

= Gumball (video game) =

Gumball is a 1983 video game by Robert Cook and Broderbund in which the player controls the valves of a maze @-@ like machine to sort gumballs by their color . The player meets the quota of each level to earn their character ? a factory worker ? a promotion , resulting in a raise in difficulty with more color choices and defective gumballs to exclude . Broderbund co @-@ founder Doug Carlston conceived of the game 's machine @-@ sorting concept , and Cook , the designer , added the gumball conceit . He designed the main gumball processing machine within a week and later returned to add smaller features , like sound and decorative animations . The developer also hid a secret image within the game that was only found three decades after Gumball 's release . Broderbund tested the game and prepared its packaging . Gumball debuted at the June 1983 Consumer Electronics Show and released for the Apple II , Atari 8 @-@ bit family , and Commodore 64 platforms . Reviewers separately noted the difficulty of the game 's later stages , praised its comical elements , and commented on the social role of simulating mundane work . The game did not become popular and copies of it became rare .

= = Gameplay = =

Gumball is an arcade game for the home computer in which the player works in a factory as a gumball sorter and sorts gumballs by color as they flow through a maze @-@ like processing machine . The player controls valves in the machine to divert the flow of individual gumballs towards bins of corresponding colors . If the player sorts incorrectly , the foreman walks onscreen and dumps the gumballs out the bin . The player has a daily quota to meet by the end of the level 's time limit . If successful , the player character receives a promotion ; the player watches an animation of a worker walking home from the factory , and progresses to a more complex level , with more color options to sort and defective , explosive gumballs to deactivate . If unsuccessful in meeting the daily quota , the game ends and the player is left to restart from the beginning .

The game requires a color television or monitor , and optionally works with a joystick or paddle controller .

= = Development = =

Robert Cook wrote Gumball for publication by Broderbund in 1983 . Broderbund had a reputation as a successful publisher . Its games and productivity software each composed about half of the company 's output , and their software in both categories reached the top of sales charts . Broderbund co @-@ founder Doug Carlston conceived the core concept of a machine that sorts based on color , and Robert Cook expanded the concept with the gumball conceit . He spent a week designing the main processing machine , with its pipes and valves . Though he later returned to add more background detail , his original pipe design did not change . Most of Cook 's time was spent programming the game 's functions , such as the how individual gumballs move through the pipes .

Once the basic functions ran reasonably well , Cook focused on making the game fun , with challenge and incentive to return . He added smaller features like sound effects and music , conveyor belt animations , and scorekeeping , but each new feature brought new software bugs to address . To make the game more interesting , Cook added the gumball bombs and tweaked the mechanism that caught them . He iterated through prototypes including a player @-@ controlled claw and an item that traversed the pipes before finally deciding on crosshairs for the player to fire . Cook also added the game 's time limit and the differences between levels . Closer to the end , Cook coded Gumball 's title page and the animated transitions between levels .

Cook then sent the game to Broderbund for testing , which took two weeks . He resolved three small errors and other minor , proposed changes before submitting the final version . By this point , the company had printed the game 's packaging ? boxes , labels , and documentation ? such that they were ready to ship after receiving the approval from game testers . The game debuted at the June 1983 Consumer Electronics Show and was later released on diskette for the Apple II , Atari 8

@-@ bit family , and Commodore 64 .

In 2016 , an Apple II software cracker team found an Easter egg hidden by the game 's creator 33 years prior . Cook had hidden a secret congratulations screen in the game for players who entered a specific keyboard key combination at a specific time and solved the resulting series of substitution ciphered clues . Cook congratulated the cracker team on Twitter . The crackers found the secret while working to preserve the game for the Internet Archive by removing its digital copyright protections . One of the crackers said that while most 1980s games could be cracked by automation , Gumball 's protections , coded by Roland Gustafsson , were exceptional .

= = Reception = =

Chris Browning of the Eugene , Oregon @-@ based Atari Computer Enthusiasts wrote that Gumball was a good interlude between shoot @-@ em @-@ up games , but found that he lost interest when tasked with sorting four or more colors of gumballs . Compute ! ' s Gazette thought that Gumball was fun , and highlighted its " comical " elements , such as the factory manager emptying the player 's bin when the player incorrectly sorts the wrong color into it . The magazine described Gumball as a " strategy @-@ action " game and considered it a useful aid in developing faculties of logic and hand @-@ eye coordination . David Hunter of Softalk asked whether the game was satirical commentary " on the Great American Dream of climbing the corporate ladder " depending on whether the factory work inculcated " good work habits " or " Disney @-@ esque automatons " . He wrote that the game had what corporate trainers would want : an introduction to repetitive tasks and a sense of nervous energy . Three decades later , Jason Koebler of Motherboard summarized that the game never became popular and that copies of it became rare .