



2600 Connection

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Desert Island Contest Winners

Imagine you are stranded on a desert island. However, you have a 2600 and five games. The task here was to pick those five favorite games. This contest was not very successful; only a handful of entries came in. Perhaps this was because I did not mention the prize. Each person below will receive a free issue of *The Videogame Trader* and a free ad coupon. If you forgot, send in your five choices. They may appear in the next issue. It could be entitled "More Desert Island Contest Winners." It's rather interesting to see the games that were chosen. Here are the entries we received:

RORY D. RICHARDSON (Seattle, WA) Adventure, Tunnel Runner, Double Dunk, Star Wars: Empire Strikes Back, Star Raiders

CHRIS PYHTILA (Houghton, MI) Space Shuttle, Solaris, Ms. Pac-Man, River Raid, Pitfall II

AL BACKIEL (Ridgewood, NJ) Frogger, Pitfall, Super Breakout, River Raid, Ms. Pac-Man

B.P. SHERMAN (College Point, NY) Adventure, Escape from the Mindmaster, Stampede, Stellar Track, Kaboom!

DAVE GIARRUSSO (Liverpool, NY) Crystal Castles, Asteroids, HERO, Gravitar, Super Breakout

DOMINICK ROMAN (Bayamon, Puerto Rico) Donkey Kong, Title Match Pro Wrestling, Star Trek, Buck Rogers, Keystone Kapers

ALEKS ONISZCZAK (Toronto, Ontario, Canada) Kaboom!, Enduro, Checkers, Backgammon, Solaris

MELVIN ANDERSON (Portland, OR) 3-D Tic Tac Toe, Othello, Video Chess, Starmaster, Raiders of the Lost Ark

FRED HORVAT (Chesterland, OH) Pitfall II, Dark Chambers, Gravitar, Stellar Track, Dragonstomper, Raiders of the Lost Ark

LARRY PLESS (Russellville, AR) Solaris, Wizard of Wor, Ms. Pac-Man, Millipede, Demon Attack

WERNER BLEYS (Belgium) Pitfall II, Montezuma's Revenge, Hero, Adventure, Othello

FREDERICK DAVIS (Shawnee, OK) Tempest (if released), Robot Tank, Starmaster, Star Trek, Millipede

JEFF ADKINS (Attica, NY) Tunnel Runner, Track and Field, Pitfall, Stampede, Superman

PAUL GEORGE (West Sacramento, CA) Missile Command, Defender, Adventure, Maze Craze, Asteroids

MARK ANDROVICH (Ventura, CA) Adventure, Pitfall, Kaboom!, Frogger, Yar's Revenge

DAVID ALLEN (Rockland, ME) Frogger, Super Breakout, Pitfall, Lock N' Chase, Demon Attack

WILLIAM SMITH (Bristol, VA) 32-in 1, Tapper, BMX, Frankenstein's Monster, Halloween

SCOTT VANARSDALL (Graham, TX) Ms. Pac-Man, Battlezone, Berzerk, Super Breakout

ANDY FLOYD (Minerva, OH) Xenophobe, Enduro, Survival Island, Crazy Climber, Kaboom!

Frying the 2600

E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial (by Atari) Hidden game 0. Fry the game until E.T. falls in a well. Press SELECT and "0" will appear. Notice that the number(s) are in black. None of the power zones are present—except a few "Call Elliot" ones—and Elliot is not in game 0.
(Courtesy of Terence Micharoni)

Swordquest Earthworld (by Atari) Extra keys. Fry the game until only a sword appears on the title screen. Start the game and you'll have six keys.
(Courtesy of Terence Micharoni)

H.E.R.O. (by Activision) 250 heroes. Fry the game until you see a stranded miner and a spider, but no hero. Let the power run out. The game will then start normally, except you'll have approximately 250 heroes in reserve! Also, at one million points, the score displays "!!!!!!".
(Courtesy of Scott Stilphen)

