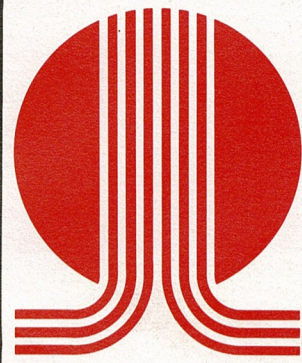


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CTW DISTRIBUTOR OF THE YEAR
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An ETP Publication

13.1.92 **EUROPE'S ELECTRONIC GAMES TRADE PAPER** Issue 369

Colour Gameboy emerges

Nintendo will launch a colour Gameboy in Japan this summer, CTW can exclusively reveal.

Whilst Nintendo itself is saying nothing at all, sources have revealed that the shock new arrival is *certain* to appear — possibly as early as June.

Though many Nintendo watchers have proposed the idea of a colour machine before, this is the first time that hard evidence has emerged. CTW understands that it will be launched in Japan at an ultra-aggressive price, possibly the equivalent of just \$99.

Few technical details are available, but Nintendo appears to have pulled a masterstroke by ensuring backwards compatibility

with existing mono Gameboy software. The firm has been stung by criticism and, possibly, lower than expected sales caused by the incompatibility of the Super NES with the NES, and it seems to have learnt its lesson.

A prototype of the new unit was distributed amongst carefully selected developers at the beginning of last month. One area that is still being worked on is battery life, with Nintendo keen to unveil a machine that outguns the colour Sega Gamegear, which eats batteries at an incredible rate.

Certainly, Nintendo's new baby — possibly called the Super Gameboy — is a response to the Gamegear, which has grown steadily since being rolled out

worldwide last year and is shaping up as significant competition. Nintendo will be keen not to let Sega have an overlong technology lead in the handheld market, having given the firm a leg up in the static consoles marketplace by leaving the Megadrive (Genesis) with a

market to itself for so long before bringing in the Super NES.

Following the Japanese launch in the summer, the US is likely to gain first units in the autumn of this year. Europe, however, is sure to have to wait until the second quarter of '93 at the earliest.



GAMEBOY: Colouring in Europe by '93?

Wonder Mega looms

JVC will enter the booming electronic games market in March, when it launches its Sega-compatible CD machine into Japan.

CTW can exclusively reveal that the new machine is called the Wonder Mega. It is the product of a joint venture between JVC and Sega (CTW July 8th) intended to increase the mass market penetration of the CD technology utilised in the Mega CD — a CD drive for the Sega Genesis (Megadrive), which can read video games software, plus standard audio CDs and other audio visual programs.

Basically, the Wonder Mega will be an all-in-one CD Genesis unit. It will have different styling to Sega's machine-plus-drive offering, being notably flatter.

How successful JVC's model is in Japan will very much determine whether it will be made available in the US and Europe.

The distribution plan is that JVC will leave the traditional toy and video game stores for Sega's 'original' CD system, whilst JVC attempts to make headway in its traditional sectors — namely hi-fi and electrical stores.

JVC's machine will arrive in Japan just four months after the Mega CD was introduced there — retailing at 44,800 yen (\$350-\$360). And, like the Mega CD, it will have technical alterations made for different territories — such as the US and Europe — in order to avoid grey import problems when fullscale worldwide sales and marketing efforts are underway.

Ocean skates Xmas charts

Ocean dominated the Christmas Gallup charts, occupying the top spot in just about every applicable category.

In the All Formats Computer Games Top 40 (week ending December 21st) the firm occupied the top three slots with *WWF* taking the coveted title of Christmas number one followed by *The Simpsons* and *Terminator II*.

The Full Price Market Share chart (units) shows the firm with 36.9 per cent, some 33.3 per cent ahead of nearest rival Codemasters. For unit sales the Market Share by Label chart shows the firm just ahead of Sega by 2.5 per cent with 14.5 per cent.

In the console characters battle, *Sonic the Hedgehog* seems to have emerged victorious, beating *Super Mario* into second place in the Individual Machine Format chart.

EA bolsters Euro line-up

Electronic Arts has expanded its range of European affiliates, adding UK label Millenium and US entertainment and productivity publisher Broderbund.

The deal with Millenium actually covers Europe, America and Australia. In Europe, EA replaces US Gold, which has been handling the Cambridge based label for the past year.

Kid Gloves 2, due out shortly, will be the first game to be released via the new deal.

The relationship between the two firms began when Millenium licensed its hit game, *James Pond*, for EA to

publish on the Megadrive. Existing Millenium product will continue to go through US Gold.

Millenium boss Michael Hayward offered: "We will benefit especially by having access for the first time to the American market, selling our titles through Electronic Arts under our own brand name."

For the last couple of years, Broderbund has been handled in the UK by Domark. The partnership enjoyed considerable success recently with the critical and commercial success, *Prince of Persia*.

Last autumn, however, Broderbund announced that EA would be handling its "edutainment" package, *Kid*

Pix. The feeling was that a title outside the games arena would be more suited to EA than Domark's more populist approach.

Now Electronic Arts will be handling all Broderbund product throughout Europe, the next product being *Patton Strikes Back*.

EA's managing director Mark Lewis commented: "We are very pleased to enter into this affiliated label relationship with Broderbund."

"It will not only broaden our distribution capabilities in Europe to include some of the most successful products in the marketplace, but allow us to further develop in our PC and Macintosh distribution channels."

Bandai loses key label

Having grabbed the spotlight through acquiring Mirrorsoft, Acclaim last week took the opportunity to announce that it is splitting with Nintendo's official UK distributor Bandai.

Acclaim's European boss Rod Cousens was reluctant to discuss the shock decision in too much depth and refused to reveal just how Acclaim will be replacing the Bandai distribution network upon which it now relies.

He offered: "Acclaim and LJN have a substantial catalogue in the Nintendo market and while Bandai

have done an excellent job, we're very selfish about our own products, we want them given maximum attention."

"Bandai could not give that, quite understandably, because of commitments to other third party publishers and Nintendo itself."

Without giving anything away, he claimed that Acclaim's new methods of distribution would cover all the ground currently reached by Bandai.

Last Christmas, Bandai was also responsible for a slice of Acclaim's marketing effort, including TV ads. Cousens insisted, however, that the marketing effort and TV spots will actually be stepped up in 1992.

Mirrorsoft falls to Acclaim

Leading console publisher Acclaim has started the year in spectacular fashion, pulling Mirrorsoft from the wreckage of the Maxwell empire.

It has acquired all its assets — including licences, trademarks and properties under development. It has not, however, taken over Mirrorsoft's debts, they are still in the hands of the group's administrators.

Big label names such as Mirrorsoft itself, Imageworks and Cinemaware will continue into 1992, although Acclaim's European boss Rod Cousens pointed out that a decision has yet to be taken as to which products on which formats will match up with the plethora of labels now

available to him.

At the time of its closure Mirrorsoft employed around 30 people — the majority were given redundancy notices on New Year's Eve. Acclaim is talking to a number of "key personnel" about taking up positions in the new operation.

Cousens stated that he was "hopeful" that long time boss Peter Bilotta would stay on. Mirrorsoft's London offices will be closed down shortly, with everything being handled at Acclaim's current Winchester site.

Administrators had been running Mirrorsoft since December, their sole aim being to sell off the division to raise the group some much-needed funds.

One possible option was a management buyout lead by Bilotta. This failed at the death of 1991 and Acclaim

then beat a couple of unknown rivals to take the spoils.

Cousens offered: "We were attracted by the assets that were in place at the company and by the reputation that Mirrorsoft has built up."

"The most visible change that the deal will make is accelerating our entry into the home computer market. If you look at the success that Ocean achieved in 1991 with a number of titles that were Acclaim's licences, it is obvious that we will now be extremely aggressive ourselves with our own properties in this market."

"The point has to be made that from our humble beginnings in this market not so long ago, we are now formidable competitors in all areas of the market, and the timetable of that rise has been quite remarkable."



COUSENS: Raiding Maxwell's house

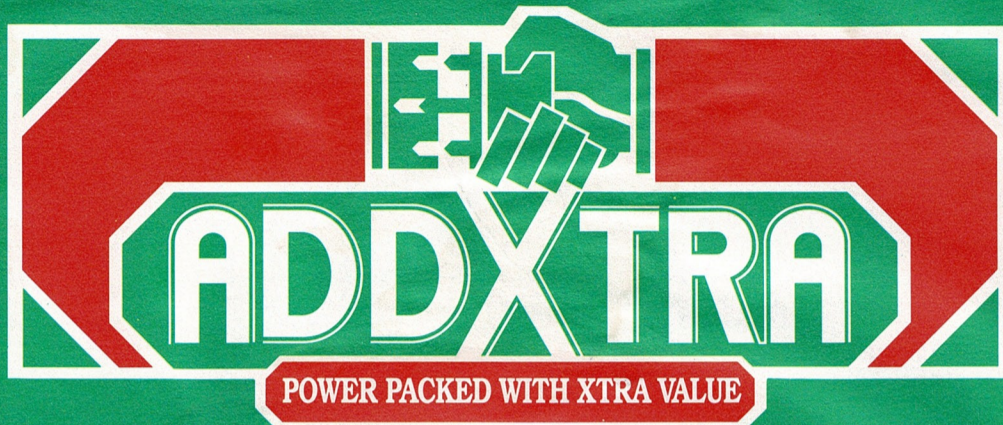
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Activision shakes off \$16m debt

The name Mediagenic vanished for good last week, as the firm began trading solely as Activision — with Philips Consumer Electronics, Sony Pictures and Nintendo becoming three of its largest shareholders.

Bankruptcy Court for the northern district of California. At time of press, the firm was due to emerge successfully from this re-structuring on Thursday (January 9th) — having exchanged substantially all of its debt obligations into equity of the company, with no indebtedness outstanding.

The decision to concen-

trate solely on the well known Activision name coincides with the firm's renewed emphasis on computer and video games development and publishing. Mediagenic had become the umbrella name for the company in the late 80s — when prior management attempted disastrous diversification projects.

Confirmation of Activision's re-organisation plan marks the successful culmination of some nine months of active restructuring by new management, which began shortly after The Disc Company took control of the firm early last year.

Under the re-organisation plan, all of the firm's unsecured creditors will receive common Activision stock in exchange for part or all of their claims. These firms will now hold approximately 80 per cent of the outstanding stock of the firm.



In the clear at last

Amstrad slashes PC prices and gives indirect support to dealers

Amstrad has started 1992 with a message of support for embattled dealers in the business market.

The manufacturer is launching a £5.3 million national advertising campaign for its PC range in the spring and has also introduced a number of new year price cuts which it hopes will stimulate the market.

The price cuts are quite substantial. The ALT286 laptop falls from £1,599 to £999 with the 386 version going from £1,999 to £1,399. The ANB notebook PC drops £200 to £1,199.

Its 8086 Generation 3 model with Hi-res colour monitor is down from £849 to £599, while every model in the Series 5 range is reduced by £100-£250, the entry level version now coming in at £299.

Amstrad's group sales and marketing director,

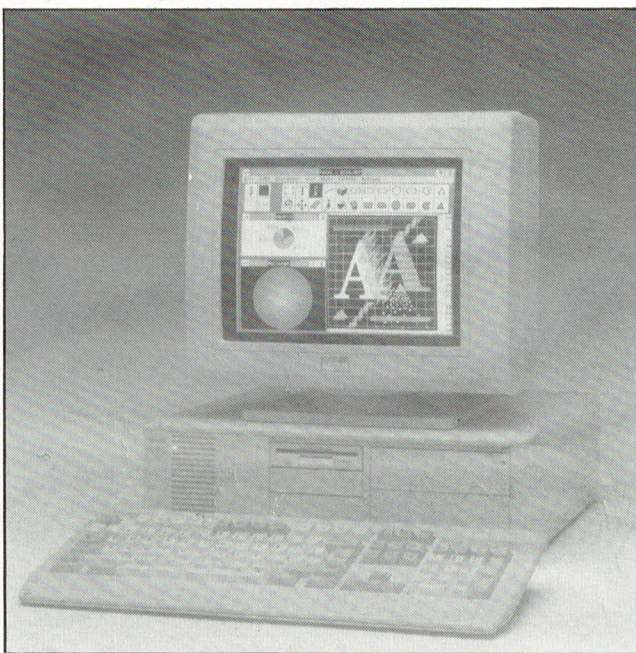
Malcolm Miller commented: "Although Amstrad has consistently maintained its dominance, the market is sluggish and, importantly, there is a current movement by other manufacturers towards direct end user supply, to the detriment of the dealer channel.

