zero GX*

## GAMECUBE

There's a handle on the back of the GameCube. While the official line was that it was there to make the console easier to carry, it was perhaps, ultimately, more of a symbolic addition – no one was carrying the system around like a briefcase, but Nintendo wanted people to take the GameCube with them when they went out. They wanted the system's owners to evangelise the machine, to bring it to their friends' places for multiplayer good-times, perhaps because they knew it wasn't necessarily going to get into every home through high sales. The fact that the PS2 outsold the GameCube at a rate of 7 to 1 meant that most gamer homes were already equipped with Sony's console, despite it, yet again, only having two controller ports.

One of Nintendo's more confusing ideas from this period was their focus on multiplayer gaming that was enhanced by the Game Boy Advance, attached to the console with a link cable. A handful of games, including Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles, Zelda: Four Swords Adventures, and Pac-Man VS (which headlined a particularly disastrous Nintendo E3 presentation in 2003) encouraged players to gather up three friends, each armed with Game Boys and link cables, and play these games together.

Of course, years later the Wii U would better illustrate some of what Nintendo had been trying to do here all along, but the idea of each player having their own secret screen never really gained traction. Nintendo was going for something very different from the competition – while Xbox gamers were playing Halo 2 online, GameCube users who wanted to take advantage of Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicle's much-touted four player mode not only had to get in a room together, but they needed to own all the appropriate kit and actively plan the session in advance. It's not a surprise that it didn't take off.

On the other hand, Super Smash Bros Melee was so incredibly popular that people are still playing it regularly in tournaments today, so that's a win.



#### Top 5 Multiplayer Games

*Wii Sports*  
*New Super Mario Bros. Wii*  
*NBA Jam*  
*Wii Party*  
*Boom Blox*

## WII

In March 2007, four months after the system's launch, a nursing home in Chicago hosted a Wii Sports bowling tournament for its residents. In Greenacre, New South Wales, reports emerged of a Wii becoming the preferred method of exercise and entertainment for several residents. Throughout the system's life, the Wii was being actively recommended as a fun, competitive form of physiotherapy in retirement villages. This has been the Wii's rose-tinted legacy – it was a machine that invited everyone to give it a shot, and which promoted activity among friends. The Wii was, for that first year at least, the king of any communal room it sat

in. **Wii Sports was one of the most important launch games of all time** – not only was it a system seller, but it was the one piece of software Wii owners needed to show what their machine could do.

A lot of the discussion around motion controls has focused on the space of our living rooms, and what they can and can't accommodate. The Wii was designed as a console that was best taken out of the bedroom and set up in a place where everyone could see and play with it and move around, but it didn't require you to move objects around or reposition your furniture in quite the same way the Xbox Kinect did (although it would have

been nice if the sensor bar had slightly better range). It prioritised accessibility: when someone saw how the Wii was used, they could pick up a remote and start playing immediately.

The fact that the technology wasn't all there just yet at launch was largely irrelevant. Even the general fatigue everyone felt for motion controls within a few years (including Nintendo, seemingly, as many of their later games on the system were more traditional experiences) can't tarnish the Wii's success at bringing multiplayer gaming to a much wider audience.

#### Holding Hands

*Nintendo's handhelds have taken a different route from their home consoles in regard to multiplayer, but the Pokémon games definitely stick out as vital multiplayer experiences. The DS, meanwhile, was the first Nintendo system to offer online play, with Mario Kart DS (which promptly revealed how terribly unbalanced the game was).*

## WII U

The stated intent of the Wii U related directly to the lounge room. When the console was first unveiled, it was discussed as a machine that was being built with the modern family living situation in mind. It was a console for the kids who didn't want to stop playing Mario while their parents watched the news, Nintendo said. Now that everyone was looking at smaller screens in their hands at all times, they figured, a system that let you take the action off the TV should appeal pretty widely.

Nintendo was wrong. They ceased production of the console at the end of 2016, having sold 13.5 million units. The Wii U was Nintendo's worst-selling console of all time, and had the lowest sales of any home console since the Dreamcast. As it turns out, no one was that fussed about playing their games on the Gamepad's crappy screen within a short range of the TV while their family, partner, or housemate was trying to watch Neighbours.

The irony of Nintendo's misunderstanding of living room dynamics was that, during the Wii U's life, couch multiplayer actually did make a bit of a comeback

through the indie development scene... but not necessarily on the console itself. On the other hand, Nintendo themselves seemed to embrace multiplayer game development more aggressively with the Wii U. Online services were improved, Super Mario 3D World added a great multiplayer mode to the series (Super Mario 64 DS technically pipped it to the post, but with lesser results), and franchises like Mario Kart and Smash Bros thrived. Many of Nintendo's best single-player franchises were put aside for a moment – even the only Wii U timed-exclusive Zelda game, *Hyrule Warriors*, was a multiplayer spin-off.

The actual best multiplayer game on the Wii U – *Splatoon* – is absent from the 'top multiplayer' list below. The Wii U is the console where Nintendo finally properly embraced the benefits of online multiplayer, and *Splatoon*, for its numerous charms, had a pretty weak couch multiplayer experience. It was a big step forward for Nintendo – perhaps, one hopes, Nintendo will finally provide amply for same-room and online multiplayer with the Switch.



#### Top 5 Multiplayer Games

*Nintendo Land*  
*Pikmin 3*  
*Super Smash Bros for Wii U*  
*Super Mario 3D World*  
*Mario Kart 8*



# SWITCH

The advertising in the lead up to the Switch's release focused heavily on the idea of gaming together in the same space. Your friends invite you to a rooftop party? Take the Switch with you, Antisocial Karen, and show it off to everyone. Heading out to shoot hoops with some friends? Shoot virtual hoops afterwards, which maybe you secretly wanted to do the whole time anyway. The Switch wants to provide a living room gaming experience that you can take with you anywhere.

Even with the console now in our hands, it's hard to say whether or not the Switch is a perfect realisation of Nintendo's grand plans to bring people together or not, but the signs are there that it has a shot. The machine launched with five titles that work best as shared experiences: 1-2 Switch, Snipperclips, Super Bomberman R, Just Dance 2017, and

Skylanders Imaginators - of which only Bomberman (which supports up to 8 players on one console) is playable online. Throw in Fast RMX, and the post-launch releases of Mario Kart 8 Deluxe, Puyo Puyo Tetris, and a huge selection of indie games, and you've got a console that seems to be fully embracing the spirit of same-room multiplayer even as it goes portable.

The Switch is the first Nintendo console - indeed, the only major console in memory - to launch with two controllers by default. The Joy Cons can be used together for complex games, or can be split apart and used as separate controllers for various titles, complete with extra shoulder buttons that slot into place on their sides. These tiny

controllers are much more comfortable than we had anticipated - not quite a replacement for the Pro Controller, but more than fine for a quick round of Bomberman.

The Switch's narrative isn't over yet, but what's clear is that it represents the continuation of a long-term goal to get people playing together, in-person. Nintendo may release the most advanced consoles, or offer the most generous libraries, but the company never seems to lose track of how much fun it is to stay up as late as you can, with your friends, playing games. ☺

## Top 5 Multiplayer Games

Rocket League  
Splatoon 2  
Minecraft  
Mario Kart 8 Deluxe  
Super Bomberman R

## Longest Powerside Ever

In 2014, four teenagers in the town of Warrnambool, Victoria, set a world record for the longest Mario Kart session. For 35 hours and 46 minutes they played through the N64, Wii and Wii U editions of Nintendo's kart racer, raising \$400 for charity Peter's Project in the process. I still think I could take 'em, though.





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**TOP**  
**10**

# Indie Games on the Switch



Indies of all shapes, sizes, and orientations have found themselves a spiritual home on the Nintendo Switch. While you can often find these games on another system, on a commute there's nothing like whipping the switch out of your backpack and waking it up from sleep mode to find that it is ready to go a second later, exactly where you left off. This feature shouldn't be underestimated.

I hear the modern gamer declaring that there are superior options on a gaming laptop; this may be true but they are expensive, heavy, hot, and not really practical on a peak hour train trip. In many cases you would also need to carry your choice of wireless controller as you can't exactly mouse and keyboard comfortably on public transport without inconveniencing the general public – and looking kinda naff in the process.

These days, indies are evolving. I find more and more I shy away from the big budget releases towards these more charming darlings, as they are often much more focussed. I feel they try and squeeze every possible idea out of a unique premise carefully crafted, rather than trying to shoehorn elements of every successful game into their creation; not every game needs to be the latest open-world, do-everything kind of experience.

Here is my list of 10 of my favourite Nintendo Switch indie/eshop games – all release dates are the date it was released in Australia on the platform.

## Celeste

Celeste is many things: frustrating, incredibly difficult, cruel... and yet fair. This game is essentially Super Meat Boy with more exploration. It controls incredibly well and has a heartfelt and real story, much more so than you would expect from you might perceive as another pixel art, 2D platformer. Celeste is not the titular character, but rather the mountain you're tasked with climbing over the course of the campaign. Your character suffers from self doubt, panic attacks, and bouts of depression while on their journey; as well as devious environmental hazards and a less than ideal D-pad, you also need to conquer your inner demons to emerge victorious.

DEVELOPER	Matt Makes Games
PUBLISHER	Matt Makes Games
RELEASED	January 2018



DEVELOPER	D-Pad Studio
PUBLISHER	D-Pad Studio
RELEASED	Feb 13, 2018



## Golf Story

Golf Story isn't perfect by any stretch of the imagination but it is a highly enjoyable golfing RPG that is a joy to play on the Switch. It's been influenced by the three-button-press-controlled golf games that have come before it, with a large amount of inspiration taken from Mario Golf. It has a distinctly Aussie sense of humour and perhaps the finest golf-based rap battle you will ever experience in a video

DEVELOPER	Sidebar Games
PUBLISHER	Sidebar Games
RELEASED	September 2017

game (now there's a Top Ten article waiting to happen! -Ed). It also has a sweet and absurd story with many funny moments and a few head scratching puzzles; it's not overly long, but for completionists there are a few optional sidequests and collectibles.

## Owlboy

Often when a game spends ten years in development hell it will never see the light of day. At its core this game (like Celeste) is a 2D pixel art platformer, but it differs from the way many platformers control. The protagonist Otus is an owl/human hybrid who can fly from the get go. Otus' village has been attacked by bastard pirates and it is up to Otus

to save the day! This doesn't mean you can just flap your feathers all the way to the final boss and lay the smack down. You explore the world in a metroidvania style adventure and meet a cast of unlikely allies who assist with their skills along the way; these allies help you along to your next destination and ultimately, take down the evil 'Solus'.



DEVELOPER	Yacht Club Games
PUBLISHER	Yacht Club Games
RELEASED	March 2017

## Garage

You are Butch, a deadbeat drug pusher; you wake up in an urban nightmare and are tasked with making your way through the 'Garage'. It is essentially a dark series of rooms where various supernatural horrors await. There are a hodgepodge of elements that all work well in tandem, though you can tell instantly the main inspiration is drawn from the outstanding Hotline Miami. In *Garage*, the pacing is much slower and requires more thought and strategy as opposed to quick reflexes. It isn't perfect but it is a unique experience on the Switch, and if you're a fan of B-Grade horror you will have a good, and bloody, time.

DEVELOPER	tinyBuild
PUBLISHER	tinyBuild
RELEASED	Mar 2017

## Shovel Knight Treasure Trove

I have bought this game three times now and I'm not even mad. The best thing about *Shovel Knight*, besides everything, is the generosity of the devs. My journey with this game is as follows; one fine day I purchased the original *Shovel Knight* the precise moment it released on Steam; it was love at first sight. A funny story, great chiptune music, a likeable protagonist, and, crucially, excellent platforming. Since release there have been two full-length DLCs (with *King Knights* DLC

currently in development) based on a couple of bosses defeated in *Shovel Knight*'s original adventure. This ain't no re-skin either, they are full length games that change the levels and mechanics up in interesting and fun ways. Yacht Club games have never sold a piece of DLC, so if you bought the original *Shovel Knight* these extras filtered down the pipe as free downloads; this is the reason I happily purchased this game on three different platforms.

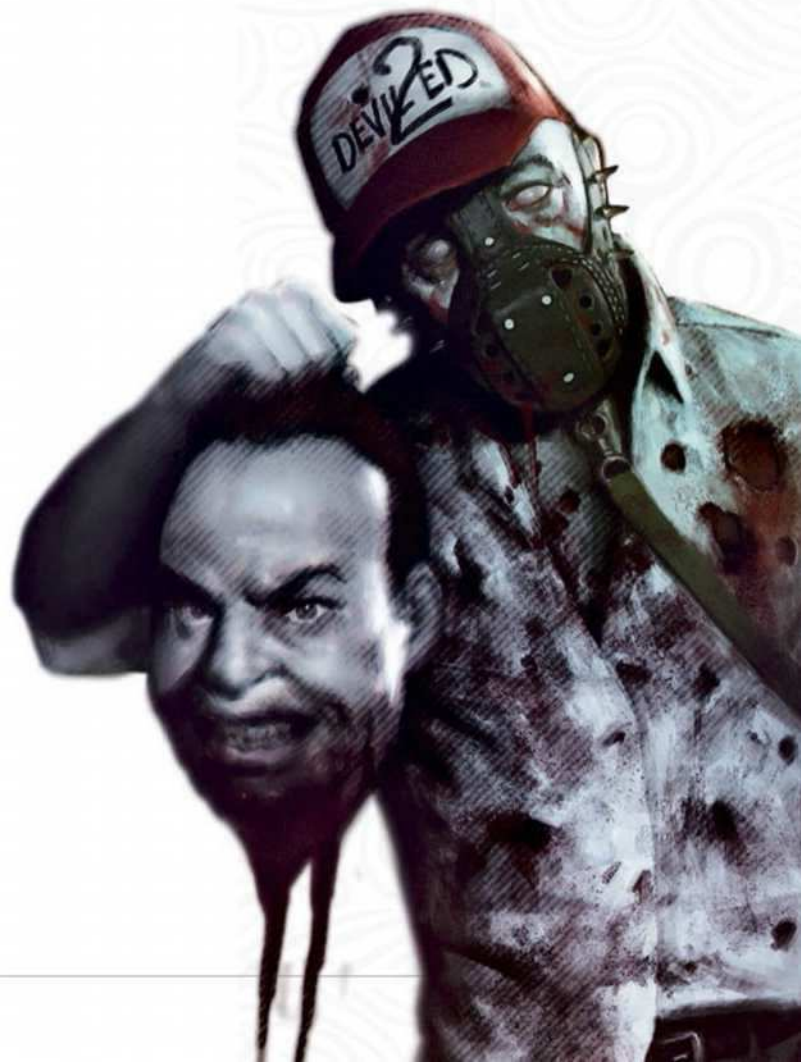


DEVELOPER	Nicalis
PUBLISHER	Nicalis
RELEASED	Mar 2017

## Binding of Isaac: Afterbirth +

*Binding of Isaac: Afterbirth +* is a twin stick, rogue-like arena shooter that is disturbing and gross in equal measure. This version of the game features all the DLC, plus extras from the versions released before it. The game is loosely based around a story from the Hebrew bible. In the biblical narrative Abraham is asked by God to sacrifice his son, Isaac, in order to prove his devotion and

fear of God. All of the imagery in the game is conjured up from the young boy's imagination and while it is childlike and at times puerile, it is powerful when viewed from a sheltered child's view of the world. There are thousands of power up items and variables to be tinkered with on your journey; for hardcore completionists this game is a real challenge and the controls translate very well to the switch.





DEVELOPER	Shin'en Multimedia
PUBLISHER	Shin'en Multimedia
RELEASED	March 2017

## FAST rmx

FAST rmx is an expanded re-release of anti gravity racing game Fast Racing Neo, which was a Wii U launch title. Normally that sentence would ring alarm bells but this game gets a lot right and very little wrong. Like many games that require intense concentration it can induce a trance like state when you are in the zone, and as the name implies it's very fast. I have

heard people compare this game to F-Zero, and while that is definitely a fair comparison I see it more as the lovechild of Wipeout and Ikaruga. The Wipeout comparison is easily understood but the mechanic that gives this series it's edge is changing your vehicle 'phase' on the fly in order to hit colour coded boost zones. It utterly rocks and is an underrated gem.

## Yoku's Island Express

Team 17 are the publishers behind the mostly excellent Worms franchise, and this is Swedish developer Villa Gorilla's debut effort; and, if this is anything to go by, I can't wait to see what it delivers next. I've noticed there are a few platformers of the Metroidvania ilk making their way on to this list, and Yoku's Island Express is another fine example of the genre, but with a unique twist that makes exploration an exciting endeavour. Your character is a cute dung beetle

who takes on the responsibility of the island postmaster. You're tasked with delivering packages to the citizens and saving the island from a mysterious dark force. Yoku cannot jump but he can use various orange and blue flippers on the island to bounce around pinball style and make his way to new areas. It can be a grind early on going through the same areas looking for new paths but once you start to open up shortcuts and new abilities it flows wonderfully and is super chill.



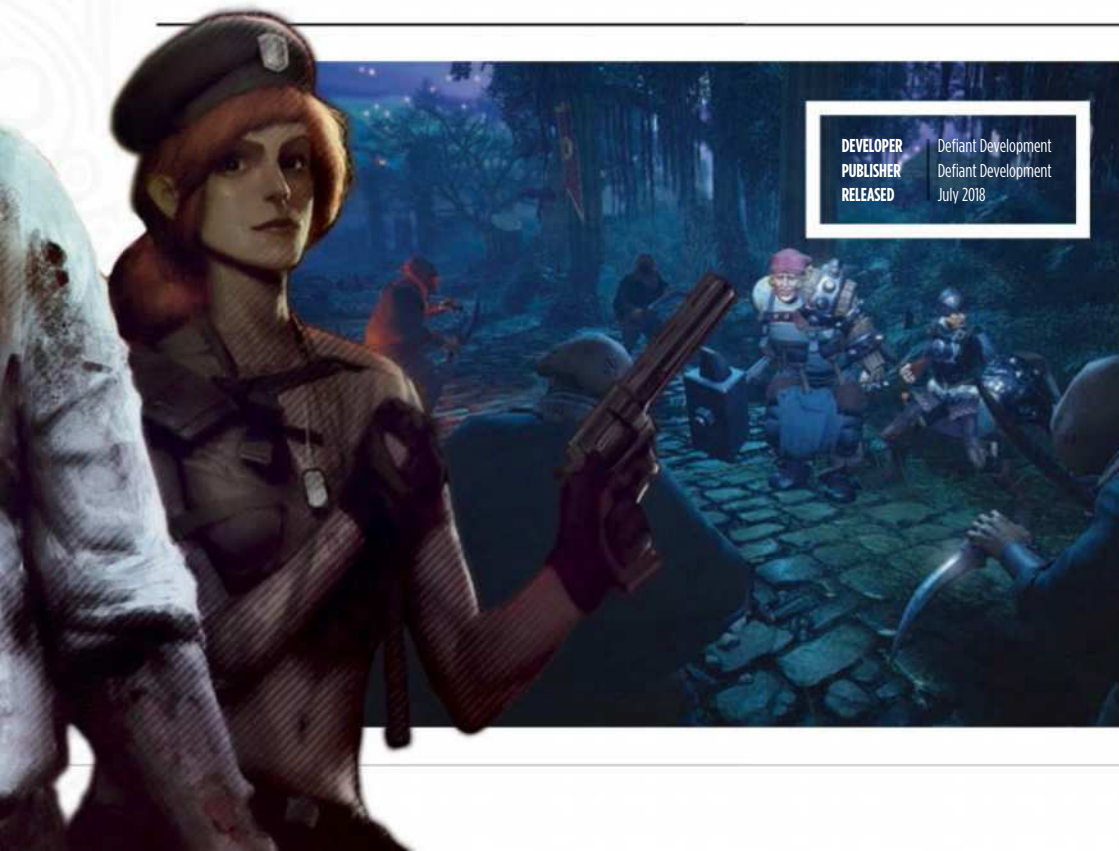
DEVELOPER	Team Cherry
PUBLISHER	Team Cherry
RELEASED	June 2018



DEVELOPER	Villa Gorilla
PUBLISHER	Team 17
RELEASED	May 2018

## Hand of Fate 2

Hand of Fate 2 is the sequel to Hand of Fate and was first released in 2017. It has recently been ported to the Nintendo Switch and runs very well even in handheld mode, even with multiple enemies on screen. This game is perfect for short bursts and is very well suited to the Switch. The premise is that cards are dealt to you by a mysterious fortune teller and the quests come from several layers of RNG; this includes die rolls, wheel spinning, and deck building, all combining to form a journey you need to conquer in order to obtain rewards. This journey plays out as a third person hack and slash adventure; sometimes like in life you are dealt a shitty hand, but your skill here is the difference. Can you achieve victory when the odds are stacked against you? You bet you can, and it's totally worth trying in this well-received Australian game. ☞



DEVELOPER	Defiant Development
PUBLISHER	Defiant Development
RELEASED	July 2018

# Controllers and controller accessories



## Nintendo Switch Joy-Con Armor Guards

Nintendo • \$22

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-switch-joy-con-armor-guards-2-pack-nintendo-switch/26596907](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-switch-joy-con-armor-guards-2-pack-nintendo-switch/26596907)

It's great that the Switch is built around mobility, but those JoyCons are tiny enough that dropping or battering them can be really easy – which is why this handy suit of armour for your controllers comes in.

Each pack includes two sets of controller grips and thumbguards, which are designed to be used in both 'wand' and 'controller' play modes. And while they're tough enough to protect your gear, they still feel soft in the hand. And they come in combinations of black/red, black/blue, black/yellow.

## Nyko PixelQuest Arcade Kit for Nintendo Switch

Nyko • \$39.95

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nyko-pixelquest-arcade-kit-for-nintendo-switch-nintendo-switch/28219955](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nyko-pixelquest-arcade-kit-for-nintendo-switch-nintendo-switch/28219955)

Nintendo's Labo is a lot of fun, but we're waiting to see some more third-party cardboard master-pieces... like this one, from Nyko!

It may not feature the whacky complexity of some Labo projects, but the Nyko PixelQuest Arcade Kit has a certain inescapable charm. It does exactly what it says on the tin, turning your Switch display and JoyCons into a two-player arcade cabinet. Included alongside the eight sheets of cardboard pieces are two thumbsticks for your controllers, mechanical remapping of the shoulder buttons, customisable sticker sheets, and full instructions.

## Nintendo Switch Core Wired Controller – Zelda

Nintendo • \$49.99

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-switch-core-wired-controller-zelda-nintendo-switch/28048576](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-switch-core-wired-controller-zelda-nintendo-switch/28048576)

While the JoyCons are pretty great controllers out of the box, there's no denying they're a touch on the dinky side – especially if you've got giant hands, like some of us in the office. Thankfully, Nintendo has that covered, with the Switch Core Wired Controller.

But what if that's not... extra enough?

Well, there's a range of themed controllers out there, but we think the best looking one is easily the Zelda one. Black with gold highlights on the buttons, it not only looks super-elegant, but features some really neat art of Link and his bow, and of course the Tri-Force emblem.

If Breath of the Wild is your constant jam, this is your constant controller.

## Super Smash Bros. Ultimate GameCube Controller

Nintendo

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-gamecube-controller-super-smash-bros-ultimate-nintendo-switch/28220552](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-gamecube-controller-super-smash-bros-ultimate-nintendo-switch/28220552)

Super Smash Bros. may now be a Switch staple, but its spiritual home is the venerable GameCube – and the GameCube controller was a pretty epic device for laying some smack – or smash, I guess...

Anyway, if that's your idea of the ultimate way to play Smash Bros. then this is literally your Ultimate Controller. You will need the separate (of course it is!) Nintendo GameCube Controller Adapter, but can you really put a price on nostalgia? Well, I guess that's kind of Nintendo's business model these days.

## Hori Mini SNES Fighting Commander Classic Controller

Nyko • \$39.95

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/hori-mini-snes-fighting-commander-classic-controller-nintendo-switch/27218417](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/hori-mini-snes-fighting-commander-classic-controller-nintendo-switch/27218417)

Hori's Fighting Commander Classic Controller – that sure is a mouthful – is a versatile controller designed to work with the Wii U, NES, and SNES, offering a retro return to form for fighting game enthusiasts.

The controller features a six-button layout optimised for fighting games, turbo functions for each button, a slow motion function, and is wireless to boot! Old school fighting functionality, new-school smarts! Yes please! 🗡️



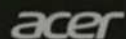
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# MISSINGNO

## THE MISSING LINK

*James O'Connor wants to believe...*

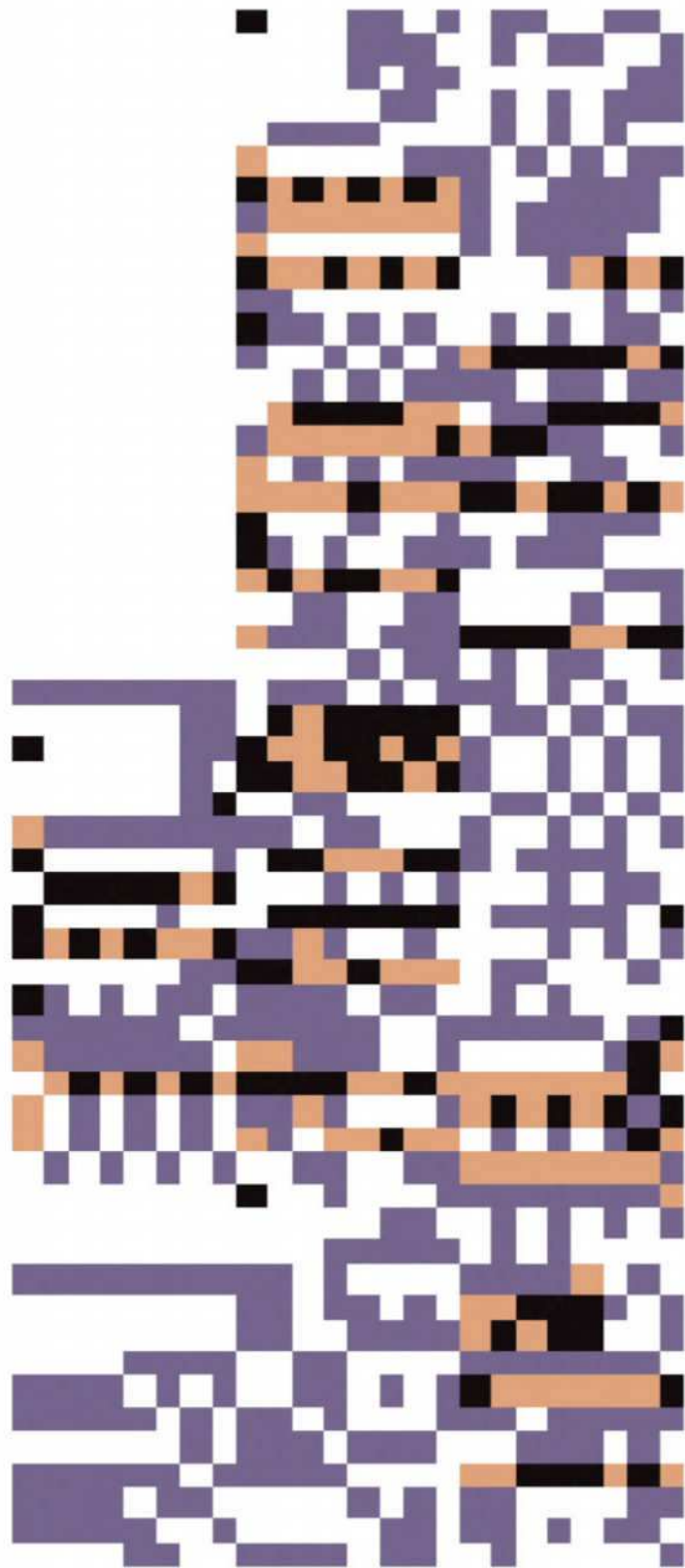
I was a child before there was an Internet, in a time when word could still be 'passed around the school ground' organically. There were rumours that you could find the Triforce in Ocarina of Time (false); someone ran around telling everyone that Maggie would be revealed as Mr Burns' killer (true - it had already aired in the US); one kid said that America got much scarier entries in R.L. Stine's Goosebumps series, with kooky names like 'Children Can Be Dangerous When Exposed To The Moon' (a total lie, but one I remember believing). We were used to implausible ideas spreading and eventually being snuffed out, but MissingNo changed all that.

