

THE HISTORY OF VIDEO GAMES AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

NINTENDO, NES, AND THE CONSOLE COMEBACK

HIROSHI YAMAUCHI

- President of Nintendo 1949 (at age 20) - 2002.
- Nintendo was a *hanafuda* playing card company.
- Yamauchi wanted to make Nintendo a global company.
- Began experimenting with toys after discovering the limitations in the playing card industry.

GUNPEI YOKOI

- Chief engineer at Nintendo.
- Invented the Ultra C Hand; Nintendo's first toy.
- Invented the Game and Watch, Game Boy, and Virtual Boy.
- 'Lateral thinking of withered technology'.

SHIGERU MIYAMOTO

- Hired directly by Yamauchi in 1977 as an apprentice in the planning department.
- Designed a number of toys before Donkey Kong.
- Possibly one of the first 'designers'.

NINTENDO EARLY HISTORY

- Hiroshi Yamauchi takes control in 1949, at age 20.
- Color TV Game 6 released in 1977 at height of Pong excitement in Japan.
- Game & Watch (Gunpei Yokoi) released in 1980.
- Donkey Kong (Shigeru Miyamoto) released in 1981.
- Planned cartridge-based home console launch for 1982 or 1983, just as the industry was collapsing in the US.

GAME AND WATCH

- Ball was first title released in 1980.
- Released 60 titles over the period 1980 - 1991.
- D-pad first appearance in 1982 in Donkey Kong.
- Paved way for Game Boy and Nintendo's continued dominance of the handheld market.

FAMICOM

- Released in Japan in July 1983.
- Sold 500K consoles by September 1983 (Japan).
- Nintendo couldn't keep up with demand for games.
- Created licensing scheme for developers and publishers.
- 17 licensed for Famicom development by 1985.

BIRTH OF THE JAPANESE RPG

- Henk Rogers, American expat, avid D&D player.
- Developed and launched The Black Onyx in 1984.
- Initial launch was a complete failure.
- Subsequently sold 10K copies per month after hand-holding magazine editors through opening gameplay.

BIRTH OF THE JAPANESE RPG

- Dragon Quest designed by Yuri Horii, released in 1986.
- Colourful, kawaii-inspired art. Text inspired by haiku.
- Controls and systems slimmed down for Famicom.
- 2 million copies sold.

BIRTH OF THE JAPANESE RPG

- Final Fantasy designed by Hironobu Sakaguchi.
released in 1987.
- Last ditch effort, hence 'final' fantasy.
- Darker than Dragon Quest.
- Spawned one of the best-known and enduring JRPG franchises.

BIRTH OF THE JAPANESE RPG

- The Legend of Zelda,
Nintendo, 1986
- Phantasy Star, Sega, 1987
- Mother, Nintendo, 1989.
- Dragon Quest III, 1988,
sold a million copies on
launch day.

CES 1984

- Clear winner that year was the Amiga.
- Amiga originally built as a gaming machine, redesigned after crash.
- AVS hardware acknowledged as powerful, but no one wanted to buy.

CES 1985

- Redesign of AVS ordered - resulting in the NES.
- Adopted Japanese licensing scheme.
- Developed two gimmicks - light gun and ROB.
- CES and focus groups still unmoved.

XMAS 1985

- Nintendo of America given \$50 million bankroll.
- Team focused exclusively on bringing NES to market.
- Xmas Eve 1985 had NES for sale in 500 NY stores.
- 90 K NES sold, mostly due to money-back guarantee.

SUPER MARIO BROS.

- Released in March 1986.
- Remains one of top selling games of all time at ~40 million sold.
- Number 1 selling toy of 1987 despite tight production control.
- Single-handedly revitalized console industry.

LICENSING AND CONTROLS

- Developers rush to sign-up, despite strict rules.
- Established zero-bug tolerance.
- Adopted a set of rules similar to Hays Code and the Comics Code.

CONTINUED SUCCESS

- By 1989 23% of all toys sold in the US were a Nintendo product.
- Nintendo Power had a circulation of 5 million.
- Nintendo help line took 50K calls per week.
- Nintendo merchandising everywhere.

EARLY CRITICISM

- Eugene Provenzp Jr., professor of education, University of Miami.
- Portrayal of gender and violence in 47 top-selling NES games. Published in Oct. 1991.
- Accused Nintendo of promoting aggression, and sexist and racist stereotypes.

EUROPE

- Difficult road for Nintendo due to greater interest in home computers.
- Licensing model scared off many European developers.
- Sega provided stiffer competition in Europe than in North America.
- Game Genie developed by Codemasters.
- Rare established by Chris and Tim Stamper.

SUPER MARIO BROS. 3

- Released in February 1990.
- The Wizard released in late 1989.
- 17 million copies worldwide, grossing \$550 million.

BISHOJO GAMES

- Koei released Night Life in 1982 - a computerized sex guide. Hugely successful.
- Spawned the bishojo ('pretty girl') genre
- Defined more by content than gameplay. Subgenres:
 - yaoi - boy's love;
 - yuri - girl's love;
 - bara - men's love;
 - ren'ai - dating sims;
 - eroge - sexually explicit;
 - life sims.

CONTROVERSY

- 177 released in 1986 - goal is to rape teenage girls. Condemned by the National Diet.
 - Ethics Organization of Computer Software formed.
- Otaku Murder in 1989 - serial killer targeting 4 to 7 year old girls.
- Equality Now launched 2009 campaign against RapeLay. Japan threatened a ban and publishers backed off.
- Bishojo has influenced other Japanese developers - Dead or Alive Xtreme Volleyball.