"We have long accepted that some companies will go direct, but there is growing evidence that traditional dealer orientated suppliers, including major top brand companies, are now considering the direct route.

"Other leading suppliers have slashed dealer margins in the face of the price threat posed by the growing number of direct sellers.

"Amstrad is committed to the dealer channel, will maintain dealer margins and has ruled out the direct route."

Meanwhile, Amstrad has expanded its interest in the fax market. It has launched



GENERATION 3: Doing the monster slash

the FX6000AT, a combined fax, phone and answering machine, which replaces the FX9600AT.

The new machine retails

at £499 and Miller stated that it will maintain Amstrad's lead in the race to bring fax machines into the mass market.

Dixons dips, Xmas lifts

At the time of going to press, City analysts were predicting a drop in Dixons' half yearly results, while pointing out that a healthy Christmas should brighten the full year picture.

Profits for the first six months are expected to be down from £27 million to around £18 million. The second half is already counteracting that depression.

Christmas was even better than expected and the Currys superstores have been performing particularly well. As the chain has pointed out previously, computers and consoles will also be one of the brightest lights amid the gloom.

When full year results are revealed in the summer, analysts predict that last year's profit of £82 million will be matched.

Virgin lines up 50 for '92

Virgin Retail has kicked off its expansion plans for 1992, with two new Games Centres pencilled in for sometime in March.

As part of its 1992 plan, the firm is hoping to have another 12-15 Games Centres opened by the end of the year, bringing the total up to



VIRGIN: Doubling up for '92

around 25 stores.

With many loose ends apparently still dangling, the firm is unable to divulge the whereabouts of the shops at the moment, only going as far as "one in the north and one in the south."

In addition, the retail chain has set its sights on another 8-10 Megastores by the end of the year which will bring

the total number up to around 22-24.

Following last year's tie-up with WH Smiths it is believed that the firm now has some £10 million worth of extra revenue to play with.

None of the stores which are currently being lined up by Virgin are Our Price stores, which are also part of the Smiths group. The firm has the option of converting some of these stores into Virgin outlets.

Virgin Retail's games manager Nick Garnell told CTW: "We have no concrete plans to turn Our Price stores into Virgins. Our Price chop and change all the time and we will only take a store if it is the right type and size.

"The total number of stores will be up to around 45-50 by the end of the year, and there will be a 50-50 split between Games Centres and Mega Stores. In a perfect world we would be opening two a month, but it doesn't work like that."

CTW honours go to Leisuresoft and Game

Game Ltd and Leisuresoft were the recipients of the two prestigious CTW awards at the recent industry awards dinner.

picking up the award for the third year in a row.

Not surprisingly, great rival Centresoft was second with Columbus, in third place, also grabbing a fair share of the votes.

Shortly after the 1991 awards ceremony, CTW took the decision to pull out of sponsoring the official Distributor of the Year award in future. The paper has no argument whatsoever with the industry dinner, but feels that the bickering that accompanies this particular judgement every year has finally reached an unacceptable level.

CTW will, however, continue to run its annual Dealer of the Year award.

Dealer of the Year, Game, was only established in December 1990. It already has 11 stores and is planning to open more in 1992 although no details are currently available.

In second place was Games Store (a chain that used to be called Computer Shop), followed by Virgin and Microbyte.

Distributor of the Year was Leisuresoft. The Northampton based firm was

US toy boys' boom gloom

Several leading US toy manufacturers are already ringing the death knell for the video games boom, having had one of their best Christmas seasons of recent times.

They claim that many consumers are now turning to traditional and lower priced toys, boosting firms which have had less than spectacular sales in the wake of the video games tidal wave.

Leading lights such as Mattel, Tyco, and Fisher Price all showed strong third quarter profits. Hasbro recorded a net loss, although on an operating basis profits grew.

Harry Pearce, president of the Toy Manufacturers of America trade group said:

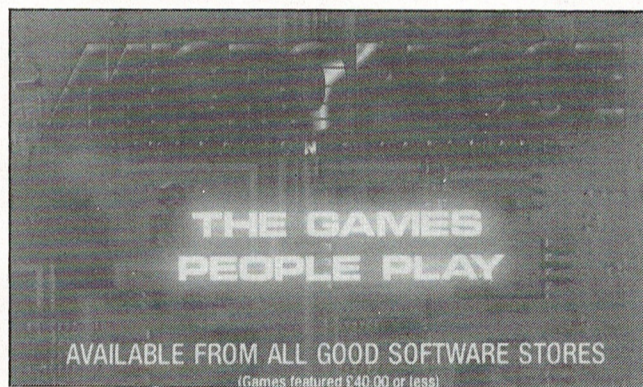
"Video games certainly seemed to have peaked. Their growth slowed this year, so companies like Tyco and Mattel Inc benefitted."

Best selling toys in the US market last Christmas included remote controlled cars, Tyco's Magic Copiers, Little Miss Mermaid dolls, and that hardy perennial Monopoly.

One analyst noted: "Dollars not being spent on video have to go somewhere in the toy area and they seem to be moving toward traditional toys."

For toy retailers though, it is apparently a different story. A spokesman for leading US chain, Child's World, commented: "Retail-wise, this has not been a great Christmas, though on the manufacturing level toys are doing well."

Prose claims TV first



PROSE: "Boldly going where no software house has gone before"

MicroProse is making the rather bold claim of being the first UK software house to run a series of TV ads.

The 30 second ads will be slotted around the Gamesmaster series on Channel 4, which started last week. They will feature 4-5 MicroProse products rather than focusing on one in particular.

A series of ads for BSkyB channels are also being pencilled in at the moment, and the firm is also considering using MTV as well.

MicroProse marketing director Paul Moodie told CTW: "We were already con-

sidering the possibility of doing TV ads and Gamesmaster came along and pre-empted it. It's missionary work, we're boldly going where no software house has gone before.

"TV represents a viable medium for us to advertise on so whether Gamesmaster is successful or not, there are a lot of shows with similar audiences which we could feature the ads on."

In addition, the firm's Julia Coombs is set to rocket into the pages of the tabloid gossip columns with an appearance in the series, demonstrating a game. Autographs available on request.

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Price is right for latest triumphant Acclaim promo

Acclaim has started 1992 where it left '91, on the promotional trail, this time linking with record retail chain, Our Price.

The product being pushed this time round is *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* on the Gameboy — appearing on the LJN label. The promotion started last week and will run until the end of the month.

Over one million leaflets will be distributed through Our Price record stores and in cinemas showing the

celluloid sequel to the *Excellent Adventure*, *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey*.

The leaflet invites the recipient to enter a competition offering copies of the Gameboy title as prizes.

Acclaim's marketing director Larry Sparks commented: "Once again this promotion demonstrates Acclaim's successful execution of cross promoting their products with major third party companies and the recognition by these companies that Acclaim is a major player in the video games market."



Larry and Rod's excellent tie-in

And the winners are...

The glitz, the glamour, the winners, the losers, all were to be seen at the annual awards night that closed 1991.

The ceremony took place at London's Intercontinental Hotel with many of the announcements being greeted with equal measures of delight and despair.

Despite the complaints and tantrums of those who did not win, however, the facts are these: **Budget Game of the Year** — *Xenon II*; **Handheld Game of the Year** — *Shinobi* on Gamegear; **8-bit Video Game of the Year** — *Sonic the Hedgehog* on Master

System; **16-bit Video Game of the Year** — *Sonic the Hedgehog* on Megadrive; **Adventure Game of the Year** — *The Secret of Monkey Island*; **Simulation of the Year** — *Formula One Grand Prix*; **Arcade Game of the Year** — *First Samurai*; **Technical Merit Award** — *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*; **Magazine of the Year** — *Zero*; **Best Promotional Campaign** — Sega; **Licensed Property of the Year** — *The Simpsons*; **Developer of the Year** — Bullfrog; **Game of the Year** — *Lemmings*; **Commodore ENVI Award** — Archer Maclean; **Software House of the Year** — Electronic Arts; **Industry Achievement Award** — Ocean.

Tetris boys get real

Bullet-Proof Software, the team responsible for bringing *Tetris* to the Gameboy, now claims to have come up with the world's first handheld Virtual Reality game.

Faceball 2000 is already available for the Gameboy in the US, and a Super NES version has recently been previewed at the CES Show in Las Vegas.

Features on the game include a four player option on Gameboy, 70 levels of play, continuous 360 degree movement, and the ability to

operate in either Cyberspace or Arena mode.

Bullet-Proof boss Henk Rogers commented: "*Faceball 2000* has received some of the hottest previews around. It's unique because it can be played by up to four players and it uses a true first person point of view giving each player the feeling of actually being inside the game.

"Because each player sees the action through the characters' eyes, it sometimes takes a bit of getting used to, and opponents are quick to seize any momentary loss of sanity to wipe the smile right off your face."

Atari races for new titles in '92

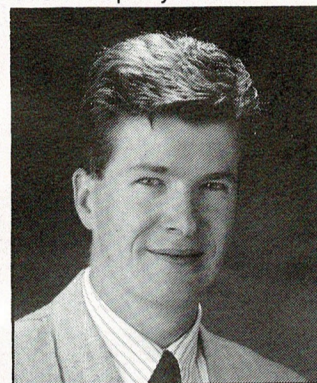
Atari is keeping the Lynx software fires burning in Europe with a new batch of titles for the first quarter of '92.

Kicking off the latest deluge of releases for the handheld is a conversion of Tengen's *Xybots*. This will be followed by *Dirty Renegade Cop*, *Dracula*, *NFL Football*, *Hockey*, *Baseball Heroes*, *Bad Boy Tennis*, *Basketball*, *Malibu Bikini Volleyball*, *Toki*, *Hydra*, *Lemmings*, *Pitfighter*, *Man Utd Europe* and *Eye of the Beholder*.

"*Xybots* is a great game for a great machine. We are very pleased to release it immediately after Christmas, because it emphasises our confidence that our colour handheld has well and truly seen off the opposition this

Christmas and that 1992 will be the year of the Lynx," commented Atari's marketing manager Darryl Still.

"There are also some hot new film licences to be announced. Lynx fans will have a year to remember. There is really nothing more to say, this line up says it all for us."



STILL: Lynx lover

Mercury rises for joysticks

A new Japanese joystick firm is set to emerge in the UK, handled by TV and telecommunications specialist Mercury Telecraft.

The sticks are manufactured in China by Computek, with sales and marketing handled by Mercury. Previously the firm marketed a range of sticks called *Moonraker* some four or five years ago.

The range currently includes three sticks — the

JS902 Fighter for £7.76, the JS 101 Turbo Pro for £13.25, and JS 301 Turbo Super at £14.80.

A Nintendo and Sega version will be added to the line in February. The firm is currently looking for distributors and has already signed up MCD.

Sales director Robin Peterson told CTW: "We were involved with joysticks some time ago, but we felt we needed a larger range and you have to invest a lot of money to do that — we saw better profitability elsewhere."

