



MCCC News



Fort Worth

June 2019

Dallas

Home Computers VS. Game Consoles

Welcome to another month. Things have been pretty uneventful, as long as you don't watch the news too closely. I don't have much in the way of Amiga news right now, so I'll offer the next best thing (or a better thing, depending on your outlook)—interesting and entertaining Amiga-related YouTube video links.

Joe Decuir (Atari/Amiga engineer) seminar

https://youtu.be/dlVpu_QSHyw

Amiga Love - the project to remake Greg Tibbs' A1000 Rejuvenator card

<https://youtu.be/ZmW6LEwgruE>

Amiga Love - the Amiga 1000 developer system

<https://youtu.be/lfUVgHsPoNU>

Revision 2019 Demo Party - Amiga Intros

<https://youtu.be/cjflrv9jGHw>

Revision 2019 Demo Party - Amiga demos

<https://youtu.be/zwoyfh7TgEQ>

Revision 2019 Party - Oldskool system demos

<https://youtu.be/vZnCYjXUaaw>

Perhaps more so in recent years than before, I have become a student of the history of video games

and computers. The more I learn, the more I understand how the forces of history shaped our favorite system. Most of us, especially those who lived through it, knew about the great video game market crash of 1983/4. As Amiga fans may also know, Jay Miner's Amiga hardware design started as something that could have been either a game console or a full computer (and has been pushed as both in different times).

I recently learned the Amiga's spiritual ancestor, the Atari 8-bit series was designed the same way, and perhaps the only reason the low-end Atari 400 had a simple keyboard is because the 'killer app' Star Raiders game was pretty useless without one.

Anyway, the North American video game crash happened while the Amiga was still being designed, and as the market shifted its interest from game consoles to home computers (before Nintendo shifted it back a few years later), the Amiga's design shifted with it. The crash also pushed the early Amiga company to seek financial aid from 'big fish' like Atari and later Commodore, as they originally hoped to support the Amiga project through sales of Atari games and peripherals (such as the 'Joyboard'), but that rug was pulled out from under them.

It's hard to say exactly how, or in what form, the Amiga hardware would have found its way to market if the Amiga company had the

resources to do most of the work on their own.

Most people also know that the video game and computer markets were different in other lands, such as Europe and Japan. What some here may not realize is the Great Video Game Crash was not a global phenomenon, but mostly contained within North America. This was mainly because the different markets were different. Japan's game market was relatively self-contained at the time, and systems like the Atari 2600VCS, Intellivision, or Colecovision barely made a ripple there.

Places like the UK and Europe were interesting in that, from a gaming standpoint, they made little to no distinction between a "home computer" or "game console" over there. The USA, on the other hand, seemed to almost have a phobia about treating computers like game machines, even if that was all their users might have done with them. The crash probably had something to do with that. Still, most US home computer advertising in the mid-eighties was some variation of "Sure, it plays great games, but you can use it to do your homework / writing / accounting too?"

The Amiga was treated no differently here, with what little marketing the system got touting its power as a business and creativity machine that can probably also play some games, and priced the A1000 as a 'serious' system, before the split to

the 2000 and 500 a couple of years later.

Europe was different, and a 'cheap and cheerful' Sinclair ZX Spectrum, BBC Micro, or Commodore 64 loading games from a cassette tape was just as viable a 'console' as some cartridge-based machine, perhaps more so as it was an easier environment for some enterprising 'bedroom coder' to come up with a game idea of their own to possibly make it big. It's worth noting that Nintendo's NES barely scratched this market while it was utterly dominating the US.

This was the environment where the Amiga thrived. Well, it did after the Amiga 500 came out and took the spotlight back after the budget-conscious Atari ST beat out the 'serious' A1000. It's part of why the Amiga is sometimes regarded as a 'European' system despite its American design, and how it found most of its success there, even after Commodore went under in 1994...that's where the games came from, for all practical purposes.

As the Demo Party links above show, the Amiga is still a popular subject for demo wizardry even today. As time goes on, the world markets got more global, and much of the video game market is a bit more samey across the world now, with the same PC, Nintendo, Sony, and X-Box pretty much everywhere (though X-Box isn't too big in Japan from some reason).

The forces of history shaped the Amiga's creation, the forces of markets showed where it would succeed, where it would fail, and where it would eventually end as a contender in the game and computer markets. It's easy to be nostalgic for those days. Things might be more powerful now, but back then you could at least tell the different systems apart just by looking at them.

...Eric Schwartz
From the AmiTech Gazette,
May 2019

and the Commodore 64 Enthusiasts of Greater Victoria.

- Meet other Commodore and Amiga enthusiasts.
- See demos and presentations on and about the Commodore 128, Commodore 64, Plus/4, DTV, VIC-20, PET, and Amiga.
- Come and present your own Commodore projects.
- And of course, see exciting Seattle, Washington!

...<http://www.portcommodore.com/pacommex>

Pacific Commodore Expo NW v3

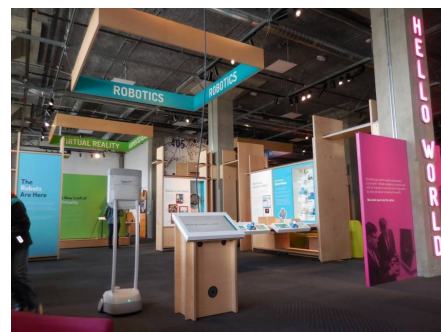
PaCommEx v3, the Pacific Commodore Expo Northwest!

Saturday, June 8, 2019:
10am to 5pm

Sunday, June 9, 2019:
10am to 5pm

at The Living Computers:
Museum + Labs
2245 1st Avenue South
Seattle, WA

Presented by the Fresno Commodore User Group, the Puget Sound Commodore User Group, the Seattle Commodore Computer Club, the Seattle Retro-Computing Society,



June Calendar

June 8 — MCCC Meeting
2:00 PM — Burleson Public Library
248 SW Johnson Ave., Burleson

June 8 — Board of Director's Meeting
Approximately 4:00 PM — Location TBD

July 1 — Newsletter Deadline — 8:00 AM

MCCC 2507 Tamaron Cove Cedar Hill, Texas 75104
<http://www.amigamccc.org>