

64DD gets better and better

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That picture again, but some exciting new information too.

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WAVE RACE RIPPLES

Like all magazines, here at N64 we sometimes don't receive UK PAL versions of games until you do – when they appear in the shops. When that happens we have to base our reviews on existing American versions. This generally isn't a problem, as games like *Shadows of the Empire* and *ISS64* are rewritten

especially to allow for the PAL system's 50Hz frame rate and don't play any differently. Since reviewing *Wave Race 64* last month, however, we've got hold of a PAL version of the game and discovered that Nintendo don't appear to have made any effort at all to adjust it for 50Hz machines. Shame on them. As a result it does run noticeably slower on UK machines, to the extent that you may struggle to beat the lap

times we printed last month. It's still a fantastic game, well worth the 90% we awarded it, and only people who've seen the US or Japanese versions running are likely to notice anything amiss. But we thought we'd better let you know.



IS LUIGI IN SUPER MARIO 64?

No, he's not. Or is he? No. Or – NO. Really. It's a hoax. Although...



64DD gets better and better

That picture again, but some exciting new information too.

Q When's the 64DD coming out, and how much will it cost? – Every N64 Reader, The World

A We don't know. All right? As soon as we do we'll tell you. In the meantime, however, more details are steadily filtering through about Nintendo's secrecy-veiled N64 disc drive add-on. Here they are, in easily digestible pellets:



It'll definitely be writable

The main advantage 64DD discs offer over CD-ROMs is writability – data can be written onto them by the N64 as well as read from from. Up to 38Mb of a 64Mb 64DD disc – which is about the size of a 3.5-inch floppy disc but thicker and stronger – can be



designated as writable, which should allow some really enormous *Sim City* cities to be built.

It'll be fast

The 64DD will transfer data at 790Kb (or 0.79Mb) per second – about five times as fast as the CD-ROM drives used by machines like

the PlayStation and Saturn. And seek time (the time it takes to locate the right bit of the disc) will be as low as 0.075 seconds, compared with about 1 second for CD-ROM. Hooray! The 64DD is being billed as a 'burst access' drive, sending data to the N64 in short, high-speed bursts. This doesn't make it ideal for streaming video and sound off the disc, currently the most popular use for CD-ROM, so if developers want to do that it'll be up to them to find a way.

It'll come with an extra 4Mb of RAM

This will pop into the little hatch in the top of your N64, bringing the machine's total memory up to 8Mb – the size of an average N64 cart. This explains how, at last year's Shoshinkai

exhibition in Japan, it was possible for *Super Mario 64* to be running on an N64 with 64DD but no cart. The extra RAM will allow RPGs and racing games to come with huge levels that can be read quickly off the 64DD and stored in the N64 with no further disc accessing.

It could well have a built-in modem

In the middle of April, Nintendo's chairman, Hiroshi Yamauchi, revealed in an interview that the 64DD will have the facility to connect to the telephone network. The 64DD "will allow users to replace the original

characters in their games with new ones via modems and, later, satellite communications," he said. Gruffly, probably. Further information about the 64DD modem has been hard to come by, though, so it's probably best not to get your hopes up about it or the multi-player gaming, Internet and game-downloading facilities it would offer.

It'll have a built-in clock

Not terribly exciting-sounding,

NEW!

RETROWORLD

with Jason Moore

New column, old games. Really, really old, in fact. Jason Moore owns possibly the largest collection of nostalgic Nintendo memorabilia in Europe...

maybe. But, in fact, the 64DD's ability to remember the time even when it's switched off will open up exciting new gaming possibilities. Imagine an RPG which works in real-time, so certain events don't take place until three days after you've bought the game, or you don't get to meet certain people unless you reach a certain point within a certain time. There's also potential here for a great version of Tamagotchi, the computer-pet craze that's currently gripping Japan – switching off your N64 wouldn't get you out of having to feed your pet.

It'll be cheap

In Japan they're talking about a price of ¥12,000-15,000 – that's £60-75, which is astonishingly cheap. And, better still, 64DD games will cost about half as much to manufacture as N64 carts, which would translate into ¥4,000-5,000 (£20-25) per game. Even after being inflated a bit for Europe, these prices would be good news indeed.

It'll be out in Japan by the end of the year

That's Nintendo's plan at the moment, and the 64DD might even be out in the US by the end of the year too. No UK date has been discussed, though, inevitably.

The 64DD will add enormously to the N64's already formidable powers, allowing bigger games, upgradable games, customisable games and – if a modem really is included – amazing multi-player games, as well as cheaper games. And it's vital to Nintendo that it succeeds. They and the N64 are suffering badly in Japan at the moment through a lack of software – developers being reluctant to commit to the massive costs of developing cart games. N64 Magazine's sources reveal that the 64DD could well go on show at America's E3 show in June. We'll be there, drooling over it, and will report back in detail.

