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Classic 80s Home Video Games Identification & Value Guide: Featuring Atari 2600, Atari 5200 Atari 7800, Coleco Vision, Odyssey, Intellivision, Vectrex



Synopsis

The early 80s was a pioneering time for home video games. Consoles from Atari, Mattel, Coleco, and others dominated many American living rooms. This guide takes an in-depth look at the classic consoles, games, accessories, and related merchandise manufactured between the introduction of the Atari VCS in 1977 and the great video game crash of 1984. The great consoles from Atari--the 2600 VCS, 5200 SuperSystem, and 7800 ProSystem are all covered in depth, as well as the amazing Coleco Vision, Intellivision, Odyssey-2-, and Vectrex gaming systems. More than 2,000 full-color photographs complement detailed listings for loose and boxed items. Consoles, cartridges, manuals, accessories, and related merchandise are listed and priced in an easy-to-use, checklist format. Products are listed by console and manufacturer for easy reference. See Donkey Kong, Frogger, Asteroids, Centipede, Pac-Man, and many other famous stars from the 1980s systems in this must-have title on classic video games. 2008 values.

Book Information

Paperback: 400 pages

Publisher: Collector Books; 1st edition (March 18, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1574325736

ISBN-13: 978-1574325737

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.8 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (16 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,817,973 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 inÂ Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Radios & Televisions #448 inÂ Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Dolls, Toys & Figurines > Toys #566 inÂ Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Popular Culture

Customer Reviews

There has been some confusion about this book, caused by what I can only hope are unintentional misstatements concerning the book's content, so I'm here to clear up as much as I can. There are 7 systems featured in this book: Atari 2600 VCS, Atari 5200 SuperSystem, Atari 7800 ProSystem, Coleco Vision, Intellivision, Odyssey2 and Vectrex. The book does provide a comprehensive overview and visual guide to all the games listed. As boxes, manuals and cartridges usually all feature the same artwork during this period, we made sure we showed at least one of the three for

every title, so you could see what you should be looking for (usually the box and/or cartridge). This first version of this book focuses only on U.S. production releases. As we did not have an unlimited page count, we chose to focus only on the material most American consumers would have come in contact with at the typical U.S. retail store in the 1980s. There are 1059 boxes shown, 934 cartridges, 154 overlays, 163 photos of merchandise (some photos show more than one item), and another 154 assorted photos, such as: magazines, Activision patches, catalogs and other supplemental material. That's 2435 painstakingly selected photos for those keeping track (I could be off by a handful, I kept losing my place!) The introduction does contain an offer to purchase collections in the section that lists our contact information. However, the book is not littered with solicitations as has been suggested. There are several rare items where we note "If you have this item, please contact us." This notation is for research purposes. Because there is so little sales history for some items, we need more information on them. How did you acquire the item? Is it from your childhood collection? If so, what materials were included with the game? How much did you pay for the item? And so on. Each chapter is color coded to visually separate the sections for each console. The title of the console also appears in the margin to make it easy to find the chapter you are looking for. Each console has an introduction that explains more about the console's history, followed by cartridge variation listings. Cartridges are listed in alphabetical order, by manufacturer, so they are easy to locate. Listings feature prices for the cartridge, manual, additional inserts, and a boxed, complete value, and list specific visual markers to help identify variations. At the end of each chapter are merchandise listings, with console listings first, followed by related merchandise. All of the related merchandise is listed in alphabetical order so you can locate them by the name printed on the item or package. As the majority of collectors focus on the games, not the joysticks, we chose to maximize the photos in the cartridge sections, and show a representative sampling of pictured items in the merchandise listings. The layouts vary by chapter because the size of boxes and cartridges vary by console, so it's not possible to make a square and a rectangle look the same without manipulation. The Atari 2600/7800 cartridges are rectangles, Atari 5200 cartridges are square, etc. Sometimes these changes in box, cartridge or overlay dimensions affected the overall layout for their chapter, although the changes are slight and the overall look is consistent throughout. The layouts have all items arranged on the page in alphabetical order as well, unless the material on the page prevented this arrangement. To maximize which variations are shown, you may see a box shown with a variation cart, overlay or other insert. Where possible, multiple variations are shown to provide a better visual picture of the variations. The book was very methodically and deliberately arranged to provide as much visual information as possible. The book

