

= Automonopoli =

Automonopoli , also known as Go to Jail , is an unauthorised computer version of the boardgame Monopoly , released in June 1983 by Automata UK for the ZX Spectrum . Although other two @-@ player Monopoly computer programs already existed , the developer advertised that their Automonopoli was the first with an artificial intelligence strong enough to compete against and defeat human players .

Initially released under the name Automonopoli , Waddingtons threatened legal action against Automata , and within weeks of its release the game was rebranded as Go to Jail . Waddingtons , concerned about the potential impact on a forthcoming official Monopoly video game , began formal court proceedings against Automata in late 1983 , and the game was withdrawn from sale in early 1984 .

= = Initial release = =

Automonopoli was released by Automata UK in June 1983 , selling for £ 6 ( £ NaN as of 2016 ) . Written primarily in BASIC , it modelled the board game Monopoly in every detail of gameplay . Although other versions of Monopoly for home computers were already in circulation for play between human players , at the time of its release Automonopoli was marketed as the first version of the game with an artificial intelligence advanced enough for the computer to play against human players .

Rather than display the entire board , only two full spaces ( and a section of a third ) are displayed at one time during gameplay . The board scrolls from right to left as the player advances following each dice roll , while pressing the " X " key takes the player to a separate screen showing a full list of sites and their current ownership , allowing players to buy and sell properties between themselves , to build houses and hotels , and to mortgage and unmortgage properties . On landing on a property the player is offered the chance to buy it ; if the player declines , or they have insufficient funds , the property is put up for auction . The game copies the UK version of the Monopoly board game in every significant detail , including the exact wording of the property names and " chance " cards .

Sold almost exclusively by mail order , the game received limited but positive reviews on its release from the few magazines which then covered ZX Spectrum gaming . A short review in ZX Computing at the time of its initial release , praised the " excellent " graphics and the strength of the computer 's gameplay , a theme repeated in a brief review in Crash . The only full @-@ length review , in ZX Computing nine months after the game 's original release , also praised the AI 's gameplay and said that " the only major complaint I can make against the program is its limited use of sound " .

= = Legal action and change of name = =

Shortly after its release , Waddingtons , UK publishers of the Monopoly boardgame , raised objections to the Automonopoli title , saying that there was a risk purchasers would confuse the two products . Automata changed the name of the product to Go to Jail in their packaging and advertising , claiming in their advertising that despite being identical in every way , Go to Jail was unrelated to Automonopoli .

Waddingtons was in talks with Parker Brothers ( the US publisher of Monopoly ) over jointly developing an official Monopoly computer game , and continued to object to perceived infringement by Automata ; Waddingtons spokesman Neville Fishwick said " They are riding on the back of a game we have had for 50 years . They know damn well it 's not their game , it 's ours " . In December 1983 Waddingtons began court proceedings against Automata ; Automata in turn launched a fundraising campaign with the support of the Computer Trade Association , whose secretary Nigel Blackhurst said " The Waddingtons action represents a major threat to the whole computing industry . If they win about 80 per cent of the games software in the market would become challengeable " .

In January 1984 , the courts ordered Automata to withdraw the program from sale . In May 1984 Waddingtons announced that the official ZX Spectrum version of Monopoly would be released shortly by Leisure Genius , although Waddingtons would retain the responsibility for taking legal action against the publishers of other computer games based on the board game . The official Monopoly video game was eventually released in July 1985 , and was described by Home Computing Weekly as " vastly superior to the other non @-@ authorised versions " .