In 1999, the Internet was just barely a thing for us. It was ubiquitous enough that we were starting to get used to it, but still not a thing we were regularly accessing. If you're of a certain age, you'll likely remember how the Internet felt the first few times you used it - it was so vast that you didn't really know what to do with it, or what you should be looking for. Pages took a long time to load, and information that would now be plastered all over your Twitter feed could take months to reach you.

One day a kid came to school and started telling everyone about MissingNo, and the Pokémon playground 'meta' shifted completely. If you weren't glued to your Game

Boy back in the day, MissingNo was a glitch in the system - a 'missing number', a Pokémon that was not meant to be there, and which manifested most of the time as a jumble of polygons on the screen. Catching one would do weird things to your game, causing visual and audio glitches. Catching one would max out whichever item was listed sixth in your items pocket too, meaning that you could upgrade to Rare Candies and level up your Pokémon to 100 easily, or get an infinite supply of never-fail Master Balls. Using it in battle would have unpredictable results - it would often manifest as a different character model, with varying stats.





When word of MissingNo first spread, of course, it sounded like complete bullshit. The steps involved – talking to the man who teaches you how to catch a Pokémon in Viridian City, then flying immediately to Cinnabar Island and using surf on the righthand coast, where the land meets the sea, until a wild MissingNo attacks – were too specific, with no unifying thread that we could identify. It's got something to do with the game's data buffer, but as a kid the mystery of MissingNo was part of the appeal. Within a week, everyone at my school who played Pokémon had caught MissingNo, the last few players having accepted that no one was playing a prank, and we all had stories about the weird effects it was having on our games.

#### PIDGEY

L4

HP:



CHARMELEON  
L16

HP:

RED used

MissingNo felt transgressive and exciting, but the appeal wore off fast. For many players, it felt like a peek behind the curtain that undid much of the attachment we'd formed to our pocket monsters – if the game was misbehaving, our Raichu and our Gyarados and our Gengar, now susceptible to the weirdness MissingNo introduced into the cartridge, felt less real. I used the glitch to spawn infinite Rare Candies and get my Charizard from level 92 to level 100, not realising until too late that I was robbing myself of a bonding experience. After dealing with a heavily glitched game in which progress felt inconsequential, many of us ended up wiping the data and starting over again.

There were other rumours out there, early Creepypastas that posited that there was a way to replace Red/Ash with a shadow version of the character that followed you everywhere secretly throughout the game. There were other weird, creepy lies circulating, but because MissingNo was there, there was always a possibility that every Pokémon rumour – and by extension, every other game rumour out there – could be true.

MissingNo's influence can be felt in future games in the series, even if the glitch has never been canonised. Pokémon has got weirder over time, with alternate dimensions and a deeper lore vaguely hinting at apocalyptic events, but nothing has ever quite matched up to what a programming error achieved. The next Pokémon games for Switch (Let's Go Pikachu/Eevee) will return to Kanto and the 151 original Pokémon, but MissingNo is very unlikely to make an appearance. That's a shame, because MissingNo was a more important part of Red and Blue than The Pokémon Company has ever acknowledged. «



INTERVIEW

# Splatoon 2

## More Ink On The Page

Interview by **James O'Connor**

In June, three significant things happened in the world of Splatoon. The Splatoon 2 World Championships took place alongside E3, where Japan's GG BoyZ dominated the competition; Nintendo announced that Splatoon 2 would continue to be supported with new content drops through to the end of 2018; and the Octo Expansion, a major single-player DLC with a punishingly high difficulty level, released. Splatoon 2 has been a major success for Nintendo, both critically and commercially, and the Inklings have become Nintendo's most significant new mascots in some time.

Hisashi Nogami is a producer on

Splatoon 2. He held the same title on the original game - it was his idea originally to make the playable characters squids. We had the opportunity to speak to Mr Nogami about his work on the series, how it has been received by fans, and what the future of Splatoon might look like.

**HYPER>>: THE VERY FIRST SPLATOON 2 TRAILER SHOWED TWO PROFESSIONAL TEAMS TRAINING IN PORTABLE MODE. NOW THAT THE GAME HAS BEEN OUT FOR A WHILE, HAVE YOU SEEN THIS HAPPENING IN REAL LIFE?**

Mr. Nogami: The players you see in the first Nintendo Switch

trailer are not meant to be from professional teams - they are meant to be from strong and popular teams. We designed the trailer hoping that the competitions of Splatoon 2 would become huge, since Nintendo Switch comes with features that make competitive play more approachable. As I have recently mentioned at GDC 2018, there have been various successful events hosted by Nintendo and fan communities across the globe. I have seen players practice in handheld mode and interact with other teams at such events. I am very happy to witness with my own eyes that what we hoped for has come true.



*Hisashi Nogami - Splatoon 2 producer and squid fan.*





**DO YOU GET MUCH OF A CHANCE TO WATCH PROFESSIONAL SPLATOON MATCHES? IF SO, DO YOU SEE ANYTHING THAT SURPRISES YOU, OR TEACHES YOU ABOUT HOW THE GAME IS BEING PLAYED?**

Mr. Nogami: I watched the worldwide preliminary competitions for the Splatoon 2 World Championship that were held at E3, including the 2018 AUNZ Splatoon 2 Cup. I watch videos of both professional players and fans from time to time. I watched a friendly match involving players from Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, and I saw discussion online that some American players have asked

Japanese players to play a match together. It makes me happy and it's such a pleasant surprise to see that players are interacting with each other around the globe.

**SPLATOON HAS BEEN AN ENORMOUS SUCCESS - DID YOU EXPECT THIS WHEN YOU WERE WORKING ON THE FIRST GAME?**

Mr. Nogami: I was hoping to make a game that is enjoyed by people around the world from when I was working on the first game, but I didn't expect the magnitude of support that we ended up having. I am happy that game fans enjoy the Splatoon series, and it has been a nice surprise that people who

had never played network games or competitive games before also enjoy the series.

**WHAT IS THE PROCESS INVOLVED IN DESIGNING A NEW WEAPON - DO YOU DECIDE WHAT IT SHOULD LOOK LIKE FIRST, OR WHAT EFFECT IT SHOULD HAVE?**

Mr. Nogami: We usually decide the effect of a new weapon first, but there are times when the design comes first. For example, Brellas were designed from childhood memories of playing with friends, splashing water on umbrellas at each other. Effects are important, but it is also important to make weapons look appealing and loveable, so we



make sure that the design and the effects work well together.

**WHEN YOU FIRST DECIDED TO MAKE THE CHARACTERS SQUIDS, HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO FIGURE OUT HOW THEY SHOULD LOOK?**

Mr. Nogami: The process of deciding that the characters will be squids and the designing of the actual characters happened simultaneously to some degree. It is difficult to tell the exact time frame, but it probably took less than two months to finalise the character design after we decided that they were going to be squids. The characters look very different in the squid state and human state because what players can do in these two states are completely different. The directors asked the development team to make sure that the characters look very distinguished in the two different states and design the characters so the human state looks clearly human, and the squid state looks clearly like squid. It didn't take long to decide on the design because the direction was clear.

**THE SPLATOON SERIES HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS 'FASHIONABLE'**

**- EVERYONE DRESSES WELL AND LOOKS COOL. DID THE TEAM CONSULT WITH FASHION EXPERTS ON THESE GAMES?**

Mr. Nogami: We have some artists who are into fashion. They seem to enjoy designing based on their tastes (laughs). Of course, it's not like they can just do whatever they want to. They design different items suited for each brand and express the passing of time through the evolving fashion. Their work contributes immensely to making the world of Splatoon 2 seem real and compelling.

**THE OCTO EXPANSION ADDS MORE SINGLE PLAYER CONTENT. HOW DIFFERENT WILL IT BE FROM THE ORIGINAL CAMPAIGN? WILL WE LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORLD OF SPLATOON AND THE DIFFERENT SPECIES THAT INHABIT IT? (NOTE: THIS QUESTION WAS ASKED PRIOR TO EXPANSION'S RELEASE DATE BEING UNVEILED, BUT WE'VE DECIDED TO LEAVE MR NOGAMI'S RESPONSE IN ANYWAY)**

Mr. Nogami: I envisioned the original single player content to be mainly about the continued rivalry between Inklings and Octarians two years after

the first Splatoon, with the Squid Sisters being main characters. The Octo Expansion expands the world of Splatoon by illustrating a different side to this world. You will also see a different side to familiar characters such as Pearl and Marina from Off the Hook and Cap'n Cuttlefish. The new storyline will be happening at the same time as the original single player content; however, the world of Splatoon changes with Octo Expansion, and Inklings and Octolings get to coexist together.

**ARE THERE PARTS OF THE SPLATOON WORLD - CHARACTERS, SPECIES, THINGS LIKE THAT - THAT YOU HAVE PLANNED OUT BUT NOT PUT INTO YOUR GAMES? DO YOU THINK THE WORLD OF SPLATOON COULD APPEAR IN A DIFFERENT GAME, OF A DIFFERENT GENRE, IN THE FUTURE?**

Mr. Nogami: My mind is all about the Octo Expansion, and I find it difficult to think beyond it for now. However, the world of

“ WE HAVE SOME ARTISTS WHO ARE INTO FASHION. THEY SEEM TO ENJOY DESIGNING BASED ON THEIR TASTES ”



Splatoon could further expand in the future, and there is always a possibility that new creatures will be introduced then.

**WHICH WEAPONS ARE YOUR PERSONAL FAVOURITES?**

Mr. Nogami: It is difficult to choose just one particular weapon since I use various weapons for different stages and modes. I like having a wide view when I play, so I often use longer range weapons that are good for logistic support. Sometimes I like to use shorter range weapons on the front line too. In terms of appearance, I like the Hydra Splatling.

**SPLATOON HAS A MANGA TIE-IN NOW. ARE YOU INVOLVED IN IT AT ALL, OR DO YOU READ IT?**

Mr. Nogami: I am involved in making the manga series in CoroCoro Comic (a Japanese comic magazine). The creator strives to understand even the fine details of the Splatoon world in order to create the illustrations and the story. I look forward to seeing the draft each time. Of course, I read the finalised comic story too.

**HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN BRINGING THE INKLINGS TO THE**

**NEXT SMASH BROS?**

Mr. Nogami: Yes. I am very proud to be involved in bringing the Inklings to Super Smash Bros. Ultimate. I was also very happy to be able to announce Octo Expansion at the same time as Super Smash Bros. Ultimate was first revealed.

**YOUR VERY FIRST CREDIT IS ON YOSHI'S ISLAND. OBVIOUSLY A LOT HAS CHANGED, BUT ARE THERE LESSONS YOU LEARNED AT NINTENDO BACK WHEN YOU STARTED THAT ARE STILL USEFUL TO YOU TODAY?**

Mr. Nogami: I was a part of making Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island as an artist, drawing graphical elements such as characters and backgrounds. I have always been focused on creating graphics that match their roles and effects in the game. That is something that I still consider important for good games today.

**YOU'VE ALSO WORKED ON THE ANIMAL CROSSING SERIES, WHICH IS A VERY DIFFERENT SORT OF GAME TO SPLATOON. WAS IT INTIMIDATING TO TAKE ON A 'SHOOTER' GAME AFTER DIRECTING SUCH A LAID-BACK EXPERIENCE?**

Mr. Nogami: I have been involved in the development of the Animal Crossing series for over ten years. As a game player, I like action games and competitive multiplayer games, so I had no hesitation in creating Splatoon.

However, developing new games is never easy. There were lots of challenges in creating both the Animal Crossing and Splatoon series.

**WHICH PART OF SPLATOON 2 ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF, WOULD YOU SAY?**

Mr. Nogami: I usually don't like to praise games that I was involved in the creation for, but one of the good things about Splatoon 2 is that you don't need to play the game yourself to understand it. You can be standing behind someone playing the game, and you'll understand what kind of game it is, and what you're supposed to do. You can be competitive and serious, and you can also be casual about playing the game with friends. I would be delighted if parents might feel interested after watching their kids play the game. Perhaps they could pick up the controllers themselves and give it a go when the kids are not around? ☺☺

# Uncut Gems

*James O'Connor takes a second look at some not-quite-masterpieces that may still be deserving of your attention.*

Nobody's perfect, and sometimes Nintendo misses the mark, even with its biggest franchises (you'll notice that the much-maligned Super Smash Bros Brawl is not on this list, because it's not great). But Nintendo games that aren't at the absolute top of their series are sometimes written off as flat-out awful, which isn't always fair. A few of its most-hated-on games deserve a second look, having achieved more, or presented more interesting ideas, than they're given credit for.



## Super Mario Sunshine

*GameCube, 2002*

Many Mario fans can't settle on whether *Sunshine* is worth it or not. The FLUDD backpack, some argue, was an unnecessary addition – the game was at its best when it offered pure platforming challenges that did not involve spraying water about – and the camera, which really was awful, is often called a game-ruiner. But if you can get past the camera, *Sunshine* was full of great set-pieces and mechanics. Nintendo seemed energised by the shift in setting – Isle Delphino is so bright and sunny and joyful – and crafted some truly wonderful challenges into *Sunshine*, the sort that wouldn't have been possible on the N64. Blooper surf races and those traditional platforming sections were great, but what really stands out in my head were the boss fights. The early rollercoaster-set battle against a giant Bowser mech was a highlight, as was the fight against Phantamanta, a squid-shaped shadow that left puddles of electrified-ink everywhere (surely an inspiration for *Splatoon*, conscious or not). Not enough is made of how great *Sunshine*'s blue coins were as collectibles, too – they scattered the game with cool mini-challenges, much like how *Super Mario Odyssey* would work years later.

## Metroid: Other M

*Wii, 2010*

The irony of me defending *Metroid: Other M* is that the review I co-authored with Dylan Burns in *Hyper* years ago ended with a score of 7/10 – well below the game's 79 Metacritic average. Expectations for *Metroid* are always sky high, and this one – a collaboration between Nintendo and Team Ninja – was no exception. But while *Other M* isn't quite up to the impossibly high standards set by *Super Metroid*, *Metroid Fusion*, or *Metroid Prime*, it's still interesting. The blend of 2D and 3D gameplay, including occasional motion-control aided first person sections, was a neat idea, and the game is a little less intense than the *Prime* series, making for an experience that, while not as impressive, is also less stressful. While the story does Samus dirty, the action doesn't – she's incredibly well animated, and the various sequences of her taking enemies apart are very satisfying. She's more brutal here than she is anywhere else. As the name suggests, this is very much an 'other' *Metroid* – check your expectations at the door and you've got a game well worth enjoying on its own unique merits.





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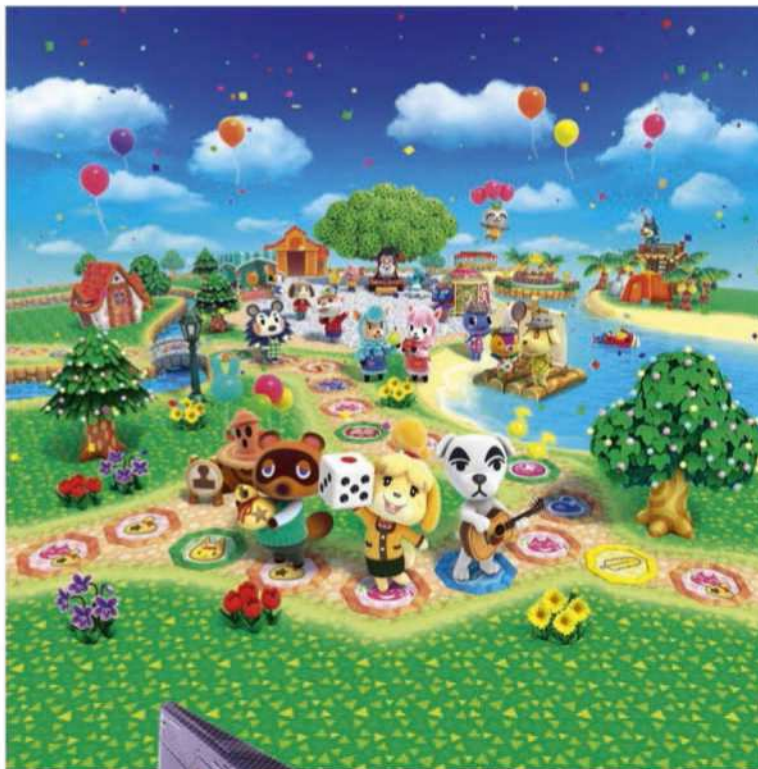
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## Animal Crossing: amiibo Festival

Wii U, 2015

Wait. Hear me out. Unlike the other games on this list, amiibo Festival wasn't just viewed as a disappointment, or a lesser entry – it's perceived as a legitimately bad game, a meritless board game that upset fans. The reason for this is very simple – this is a game aimed at much younger children than many Nintendo games, which typically target an all-ages market, usually are. It's a game explicitly designed for young children, and, yes, one that Nintendo obviously wanted to use to shift amiibo units (the game was packaged with two, but to play with four players they'd all need their own figurines). It came right at the tail end of one of Nintendo's worst years ever, and seemed emblematic of everything wrong with the Wii U. But here's the thing – as a gentle kid's game, amiibo Festival is fine. It's light and easy and a bit of fun if you're playing it with a kid. It nails the Animal Crossing aesthetic and functions well for what it is. On another system, with another license, it would have been left alone – it's clearly not for adults, or anyone over eight, really. Wrong place, wrong time.



## Paper Mario: Sticker Star

3DS, 2012

The Paper Mario franchise's trajectory has been baffling, moving from two wonderful text-heavy RPGs with great combat and intelligent levelling systems to a mish-mash of ideas and genres that sometimes work and sometimes don't. Quick hot-take rundown: Color Splash was okay, Super Paper Mario was bad, Paper Jam was fine but I've already forgotten most of it. Sticker Star was perhaps the most derided of them all, but it's the one I'm here to defend. The game works around the strange conceit of needing to find and use stickers during turn-based combat; there's no levelling system, and your power is defined by which stickers you have. But Sticker Star's strengths were in its world, not its combat. Exploration is a priority; hit every block, discover every secret pathway, figure out where the best stickers are, because some of them will be essential in later, difficult puzzles. You can 'flatten' the world and interact with it directly, peeling up flaps or using stickers to fix broken geography, which is honestly great fun. Sticker Star's experimentations mostly work, and create a unique, interesting experience that still feels very 'Mario'.



## Star Fox Zero

Wii U, 2016

In a perfect world, the Wii U would have prepared us for Star Fox Zero, and its release towards the end of the console's life would have been the culmination of the system teaching us new ways to play before giving us a game that properly made use of everything the system could do to make games unique. As it turns out, 'unique' wasn't what anyone wanted. Star Fox Zero is an odd one – the controls only finally clicked for me, and started to feel good, during my third attempt at defeating the final boss. This is not ideal, obviously, but then when I went back and started replaying from the beginning it suddenly felt fresh and exciting and creative. Star Fox Zero didn't compromise just because the Gamepad had failed to inspire most developers – it went all-in on giving an experience that only the Wii U could provide, one with a steep learning curve well worth conquering. We weren't ready for it; and now, with the Wii U written off as a failure, we never will be. ☹



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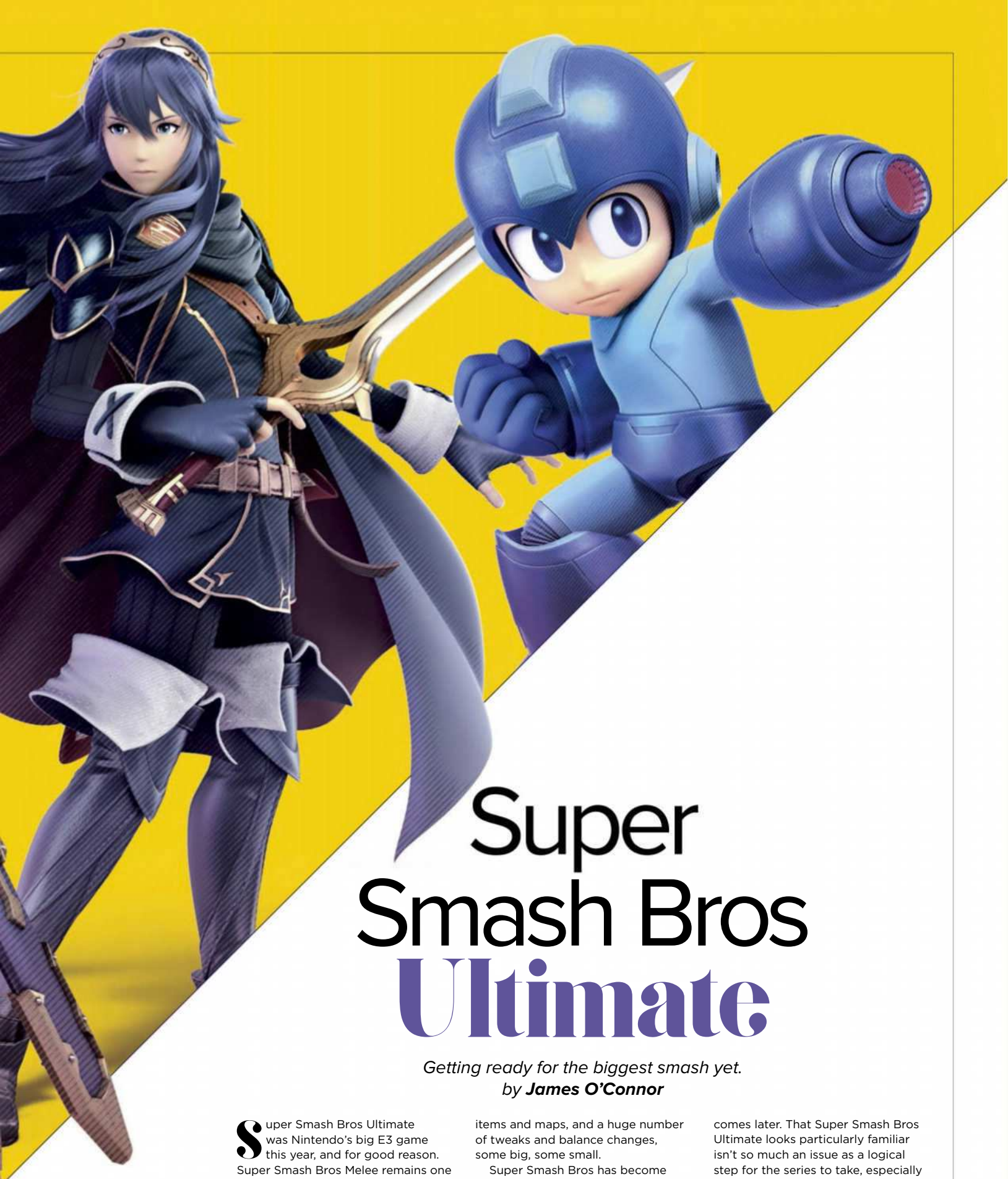


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FEATURE







# Super Smash Bros Ultimate

*Getting ready for the biggest smash yet.*  
by **James O'Connor**

**S**uper Smash Bros Ultimate was Nintendo's big E3 game this year, and for good reason. Super Smash Bros Melee remains one of their most popular and beloved games of all time, and Smash Bros for Wii U has proven itself worthy across years of play. The elevator pitch for Super Smash Bros Ultimate is simple - this is a Smash Bros experience that mixes together everything that came before. It's got every single Smash Bros fighter ever (and a few extras), lots of returning

items and maps, and a huge number of tweaks and balance changes, some big, some small.

Super Smash Bros has become Nintendo's most important esports title, but the real reason for its success is that these games are easy to pick up and figure out. If you've played the games these characters have appeared in before, you'll be able to pick them up and understand their attacks straight away. Smash Bros survives on immediate familiarity; mastery, however,

comes later. That Super Smash Bros Ultimate looks particularly familiar isn't so much an issue as a logical step for the series to take, especially with Ultimate being positioned somewhat as an end point for Smash Bros in its current form (where do you go from the 'Ultimate' version)?

Super Smash Bros Ultimate releases on December 7, but there's already plenty to start speculating on, and things to prepare for if you want to win those online bouts on day one.

## Studying up on some of the returning heroes

Each of these characters has only appeared in one previous Smash Bros: if you skipped an entry, missed some DLC, or just haven't gone back to the older games in a while, you might need a refresher. These characters also, broadly, represent the different fighting styles, strategic methodologies, and levels of approachability.



## Bayonetta

Bayonetta made her way into Smash Bros 4 as DLC through an audience vote, and while she seemed like an odd fit to some, she's a Smash natural. If you never dropped money on Smash's exorbitant DLC you missed one of the best all-around fighters in the game, with phenomenal potential in the air, great range, and excellent combo potential. Every tweak that Smash experts have noticed from Ultimate so far is a nerf – her attack knockbacks have been lowered a bit, Witch Time doesn't last as long, and some of her combo possibilities have been altered slightly. Most of these will only really matter to high-end players, though – Bayonetta 1 & 2 are some of the best action games available, and because her Smash appearance is so closely modelled on those games, playing as her is extremely fun.



**Match to Watch:** *Plup (Ridley) vs MkLeo (Bayonetta) Losers' Finals at the Super Smash Bros 2018 Invitational*

Bayonetta's ability to destroy an enemy while flying gracefully through the air in Ultimate is on full display here – she's so good that you don't even need to be on screen to take an opponent down. Her ground game is fine, but get her in the air and your opponent is in real trouble (which is not dissimilar to how she is in her own games, really). Watching a good Bayonetta player really getting down to business is terrifying since she's so extremely versatile. This will be good for the game's esports scene, because a good Bayonetta player is always fun to watch.