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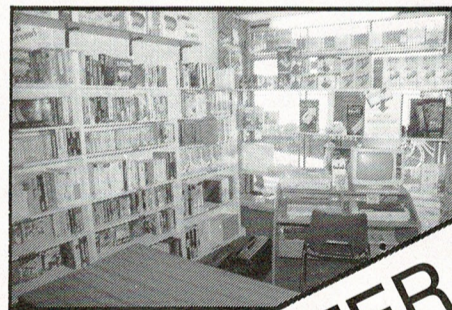
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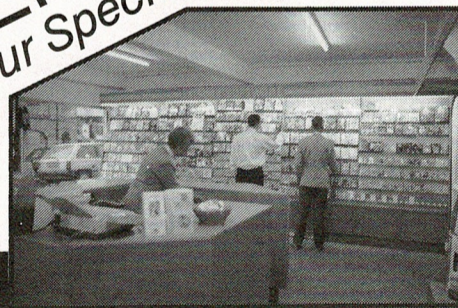
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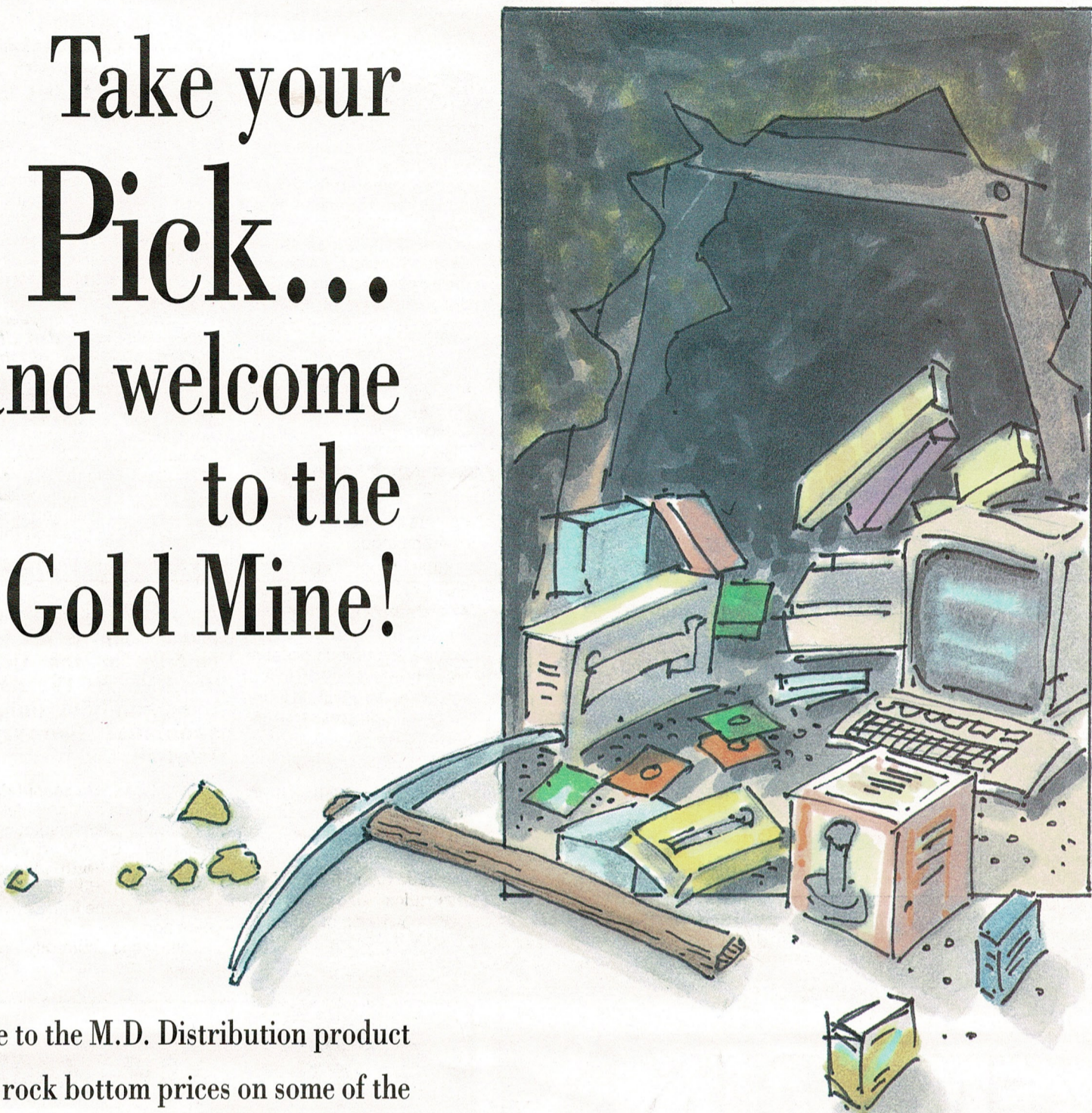
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Shopper Show triumphs again

Blenheim's Computer Shopper Show is once again being hailed as an unqualified success by the firm, claiming to have beaten all previous records.

Attendance was up by 14,000 on the previous year's event to 51,655, whilst total sales increased by £4 million to £12 million.

One firm, Mesh Computers, apparently turned over £1 million at the event. Mesh boss Fraz Douroudian commented: "Words almost fail me that it was such a brilliant show. We expected it to be good news but not such a success. It had everything, and we will definitely be coming back next year with a bigger stand."

Blenheim has already

started taking bookings for the spring event, claiming that it will be 50 per cent bigger than the 1991 show.

The firm is expecting around 40,000 visitors — 13,000 up on last year's show.

Event director Nav Mann commented: "The main floor of the National Hall will house leisure exhibitors, while the gallery areas will be used for the growing business section of the show."

"We decided to bring in the gallery areas of the National Hall following record advance stand sales achieved at the Christmas Computer Shopper Show. There is overwhelming interest and this additional space will allow us to provide distinct areas for both the leisure and business sectors of the market."

Europress lines up new label and old faves

Europress Software has made a number of announcements for the coming year, including the launch of a new educational label and sundry versions of well known titles.

A new label aimed at 11-14 year olds — called ADI — will be launched by the end of April. All the games will feature an extra terrestrial character called ADI.

Titles will include Maths, English, French and The Sciences. The programs have already been on sale in

France where it has been apparently well received.

In addition, the firm will be launching STOS 3D which will retail for £34.99, Easy AMOS, which will also be out for £34.99 and includes a manual written by Mel Croucher, and Mini Office on the Amiga for £49.99.

Meanwhile, Europress Publications has made two key appointments. Ian Dalglish joins as group marketing manager having previously worked for The Kellogg Company, whilst Brian Raynor joins as business development manager.

Games hacks quit

Respected games editors Ciaran Brennan and Colin Campbell have opted to quit their roles at EMAP Images and Future respectively.

Brennan gives up his position as editor of *The One for Amiga Games* and *The One for ST Games* on Friday (December 17th).

He has already secured several freelance posts — including an incredibly prestigious fortnightly column with CTW — and is currently evaluating a number of new projects.

"Under Ciaran's stewardship, *The One* has successfully transformed from a multi-format magazine into two separate magazines, with huge readership growth," commented Images' managing director Terry Pratt to CTW.

"EMAP will continue to benefit from Ciaran's experience. He will be working

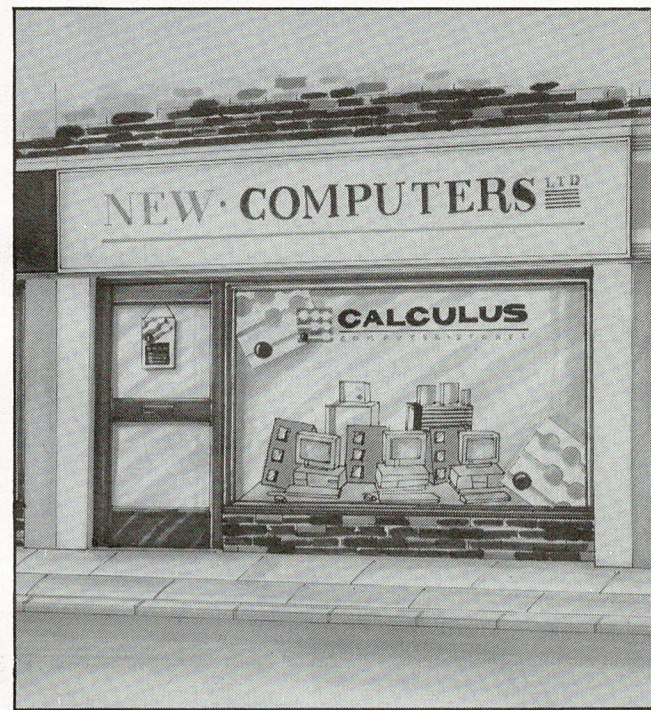
for us on a freelance basis across a wider range of titles, and is particularly interested in spreading his wings into contributing for other EMAP titles — including *Q* and *Empire*."

Brennan, meanwhile, was impressively candid when explaining his decision to leave: "With Gary Lineker going to Japan next season, I want to concentrate on getting into the Tottenham first team."

Campbell, meanwhile, has quit *Future* for a senior role at fast-growing publishing outfit Pegasus.

He had worked at *Future* for over three years, switching from *New Computer Express* to *Amiga Power* and, latterly, *Commodore Format*.

His new role is as managing editor of Pegasus, with control over three titles — role-playing mag *Gamesman*, indie music mag *Siren* and movie title *Academy*.



ZCL's franchise scheme is gathering pace, with a look for the Calculus shops being revealed and interested dealers being contacted and consulted this week. Full details of the scheme will be available in the next couple of weeks after those talks and consumer advertising for the proposed chain will start in February. ZCL hopes to have 50 Calculus stores up and running by the end of the year.

Soundware delivers cricket licence

Fledgling publisher Soundware has gained the official licence for the forthcoming Cricket World Cup which takes place in Australia.

The firm has already had a hit with the imaginatively titl-

ed *Cricket*, and will be launching a completely new game for the event.

World Series Cricket will feature side-on and overhead views of the game, the screen itself will be split into four. The game will be available on Amiga only.

Soundware's Steve Bailey told CTW: "The game will be

out on January 22nd, coinciding with the tournament which comes to a climax in March. We're only releasing it on Amiga. We released an ST compilation over Christmas, but we felt that for this particular title, weighing the extra programming against the extra sales it just wasn't worth it."

"The PC market is a very strong market and we will have a cricket game out on that in three or four months, but obviously that won't be in time for the World Cup."

The firm is hoping to tie in with USD for promotion of the title, looking to organise local cricket teams to assist with the marketing activity.

Fair parks up

The first All Formats Fairs for 1992 have been lined up, with three new venues being added to the five currently being used by the organisers.

The new venues are Haydock Park, Donington Park, and the Northumbria Centre. Each venue will host four to six fairs a year.

Fair owner Bruce Everiss commented: "Only the All Formats Fair takes everything computing to its public throughout Britain. Its simple, unpretentious, formula ensures amazing diversity and remarkably low prices."



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INSIDE STORY

MEGA OR MEAGRE?

The Mega CD has been on sale in Japan for over a month, and launches are being lined up for the US and Europe this year. TONY TAKOUSHI managed to get hold of one to take a closer look...

The Sega Mega CD was launched in Japan on December 7th with a retail price of 44,800 yen (around £200). It is a CD ROM system with hardware facilities that potentially make it the most powerful video games system in the world.

The CD ROM unit measures 28 by 21 by 8 centimetres high. It has a sleek black casing with a plastic fascia on the front. The CD drawer has a Mega CD motif and there are panel lights to show its operating modes (these include Standby, Access and Ready).

On top of the CD unit is an edge connector to port that fits the external port on the Megadrive, and the Megadrive actually slides in on top of the unit. To the left side is a latching slider that locks the Megadrive on top of the CD unit.

When the Megadrive has been attached it operates as an integral unit and you can use either CD games or normal cartridges.

To the rear are ports for power, mixing (which is probably for microphone or external sound sources) and left/right phono jacks for stereo sound.

There are no buttons on the CD unit as all operations are via a menu which pops up after the boot demo.

What sets the Mega CD apart is the ability to scale and rotate on-screen images with no loss of speed — it takes the basic Megadrive hardware and adds extra hardware functions. To date other players offering similar hardware are Atari with its Lynx and the Nintendo Super NES. The Sega CD ROM is the first machine to offer these abilities, plus the cream on the cake — 550 megabytes' games storage.

To put it further into perspective, simply take any Sega coin-op released to date (*Space Harrier*, *Afterburner*, *Power Drift*, *Galaxy Force*) and you could probably put one, or more, of them on one Mega CD disc. With the extended hardware abilities of the CD ROM it would be possible to emulate the coin-op almost identically!

On switching on the power, the user is shown a plaque with a Mega CD motif and the operating system number in the top right corner (version 1.0). The plaque then twirls and whirls all around the screen, shrinking and growing with a zippy stereo sound track in the background. It gives a powerful taste of the scaling abilities of the Mega CD.

