

BOYS' LIFE

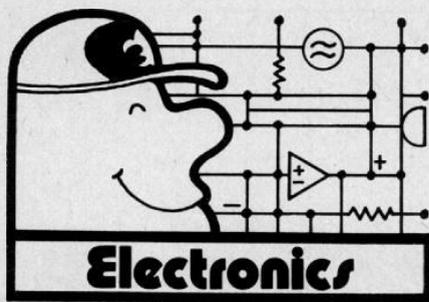
FOR
ALL
BOYS

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PEE WEE SAYS:
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



THE LATEST IN HOME VIDEO GAMES

By Robert L. Perry

Christmas morning will resound with the bleeps, blips, crashes and crunches of the latest video games and home computers.

Prices are at new lows, but colorful action game challenges are better than ever.

For example, Commodore, Inc. has introduced MAX[™], a \$179 three-in-one video game/home computer. It comes with 16 colors, a synthesizer that plays real musical tones and a full-sized keyboard. (The keyboard makes MAX[™] a home computer you can write your own programs for.)

Among its more than a dozen new games and programs, Commodore has *Mole Attack*, a new type of target shooting game, and *Wizard of Wor*, a fantasy adventure game where a player searches for hidden treasure through mazes, tunnels and dungeons while fighting monsters and overcoming other obstacles.

Video games and home computers have come a long way since Atari[™] invented the simple, black and white *Pong*[™] game in 1975.

For 1982, Atari[™] has added System 5200, a colorful advanced video game machine (\$279). Coleco[™] is introducing ColecoVision[™], a video game machine (\$279) with an add-on device that allows you to play games originally made for the Atari[™] VCS.

Mattel[™] has developed a "talking" game unit (about \$69): It plugs into Intellivision[™], and has a speech synthesizer that duplicates the human voice. Another home video system, Odyssey², also has a voice module that will speak words you program onto the screen.

Many Improved Game Features

In addition to new games, major companies have made numerous improvements, making games easier and more fun to play. First, *better color graphics*. For example, the Astrovision Arcade (\$299) comes with 256 colors, (compared to 16 colors with most games) for brighter, more eye-appealing games.

Second, ColecoVision[™], Atari[™] System 5200, and Astrovision Arcade now come with *coiled cords*. They retract easily and store in a compartment on the video game; they replace the straight, loose wires which often were hard to wind and caused a mess around many home televisions.

Third, the new games come with *universal controllers*. In the past, you played some games with "joysticks," and others with game "paddles" with round knobs. ColecoVision[™]'s new all-in-one controller has a control knob that moves in eight directions and a 12-function calculator-like keypad.

Fourth, several games also serve as *home computers*. You can learn to program—write sets of instructions into—the unit so you can make up your own games. MAX[™], Astro Arcade, and Mattel Intellivision[™] offer home computer keyboard units.

Wide Variety of Games

Many companies make video games, for the Atari[™] VCS and for Intellivision[™]. For example, Imagic[™] has released seven new Atari[™] games and five for Intellivision[™]. Two games are common to both: *Atlantis*[™], an adventure game to save the Lost City of Atlantis, and *Demon Attack*, in which you fend off pulsating creatures.

One exciting game concept is Imagic[™]'s *Micro Surgeon*, for Intellivision[™]. You act like a doctor

and go inside a human body to eliminate disease and cure illness.

Activision[™] has 20 games just for Atari[™] VCS. Among its more popular games are *StarMaster*, which simulates space flight, *Ice Hockey*, *Stampede*[™] and *Chopper Command*. M Network[™], from Mattel Electronics[™], has a growing selection of games, such as *Astroblast*[™] and *Dark Cavern*, designed for the Atari[™] VCS. So does US Games, with *Space Jockey*, *Towering Inferno* and three other games for Atari[™]'s system.

Some established toy companies and movie producers have begun making video games. For example, Parker Brothers[™], has introduced a game based on *The Empire Strikes Back*. A player combats a moving row of tank-like Imperial Walkers.

Major movie companies, including 20th Century Fox[™], MGM[™] and Lucas-Films (the maker of *Star Wars*[™]) will also join with home computer game companies to produce video games for Atari[™] VCS.

Many new games are based on popular arcade games. ColecoVision[™] has a home version of *Donkey Kong*[™]; the Atari[™] System 5200's first line includes these very popular arcade games: *Pac Man*[™]; *Space Invaders*[™]; *Galaxian*; *Missile Command*[™]; and *Asteroids*[™], to name a few.

If you plan to buy a home video game machine or computer, you have to select the brand carefully. In general, you *cannot* play games made for one brand machine on another brand machine. (For example, you cannot play games for the Atari[™] VCS on Intellivision[™] or Astro Arcade or even—at least not yet—on the new Atari[™] System 5200.)

You should ask about the number and types of games available for a game machine before you decide to buy it.

Games for Home Computers

Beside video "action" games there is a wide variety of other historical simulation, science-fiction and fantasy adventure games available for home computers.

For example, Avalon Hill Microcomputer Games offers more than 30 games for a variety of home computers, including the Atari[™] 400 and 800, Apple II[™], Radio Shack TRS-80[™], Commodore PET and IBM Personal[™] Computer. Avalon Hill has such challenging games as *Midway Campaign*[™], which simulates the decisive World War II sea battle. Another is *Empire of the Overmind*, in which you must destroy a part-machine, part-spirit tyrant. *Andromeda Conquest* challenges you to colonize galaxies on a vast scale.

Hundreds of such electronic games, ranging from simple games for young children to advanced strategy games for up to a dozen older players, are available for home computers from a variety of companies. ♣