The world's first games console, the Odyssey, was released in 1972. Games were supplied with plastic screens you had to stick onto your TV to add colour, and if you left the machine on too long it burnt permanent lines into your screen. In the 25 years between the Odyssey and the N64, literally hundreds of companies have produced games machines and software.

In the late '70s, Atari dominated the games industry, only to be crushed by the arrival of the home computer in the '80s. By the mid-'80s, Nintendo had conquered the US with the NES, while in Europe, Atari and Commodore fought over the 16-bit computer market. By the late '80s, Sega and Nintendo were set to take over the world and re-establish cartridges as the gaming format. Now we watch as market share is fought for again, this time by Nintendo and Sony.

The result of all this is redundant systems and games, some common, some rare. And while most people throw out their old machines, there's a new breed of gamer intent on collecting them. It all started in America, with the Atari 2600 dominating the collecting scene thanks to the many special edition and 'fan club only' titles that Atari released during their reign over the industry. It didn't take long for rare carts like *Q*Bert's Cubes* to rocket in value, fetching up to \$600. And this was the tip of the iceberg, with the collecting phenomenon now encompassing every format that's ever existed. The UK has quickly caught up with the US, leading the world with user groups and dedicated fanzines.

Nintendo fans have always been lucky when it comes to collecting, with over 2000 NES titles and a huge range of Game & Watch handhelds out there to be hunted for. Over the coming months I'll be taking a look at some of the funkier Nintendo retro items out there...

DUCK HUNT

It just goes to show how much Nintendo has changed as a company when you come to look at *Duck Hunt* on the NES. It was released at the machine's launch and, in stark contrast to their now familiar soft and cuddly approach to software themes, allows you to maim and kill wild animals. That's not to say it isn't fun. The NES Zapper light pistol simply plugs into the joy pad port and is very accurate, leaving you to rely on your aiming skill. Ducks fly around the screen in batches in ten.

Get six out



of the group and ascend to the next level. By the time you get past level ten, the temptation to touch the screen with the end of the gun is overwhelming. Challenging, fun and just a bit sick. What more could you want from a game?

RETRO-RATING

71%

BIONIC COMMANDO

If anyone out there still regrets bursting their Stretch Armstrong as a kid, this is the game for them. *Bionic Commando* is a conversion of the classic Capcom coin-op, and features a man with stretchy arms. In this relatively simple

platform game you use your extending limb to climb to higher levels or swing from one ledge to

another. You also carry a gun to blast any enemies found lurking behind barrels. Unfortunately, the game's simple concept has been ripped off so many times in subsequent games – mainly *Batman* and *Spiderman* ones – that it's lost much of its originality. *Bionic Commando* is fun for a while, but I dare you to stay awake for more than two levels.

RETRO-RATING

47%

TROPICAL FISH GAME & WATCH

There can't be many gamers in their twenties who haven't encountered a Nintendo Game & Watch. During the early '80s Nintendo dominated the handheld market, thanks to their own *Donkey Kong* licence and the vast variety of machines they did. *Tropical Fish* uses the basic single-screen format. Released in 1985, it has you holding a fish bowl. On either side of the screen are fish tanks which your fish seem intent on jumping out

of. It's your job to catch the fish in the bowl, which they then jump out of and back into the tank on the other side of the screen. Okay, so it's not exactly *Super Mario 64*, but it's fun nonetheless. It has turned me off keeping fish, however.

RETRO-RATING

60%

DONKEY KONG JNR TABLE TOP

If I told you that Nintendo were producing full-colour LCD games six years before the invention of the Game Boy, you'd probably be thinking I'd been sniffing the insides of a burst

Stretch Armstrong. In 1982 Nintendo developed the Panaramavision, using a mirror to back-light a completely colour LCD screen and producing the first full-colour handheld. The same technology was used in the *Game & Watch Table Top* range, of which *DK Jnr* is one. Mario is depicted as a baddy, guarding a caged Donkey Kong at one end of the screen. You control DK Jnr, dodging the jungle wildlife to find keys to the cage and so set your dad free. The graphics look quite impressive even today, and the machine itself is still handsome enough to sit alongside your N64.

RETRO-RATING

83%

Intrigued? Jason puts together the excellent *Retrogames* fanzine, and maintains an Aladdin's cave of obsolete (sorry, 'classic') gaming technology. You can contact him at: *Retrogames*, 61 Baccara Grove, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK2 3AS.



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