On pressing Start you go to a menu that allows you to operate all functions of the CD (open/close/program/start/forward etc.). You can choose to play a game or listen to a normal music CD or watch a CDG disc (basically a music CD with pretty pictures).

Unbottled sol

Three games are on sale in Japan at present —

Sol Feace, (a scrolling zapper), *Nostalgia* (a role playing game), and *Heavy Nova* (a futuristic beat 'em up). They all retail for 6,210 yen which is around £30.

Sol Feace is a slickly presented left to right scrolling zapper. It was written by Wolfteam in Japan and it

features fully orchestrated sound tracks and spatial stereo sound. The graphics are average and the gameplay is pretty hot, with the usual power-ups and bosses to take out. There is a very pretty title sequence with digitised Japanese speech and rolling

storyboards. What was impressive was the almost seamless disc access as it loaded in data for various levels.

Nostalgia is a role playing game with digitised speech. Unfortunately I really could not work out what was going on with all the Japanese text and speech.

Heavy Nova is a futuristic kung fu-style beat 'em up. You are a robot and have to take on other robots in a battle to the death. There is a very pretty attract mode with some amazing music and

Continued on page 22



MEGA CD: Sega's ace in the pack

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Monday, 3rd of November 1991 THE NEWSPAPER OF CHAMPION GAMES. ★ 1st year N# 00001

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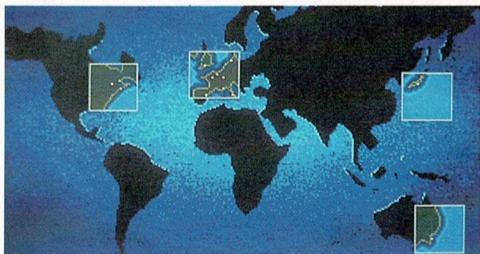
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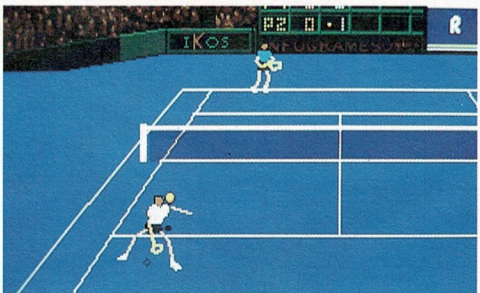
From *ST Action*:
"This should definitely be added to your collection. Smashing stuff!"
ST Action A1 Rated.

A CHAMPION'S PORTRAIT

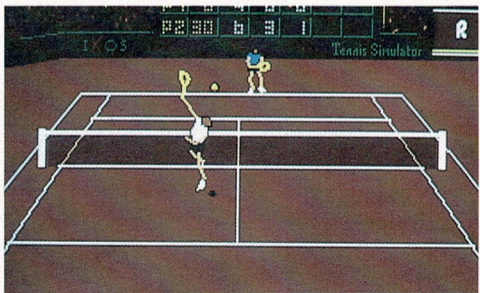
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SPOTLIGHT

BACK AFTER THE BREAK

A cracking good year lies ahead for both 16-bit computers and consoles sales, if a bumper crop of Christmas '91 adverts is anything to go by. So, at any rate, reckons STEVE CAREY...

While a sofa-weary nation hauled itself upstairs for a leak; sloped out to put the kettle on, or just moaned about how appalling the telly at Christmas is these days, you and I were a-shushing and a-tutting, a-leaning forward in the chair and a-staring intently as, yet again, Commodore, Nintendo, Sega or Atari took another 30 seconds to nonchalantly shovel another 20 grand into the crystal bucket.

And what conclusions did we reach? Well, whether it was the X-rated, not-in-front-of-the-kids prosethetics of Atari; the cheery banalities of Commodore; the obscure antics of Sega's Jimmy and his halfpint oriental sidekick; or the sight of Mario's fat face gloating over the globe, this, surely, was the best attempt the games industry has had so far at putting the mass into Christmas.

Indecent behaviour

This was the Christmas when Sega struggled to re-assert its superiority; when Nintendo finally showed what it could do; when Commodore attempted to convert a decent profit into a really indecent one; and when Atari, having thrown the lead away, tried to get rid of the dog tag. Never again will the battles be so equal, the angles so finely judged and the markets so open.

Still, though budgets may have been huge — if not quite as huge as some of the figures being plucked and banded — the end didn't always justify the means.

Did Atari really set out to produce an ad, for instance, that allegedly generated the biggest volume of complaints on record?

Did anyone know what the hell was going on in that Sega saga — or even that it was Sega?

Has Commodore completely misjudged by focusing on the Amiga's strengths as a games machine — when it's three times the price of a good console?

And should Nintendo really be ramming the cultural invasion element quite so far down the throats of the stiff-upper-lipped Brits?

Here, then, are Those 1992 CTW Advertising Awards in full. A hefty bonus: no speeches.

ATARI ST LYNX

Tag line: "The real thing, not a plaything" (ST)
Claimed "actual" spend: £4 million

Agency: Harari Page
Other clients: Oki Printers, Harvey Nichols, Minolta, Barclays
Ad directed by: Bob Laurie (also directed Appletise ad)

The horror! The horror! Banned before 5.30pm — because of special effects showing a series of faces torn away in layers, representing aspects of the ST — Atari's ST campaign

steered well clear of such trivia as computers, screens, keyboards or computer games.

It went instead for the all-in-one (except games) self-betterment machine angle, the kind of computer John Major might have: a sort of comprehensive computer.

The theory was that parents would get the improve yourself message while sprog drooled over the sexy FX. In reality, as often as not, it worked the other way round, with parent foaming over the horror-movie visuals while offspring looked for, and failed to find, the fun.

Still, despite questions over the strategy, it was a nicely put-together piece. So nice, in fact, that Atari is looking at using an uncut 60-second version in the cinema from Easter.

What parent said: "Bloody hell! I'm not having that on while I'm eating my dinner."
What sprog said: "If they won't go for an Amiga, maybe..."

Marks out of ten: Concept 6, Execution 8, Exposure 7, Overall 6

COMMODORE Amiga/CDTV

Tag line: "Brighter by far"
Claimed "actual" spend: £2.4 million

Agency: Evans Hunt Scott
Other clients: Barclays Bank, RAC, BT, Sun Alliance
Ad directed by: Steve Lowe (also directed ads for Brylcreem, Bovril, Today, and Tandon)

If Commodore's intention was to stress the games aspect of the Amiga at the expense of all others, it succeeded brilliantly. This was an absolutely cracking ad: strong sound (Zoe's *Sunshine on a rainy day*), coupled with bright, attractive, exciting images of boy playing on Amiga — you never even saw an ST in the Atari ad, remember.

It did, however, concentrate on games to the exclu-

sion of all else. Ten points, for instance, to anyone (who doesn't work at EA) who noticed that packshot of *D-Paint 3*.

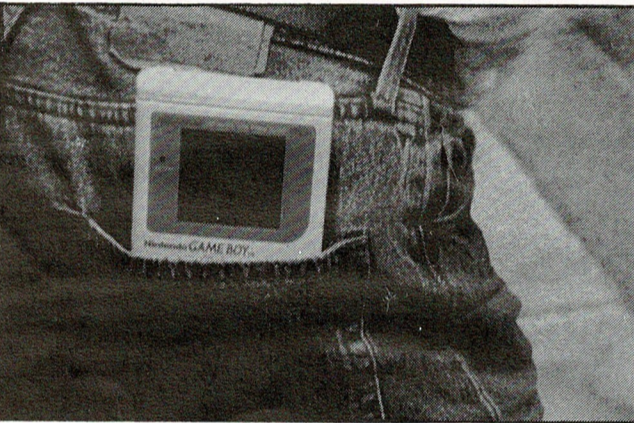
Indeed, the advertising agency speaks of hitting the 12-15 year old age bracket, which is perhaps younger than one might have thought.

Meanwhile the ad for CDTV ("It's nothing short of revolutionary" — geddit?) proved how hard it is to push the concept as well as the product. Still, if the tell spots didn't quite do the trick, Dave "Dave" Lee Travis (lod of work for charridy) was ready to donate many thousand of pounds' worth of advertising for the price of half-a-dozen boxes. Prat.

What parent said: "That's nice dear"

What sprog said: "I know where I can get loads of Amiga games dead cheap"

Marks out of ten: Concept 8, Execution 6, Exposure 7, Overall 7



GAMEBOY: The Pope's favourite toy

NINTENDO NES/Game Boy

Tag line: "How much fun can you handle?"
Claimed "actual" spend: £6.1 million

Agency: Publicis (Geers Gross before merger)
Other clients: MFI, Boots, Renault
Ad directed by: Young & Rubicam, Paris

While others spent on creativity, or stressed technical excellence and all

that cobblers, Nintendo went straight for the toy accessory angle: the Game Boy, a sort of Rubik's Cube that eats batteries.

Nintendo certainly achieved blanket coverage: every child between 4 and 15, it estimated, saw a Nintendo ad 30 times during the autumn.

You know the ads, I'm sure: the "Mario! Mario!" chant from a host of hypnotised teenagers, who turn into Mario's eye which then becomes his face revealed all over the globe.

And everyone, from the Pope to starving Russians, if you believe the ad, already has a Game Boy. And if you're not among them, so it implied, your friends will talk about you behind your back, your partner will no longer find you sexually attractive and you'll turn into Jonathan Ellis. Persuasive stuff.

The only quibble: watching the ad didn't actually

tell you what a Game Boy is for. Still, when you're this hot, why bother?

The Game Gear and even the distantly third-placed Lynx may win the boffin vote, but the kind of punters Nintendo is hitting couldn't give a toss.

What parent said: "Want one"

What sprog said: "Want one"

Marks out of ten: Concept 7, Execution 8, Exposure 9, Overall 8



CDTV: Nice ad, difficult concept



JIMMY: Strange chap, but better looking than Mario

SEGA MegaDrive

Tag line: "To be this good takes ages/Sega"
Claimed "actual" spend: £4.5 million

Agency: WCRS
Other clients: BMW, Carling Black Label, Prudential
Ad directed by: John Lloyd (also directed *Blackadder*, as well as Red Rock TV ads)

Long on style, mood and low lighting and astonishingly short on substance and brand — at least in the central full-length, truck-based sequence — the Sega campaign has been criticised for being incomprehensible, not least by me.

The 30-second centre-piece features a bloke who prefers his handheld (ahem) to his fabulously gorgeous girlfriend, and who is shackled up in a lorry with his dog, Terminator.

Finally there's Joey, an oriental teen male with a grudge of quite extraordinary ferocity, for reasons it may not be entirely appropriate to go into. Strange chap, this Jimmy.

Yet despite the self-conscious obscurity, clearly someone was convinced: the Sega campaign won the In-Din Promotional Campaign of the Year Award.

Good television admittedly. But how many MegaDrives did it sell?

What parent said: "Am I getting old or something?"

What sprog said: "Neat ad. Er, what's it for again?"

Marks out of ten: Concept 5, Execution 8, Exposure 8, Overall 6

And there, in a very real sense, you have it. Take your pick. Either Commodore has taken its eye off the ball, concentrating on games-playing just when consoles are cleaning up and Atari is steaming in on the "real computer" angle; or it's riding the biggest wave ever and knocking seven shades of shit out of Atari, still.

Take your pick. Either Atari is scaring the wits out of the kids and turning the parents right off; or it's spotted the big trick Commodore is missing, cleverly trading off the education sell aimed at parents against the wow-factor kiddies will love.

Take your pick. Either Sega has money to burn and a burning desire to win its ad agency awards, even if that means not giving a toss about the message; or it's already won the war in the enthusiast heartlands and is now making rapid inroads into style-victim territory, leaving behind a leaden-fotted and slow-moving Nintendo.

Take your pick. Either Nintendo has insulted the honour and dignity of the Great British viewing public by fobbing us off with some warmed-over old US tat; or it has realised that technical excellence (8-bit/mono) is much less important than fashion. And of course it has the Super NES, a genuinely exciting machine, still to come, while Sega has...price-cuts.