Pitfall II: Lost Caverns (by Activision) You may start from at least three different areas—one screen over from the original starting point, behind the cave rat, or under the cave rat. The third area is the easiest to achieve. Hold the joystick right for a few moments and you will soon see Pitfall Harry appear next to the scorpion under the rat. If killed, Harry will soar high above the trees before gently falling on the first red cross.
(Courtesy of Scott Stilphen)

Frying is accomplished by rapidly switching your ON/OFF switch back and forth. The 2600 Connection cannot be responsible for any damages to your system.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE: *The Collector's Guide to Atari's Cartridge Labels, E.T., Cartridge List: Sega / Bally Midway, more.*



Dear Editor: In response to last issue's baseball cartridge guide, I must jump to the rescue of one of my favorite 2600 sports games! **Super Challenge Baseball** (by M Network) does a pretty good job of bringing baseball to the 2600, especially compared to Atari's three attempts to get it right. Simply put, you *can* steal bases. If you cannot steal, turn the console off and switch the difficulty switches. This cannot be done "on the fly"; the console must be turned off. Both switches must be in the same position for both teams to steal.

Many hours of my earlier days were spent playing seven-game World Series-type contests with a good friend of mine, who only lamented the lack of a shortstop. Also, while batting, holding the joystick back when you hit the ball will cause the batter to bunt. Push the joystick forward and the batter will "power bat" it out of the park. (Usually...and if its not fielded, of course.)

Mark Androvich is right—there's no one-player option. However, one on one interaction is the name of this game, and the pitcher-batter play action still ranks among the best I've ever played.

Jeff Morin
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I hope everyone enjoyed Mark's comprehensive look at baseball games on the 2600. I believe Mark is working on a similar article about football games.

Dear Editor: I enjoyed Dominick Roman's "Tales of the 2600" in issue 16. It reminded me of DC's *Atari Force* comic series. I bought and still own every issue. Even though it had nothing to do with videogames, I believe it was one of, if not the best sci-fi comic series ever produced. It's far better than the Star Wars and Star Trek adaptations. It's a shame it was cancelled. The name should have been changed—it had nothing to do with Atari!

Questions? Comments? Suggestions?
Our address is: The 2600 Connection,
P.O. Box 3993, Westport, MA 02790

In last issue's Spectravision listing, you mentioned a never-released game called *Cave-In*. I remember going to a local Ames department store in 1984, hoping to find Atari games. The entire stock had been cleared out, replaced by Commodore 64 and Vic-20 software! I recall one of the few Vic-20 games they had was *Cave-In*. It came in the familiar silver box and had a farm scene on the box.

Was *Foxbat* ever released by Atari? It was advertised in the Spring 1983 issue of Creative Computing's *Video & Arcade Games* magazine. Was it released under a different name?

David Allen
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To my knowledge, Foxbat was never released. It was once thought to be a code name for Raiders of the Lost Ark, but it is not. Foxbat was most likely planned to be an updated version of Combat.

Dear Editor: I have been having a problem with a few of my Activision games. I get blank screens or jumbled colors when put into the 2600. It takes me forever to get the game to play. My 2600 is not at fault; other games play and perform fine. Is there a way to prevent this? Could the problem be fixed by repairing the game.

Kevan L. Wharton
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The source of your problems seems to be dirty cartridge contacts. It's very easy to remedy: Dip a cotton swab in rubbing alcohol, touch something grounded (like a kitchen sink), and carefully clean both sides of the metal contacts.

There's also Doc's Fix-a-System, a cleaning kit sold at Toys R Us stores for around \$8. Look for the one that specifically says it has an Atari 2600 cleaning card.

Cartridge ROMs require a certain amount of current and voltage in order to be "read" properly by the 2600's microprocessor. Too much dirt on any one contact can cause resistance and prevents a proper read. It's important to be grounded—a spark of static electricity can ruin a ROM altogether.

Dear Editor: I have an old 2600 that I can't use because I don't have any controllers. I can't find any stores that sell joysticks or paddles. I was reading through an old issue of *Videogames and Computer Entertainment* magazine when I came across your newsletter in the "Fandango" section. Did you publish an article that explained how to make your own paddle controllers?

