



THE VIDEO GAME UPDATE

A Critical Newsletter for the Serious Gamesman

Vol 1, #5

© AUGUST, 1982

Two Dollars

COLECO

As we get closer to the release of COLECOVISION, we have some revised shipping dates. The unit itself is being earmarked for limited release right at the end of July. Look for it on just a very few markets, including New York and Boston. Major markets such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and the like, should have it, in limited supplies by the end of August. National distribution will not happen until September/October. As we told you last month, DONKEY KONG will be included with the unit. The Atari version of DONKEY KONG has just released while the Intellivision version will not ship until the end of August. The release of the expansion module which allows the use of Atari-compatible cartridges has been bumped until October.

Coleco plans the release of 15-20 cartridges for its own system by the end of the year. We should see about 7-8 cartridges by the end of September. Those include MOUSE TRAP, VENTURE, TURBO, ZAXXON, COSMIC AVENGER, CARNIVAL and SMURF ACTION.

We have spoken with the folks at Coleco and expect to have some first-hand reviews for our September newsletter. In the meantime, we have some descriptions based on Coleco literature which should help you to get an idea of what the games are all about.

Here we go . . .

MOUSE TRAP, based on the Exidy coin-op, pits your cheese-gobbling mouse against hungry cats while scrambling through a maze of hallways, The mouse's weapons include a secret tunnel, the ability to change the maze by opening or closing groups of doors, and the occasional power to transform itself into a dog which can chase the cats!

VENTURE, another Exidy game, sends Winky on heroic expeditions to claim treasures hidden in a dungeon. Each treasure is guarded by monsters which Winky must kill with his bow & arrow.

TURBO, based on the Sega coin-op, is included with Coleco's Expansion module #2 which outfits you with a table-top console including large arcade-type steering wheel and accelerator which operates from the floor. The Coleco hand controller mounts in the steering console to act as the gearshift. **TURBO** is a fast-paced 3-dimensional racing game in which you drive your car through city streets and tunnels, down country roads and over bridges. You control the speed and direction while passing other cars and avoiding obstacles. By the way, more cartridges are planned for use with the module.

COSMIC AVENGER, based on the Universal coin-op, is a futuristic land and sea battle fought between a ship you control and an advanced alien civilization.

CARNIVAL, from Sega, is an old-time shooting gallery with a twist. One of your targets is a line of "sitting ducks". Watch out, though . . . those ducks come to life when they come to the end of the gallery and start chomping away on your limited supply of ammunition.

SMURF ACTION is a zany adventure where Smurf is off on a rescue mission to free Smurfette held prisoner in Gargamel's Castle.

ZAXXON, based on the revolutionary 3-dimensional arcade game from Sega, is a space battle where your futuristic spaceship zooms through the sky, diving down to bomb enemy fighter planes and to attack enemy installations. The ship must avoid hazardous walls, devastating force fields and the enemy's fire. We are most anxious to see this one first hand as the designers at Coleco are working furiously to make this as close to the fabulous arcade game as possible.



COSMIC ARK and **ATLANTIS** (Atari-compatible) have just shipped (see reviews). Coming within the next few weeks, look for **FIREFIGHTER** and **RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX** (also Atari-compatible).

Meanwhile, **IMAGIC** has announced plans for cartridges for the Atari 400 and 800 computers, to start releasing later in 1982. The first offering for the Atari computer will be the very popular game, **DEMON ATTACK**. With the increased memory capability of the computers, this game should look absolutely terrific.

They have also announced plans for the release of cartridges for the **ODYSSEY²** system beginning in early 1983. Again, **DEMON ATTACK** should be one of the first games available for that system.



A Warner Communications Company

MATH GRAN PRIX still set for release any moment. One piece of news regarding the **SUPERGAME** still scheduled for Fall release . . . Atari plans an expansion module (no release date set) which will allow you folks with cartridges for the current Atari system, to use them on the new system! Don't expect "enhanced graphics", but at least your current games will not become obsolete if you purchase the new system.