My own belief is that Atari's re-positioning is probably too little and certainly too late; that Commodore cashed in at Christmas like never before — and never again; that Sega's "sophisticated" sell will be less effective than a more direct, blatant campaign would have been; and that Nintendo's Game Boy campaign will prove to have been the most successful of the lot. But then, what the hell do I know?

Oh, and if it means anything, I still can't decide whether to spend the cheque for this piece on a pair of Gameboys — or wait for the Super NES. One up to Nintendo? □

When he's not goggleboxing ("research"), *Future Publishing's Steve Carey publishes Total!* as well as *Sega Power*, *Amiga Power* and *ST Format*.

Memories are made of these...



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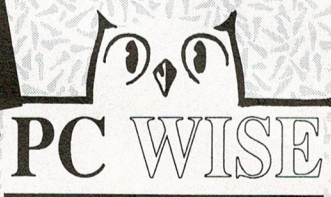
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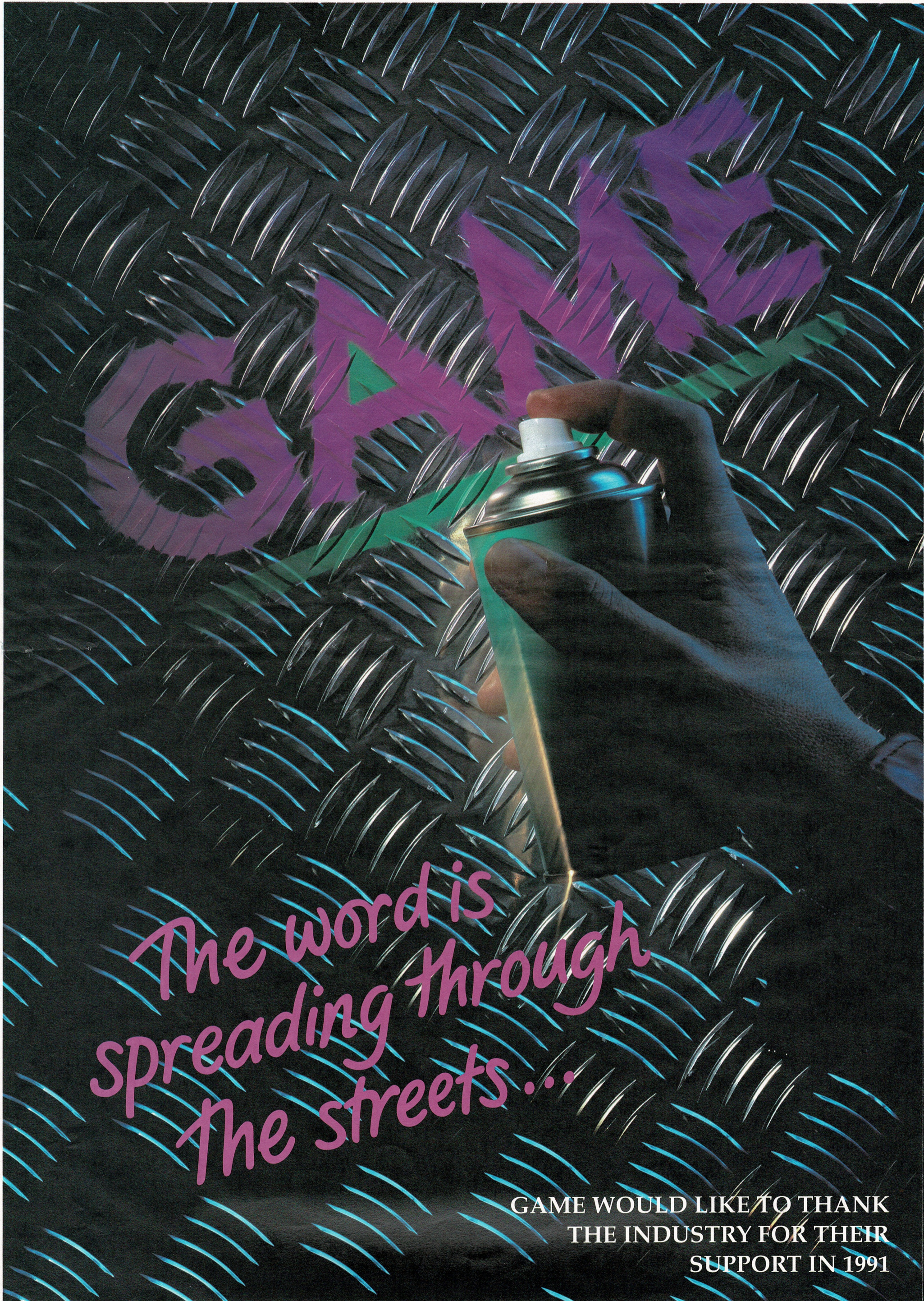
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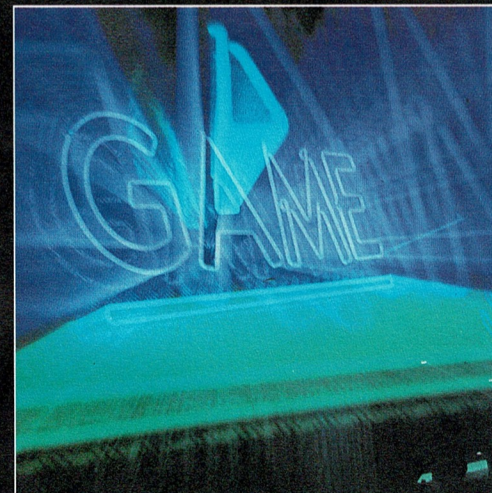
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SPOTLIGHT

TREND GAMES

Fashion, as a wise man once informed us, turns to the left and, indeed, turns to the right. Now it has turned to games. DAVE ROBERTS dons hipsters and tank-top to look at what is behind this curious development...

Computer rhymes with homework and anorak. People who play computer games are called Kevin and have to bath in industrial strength Oxy 10 just to avoid permanent disfigurement.

They are ignored by trainspotters at parties — or

rather they would be if they weren't such unpardonable geeks that never get asked to parties.

Music, skateboarding, videos, even joyriding (no, especially joyriding) — all are liberally sprinkled with that indefinable quality, cool. Computer games reek of

that all too definable commodity — B.O. They're anti-social and strictly for losers.

Harsh words, dear reader, but for some time now that has been the received wisdom of a huge amount of people.

But wait, stop checking you underarm aroma. Things

are changing. For, whisper it softly, recent evidence suggests that the previously unthinkable is happening — games are becoming fashionable.

Slowly, the mysterious body of men and women who live on planet trendy are picking up on games. They are sending down messages to the rest of us. They are saying it's OK to play.

The key factor in this sudden transformation is the arrival of consoles. Consoles are simple, wonderfully and soothingly simple.

Once you've figured out which way the cartridge

goes in there is very little left to learn about your Sega and Nintendo.

And when you've loaded your game, there's no need to take a series of evening classes on the manual. In most cases, shoot at anything that looks unfriendly and if you're not sure, shoot anyway — it probably won't do any harm.

It eliminates the dominance of the technobores. Previously, any chance of feeling inferior to someone whose role model was Sir Clive Sinclair was an experience well worth avoiding.

In four of the country's leading style and fashion publications, coverage of games is increasing with every issue.

i-D, the almost unbearably trendy monthly, has run a feature on the things and has recently highlighted the rising number of top clubs that have arcade machines.

And in a recent issue, two members of its own staff were featured on the fashion pages — both rattling on about how much they loved their Segas.

Face facts

The Face, the long-established, more respectable bible of style, has also succumbed. Its models have been snapped playing with Gamegears and new titles for consoles and computers, regularly appear in its news pages.

In its Christmas issue, the style bible gave its version of what shaped 1991. One page was filled with just a single picture of a certain Mr Mario. The one line of text read simply: "This man is more recognisable to America's youth than either Mickey Mouse or George Bush."

Arena is *The Face* for grown-ups and, despite the older audience, it too has seen fit to feature games on a regular basis.

As you might expect, it is particularly taken with the 16-bit Megadrive. A recent piece of advertorial described the machine as "essential office equipment" and photographed it surrounded by a plethora of other mainstays of any international bright young thing's life.

Now obviously, *Arena* organised the spread in conjunction with, and after inducement from, Sega itself. But the point is, it was quite happy to run it.

It had no qualms about a console ruining the stylish flow and tasteful content of its precious pages.

The leader of the inkies, the *NME*, now features "Favourite videogame?" as a regular question for pop stars in its Material World section.

Recently, in that very column, no less luminaries than The Manic Street Preachers, cited their Segas as things they couldn't live without, right up their with toppling governments and corrupting a generation.

In the even younger end, *Smash Hits* has grasped games with gusto. A recent special edition covering the mag's poll winners' party described the backstage scenes and concluded that it ended up as "one big Gameboy play-off" involving various New Kids, Minogues and Colour Me Badd.

In the new Evian-fuelled world of rock 'n' roll, it seems that the only thing it's hip to be addicted to is *Tetris*.

The news for '92 is that computer and, particularly, console games are fashionable. It won't last of course, that's the nature of fashion.

But hopefully, even when *The Face* and *i-D* have moved on, games will have spent enough time in their spotlight to be left with at least some glow of credibility. □

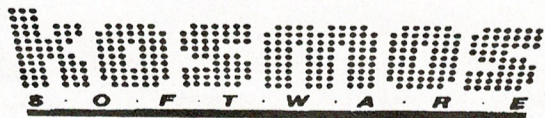
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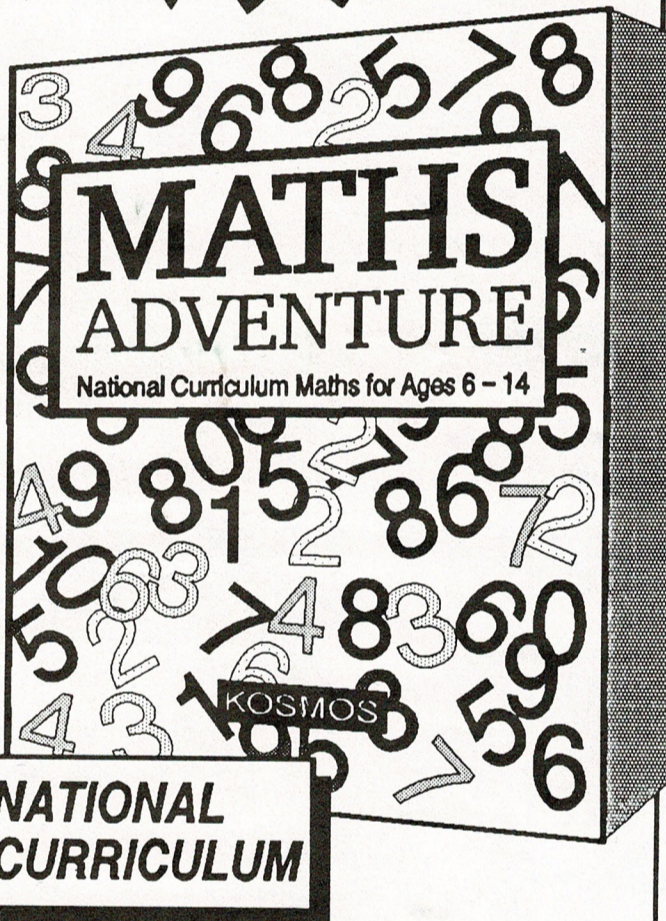
By solving the Maths problems and learning as you go, you face the challenge of the *four games* in the Adventure through Time. Start in the land of the cave man, and if you survive long enough, you can help Zen in his desperate struggle to defend a Martian city.



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Pat Winstanley — *Amiga Shopper* Jan '92



NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Topics included ...

