



- [Thief walkthrough](#) Sneak your way through the game in style.
- [Castlevania: Lords of Shadow 2 walkthrough](#) A game guide with bite.
-

[Sign in](#) [Create an account](#)

Login with Facebook

Username	<input type="text"/>
Password	<input type="password"/>
<input type="button" value="Log in"/> Forgotten your details? ▲	

Loading...hold tight!

- [Reviews](#)
- [News](#)
- [EG on YouTube](#)
- [Digital Foundry](#)
- [Release Dates](#)
- [EGX London](#)
- [EGX Rezzed](#)
- [Forum](#)

Search	<input type="button" value="Go"/>

- [Interview](#)

Rewriting history • Page 3

Replay author Tristan Donovan on why games began with the atomic bomb.

- **Share on:**
- [Facebook8](#)

- [Twitter10](#)
- [Google+](#)
- [Reddit](#)

By Christian Donlan **Published** Tuesday, 16 November 2010

[Previous Page 3 of 3](#) [Next](#)

- [Page 1](#)
- [Page 2](#)
- [Page 3](#)

Eurogamer: Given how splintered and diffuse the industry is now, with big releases like Call of Duty and then Facebook games, browser games, iPhone games... do you think it's even going to be possible to write the history of the next 60 years? Are games moving in too many directions?

Tristan Donovan: I think they might be. It's very hard to see these things when you're in the middle of them. That's why in the book I avoided writing about things like Facebook games. They're so new. The idea of trying to write a history of something that's still happening is crazy: it's going to be wrong in six months.

It could just be our perspective at the moment means we can't see the trend, but you may be right: it is getting so diffuse. Again, it would be like trying to write a history of music. How do you start? There's just so many forms. How do you find coherency?

It was hard enough with Replay to catch a sense of coherency towards the end. I guess in the future, you'll see histories of genres more, of various types of games. I think gaming history will have to become more specialised, just as it has with every other medium.

Eurogamer: Two final questions: pick one character from your book without whom videogame history would have been radically different, and pick one person who's perhaps a little obscure but whom you'd like people to learn a little more about.

Tristan Donovan: For the obscure person, Muriel Tramis, a French game designer. She did most of her most interesting work in the 1980s. She was the European equivalent of Roberta Williams.

She came from the French island of Martinique in the Caribbean and moved to France in the 1970s. She had an ancestry that involved slavery and she set out to make these text adventures that talked about slavery, Creole culture, and that sort of thing.

To do that in the mid-1980s, to do something so highbrow in games when we were all playing Jet Set Willy, I think that's amazing. She got recognition from the French government for her cultural impact, and it's a real shame she's not really making games anymore.

A fascinating character, and it's a shame that the language barrier made interviewing her difficult. It's incredible to see such highbrow stuff at such a primitive time, though.

Eurogamer: And now for the pivotal figure?

Tristan Donovan: I'm always tempted to go for someone that people won't expect, so I'm going to say Ray

Kassar, the much-hated chief executive at Atari. There are lots of reasons why.

Firstly, before he took over at Atari, it still wasn't a household name. The VCS was popular but it wasn't the runaway success it later became, and it was under his management that Atari and the VCS became this gigantic thing that defined the perception of videogames in the early 1980s.



Atari's Ray Kassar.

On top of that, it was his unkeen attitude towards developers that led to Atari employees quitting and forming Activision, which created the first third-party publisher. We remember Atari because of what Ray Kassar did, and not what Nolan Bushnell did.

Obviously Bushnell started the ball rolling and created the industry, but this idea of Atari, which became the model of how you run a games studio – it's all crazy and everyone stays up all night coding – that all started under Kassar's regime.

He also commercialised games under his leadership and, ultimately, didn't invest in the research and development Atari needed, which so unwittingly caused the great industry crash. There were other reasons for that, like the rise of video recorders, but it really shaped games in its own way, making the audience much more hardcore and opening the way for Nintendo.

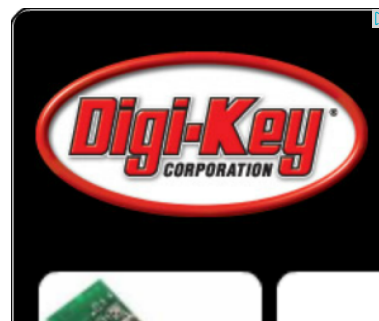
So Kassar's a much-maligned figure, but a perfectly nice man to talk to, and he was a corporate chief exec: he was there to turn Atari from a start-up into a global goliath. He did it – he couldn't sustain it – but he helped to get the whole thing started.

Tristan Donovan's *Replay: The History of Video Games* is out now, priced at £12.99. You can save yourself the price of an iPhone game if you pick it up at [Amazon](http://www.amazon.com).

[Previous](#) [Page 3 of 3](#) [Next](#)

- [Page 1](#)
- [Page 2](#)
- [Page 3](#)

- **Share on:**
- [Facebook](#)8
- [Twitter](#)10
- [Google+](#)
- [Reddit](#)



•



- [Rust alpha review The naked and infamous.](#)



About [Christian Donlan](#)

Chris Donlan is a senior staff writer for Eurogamer. His heroes include Eugene Jarvis, Errol Morris, and Linus Van Pelt.



More from the web...



[Must-Have Products Being Sold For Next To Nothing](#)
(LifeFactopia)



[You NEED to See these 20 NES Games that are Still Fun Today](#)
(Rant Lifestyle)



[US, China ready to each assert power in Pacific](#)
(Nikkei Asian Review)



[For Boston's top video game talent, even a hit doesn't guarantee a job](#)
(BetaBoston)



[6 Fall TV Shows That Got the Ax](#)
(Celebrity Gossip Answers)

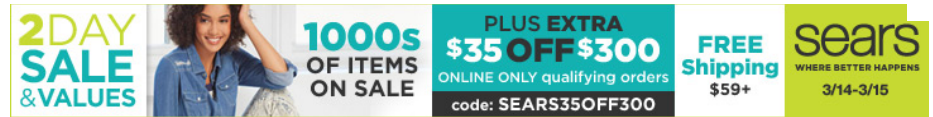


[26 Things You Probably Didn't Know About the Original RoboCop](#)
(Vulture)



[Subscribe to The Eurogamer.net Daily. The 10 most popular stories of the day, delivered at 5pm UK time. Never miss a thing.](#)

[?]



Comments (31)

Comments for this article are now closed, but please feel free to continue chatting [on the forum!](#)

- - [Order](#)
 - [Oldest](#)
 - [Newest](#)
 - [Best](#)
 - [Worst](#)
- - [Score](#)
 - [-25](#)
 - [-10](#)
 - [-1](#)
 - [0](#)
 - [+1](#)
 - [+10](#)
 - [+25](#)



- [Rust alpha review The naked and infamous.](#)

- [Kill_Crazy](#) , 3 years ago

Only £8.04 on the Kindle store. [Reply](#) +1 - + [Edit](#) [Delete](#) [Ban](#)

- [InfiniteFury](#) , 3 years ago