Nintendo "Bulks" up N64

Article scanné dans le magazine GamePro n°092 (Mai 1996)

Sujet de l'article : Nintendo 64DD Starter Pak

When Nintendo announced the 64-bit Nintendo 64 at its Shoshinkai last november, it also snu

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THE CUTTING EDGE

Nintendo "BULKS" UP N64

By The Whizz

When Nintendo announced the 64-bit Nintendo 64 at its Shoshinkai video game show last November, it also snuck in an interesting announcement concerning the first Nintendo 64 peripheral. A read/writable disk drive is in the works for the N64!

Read'n and Write'n

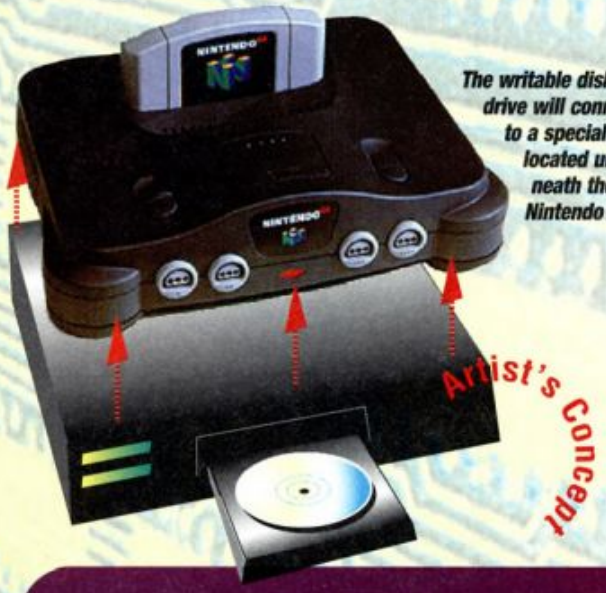
This disk drive unit, sometimes referred to as the 64DD or the "bulky drive" in the press and online, will enable game players to record new data or customize the games they're playing. Obvious uses include saving built-up characters or souped-up vehicles, but such a drive could enable game companies to provide new levels or scenarios for N64 cartridge games.

The 64DD will use special 3.75-inch magnetic disks, which load into the front of the system. According to Nintendo, these disks will hold approximately 64 megabytes of data, or approximately 16 times the data in a Donkey Kong Country SNES cart.

The entire unit will mount underneath the Nintendo 64 console. Additionally, as a further expansion to the N64 system, the writable disk drive will reportedly come bundled with a 1- or 2-megabyte expansion RAM pack, which will install into the N64 memory-expansion slot. This added memory will beef up the N64 main memory (4 megabytes), and it will be available for use by the magnetic disks, the cartridges, or both.

Games to support the drive are already in development. Nintendo is preparing an N64 version of The Legend of Zelda, and Enix has DragonQuest in the works.

At Shoshinkai, Hiroshi Yamauchi, chairman of Nintendo of Japan, all but promised that a workable drive will be demoed at the show in Japan this fall. G



The writable disk drive will connect to a special slot located underneath the Nintendo 64.



The N64 version of The Legend of Zelda will be one of the first games to support the disk drive.

VR FOR THE PLAYSTATION

Virtual I/O has a virtual-reality headset in the works for the PlayStation, and it's even possible that Sony may actually stick its label on the unit. PC gamers may recall that Virtual I/O currently has a headset on the market called Virtual i-Glasses. In fact, you can purchase the i-Glasses with bundled versions of Descent or Tank Commander, which include drivers for Magic Carpet and Dark Forces.

The nifty lightweight i-Glasses headset essentially plants a pair of tiny viewing screens in front of your eyes. The binocular design, which projects dual independent images, helps create a 3D effect. However, the real juice behind this VR system is the see-through lens design, which projects a tiny video image in front of your eye that appears as big as a 40-inch TV screen viewed at a distance of six feet. A mini-stereo system mounted into the i-Glasses stems pumps audio into your VR trip.

An $800 version of the i-Glasses for PC includes head tracking capability, so that when you move your head left to right or up and down you view the onscreen terrain in those directions. However, it's not yet clear whether a PlayStation version will incorporate this cool, but rather expensive technology.



Will Virtual I/O i-Glasses make the PlayStation the first home virtual-reality system?

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