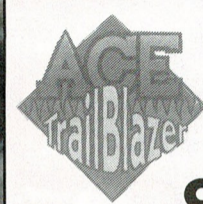
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“Core certainly look set to have another winner under their belts” — Steve White, Amiga Action

Wolfchild

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90%**



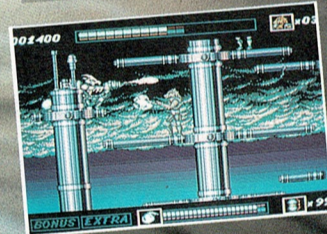
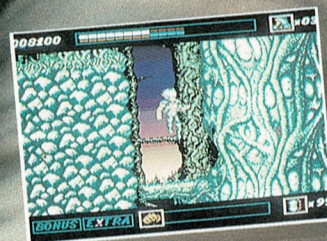
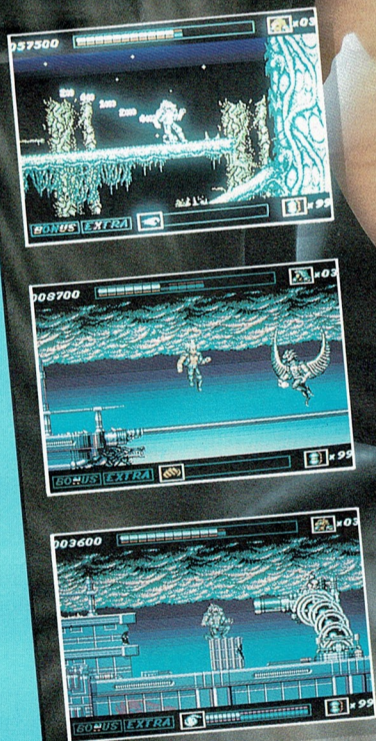
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“The gorgeous animation guarantees a visual feast — knocks the likes of Switchblade II into a cocked hat”

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THE FIRM THAT CAME IN FROM THE COLD

Some dealers are still wondering why they aren't allowed to join the Nintendo party, but those that have passed Bandai's rules and regulations have entered the year with a grin. In the Christmas run-in sales were high, and the service top notch. So argues STUART GARRETT...

There was a time when we thought we'd never be nice about Nintendo and its UK agent Bandai. That's what we're about to be though, and for good reason. Read on. We first stocked Nintendo

consoles and cartridges five years ago, back in the middle of 1987, after we were mesmerised by a man from Mattel, UK agent for Nintendo in those days.

We thought Nintendo were set for a big future, but

caution prevailed so we gave the Mattel man a wary order for three consoles, plus a sprinkling of cartridges.

When they came we hired two smart lads to sit in the store and demonstrate Nintendo every day for

weeks in the run-up to Christmas. Smart marketing, we thought.

In the event, nothing at all happened, even though we repeated the performance every Christmas for the next two years, and at various times during each year, too.

In fact, we didn't sell the last console until late 1990, when the Nintendo sales dam well and truly burst.

Which just goes to show we have excellent product judgement and a truly lousy grasp of timescales.

All in all it took three changes of UK agent culminating with Bandai, plus years of untiring and additional effort by Centresoft, to get Nintendo product moving.

Some like it hottest

Then suddenly it was one of the hottest things around. And that was BG — Before Gameboy.

Independents were normally supplied by Centresoft, who were besieged

for stock from pre-Christmas 1990 right up to the Bandai-Centresoft split last August.

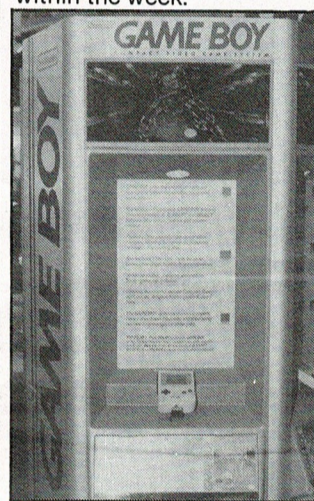
After that, of course, there were a lot of independent outlets with Christmas getting closer and no Nintendo supplier.

Following the Centresoft severance we thought Bandai would be contacting and recruiting at least some of the retailers previously served by Centresoft.

As everyone knows, though, there's no logic in this business so we didn't hear a thing from Bandai and we don't know of anyone else who did either.

By the end of last October we were chastened enough to reverse roles and contact Bandai instead.

After listening courteously they told us a sales person would call and, true to their word, a nice man came within the week.



GAMEBOY: Not all bad

"There shouldn't be any problem," he told us sunnily as he proffered an account application and separate large blank order forms for NES and Gameboy product.

By then our existing stocks were low or non-existent so we charged through both forms, ordering loads of things we hadn't had or been able to get for months.

"Don't worry," the nice man cheerily told us. "You probably won't get even half your order before Christmas but we'll do what we can. We'll get some point-of-sale stuff sorted out too."

Lauded and orderly

About ten days later we heard an account had been opened, and from then on it was nearly unbelievable.

The first boxes of stock came just a day or two later, crisply and neatly packed, without an error or even a minor dent or crease to mar the effect.

After that, there were two or three deliveries a week as gradually and inexorably almost the whole of our first order was filled. Sales, of course, blossomed.

But more was to come. Early December brought a phone call asking us to describe our exact location.

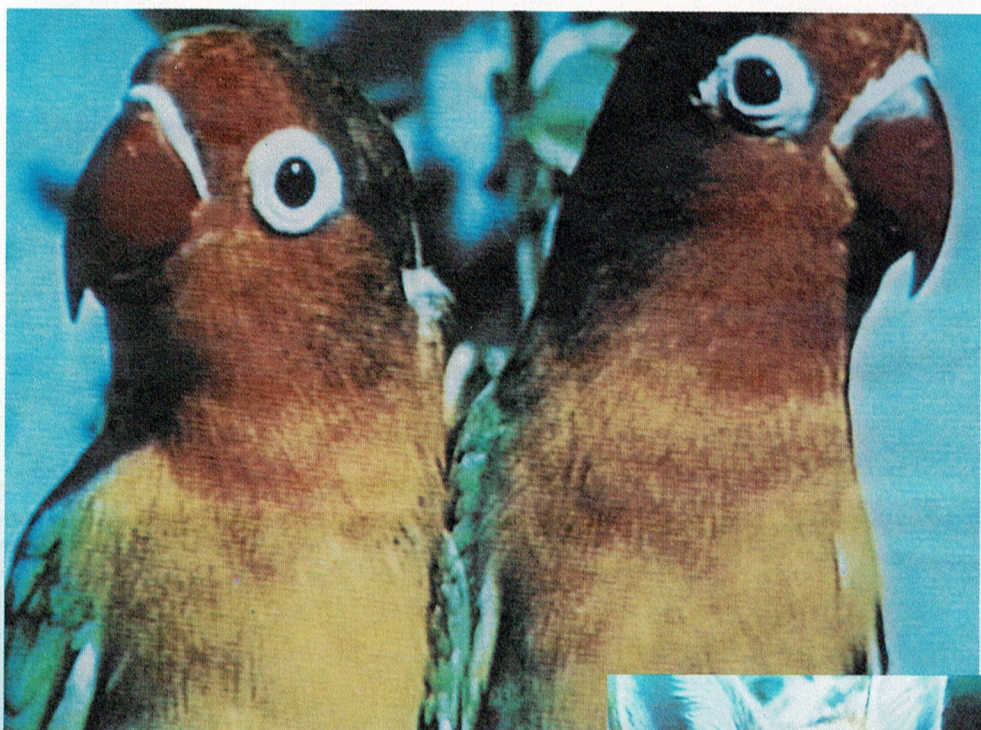
Apparently a lorry was about to deliver Nintendo and Gameboy display cabinets, complete with people to bring them in and, if we wanted, to set them up.

Lorry, people and cabinets arrived just 30 minutes later with the latter virtually complete down to the last nut, bolt, wire and display light.

There was even a
Continued on page 22

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Amiga Computing: The best Amiga digitiser has had the technicolour treatment. Vidi must be one of the most exciting peripherals you can buy for your Amiga.

Micro Mart: When I first saw Vidi "in the flesh" as it were, at the CES show last September it looked to be the answer to a frustrated Digi View owner's dreams — in fact to see pictures appearing on screen without the customary two minutes wait seemed almost too good to be true. I have consistently produced more good quality pictures in the short time I have had Vidi than I ever did with Digiview.

Zero: Now under normal circumstances cheap usually means poor quality but this is not the case with Rombo. Why? cos Vidi-Amiga is the best digitiser for under £500 and I've tried them all.

Amiga Format: Where quality is concerned, Vidi produces some of the best results I've seen on any digitiser at any price.

Amiga User International: The latest addition to the Rombo kit is called Vidi-RGB and brings this already impressive package to the realms of totally amazing. CONCLUSION: Who will find Vidi-Amiga useful? The answer to this is almost anyone with a video recorder or camera and a passing interest in graphics.



13/1/92

The Release Schedule

Week 155

PLEASE ALLOW FOR SLIPPAGE.

A VITAL REFERENCE TO NEW AND FORTHCOMING LEISURE SOFTWARE. *UPDATED WEEKLY.*
 OUT NOW = RELEASED WITHIN LAST MONTH. IMMINENT = EXPECTED AT TIME OF PUBLICATION.

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 AIR SUPPORT25.99 FEBRUARY.....PSYGNOSIS
 CHE-GUERILLA IN BOLIVIA.....24.99 OUT NOW.....CCS
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 JET SET WILLY9.99 OUT NOW.....SOFTWARE PROJECTS
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 MANIC MINER9.99 OUT NOW.....SOFTWARE PROJECTS
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 MICRO FRENCH (GCSE).....24.00 IMMINENT.....L C L
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 MYSTICAL9.99 JANUARY 16 ACTION 16 PREMIER
 ORK25.99 JANUARY.....PSYGNOSIS
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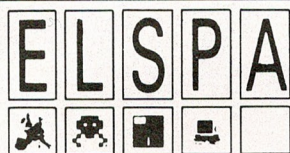
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CHARTALK

Compiled by Gallup on behalf of ELSPA
WEEK ENDING January 4th 1992

ALL FORMATS TOP 20 16-BIT (FULL PRICE)

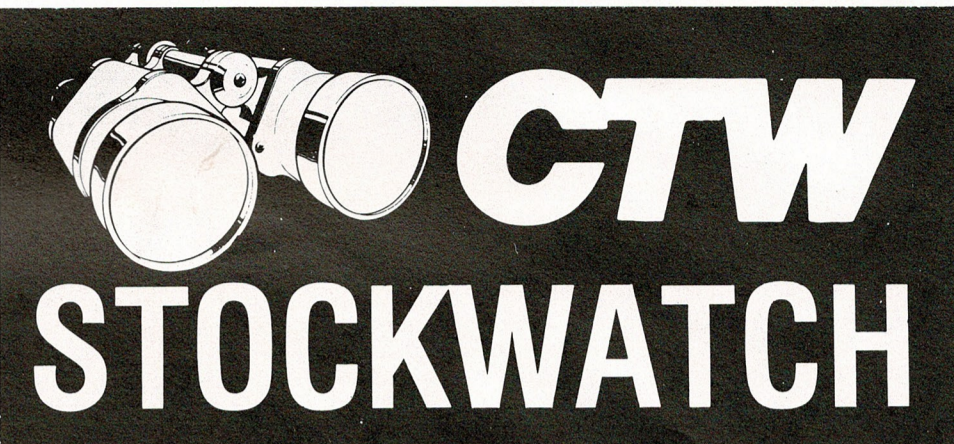
RANK	TW	LW	TITLE	FORMATS	PUB. LABEL
1	1		WWF WRESTLEMANIA	SP AG PC	OCEAN
2	3		LOTUS TURBOCHALLENGE 2	ST AG	GREMLIN
3	4		BIRDS OF PREY	ST AG	ELECTRONIC ARTS
4	7		JAMES POND 2 — ROBOCOD	ST AG	MILLENIUM
5	6		ROBOCOP 3	ST AG	OCEAN
6	11		TERMINATOR 2	ST AG PC	OCEAN
7	9		J. WHITE'S W'WINDSNOOKER	ST AG ST	VIRGIN
8	5		THE SIMPSONS	AG PC	OCEAN
9	19		MICROPROSE GOLF	ST AG PC	MICROPROSE
10	8		OH NO MORE LEMMINGS	ST AG	PSYGNOSIS
11	2		POPULOUS 2	ST AG	ELECTRONIC ARTS
12	10		DIZZY COLLECTION	ST AG	CODE MASTERS
13	—		NINJA COLLECTION	ST AG	OCEAN
14	20		KNIGHTMARE	ST AG	MINDSCAPE
15	17		SOCCER STARS COMPILATION	ST AG	EMPIRE
16	18		FOOTBALL CRAZY CHALLENGE	ST AG	ANCO
17	12		LEANDER	— AG	PSYGNOSIS
18	16		MAN. UNITED EUROPE	ST AG PC	KRISALIS
19	15		MEGA-LO-MANIA	ST AG	MIRRORSOFT
20	26		BOARD GENIUS	ST AG PC	BEAUJOLLY
21	13		HEIMDALL	— AG	CORE DESIGN
22	28		4 WHEEL DRIVE COMPILATION	ST AG	GREMLIN
23	24		PGA GOLF TOUR	— AG PC OT	ELECTRONIC ARTS
24	32		THE GODFATHER	— AG	U.S. GOLD
25	23		FIRST SAMURAI	— AG	MIRRORSOFT
26	30		MONKEY ISLAND	ST AG PC	U.S. GOLD
27	—		BATTLE ISLE	— AG PC	UBISOFT
28	25		REALMS	ST AG	VIRGIN
29	35		PITFIGHTER	ST AG PC	DOMARK
30	22		ALIEN BREED	— AG	TEAM 17
31	—		FUN SCHOOL 4 (5-7)	ST AG	EUROPRESS
32	27		RUGBY — THE WORLD CUP	ST AG	DOMARK
33	29		CRUISE FOR A CORPSE	ST AG	U.S. GOLD
34	14		FINAL FIGHT	ST AG	U.S. GOLD
35	34		MAGIC POCKETS	ST AG	RENEGADE
36	—		EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE	ST AG PC	CDS
37	38		TIP OFF	— AG	ANCO
38	39		BLUES BROTHERS	ST AG PC	TITUS
39	—		LINE OF FIRE	ST AG	U.S. GOLD
40	—		UTOPIA	ST AG	GREMLIN