Explanation of Rating System:

First set of stars—quality of graphics

Second set of stars—quality of play action

- ★★★★ = EXCELLENT
- ★★★ = GOOD
- ★★ = FAIR
- ★ = POOR

Any game for a given system is compared only to other games for that system. In other words, all Atari & Atari-compatible games are judged separately from Intellivision and Intellivision-compatible games, etc.

CRITICALLY SPEAKING...!

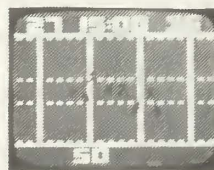
New for your Atari VCS from VIDTEC (formerly U.S. Games) is WORD ZAPPER (★★½/★★★), a memory and spelling game for children of elementary school age. The box proclaims "NEW Improved Graphics", but we found the graphics only average. Whether or not this game will appeal to your children depends on their resistance to a dose of learning with their video game fun, but we like it. The one- or two-player game features the rotary wing Word Zapper, a space vehicle whose lasers are used to pick off moving letters from the scroll and to fire at Doomsday Asteroids, Bonkers and Zonkers. Initially, a word (in more difficult versions, scrambled letters) appears at the bottom of the screen for four seconds and then disappears. The player then uses his Word Zapper to re-create the word and move on to the next one. There is a time limit of ninety-nine seconds to complete three words while being generally harassed by meteors and such which get in the way. RECOMMENDED! (retail \$29.95)

According to the manufacturer, Apollo, their new Atari-compatible RACQUETBALL (★★★/★★½) is played according to official rules for that game. Graphics are quite good, representing a court in a fairly convincing three-dimensional manner. The game opens with the appearance of a door in the court's far wall: two players emerge, move to center court, shake hands and take their playing positions while a short tune is played. This routine is cute at first, but rapidly becomes annoying since you must wait for this ritual at the beginning of each game. Serving the ball is easy for even the clumsiest player since the computer keeps bouncing the ball until you hit it--in fact, you can even make a backward pass at the ball, hit it, and it will career forward! Once the ball is in play, the action is fast. It can be a bit confusing, too, since the white ball casts a white shadow, often giving the effect of two balls in play. Especially for beginners, play action will be more enjoyable in the two-player mode than one against the computer! The computer has a nasty habit of putting the ball in the most unreachable corners! This game is likely to appeal only to sports fans—and not to all of them. (retail \$31.95).

The first three games from M NETWORK (Atari-compatible from Mattel) have been released: ASTROBLAST, SUPER CHALLENGE BASEBALL, and SUPER CHALLENGE FOOTBALL. These are versions of Intellivision Astromash, Major League Baseball and NFL Football redesigned for the Atari VCS.



Super Challenge™ Baseball



Apparently we had a defective batch of ASTROBLAST since two in a row went blank on us, but we did have enough playing time to rate the game ★★★/★★★½. For those who have played Astromash, this will immediately strike you as a much faster game with greater requirements for accuracy. Either the joystick or paddle may be used, with the paddle offering greater control, accuracy and lightning-quick response time. Basically, this is an entertaining shoot-em-up that will appeal to all the space cadets among you. Super Challenge Baseball (★★★/★★½) and Super Challenge Football (★★★/★★½) will be of interest to dyed-in-the-wool video sports fans. Do not expect all the options and nuances of the original Intellivision games, but DO expect to spend a fair amount of time mastering the multitude of functions controlled by every imaginable joystick position. Both games are for two players only as is Atari Football. Only the original Atari Home Run offers a one-player-against-the-computer option.

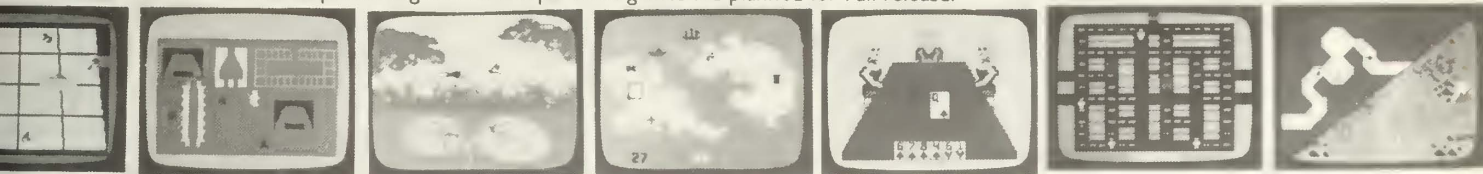
New from Mattel for Intellivision is NIGHT STALKER (★★★½/★★½), a maze game in which your man exchanges shots with various robots while avoiding bats and spiders. Graphics are typically very good, and play action is interesting, but somewhat hampered by the controller. The man must pick up a gun capable of only six shots; shots are permitted in four directions, each of which is chosen by a different button on the keypad--almost impossible to select without losing total concentration on the TV screen. Manuevering the man through the maze by means of the controller disc is also unwieldy. A joystick type of controller works better in this kind of movement.