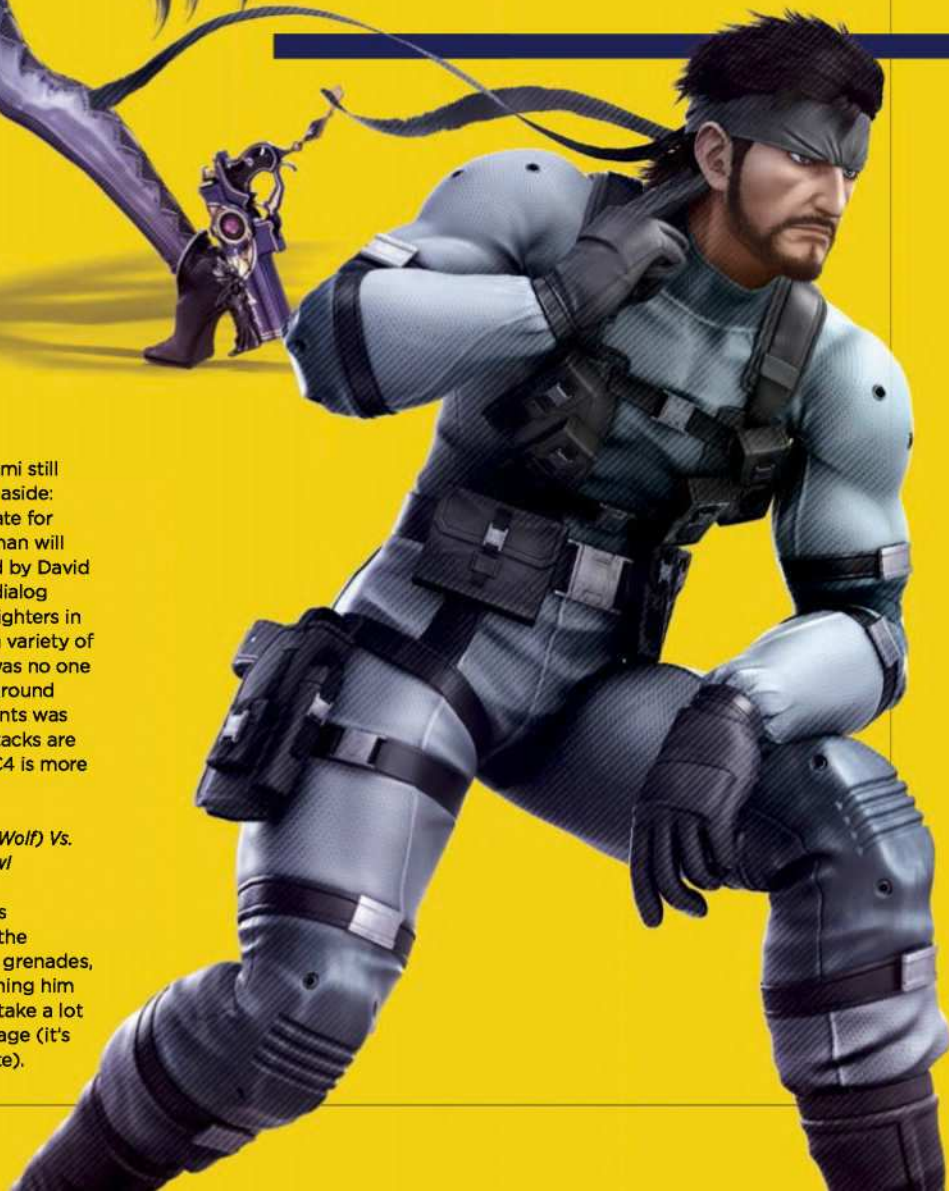
## Snake

After all the unpleasantness of the last few years, Konami still seems happy to lend out Solid Snake to Nintendo (fun aside: Snake and Mother Base also appeared in a recent update for Switch launch title Super Bomberman R, and Bomberman will be in Ultimate as an assist trophy). Snake's even played by David Hayter here, although we're not sure how much 'new' dialog he'll get. He's considered one of the most high-tiered fighters in Brawl, with a move set that allows him to attack from a variety of positions and distances. He's bad in the air, but there was no one in Brawl who could do quite so much damage on the ground – the only character to have more success in tournaments was Meta Knight. For Ultimate, some of his more potent attacks are being nerfed significantly (grenades do less damage, C4 is more visible), but Snake should still be worthy.



**Match to Watch:** *S@X Monthly - NS | Seagull (Wolf) Vs. Jrugs (Snake) SSBB Winners' Finals - Smash Brawl*

That thing I said a moment ago about Brawl being less interesting to watch is less true when Snake is one of the fighters. Because Snake's always hurling shit around – grenades, mines, rockets, C4 – he's an exciting fighter, and watching him lay traps around the arena is fun. Snake's also able to take a lot of punishment, still surviving with close to 200% damage (it's possible that this will get toned down a bit for Ultimate).



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## Wolf

Wolf appeared in Brawl and promptly disappeared from Smash 4, possibly because three similar Star Fox characters seemed like too many (Fire Emblem didn't get the memo, bless 'em). Wolf was one of the harder characters to unlock in Brawl, so if you (like me) abandoned the game quickly it's possible that you never got a chance to test him out. Although generally considered a mid-tier fighter thanks to some poor recovery options, he's always been a powerful fighter if used properly. His moveset is essentially the same as Fox and Falco's, but his main quality is the deceptive range of his attacks. Wolf's a bit heavier than his Star Fox brethren, but his attacks hit fast and hard. In Ultimate, he's receiving a few minor tweaks - better combos, some range adjustments - but not, it seems, a radical shift.



**Match to Watch:** *Glitch 2 Brawl - Circa | 6WX (Sonic, Sheik) Vs. VexX | Seagull (Wolf) SSBW Winners' Finals*

One of the reasons why Super Smash Bros Brawl never really took off as a competitive game is because, honestly, it's not that interesting to watch - it's a bit too slow and floaty. In this fight, though, you can see how hard he is to land a hit on if he's in the hands of a good player. His range allows Seagull - one of the top Wolf players in the world - to sneak in a lot of hits. The commentators describe Wolf as "the best bad character or the worst good character", depending on your perspective: in Ultimate, hopefully his claws have sharpened further.

## Pichu

Pichu's back from Melee, and he still looks weak - he takes damages from his own attacks, after all. Pichu was originally intended to be used as a 'handicap' fighter in Melee, which means that picking him is a sort of mind game tactic. For all of Pichu's obvious problems the blighter is fast as a rocket, scooting around maps like he's possessed, and because most of his attacks have little to no start-up lag you can get in, do damage, and get out again. He's a tiny target, too. But the real reason to choose Pichu is that, unless he has received a significant overhaul, losing to him is humiliating. In Ultimate, Pichu will be able to crawl, making him even harder to hit; hopefully he'll receive a few other tweaks, but remain kind of charmingly weak.



**Match to Watch:** *KIT 15 - GK | Eikelmann (Ganondorf, DK) Vs. IP MVG EMP Mew2king (Sheik, Pichu) - Winners' Semis*

As the match starts, one of the commentators notes that Eikelmann is not happy at his opponent for choosing Pichu. "He's definitely feeling the disrespect", he says, as Pichu huffs around the arena landing quick blows and quickly retreating. There are actually plenty of videos of Mew2king winning matches with Pichu (check 'The Greatest M2K Pichu Plays/Combos') - he loses this one by quite a bit - but they're mostly in 'low-tier' matches, and Eikelmann's frustration perhaps best exhibits how sweet a Pichu knock-out can be when your opponent knows that they should win.



## The Newcomers

Series director Masahiro Sakurai has explicitly warned against getting our hopes up for too many more characters beyond the three confirmed so far. That's fair enough, we suppose - we're getting some heavily requested fan favourites (although, as you'll see a few times elsewhere in this issue, we're holding out hope for a few others).

## Ridley

They did it! They actually did it! Ridley has been compromised somewhat on his way into the roster (he's not as big and intimidating as past iterations of the character have been, including his Smash Bros Brawl boss fight appearance), but Ridley is a fast and powerful fighter. Word from the show floor is that he's already looking like a

serious contender to pro players, even if very few people have been able to put serious time in with him yet. He's a brawler, essentially, without much in the way of fun 'gimmick' moves, but he can charge fireballs and smash the hell out of opponents with his tail. Imagine a punchier Bowser and you're some of the way there.

## Inkling

The Inklings were the safest of safe bets for Smash Bros inclusion, and by the sounds of things they'll bring an interesting dynamic to the game. Their attacks will switch between the numerous Splatoon weapons - the Splat Roller, Ink Brush, Splasher, Splattershot and the Blaster - which will leave coloured ink all over the

stage. The Inklings can turn into squids and travel quickly through that ink - possibly faster than any other character in the game - but to refill their reserves, they'll have to bring up their shields and hold B, which is a slight shift in mechanics from how they work in Splatoon.

## Daisy

Daisy is just Peach again, essentially (see point one in the list in this feature), but from what I've been told by my sister - who is crazy about her - there's a considerable Daisy fan community that is very excited about this. So, cool, go get it girl. Daisy

might seem like a lesser character in the Mario canon, but here's my sister's explanation for why she's good: "Peach gets captured all the time, but Daisy has only needed to be rescued once or twice". That's, you know, grim, but hey.





20

Things You  
Should Know  
About

## Super Smash Bros Ultimate

*There are so many changes, tweaks, and details about Super Smash Bros Ultimate out there after E3 – the game looks familiar, but has changed quite a lot. Here are the twenty most important things we've learned, and what they mean for Smash Bros.*

**1** **Certain characters will be classified as 'Echo Fighters' in Ultimate**, meaning that they're designated as slightly tweaked clones rather than new fighters. This suggests that any unannounced new characters we get are likely to be heavily based on existing characters (like Daisy, who is Peach's Echo Fighter). Who else will we get? Shadow the Hedgehog? Ms. Pac Man? Dark Samus? Lucina and Dark Pit are the only other confirmed Echo Fighters so far. Does this mean that Toon Link and Child Link are considered significantly different? What about Gannondorf and Captain Falcon, whose shared move-set feels increasingly strange with each new iteration? Does Dr Mario not qualify?

**2** **Final Smashes** have been fundamentally overhauled to happen faster and not break up the fight so much. Some of the more irritating ones are gone, and while there's perhaps less nuance now that so many of them just do a bunch of damage to anyone in the affected area, fights should flow better now without long, sustained distractions. Fox/Falco/Wolf's Landmasters have

been removed, replaced by an assist from the rest of the StarFox/StarWolf team. Donkey Kong now just beats the hell out of his opponents without using his bongos, and Little Mac does the same without rampaging around as Giga Mac. This will be the case for most characters that had an overcomplicated Final Smash.

**3** **Nineteen stages have been confirmed so far**, only two of which are brand new (Splatoon's Moray Towers and Zelda's Great Plateau Tower). Each stage will also have Battlefield, Final Destination, and Omega variations, so you can switch up the aesthetics for your very pure one on one bouts. We're holding out hope for Pokémon Floats.

**4** **Damage is now tracked down** to a tenth of a percentage. If your opponent is at 100%, they're pretty vulnerable; if they're at 100.5%, they're just a tiny bit more vulnerable. This will make the exact damage caused by certain moves a little bit easier to track - it seems like a change introduced for the esports scene.

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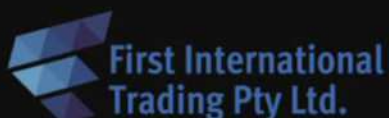


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**5 Directional air-dodges are back.** This means that, unlike Brawl and Smash 4, you can move in a direction as part of your air-dodge. You can no longer wavedash (air-dodging into the ground at an angle to slide a short distance), but you can waveland as you hit the ground (although it will be significantly nerfed compared to *Melee*). This is more relevant at high-level play than it is at casual, but it'll open a few more defensive options even for intermediate players.

**6 A 'short hop' is now much easier to pull off** – push 'up' on the stick and A at the same time to do a much smaller jump, letting you perform an aerial attack at, essentially, ground level. This has been possible in previous Smash games if you knew exactly how to manipulate the controller, but *Ultimate* aims to make advanced techniques easier to learn and pull off. One piece of feedback from pro players at E3 is that Nintendo seems to be taking esports seriously at the moment, and wants to make the path towards getting really good at the game easier to traverse.

**7 Support for the GameCube controller adapter will continue.** We're not convinced that it's necessary – the Pro Controller is a strong contender for the best controller ever – but hey, you do you, Smash fanatics.

**8 Although there are a lot of characters in the game, the starting roster will be small.** You'll have to unlock characters by playing, but that's all part of the fun, and Sakurai wants new players to be facing off against an absolute barrage of challengers.

**9 Let's talk defence.** In *Ultimate*, if you press the shield button as an enemy attacks and then release at the exact moment their attack ends, you'll generate a 'Perfect Shield'. Your character will flash and you'll be able to counter-attack much faster than usual (which is a matter of less than a second, but at a high enough level it matters). This is different from in

previous Smash Bros games. There are also penalties for dodging too much this time – try to chain together too many dodges and you'll be left open and vulnerable to attacks.

**10 Waluigi will not be a playable character,** only an assist trophy. While we could joke around, it's honestly surprising that he continues to get overlooked.

**11 Adult Link** is dressed in his *Breath of the Wild* garb now and doesn't have his hookshot anymore (which left you absurdly vulnerable if it missed). His bombs now work via remote detonation, which is interesting.





# 14

**Amiibo support is back, baby,** and all the amiibo fighters you trained up on the Wii U and 3DS iterations can be transferred across to Ultimate. For those of us who already amassed huge collections, this is a considerable relief, even if it sounds like they won't be gaining any additional functionality in Ultimate. New amiibo will be released for the characters that don't already have them too - Ridley and the Inkling were shown off, but by my count there are five other characters announced so far that don't have Smash-specific amiibo yet.

Meanwhile, Zelda is now dressed in her Link Between Worlds outfit, because that game is rad as hell.

**12 Stage selection** now comes before character selection. This might seem like a very minor change, but it means that you can leave Little Mac behind if you're choosing a map where jumping any sort of distance will be essential, for instance. It's easier to match a character to the fight you're about to have now.

**13 There's a fake Smash Ball now,** which looks very slightly different from a regular one and will do massive damage to you if you smack it. Tricky-tricky.

**15 As of right now, we know very little about the game's single-player mode.** The typical Nintendo strategy with Smash Bros games is to just sort of casually reveal almost every detail about the game in the lead-up to its release, so hopefully we'll find out more soon. Smash 4 had a pretty weak single-player mode offering on both Wii U and 3DS - we'd love something akin to Brawl's Subspace Emissary.

**16 It can be hard to track who is winning a timed battle,** so now the points leader will occasionally flash to indicate that they're ahead. It's a subtle flash, easy to miss, but if you're winning a four-player brawl and your opponents notice, expect them to gang up on you (or go to greater

lengths to avoid you).

**17 You can now start charging a smash attack,** or most charge attacks (like Samus' gun) while airborne. This leaves you vulnerable, of course, and massively limits your manoeuvrability, but it means that in an eight-player brawl (they're back too, by the way) you can land right into the middle of a fight and immediately send your opponents flying.

**18 Snake's bubble-butt has been flattened right out in this one,** and returning voice actor David Hayter agrees, via Twitter, that this is a travesty. Why isn't Snake allowed to have a nice butt in this one, especially with Nintendo embracing more of a 'thicc' aesthetic with its original characters for Switch (this is a real thing that has happened and I will not be convinced otherwise)? Hard to say.

**19 Super Smash Bros Ultimate was built from scratch** - it's a new engine, not an update to the Wii U engine. It'll have improved texture rendering and lighting compared to that game, and better character models. Development has been a joint effort between Sakurai's studio, Sora Ltd, and Bandai Namco, just as the last game was.

**20 There are a whole heap of minor UI changes** for easier visibility and better tracking. Villager's icon will now tell you what they have stored in their pocket, for instance. Ryu always faces his opponents in a one on one fight to make inputs easier. Certain characters' voices will change slightly depending on their costume, Shulk's arts are now easier to change, ROB has a visible fuel display - the team has truly paid attention to every detail. They're not kidding with that 'Ultimate' tag - there are dozens of changes that did not make it onto this list. ☞

# Our Wild Super Smash Bros

## wish list

We all have characters we'd love to see in Smash Bros. We also have characters we know, definitely, will never be in Smash Bros. This list fits... somewhere between those two. Here's my wild, "this won't happen, but you're nothing without dreams" Smash Bros fighter wish list.

### Sam Gideon (the dude from Vanquish)

I dunno, he slides around and shoots things and he's very cool. Honestly we're just trying to build a grassroots campaign for a Vanquish sequel on Switch and this seems like the best way.



#### Proposed attacks

Boosting around the arena on his suit's jet boosters, triggering slow-mo as he circles around his opponents so he can simultaneously shoot their weak points and dodge between a barrage of lasers, being very cool and underappreciated.



### Bubsy the Bobcat

Bubsy - the subject of the very first piece I ever wrote for Hyper, over ten years ago - returned last year for a reboot that made so little impact that I'm not even going to look up its name. Everyone's favourite sneakingly underrated bobcat deserves a proper, uh, fourth-or-so chance, and what better series to give him one than Smash Bros? His ability to glide would make him easy to manoeuvre back onto the fighting stage, and if he was any good - and pro players started to use him regularly - the poor creature, who has looked a tad fleabitten and ragged of late, could finally find himself on the mend. We've made enough fun of Bubsy - let's give him a chance to be cool now.



#### Proposed attacks

Hurling balls of yarn around, floating through the sky gracefully, charming his opponents with wacky catchphrases.





## Ken Griffey Jr

By far the best player the Seattle Mariners – the baseball team Nintendo owned from 1992 until 2016 – ever had, Griffey Jr would be a great choice for Nintendo’s fighting franchise. Not only does he have the sixth highest home run count in the history of the MLB, but he had his own N64 game – Major League Baseball Featuring Ken Griffey Jr – which makes him more qualified than, say, Dark Pit (we’re still a bit baffled by Dark Pit, to be honest). Thanks, Ken, for being an important part of my childhood – not because I played the game, but because it meant I knew the name of one baseballer and could bluff through sports conversations (same goes for Kobe Bryant, but that guy really sucks).



### Proposed attacks

*Drinking a lot of nerve tonic, thwacking baseballs at you, and eventually leaving to join a different videogame team.*

## Peach’s Castle Itself, Which Was, When You Think About It, Really the Second Main Character in Super Mario 64

In keeping with the Smash Bros tradition of gender imbalance, if you don’t count the ambiguity of the amiibo, only one of the characters on this list is a woman (quick non-joke aside – we love you Nintendo, do better!!). Peach’s Castle, which is, if you ask me, really a character in and of itself, should finally be recognised as such within the world of Smash Bros, so that we can stroke our chins and respond to our friends’ incredulity by saying “well, really, what makes Peach’s Castle any less of a character than Mario?” There should also be a stage inside the castle, and if you choose to play as Peach’s Castle on this stage the game could encourage you to write a think piece about it.



### Proposed attacks

*Unleashing a bunch of Boos, warping itself around via paintings, bamboozling its opponents by pointing out that describing a location as being a character in and of itself is trite and redundant in most cases.*



## Amiibo

Amiibo first came about because of Smash Bros on the Wii U and 3DS; as they accumulated in our homes and disappeared off store shelves, they became silent judges of those of us who don’t take good care of our money. Their application in Smash Bros for Wii U and 3DS was actually very cool, but we’d like to see it taken further in this next Smash Bros. The existing amiibo should appear in-game so that a whole new range of amiibo can appear, amiibo that depict the amiibo figurines that are in the game, little stands on top of little stands, so that our figurine shelves can creak and splinter under the weight of our avarice until we call our accountants one bright dewy morning and ask about the steps involved in declaring bankruptcy.



### Proposed attacks

*Randomly disappearing for entire matches, weakening opponents’ resolve to act sensibly whenever they’re nearby, being able to summon an item whenever the user taps one of their own amiibo mid-fight. «*

# NIN-CONTROL

## How Nintendo continually tried to innovate the way we play

*Andy Corrigan wraps his hands around some of the most creative gaming hardware ever developed.*

### NES (1987)

The Nintendo Entertainment System's boxy controller is an instantly-recognisable classic that has become synonymous with 8-bit gaming, but with only two action buttons, it's so simplistic that it might be hard to believe that it was ever considered innovative. Yet, while other early systems had experimented with similar input methods, it was the NES that popularised the D-pad as we know it.

Following the success of the 'cross' D-pad design on a few of their LCD handheld Game & Watch titles, Nintendo recognised the potential and opted to use a larger version in their first home console's controller.

The move proved undeniably popular, not only with players, but with the industry too, seeing the D-pad become not only a staple on practically every gaming controller since, but an iconic symbol of the

entire pastime.

As those with their old consoles or a NES Classic can attest, the controller is still surprisingly comfortable despite that angular design and is just as perfect for those old Super Mario Bros. entries as it ever was.

### SNES (1992)

The power boost that came with the 16-bit era saw visuals become a lot more detailed and a little less square, and Nintendo too, with the design of the Super Nintendo, was all about the curves. The SNES controller was a revelation with its ergonomic shape, the best D-pad ever made, and a then-whopping arcade-standard six buttons.

The increased number of inputs not only allowed games to become more complex mechanically, seeing Mario and friends gain a plethora of new tricks, but also made the

SNES an ideal home for third-party classics too, like Capcom's unstoppable Street Fighter II, which came to Nintendo's platform ahead of its nearest, three-button rival.

And with these six buttons, Nintendo again managed to set an industry standard, not because of their number (though six buttons indeed became a short-lived standard, causing SEGA to match), but rather their layout.

Four face buttons arranged in a diamond? The SNES pad introduced it. Extra buttons on the shoulders? Nintendo did it first. And they weren't the last, with all major players still using slight evolutions of that layout today.

### N64 (1997)


With the N64, Nintendo took a literal 'three-pronged' approach to controller design, resulting in a pad that gave its users the ability to kill







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a guy with a trident. The N64 pad came with the claim that it offered three ways to play, but in reality offered only two, providing a choice between the D-pad and the analog stick.

But it's in bringing the analog thumbstick to the mainstream, and not the pad's shape, that let Nintendo again led the pack, being the first to recognise that the D-pad didn't have the precision to move a character around a 3D space. The second you used the stick to move Mario around the outskirts of the Mushroom Kingdom in Super Mario 64, controlling his speed and direction with the stick, it just made sense.

Although later refined by Nintendo's rivals, the N64's analog stick also provided solutions to other problems, making it easier to freely move a reticle around the screen in the likes of Goldeneye and Pokémon Snap, and introduced fluid control to sports titles, with influential franchises like International Superstar Soccer at their best on the 64-bit platform.

And through the port in the back of the controller, Nintendo introduced haptic feedback to the industry via the Rumble Pak, making it the first controller to provide force feedback alongside in-game actions, brilliantly demonstrated with collisions in Lylat Wars and gunfire in Goldeneye.

#### GAMECUBE (2002)

Ditching the greys and subtle colour splashes for a shocking shade of purple, the GameCube controller is easily the gaudiest in Nintendo's history. While one of Nintendo's most traditional controllers post-16bit era in terms of shape, it had a couple of features that set it apart from the competition.

With the A button the most prominently used across all previous controllers, Nintendo decided to make it front and centre, placing the enlarged input among the face buttons in a way that'd almost feel insulting if it didn't work so damn well. As the main action button used to jump and interact in games, your





*In hindsight, the Wii U really does seem less like it's own thing, as a prototype for what came next...*

thumb tends to rest on it anyway so why not make it the main feature? While the benefits of this are likely obvious to fans of Nintendo's first-party output, this layout gelled perfectly with games like *Resident Evil 4*, especially given its quick-time events and constant item pick-ups.

The analog triggers also provided some mechanics not seen elsewhere. Aside from pressure sensitivity, when fully-pressed the input signal would switch from analog to digital, meaning the triggers were effectively two buttons in one.

In *Super Mario Sunshine*, for example, a weak press let you keep moving while spraying water from Mario's FLUDD backpack, but by clicking the trigger down fully, he would instead plant his feet so you could aim with precision. In *Super Smash Bros.* the triggers provided two types of shield, with a light-press providing a long-lasting but weak defence, and a full press performing the reverse.

Both these features have been absent from Nintendo controllers since, the latter the mooted reason as to why GameCube games have never been on Virtual Console.

#### WII (2006)

Although unfairly remembered for gratuitous shovelware, shoehorned waggle, and for starting a misguided motion control arms race that nobody asked for, Nintendo's intentions with the Wii were admirable. They saw an untapped market of willing, would-be gamers that viewed traditional controllers as impenetrable barriers and tried to bring them along for the ride.

Taking the form of a television remote control, a shape familiar with everyone, the Wii Remote used a combination of infrared sensors and accelerometers to allow players to point cursors and mimic real-life motions of in-game actions. While it didn't deliver true 1:1 control until the introduction of Wii MotionPlus's gyroscopes three years later, even the original 'Wiimote' proved incredibly versatile.

Used on its own it could mimic the swing of a tennis racket, golf club or bowling ball, proving more fun than it had any right to be in *Wii Sports*. The 'nunchuck' attachment added an analog stick, combining motion and traditional controls, letting you to move Link around as you'd become

accustomed, while still wielding the Master Sword. It could be used as a steering wheel in *Mario Kart*, or a light gun in *House of the Dead*, and could function as a makeshift NES pad for the Virtual Console. You could even plug traditional controllers into it. Padception!

While motion control is mostly reviled now, the Wiimote still made a mark. It had the first in-controller speaker, something now found in Sony's DualShock 4 and, when done right, motion aiming can still enhance a shooter, whether for subtly fine-tuning your aim, or full aim, as demonstrated in the Switch ports of *Resident Evil's* 'Revelations' subseries.

#### WII U (2012)

Nintendo's first high-definition console, the Wii U, failed to match the lofty heights of its predecessors, mostly due to a well-documented lack of third-party support and mixed messaging that failed to sell its ideas to the public. Much of the casual contingent that bought the Wii in force simply didn't bother with the Wii U, either having their short-lived interest in games wane or believing its tablet-style controller to be an expensive add-on for what they already owned.

No one, however, can doubt the quality of the Wii U's first-party titles (many seeing a new lease of life since being ported to Switch), nor the concept of the hardware that powered them.

Although the inbuilt touchscreen gave the GamePad a frame that made Xbox's 'Duke' seem dainty, it allowed for some incredible developer creativity. The packed-in *Nintendo Land*, for example, provided a unique spin on local multiplayer, with the GamePad user designated as 'it' in most games, advantaged by information not privy to friends who battled against them via traditional controllers. In the single-player space, Ubisoft's *ZombiU* used almost every feature available in its punishing apocalypse, having players snipe zombies or scan rooms for items using its gyroscope, and swiping the touchscreen to manage



inventory. While a little gimmicky, its mechanics helped build definite tension by involving you outside of the TV and leaving your character vulnerable. The Wii U needed more risks like this.

Away from madcap concepts, the screen also provided several 'quality of life' enhancements, seeing maps and inventory systems located handily on the GamePad. This meant easier navigation and, in the case of the Zelda remasters, quicker item management, with desired items one press away rather than two or three.

And with most core games, you were able to sacrifice those features to move the action entirely to the GamePad's touchscreen for use as a faux-handheld, which was terrifically useful for one-TV households. The range was short, thanks to the weak wireless technology used to beam the image, so you couldn't just pack it up and take it off to another room, but the option was welcome and taken to its natural conclusion with the Switch...

#### SWITCH (2017)

The Switch, as a system, takes the most useful benefit of the Wii U - the ability to switch (aha) between TV and handheld - and implements it far more practically, while the detachable JoyCon represent an amalgamation of nearly all Nintendo's prior ideas.

As a standard for single-player, these two controllers combine to function as one for traditional play, but can be used as individual controllers too, suitable (but not perfect) for impromptu local-multiplayer sessions of FIFA or Mario Kart 8. They can also be used in the same way as Wiimotes,



with gyroscopic and pointer-based motion control - the latter now possible, amazingly, without a sensor bar.

This all-encompassing approach to control means that developers have heaps of options, allowing for a range of interesting experiences, but equally have no obligation to include an approach that doesn't fit their vision. In fact, even when motion control may absolutely enhance a game, it's rarely essential, as seen with Super Mario Odyssey, where those not inclined to use them simply need not, save for a handful of Power Moons.

The inclusion of HD Rumble adds a sense of texture to force feedback, allowing different ends or sides of the controller to be targeted. For some,

it's been hard to tell that it's anything more than a powerful form of haptic feedback (author included), but with 1-2 Switch having entire mini-games built around it, and games like Golf Story using it to generate sounds, it's clearly more advanced than what we've felt before.

Plus, HD Rumble and the right JoyCon's surprisingly advanced IR sensor have come into their own with the release of Labo - Nintendo's cardboard-folding stab at getting kids interested in building and programming. From making music to powering a remote control 'car', LABO's contraptions use JoyCon in ways that nobody could have predicted when announced, which really is the Nintendo difference. ☞

*It's the controllers that make the Switch so truly versatile.*



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FEATURE

# Crash Bandicoot

## The Long Road To Switch

*James O'Connor takes a stroll down memory lane... Just don't mind the slightly adult content along the way.*

If you were a Nintendo kid in the 90s, there's a good chance that you bought at least a few issues of Nintendo Magazine System, Nintendo's official games mag at the time. Most of the magazine was what you'd expect - previews, reviews, a lot of bright colours and pictures of Mario - but the letter sections were another thing entirely. For several pages the magazine descended into a bafflingly obscene bacchanal of home-drawn pornography, hostility, and images of Mario and pals brutally killing Sonic and Crash Bandicoot. In almost every issue one or the other - often both - would be drawn getting ripped to shreds by Nintendo's stable of mascots, depicted by artists who were encouraged by 90s mascot rhetoric to despise these characters for not appearing on Nintendo's systems.