KEY: ST — Atari ST; AG — Commodore Amiga; PC — PC Compatibles; OT — Other

ALL FORMATS TOP 20 8-BIT (FULL PRICE)

RANK	TW	LW	TITLE	FORMATS	PUB. LABEL
1	1		WWF WRESTLEMANIA	SP CO AM	OCEAN
2	2		THE SIMPSONS	SP CO AM	OCEAN
3	3		DIZZY'S EXEL. ADVENTURES	SP CO AM	CODE MASTERS
4	4		TERMINATOR 2	SP CO AM	OCEAN
5	6		DIZZY COLLECTION	SP CO AM	CODE MASTERS
6	7		CARTOON COLLECTION	SP CO AM	CODE MASTERS
7	5		TURTLES — THE COIN OP	SP CO AM	MIRRORSOFT
8	16		SUPERSPACE INVADERS	SP CO AM	DOMARK
9	12		BIG BOX	SP CO AM	BEAUJOLLY
10	—		OUTRUN EUROPA	SP CO	U.S. GOLD
11	10		SOCCER STARS COMPILATION	SP CO AM	EMPIRE
12	9		PITFIGHTER	SP CO AM	DOMARK
13	8		FINAL FIGHT	— CO	OT U.S. GOLD
14	11		MAN. UNITED EUROPE	SP CO AM	KRISALIS
15	18		DOUBLE DRAGON 2	SP CO	STORM
16	—		NINJA COLLECTION	SP CO AM	OCEAN
17	17		SMASH TV	SP CO AM	OCEAN
18	19		KIDS PACK	SP CO AM	ALTERNATIVE
19	13		RAINBOW COLLECTION	SP CO AM	OCEAN
20	20		RUGBY THE WORLD CUP	— CO	DOMARK

KEY: SP — Spectrum; CO — Commodore 64; AM — Amstrad; OT — Other



by Mark Ramshaw

Welcome to 1992, and — hey! — what happened to the flood of new releases? After another desperate battle between the software giants for the biggest slice of Christmas sales, another dry January is going to leave the shelves a little bereft of new titles. A shame, when the kids will be dying to unburden their Christmas money on anything with nice cover artwork.

Shadows of the best

An ideal time, then, to ensure plentiful stocks of titles such as: *Populous 2* (Amiga) — which only just made it in time for Christmas, and also benefits from a naturally long shelf life. It's had the great reviews, it's complicated (so piracy will hopefully be reduced), and it's one of the few biggies around to clear up post-Christmas. Don't be surprised to be selling this one next Christmas.

WWF (Amiga/C64) — Undoubtedly the Christmas number one, chances are there are still people out there who haven't got it. As good a reason as any for keeping a few extra copies in stock.

Formula One Grand Prix (Amiga) — The one title which could have arguably stolen the top spot from Ocean's wrestlefest, this typically raved-over MicroProse game already seems to have achieved legendary status. I've no doubt that sales will be plentiful following the gushing reviews plastered in every Amiga mag since October.

Another World (Amiga) — Late reviews and an ever-growing word-of-mouth buzz ought to keep US Gold's storming arcade adventure on the move. Definitely one to use as an in-store demo, this is a game with real class — the non-thinking man's *Monkey Island*.

Wolfchild (Amiga) — After a couple of hiccups last summer (*Frenetic*, *Warzone*), Core regained its solid reputation with the more ambitious *Thunderhawk* and hype-saturated *Heimdall*.

It has now turned its attentions back to straight arcade games (it's the console-style platform treatment this time around), and the results have been suitably well received. Ready to ship any day now, *Wolfchild* is a jolly impressive mainstream title. File under 'Games which appeal to fans of *Leander* and *Switchblade 2*'. *The Secret Of Monkey Island 2* (PC) — Another long-term seller, this represents the pinnacle of computer games. Whether this equates with hard sales (particularly on the PC) is another matter. Seek solace in the fact that come Easter, the Amiga version will very probably outsell everything else by two to one.

Coup corner

No post-Christmas re-stock is complete without the requisite number of compilations,

so in absence of sufficient column space to discuss the full range at length, here's five of the best.

Super Sega — Anything with the Sega badge seems to do well, and the five games in the pack are actually pretty good, *Golden Axe* being the standout title.

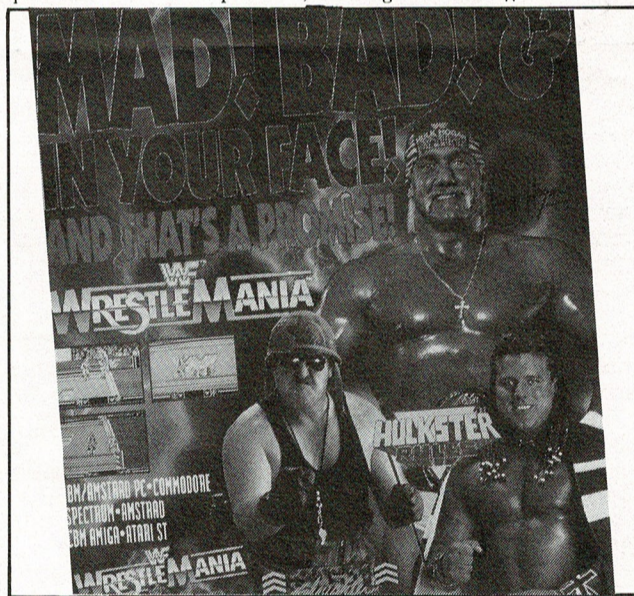
MAX — Probably the most essential compilation around, it gained a standout 90 per cent in *Amiga Power* magazine.

The Top League — Ubi Soft's gathering of five quality titles, including *Speedball 2* and *Mid-winter*.

The Rainbow Collection — Only three titles (*Rainbow Islands*, *Bubble Bobble*, *New Zealand Story*) but it's firmly a case of quality over quantity.

Codemasters' Cartoon Collection — A cheap, cheerful and actually damn playable collection of 'lovable' budget characters. Stirling stuff.

And that's yer lot. Next week 1992's titles will hopefully begin to filter through, so it'll be business as usual. *Mark Ramshaw is deputy editor for Future Publishing's Amiga Power magazine.*



CTW EVENT CHECK

CTW Event Check welcomes details of any shows or conferences being planned for the leisure/low end business marketplace. Please address all correspondence to CTW EVENT CHECK, The BTC, Bessemer Drive, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2DX. Or fax us on 0438 74127.

JANUARY

Birmingham Computer Fair: January 12th, Solihull Conference Centre, 0273 607633.
Consumer Electronics Show: January 9th-12th, Las Vegas, USA, 0101 202 4578700.
Benelux Computer '92: January 24th-26th, Eindhoven Trade Fair Building, Holland, 01031 40528191

Brighton Computer Fair: January 25th, Corn Exchange, Brighton, 0273 607633
British International Toy & Hobby Fair: January 25th-29th, Earls Court, London, 071 701 7127

FEBRUARY

London Computer Fair: February 1st, Central Hall Westminster, 0273 607633
Kent Computer Fair: February 8th, Oakwood Park Halls, Maidstone, 0273 607633
16 Bit Computer Show: February 14th-16th, Wembley Exhibition Centre, London, 081 549 3444

Computer Arena: February 19th-23rd, Larnaca, Cyprus, 081 742 2828.

MARCH

Amiga Expo '92: March 20th-22nd, Odd Fellow Palaet, Copenhagen, Denmark, 01045 3391 2833

CD-ROM Europe '92: March 31st-April 2nd, Metropole Hotel, Brighton, 0895 622233.

Amiga Berlin '92: April 2nd-5th, Berlin, Germany, 01049 8106 34094

APRIL

European Computer Trade Show: April 12th-14th, Business Design Centre, London, 081 742 2828

MAY

Spring Computer Shopper: May 28th-31st, Olympia, London, 081 742 2828.

Portable Computer Show: May 12th-14th, Olympia 2, 081 742 2828.

JUNE

Technology in Leisure and Entertainment (TILE): June 1st-3rd, Maastricht Exhibition and Congress Centre, Holland, 0985 846181

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SPEAKEASY

A winter's tell-tale

I thought I should join the thousands and force myself to put pen to paper and express a few thoughts on the current world of leisure computer retailing.

I do not want to produce yet another piece of literature depicting the sad state of the Sega saga, but then again I cannot avoid an opening mention on the skillful marketing strategies to egest themselves from the Sega stable.

Oh what happiness loomed to computer retailers when Sega produced a best selling match for Nintendo's *Mario* and hence the birth of *Sonic*. Everybody eagerly awaited the arrival of this world selling game — set to boost dwindling sales.

While all the loyal and enthusiastic independents waited for their back orders to be completed a strange miracle occurred. *Sonic* appeared in all the multiples and was then generously being donated to the game hungry public. What kindness — but how pray tell? — where did these huge stocks of an unavailable game appear, when the backbone of the industry goes without? I cannot remember well but do recall ordering a minimal four copies five months ago. Anyway enough said on that matter — I won't even attempt to touch on the moral, ethical or even fair trading aspects of this diabolical situation.

By the way, who can supply me with Megadrives, Game Gears and even the simplest Master System II Plus?

Christmas cheer and merriment brings with it the roaring trade and the regularly annoying price wars to our industry. It is good to see sales increasing and people spending bundles of cash (more so than credit), and it must be said that the machine of the moment is still the Amiga A500. I find it out-numbering other machines and consoles by about four to one.

So imagine our initial disbelief, and then horror, when a customer told us of the pricing of the Amiga pack in a Kent store. We checked the facts and found that Software Plus in Canterbury was selling the machine for £339 (including VAT).

This appears to be cost plus VAT. So be it Software Plus — cut your own income if you wish — but kindly do the decent thing and do not disenchant the money spend-

ding customer by informing them, with some apparent pride, that this is cost price. The margin on Amigas is small enough without discounting, but the average buyer does not appreciate the sheer expense of selling them a machine from a shop, with staff and expert knowledge and advice, etc.

The industry as a whole will never gain any bonus points from activities such as these, and in fact will purely build up an air of mistrust with sales of other products. Also it can be argued that the deadline of December 25th forcing people to purchase now is not necessarily the most subtle time to sell new and ordered stock at cost.

The manager of Software Plus appears happy to tell people the cost of the machine to the trade and cheerfully admits that the sole reason for this is to upset the competition!! (Competition in this context appears to mean outlets which are still making 10 to 20 per cent margin). What a marketing genius. Perhaps he is after a job with Sega?