Nick Bair
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"How to Build Your Own Paddle Controllers" appeared in issue 13 (Nov/Dec 1992) and was written by Richard E. Toy. All of the required parts to build the paddles can be purchased at Radio Shack stores. I've yet to see an article which describes how to build joysticks.

B & C Computervisions, an Atari computer mail order company in California, sells the standard Atari joystick (\$6), the Wico Black Max (\$4.95), paddles (\$4.95), and a number of other controllers. Call them at (408) 986-9960 or send \$1 in coins or stamps to receive the B & C catalog. The address is: 2730 Scott Blvd., Santa Clara, CA 95050.

Dear Editor: In a letter in issue 15, Richard E. Toy said Atari lost credibility in the U.S. by disregarding the market for the 2600. Atari sold its games to Big Lots because it was more profitable than selling them retail. This indicated that the market dwindled to marginal proportions.

Furthermore, if Atari releases the Jaguar videogame system this winter, not having the 2600 around will prove to be beneficial. People will see Atari as always being on the cutting edge—with the Jaguar and Lynx now and with the 2600 way back when. If Atari was pushing the Jaguar and 2600 simultaneously, they would appear as low-tech, 2-bit peddlers.

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Atari's been fighting for credibility and respect ever since the 2600 lost its "reign" after the videogame crash of 1983/1984. Hopefully, the Jaguar will give Atari some respect—the Lynx really hasn't been able to. It sounds like an impressive system—just as the 2600 did years ago.

News & Notes


Werner Bleys, our correspondent from Belgium, has discovered a rare multi-game cartridge along the lines of **32 in 1** (by Atari). **16 Games in One** has one unique feature—four dip switches on the side of the cartridge. The positioning of the four dip switches determines which game can be played when turning the 2600 on.

The cartridge is not made by Atari or under license from Atari. This is assumed because there is no mention of Atari Corp., trademark, or product number on the box nor cartridge. Instructions did not even come with the game. The manufacturer probably did not receive legal rights to manufacture this cartridge. Therefore, it is probably a "pirate" cartridge. Werner cannot find anymore; he is the only known owner of the cartridge. Here are the 16 games that the cartridge offers: **Surround, Fun with Numbers, Outlaw, Air Sea Battle, Sky Diver, Slot Racer, Miniature Golf, Slot Machine, Football** (all by Atari), **Tennis, Skiing, Fishing Derby, Laser Blast, Freeway, Stampede** (all by Activision), and **Cosmic Swarm** (by Commavid). Werner states that the game has the Atari "look"—a silver label with a picture and a red stripe. However, the manufacturer could have pirated the packaging as well. It is a PAL release, so the game probably does not exist in the USA. Look here for more details if any other news about **16 Games in One** is discovered.

Jerry Greiner has started his own classic videogames mail order business called Jerry G Visionaries. Jerry has bought out the Atari inventory from Games & More, of Waterford, MI. Please see the display ad on page 8 for more information.



- Subscription: \$6 for six bi-monthly issues.
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Cartridge List Part 16: Sega & Bally Midway

If you mention the word "Sega" to any videogame player today, it is regarded as one of the two leading American videogame system manufacturers. This is the company famous for the Sega Master System and the Genesis videogame systems. This is a whole different story which I will not get into. After all, this column is about the Atari 2600.

The Sega company began as a Japanese arcade coin-op videogame developer. Two of their biggest hits were **Frogger** and **Zaxxon**. In 1982, Sega licensed the rights to a 2600 version of Frogger to Parker Brothers and a 2600 version of Zaxxon to Coleco. Soon afterwards, the American division of Sega then decided to try releasing their own 2600 games. Many of them were based on Sega arcade coin-op machines. A few of the games were based on movies as well. Obtaining the rights for a movie-based game was easy because the company was owned by Gulf & Western, owners of Paramount. **Star Trek: Strategic Operations Simulator** and **Buck Rogers: Planet of Zoom** are two examples of the Sega/movie games. Both of these games also existed as arcade coin-op machines, too. Sega also planned **Star Trek III: The Search for Spock**, but it was never released. A number of other movie-based games were rumored to be released for the 2600: **48 Hours, Airplane, Escape from Alcatraz, Friday the 13th, and War of the Worlds** just to name a few. None of these games ever saw the light of day because Gulf & Western decided to back out of the home videogame development business. Before Sega could close its doors, Bally, the company which produced the Professional Arcade system up until 1980, bought out the development division from Gulf & Western. Bally released three excellent games—**Up 'N Down, Tapper, and Spy Hunter**. All of these games are based on the Bally/Midway arcade coin-op machines. Although the 2600 graphics are not even close to the arcade machine quality, the three games are excellent translations. **Spy Hunter** was packaged with the dual control module—a piece that connected both joystick bases. It was included because the game utilizes both fire buttons—one for the car's gun and the other to activate the special weapons.