Parker Bros.' first Atari-compatible release is THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (★★★/★★★½), pitting your missile-firing Snowspeeder against the relentless attack of the Imperial Walkers (if you're one of the two or three people on the planet who has not seen the movie, we won't even try and explain what these are). The game opens with an electronic rendition of the Rebels' theme song, and the battle is on! The entire battlefield is 8 TV screens wide, so you are provided with radar for an overview of your strategic situation. The huge Imperial Walkers take alot of hits before they are destroyed, and they can track and aim at your Snowspeeder. Keep your craft in the air long enough, and "the Force will be with you." This one is great fun for Star Wars fans. RECOMMENDED! (retail \$39.95)

IMAGIC (Atari-compatible) has done it again with two new sure-fire hits: ATLANTIS (★★★★/★★★★) and COSMIC ARK (★★★★/★★★½). Both games feature superb, arcade-quality graphics and truly original play action--quite refreshing in this day of so many copy-cat games. ATLANTIS is set in the fabled underwater city, which you must defend from enemy assault using the weaponry of three missile installations. COSMIC ARK is a beautiful saucer-shaped spaceship whose mission is to bring back creatures from distant planets (using satellites with "tractor beams"). The requisite battles with interplanetary foes are also present, complete with some of the best sound effects we've heard in home video games. These games are truly "state of the art". Hats off *again* to IMAGIC. RECOMMENDED! (retail on both games \$31.95)

ASTROVISION Two new games planned from BALLY ASTROVISION. The first one is PIRATE'S CHASE (Aug), an adventure-type game where you race to scoop up as many gold doubloons as you can carry while pirates are on your trail! Try and collect as much of the treasure as possible before Long John Silver collects you! Suggested list of 29.95. (We have not seen the game for a rating) The second of the new games is THE INCREDIBLE WIZARD, another adventure game. The premise of this one is to challenge The Incredible Wizard and his creatures in their own environment—treacherous dungeons. Shoot the Incredible Wizard and experience the tremor of the entire dungeon as his magic wavers. This cartridge is also scheduled for August with a suggested retail of \$34.95 (no rating as we have not had hands-on experience with the game)

Many of you have asked if the Tron games have been shipped yet, especially in light of the fact that the movie is out. Intellivision is still talking an August release for both TRON DEADLY DISC and TRON MAZE-A-TRON. As the hero, Tron in TRON DEADLY DISCS, you must use both quick action and strategy to avoid deadly discs tossed by evil warriors. You are also equipped with deadly discs to throw at the enemy. In TRON MAZE-A-TRON, you're trapped in the integrated circuitry of a deadly alien computer as you attempt to disable its Central Processing Unit. You must carefully travel through the computer's circuits, ward off its defensive messenger bits and disconnect the central processing unit to escape. Both games are planned for Fall release.



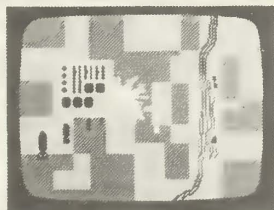
Deadly Discs™ Tron™ Maze-A-Tron™ Frog Bog™ Royal Dealer™ Lock 'n Chase™ Advanced Dungeons & Dragons™ Utopia™

