

N64 sales soar as price plummets

Article scanné dans le magazine N64 n°03 (Juin 1997)

Sujet de l'article : Nintendo 64 (*)

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PLANET 64

NINTENDO 64 NEWS CENTRE

N64
MAGAZINE

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Issue 3 June 1997

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Annual subscription UK £38.35
Europe £46.35
Rest of the World £56.35
Telephone 01225 822511

Printed in the UK



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This issue on sale
30th May
Next issue on sale
19th June

N64
price

£250

£150



SHINY THING

Those fickle folks at Foxdata have already grown weary of the N64's sober shade of grey. So they've given it a fresh new look for summer, 'chroming' it till it's shiny silver. The resulting Chrome Nintendo 64 (an import machine which comes with a step-down transformer and a SCART cable) can be yours for £270, or you can have your own N64 chromed for £60 plus £10 p&p. Fox also do a

range of co-ordinating N64 Controllers, available in gold, metallic blue, metallic copper or chrome again, each costing £44.99. So if you reckon your home would benefit from a dash of chrome, call Foxdata on 0171 359 3711.



SORRY WE'RE LATE

It'll have come to the attention of N64 Magazine's committed fans that this issue will have reached the shops just a teeny bit later than we originally promised. And, indeed, the last one did too. Sorry. It's all James's fault. (Will's the one who's been playing Doraemon all month. - James) (It'd have been

fine if Tim had spent a bit more time reviewing ISS64 and a bit less time flicking elastic bands at me. - Will) (Freak. - Tim) Issue 4 will definitely be available on Thursday, 19th June, however. You have our word as professionals.



sales soar as plummets

But the UK's first 75,000 N64 owners are left in tears...

The slashing of the Nintendo 64's price from £250 to £150 has been the desired effect. THE Games, Nintendo's distributor in the UK, claim that N64 sales are now outstripping those of the PlayStation, which has been in huge demand since being reduced to £130. And the shops we've spoken to confirm this, saying they're selling about twice as many N64s as they were pre-price-cut. In the two weeks following the price cut on May 1st, about 35,000 Nintendo 64s were sold, bringing the total number installed in UK sitting rooms to around 110,000. Good news all round, then. Although...

While the price cut was obviously welcomed by those hadn't yet bought N64s, and can only help the N64's cause in the long run, it's come as something of a blow to the thousands of Nintendo fans who paid £250 to be among the first to own an N64. Consoles are always subject to price cuts, but rarely such large ones, and never so soon after launch. Here at N64 Magazine we've been crushed beneath the weight of letters from embittered Nintendo fans, and deafened by the constant ringing of our telephones. THE Games, meanwhile, had to set up a special phone line to deal with complaints.

What, then, happened? Why 40% off? Why just eight weeks after launch? Why no warning?

It's a mess, to be honest. When the Nintendo 64's original UK price was decided upon prior to March 1st,

N64s were selling in Japan and the US for around £120. Electronics goods are always more expensive in the UK, so a UK price of £200 would have been about right, and would have matched the PlayStation's. For reasons best known to THE Games and Nintendo, however, the N64 went on sale on March 1st for £250.

But two days earlier, too late for Nintendo to react, Sony had aggressively slashed the PlayStation to £130. And shortly after that, American and Japanese N64s were cut to the equivalent of under £100. The N64 suddenly went from being a 'premium product' to looking absurdly overpriced, and as PlayStation sales went through the roof the excitement surrounding the N64's launch faded fast.

For the next few weeks, THE Games officially denied rumours of a price cut. But secret meetings were held at which it was decided something would have to be done. £50 lopped off would still have left the N64 looking expensive next to the PlayStation, so £100 it was. An announcement was made on April 29th, and £150 N64s appeared in the shops two days later.

Nintendo of Australia made a similar move on May 5th, cutting the Australian N64 - which was launched at the same time as the UK one - from A\$399 (£195) to A\$299 (£145). However, Australians who bought their N64s before the price cut received compensation in the form of an entirely free game. THE have no such

policy. Not that they're admitting publically, anyway...

But, whether you've been stung to the tune of £100, or have have skipped to your local video game vendor with £150 in hand, the N64's new price comes as a relief to all of us here at N64. More N64s sold means the likelihood of more new UK games being launched. And, of course, more N64 readers. Hurrah!



△ If you paid £250 for your N64, and were hacked off enough to complain to THE, you'll probably have received a letter like this, from Dick Francis, THE's managing director. It explains the reasoning behind the price cut, but probably won't console (sorry) you much.

Angry, Tense?

If you reckon you're the only £250 N64 owner to feel miffed, take a look at some of the comments other N64 readers have made:

...I've never been as upset or disgusted in my life as when I found out about the price cut. In fact, my N64 nearly got thrown out of the window. My fingers were burnt by Sony when they reduced the PlayStation from £299 to £199, but at least they had the decency to wait longer than 60 days...
Simon Nugent, Liverpool

...I have a sense of humour, but I don't think wasting £100 is very funny...
Keith Patmore, Clacton-on-Sea

...exactly one week before, I bought an N64 for £224. I've just blown £85 when I could have bought two more controllers and an adaptor with £5 to spare. What kind of joke is this...?
Chris Southam, Worthing

...one of my friends said he'd be getting one soon - he was just waiting for the price to drop. If only I'd waited too, I could have saved £100 and bought two more games. Now my friend has two more games for his...
Steven Mytum, Leeds

...not only have Nintendo ripped me off, but they've ripped off my kids who saved up their pocket money to contribute to its purchase...
Mr J Khalid, Glasgow

...thanks very, very much, Nintendo, for cutting the price of the N64. As soon as I heard about the price cut, I decided that I must have a Nintendo 64. I'm now hoping to get an N64 during the next three weeks...
Chris Wade, Bradford