I highly recommend **Tapper**. As a bartender, you must serve your customers drinks and catch the empty glasses which they throw back when finished. There are four different bars, or game screens, to beat. Plus, there's a bonus round in which the soda bandit challenges you to a version of an old-fashioned shell game. You have to guess which shell has a drink under it. The bandit shuffles them quite fast, especially in higher levels of the game. **Tapper** is one of my all-time favorite games. I originally played the Atari 8-bit floppy disk version first. I did not know a 2600 version existed until about three years ago. When I heard of it, it immediately became a "must have" cartridge. This game is a lot of fun—one of the best for the 2600 in my opinion.

The Sega and Bally Midway games are a fine addition to a 2600 gamer's collection. I bet many people don't realize that the makers of the Genesis system once made games for the 2600!

Sega

001-01 Tac Scan
002-01 Sub Scan
003-01 Thunderground
004-01 Star Trek: Strategic Operations Simulator
005-01 Buck Rogers: Planet Of Zoom
006-01 Congo Bongo

Bally Midway

009-01 Up 'N Down
010-01 Tapper
011-01 Spy Hunter

Sources: Russ Perry Jr.'s Cartridge List and **ABC to the VCS** by Leonard Herman
Introductory article by: Tim Duarte



Atari 2600 Playing Strategies

E.T. : The Extra Terrestrial

by Scott Stilphen

E.T. was certainly a big hit movie in 1982, and Atari's game adaptation was a hot item when it was released in time for Christmas of that same year. The E.T. "craze" was in full swing when Atari received the rights to produce a videogame based on the movie. Common sense dictated that the sooner the cart was released, the better the sales would be. Atari turned to veteran programmer Howard Scott Warshaw, who managed to program the game in a record six weeks! Total production was a scant four months.

Although E.T. was a best seller, much criticism was made about its complexity. Many young players found the game to be extremely hard to solve. Probably the biggest fault the game has is trying to levitate E.T. out of a pit. Tip sheets were later packaged with the game to help players. Since the game was programmed in such a short time, it contains some strange tricks and many things in the instruction booklet are wrong. However, Howard Scott Warshaw still managed to hide his initials in the game!

Scoring

A number of things are incorrect in this section of the manual, possibly done to "lead" the player to the initials. The special points for collecting candy after the 31st piece (1,000 each) don't exist. Instead, you are still given the same 770 points for each as before. Another point of confusion is the penalty rule. Supposedly, if you give Elliot (collect) more than 31 candy pieces in a round, E.T. loses 700 energy units for each piece (deducted in the next round). However if more than 22 (not 31) pieces are collected in one round, you will lose energy in the next round. It will not be at the rate of 700 units per candy. The following chart breaks it down:

<u>Candy #</u>	<u>Energy (next round)</u>	<u>Energy loss per candy</u>
23	9292	707
24	8484	808
25	7676	808
26	6868	808
27	6868	---
28	5959	909
29	5151	808
30	4242	909
31	4242	---

According to the manual, the cutoff point for the number of pieces seems to be 31. The programmer's initials will appear at 33 pieces, along with some strange symbols. Presumably, they should start at 32 and any number greater.

Reviving

The manual states Elliot can revive E.T. three times, plus one extra time every round (after reviving the flower). The following method proves this wrong:

Round 1: get E.T. killed three times, revive flower, then end the round.

Round 2: you get one revive, plus one more if you revive the flower.

