



The Ultimate History of Video Games: From Pong to Pokemon--The Story Behind the Craze That Touched Our Lives and Changed the World

By Steven L. Kent

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Inside the Games You Grew Up with but Never Forgot

With all the whiz, bang, pop, and shimmer of a glowing arcade. *The Ultimate History of Video Games* reveals everything you ever wanted to know and more about the unforgettable games that changed the world, the visionaries who made them, and the fanatics who played them. From the arcade to television and from the PC to the handheld device, video games have entranced kids at heart for nearly 30 years. And author and gaming historian Steven L. Kent has been there to record the craze from the very beginning.

This engrossing book tells the incredible tale of how this backroom novelty transformed into a cultural phenomenon. Through meticulous research and personal interviews with hundreds of industry luminaries, you'll read firsthand accounts of how yesterday's games like *Space Invaders*, *Centipede*, and *Pac-Man* helped create an arcade culture that defined a generation, and how today's empires like Sony, Nintendo, and Electronic Arts have galvanized a multibillion-dollar industry and a new generation of games. Inside, you'll discover:

- The video game that saved Nintendo from bankruptcy
- The serendipitous story of Pac-Man's design
- The misstep that helped topple Atari's \$2 billion-a-year empire
- The coin shortage caused by *Space Invaders*
- The fascinating reasons behind the rise, fall, and rebirth of Sega
- And much more!

Entertaining, addictive, and as mesmerizing as the games it chronicles, this book is a must-have for anyone who's ever touched a joystick.

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- Sales Rank: #50647 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Three Rivers Press
- Published on: 2001-09-06
- Released on: 2001-10-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.20" h x 1.20" w x 7.40" l, 2.30 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 624 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this rollicking, mammoth history of video games from pinball to Pong to Playstation II Kent, a technology journalist and self-professed video game addict, covers almost every conceivable aspect of the industry, from the technological leaps that made the games possible to the corporate power struggles that won (and lost) billions of dollars. Anecdotes are legion. Readers learn that early Atari, for example, had the corporate climate of a dot-com startup, with rampant drug use and meetings staged in outdoor hot tubs. The original name for Pac-Man turns out to be Puck-Man; its creators changed the name after worrying that vandals in arcades would replace the P with an F. In 1978, there were so many people playing Space Invaders in Japan that the game caused a national coin shortage. Kent meticulously documents the rise of home video games and the console wars of the past decade, when Sega, Nintendo, Sony and others raced to produce the fastest, most powerful game system. Also addressed is the public backlash of the '80s, when video games were thought to distract students from homework, and the '90s, when Doom and other violent games were linked to the massacre at Columbine High School. Along the way, Kent interviews virtually every key player in the industry. At times, Kent's comprehensiveness is exhausting 500-plus pages on video games may be a bit much, even for their most ardent admirers. But most often Kent's infectious enthusiasm is enough to carry the reader along. Equal parts oral history, engineering study, business memoir, game catalogue and Gen-X nostalgia trip, Kent's book is a loving tribute to one of the most dynamic (and profitable) industries in the world today.

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From the Inside Flap

Inside the Games You Grew Up with but Never Forgot

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From the Back Cover

"A major triumph."

—*Next Generation Magazine*

"If anyone knows game history, it's Steve Kent."

—Dave Theurer, creator of *Tempest*, *I*Robot*, and *Missile Command*

"This is the best video game history book I've ever come across."

—John Romero, founder of Ion Storm

"For industry insiders and game players alike, this book is a must-have."

—Mark Turnell, designer for Midway Games and creator of *NBA Jam*, *NFL Blitz*, and *Wrestlemania*

"A compelling journey through the evolution of the video games industry."

—Minoru Arakawa, president of Nintendo

"This book is from the horse's mouth. Finally, the game designers speak out in all their wisdom and stupidity."

—Eugene Jarvis, creator of *Defender* and *Robotron 2084*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Clarence Guyer:

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Laura Thompson:

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