Some of the other Intellivision games planned for release soon include FROG BOG where you are in control of a frog sitting on a lily pad. As the game progresses through daylight, twilight and evening, it is up to you to jump the frog between lily pads in pursuit of flies. UTOPIA puts you in control of a completely uncivilized land where you're responsible for housing, feeding and educating your people in the midst of the combating forces of nature. Destructive storms, hurricanes and pirates pose dilemmas that could wipe out your entire population. Strategy and planning are crucial in this 1 or 2-player game. ROYAL DEALER is a one-player game of Hearts, Crazy Eights, Rummy, or Gin Rummy against one, two or three computer controlled opponents. LOCK 'N CHASE is a run for your money and your life. Escape through vault corridors, swiping gold coins as you go and hide behind locked doors to try to outwit the law. One of the most awaited Intellivision game is ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS which puts you and your comrades on an exciting exploration through peaceful mountains, forests, rivers and plains. You and your team are searching to find and enter the legendary Cloudy Mountain, the home of the ancient emerald crown. To take possession of the crown, you must defeat various cave monsters and ultimately, the Winged Sloths who guard Cloudy Mountain.

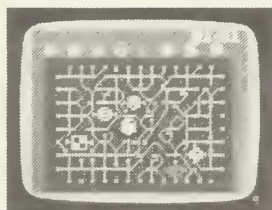
Meanwhile, the VOICE SYNTHESIS MODULE is still planned for September shipping. There are 4 voice cartridges planned initially. They are SPACE SPARTANS (due to ship concurrently with the module), B-17 BOMBER, BOMB SQUAD and TRON SOLAR SAILOR. SPACE SPARTANS has you as commander of a spaceship fighting off invasion forces while constantly having to build your ship's defenses. The female voice battle computer greets you with "Hello Commander, computer reporting" and then keeps you informed of the status of your ship with reports such as "hyper-drive on," and "Battle computer off." In B-17 BOMBER your mission is to attack selected military targets in occupied Western Europe and return your B-17 to home base, guided by the Western sounding voice of your co-pilot instructing you to "Watch out for flak ahead". A southern Bombadier offers further help pointing out "Target in Sight" and "Checkpoint coming". You face a tense and difficult task in BOMB SQUAD as you attempt to disarm a terrorist bomb guessing the correct numerical code. Your bomb squad master makes things even more desperate by saying, "The code, the code, figure out the code." You're trapped in the computer with TRON in TRON SOLAR SAILOR and you must ward off the belligerent Master Control Program in order to transport your space vehicle from one point to another. Yori, your female navigator, advises you of the status of your ship and BIT helps you guess the code which could mean your escape. If you upset the Master Control Program, he'll tell you "You'll regret this" or "I have total control."



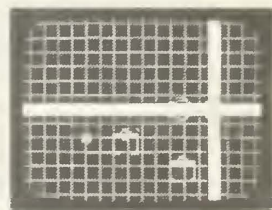
Space Spartans™



B-17 Bomber™



Bomb Squad™



Tron™ Solar Sailor™

M NETWORK from Mattel (Atari-compatible) has just shipped ASTRO-BLAST, FOOTBALL, BASEBALL (see reviews this issue), and SPACE ATTACK, a space action game which pits you against computer-controlled alien invaders.

SOFTWARE UPDATE

TIGERVISION (Atari-compatible) Two games scheduled for release around August 1 (we have no experience with this company so cannot attest as to whether they tend to meet their release schedules). The first is KING KONG (retail 31.95), in a scenario reminiscent of Donkey Kong, but, from what we saw at the Summer Show, it does not begin to measure up to either the arcade version or the Coleco version of Donkey Kong. Their other new release is THRESHOLD, also scheduled for August 1 (retail 22.95) which has you flying a space attack ship through the galaxy encountering different enemy forces. Watch for reviews of these games in the next newsletter.

VIDTEC (formerly U.S. Games) (Atari-compatible) promises a new release within the next couple of weeks, SNEEK & PEEK (retail 29.95). **WORD ZAPPER** (retail 29.95) has just shipped. (see review)

MCA has announced that it has set up a new division, MCA VIDEO GAMES INC. to develop and market game cartridges. There has been no announcement as to which systems they will be compatible with; however, they will be developing games based on characters from some of Universal's successful movies such as SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT and BRUCE, the shark from JAWS. Shipments will probably not begin until mid-1983.