This gives you a total of five revives—but this is not all you can get. Every flower revived will carry over to the next round (if not needed), giving you practically unlimited revives.

Forgetful Elliot

First, make sure you don't have all the phone pieces and you have at least one revive left. Get nine candies and call Elliot. Stand near a pit and wait for him to appear. When he takes the candies, fall into the pit. Your energy must be low enough so that E.T. dies when he falls. When Elliot revives you, levitate out of the pit. Elliot keeps the phone piece he's supposed to give to you. You have to call Elliot again to get it, because it won't be in any of the pits.

Landing tricks

When E.T. calls the spaceship, the scientist and F.B.I. man both return to their buildings.

The left difficulty switch, which is supposed to determine the landing conditions with Elliot, does not work. Elliot can't be present when the spaceship arrives—regardless of the switch setting. The spaceship will always crash down on Elliot. This "locks up" the game.

Pressing the fire button just as the spaceship is about to appear will freeze E.T.'s head when it's elevated. Because of his added height, his feet will stick out of the bottom of the spaceship as it flies away.

Pit tricks

When E.T. falls in a pit, press the fire button when his feet just touch the bottom. If done correctly, E.T.'s feet, and sometimes part of his body, will be stuck in the ground. Press the fire button once to get him out.

On the screen with five pits, go to one of the two left-most pits and fall in. Levitate out and center E.T. over the pit and push left. Before appearing on the adjacent screen, E.T. first appears on the other side of the first screen.

Let E.T. run out of energy just as he's about to levitate out of a pit. E.T. will die in mid-air and fall back to the ground like a rock.

Flower tricks

If E.T. dies while reviving a live or dead flower, he will appear above the ground.

If E.T. dies while reviving a live flower, sometimes Elliot will not appear and it looks like E.T. "eats" the flower.

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Secret Initials

Yes, there is a trick to turn E.T. black (or purple). This reveals the programmer's initials. To do this, collect at least 32 candy pieces in one round. Every round does not contain that many candies. It seems as though the round at which that many can appear is random. You may get the "lucky" round with your score around 60,000 or at 600,000. Once you give Elliot all the candies, end the round. When the next one starts, E.T. will be black and the energy counter will be unreadable. As you move around, you'll see HS and W3 appear instead of numbers or symbols. The meaning of the strange symbols is unknown. This is how the energy counter will look, and the order in which the symbols descend.

The Warshaw "sword"

A combination of uncovering the initials and possibly another trick may trigger the appearance of a mysterious "sword-like" object. It appears in the upper right-hand corner and looks something like a lower-case "d" and "b" together as "db". The only other documentation on this appeared in a 1984 issue of *Electronic Games* magazine. An anonymous reader (posing as E.T.) wrote of a pair of initials in the same corner, stating these were the designer's initials. The letter also stated Indiana Jones will also appear if a certain task is performed. The letter didn't mention how to perform these tricks and nothing else was mentioned in future issues. I've tried to "lure" him out by "flipping" the score on games 1 and 3, but to no avail. It could be a combination of the score and the setting of the difficulty switches. Maybe if you discover the initials, and then flip the score. If anyone knows something about this, please write in and enlighten us.

Final notes: We know that Howard Scott Warshaw programmed three games for the 2600—**Yar's Revenge**, **Raiders of the Lost Ark**, and **E.T.** (in that order). He also "numbered" each game, and included some subtle hints in each cartridge's manual to uncovering them.

Yar's Revenge - released May 1982 - initials HSWWSH
 Raiders - released November 1982 - initials HSW2
 E.T. - released December 1982 - initials HSW3

Since he programmed both E.T. and Raiders, it's quite possible that the hidden Indy rumor may have some truth to it. So start playing!

Another interesting thing I noticed is the promotional picture of E.T. in the Nov/Dec 1982 issue of *Atari Age* magazine. The game picture, which looks like an early prototype version, shows a black E.T. instead of a green one. Is this another hint?

Lastly, I'd like to thank Jeff Adkins for capturing the initials on videotape for me. (We have proof!) I'd also like to thank Russ Perry Jr. for "2600 Trickery"—a very inspirational E.T. article which appeared in the very first issue of *The 2600 Connection*.