The 90s were WEIRD, man. Then the GameCube came

along, and two things happened - Nintendo's stock dropped far enough that every major Australian Nintendo-specific mag died, and both Sonic and Crash Bandicoot came to Nintendo. The exclusivity ended, as did the animosity, with Crash's GameCube and Game Boy Advance outings. But the original Crash Bandicoot games - the three designed by Naughty Dog for the PlayStation; the Crash Bandicoot games that people really loved - remained exclusive to Sony until this year. In June Crash Bandicoot N-Sane Trilogy finally brought the beloved classics to the Switch, and Nintendo die-hards who have steered clear of Sony were finally able to see what the fuss was about.

With this in mind, now's a good time to look back over Nintendo's history with Crash Bandicoot - the games that have made it to Nintendo systems, and what they've meant for Crash's legacy.





**THE WRATH OF CORTEX**  
*GAMECUBE, 2002*

Crash's first non-PlayStation exclusive took a while to reach the GameCube from the PS2, and by the time it did word had already travelled that the game wasn't on par with his older efforts. It was originally intended to be designed by series architect Mark Cerny, and would have presented an open-world platformer like the ones that had been so popular on the Nintendo 64. But after a series of fallouts and internal issues, developer Traveller's Tales found themselves starting fresh with just 12 months to design what ended up being a fairly bland Crash adventure, most notable for splitting its hub into different 'VR Worlds' (back then VR was still retro-futuristic instead of just being a thing we had). The Wrath of Cortex sold well on Nintendo's system, yet the next Crash game, Twinsanity, skipped a GameCube release.



**THE HUGE ADVENTURE/  
N-TRANCED/PURPLE:  
RIPTO'S REVENGE**

*GBA, 2002/2003/2004*

If you had a mascot in the early-to-mid 2000s, they got a Game Boy Advance 2D platformer. This was law, enacted across all studios and companies, and Crash Bandicoot was no exception. The Huge Adventure (titled XS in Europe, which is a much cleverer title) and N-Tranced were generally well-received as solid little games that probably haven't held up super well, but Purple: Ripto's Revenge is the interesting one here. It was a Spyro cross-over event game - Spyro Orange: The Cortex Conspiracy was also available at the same time. Mini-games could be played between owners of each game, and there was an elaborate card-trading system in place too, because GBA games often had weird gimmicks like that in them. The two crossed over again, kind of, in the PS4 version of Skylanders: Imaginators some years later.



**NITRO KART/TAG TEAM RACING**  
*GAMECUBE/GBA, 2003;*  
*GAMECUBE, 2005*

Nitro Kart and Tag Team Racing live in the shadow of Crash Team Racing, the final Crash Bandicoot game developed by Naughty Dog back in the PS1 days – and one that fans still, to this day, want a remake of. Crash Team Racing was the cool PlayStation-exclusive Mario Kart competitor that gave the series a run for its money; Nitro Kart and Tag Team Racing were also-rans, even with TTR blatantly stealing Mario Kart Double Dash’s ‘two racers to a cart’ idea with its weird mid-race-merging ‘clash’ mechanic. Between these and Wrath of Cortex, Crash gained few new fans in his GameCube releases.



**BOOM BANG!**  
*DS, 2006*

Crash Boom Bang, a party game compilation, was developed by

Japanese developer Dimps – best known now for developing the Dragon Ball Xenoverse games and co-developing Street Fighter V – and was the only Crash game to release in Japan before the US. It’s a weird one; a misjudged and terrible party game in the style of Mario Party, featuring 40 mini-games, boards that take forever to finish, and a general lack of justification for its own existence. It’s also set in Tasmania, so at least it’s got that going for it.



**CRASH OF THE TITANS**  
*WII/GBA/DS, 2007*

By 2007, the Crash brand was somewhat diminished, but the Wii was the hottest ticket in town. For this entry, developer Radical Entertainment decided that Crash should have more of a ‘punk’ look (how’s that for a sentence that makes 2007 feel very long ago). This was more of an action game than a platformer, with Crash needing to collect ‘mojo’ to upgrade his fighting ability so he could take down ‘titan’ enemies. It was the sort of Crash Bandicoot game that exactly no one was asking for, in other words, but it sold quite well here in Australia. Funnily enough, the DS version – which more closely resembled the original games – garnered the best critical reviews (the 2D GBA version barely elicited a shrug).



**MIND OVER MUTANT**  
*WII/DS, 2008*

Mind over Mutant is the last ‘new’ Crash game for consoles, and while reviews were a bit more positive than they were for many of the other games in this list, the ‘Crash’ that fans knew and loved – that Nintendo-only players had never really gotten to know – was an increasingly distant memory. Crash had not fallen as hard as Sonic, and Mind over Mutant – which continued the fight-heavy style of Crash of the Titans – had some neat touches. Each cutscene was animated in a unique art style, and the game had a satirical bent that gave it a bit more of an edge than past adventures, but technical issues and a short-run time – and the fading relevance of the once proud marsupial – led to Crash slowly slinking away after this release. It would be nine years (and a few games quietly cancelled behind the scenes) before he’d re-emerge, triumphant once more, for the N-Sane Trilogy.

*Why does Crash always look so manic? Has anyone asked him if he’s okay?*



## HYPERCHAT: VICARIOUS VISIONS

*We talked to Vicarious Visions' studio head Jen Oneal and producer Kyle Martin about bringing Crash back to Nintendo with the (very good) N-Sane Trilogy, and about giving PlayStation holdouts their first chance to play the original classics, albeit in updated form.*

### **HYPER>>: WERE YOU NINTENDO OR PLAYSTATION PEOPLE WHEN CRASH CAME OUT ORIGINALLY? HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SERIES?**

Kyle: I was kind of in the middle. When Crash 1 came out I was still an N64 kid, but then when Crash 3 came out, I'd gotten hooked on PlayStation as well. For me it's been great seeing Crash come through to the present day and be available on all these new platforms.

Jen: This might point to how old I am, but I actually played both. I was in the industry at the time, so I had a Nintendo and a PlayStation, and my friend would come over and we'd hand the controller back and forth while we played Crash. We did the same thing with Mario too. It was a great time for platforming.

### **HYPER>>: WHAT HAS MADE CRASH ENDURE AS A CHARACTER AND AS A MASCOT, WOULD YOU SAY?**

Kyle: For Crash, the big thing that sets him apart is the humour. It's not just Crash, all the supporting characters as well have so much personality. Especially with what we've done with the N-Sane Trilogy with remastering the cinematics, there's just so much life in the characters. It feels like you're playing through an animated movie.

### **HYPER>>: WHAT MAKES HIM A UNIQUE CHARACTER AND ICON, BEYOND THE QUALITY OF THE ORIGINAL GAMES?**

Kyle: I think it's got a lot to do with the humour - well, not just the humour but how that plays into the gameplay. Crash is such a precise, challenging platformer, but it's got a lot of exploration as well. It's got beautiful levels, and all of that ties into the characters and builds a cool world around it.

### **HYPER>>: THE N-SANE TRILOGY LOOKED FANTASTIC ON PS4 - HAS IT BEEN CHALLENGING TO GET IT RUNNING ON SWITCH?**

Jen: Quite honestly, it wasn't that challenging. Obviously, there's work to do - you don't just press a button and now it's made for Switch - but we had an engineer here who was a huge Switch fan, a huge Nintendo fan, and wanted to get it working. He spent a holiday weekend on it and got the first level up and running. From there, we knew we had a path forward. So it wasn't difficult. It's something we knew Switch fans would appreciate, so we felt it was necessary to get it onto that platform.

### **HYPER>>: FANS OF CRASH BANDICOOT HAVE OFTEN BEEN BIG FANS OF PLAYSTATION, TOO, BUT MORE AND MORE GAMES GO MULTIPLATFORM THESE DAYS. DO YOU THINK IT'S EASIER NOW TO WIN OVER NEW FANS ON DIFFERENT SYSTEMS THAN IT USED TO BE?**

Jen: Certainly. I know there's many friends I have who own multiple systems, for example. If you want to have your on-the-go experience you take your Switch, if you want to have a super high-def experience, the Xbox is a great way to play it as well as a PS4... it all depends on how you play games.

### **HYPER>>: THE ORIGINAL CRASH GAMES WERE DESIGNED WITH THE LIMITATIONS OF THE PS1 IN MIND. WHAT MAKES THESE GAMES HOLD UP TODAY?**

Kyle: When we were doing the N-Sane Trilogy last year, we tried to see what modernisations we could make - what sort of things were done in Crash 3 that we could bring back to Crash 1, that sort of thing. We created a unified save system and checkpoint system and online leaderboards - the kind of cool things players expect from a modern release.

### **HYPER>>: CRASH BANDICOOT IN SUPER SMASH BROS. HOW LIKELY?**

Kyle: We have nothing to announce at this time. (laughs) ☺

# THE TOP TEN BEST 3DS GAMES

The definitive list of the greatest games on the 3DS that **James O'Connor** is sure you will all agree with and not get at all angry...

**3**D is dead. The 3DS is not. Thanks to a large install base and continued support, the 3DS will continue to see new releases into 2019. But even if none of the system's upcoming games grab you, it's still worth holding onto, or getting your hands on, one - especially if you never got around to these ten games.

## HONOURABLE MENTIONS:

*Pushbox, Bravely Default/Second, Shin Megami Tensei IV, Pocket Card Jockey, Metroid: Samus Returns, Theatrhythm Final Fantasy: Curtain Call, Kirby: Planet Robobot, BoxBoy!, Dead or Alive Ultimate, the Zelda ports that felt wrong to include.*



10

## Rhythm Heaven Megamix

The Rhythm Heaven series has split between many different systems and control methods, but Megamix brought all the best rhythm mini-games in the series together and unified them with button controls. Megamix has been overlooked somewhat as a compilation, but it's comfortably the best game in the series.



9

## Picross 3D Round 2

Picross is a fine form of puzzle, but Picross 3D - which feels like chipping a sculpture out of a block of marble - is the best puzzle game on the system. There's a zen to Picross 3D, and while the game is generous enough that the option of blindly spamming through is often there, you'll want to take your time and do it right to feel that proper endorphin rush.



7

## Super Mario 3D Land

3DS games often didn't make great use of the 3D effects the console is capable of, but Super Mario 3D Land is a great example of how extra depth can subtly enhance an experience. Turning on 3D helped players to judge the spaces they were in on the smaller screen, and led to some neat puzzles outside of the always-world-class platforming bits.



6

## Super Smash Bros for Nintendo 3DS

The split between Super Smash Bros on handheld and home consoles might have been the best argument for why we needed the Switch. While it paled in comparison to the amazing Wii U version, the 3DS let you train on the go, with unique levels and modes to enjoy. Even pared down, Smash Bros is a blast.

## PHOENIX WRIGHT

## Acc Attorney: Spirit of Justice

8

Phoenix Wright's second 3DS outing - the only non-Nintendo published game on this list, and technically the only non-exclusive, since it got a mobile release - is far better than the limp 'Dual Destinies'. It brought in great new mechanics through the séance sequences, told a story that pushed the Phoenix Wright mythology in a cool direction, and brought back Maya, everyone's absolute favourite. It's a great Ace Attorney game.



## Fire Emblem: Shadows of Valentia

5

Putting Fire Emblem on the list twice feels like a cheat, but Shadow of Valentia is a game that deserves more credit than it got. This take on Fire Emblem is more traditional than the other FE games on the system - it's a remake of the second game in the series - but the dungeon-questing and dual storylines were great fun. It also introduced a limited-use rewind mechanic, which is, honestly, a godsend - Fire Emblem needs permadeath to really work, but being able to wind back after an enemy lands an extremely low-odds critical on your best healer is a concession we can live with.



## Pokémon Sun / Moon

Pokémon Sun/Moon did not reinvent Pokémon, but it certainly proved that the series could try some new things without sacrificing the core experience people liked so much. Alola is a lovely setting, and it felt like series developers Game Freak were having fun working through some new ideas. Gyms were out, replaced with 'trials', and the story shifted into a weirder gear - the Ultra Beasts and ventures into other dimensions made for a Pokémon game that left us quietly excited for the series' future. Ultra Sun and Moon iterated even further, of course, but Sun and Moon felt fresh.



3

## Animal Crossing: New Leaf



I comfortably put over a hundred hours into New Leaf, which is very atypical for me. It took a while for this version of Animal Crossing to click, but over time - and after playing a great deal with other people - New Leaf turned into a daily ritual, an experience that is more meditative than demanding (despite an expectation, at a certain point, that you'll play it every single day to get the best gear). New Leaf is a game where your efforts pay off over months and years, but which keeps finding ways to reward you. It's like living a happy, simple second life, but one that you only really have to check in on.

## The Legend of Zelda: A Link Between Worlds

Well before Breath of the Wild fundamentally reinvented Zelda, A Link Between Worlds showed that Nintendo's teams were thinking about different ways of doing things. The item hire system is genius, as are the ways the game pares the experience back a bit. This is Zelda at its most digestible, with small, short dungeons, a world layout that you can memorise, and an open structure that lets you tackle your objectives in any order. It's a more than worthy follow-up to A Link to the Past, and - just quietly - at launch it was the best new Zelda in a long, long time.



2

## Fire Emblem Awakening

Fire Emblem Awakening is everything great about Nintendo's handhelds. It's a game that's hard to pull away from, which is perfect for those nights and mornings where you just want to lie in bed and play, and it's something you'll occasionally want to slam shut and throw across the room (not something we'd recommend with the Switch). Fire Emblem Awakening is the very best Fire Emblem game - and the best 3DS game - because of its introduction of a 'relationship' system. Pairing up characters until they fell in love gave the game a new tactical bent, a great recruitment method (involving the couple's time-travelling children) and prompted some intense emotional investment (Tharja and Lon'qu are a perfect couple and if you didn't pair them up then I don't understand what motivates you in life). It's a heart-bending, mind-sharpening, absolutely wonderful strategy game. «



1

# Wear your Ninty on your sleeve



## Nintendo Zelda Charm Bracelet

Medicom • \$47.69

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-zelda-charm-bracelet/26778848](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-zelda-charm-bracelet/26778848)

Hey, here's that Charm Bracelet!

There's a little bit of everything on this little bracelet - Link's sword and shield, the Tri-force emblem, and even a little shiny silhouette of Link himself.



## Nintendo Super Mario Villains Backpack

Nintendo • \$74.19

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-super-mario-villains-backpack/26149292](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-super-mario-villains-backpack/26149292)

When I say there is a LOT going on with this backpack, I don't mean it's a wonder of every-day-carry with a million pockets, charging ports, built-in personal Wi-Fi network, and all kinds of straps, molle attachments, and handy little pockets.

What I mean is it's a multicoloured monstrosity of villainy that somehow still looks kinda charming.

Damn you, Nintendo.



## Nintendo Zelda Shield Necklace

Nintendo • \$18.01

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-zelda-shield-necklace/26749975](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-zelda-shield-necklace/26749975)

**Conundrum:** you really like Link's shield, but you don't want to - you know - actually carry around a full size one. Well, how about a smaller one, on a chain about your neck?

Beautifully detailed, this pendant can also be matched up with a Zelda Charm Bracelet, and Sword & Shield earrings. Though that may be taking your fandom a little over the top. Maybe just the pendant then...



## SNES Controller Power T-Shirt

Bioworld • \$31.79

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-snes-controller-power-t-shirt-medium/27957934](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-snes-controller-power-t-shirt-medium/27957934)

The beauty of this simple black t-shirt is its ambiguity. Is the power that 'you' are playing with the Nintendo controller and console, lovingly represented in retro lineart?

Or is the person in the t-shirt the 'power', and the shirt is in fact a warning that the wearer is not to be trifled with.

Or is it in fact yet another excuse for strangers to see if those buttons really work? There is only one way to find out...



## Nintendo Controller - Snapback Cap

Nintendo • \$37.09

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-controller-snapback-cap/27957598](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-controller-snapback-cap/27957598)

Okay, so with this one you're wearing your Ninty love on your head, but in a lot of ways that means you're just being MORE PROUD. This snapback cap is a stylish grey-black piece of headware, with a very touchy-feely rubber NES controller one the front.

**PRO:** It looks great.

**CON:** Not sure I'd want people trying to work out if the A and B controllers work.



## Legend of Zelda - Link Cosplay Hat

Bioworld • \$31.99

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/legend-of-zelda-link-cosplay-hat/27277592](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/legend-of-zelda-link-cosplay-hat/27277592)

So, maybe it's not an every-day hat, but it sure is a GREAT hat.

And for a piece of over-the-counter cosplay, it's actually not bad! Sure, when you get down to it, it's not the most complex item of clothing... in fact, it's really just a bag on your noggin. But the faux-leather lacing and patch give it a certain veneer of authenticity - you could probably sneak it into an SCA event and no one would even blink... ☹



# Nintendo Labo

*James O'Connor has a ball exploring Nintendo's cardboard kingdom*

A few months after the first Labo kits launched, Nintendo's experimental product line is already in an odd position. Right now, Labo could be either the next big thing or a quickly abandoned side-project. Neither eventuality would surprise me, although plenty of people have already made their mind up about it.

"It's \$100 for cardboard!" they shouted. "CARDBOARD!"

This ignores the fact that both kits also come with software to interact with all that cardboard, of course, and that they allow for some pretty interesting, complex stuff. From what we can gather, the Variety Kit has sold decent numbers, while the more expensive Robot Kit – which features a bigger build and a slightly more traditional 'game' – hasn't done as well. It's not clear what further packs are planned – different objects have been spotted in initial promo spots for Labo, including a camera, a steering wheel, a flight stick, and

a gun, but at the time of writing no release dates or packaging decisions have been unveiled.

In June, Nintendo announced a second Nintendo Labo 'Creators Contest', whereby Labo owners were challenged to use the software's 'Toy-Con Garage' application to create their own games, or musical instruments, with all sorts of prizes up for grabs. The creative potential of Nintendo Labo isn't as widely publicised as the cardboard peripherals it comes packaged with, simply because digging into something like that requires the sort of time, effort, and dedication that fans handle much better than journalists do. For many, the programming possibilities of Labo will be a major selling point – but for the majority, I suspect, these are just fun toys.

We've had a look at the available Toy-Con kits and have some thoughts on Labo – both where it is now, and where it might go from here.



## RC Car

**Enjoyment of Build:** It's a fun way to spend fifteen minutes.

**Fiddliness:** You need a large, flat, hard surface to operate the RC car on, but there's not really a lot to building or operating this one.

**How Easy to Break:** The RC Car feels sturdy, and you won't be manipulating it with your hands much, so there's no real danger of it breaking.

**Gameplay:** The RC Car is designed to be a quick, easy showcase for what Labo is. Within fifteen minutes you're using the Switch touch screen to move the car around with Joy-Con vibrations, and it's a damn delight. Turning on the camera function and picking up images through the Joy-Con is a neat reminder of just how versatile and cool the little controllers are. Unless you get deep into the 'Garage' programming stuff you're not going to get a lot of play out of the RC Car, but it's a lovely thing to show off to family and friends.

# Fishing Rod

**Enjoyment of Build:** Seeing the fishing rod come together is a fun process, with lots of different bits and bobs to manage, although at times it's difficult to get your rod to look like the one on the Switch screen, where every part looks just a bit firmer (don't worry too much if the holes you feed the reel through won't stand up straight).

**Fiddliness:** The fishing rod is extremely cool, and during the build process there are numerous "Oh, that's how they're going to do that" moments (the thin 'sound' tab used to simulate the creaky reel is

particularly smart).

**How Easy to Break:** The rod seems sturdy, although when stretched out it's quite long and thin, and I feel like the odds of a small child using it as a makeshift lightsabre while playing are pretty low. One of the central contradictions around Labo is that it's obviously designed with children in mind - the excellent tutorials encourage the builder to ask their parents for help - but if your child is particularly young, Labo is not going to survive their play sessions.

**Gameplay:** The little fishing game included in the Variety Kit is

great fun, like Ridiculous Fishing meets Sega Bass Fishing with the Dreamcast Fishing Controller. You lower your hook with the Toy-Con reel, dance it around a bit to attract fish, and then reel in hard once something bites, making sure to slack the line and fight against the fish as you're going. There's a real sense of connection between the string of your rod and the string on the screen, and the novelty lasts long enough for you to make an attempt at catching the bigger fish that rest towards the bottom of the game's digital ocean.





## Piano

**Enjoyment of Build:** The piano is the star of Nintendo Labo, the most immediately enticing project in the Variety Kit, but it's also the least enjoyable build of the lot. The body is fine, but there are thirteen keys, and you must build each one individually through the same damn process. It gets tedious - I advise putting something on TV in the background and turning the sound down on your Switch (which is a good idea for every Toy Con, really, but this one gets particularly boring).

**Fiddliness:** Because the keys sit loose within the body of the piano, the whole thing can feel a bit flimsy if they're not exactly in place, and

sometimes the keys won't spring back properly if they're misaligned. But the thing works surprisingly well, and the swappable dials are easy to pull in and out.

**How Easy to Break:** The body of the piano feels sturdy, and the keys show no sign of wear and tear after quite a few demonstrations. There are a lot of loose parts that could very easily get lost or trodden on, though.

**Gameplay:** The piano is the primary selling point of Nintendo Labo because the sheer magic of a useable cardboard piano is so immediately appealing. Not only does the Labo piano work, but if you insert a dial you can make

cat noises with the keys and pitch shift them by twisting it, which makes it, by certain very specific metrics, objectively better than a standard piano. There's plenty you can do with this - and there are some wonderful covers and performances popping up online - but the one thing that's missing is a robust tutorial that teaches you the basics of the piano. Yeah, this isn't the right way to learn Chopin, but if you're hoping to, say, live your dream of learning 'Laura's Theme' from *Twin Peaks* and play it while openly weeping, this might not fit the bill (your tears might wreck the cardboard anyway).



## Motorbike

**Enjoyment of Build:** This is a fun one, with a lot of “Oh, that’s neat” moments during the build process. Part of the fun of Labo is seeing the process under the surface come together, and learning how the moving parts inside are going to simulate the experience of, in this case, riding a motorbike.

**Fiddliness:** The motorbike Toy Con is fiddly in the final stages, when everything is clicking together. There’s a tab you need to open and close again whenever you insert the

Switch screen into the main shell, and it’s starting to look and feel pretty raggedy after a few uses.

**How Easy to Break:** I’d have to guess extremely. Pulling at the little tabs and twisting at the throttle feels precarious, and after just a few uses my Toy Con is in noticeably worse shape than it was before, with bends in places there shouldn’t be and less resistance on the brake than I’d like.

**Gameplay:** The included motorbike game is cool fun, but it’s also a good reminder of why this thing

would never work for a ‘full’ game – crank the speed up and suddenly twisting the throttle and turning while pressing the Toy Con into your gut becomes a less enjoyable experience. While Toy Cons that are compatible with bigger games might work in the future, this one’s not quite there. Mario Kart 8 Deluxe recently received an update that included support for the Motorbike Toy-Con (complete with a zoomed-in camera), but after one race I went right back to the Pro Controller.

## House

Midway through the house build, I realised that one of my sticker sheets was missing. Sticker sheets are important for Labo kits – the Joy Con’s sensors read the movement of those stickers during gameplay – so without them, there was no point continuing to build this. I searched high and low, and have no idea what has happened to this sheet.

This is a good example of why some people have been so tentative towards Labo. It’s easy to lose a crucial piece, or bend something the wrong way, or stuff the process up in some other way. The only way to buy another sticker set in Australia is to buy the ‘replacement parts’ pack on Nintendo’s eBay store, which will set you back \$22 including shipping.



## The Robot Kit

**Enjoyment of Build:** The Robot Kit is available separately from the Variety Kit, and costs \$130, so you'd want to hope it's a fun build. It is, thankfully, largely because the whole thing feels so ridiculous. There are a lot of different parts to bring together, many of them quite large and silly – the backpack, which you'll fill with weighted boxes during the build process, is comically chunky.

**Fiddliness:** Building the robot is far more cumbersome a process than anything in the variety kit, both because it's huge and, as an adult building a contraption intended for children, it's difficult to know if the measurements the instructions are suggesting are going to be adequate when you're a large man instead of a small boy. I spent a lot of time during the building process worried that it just wasn't going to work properly once it was all together. Thankfully, when the whole thing was done, it turned out that adjusting the various straps and threads for my height was not difficult. Getting it on and off my 'game journalist' frame was a

little less comfortable than I'd like, though, and the straps around my head and feet were not particularly comfortable (I recommend wearing shoes).

**How Easy To Break:** The Robot needs to be sturdy – if you're paying \$130 for a single kit, you don't want something that a kid could conceivably break. Thankfully, short of falling backwards (which is unlikely to happen), it's hard to imagine someone accidentally doing massive damage to this thing. All the straps and strings seem to be fairly high quality too.

**Gameplay:** The Robot is dorky in a way the Variety Kit isn't, and despite being alone at the time, I felt a little embarrassed putting it on. I cleared a decent space in my living room and got stomping and smashing, walking on the spot and throwing punches to do the same with my robot. Lowering your visor switches to first-person mode, and you can stretch your arms out to fly or crouch to turn into a tank.

There's not a lot to do with the robot, though. You can wander

around a city, smashing buildings and destroying floating UFO-like objects, or engage in a 'challenge' mode that puts you through various... well, challenges. These are neat, but limited. Don't expect to feel like a real mech pilot – it's closer to playing one of those Wii games where your character always felt slightly off centre and you had to keep reorienting. It's cool seeing the robot match your movements, but the novelty only lasts for so long. In an arcade setting, this would be a cool attraction that you'd try once and talk about as a fun experience you got to have; it's not necessarily a fit for the living room.

Four years ago, I had the opportunity to test out Project Giant Robo at E3. This game is built on the skeleton of that abandoned Wii U project, but it still feels like it never moved past a concept stage. Perhaps more challenges will arrive in a later update, or a new game using the suit will arrive at some point – until then, the massive backpack's just taking up space. ☐☐



# We Need to Talk About Waluigi

*Strong opinions about a contentious Mario character? You bet James O'Connor has them.*

When Waluigi popped up in Mario Tennis back in 2000, few players took kindly to him. Who was this lanky man, this spindly inversion of Luigi? He appeared to be Wario without the 'greed is good' backstory, a purple-clad horror with enormous bags under his eyes and a terrible name. Where did he come from? Why was it that he was debuting in a tennis game? Why was he not named Tuigi, with the L turned upside down?

The answer to that last question is easy enough to trace, at least. The 'Wa-r(x)' prefix, in Japan (where Waluigi is pronounced Waruīji) is a play on the word 'warui', Japanese for 'bad', 'evil', or 'inferior'. The name is also an anagram of 'Ijiwaru', meaning 'cruel'. Official descriptions of Waluigi at the time described him as cunning and mean, a man displeased by other people's happiness, a being driven by a need to sap away joy. While most Mario characters seek victory in their sports and racing games, Waluigi's chief interest is in making sure that other people lose.

While Wario's moustache is pointed like a lightning bolt, Waluigi's curves upwards like a villain of the old west. While Wario is defined by his greed, Waluigi seems more malevolent, an offshoot of what was already an evil copy, a dark force that Nintendo will only give so much rope to. Waluigi is yet to get his own game, and is actively denied even a role in the Smash Bros roster, which has expanded to include just about every major and minor character in Nintendo's history (he was pointedly revealed as an assist trophy during E3 to deliberately quash any hopes). There has been some outcry over this, but to give Waluigi his own game would mean having to reckon with who he is, something Nintendo has, thus far, tried to avoid.

The question of who and what Waluigi is, exactly, is surprisingly difficult to answer. His goals and aspirations in life remain a mystery. Is he like a resident of Twin Peaks'

Black Lodge, feeding on the pain and sorrow of humanity? Is he the logical end-point of Wario's avarice, a man who has dived so far into the deep end of late capitalism that he emerged a grim spectre, a haunting reminder of humankind's folly? Is he, as some have supposed, a blank slate onto which we can project our fears, or possibly even the ur-text of man, the root of our evils upon this earth? What makes Waluigi tick?

