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Classic Home Video Games, 1972-1984: A Complete Reference Guide



Synopsis

This reference work provides a comprehensive guide to popular and obscure video games of the 1970s and early 1980s, covering virtually every official United States release for programmable home game consoles of the pre-Nintendo NES era. Included are the following systems: Adventure Vision, APF MP1000, Arcadia 2001, Astrocade, Atari 2600, Atari 5200, Atari 7800, ColecoVision, Fairchild Channel F, Intellivision, Microvision, Odyssey, Odyssey2, RCA Studio II, Telstar Arcade, and Vectrex. Organized alphabetically by console brand, each chapter includes a history and description of the game system, followed by substantive entries for every game released for that console, regardless of when the game was produced. Each video game entry includes publisher/developer information and the release year, along with a detailed description and, frequently, the author's critique. An appendix lists "homebrew" titles that have been created by fans and amateur programmers and are available for download or purchase. Includes glossary, bibliography and index.

Book Information

Paperback: 316 pages

Publisher: McFarland; Reprint edition (March 7, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786469382

ISBN-13: 978-0786469383

Product Dimensions: 1 x 7 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 17 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #442,730 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in [Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Publishing & Books > Bibliographies & Indexes > History](#) #71 in [Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Publishing & Books > Bibliographies & Indexes > Science](#) #316 in [Books > Reference > Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Sports](#)

Customer Reviews

"a labor of love...comprehensive...recommended" --Library Journal
"thoroughly researched" --Game Informer
"useful" --Arba
"Weiss's deep familiarity with his chosen subject matter is an asset of the text, and as a writer he conveys information clearly and without pretension...Weiss's reviews of obscure games make the book a treasure...impressive and fun book...valuable...the breadth of

coverage here is astounding...a fun read and a nostalgic trip supreme...undeniably smart, historically valuable and wide-ranging in coverage." --GameCulture Journal"A must-read...both fun and informative, a highly recommended purchase." --Video Game Collector

Former comic shop owner Brett Weiss lives in Fort Worth, Texas area. In addition to his reference books about classic home video games, he has written for numerous industry magazines.

Wow this has some obscure stuff in it, I learned about all sorts of oddball systems and some of the super early stuff. I have been collecting games and systems for over 20 years and I actually learned about some new things and some fun history. This is more of an encyclopedic read as opposed to a narrative so don't expect a story, its facts, dates and history. If you are looking for an excellent resource guide this is the creature. I love this book, I wish there was a single huge thick version of this that had all volumes in it. I would love giant hard copy of this. I hope the book gets a few more versions and the author keeps up the good work. The pictures are adequate, but sparse. The information is extremely throughout for this kind of book. Great great reference/guide.

Before I start nitpicking, let me begin by saying that this book is great. As far as other reviewers feel about Weiss's personal opinions about games, I WELCOME them. The author would be performing a disservice by not warning collectors about duds before we unload a hefty amount of cash on them. Now let's talk about room for improvement. For the price, and the type of book (hardbound compendium), I expected something with more keepsake quality. The pages are thin, and all of the photos are in black and white, which in my opinion deters from what the pictures are trying to convey. While this book is thorough in describing each game for each system, the essays on the systems themselves are all rather short, 1-2 pages. A longer passage, including more hardware specs, history, and even company politics at the time would have been great. But at the end of the day, it's a welcome addition to my library. As part of a dying breed, I love being able to walk over to my bookshelf to look up a game, rather than having to google it. Great job, Brett. Perhaps a 2nd edition will knock it out of the park.

Since buying this book, I have referred to it dozens of times. The author did a great job highlighting the best games from each console from this era. Definitely worth a read.

What I was looking for.

Well worth the asking price and a great reference guide for the systems covered recommend you get the whole set.

I love this book,thank you. Very helpful. No other books like this on the market. Would highly recommend to anyone who loves gaming

Really good read. Interesting and very informative.

I've owned CHVG 1972-1984 for a couple of years now, so I've come to know the book pretty well in that time. It's a constant desktop companion for me. When I hear mention of a game or system that doesn't automatically ring a bell for me, I know that it will be covered in detail in the Reference Guide. Basically, the way the book is set up is in chronological order starting with the Magnavox Odyssey, and it covers everything up to the Atari 7800 (which actually didn't come out until 1986, but was supposed to be released two years earlier.) Brett Weiss steers clear of ultra obscure prototype or foreign consoles, as well as the early stand-alone Pong consoles, instead focusing only on cartridge based consoles (both home and portable) released to the North American market. This is exactly the criteria by which I collect, so pretty much everything in my collection is covered in the book. While not as all-encompassing as some books that seek to name every console known to man, nor as limited as other guides that forget all about the non-Atari or Intellivision consoles; the Reference Guide hits a very happy medium. (BTW, all you Microvision and Telstar Arcade fans that routinely get shunned by the other console collectors can rest easy- those systems are covered here too). Each system gets its own chapter with a brief one or two page history about the console, and what follows is a capsulized review of each game that was released for the system (in some cases, notable homebrews or "lost and found" prototypes are also mentioned). Brett Weiss is no Leonard Maltin- he doesn't troll for rich subtext underneath all the pixels. If a game is good, he tells you why. If a game is bad, he tells you why. If a game is merely average, he says so. Someone looking for a scholarly treatise on the finer nuances of "Activision Decathlon" should look elsewhere. You're going to find out basic info about the game's story, characters, technical data, and playability. You should be able to decide from the review whether or not a game is worth exploring some more. Again, Weiss is not an overly picky reviewer. He seems to try and keep an impartial view towards even the most primitive of the early consoles and to put his criticisms of certain games into the larger context of the era they appeared as well as the technical limitations of the hardware it

played on. I applaud this "middle of the road" view, because in this case, it works. Video games are a bit different from other forms of media in that their interactive nature doesn't lend itself well to a blanket encyclopedic description. You can read a sterile plot outline of the latest horror film and pretty much know what you are in for before you see the movie. Try that for a Video Game and you'll run into some problems. "Man with hammer climbs ladder to save girlfriend from ape" simply does not describe Donkey Kong in any way that will be understandable to a non-player, which is why an impartial review (in my opinion) is the best way to document each title. My only real criticisms of the Guide are not so much a critique of this book in particular, but of McFarland books in general. Not enough pictures. No color. No dustjacket. High retail price. Medium-brittle paper stock. Sub-par binding. Limited availability. I own two copies of the Reference Guide; one a desk copy and another I keep sealed in Mylar for safekeeping. I learned to go this route when my two other very well-read McFarland books ("A Critical History and Filmography of Toho's Godzilla Series" and another chronicling the films of Bela Lugosi) literally just disintegrated after several readings. For the above four books, I've spent about 150.00 in total. For that kind of money, I expect at the very minimum better binding and premium paper stock. I haven't got around to picking up the companion piece to this book, which continues the overview of classic gaming on into the NES era (my own personal "coming of age"). I have high hopes for it though, and so long as it continues the framework laid down by the author in the first volume, I doubt I'll be disappointed.

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