Eat candy, search for phone parts, revive wilted flowers, and fly away in your spaceship. You can do all of this in E.T. (by Atari). In this adventure game, you have to help E.T. find three parts to his phone, call his ship, then find the landing zone to get off the planet. Sounds easy, right? Throw in a scientist who can take E.T. to his lab, an F.B.I. agent who can take candy or phone parts from E.T., plus a limited amount of energy that goes down as E.T. moves or levitates, and you also have a strategy game.

To play, you must traverse E.T. through the six different sites. The first is a forest where your spaceship drops you off at the beginning, and picks you up to complete a round. The second site is where the scientist's lab, the F.B.I. building, and Elliot's house are located. The other four sites contain wells. E.T. can find parts to his phone at the bottom of these wells.

The game begins with three lives. There are two ways to acquire phone parts. One way is by locating the "find phone part" zone on one of the four well sites. A question mark designates this zone. If there is a part to the phone, a dot will flash in one of the wells. By falling in the well, E.T. can collect the part. The other way is to collect nine pieces of candy. Find the "call Elliot" zone, designated by a face. If E.T. gives Elliot the candy, and E.T. still needs a part to the phone, then Elliot will return and give it to E.T. This is the best way to achieve a high score quickly. The more candy E.T. gives to Elliot, the more points are awarded at the end of a round.

After E.T. collects the three phone parts, he must find the "call ship" zone, designated by a devil-shaped figure. This can be found on any of the six sites. Sometimes it is tricky to find. After E.T. calls his ship, he must return to the forest and find the landing zone. E.T. must be careful to get rid of humans that appear here, or the spaceship will not pick him up. However, Elliot is an exception.

—review by Jeff Adkins

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A Collector's Guide to Atari's Cartridge Labels

by Scott Stilphen

Warning: The following article applies to cartridges produced by Atari, excluding the Sears-labeled cartridges. Scott is a true 2600 collector at heart; and one of his first goals was to obtain every cartridge made by Atari. Refer to "Cartridge List Part One" in issue 2.

Determining if a cartridge you have is an original release or re-release depends on what type of label it has. You cannot rely on any one specific detail because there are many factors involved. Type style, type color, picture, no picture, and overall layout are just some examples. Atari manufactured cartridges at company-owned facilities in various locations around the world. These sites included Hong Kong, Taiwan, Puerto Rico, and the United States. Changes in software, hardware, or packaging did not affect all these at the same time, which makes tracking down the original release version of a certain item to be even more difficult. The information listed below should help to sort out the confusion in most cases. To be 100 percent sure on a given cartridge, I suggest trying to obtain some of the older game catalogs Atari included with the cartridges. The subject of catalogs will be discussed in part two of this series. I welcome any changes or any additional info that anyone can provide.

The Four Major Label Designs

1977 - The first label style. These original nine releases have the last two product numbers printed on the side label:

02 Air-Sea Battle
61 Basic Math
51 Blackjack
01 Combat
03 Star Ship
11 Indy 500
12 Street Racer
41 Surround
21 Video Olympics

Note: A limited few have a colored border on the side label.

1978 - Smaller type size

The labels have smaller type and a smaller Atari logo. Those cartridges with larger TM and (R) symbols are earlier releases than those with smaller symbols. The number on the side label was dropped in 1978.

1979 - Copyright dates

Copyrights, which appear as (c), were added on the label. Dates on older titles that were still being produced up until a few years ago have a different—actually later—copyright date.

1980 - Type style change

The type was slightly altered on cartridges made in 1980. All TM and (R) symbols are small.

Note: Between 1978 and 1980, some games were issued in labels with two different type colors. Some examples are Bowling (red/blue), Flag Capture (green/orange), Outlaw (red/yellow), Street Racer (yellow/orange), Casino (yellow/green), Football (yellow/green), and Sky Diver (red/blue).