Even Waluigi's exact relationships with other characters can't be pinned down. In a 2010 interview, voice actor Charles Martinet said that he didn't believe that Wario and Waluigi are brothers; they're simply "two nice, evil guys who found each other". This is the rationale, one suspects, that stops Martinet from having to dive too deep into Waluigi's warped psyche. Mario and Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games states on an in-game 'trivia' page that the two are cousins, but this seems like a case of Sega pontificating; Waluigi's trophies in Smash Bros indicate that the relationship between the two men is intentionally unclear.

Are they, perhaps, lovers? It seems like a possibility, although Waluigi and Daisy are a more popular pairing in fan communities: they're two moderate outsiders who tend to only make it into the games within the Mario series once the cast expands out widely. The fact that both characters showed up at the same time in Mario Party 3 was not unnoticed, and the Prima guide for Mario Party 4 outright states that Waluigi has a certain affection for the princess, who Luigi also pines for (none of this even occurs as subtext within the game, and yet it feels right, somehow). Perhaps this crush is meant to humanise the man, but it seems more likely he simply doesn't want Luigi, a man he in no way resembles but whom he surely sees as his own personal antagonist, to be happy.

So what is a man when we don't know his alliances, his priorities, his motivations, what he loves and who he cares for (if anyone)? What

is a man that only exists in relation to other men? He is the Wario equivalent of Luigi, the 'it's like if you combined X with Y' of people, but inherently evil. He is, surely, God's mistake, albeit one that we can't help but be fascinated by. His boisterous recitation of his own name - 'Waluuuuuigi!', or sometimes simply 'waaaaah!' - is iconic, but also telling. He is a man who shouts his own name because he has no sense of identification beyond it.

Our collective confusion over Waluigi and what

he represents has turned him into a catch-all symbol for mischief. When Twitter rolled out a new system to make it easier to report abuse claims in January this year, the image they used in their announcement tweet featured a theoretical user whose display pic was a full-body shot of Waluigi, tugging at his moustache, a rictus grin set upon his face. But Waluigi is not actually the symbol which any organisation or hate group could stand behind, unless their stated goal was undirected chaos - he simply wishes for bad things to happen, to see everyone around him fail.

Who is Waluigi, exactly? He's no one, and yet he is each of us at our lowest point, that inner darkness, that scornful sting of seeing the people around us achieve success after success, while an inner voice that becomes harder to silence, which seems more logical and right with each passing day, wishes that they would fail so completely that we could hold our own lives up against theirs and find that ours now looked less empty in the comparison.

...  
Basically, he's a great character and I love him. ☹️

“  
WHO IS WALUIGI,  
EXACTLY? HE'S NO  
ONE, AND YET HE IS  
EACH OF US AT OUR  
LOWEST POINT...”



INTERVIEW

# Finger On The Button Panic Button And The Perfect Switch Port

Interview by James O'Connor

**W**hen Panic Button Games brought Doom to the Switch, they showed that the Switch was capable of far more than we realised. Its Wolfenstein 2 port is, if anything, even better – it's a wonder, whether docked or handheld, how good a job it does at capturing the experience the game offered on PS4 and Xbox One last year. We reached out to studio head Adam Creighton to ask about the company's work with the Switch, and how they've managed to squeeze so much out of a mobile chip set.

**HYPER>>: WHEN DOOM WAS FIRST ANNOUNCED FOR THE SWITCH, PEOPLE WERE SURPRISED THAT IT COULD BE DONE AT ALL. DO YOU THINK PEOPLE UNDERESTIMATE HOW POWERFUL AND CAPABLE THE SWITCH IS?**

The Nintendo Switch is a very cool, very purpose-built hybrid device. Making games that were originally developed before the hardware was a consideration as a release platform work on there requires the right mix of game, tech, and development & platform expertise.

**HYPER>>: AT WHAT POINT IN**

**DEVELOPMENT - FOR BOTH DOOM AND WOLFENSTEIN - DID YOU REALISE THAT YOU COULD MAKE THIS HAPPEN? WAS THERE EVER ANY DOUBT OF WHETHER THESE PORTS WOULD WORK?**

These are definitely swing-for-the-fences projects. For titles like these we work with our partners to define joint quality goals for release, and we do a focused technical due diligence effort. That effort lets us know what's doable, where the technical challenges are, and where we can push things even more. We start out with an educated, "We think we can do this, we think we know how, and we have an idea of the challenges and risks." That due diligence effort validates and refines those thoughts.

**HYPER>>: DO THINGS LIKE FILE SIZE AND THE SWITCH'S BATTERY IMPOSE RESTRICTIONS ON YOU WHEN YOU'RE WORKING ON THESE GAMES?**

Every platform has constraints unique to the hardware, and for the hybrid nature of the Nintendo Switch balancing performance and battery life is very important. That definitely factors in to development and testing (we do a lot of battery life tests during development).

The Nintendo Switch is a portable device with a set amount of on-board storage, no Blu-ray media, and it needs to share space with other titles and system resources. Getting everything to fit is a series of optimisation development priority calls and hard work.

**HYPER>>: LOOKING AT YOUR DOOM PLAYERS, DO YOU HAVE A SENSE OF HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE 'NEW' TO THE GAME, AND HOW MANY DOUBLE-DIPPED FOR THE SWITCH RELEASE?**

That's more a question for Bethesda, though anecdotally, we get a lot of positive feedback from both groups. To be honest, that was a big part of why I wanted to do this game. This brings the franchise to an all-new audience. Some Nintendo Switch owners are long-time, multi-generational Nintendo-only fans, and this is their first experience with Doom. And there are those of us who want

“  
WE THINK WE CAN DO THIS, WE THINK WE KNOW HOW, AND WE HAVE AN IDEA OF THE CHALLENGES AND RISKS.”





to take games like this and play wherever we are, so I'm fine buying it yet again to play on the go.

**HYPER>>: YOU ALSO HANDLED THE SWITCH PORT OF ROCKET LEAGUE - HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT GETTING NINTENDO-EXCLUSIVE CONTENT IN THERE?**

Panic Button did the Nintendo Switch version of Rocket League, but it was Psyonix that negotiated and created the content unique to the Nintendo Switch. It's fun stuff for fans of all of those franchises.

**HYPER>>: ROCKET LEAGUE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST SWITCH GAMES WITH CROSS-PLAY. THE IMPRESSION I'VE GOTTEN FROM READING INTERVIEWS ELSEWHERE IS THAT ENABLING THIS IS PRETTY SIMPLE, BUT OFTEN WE THINK THINGS ARE EASIER THAN THEY ACTUALLY ARE. IS DEVELOPING A GAME FOR CROSS-PLAY COMPLICATED?**

I would not call developing for cross-platform easy, both because developing multiplayer functionality is not easy in and of itself, and when you add in multiple platforms, requirements, experiences, and more, it's more complicated. Games with cross-platform play built into

their game have a better starting point, but that's not free - they invested in that work to get to that point. Each of the platforms have different authentication, technology, and experience requirements for their gamers, and I'm glad they do. Those requirements are geared toward creating a good gameplay experience on their platform of choice, and protecting gamers. Fitting into that technology experience and protecting the platform brand is important stuff.

**HYPER>>: IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING THAT PANIC BUTTON WANTS TO BRANCH OUT INTO ORIGINAL GAMES FOR THE SWITCH. IS THIS LESS OF A 'SAFE' BET THAN YOUR PORT WORK?**

What developer doesn't want to make their own games? 'Safe' doesn't really fit into our company culture, because we're a group of aspirational, push-the-envelope developers. There's not much safe about games like Doom or Wolfenstein II - They're technically challenging, and we're working with Bethesda and Nintendo to bring them to a whole new platform and whole new audience.

As we create our own internal properties, we're doing that as

part of our overall portfolio, which also includes co-development and publishing. We won't change the direction of our entire studio to do a game that might or might not be successful due to things outside of our control. We're running a business, we want to keep being a key part of good games (whether or not they're ours), and we want to keep growing and take care of our studio.

**HYPER>>: HOW DOES PAYMENT WORK ON PORTS? IS IT A FLAT FEE FOR YOUR STUDIO'S WORK, OR ARE THERE RESIDUALS BASED ON SALES AFTER THE FACT?**

Honestly, the terms for development are all over the place. We're super flexible, and one of our strengths as a development studio is we want our projects to be collaborative partnerships with people who want to do amazing things together, and not just turn a buck or exploit a property.

*(Note: We also asked Panic Button what they were working on right now, but they were coy in their response; the day after we received answers, it was announced that they're developing a Switch version of popular free-to-play shooter Warframe.)* ☞

AUSTRALIA'S ESSENTIAL N64 GUIDE: 141 REVIEWS INSIDE

# N64

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WORLD'S FIRST REVIEW

# Donkey Kong 64

The Best Game of the Century!

# EARTHWORM JIM 3D

The zaniest platformer ever!

# WINBACK

Surprise hit of the year!

# TUROK RAGE WARS

Reviewed: Magical Multiplayer Mayhem!

next gaming

9 771329 769008

23

# LEGO Racers

Build your own game!

HUGE CHRISTMAS ISSUE 16 NEW REVIEWS!

FEATURE

# REMEMBERING N64 GAMER: *The Australian 90s Nintendo Bible*

*James O'Connor talks with some of the pioneers of Nintendo journalism in Australia.*

If you were an Australian Nintendo 64 kid in the 90s and early 2000s – a dyed-in-the-wool serious Nintendo 64 kid, who bought into the 'console wars' and stuck posters of Banjo-Kazooie up on your walls – you bought N64 Gamer, Next Publishing's magazine dedicated to all-things Nintendo 64 (and then, later, GameCube and Game Boy). You admired the commissioned art covers, memorised the review scores, and bought into the magazine's 'Nintendo rules, PlayStation drools' ethos. Because this Nintendo-themed issue of Hyper is the closest thing to a new issue of the magazine in a long time, I reached out to all the magazine's past editors to reminisce.

#### **SUPER MEMORIES 64>>**

These days, many of the review codes local journals receive come from Stephen O'Leary. He works for Bandai Namco now, but I first became familiar with him in 1998 when I bought my first issue of N64 Gamer and saw his name and mugshot alongside the opening editorial. "I was a contributor for Hyper Magazine for a little while before N64 Gamer", O'Leary

reminisces. "At the time Dan Toose was editing the magazine and was kind enough to recommend me for the N64 Gamer editor position. I was a bit of a hardcore gamer back then and had most systems, including an imported N64, so it was easy for me to get together the content required for the magazine." He brought on Narayan Pattison as his deputy editor; while O'Leary was only there for the first year, Pattison stayed on for close to three years, taking over as editor once O'Leary left. "First thing I wrote was about GoldenEye – still to this day my favourite N64 game", Pattison recalls. "The experience of gushing to Australian gaming fans about why they should buy GoldenEye was super rewarding and convinced me to turn my back on my law degree and pursue a career in games journalism."

In those early years, spirits were high – the N64 was a technical marvel, and O'Leary remembers how keen the team was on the console. "N64 was the first true 3D system for home", he says, "and it had effects that other consoles didn't support at the time, so it gathered a bit of attention. We had a blast in the office playing Mario Kart 64 and

GoldenEye with many late nights." Troy Gorman – who remembers being brought on to proofread the second issue while hanging out at Narayan's house one day, and would later serve as editor after Narayan left – was excited to work on a magazine that didn't face much competition on the local market. "The Official magazine was our only competitor for Nintendo content and we didn't really even look at it", he recalls. "We just attempted to create a magazine that we would have liked to read."

#### **FOR THE FANS>>**

A lot of 90s single-format games magazines leaned heavily on the N64/PlayStation 'console war' – what better way to get readers buying the magazine than to get them invested in the 'side' they chose? "I think it was very real with a portion of our readers," Pattison muses. "I think most kids, very understandably, couldn't afford both consoles. It makes sense to demonise the competing consoles to reinforce your belief that you've backed the right horse." N64 Gamer's anti-PlayStation bent was aggressive throughout the

**N64 Gamer**

**REGULARS**

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- 16 Troy's Mailbag.** This month we discuss random acts of terrorism against Sega mascots, reveal reasons why the PlayStation is superior, changing the Nintendo Outliner's name to the Dark and pointless letters.
- 18 Bad Ass' Basement.**
  - 10 Q & A - If you're stuck in a game ask Bad Ass and he'll sort you out.
  - 11 Commentaries - Bad Ass is giving away copies of Chrono King 64, Turbo, Rapa Flats and Nintendo 6. So start writing!
  - 12 Insult My Head - If you've got an ugly enough head, Bad Ass will insult it for you.
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**Codes** If you're a lucky site reader, we've got some special codes for you. Use them to get some extra stuff.

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**Bad Ass' Basement**

**Q&A**

**Island hopping**

**Perfectly Stupid**

**Games 'n' Us**

**Bad Ass' Basement**

**BADASS' COMPETITIONS**

**Aim and Prof!**

**Rage Against the Machine**

**WINNERS**

**ALL COMPETITIONS END ON THE 31ST FEBRUARY**

**Mario Party 2**

**It's time to get party!**

**PREVIEWS**

mag - you'd never know that the PlayStation was vastly outselling the N64, or, eventually, that the PlayStation 2 wasn't going to crash and burn - but it was all a bit of an act. "I've always been a Sega fan", O'Leary admits (he left the magazine for a job at OziSoft, Sega's local distributor at the time, and never returned to journalism). "There were very few N64 games and lots of pages, so playing up to the console wars was one of the many ways we injected more style and humour into the magazine", Pattison recalls. "Although I do think the N64 genuinely had the more innovative games on balance and would be the one I would have picked if I could only have one console back then."

For Stephen Farrelly, the

magazine's final editor, it was more real. "When I arrived at the office, the Sony hatred on my Nintendo fanboy side was super-strong", he remembers. "My world was shattered when Troy revealed they hammed up the rivalry and that they often just made up quotes from the PlayStation magazine guys in N64 Gamer. Being next to Hyper and PC PowerPlay in the office meant I had a deep exposure to so many games that I kind of shifted from hardcore Nintendoophile to a lover of all games."

The Nintendo 64 had long periods where few new games released, and the team would have to find ways to fill pages. Often, they'd lean on their readers. "We got a big box of letters each month", Pattison remembers, "that we read though and replied to.

Because of the limited access to new games we devoted a lot of pages to letters, and I think that gave us a good handle on our readers and allowed us to make a magazine they really responded to."

**GROWING UP>>** N64 Gamer was not the most mature magazine.

This was true of most gaming magazines at the time, of course, but N64 Gamer went out of its way to depict its own office as raucous and fun. In one issue, a multi-page, photo-heavy feature explained how to hold the ultimate Nintendo party

**PLAYING UP THE CONSOLE WARS WAS ONE OF THE MANY WAYS WE INJECTED MORE STYLE AND HUMOUR INTO THE MAGAZINE.**

**Hugh's Score Board**

Send all entries to: [scoreboard@n64gamer.com](mailto:scoreboard@n64gamer.com)

**Time Comps**

Bad Ass  
N64 Gamer  
78 Resnick at Redfern, NSW.

**Goldeneye 007**

Let's see how tough your bullets are in Goldeneye and see some fast times!

**StarCraft**

Join the Battle of the Console Wars!

# Hugh's High Scores

5	00:01:10	Tim Knowles	5	00:01:39	Steve Paul	2	1:32:50*	Dave Mulberry
<b>Control</b>			<b>Revel Racway</b>			<b>Madcat Partners</b>		
1	00:04:01	Jon Burrows	2	02:05:59	Luke Barrett	1	1:42:56*	Libal Kunkoff
2	00:05:06	Geoffrey Maddocks	3	02:06:57	Peter Mount	2	1:42:57*	Nicholas Wilkenhaar
3	00:05:13	Ferry Martin	4	02:07:22	Fred Holloway	3	1:48:17*	Cory McGraw
4	00:05:19	Jamal Shevart	5	02:07:54	Terry Reynolds	4	1:48:35*	Via Bellaston
5	00:05:25	Fred Deane	5	02:15:59*	Stacy Ingham	5	1:49:05*	Mai Goodbar
<b>Aster</b>			<b>Power's Castle</b>			<b>Yoshi's Valley</b>		
1	00:04:25	James McDermott	1	02:15:33	Berge Matthews	1	01:59:49*	Joah Belmont
2	00:04:50	Alan Dickinson	2	02:16:12	Offen Gould	2	02:00:22	Brandy Bowering
3	00:05:06	Aaron Triggs	3	02:19:02	Cameron Needham	3	02:05:12	Claris Lee
4	00:05:13	Feraru Peppetti	4	02:22:01	Tony Smeo	4	02:01:11	Jessie Hodge
5	00:05:32	James Erlington	5	02:22:02	Jimmy Green	5	04:46:19	Carly Ellis

1	00:01:26	Geoffrey Maddocks	1	01:59:49*	Joah Belmont
2	00:01:30	Jon Burrows	2	02:00:22	Brandy Bowering
3	00:01:48	A. Rodriguez	3	02:05:12	Claris Lee
4	00:01:48	Kyle Service	4	02:01:11	Jessie Hodge
5	00:01:47	Tim Knowles	5	04:46:19	Carly Ellis

**Diddy Kong Racing**

I want to see your money scores give me good scores. My money Hugh. I'm unbeatable in the game.

**Association P&L Lap Times**

**Arcade Lake**

Hugh's P&L

1	00:19:36	Simon Warren
2	00:17:05	Ben Hilly
3	00:17:06	Trotan Lambert
4	00:45:78	Denny Dunn
5	00:48:87	Richard Van Oort

**Wave Race 64**

Seeing that most of you constantly wall your smelly pants, you should be able to get half-decent scores on Wave Race 64.

**Association P&L Lap Times**

**Senior Beach**

1	1:18:92*	Geoffrey Maddocks
2	1:19:36*	Luke Dreamboy
3	1:21:54*	Jay Williams
4	1:28:32*	Carl Zuber
5	1:29:36*	Sam O'Shea

**Mario Kart 64**

Get off your fat, lazy butts and squeeze them into a go-kart - yes, show me some rubber bunny times. Tools.

**Association P&L Lap Times**

**Single Tracks Beach**

1	00:01:26	Mike Outbrook
2	00:01:31	Erica Walters
3	00:01:32	Yves Coules
4	00:01:32	Robert Ernest

**Part Blue**

1	1:48:22*	Cory Owen
2	1:48:54*	Kamran Saiton
3	1:51:54*	Rael Newbury
4	1:52:92*	Key London
5	1:53:81*	Jon Glasco

**Drake Lake**

1	1:30:18*	Adnan Fakh
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**Donkey Kong 64**

Arthur gets stuck into the platform game of the century



**Donkey Kong 64** is a platform game for the Nintendo 64. It features Donkey Kong and his friends in a lush jungle setting. The game is praised for its high-quality graphics and challenging gameplay.

**Donkey Kong 64**

Donkey Kong 64 is a platform game for the Nintendo 64. It features Donkey Kong and his friends in a lush jungle setting. The game is praised for its high-quality graphics and challenging gameplay.

**Association P&L Lap Times**

**Whale Bay**

1	00:21:05	Trotan Lambert
2	00:24:05	Samuel Simpson
3	01:04:54	Hansford Mullins
4	01:04:64	Kenneth Doyle
5	01:04:87	Andrew Quarme

**Hot Top Yokamo**

1	00:26:05	Trotan Lambert
2	00:26:75	John Graham
3	00:27:26	Samuel Simpson
4	01:25:68	Claris Woodhouse
5	01:25:79	Peter Pharoah

- and also told the story of their latest office hire, who they claimed was a pizza delivery guy who had lost that job because he chose to stay on at the party after delivering the pizzas. This was the sort of piece designed to fill a lot of pages without needing to write a lot, but it was also a piece that made readers feel closer to the writers. In truth, the office was a more traditional work environment, with four desks set up next to each other, not so different from where Next's games magazines are put together now.

The magazine's frivolity and willingness to play around with format led to a few memorable incidents. In one issue's letter section, the magazine jokingly promised to reveal a 'nude code' for GoldenEye if enough people wrote in. "I thought it would be an amusing joke to photoshop in a model from the mens' mag in the office next to us", Pattison says. "I'm sure most readers realised a photograph in a screenshot was a joke, but we got a couple of thousand letters asking for the code." A few reviews stick out as well - the infamous Superman was given a 6/10, a score later admitted to being far too high - but the standout is the 101% awarded to Perfect Dark in issue 30, on the basis that the multiplayer modes were so customisable that the player was given the choice to play in any way they wanted, regardless of how it impacted the frame rate. The review was written by then-editor Troy Gorman, who still loves Perfect Dark. "It was a great game. I still play the Xbox 360 version. When I wrote that review I expected some response, because scoring a game over 100% is just ridiculous, but we didn't get any letters about it."

**THE LATER YEARS>>**

Stephen Farrelly was N64 Gamer's - and then, Nintendo Gamer's, following a branding change - final editor. When he was first brought into the fold, he was writing for a Nintendo fansite called Tendobox. "My writing, while pretty shit, slowly got better", he recalls. His first piece in the magazine was a freelance preview of WWF: Attitude, and his relationship with the magazine developed from there. "I also contributed regularly to the news section", Farrelly recalls, "before Troy revealed he was leaving, but that he'd suggested me as a replacement editor". Farrelly was living in Melbourne at the time, but after a few months of discussion decided to follow his passions to Sydney, where the editor's chair awaited him. "I had nothing but the clothes on my back, and really had no idea about what it meant to be a magazine editor", he admits. "However, I was always a pretty good talker and understood business and wanted to make an impression."

By the time Farrelly came on, there were only two permanent staff in the office, him and Andrew

**Reviews**

**Star Wars: Battlefront**

Star Wars: Battlefront is a first-person shooter for the Xbox 360. It features the iconic characters and settings of the Star Wars franchise. The game is praised for its high-quality graphics and immersive gameplay.

**Turok: Rage Wars**

Turok: Rage Wars is a first-person shooter for the Xbox 360. It features the iconic character Turok and his adventures in a lush jungle setting. The game is praised for its high-quality graphics and challenging gameplay.

**Reviews**

**Shadow Man**

Shadow Man is a third-person action game for the Xbox 360. It features the iconic character Shadow Man and his adventures in a dark, gothic setting. The game is praised for its high-quality graphics and challenging gameplay.

**WinBack**

We may have tricked him into believing that this game would win back his girlfriend for him, but Arthur ended up having a blast anyway.

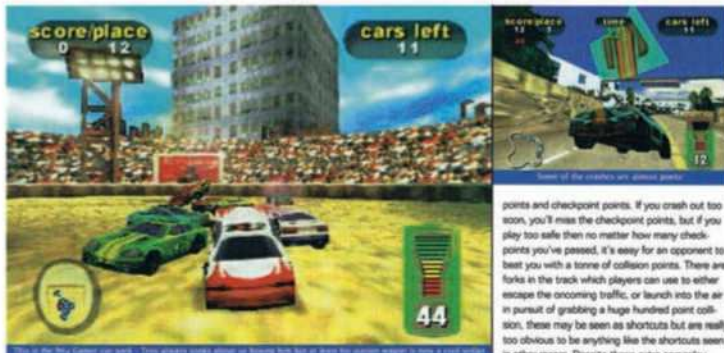
**WinBack** is a first-person shooter for the Xbox 360. It features the iconic character Arthur and his adventures in a dark, gothic setting. The game is praised for its high-quality graphics and challenging gameplay.

**Shadow Man**

Shadow Man is a third-person action game for the Xbox 360. It features the iconic character Shadow Man and his adventures in a dark, gothic setting. The game is praised for its high-quality graphics and challenging gameplay.

# Destruction Derby 64

James straps on his stackhat and elbow pads to go and put the smackdown on some driving Jabronies.



One of the first PlayStation games that was released on Sony's console was a game called Destruction Derby. I remember playing most of the released games for the system, which included Tekken and Ridge Racer. Destruction Derby seemed a tad shallow in comparison. The original simply had you ramming into other cars trying to get them to do spins and flips, resulting in a lot of points for your driver. The idea was fun for a while, but just beelining around with computer cars got dull pretty quickly. If you're a fan of Destruction Derby and have thus been forced to play a PSX version, for you no longer have to wash your hands after your gaming sessions (unless you're squeaky-clean like Nick).

**Crash and Burn**  
The first thing that will grab you about Destruction Derby is that there are four arenas in which you can enjoy some original PSX style Derby smashing: most of the single player game is based on proper course tracks. Of course smashing can still play a major part. Just don't forget to keep your eye on the road. The reason being that, whilst racing, you gain points for passing checkpoints and smashing other cars. You have a limited amount of checkpoints so you'll have to try to fit some crash-

ing action in there anyway, and indeed destroying your own car needn't mean that you have lost the race. On more than one occasion I crashed my car into another, and ended up winning the race because of the heap of points that I got for my final impact. Crashes themselves are neat, (and they're quite frequent as the CPU cars travel around the track in the opposite direction) with the maximum number of points awarded equating one hundred, although on most occasions you'll probably only get 15-40 points. This brings in some strategy, as every time you attempt a high scoring crash your car will be weakened. This means that you must strike a good balance between collision



points and checkpoint points. If you crash out too soon, you'll miss the checkpoint points, but if you play too safe then no matter how many checkpoints you've passed, it's easy for an opponent to beat you with a tonne of collision points. There are forks in the track which players can use to either escape the oncoming traffic, or launch into the air in pursuit of grabbing a huge hundred point collision, these may be seen as shortcuts but are really too obvious to be anything like the shortcuts seen in other racers. Despite these extra gameplay aspects, I still felt that nothing was really put into the game to increase its depth. In most car games you have to try to shave seconds or less off your track times, or to simply juggle for the position of first place. In Destruction Derby I found myself just racing around the track with the accelerator fully maced, waiting for a car to ram into me. Even going off the big jumps just seemed like a matter of luck whether I'd score a huge collision or not. After all, the computer car has to be at the right place at the right time.

The car handling in the game is itself very "arcade", with your car being able to turn on a twenty cent coin if you use some smart braking. This is a good thing for the game, as some



accurate turning is necessary in a lot of levels. However, there doesn't seem to be any gears in the game, which could've made the driving experience a little more interesting.

On the other hand, the arena type levels will probably be a welcome break from the standard courses. These are very similar to the original Destruction Derby concept, and the developers probably realised that creating games solely based around arenas gets quite boring, but having them every now and then can be great fun. And it almost is. You take off around small arenas flying off ramps and such, trying to get the biggest collision you can whilst avoiding premature destruction. There are problems, however. Often it is really too hard to get a decent hit on another car, and you'll have to make do with 10-20 pointers pushing your score up. Also the game doesn't have the PSX scoring system where you got more points for causing a car to do a 360, 180 or a flip. Rather it seems totally based on just how hard you hit them which, as I've said, is pretty hard as you have to be traveling pretty quickly to pull off a big hit, and the CPU will most of the time get out of your way. However this mode is a lot more fun when you plug in some more controllers.

**It's got the modes**  
Destruction Derby 64 has four different multi-player modes which depend on how many players you have. For two-players you can play all four modes, including the straight out smash'em Deathmatch; the entertaining Bomb Tag where you play hot potatoes with a bomb (pretty dull if you lose early); Capture the Flag; and Destruction Race. With three players you can't play Destruction Race or Capture the Flag, and with four players you can play them all except the Destruction Race which involves racing around the game's main tracks smashing each other. Overall, the multiplayer was quite enjoyable.

The graphics in this game are really a mixed bag. On one hand the backgrounds are bright and detailed, and on the other hand the textures used on some of these detailed graphics are blurry, drab and horribly pixelated. That could be forgiven if the frame-rate was outstandingly

smooth. It's not. Racing game fans who require a smooth frame rate will probably be put off by Destruction Derby's attempt. However, the frame-rate doesn't really drop in the multiplayer modes, and the levels are designed so that the frame-rate doesn't really interfere with the arcade style gameplay. The other good thing about the level design is that there is basically no pop up, due to some well-placed curves and structure that make up the track.

