Supercade: A Visual History of the Videogame Age 1971-1984

By Van Burnham

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It was a time when technology was king, status was determined by your high score, and videogames were blitzing the world...From Pong to Pac-Man, Asteroids to Zaxxon -- more than fifty million people around the world have come of age within the electronic flux of videogames, their subconscious forever etched with images projected from arcade and home videogame systems.

From the first interactive blips of electronic light at Brookhaven National Labs and the creation of Spacewar! at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; to the invention of the TV Game Project and the myriad systems of Magnavox, Atari, Coleco, and Mattel that followed; through the rise of the Golden Age of videogames and forward into the imagination of millions, *Supercade* is the first book to illustrate and document the history, legacy, and visual language of the videogame phenomenon.

Exuberantly written and illustrated in full color, *Supercade* pays tribute to the technology, games, and visionaries of one of the most influential periods in the history of computer science -- one that profoundly shaped the modern technological landscape and helped change the way people view entertainment.

Supercade includes contributions from such commentators and particpants as Ralph Baer, Julian Dibbell, Keith Feinstein, Joe Fielder, Lauren Fielder, Justin Hall, Leonard Herman, Steven Johnson, Steven Kent, Nick Montfort, Bob Parks, Carl Steadman, and Tom Vanderbilt.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
The generation now in its 30s pumped innumerable quarters into free-standing video consoles with protruding joysticks, steering wheels, and "fire" buttons the quaint precursors of today's dollar-based sensory overload and sleekly sophisticated home systems. Burnham, an L.A.-based Wired contributing editor and a member of the Video Arcade Preservation Society, lovingly collects screen shots of faves like Space Invaders, Pac-Man and Q*bert, along with early games like Computer Space and Pong, and home games from Atari and Nintendo. The cheeky capsule descriptions of each game from Burnham and others are matched with longer essays from writers like Julian Dibble (My Tiny Life: Crime and Passion in a Virtual World), who writes about the text-based game Adventure, and former Feed editor Steven Johnson (Emergence) on Atari competitor Intellivision. The chronological organization holds the book's disparate games and players together adequately, but readers looking for a straight narrative history should look elsewhere: this is all about memory jogging and rapturous description. Notably, Burnham did the book's text, design and production; the layout is quirky and provocative but not disorienting, and the print quality is excellent. (Nov.) Forecast: While the book can't compete with the actual experience of playing the games, Burnham's time capsule will given as a gift among gamers (not a small subculture), and browsers from its demographic will at least flip through. The MIT imprint could lead to some campus acquisitions, especially for schools with modern media and culture departments.

From Library Journal
Initially thought to be mere fads, video games have become entrenched in global popular culture. These two books use different approaches to document the phenomenon. Kent, a freelance writer, interviewed video game innovators such as Atari founder Nolan Bushnell and Pac-Man creator Toru Iwatani, among hundreds of others, to provide a definitive history. He includes photos of the major video game players and quotes extensively from his interviewees in an academic but highly readable style. The promised index will be needed to navigate the text, but this remains a fascinating and well-researched account of the games many of us grew up with or have encountered in an arcade.

From **Booklist**
Remarkably, the first interactive computer game was programmed in 1958 ("Tennis for Two," devised as a way to occupy bored guests to Brookhaven National Laboratory), and the first commercially available hardware able to download games over telephone lines was produced in 1982 (Gameline, a modem marketed for the Atari 2600 game system). These are but two of the many fascinating facts in this lively, colorful history of the golden years of the video game (i.e., the years before the personal computer became the primary medium of the games). The author, a contributing editor to *Wired* magazine, enlists the help of numerous experts in the field to tell this splashy story in a detailed but userfriendly style. For some readers, this will be a trip down memory lane (Atari, Activision, Pong, Space Invaders, PacMan); for others, an eyeopening story about the quest for video-game supremacy. Either way, it's a winner. *David Pitt*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Hinojosa:

Do you one among people who can't read gratifying if the sentence chained within the straightway, hold on guys this specific aren't like that. This Supercade: A Visual History of the Videogame Age 1971-1984 book is readable by simply you who hate those perfect word style. You will find the details here are arrange for enjoyable examining experience without leaving even decrease the knowledge that want to offer to you. The writer involving Supercade: A Visual History of the Videogame Age 1971-1984 content conveys prospect easily to understand by a lot of people. The printed and e-book are not different in the content material but it just different such as it. So , do you still thinking Supercade: A Visual History of the Videogame Age 1971-1984 is not loveable to be your top listing reading book?

Marie Michael:

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Clyde Miller:

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