1981 - Second label style

New cartridges released in 1981 sported the same full-color picture that appeared on its respectful box, along with a black background. Type colors were still the same, plus the addition of purple. The first cart to have this style was **Video Pinball**, and right after that were **Missile Command**, **Asteroids**, and **Warlords**. These four cartridges have a few label versions. The original release of Missile Command and Video Pinball have lower-case letters in the title on the side and front (top) labels. Further releases of Video Pinball has the side label in capital letters while Missile Command has the front label title in capital letters. Starting with Asteroids and Warlords, all picture labels have the game title in capitals on both front and side labels. Older titles that were still being produced up until a few years ago were "upgraded" with the new label style, but still retained the original release date. The original nine cartridges show a (c) 1978 instead.

1982-1983 - Third Label style

The next year brought about another major labeling change. The Atari VCS was now being called by its product code, 2600. "ATARI 2600" is printed on the top of the front label instead of "game program". The background color was changed from black to silver. The game title was printed against a red stripe which stretched across the entire label. A color picture appears beneath the stripe, and manufacturing notes/credits appear beneath the picture. Side labels were all printed in a red-colored type. The first few releases of this style have the credits in very small type and no copyright date is printed.

A few early titles, such as **Star Ship**, were produced with a similar-style label as the original release, but with "ATARI 2600" printed in large, white letters on the top, and a glossy, black background with colored-lettering titles.

1983 - Larger picture

A minor change was made in mid-1983. The color picture was now larger in size. "VIDEO GAME CARTRIDGE, ATARI 2600 VCS" was printed on the top left and "ATARI 2600" was printed on the top right. The red stripe was now only the width of the picture.

1984-1987 - Title Graphics

Each game title on the front label was now printed with its own, original graphics. Many older titles were re-released with the second-style packaging. These re-releases have black and white boxes, manuals, and sometimes labels. The copyright dates are usually from 1986-1988. Some cartridges released between 1982-1984 were re-released with the third label style with larger pictures and later copyright dates.

1986-1987 - Fourth Label Style

Another overall labeling change was made—this being the last. The background color is red. The pictures are in black and white and are not as wide. "ATARI 2600 VIDEO GAME CARTRIDGE" is printed in white type across the front, and the side label includes "ATARI 2600 VCS". Only

Re-releases and Renames

- Atari Video Cube (CX2698), Rubik's Cube (CX2690)
- Superman: trademark/date on one line (original release with glitch), trademark/date on two lines with glitch removed)
- Realsports Baseball (CX2640), Super Baseball (CX26152)
- Basic Math, Fun with Numbers
- Hunt & Score, A Game of Concentration
- (Pele's) Championship Soccer, Pele's Soccer
- Stargate, Defender II

Early Prototype Names for Released Titles

<u>OFFICIAL TITLE</u>	<u>PROTOTYPE TITLE</u>
Dark Chambers	Dungeon
Demons to Diamonds	Hot Rox
Desert Falcon	Nile Flyer, Sphinx
Pigs in Space	Dr. Strangeport (?)
Haunted House	Grave's Manor, Nightmare Manor
Sorcerer's Apprentice	Mickey Mouse (?)
Pole Position	Realsports Driving
Swordquest games	Adventure I-IV

Label Misprints and Unique Labeling

- Air-Sea Battle (1986): "for use with paddles"
- Centipede (1985): side label has orange lettering instead of red
- Combat (first design): labels marked with "Made in Taiwan" have either a similar or glossy look than those not marked
- Dark Chambers: released in 1988, but programmed back in 1983. This is noted on the label and is not a mistake. Why did it take five years to be released?
- Dodge 'Em (1986): "for use with paddles"
- Pole Position: original release has a side label typo, "POLE POSITN" (with smaller picture design)
- Space Invaders: original release omitted Taito trademark.
- Stargate: type style of titles on both labels are original arcade graphics
- Super Breakout: all labels have a 1978 copyright date, but the game actually came out in late 1981 - early 1982.
- Track & Field (1984): same product number as Gremlins (CX26127) on label. Picture and background is in black and white, title is in red.

Notes: The original release of Pele's Championship Soccer doesn't have "Pele's" anywhere on the label. Super baseball is a completely reworked version of Realsports Baseball.

new releases used this label style. During 1987-1990, full color picture labels were released.