**Crunch time!**  
Destruction Derby 64 makes a good attempt at being a great racer, and the game is slightly better than the PSX version due to the multiplayer modes. The fact, at the end of the day, is that smashing the cars didn't seem as fun as it used to be on the PSX. Even so, the game really needs more depth before it would demand a purchase. Fans of the PSX versions and racing freaks looking for something original may like it but people who need depth shouldn't bother.



**SECOND OPINION**  
I'm willing to look past the fact that this game is based on a PlayStation title and give it a fair go but I can't get past the frame rate. I like my racers like my Nintendo pick-up lines: smooth. This game has some good ideas but it's simply too jerky to enjoy. By the way, can I interest any of you girls in some 4-way action? - Nerepis

**ALTERNATIVE**  
**VIGILANTE B**  
Looking for more destruction? You can't really go past Vigilante B. With its meaty weapons, co-op mode, cool vehicles brings vehicle destruction to a new level. Unlike Destruction Derby tracks in the game but it rains in VB are pretty fun.

**THUMBS UP**  
There are both reasons to praise it's an original of the multiplayer mode is a

**THUMBS DOWN**  
Frame rate and textures. Handled racing fans will multi substance here

**PUBLISHER: GT INTERACTIVE**  
**DEVELOPER: RAGE**  
**GENRE: RACER**  
**RELEASE: DECEMBER 1997**  
**PRICE: \$99**  
**RATING: E**  
**PLAYERS: 1-4**  
**RUMBLE PACK SUPPORT: YES**  
**SAVE GAME SUPPORT: YES**

**LAST STAB**  
**GRAPHICS**  
**SOUND**  
**GAMEPLAY**  
**OVERALL**  
**75**



**BRING UP N64 GAMER IN A ROOM OF 30-SOMETHING AUSTRALIAN GAME ENTHUSIASTS AND SOMEONE WILL REMEMBER IT FONDLY.**

Bulmer, and they were set up in the same office as Hyper and Next's PC magazines. "Our office was massive", he remembers, "and we got along really well. The gaming mags were nestled alongside the soap opera mags, and they didn't much like us because we were always loud, obnoxious, and usually played a lot of office cricket, which would see their desks getting battered with makeshift balls made from paper and sticky tape."  
They were having fun, but there was an insurmountable obstacle in the magazine's way - the failure of the GameCube in Australia. The hugely delayed release of the

console, which launched in Australia on May 17, 2002 - a full six months after the US - meant that the magazine had to limp through a very long release drought, and then cover a console that there was little local interest in. Issue 21 of Nintendo Gamer - which followed N64 Gamer's 41 issue run, and released in July 2003 - was the final issue.  
"The mag closing was one of the hardest moments of my life", Farrelly says. "By our third year at the helm, my art-director Alen Trivuncevik and I - the only two full-timers on it - had it down to a fine art, and our writers were at the

top of their game. The GameCube's sales in Australia weren't great though, and ad sales on the mag were hard to maintain because we had a revolving door of ad sales people coming through." But Farrelly is happy with where the magazine ended, at least. "That last issue we got out was baller. The fact I was given a farewell issue to produce was bittersweet in that it was the end, but also because I got to say goodbye in its pages in my own way. That was the best issue of the magazine we ever did."  
**LOOKING BACK>>**  
Bring up N64 Gamer in a room of 30-something Australian game enthusiasts and someone will remember it fondly - and the same is true of its editors. "The working environment at Next was pretty

**A Brief Rebirth**  
*The brand name Nintendo Gamer made a very brief comeback in 2007 when Next attempted to re-launch the magazine as a bi-monthly publication. The Wii and the DS were huge successes, so it seemed like an appropriate time for the magazine to return. Unfortunately, it didn't last long - four issues were released before the magazine disappeared.*







# SWITCH DOWN UNDER

*James O'Connor explores the Australian developers embracing Nintendo's new console.*

**I**n the year and change since the Switch released, we've heard the same indie success story repeatedly. Games like *Oceanhorn*, *Celeste*, *Wonder Boy: The Dragon's Trap*, and other indie titles sold better on Switch than they did anywhere else. *Super Meat Boy* came close to matching its Xbox 360 launch sales when it launched on Switch, a full seven years later – and that's a game that, surely, everyone already owns. The same thing happened with *Shovel Knight*. *SteamWorld Dig 2* on Switch outsold the Steam version at a rate

of ten to one – it was so successful that the first game was also ported to Switch.

It's a good time to put a high-quality indie game on the Switch, and Australia, having moved well past the collapse of big studios that happened some years back, is full of talented indie teams. Many of them have set their sights on the Switch, having seen how well games are doing on the eShop, and have found considerable success. We reached out to five of them to ask about the experience of releasing a digital indie game for the Switch.

# Putty Pals

Harmonious Games



If you've been to PAX AUS, or any other Australian convention with an indie games section, you might notice that there's an abundance of co-op and competitive couch multiplayer games being developed in Australia. These are games that exhibit well, but can struggle at retail. Putty Pals is a two-player cooperative title, a simple, enjoyable platformer focused on cooperation and family-friendly fun, which released on Steam in February 2017. "When we shipped on Steam", creative director and studio co-founder Laura Voss says, "we knew it wasn't the right platform for Putty Pals. We didn't get great sales in our first week". The moment Nintendo's system had been unveiled, though, the team at Harmonious Games saw - fittingly - how the system and their game could harmonise. Here was a console that would allow for easy two-player gaming, at home and on the go - one analog stick and four face buttons were all Putty Pals needed, so the Joy Con was a perfect fit. Voss recalls turning to her studio director and saying "Holy shit, it's like they made that console for Putty Pals!"

When the game launched on Switch in October last year, it took "a day or two" for it to match the Steam's total sales from an eight-month period. "This proved to us that we'd hit the right target audience and the Switch at the right time", Voss says. The team worked hard during GDC 2017 to make sure that they could get their hands on a dev kit, and Putty Pals



became the first game developed in Victoria to hit the Switch. Since the game's launch, Nintendo has quietly supported the game with social media posts and videos on their YouTube page. "Nintendo Australia has been quite helpful and posted an article about us and Putty Pals on their website last year", Voss recalls. "Putty Pals continually pops up on various Nintendo YouTube channels and sites and it definitely helps." Getting the game on the system was a straightforward process, too, despite the machine being much

less powerful than its competitors.

While Voss thinks that other indies should consider whether or not the Switch is "the right platform" for their games before diving into development, she acknowledges that the console's hot streak bodes well for developers. "At the end of the day, the Switch is the latest console and it has sold exceptionally well. Meanwhile PS4 and Xbox are likely nearing the end of their cycles and Steam is convoluted with games now, so if you have a chance to be on the Switch I'd try and take it."

*Putty Pals is all about wholesome cooperation, making it perfect for a less in-your-face gaming experience.*



You can't see it in these images, but this might just be the most 'Aussie' game you play on the Switch.

## Golf Story

Sidebar Games

Part of the initial allure of Golf Story – a golfing RPG reminiscent of the legitimately excellent Game Boy Color Mario Golf game – was its unexpected Australianness. Here was a game where characters spouted ocker slang across a map that, you eventually came to discover, was shaped like Australia. There's even a scene early on where you're given the option to heat up a meat pie in the microwave, like every (non-vegetarian) Australian kid did the first time they were made to prepare their own lunch.

This became a talking point among journalists and media. "Who are these folks", we asked one another, "and where did they come from?" There's an aura of mystery to Sidebar Games – the developer's names are not even listed in the game's credits – but (in my experience) the team is good at responding to emails. According to Andrew, the guy on the other end of their email address, they "keep to ourselves for the most part", and "don't know much about the Brisbane development scene" (so we know where they're based, at least).

Golf Story has been a global success. Talking to the Wall Street Journal in April, new Nintendo president Shuntaro Furukawa **casually** mentioned Golf Story as a recent favourite of his, which is **extremely good press for the team**. "We weren't expecting a golf game to be super popular, but it ended up doing quite well", Andrew admits. "We always made sure to emphasise the story and adventure aspects of the game the most, and I think they looked appealing enough for people to subject themselves to golf to see what it was all about." All the Australianisms in the game's

dialog don't seem to have hurt them abroad. "I wasn't sure how much I could get away with and tried to limit using phrases people wouldn't understand. I thought there were just a few things here and there, but the game was accused of being Australian immediately. It actually went over well, and I've seen a lot of people using some of the Australian catchphrases – albeit incorrectly most of the time."

The game was originally in development for the Wii U, but was transferred to the Switch soon after the console was revealed and a dev kit was acquired. "We went with the classic strategy of sending unsolicited tweets to Nintendo staff on Twitter", Andrew says. "This was encouraged by Nintendo at the time. We said something along the lines of "Hey, I've got a sick idea for a game. You interested?" Their response was "Please tell us more," so we explained some general features (and how we wanted to use HD rumble), which secured the dev kit." This anecdote is very much in keeping with the irreverent spirit of the game itself.

Golf Story, I'm told, will stay exclusive to Switch for now, so that the team can focus on making their next game rather than focusing all their energy into a port. True to form, Andrew is cryptic about what's **coming next**: "It's going to be a bit different so we'll see what happens."



# Framed Collection

Loveshack Entertainment

Framed released for mobile devices in late 2014, and its sequel arrived in mid-2017. Both games task players with switching around comic-style panels on the screen to advance the action, making sure that the characters they're following make it to the final panel on the screen safely. The games have been lauded, with famed designer Hideo Kojima nominating the original Framed as his personal favourite game of 2014.

Framed 1 & 2 came to PC and Switch this year, leaving mobile behind for the first time and fulfilling a request the team at Loveshack Entertainment had been receiving since well before the Switch was first revealed. "People kept asking for the game on Steam and other platforms", says Ollie Brown, a designer and the lead artist on the collection. "We figured that now that the game was a bit more fleshed out and had a bigger, overall experience it may be suited for more platforms."

Framed Collection is currently a console exclusive to the Switch, which was a natural choice for a game designed around touch screens. "After we got our hands on the device itself we realised just how versatile it was and how well it fitted our games style, mechanics and overall theme", Brown says. "Framed is literally a game about switching panels around to change the outcome of a story - the Nintendo Switch was a perfect fit." Although button controls are allowed, using a finger to drag panels around is a much more natural way to play. Switch sales for Framed Collection have been "trending similarly to the iOS release", and outperforming the PC version. "Both versions have been critically well received", Brown says. "But there is a notable mobile-

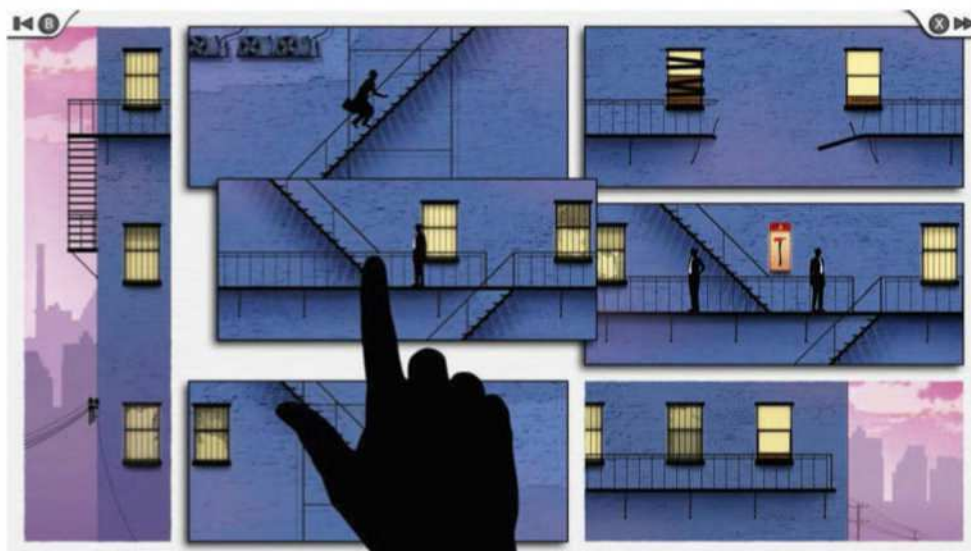
to-PC bias, whereas Switch feels much more 'collection' friendly."

It has been said that the Switch is easier to develop for than most consoles have been historically, and Brown says that the port process went smoothly. "Framed uses a custom OpenGL-based C++ engine, and the Switch supports OpenGL 4.5 and OpenGL ES, so porting the game was fairly straightforward", he explains. The most difficult part of development was getting the two games together for a single collection. "We needed a lot more UI love than we had on mobile. Our lead Switch developer, Sam Izzo from Horse Drawn Games, took the extra time to make sure that the game was robust and stayed true to the feel of the originals." The game went through a publisher (Surprise Attack Games), so Brown and the rest of the team didn't have much direct contact with Nintendo, but he says that it was generally

helpful, albeit slightly hands-off during development. "All of its feedback was well laid out, and we always had a general idea of where the game was in Nintendo's processing systems."

With Framed Collection making its way onto Switches worldwide, Brown believes the team is likely to work on more games for the system in the future. Nintendo requires that teams become licensed Nintendo developers through the Nintendo Developer Portal, which means that there's a certain level of prestige associated with being published on their systems still. "The eStore has a barrier to entry, and while this makes it a bit harder to pass the entry standards, it also keeps the caliber of games fairly good", he says. "If Nintendo continues to refine its store curation processes and the store's features it will continue to be a platform that developers want to be on."

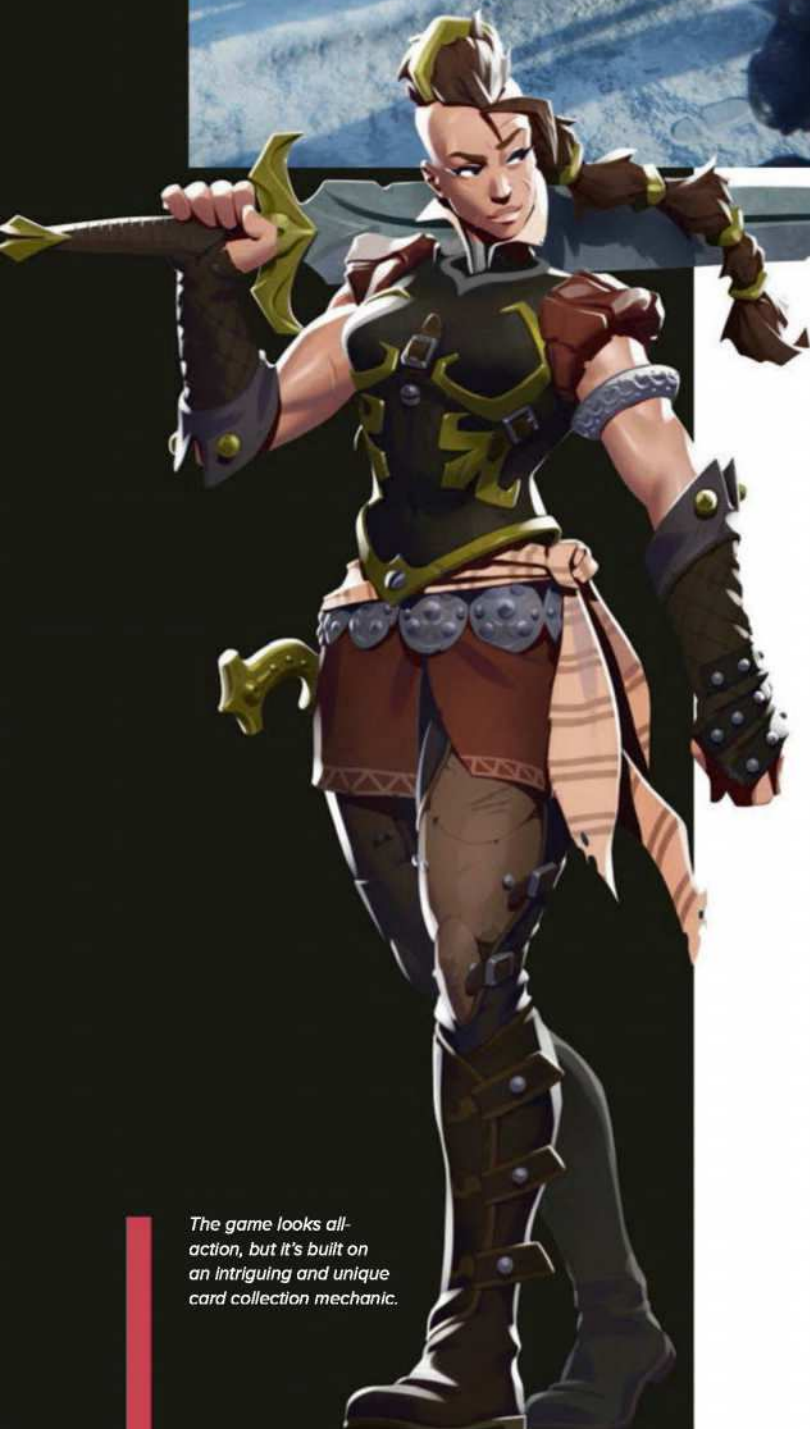
*Framed had its first incarnation on mobile, but Switch may be an even better fit!*





# Hand Of Fate 2

Defiant Development



The game looks all-action, but it's built on an intriguing and unique card collection mechanic.

Hand of Fate 2 is the only game in this feature that isn't a console exclusive to the Switch – in fact, the Switch release this past July came about eight months after the game's initial release on PC, PS4 and Xbox One. The idea of porting the game, a sort-of single player, card-based RPG with strong combat elements (it's extremely good, by the way), had been ticking over in Defiant Development's collective heads for some time by then. "Pretty much the second the Switch came out we were keen", says comms manager Lee May. "It felt like a perfect fit for Hand of Fate 2. Fortunately, Nintendo and Unity have made the whole process pretty straightforward." Fans were requesting a Switch port even before the game's initial release.

The port was handled in-house at Defiant by a small team, consisting of "a graphics programmer, an animator and a 3D artist, with a few others coming in and out as the project required". Despite the game being quite visually intensive in places, it sounds like porting across wasn't too complicated a process. "Most of the hard work was in optimising older in-game assets", May says. "We've since been able to bring those optimisations across to other platforms, so every version of Hand of Fate 2 has benefited from the Switch port." Over a year past its initial release, there's still some question of just how much the Switch is capable of, and what sort of games will fit onto it. While the process "wasn't without its challenges", the development team

found that they were able to get the game onto the system in a good state. "We're constantly impressed with how much the Switch can actually do, and so we pushed as much as possible on the graphics front", May says. "We're pretty confident that, at least at the time of writing, we've got the best-looking Unity game on the console."

Hand of Fate 2 is not the sort of game we would have likely seen on the Wii U – games of this size and quality often didn't justify ports, and although Nintendo made a deal with Unity back in 2012, few games made their way to their doomed console. But the Switch is a very different system, and May is impressed at how well Nintendo has courted significant indie developers. "It's made a big push to be open and accessible to indies, and it's a massive change from the previous Nintendo. It's amazing how quickly it's caught up with all the other platforms, and obviously Switch is a great form factor for a lot of indie games - there's a lot of games I'd rather play on Switch than PC."

At the time of writing it's too early to know how well the game will sell on Switch, but May says that the team is not worried about the indie bubble bursting on the system just yet, although an influx of games might mean a few get buried. "There's still going to be plenty of indie games every month doing really well. What's going to increase is the number of games that fall below the radar and don't do well, though. No platform is ever a golden ticket for long!"

# Hollow Knight

Team Cherry Games

Hollow Knight is one of the poster-games for the indie movement on Switch. Originally announced for the Wii U back in 2014 during the game's Kickstarter campaign, Hollow Knight would eventually make its way to the Switch in June this year. During Nintendo's opening E3 presentation, Reggie himself revealed that the game was now available to buy and play; within two weeks, the game would sell 250,000 copies. The Adelaide-developed game has been lauded as one of the best indie games of the last few years.

Put simply, it rules.

Ari Gibson and William Pellen, the co-directors and founders of Team Cherry, have been working on Hollow Knight for what seems like forever. When I caught up with them they were deep into development on the game's third and final major free DLC, Gods and Glory, and will soon be moving on to implementing a new playable character (Hornet, who appears as a boss in the original campaign). Nintendo approached them, they tell me, about launching during E3 – usually a very risky move, but it can pay off if your game is a major part of a presentation like theirs was. “They pitched the idea to us well before E3”, Pellen says. “We were talking to them about when the release would work, and they had this idea.”

“And it worked out perfectly”, Gibson adds, “because our development timeline lined up exactly with when they wanted to release”.

Nintendo first reached out to Team Cherry shortly after its Kickstarter went live. “Nintendo approached us”, Gibson recalls, “and said ‘this would be a really good fit for our platform. We'd like you to consider it.’ We were thrilled.” A Wii U version was promised in a stretch goal that was comfortably met, but once the Switch was revealed it made sense to move the game to Nintendo's new system. “It was just a very natural timing thing”, Gibson says. “By the time we were ready, the Nintendo fanbase had moved over to the Switch. When we

announced it on the Kickstarter, it was unanimously enthusiastic.”

The Switch port was a joint effort between Team Cherry – which has still been developing new content pretty consistently since the game launched on Steam in February 2017 – and Sharkjump, a small Adelaide developer that mostly focuses on mobile games. “Those guys helped us out a lot”, Gibson says. “They did a lot of the integration features and helped us to optimise the whole build.” It's an excellent port that runs well and looks beautiful on the portable screen. Although it's taken over a year for the Switch version to release, the initial work to get a version of the game running didn't take long at all – according to Pellen, it was “a matter of days” from getting the dev kit to getting the game running on the system. “We didn't have to make any compromises”, Gibson assures me. “We just had to rethink a few of the things we did. One of the best things about doing optimisation for consoles is that we brought it all back to the PC version as well. Now the PC version runs better at lower settings.”

It'll be a while before Team Cherry gets the chance to work on its next game, with Hollow Knight still receiving updates and tweaks from a very small team. With this Switch release, a new audience is discovering the game, and the team has seen an influx of fan art and activity on its Reddit and Discord channels.

Porting the game to Switch was a learning experience too – the pair admit that they made the game in “a few silly ways” due to a lack of development experience, and continuing to work on Hollow Knight has taught them good development practices. “Everything we've learned now we can bring forward into future games”, Pellen says. “Building the game so it'll run on consoles has been of huge benefit to us.”

Hollow Knight walked a long road to arrive on Switch, but the wait seems to have been worth it for Team Cherry and its growing number of fans. ☞



## HOLLOW FIGHT

*In the interest of shits-and-giggles, that most Australian of concepts, I asked the guys at Team Cherry how hard they were working at getting Hollow Knight into Smash Bros. Here's William Pellen's response: "We'll send a move set to Sakurai (laughs). I mean, if Nintendo would do us an amiibo, that's our price. We'll put him in anything. We'd put him in Mario Party."*



#### **MORE AUSSIE GAMES ON SWITCH**

- *Mr Shifty*
- *Party Golf*
- *Death Squared*
- *Super One More Jump*
- *Yonder: The Cloud Catcher Chronicles*
- *Crawl*
- *Puzzle Puppies*
- *The Adventure Pals*
- *Rogue Singularity*
- *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*

*There are also several games that local developers have confirmed to me are on the horizon - including some much asked for mobile and PC ports, and a few titles from big local teams that are entirely new - but as they're yet to be formally announced at the time of writing, we've decided not to blow up their spot here.*

10

## GAME SOUNDTRACKS

Koji Kondo  
Absolutely  
Nailed

**Angelo Valdivia** looks back at the famed composer's gaming discography.

**W**e recognise many retro games for their primitive visuals and simple controls, but nothing tugs on our nostalgic hearts quite like music. Nintendo dominated many childhoods during the 80s and 90s (full disclosure: I was a SEGA kid up until the N64), and over those decades sound technology evolved alongside the graphical capabilities of the systems. While Miyamoto is famous for bringing iconic characters like Mario, Yoshi and Link into the world, less of a big deal is made about Koji Kondo, whose iconic tracks and samples can pull us right back to those earlier years.

Kondo started out like most musicians, learning an instrument (in his case the keyboard) as a young child. During his tertiary studies in the early 80s, he became interested in the developments of sound technologies thanks to synthesisers and computers. He didn't have a strong background in classical music: he was more interested in jazz, fusion and electronic music. When a job opened at Nintendo in 1984, he jumped at the opportunity.

Kondo entered the games industry soon after the market crash of the same decade, just as things were picking up again. Skyrocketing advancements in home computing made this the perfect time for a talented young composer with something to prove to come along and make their mark.

Since then, he has been the driving force behind Nintendo's sound division for over 30 years, and composed music for over 30 games in that time. Here's our top ten Kondo soundtracks.

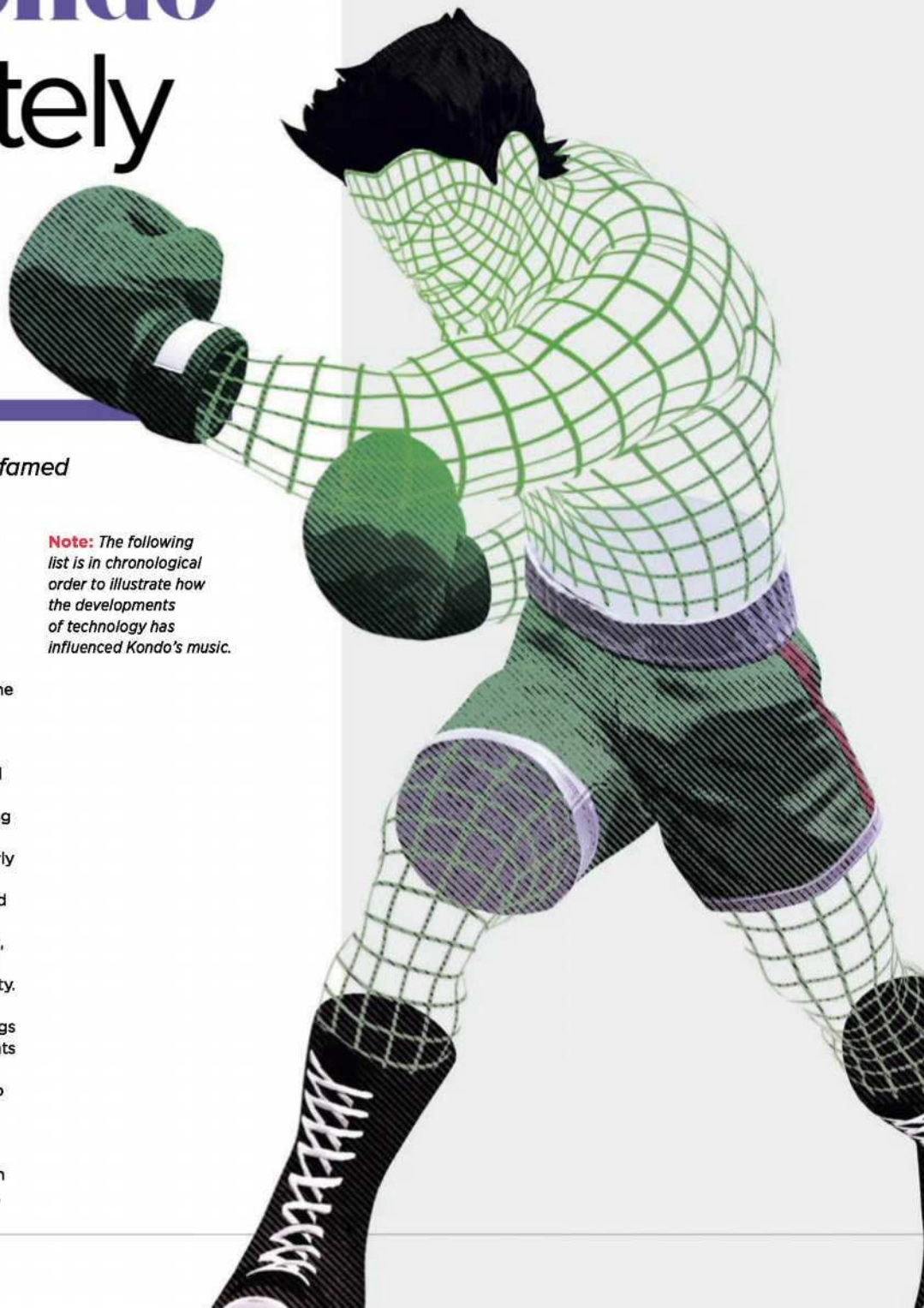
**Note:** The following list is in chronological order to illustrate how the developments of technology has influenced Kondo's music.