CBS has formalized a pact with Bally Manufacturing to form CBS VIDEO GAMES where they will market at least 3 Bally games for the Atari system by the end of this year. Games to be compatible with Intellivision system are on the drawing board.

New games announced by two new entrants . . . Telesys with FAST FOODS and COCO NUTS; and CommaVid with COSMIC SWARM and ROOM OF DOOM. Both companies are making cartridges for Atari.

ACCESSORY UPDATE

FIREPOWER, a new action joystick, is announced for release by G.C.E. (the folks who make Gametime Watches). This item is designed for your Atari VCS and 400/800 computers. Retailing for \$14.95, this item is advertised as a one-handed joystick with two fire buttons built in, offering the option to fire with the thumb or trigger finger. It's also advertised as being more reliable with a unique switch mechanism which does not require pressure to operate. Expected delivery is Fall, 1982. As soon as we are able to get "hands-on" experience with Firepower, we will review it.

WICO, long known as a manufacturer of controls for arcade games, announces introduction of **ARCADE JOYSTICK, TRACKWHEEL, & TRACKBALL** for your Atari home system. Plans call for release in August of these items. The Arcade Joystick is set to retail at around \$30.00, Trackball at \$70 to \$80. Once again, as soon as we can get "hands-on" experience we will review them.



The **MASTER STRATEGY** games have become some of the most popular games that are offered by Odyssey. Already out are **GREAT WALL STREET FORTUNE HUNT, QUEST FOR THE RINGS**, to name a couple. Newly announced for that series is the Fall release of **CLUE**, based on that very popular board game that has been around for years. It's different from the board game in that it is set in the late 19th century of Sherlock Holmes' London. Sports games are also planned in the future.

PICK AXE PETE has just been released. The concept of the game is that your miner is in grave danger while mining gold. If he wants to survive, he has to jump and dive to avoid being smashed by giant gold nuggets that come from all directions. As you continue to play, the action gets tougher.

We are still expecting the introduction of the **VOICE OF ODYSSEY**, a voice synthesis module set to retail for \$99.95. This module, unlike the one being readied for Intellivision, will audibly reproduce anything the user types on the keyboard. It will be used primarily to enhance educational cartridges. We expect this unit sometime in the 4th quarter of 1982.

The news for 1983 is **ODYSSEY³** with much improved graphics. We have not seen it for evaluation and no price is set; however, the good news is that they plan an adaptor which will allow you to use your **ODYSSEY²** cartridges. For once, your current cartridges will not be pushed into obsolescence! The **MASTER STRATEGY** games, so popular for **ODYSSEY²** will take on an entirely new dimension with the new unit. Talk is that one of the first Master Strategy games to be made available will an entire football season (this may keep YOU occupied for the entire football season) with multiple teams, players who can be traded and much more! This one sounds as though it's for the true football aficionado. Odyssey also plans the resurrection of its character, K.C. Munchkin in a new game called **K.C.'S CRAZY CHASE**.

VIDEO TAKE-OUT'S TOP 10 SELLERS

This Month	Last Month		
1	3	Starmaster (Activision)	
2	4	Chopper Command (Activision)	
3	1	Defender (Atari)	
4	-	Space Hawk (Intellivision)	
5	2	Demon Attack (Imagic)	
6	8	Haunted House (Atari)	
7	-	Space Invaders (Atari)	
8	6	Pac Mac (Atari)	
9	-	Star Strike (Intellivision)	
10	-	Space Cavern (Apollo)	
-	tie	5	Yar's Revenge (Atari)

COMING NEXT MONTH...

- . . . Reviews of many new games including:
 - . . DEMONS TO DIAMONDS (Atari)
 - . . MATH GRAN PRIX (Atari)
 - . . FIREFIGHTER (Imagic)
 - . . RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX (Imagic)
 - . . SUB-HUNT (Intellivision)
 - . . REVERSI (Intellivision)
 - . . PITFALL (Activision)

Up-To-The-Minute information on **COLECOVISION**
 Book Review of **BUYING AND BEATING THE HOME VIDEO GAMES** by Ken Uston
 and much more .

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