Special Series labels

There are four special cartridge series, each with its own colored label. The labels have a checkered grid over the colored background with a color picture. The name of the series is printed in the upper left and "ATARI 2600" is in the upper right. Here are the four series:

Children's Computer Workshop (CCW) - yellow

These games featured a Sesame Street character and used the oversized Kid's Controller (cx23). The games released in this series are: **Alpha Beam with Ernie**, **Big Bird's Egg Catch**, **Cookie Monster Munch**, and **Oscar's Trash Race**. **Grover's Music Maker** was released as a prototype.

Jim Henson's Muppets - purple

These games were based on Muppet characters. **Pigs in Space** is the only game in this series. **Miss Piggy's Wedding** was planned, but was never released.

Peanuts - red

These games feature the characters from Charles Schulz' popular comic strip. **Snoopy and the Red Baron** is the only game in this series. **Good Luck, Charlie Brown** was planned, but was never released.

Disney - blue

These games are based on Walt Disney's cartoon characters. **Sorcerer's Apprentice**, a game based on part of the *Fantasia* movie, is the only game that was officially released. **Donald Duck's Speedboat Race** and **Dumbo's Flying Circus** exist as prototypes. **Snow White** was planned, but was never released.

NTSC/PAL/SECAM - game and label variations

Games for use outside the U.S. were distributed under the Atari International (U.K.) name. Labels, and sometimes title and program graphics, differ slightly from the U.S. releases. Older titles in PAL format have a small "p" on the side label. Newer carts, such as **Klax**, have a small sticker with the letter "p" somewhere on it. **Taz** was released as **Asterix** in Europe. It's the same game, but it has different graphics.

Realsports Soccer was renamed **Football Realsports Soccer** for the European release. Some of these can be found in NTSC format.

Atari Lab labels

In the early 1980s, prototype cartridges were widely used by many companies for trouble-shooting any programming bugs, what changes (if any) to be made, determining the most effective type of marketing package, etc. Prototype cartridges were also often sent to the editorial offices of videogame magazines for review.

Prototypes are easily recognizable. The labels are completely black and the type is white in color. "LOANER CARTRIDGE" is printed across the front, with the game title—usually on a white block or sticker—underneath. Below the title, "RETURN TO:" and Atari's address is printed. Sometimes the game title is not attached, or it may be the only thing on the front label. There may be a black side label or none at all. The main thing to look for is an all-black label.

Scott's address appears in his ad on page 8



Become a 2600 Survivor

an editorial by Tim Duarte

It's hard to believe that this newsletter is going on its third year of publication. A lot has happened to the Atari 2600 community—I've seen it grow right before my eyes. The reader base is just over 200, give or take a few who decide not to renew their subscription. The average 2600 Connection reader is hard to describe. The readers consist of all ages. For the most part, there are two types: game players and game collectors. Some readers, like myself, are a mix of both. Some readers have an advanced knowledge of computers and have enjoyed Harry Dodgson's "Programming the 2600" articles in past issues very much. Others do not own a computer and would rather read lighter and less technical articles, such as the interviews with the game designers. It's hard to please the readers; I am trying my best to serve the community.

We also saw the discontinuation of the 2600 at the end of 1991. It didn't really phase us that much because Atari really wasn't supporting the 2600 users anyway.

Next issue will feature "The 2600 Connection Mail Order Directory for 1993". This will comprise of the companies which still sell games for the 2600. As an additional bonus, I would like to create a mailing list of active 2600 fans who trade, buy, and sell with other fans. Any reader will be able to obtain this list by simply sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to our address. To get on this list, please send a postcard or letter with your name, address, city, state, and zip code. You may or may not want to include your phone number—it's optional. Include a S.A.S.E. with your info and this will guarantee that you will receive the first list of 2600 Survivors. Russ Perry Jr. actually came up with the name.

I have a lot of plans for The 2600 Connection. I'd like to make some improvements in the future. I can't do it alone. I need your participation as well. So after you're done playing E.T. tonight, send me your info so you can become a 2600 Survivor.

Want to advertise in the pages of The 2600 Connection? Write or call (508) 994-0115 for more information.



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