## Punch Out!!

1983, Arcade

**🎵** Koji Kondo's first official project for Nintendo was for the now-iconic boxing game Punch-Out!! Though there isn't much complexity to the music due to hardware restrictions, there are still some pretty memorable tunes.

Upon starting, players hear a fanfare of chimes reminiscent of Rocky's Gonna Fly Now, leading into a simple march. As the fight begins, it's hard to not feel just a little anxious when that bass line kicks in to get the heart pumping. While it might not be Kondo's best work, it's certainly memorable for being an iconic part of Nintendo's history.







## Soccer

1985, NES

🎵 It might seem like I'm taking the piss, but hear me out. Soccer is a pretty generic take (as most sports games were at the time) on the world game, but the music is probably one of the most redeeming qualities of the

experience. Clocking in at a whopping two minutes the soundtrack is super catchy and not too annoying to have to listen to for multiple rounds against the CPU or a buddy. Give it a listen and tell me I'm wrong - I dare you.

## Super Mario World

1990, SNES

🎵 The NES was so 1980s: now we're playing with power. The Super Nintendo didn't just have fancy graphics and a better processor - this bad boy featured the S-SMP sound chip, powered by Sony's SPC700 processor. What makes this significant is that it continued to be manufactured by Sony for the SNES despite Nintendo's backstabbing over their ill-fated, joint PlayStation project.

Mario's SNES launch title was Kondo's first soundtrack for a 16-bit game. His music could finally feature diverse instrumental timbres and dynamics (volume changes), delivering rich characteristics for each stage. This was also the debut of Yoshi's theme, featuring more jazz/swing influence, which is most obvious in the overworld tunes.

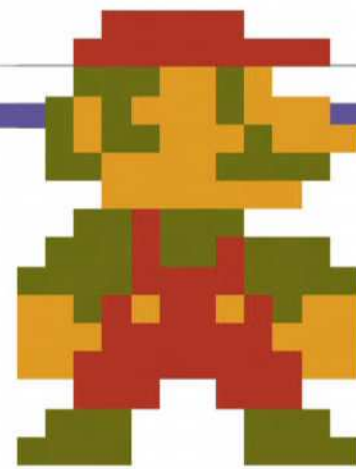


## Super Mario World 2: Yoshi's Island

1995, SNES

🎵 Towards the end of the SNES' lifecycle and the 16-bit era as a whole, Kondo still brought his A-game to Yoshi's first solo adventure. Alongside Miyamoto's child-like, crayon-painting visual style was Kondo's equally playful

music capturing that same innocent tone, albeit with some tribal beats. While other SNES games also featured incredible soundtracks, it's clear Kondo was just warming up, and with each new generation he was ready to keep raising the bar.



## Super Mario Bros.

1985, NES

🎵 You might be more familiar with this one: Super Mario Bros. has some of the most iconic game melodies ever written. If you were to whistle the theme in public, or even have, say the 1UP chime as a message tone on your phone (like I do), it's almost guaranteed to be recognised by someone nearby, unless they're super old or, like, a baby (and even then, maybe).

What makes this soundtrack so special and timeless is how wonderfully it captures the essence of Mario's adventure. When the music kicks in at the start of World 1-1 you know you're in for a fun time. The tune we all know and love didn't come easily; Kondo had to go back and forth with the developers to make sure the music fit just right with how players jumped and ran through the Mushroom Kingdom.

Then there's the subterranean music, which features one of the most memorable basslines of all time. Think of the underwater waltz, which is so whimsical despite being concerned with Mario's miraculous ability to hold his breath for so long. Oh and King Koopa's castle! And then there's...

We could go on.



## Super Mario 64

1996, N64

🎵 For all its superb graphical capabilities, the Nintendo 64 was under-powered for sound when compared to the PlayStation, which could pump legit CD audio. But that didn't stop Kondo from creating some of his most innovative soundtracks ever.

Super Mario 64 starts out strong with Mario's face popping out to give a hearty "It's-a me, Mario! Hello!", but it's the funky Bob-omb Battlefield music that really kicks the game into high gear. From there we get consistent hits like Cool Cool Mountain, Metal Mario's music, the Slide Theme and Dire Dire Docks. But, arguably, the real showpiece for Kondo's compositional talents on the N64 was...

# The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time

1998, N64

Remember the moment you first placed Ocarina of Time into your system, switched it on, and saw Link riding Epona over Hyrule's hills, accompanied by soft piano chords and a haunting ocarina melody? That incredible opening is one of the most iconic tile screens in video games history, and it only got better from there.

Kondo is one of gaming's masters of the concept of leitmotif, which is creating music specific to a character, setting or mood. Take a



moment to recall The Lost Woods, Kakariko Village, Zelda's Lullaby, or even the damn owl's theme. Music also became a significant gameplay mechanic with Link's ocarinas, pulling us further into the musical experience. We still catch ourselves humming the Song of Storms sometimes.



# Super Mario Sunshine

2002, GameCube

There's a pattern here: new console generation, new hardware, a step up in music quality. When Mario and Peach's (and Toadsworth's?) holiday to Isle Delfino takes a weird turn, Kondo plays along and gives us an all new set of sounds to suit the tropical locales.

Okay, alright, Sunshine might not be everyone's favourite Mario game (get outta here, FLUDD) but the game is still chock-full of earworms. Standouts include the music of Pianta Square and the a cappella Mario theme. Who'd have thought a four-part scat version of Mario's tune could be so damn good? I guess old mate Koji dic.



# The Legend of Zelda: Wind Waker

2003, GameCube

Speaking of islands, Wind Waker has some of the most appropriate location music of the era. Of course, the title screen music gets props for its celtic-influenced, flute and fiddle jig. But despite the islandic, sea-faring adventure that's completely different to the typical highlands and forest trek that we're

used to, Wind Waker's soundtrack still wonderfully captures the charm and life that remains at the heart of the series.

What makes many of the tunes in this soundtrack work so well is the diverse range of instruments and styles used, including blues, jazz and dramatic orchestral.



# Super Mario Galaxy

2007, Wii

Super Mario Galaxy, apart from being a fantastic reimagining of Mario's platformer mechanics from the main series, is also the crowning moment when Koji Kondo masterfully blends sweeping orchestrations with electronic sounds. It's a mash-up of all kinds of musical styles spanning the plethora of galaxies Mario jumps between. The soundtrack is wonderfully performed by a live symphony orchestra, of which many orchestral arrangements have been transcribed and performed around the world. A few of the many gems to note here: the Comet Observatory waltz, Toy Time Galaxy's remix of Mario's original theme, and of course the Overture.

But one track is easily the piece de resistance: Gusty Garden Galaxy. Listening to this piece is one of the happiest and most transcendental orchestrations written and performed in a video game. It encapsulates the entire experience of Super Mario Galaxy in its two-and-a-half minute duration. Super Mario Galaxy is an absolute Kondo masterpiece. ♪

## 5

## Times Nintendo Used the Law and it was *Super Effective*

*Sometimes leaving luck to heaven just isn't in the cards, writes **Angelo Valdivia**.*

**L**ike most tech companies, Nintendo isn't unfamiliar with lawsuits, DMCA threats, or even standing before US Congress. The once-family run business has gone from being a manufacturer of cards highly favoured by the Japanese mafia, to adapting to the modern toy business, to reviving the video game industry. Across that 130 year history, Nintendo has had its share of trips to the courtroom.

### KONG VS KONG

When Nintendo first moved into the US arcade market, it flopped. Radarscope was its first big attempt at creating an arcade game that would strike big outside of Japan. When the game failed to move units and was bottle-necking Nintendo's warehouse with cabinets, it was up to the newly-employed, bushy-tailed Shigeru Miyamoto to create a game that would pick up the slack.

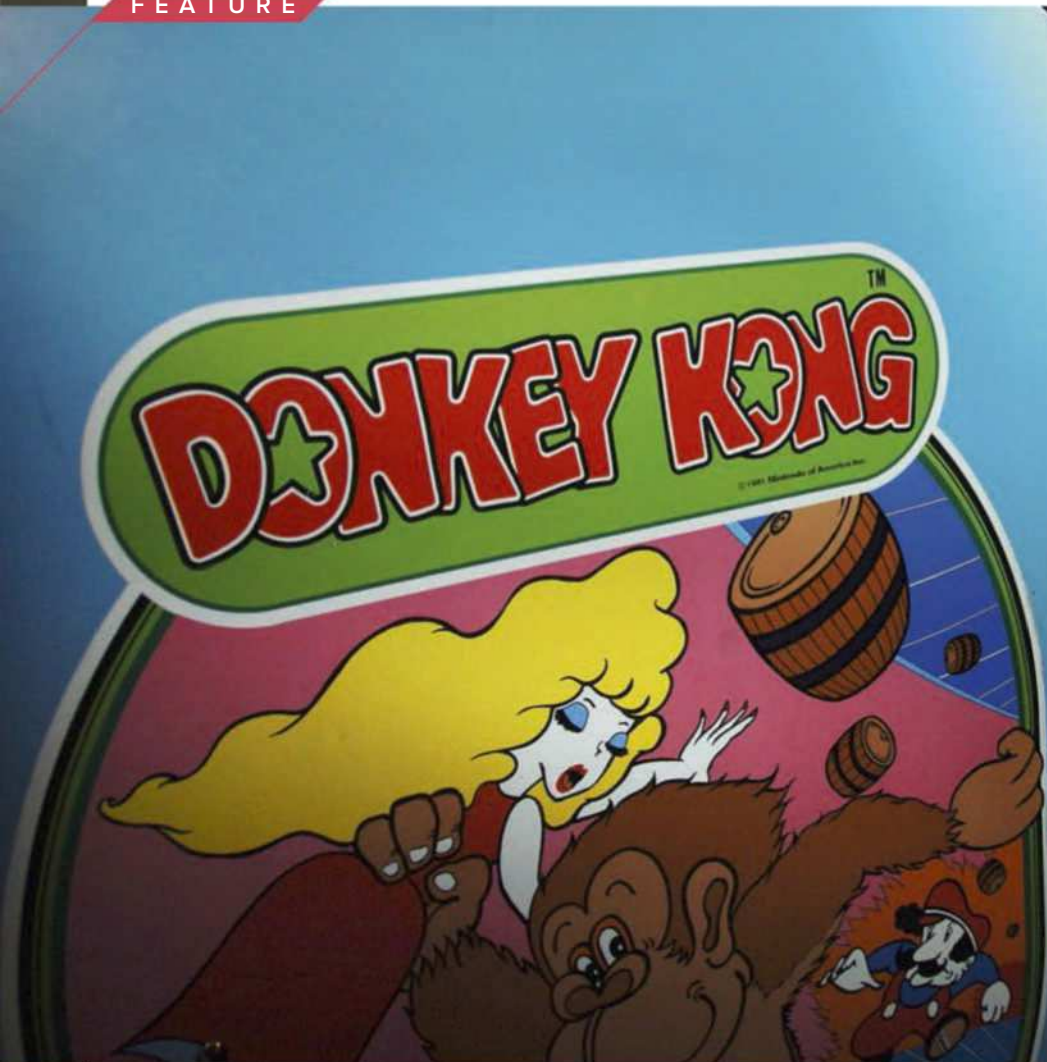
Donkey Kong was retro-fitted into those old Radarscope cabinets, and it became an absolute phenomenon which sent many youngsters into a frenzy of quarter-popping.

But it also caught the attention of Universal Pictures, who years earlier had released an adaptation of King Kong. They sued Nintendo for infringing on their IP - after all, Donkey Kong was a giant ape

who climbed a building clutching a damsel in distress. It seemed like an easy win for such a huge Hollywood studio.

Then-President of Nintendo of America, Minoru Arakawa, enlisted the help of a lawyer named Howard Lincoln. Lincoln was tenacious with his work, and he argued there were stark differences between this new game and the iconic films. Bringing Miyamoto in to explain his reasoning for the game, it became apparent Donkey Kong was initially based on Popeye, not King Kong. Furthermore, the ridiculous name Donkey Kong made some sense when Miyamoto gave his rationale: "donkey" or mule is the direct English-Japanese translation for something stubborn; and kong is a general term used for referring to apes.

Lincoln wasn't done there. He discovered that upon release of Universal's 1976 King Kong, the film company was dealing with a lawsuit from Paramount over the rights to the production. Universal won the case by arguing the IP of King Kong is out of copyright and in the public domain, therefore allowing them to release their movie. Lincoln discovered this in the court notes, argued this same point, and helped seal the deal.



*Nintendo proved it was the true King of Kong...*

The court sided with Nintendo, ordering Universal to pay \$2M to Nintendo in damages. This sent shockwaves throughout the entertainment industry: Nintendo, a comparatively small Japanese toy company, had climbed above Universal and swatted them down.

#### TENGEN VS IONES

When Nintendo revived the video game industry after its crash in the early 80s, it practically owned the home gaming market. Before other 8-bit systems were able to provide an alternative platform for game distribution, Nintendo made the rules about how many games each company could release per year (five) and increased distribution costs for developers by requiring a large order of cartridges (minimum 10,000). They enforced this on companies via a legal agreement making them develop mostly exclusively for the NES, and thanks to a lock-out chip called IONES which restricted unlicensed software from working with the system.

Atari, under their home gaming subsidiary brand Tengen, didn't like this. Some employees of Tengen illegally obtained patents of the NES from the US patent office and replicated the code that forces the IONES chip to authorise software. This meant Atari could develop however many games they wanted

without having to enter a license with Nintendo, and distribute directly to retailers on their own.

Nintendo didn't stand for that. It bided its time, built up multiple infringement cases against Atari, and even threatened retailers with restraining products if they continued to sell unlicensed games. This wasn't an option for retailers given the lucrative business the NES had become, so Atari fought back, declaring Nintendo was holding a monopoly over the market.

Many lawyers, court hearings and dollars later, the courts decided in Nintendo's favour due to Tengen's illegal copying of the IONES code. Atari and Nintendo would continue to beat their chests at each other over the coming decades.

#### TETRIS

Following on from their previous feud, Nintendo and Atari also fought over the distribution of Tetris outside of its native Russia. The creator of the game, Alexey Pajitnov, had his game shared among some mathematician colleagues, and from there Tetris' popularity began. Given the political climate of the USSR at the time, any artistic work released outside its borders was notoriously difficult to negotiate with the Soviets given the collective ownership of communism.

That didn't stop many games

companies from trying, though. Pajitnov was approached by London-based developer Andromeda, despite him not legally having the authority to distribute Tetris' rights. Before an agreement was made, Andromeda sold their rights off to other companies which immediately began producing and distributing the game for PCs, arcades, and home consoles. Thus began a daisy-chain of unofficial (and illegal) versions of the game.

Nintendo, meanwhile, noticed no one touted the rights to a handheld version of the game, and saw an opportunity. They made contact with the Soviet government (via a third-party called Elorg) to broker a license to distribute Tetris for Game Boy. This meant Nintendo was legally granted distribution rights to home console and handheld versions.

Tengen also developed its own versions of Tetris (for arcade and home console, the latter featuring two-player) but did not secure the official rights from the Soviet government. More legal back-and-forths with Nintendo ensued, and it became apparent that Atari didn't have a legal leg to stand on. Nintendo secured the worldwide hit synonymous with the Game Boy.

#### NINTENDO'S NIGHT TRAP

Only 90s kids will remember the

#### Together at last

*Though Universal lost the lawsuit to Nintendo over Donkey Kong, time does seem to heal all wounds. The two companies partnered together back in 2015 to begin construction in Japan on a theme park based on Nintendo IPs called Super Nintendo World. The park plans to be open in time for Tokyo's 2020 Summer Olympics.*



We happy [CENSORED] Since the ESRB began, other ratings boards have been created to regulate games classifications in their own regions, such as Japan's CERO, Europe's PEGI and Australia's OFLC, now known as the Australian Classification Board (ACB). And while Australia might still refuse classification of some games (the system's rubric is very specific and freely available online), who can argue that such a system isn't necessary to keep kids from buying gratuitous or violent stuff?

days when Sega and Nintendo would sling mud into each other's eyes over which of their systems were better. Back then, video games didn't have a regulatory body to classify which games were suitable for those kids or not. This became a huge problem, and Nintendo and Sega had to answer to the US congress.

In 1993, the two gaming heavyweights had to endure scathing criticism over the content of some violent games, most notably Mortal Kombat and Night Trap. Both were available unrestricted to all ages on the Mega Drive, but only the former was available on the SNES (blood was replaced with "sweat"). Members of the senate argued the games featured gratuitous violence and smut, and were therefore not suitable for children, and should not be considered acceptable for the toy market. Sega defended itself by claiming their systems don't cater exclusively to children, and that a significant portion of its audience were adults. Nintendo maintained that its systems were family-centric, and that it took measures to censor content where needed. Other experts were consulted to weigh in with their arguments and research of how impactful games are on impressionable children, but pretty

much everyone agreed these games shouldn't be in the hands of kids.

The following year, a new company was created within the US games industry to regulate and classify the content of games: the Electronic Software Ratings Board (ESRB). Originally Sega proposed a ratings system for games given its wider audience ages, but Nintendo was reluctant to work so closely with a competitor. Once an unbiased, independent company in the industry was introduced, Nintendo had to comply.

**DMCA 4 ALL**

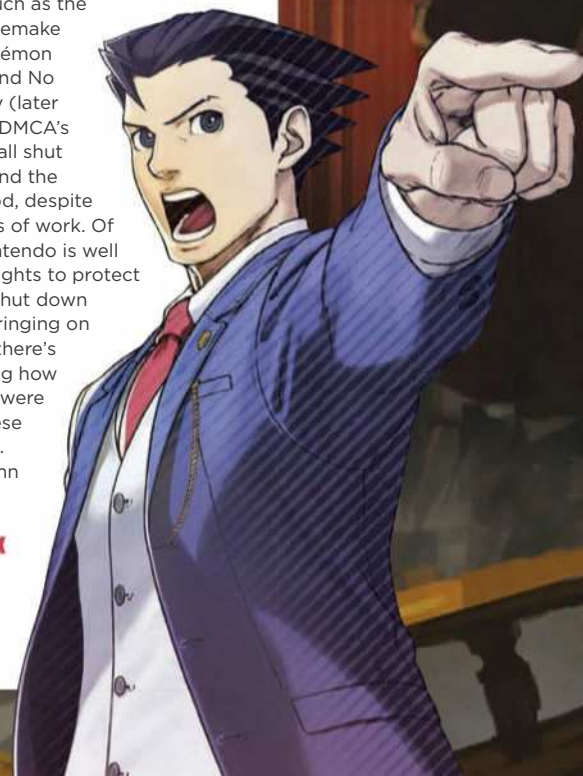
You don't rise to the top without learning how to protect yourself. By now, Nintendo was very aware of how to best protect its IPs from copyright infringement not only by industry competitors, but by fans themselves.

Nintendo is notorious for its heavy restrictions on fan-generated content, particularly YouTube videos. In early 2015 it began a 'Creators Program' in which video creators could operate under an agreement that any ad revenue generated through views would share a 40% cut with Nintendo. There's even a list on the Nintendo website specifically stating which games can be used for this content by creators. Many YouTube channels

either had their content flagged or ordered to transfer revenue to the company, forcing many creators to avoid using Nintendo games entirely.

Then there was the enormous wave of cease and desist orders directed at fan games in early 2016, with more than 500 of those being made through the host community Game Jolt. Many high-profile fan remakes such as the Metroid II remake AM2R, Pokémon Uranium, and No Mario's Sky (later revived as DMCA's Sky) were all shut down around the same period, despite many years of work. Of course, Nintendo is well within its rights to protect its IP and shut down anyone infringing on them, but there's no doubting how many fans were hurt by these takedowns.

And damn it, AM2R looked amazing. ☹



INTERVIEW

# Jason Imms

## Switches Things Up At The Machine QA

Interview by James O'Connor

When previous Hyper contributor Jason Imms told us that he was forming his own quality assurance company, we wanted to know why anyone would leave the lucrative world of freelance games writing. Now, as his company works to ensure quality across numerous titles - including several Switch titles - it makes more sense. We caught up with Jason to ask about the process involved in quality assurance, and what it's like to work with the console.

### **HYPER>>>: CAN YOU GIVE US A BRIEF RUNDOWN OF WHAT THE MACHINE QA DOES?**

Jason: The Machine QA is Australia's first games-focused quality assurance consultancy. Our aim is to help the Australian games industry make the best games they can by consulting on how to do QA well, helping studios build sustainable QA pipelines, setting up powerful issue tracking systems, and offering our services as contract testers.

### **HYPER>>>: HOW FAMILIAR DO YOU NEED TO BE WITH THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CONSOLE RUNNING THE GAME?**

Knowledge of console architecture helps by making the busywork side of testing much faster. You know how to get builds onto test kits, where to find crash reports, how to force the systems to behave in ways

that mimic real-world environments. But ultimately? It doesn't matter that much. To do the testing itself, it's more important that you act as a proxy for the player. What do they want? What do they expect? Does the game meet those standards? For that, being aware of how the games community thinks and how games communicate with players is more important.

### **HYPER>>>: HAVE THERE BEEN MANY REQUESTS COMING IN FOR QA ON SWITCH GAMES, INSIDE AUSTRALIA AND OUT?**

The Switch has been a very popular platform for Australian studios this year! For us, the biggest aspect to this is pre-lotcheck testing. Lotcheck is a series of tests Nintendo performs before a game can launch on its platform. We've been receiving a steady stream of requests from studios to help with this by running the lotcheck tests ourselves, reporting on the results, and offering guidance on which last-minute changes will reduce the chances of their games failing lotcheck. We've been working with both Australian and US studios, including Loveshack Entertainment on The FRAMED Collection, Asymmetric on West of Loathing, and others we're not quite ready to announce yet...

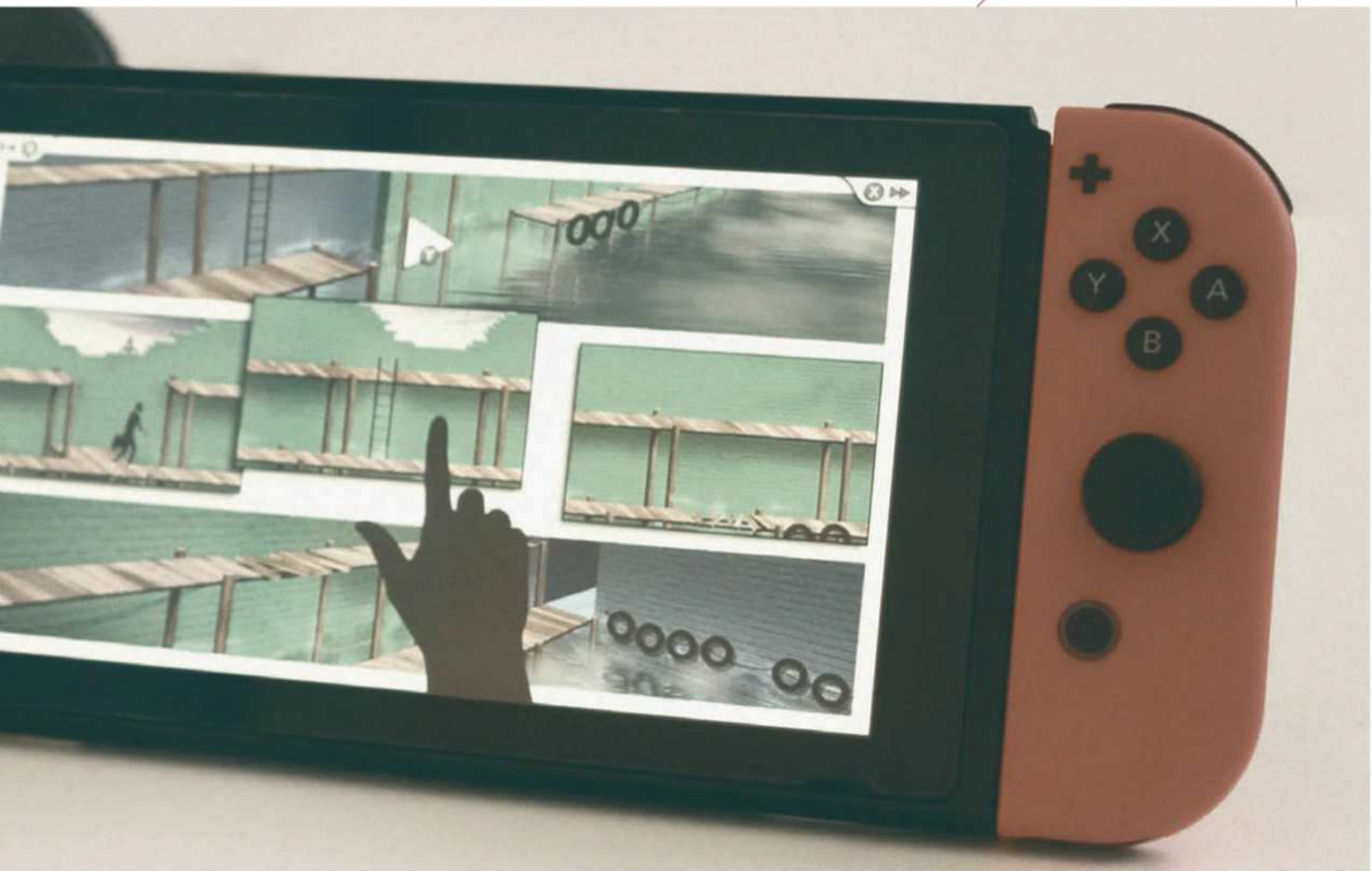
### **HYPER>>>: A LOT OF LOCAL TEAMS ARE BRINGING GAMES TO**

### **SWITCH - DO YOU THINK THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE MACHINE THAT APPEALS TO AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPERS?**

The Switch is an incredibly appealing platform for a bunch of reasons, but I think the biggest is the fact that it's new. The storefront has been light on content since launch, with things only really starting to pick up now. Early developers saw HUGE increases in sales over other platforms, in some cases even over all other sales combined. Obviously, this diminishes with every new game that hits the store. Nintendo is going to have to do considerable work to how that storefront operates soon to make sure it remains a viable place for the developers it supports.

### **HYPER>>>: FRAMED AND WEST OF LOATHING BOTH LOOK 'SIMPLE' FROM THE OUTSIDE. WHAT SORT OF BUGS AND ISSUES TEND TO POP UP IN GAMES LIKE THESE, THAT ARE AVAILABLE ALREADY ELSEWHERE AND WHICH SEEM LESS COMPLICATED?**

“  
THE MACHINE QA IS AUSTRALIA'S FIRST GAMES-FOCUSED QUALITY ASSURANCE CONSULTANCY.”



The main thing about bringing even simple games over to the Switch has been the need to support multiple input types. On consoles you usually only need to support one type of controller scheme. On PC you must support mouse/keyboard AND controllers, but the framework for that has been in place for years. Developers are good at that now. On Switch though, many games need to simultaneously support traditional controller inputs AND touch inputs. Those two control schemes are very different, and require some considerable design work to make them work in concert. And that's not even including all the other inputs the Switch offers, like the IR camera, motion controls, or amiibo.