We are all aware that price fixing is both illegal and unnecessary, but surely no distributor would admit to selling machines to a dealer knowing the end user cost, but who knows what people do for money?

The loser of this hopefully one-off idiocy will only be themselves, as of yet I have not lost any local revenue from our competitive machines — so I'm OK Jack — but I do not think that excuses anyone from revealing trade privileges to the customer, and pray to the powers above that this does not become a future trend.

On a slightly happier note, I will tell two stories from our newest customers' experience with the fully stocked multiples.

"Oh no Madam, your 8 year-old son cannot learn anything on the C64. What you need for learning is the Amiga Class of the 90s."

"If, as you previously told me, the C64 is only a games console, why does it have a keyboard?"

"To make it look good — it is only stuck on for show."

Isn't it good to know that manufacturers prefer to force their end users to purchase goods from cretinous idiots like these?

Yours faithfully
Colin Angus (director)
Parkland Technology

Euro maniac

CTW says 'Konami is to become the first publisher to release games with on-screen English, French and German', (CTW Europe — January).

Oh no they're not!

Maniac Mansion for the NES will hit the streets during early '92 in French German and Italian. By spring '92 it will also be available in Spanish and Swedish.

If you need any further information about the great games available from Jaleco I will be pleased to assist.

Best regards
Norman Leftly
Head of European Operations
Jaleco Europe

Strachan warning

Dear Mr Strachan of Domark.

In reference to your last two letters, constant phonecalls, hanging around outside my house, flowers, chocolates, diamonds, cars and other gifts, NO! You cannot have my autograph and if you continue to harass me I shall have the police enforce that restraining order.

Happy New Year everyone (except Ingham).

Ciarran Brennan
EMAP Images
London

Every picture tells a story

I have just read this week's *Computer Trade Weekly* and was shocked to see my photograph printed twice at the top of page 23.

No reference was made to this photograph in the articles below and, upon reading them, I strongly object to being associated by implication with such offensive material. I found the whole of the *Christmas Trade Weekly* section extremely unfunny and in very poor taste.

I enjoy genuinely funny satire and wit particularly at Christmas time when journalists like to "let their hair down" a little. I'm sure that, had they written a "silly" article about me or my company (as long as it did not malign us of course) and sought permission to do so, I would have gladly agreed.

As it is you published two pictures of me without my permission and, because there was no caption or statement to the contrary, automatically implicated me in the subject matter of the articles.

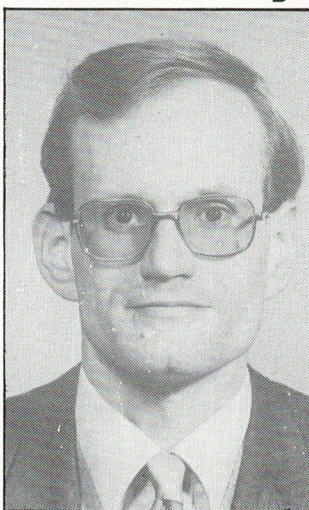
I intend taking steps to obtain compensation for your actions but before I do so I would like to give you the opportunity to reply.

Yours faithfully
Jeffrey M Green
Advantage
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire

— Our deepest apologies, Mr.Green, if you took offence at the double dose of your photograph at the top of *Christmas Trade Weekly* (CTW December 16th).

At no time did we intend to upset you, and we are rather concerned that you have reacted in such an aggressive manner. Just why you are so annoyed, however, is a little beyond us and we would like, if we may, to explain why the very becoming shot was used.

Basically, we are very aware that many 'unsung' firms feel that they do not ever get their fair share of publicity in CTW — muscled



GREEN: This man is excellent

out by the bigger firms, bigger stories and bigger personalities from within the trade. Thus, in the run-up to Christmas, we strive to use our extended news pages to focus in on some of the smaller outfits who — glamorous or not — play a very important part in keeping our own little world turning.

Similarly, many personalities miss the spotlight, despite making a genuine effort to gain the oxygen of publicity. So, from a random selection, you, Mr.Green, were plucked from our photo files. On inspection, we thought your picture to be particularly sharp, with neat photographic direction, conveying perfectly what Advantage has become so well known for throughout the industry — professionalism and a friendly attitude. Lastly, we recognised that it was quite ironic that an established and respected industry figure like you, Mr.Green, had never seen your photograph used — despite no doubt expending much time and trouble to have it taken several years ago.

We would also like to take this opportunity to say just how hard our little team at CTW will be rooting for Advantage through 1992. Let's hope it's another great year for one of the few truly special firms in the industry.

MEGA OR MEAGRE

Continued from page 8

story screens. Again the graphics are average, the gameplay is reasonable and the overall presentation is professional, but not by any means stunning!

Due some time next year is the Nintendo CD ROM. At present little is known about it, other than the companies producing it.

It is a good bet that it will have enhanced hardware and that it will be pitching for the same market, both in tech spec and street cred.

So what is the bottom line on the Sega Mega CD? The initial batch of games launched with the machine really does not do it justice. The games give a taste in places, but that is all. The music is quite exceptional and generally the disc accesses

are fast and in some cases seamless.

The Mega CD will ONLY be compatible with the territory it was released in. Japanese, US or European machines will not work with software released outside its host country.

In many ways the Mega CD ROM is reminiscent of the NEC CD ROM for the PC Engine. The initial games were average at best, and now, two years on, the latest games utilise the new operating system (3.0) and have faster access and play better.

The Mega CD ROM is clearly a machine of the future and by the time we get it in Europe (probably late this year) no doubt Sega will have pulled out all the stops to have some really hot software on show. □

MEGA CD TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

MEGA CD:
68000 processor running at 12.5 MHZ
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8K backup RAM
8 Channel PCM sound (32KHZ sampling)
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CDG/Karaoke disc playing

MEGADRIVE:
68000 processor running at 7.67 MHZ
64K VRAM
Screen resolution 320 x 224
Screen colours of 64 from a palette of 512
Sound 6 FM voices/3 PSG/1 PCM/1 noise

THE FIRM THAT CAME IN FROM THE COLD

Continued from page 18

Gameboy ready-mounted in the Gameboy display, and a NES console plus video monitor ready to fit into the Nintendo cabinet. All at no charge.

The immediate effect was slightly spoilt when we found the NES console was faulty and there were no display racks or inserts for the cabinets.

We phoned Bandai, thinking it might get these problems sorted out before the weekend — but we were wrong.

The firm's reaction was appalled horror and we had a working console, display racks and game inserts

delivered within the hour.

True, Bandai is only about eight miles down the road from us, but along with everything else it was nevertheless a very impressive level of service.

In fact, from start to finish, we haven't experienced anything quite like it in years and it gives us a lot of pleasure to start 1992 by saying so.

Admittedly it's service based on self-interest, but isn't that what service is all about? What a pity some other major manufacturers don't even come close.

No names, no pack drill — but take a look at where my mouse is pointing. □

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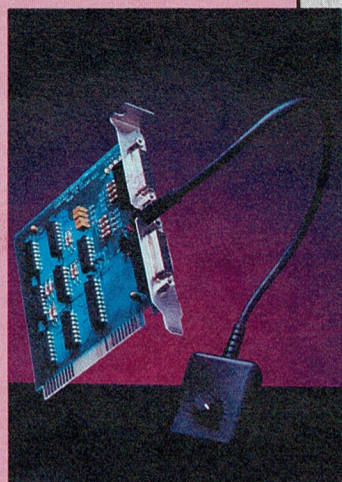
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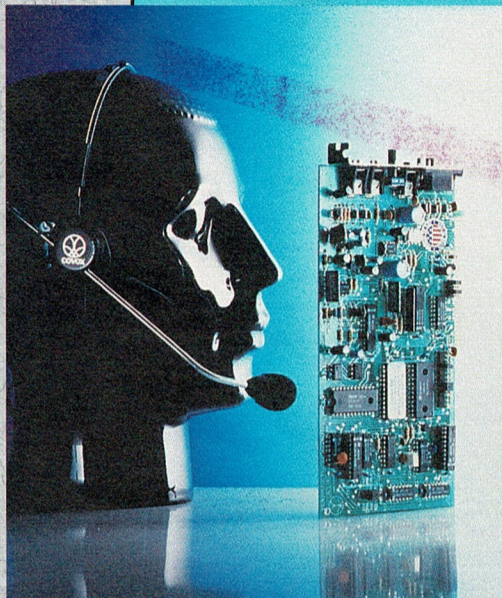
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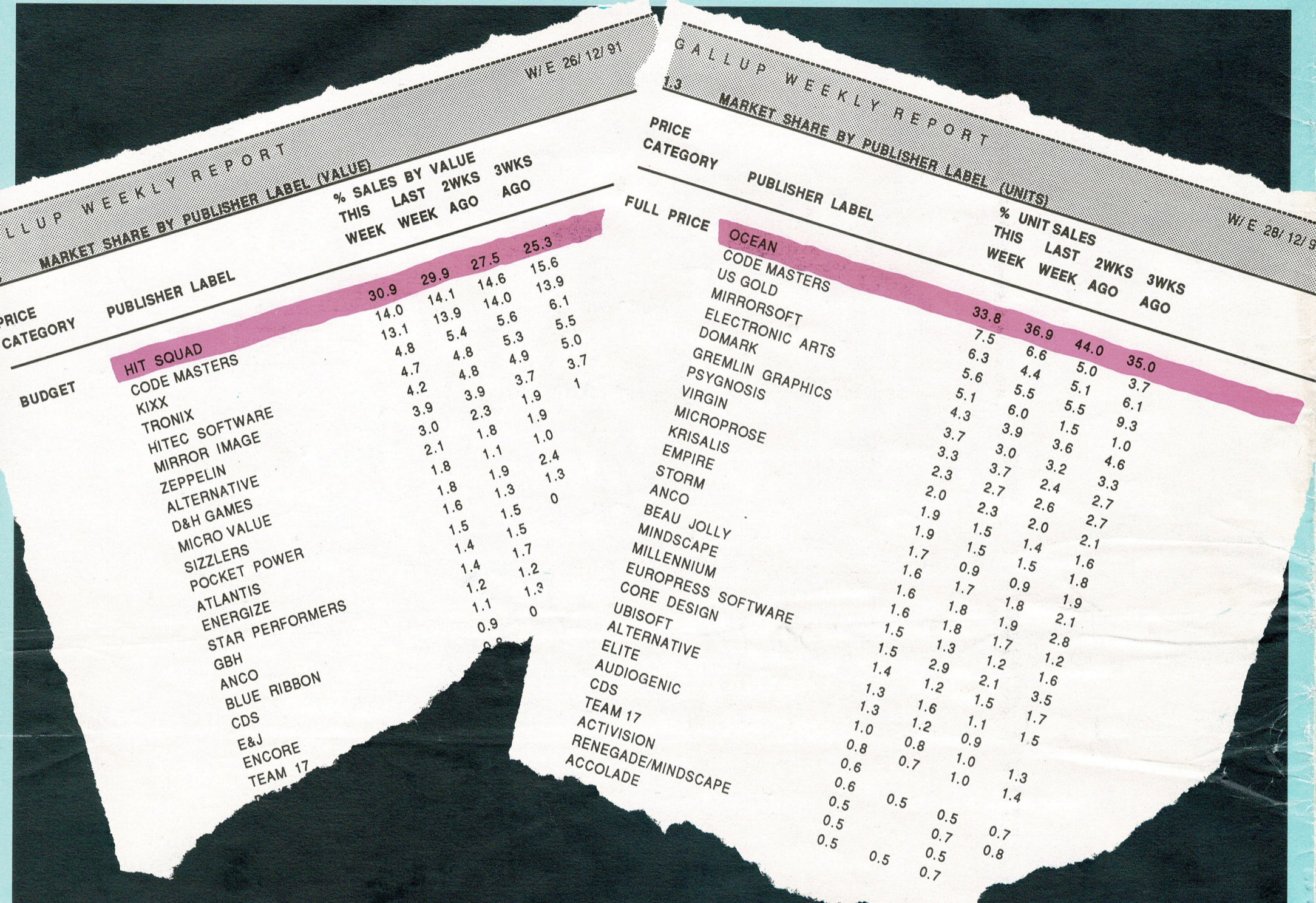
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