**HYPER>>>: DOES THE RELATIVE 'NEWNESS' OF THE SWITCH COMPLICATE THE DEVELOPMENT OR QA PROCESS IN ANY WAY? ARE THERE THINGS ABOUT THE MACHINE, AND HOW GAMES ON IT WORK, THAT THE INDUSTRY IS STILL COMING TO GRIPS WITH?**

Not really! It's been around for long enough now that developers seem to be getting a handle on it. The main issue is just process - Because the Switch is the first Nintendo platform that has truly been embraced by self-publishing studios, developers at those studios are learning for the first time about

the unique aspects of Nintendo development. This can slow things down a bit, but the Australian scene is friendly enough that there's usually someone that's been through it who can offer advice.

**HYPER>>>: THE SWITCH HAS A REPUTATION OF BEING 'EASY TO DEVELOP FOR'. IS THE QA PROCESS ANY DIFFERENT FOR A SWITCH GAME?**

Yes and no. QA is fundamentally an adaptive application of defined processes; good QA is platform agnostic. The way we test on Switch is very similar to the ways we test on other platforms, we just change-up the specifics. That said, we're constantly learning about how the Switch copes with certain common things games do. I can't speak specifics due to a combination of NDAs, but given the nature of the Switch's hardware, there are certain requirements games need to conform to that aren't a concern on other platforms.

**HYPER>>>: HAS THE MACHINE QA HAD, OR NEEDED, ANY SUPPORT FROM NINTENDO THEMSELVES?**

Only a little! The Nintendo Developer Portal is full of super informative documentation that helps us greatly. The only thing we've needed is help with getting access to the Switch side of the portal itself. That process is by

application, and to apply you need to have a game project to pitch. As a service provider rather than a developer, we're not making a game ourselves, so we don't meet that requirement. Thankfully Nintendo personnel have been looking after us, I think they see the value in having a service provider like us operating in this region.

**HYPER>>>: WHAT WOULD YOU TELL SWITCH DEVELOPERS TO LOOK OUT FOR, OR BE CAREFUL OF, DURING DEVELOPMENT?**

The main thing is to be purposeful about it. You want to release on the Switch because it'll net you a bunch more sales, but have you thought it through? Do you have anyone on staff with experience developing for the platform? There are some excellent contract Switch developers in Australia that you can find via your local community groups, the GDAA, or local IGDA chapters. I'd also be happy to connect people to contractors we've worked with! Make sure you've read up on and planned for Lotcheck. The process can be time consuming - very few projects make it through on their first submission, especially if they've not been through it before.

*(If you're a developer with quality assurance needs, Jason can be contacted at [jasonimms@themachine-qa.com](mailto:jasonimms@themachine-qa.com)).* ☞





# WHY THE SWITCH IS THE IDEAL HOME FOR JRPGS

*Time, scale, and complexity are the reasons Andy Corrigan wants to see more games like Xenoblade Chronicles on his favourite console.*

It's perfect for Switch." Admit it, you've said it. We've all said it, probably repeatedly. We're well past the Switch's first year and this phrase has become the default sentiment for almost every game announced for Nintendo's hybrid system, or the argument made in the increasingly-commonplace act of 'port begging'. But what does it really mean?

Any videogame that comes to a major platform should be a positive, right? Yet the fervour surrounding games that make the jump to Switch has proven especially fierce because of its inherent versatility. And while that versatility can be a huge selling point for any title, there is almost certainly one genre that can be considered perfect for it: the JRPG.

With huge worlds, an abundance of characters and complex, ever-escalating stories, JRPGs typically demand a huge time investment from their players. A longer game may ask for a hundred hours or more from you, while even those we consider 'short' can still take thirty or forty. With so many high-quality games releasing every month, the prospect of committing a hundred of your precious hours can be daunting, especially when much of that time can be spent in repetition, grinding through inconsequential battles or tackling side-quests to ensure you're properly tooled for the next big boss fight.

But repetition is always less of an issue when playing JRPGs on handhelds, which allow you to chip away at those elements in whatever time you have free. Whether you're on your morning commute, watching low-investment telly or just have ten minutes to spare, you can mindlessly keep momentum and character development ticking along during what otherwise would be dead time.

The Switch has this benefit too, but without many of the compromises you usually find with handheld RPGs. The 3DS is a terrific system with countless great JRPGs in its library, no doubt, but each makes trade-offs for the platform. Developers may resort to a classic, top-down viewpoint, use low-res textures or opt for pixel art over polygons - all of which are perfectly valid approaches to game design and often yield great results, but in this scenario are still approaches made with hardware limitations in mind.

While not the beefiest home console on the market, the Switch is enough of a step-up from its nearest handheld competitors to see those portable benefits applied to games with grander scopes - role-playing adventures with the kinds of vast 3D spaces, breathtaking vistas and drama-fuelled cinematics you'd expect to experience on your TV. If a developer opts for a retro visual style on Switch for an original game, as with the recently released *Octopath Traveller*, then they're more likely doing so out of stylistic vision than hardware constraint.

The Switch's flexibility as a hybrid console, then, makes it a best of both worlds solution for this genre. You can experience gorgeous, expansive worlds whether in front of your TV or not, and still tackle the grind during whatever

time you have away from it. This lets you save those big, melodramatic story beats and strategy-heavy boss fights - the genre rewards for investing so many hours - for when you have the time to sit in front of the big screen and soak it all in.

Conversely, for those occasions you find yourself stuck on a boss, only to have a lightning strike of tactical genius hit you at an inopportune moment, you don't have to wait until you get home to put it to the test. Your next break could also be your breakthrough.

The effect this flexibility has on the process of beating a lengthy JRPG cannot be understated. This alone is why I was able to smash through over a hundred hours of the divisive *Xenoblade Chronicles 2* in as little as a month, a game I merely enjoyed, and why more than a year after release I was still chipping away at *Persona 5* on PS4, a game of similar length I absolutely adore. It's why I've beaten both of Tokyo RPG Factory's Switch releases within a week or two of starting them, and why I'm yet to even consider better-received RPGs on other platforms.

Of course, it could be argued that other home systems have provided that off-screen experience to offer similar options, but they've so far been... inelegant. Nintendo's own Wii U gamepad let you free up your TV, sure, but you couldn't walk more than a few metres away from it. The PS4 has both Remote Play and Cross-Save with the moribund Vita in its locker, but the former needs a high-speed internet connection away from home (good luck with this, Australia) and the latter, for most games that offer it, asks that you buy the same game twice. Even then, transferring your save between two devices requires the internet, takes time, and I've had a few file corruptions in the process. It's a viable option, but it's undoubtedly faffy.

The Switch mitigates this by being the same device in both cases. When you pull the console from the dock, it's the exact game you were playing moments ago. There's no input delay caused by streaming across a network, no file transfers, no need to double-dip; you can access it at a second's notice, anywhere you take it. It just works.

And it's the way the Switch brings together and refines these conveniences seen or experimented with on other systems that makes it such an ideal bedfellow for JRPGs.

There aren't heaps available for it just yet (it's a genre that takes a little while to get going on new hardware, and they take a long time to develop after all), but with the variety already released - from AAA entries like *Xenoblade Chronicles 2* to smaller, more experimental efforts like *The Longest 5 Minutes* - the benefits have already been proven.

The Switch's adaptability allows a wider range of JRPGs to slot easily into your lifestyle, rather than forcing you to make time around them. Spending a hundred hours on one game is infinitely easier on Nintendo's system, and that's what gives it the potential to become the home for the genre over the next few years. ☺

# Press 'A' To Jump And Go From There

The best starting points for Nintendo's biggest series, according to **James O'Connor**.

If you've never jumped into a game series, it's hard to know where to start. Maybe Mario passed you by somehow; Fire Emblem, from the outside, looks like something you really need to know going in; Metroid is extremely intimidating. Nintendo has a reputation for being 'for everyone', but a lot of their games still assume a lot of knowledge from the player. Getting into a new series is easier if you have the right entry point - start with one of these games and you've got a good shot of finding out whether these series are for you or not.



## The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

(GameCube, Wii U)

Wind Waker is everything good about Zelda boiled right down and distilled into a friendlier package. While Ocarina of Time was a marvel for its time and can still wow today, Wind Waker is a Zelda for everyone, a game that delights where others might intimidate, one that makes no attempt to make Zelda 'gritty', instead focusing on the joy of being a child and exploring the world. Zelda has always been a series about finding out what's around the corner, or over the horizon, or even in the next room, and knowing that there's a good chance it'll be something exciting. Stretching that exploration out over an ocean of undulating waves, full of hidden treasures and enemies, specked with islands begging to be explored, gave us the most joyously childlike Zelda experience in the series. Play it before the staggering Breath of the Wild and you'll go into that one knowing what makes Zelda so special.

**Series best:** *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*

## Kirby Super Star

(SNES, DS, Wii, SNES Mini, Wii U)

Kirby, an amorphous blob clearly designed in a simpler time, has been the star of many games that are both gentle and experimental (and occasionally baffling from the outset – I never quite figured out Kirby and the Amazing Mirror). Kirby is meant to change and morph, to take on new roles depending on what the game is asking of him, and Super Star embraces this well by being eight games (of varying quality) in one. In one game, you play through what is essentially a remake of Game Boy classic Kirby's Dream Land; in another, you explore a Metroidvania-styled cave. Some let you use Kirby's famous copy abilities, others don't. It's a mix of genres and styles and mechanics, and it sums up the Kirby series well – you never quite know what you're going to get with this guy, or what sort of game it's going to be, unless you read the reviews.

**Series best:** Kirby Mass Attack



Kirby



Mario (2D)

## Super Mario World

(Just about every single Nintendo thing)

Look. The original Super Mario Bros is a great game, but is it going to impress someone now, in 2018? Probably not. And Super Mario Bros 3, despite being the tightest piece of game design imaginable, is best gone into with some understanding and appreciation of how Mario moves, and even where the series went afterwards. Super Mario World, on the other hand, is a game that people tend to fall in love with more or less immediately, a lovely, colourful, exciting cavalcade of ideas, most of them perfectly realised. It introduces Yoshi, who is impossible not to love; the flying cape, which makes a bit more sense than a Tanooki suit; and castle levels that still impress today (and which were mind-blowing back in the 90s). Super Mario World isn't necessarily the best 2D Mario, but it's a game that feels wonderful from the very first level.

**Series best:** Super Mario Bros 3

Mario (3D)

## Super Mario Galaxy

(Wii, Wii U)

If you were going to have a conversation about the best game Nintendo has ever made, both Super Mario Galaxy games would make the shortlist. Super Mario Galaxy took the broad philosophy that the Wii had outlined with Wii Sports – that anyone should be able to play – and attached it to their signature franchise, resulting in a game that hits a perfect balance between showiness and accessibility. Both Galaxy games are near-perfect, and the multiplayer functionality – which lets another player use the Wii remote to attack enemies with star bits – is perfect for introducing non-gamers to Mario. We're going with the first game over the second here not necessarily because it's better – the two games are neck-and-neck, really – but because if you play one you'll eventually want to play the other, so why not start with the first game?

**Series best:** Super Mario Galaxy 1/2

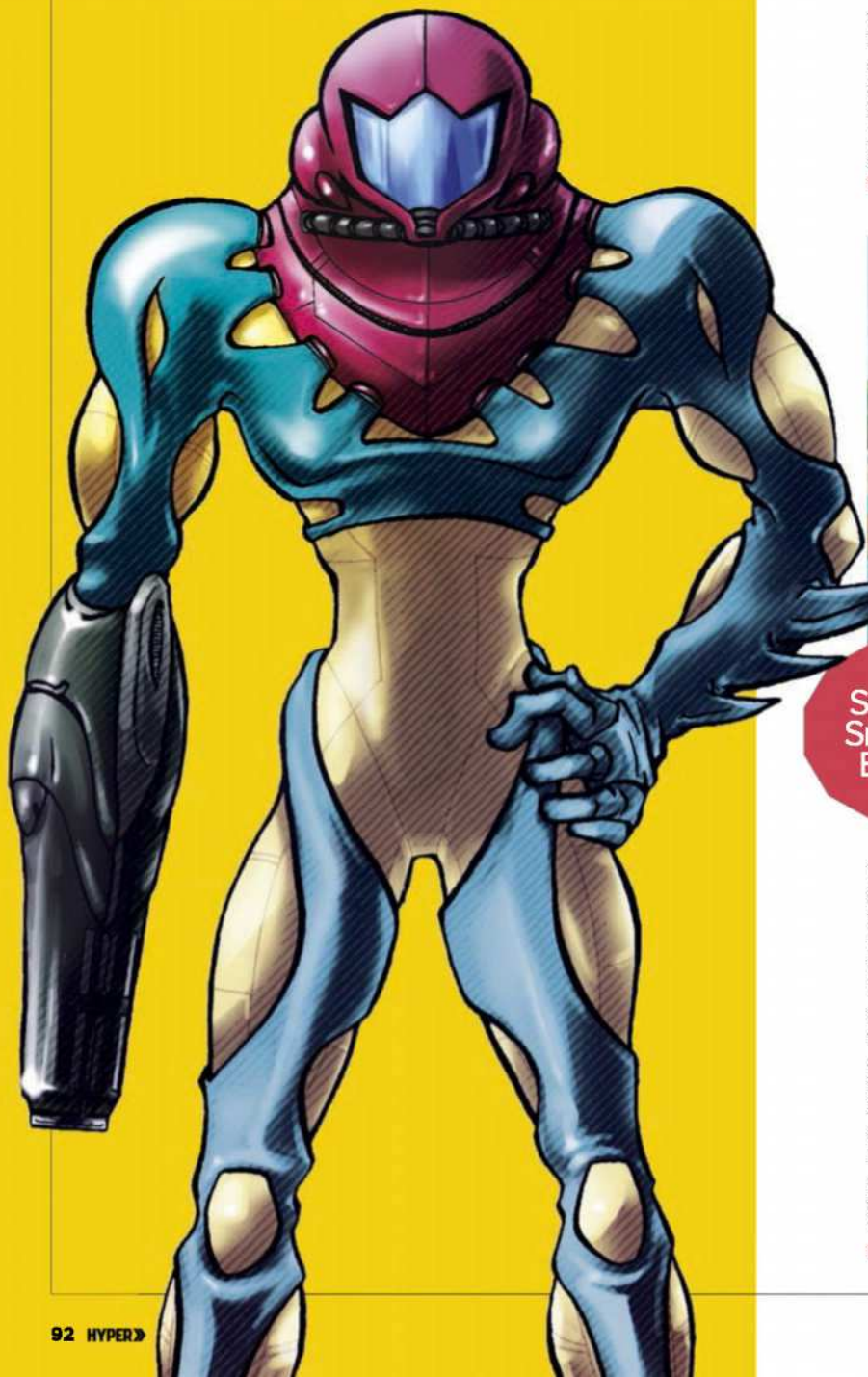


## Metroid Fusion

(GBA, 3DS Ambassador's Program, Wii U)

In the US, Metroid Prime and Metroid Fusion released on the same day (in Australia there was a ludicrous five-month gap between the two). One represented a bold new future for the franchise (one we're currently waiting on a return to), while the other, which delved into the series' past, was a perfect kick-off point for those of us who had missed Samus' earlier adventures. Fusion is, chronologically, still the 'last' Metroid, featuring Samus in a new suit and filled with numerous references to the older games, but if you've seen Alien and Aliens you don't need to worry too much about missing plot details. More importantly, it digs deep into who Samus is and what makes her tick, giving the character dimensions and depth that the original games didn't. It's also a staggeringly great game, one that isn't as reliant on (occasionally tedious) backtracking as the still-wonderful Super Metroid - it's a perfect introduction not only to Metroid, but to the whole 'Metroidvania' subgenre.

**Series best:** *Super Metroid* or *Metroid Prime*, depending on taste



Metroid



Star Fox

## Star Fox 64

(N64, 3DS, Wii, Wii U)

There are seven different major Star Fox games, but when people talk about Star Fox, they're talking about Star Fox 64 (originally called 'Lylat Wars' over here, a name I remain quietly fond of). Star Fox Adventures, the series black sheep, is a Zelda-style adventure with occasional space-bits; Star Fox and the just-recently released Star Fox 2 are SNES tech demos above all else; Star Fox Command and Star Fox Assault are interesting curios; and Star Fox Zero, which I have defended elsewhere in this issue, is brilliant but complicated. Star Fox 64 is Nintendo's greatest summer blockbuster, a short, exciting shooter full of lasers and explosions, one that spawned memes not just because the dialog was funny but because we became attached to lines of dialog after playing the game all the way through over and over again. It's a wonderful game.

**Series best:** *Star Fox 64*



Super  
Smash  
Bros

## Super Smash Bros Melee

(GameCube)

There are two schools of camp over which Smash Bros is the best, but there's no question of which is the most important. Melee laid the groundwork, and remains, to this day, one of the most beloved fighters ever. Melee is so iconic that it has kept the GameCube controller relevant well into the Wii U years, and it's a bit easier to approach than Smash Bros Wii U, a game that relies on you already being a fan (knowing that this is probably a safe assumption for most players). It has a superior single-player mode, which is important for getting to know how the different characters work, a more manageable 'trophy' reward system, and some wonderful, iconic courses. Smash Bros is coming to Switch by the end of the year, and odds are it'll snatch the crowns away from both of the truly great Smash Bros games, but for now, if you can get your hands on a copy, Melee remains the best starting point.

**Series best:** *Super Smash Bros for Wii U*



Mario Kart

## Mario Kart DS

(DS, Wii U)

For all the talk of Mario Kart being an accessible series, the list of tricks you should know going into one of these games has been increasing for a while now, and if your main experience is getting your arse handed to you at a games night because you can't come to grips with the powerslide you're going to want a way to find the fun in Mario Kart. The obvious candidate would be Mario Kart 64, but Mario Kart DS has an advantage over every other game in the series - a single-player mission mode. It's a blast, throwing you into unique scenarios that none of the other games feature, and it'll get you better acquainted with Mario Kart's intricacies. The track design is also wonderful, and the game has aged well. Mario Kart 8 is far and away the series highlight, but you'll want to go in having been trained by this excellent earlier entry.

**Series best:** *Mario Kart 8*



Fire Emblem

## Fire Emblem Echoes: Shadows of Valentia

(3DS)

The most recent Fire Emblem release, a remake of an old NES game that never made it out of Japan, introduces a few changes that makes Fire Emblem just a little bit friendlier than before without taking off too much edge. Weapon durability doesn't need to be tracked, and a limited-use 'rewind' tool lets you redo that 85% hit chance that you missed, or bring back that character that was just killed because four attacks with a 40% chance of landing all hit them. It also sands off some of the parts that made Fire Emblem Awakening so good, including the relationship system, but this means that there's much less for a new player to keep track of. Echoes is excellent in its own right, and will get you suitably prepared for Awakening. Just remember that the series absolutely must be played with permadeath turned on to properly enjoy it.

**Series best:** *Fire Emblem Awakening*



Pokémon

## Heart Gold/Soul Silver

(DS, Wii U)

Pokémon is one of Nintendo's most intimidating franchises from the outside, with each game being built around a level of assumed knowledge about type differences and what different moves do. To really dig into what makes Pokémon great, you need to jump back to the second generation of releases, and while the Virtual Console Game Boy Color versions are the most easily accessible it's worth trying to track down one of the excellent DS remakes. Gold and Silver expanded the Pokémon roster out, fixed a heap of UI and accessibility issues, improved the game's progression model, and threw in the entire Kanto region from Red/Blue as a post-game treat. The final boss fight won't resonate quite as hard if you're not familiar with the originals, but that's a minor quibble - these are the games that best capture the appeal of Pokémon.

**Series best:** *Heart Gold/Soul Silver* 🐉



FEATURE

# BREAKING THE CURSE OF AMIIBO ADDICTION

*James O'Connor can give up any time. Anyyyyy timmmme...*

One night three years ago I heard that a Kmart across town had received a fresh shipment of first-wave amiibo (lower-case and irregular plural are the official grammatical rules for the word, I believe). The shipment, including several of the models that had disappeared from shelves - many of which I'd never seen in the wild before, having jumped onto the hype train just slightly too late. I told my then-girlfriend about this, and she agreed that it was worth the lengthy trip on a cold night.

On the way there I pondered whether this obsession was going too far, whether it was, perhaps, better to have some amiibo that I could never collect so that the temptation to collect them all would not be there. I waved the thought away. As a games journalist, I rarely have to pay for games - the amount I'm spending on these figurines, I figured, isn't more than I'd be spending on games if I worked in another profession. It was naive

reasoning, of course, but I felt justified when we reached the store and I found rows of Marth, the most coveted and rare of all amiibo (everything else, unfortunately, had already been picked clean).

Cut to now. I'm single again, and living alone. Most of my amiibo - including Marth - now sit on a mantelpiece over my DVD shelf, displayed prominently in my living room. Placing them there was a decision I made on the assumption that I would, over time, grow more comfortable with myself and feel okay with people seeing my huge collection of plastic Nintendo figurines. This has, in no way, been the case. Having a friend around involves a lot of nervous glances and a quick hand-waved explanation for why I have so many of the damn things (not all of them, but I have every individual Smash Bros character and several others on top). Bringing a date home is a nightmare. "You should know that I have a lot of nerd shit", I've been known to say

before we enter, worried that they'll see the mantle and recoil in horror. The recoil has not happened yet, but I imagine something ticking over in their minds, a "Huh, that's a bit off, right?" response. The Silver and Gold Mario, which have stayed in their packages and hang on hooks in my bedroom, at least have the air of being highly collectable about them.

I have always been one to collect to excess - my DVD and Blu-Ray collection is full of films I have never seen, and I have an entire bookcase of unread books - but the amiibo collection is the one I am most embarrassed by. While there was a time where I felt that I could comfortably justify having so many, and the life I was living while collecting them, I now have a harder time explaining what it is, exactly, that drew me to these things. "The good thing is that you can use a single figure across multiple games", I've explained to people in the past. "Mario can be used in Smash Bros, but he also works with Mario Party,





Mario Kart, Mario Maker – heaps of different Mario games! Hey, where are you going?”

This is mostly my own fault for not just accepting myself for who I am, and admitting to myself that I like these little figurines because I like the characters, and I like how they unlock new things in games. I have self-esteem issues that make it difficult to have a shelf covered in these things long after the craze has died down, past the point where many non-games retailers have stopped stocking them, and all the amiibo’s competitors have fallen, one by one (I have a cupboard full of Disney Infinity figures too, but they were sent for reviews, at least).

Recently a drunk friend came to crash in my spare room after a big night out, and I was acutely aware that he had never seen my collection before. As we entered my living room, he drunkenly surveyed it. “I like those figurines, man”, he said. “They look cool, all lined up like

that”. I was relieved. “Maybe they are”, I thought to myself, still faintly aware that I’d spent a lot of money on plastic figurines that I’d have to awkwardly explain to everyone who entered my house forever.

I think my days of buying new amiibo are over now that the shelf is full. I have a little Waluigi amiibo sitting on my computer to watch over me as I work, and - as he watches me write this - I want him to know that I’m done. Having nabbed every Smash Bros character, plus several others from Splatoon, the Super Mario series, those darn Yoshis, various Zelda releases... I just don’t have room in my heart for more. That said, the new Smash Bros Splatoon figurine is gorgeous.

And Ridley! I need to buy Ridley, right? And Daisy too, to complete the Smash Bros collection?

And look, it’s not like I’m bringing many dates home these days.

Perhaps I should finish off that Zelda collection... ❧



# Five to watch:

The games we can't wait to see on the Switch!

**Monster Hunter Generations Ultimate**

DEVELOPER | Capcom  
RELEASED | August 28





## **Dark Souls: Remastered**

*FromSoftware • Winter 2018*

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## **Mega Man 11**

*Capcom • October 2*

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## **Pokemon: Let's go Pikachu! / Eevee!**

*Game Freak • November 16*

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## **Yoshi (Working title)**

*Nintendo • 2019*

# Actual TOYS! And some other cool collectibles



## Legend of Zelda Link Shield

Nintendo • \$37.09

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/legend-of-zelda-link-shield/23065497](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/legend-of-zelda-link-shield/23065497)

Fancy a little casual cosplay of your favourite Nintendo character? Well, if that character is Link, then you really, really want this shield.

Sure, it's hollow plastic, but it looks the part, and it sure beats carrying around the real thing - real shields are heavy, gang! There are straps on the back so you can defend yourself (remember, it's dangerous to go alone!), and it measures 19in tall, and 15in wide (may not in fact be any good as an actual shield).

## The Legend Of Zelda Encyclopedia

Nintendo • \$74.19

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/the-legend-of-zelda-encyclopedia-hardback/27304991](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/the-legend-of-zelda-encyclopedia-hardback/27304991)

Whether you're a dyed in the wool Zelda fan with a conspicuous Tri-Force tattoo (you know who you are), or a neophyte to the series after the release of Breath of the World, The Legend Of Zelda Encyclopedia is packed with...

Well, everything.

Every item, potion, and more is lovingly listed. A comprehensive Zelda timeline is included too, and character histories, maps, languages, development sketches... EVERYTHING. The Encyclopedia even includes an interview with Eiji Aonuma, the producer of the series.

## Mario Kart - Mini Anti-Gravity RC Racer

Nintendo • \$89.99

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-mario-kart-mini-anti-gravity-rc-racer/27606207](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-mario-kart-mini-anti-gravity-rc-racer/27606207)

Okay, so we admit it - it's not a true anti-gravity toy. I mean, Nintendo is smart, but if they've solved that puzzle then they must be sitting on the patents. But the Mini Anti-Gravity RC Racer is still pretty neat.

You can race this guy (against your cat, I guess) in standard, wheels-down mode, or flip those suckers up into anti-grave mode, where you can drift about like a Tokyo street racer. The RC toy has a hundred-foot range, and can perform a number of cool tricks\*.

\*If you think wheelies are cool.



## Inkling Girl - Character Figure

Jakks Pacific • \$17.99

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-world-character-figure-inkling-girl/27606362](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/nintendo-world-character-figure-inkling-girl/27606362)

I'm not even a fan of Splatoon, but as a fan of articulated figures in general, even I want one of these.

Inkling Girl is part of the Super Mario 4 line of toys, but she's easily our favourite, suitably sassy and ready to fight. The figure features 13 points of articulation, and comes with a power-up accessory. And big, long, tentacle hair...



## Link (Breath of the Wild ver.) - RAH Figure

Medicom • \$529.99

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/the-legend-of-zelda-rah-link-breath-of-the-wild-ver-articulated-figure/26796037](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/the-legend-of-zelda-rah-link-breath-of-the-wild-ver-articulated-figure/26796037)

Okay, so you need to be a pretty serious fan to think about dropping this much money on a 'toy' (says the guy who covets every Marvel Hot Toys figure), but if you are that serious, your hard-earned is going to get you one hell of a keepsake.

Built on a Kai arts body, this Link is 30cm of poseable awesome, and comes complete with sword, shield, and bow & arrows. Multiple hand parts let you pose the figure with freedom, and since it's based on a Kai body... that's a LOT of freedom.

## Samus Light Suit 1/4 Statue

First 4 Figures •  
\$635.99

[www.mightyape.com.au/product/metroid-prime-echoes-samus-light-suit-14-statue/22658343](http://www.mightyape.com.au/product/metroid-prime-echoes-samus-light-suit-14-statue/22658343)

Well, I guess Samus ain't about to be outdone by no bow-wielding hippy.

Now, sure, this suit isn't posable, but it's also a masterful recreation of Samus' Light Suit from Metroid Prime 2. It boasts a hand-numbered base, and the figure is...

\*checks notes\*

HOLY SHIT. It's a 1/4 scale figure, and is a massive 20in tall. With a limited run of only 2500 figurines made, no wonder it costs an arm and a power-armoured leg. ☹☹



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# A WORLD OF POKÉMON AWAITS! LET'S GO!



+

## VALUE PACKS



Solus Editions  
Also Available

Check the Classification

# 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018

At the time of release, the Poké Ball Plus will only be compatible with Pokémon GO, Pokémon: Let's Go Pikachu! or Pokémon: Let's Go Eevee! Console sold separately. © 2018 Pokémon. © 1995-2018 Nintendo / Creatures Inc. / GAME FREAK inc.