is full, but is not crammed. Everything shown was placed on purpose and as visually pleasing as possible. We wanted to show as much as possible without being visually distracting. Jason has collected video games for more than 15 years, and I have collected for about 5 years now (plus an additional 4 years when I was a teenager). He has owned his store for 7+ years, so he has actual sales data which aided us in determining values. Economic conditions change so any price guide is always a starting point, but we were very thorough and deliberate in our pricing decisions. Luckily we didn't value the price of gasoline anywhere in the guide. We did not list game play information for each title as there was simply no room to do so. Additionally, the game play is essentially the same for a single title across consoles, so a lot of space would be wasted in duplicating text. If you are looking for game play, the manuals are your best source. For many titles, the book "ABCs to the VCS" is an excellent and affordable source of material for this information. We worked very hard to make this a very usable guide and Jason and I are both very proud of the results. Our greatest compliment about the book was given to us on April 6 of this year when Harry Rinker, the host of the syndicated radio show "Watcha Got" called our book one of the most detailed price guides he has ever seen. I agree, but I might be biased, so check out his website and listen to the interview yourself (we're about 30 minutes into the program). Video Game Trader Magazine recently reviewed the book as well and said, "None of the other guides on the market have such great color pictures and comprehensive details and data which is what makes this book stand out above the competition". See for yourself in their online #7 issue. You can see excerpts in their #8 issue, also available online. Thanks to everyone who has purchased the book so far and for your compliments on the material. Watch for the next volume which is currently in the planning stages. And, last but not least, A very special thank you to those in the collector community who provided supplemental material. You will find all of their names listed in the acknowledgements.

The one thing in this book's favor is its price, which renders criticism of it somewhat moot. At a glance, the guide offers relatively comprehensive coverage, but as one digs into the content offered, the beauty of the photo spreads is mostly skin deep. Although nearly all game titles presented within are documented with photographs, far too many items are only partially illustrated (e.g. only a cartridge, but not the accompanying manual or original packaging). Given that the authors could have reached out to the collecting community to obtain photos of the missing items, each absence adds up to an inexcusable shortcoming for a field guide. More troubling are entire product ranges that go unmentioned (e.g. the double-ended cartridges Xonox produced for the ColecoVision) and the rather slipshod presentation of non-game materials for each system, such as peripherals and

third-party accessories. The latter are listed in bulk at the end of each section, often without photos, and in alphabetical order rather than categorized by item type. Much to-do is made of variants in packaging cataloged within its pages, but here, too, the information is scattered and incomplete, despite appearances that comprehensive research has been done. General layout of each section can at times be equally haphazard, but for the most part works. Perhaps the greatest weakness of this work is the effort made to assign valuations to items for collectors. In some cases, the information is accurate. However, by and large, the dollar values appear to be assigned with no attention paid to real-world transactions, instead being plucked from the imaginations of the authors or thinly-veiled formulae (e.g. manual prices are near exclusively assigned as a fraction of "complete" specimen prices, which is an altogether mistaken methodology). In some cases, prices are assigned for portions of games that go beyond reason (e.g. per-token pricing for Odyssey 2 board/video games). These are all common traps for collecting guides, and despite assurances that both authors have deep experience with the field, there is little evidence that either managed to overcome personal bias in assigning values. It would have been better to leave the book as an identification guide than to stretch its authority to (poorly) cover individual game pricing. Moreover, it doesn't help matters much that the book itself is littered with pleas from the authors to contact them to sell them your games. Absent independent research, this work should not be trusted as an authority on the valuation of video games of the era.[...] the guide is also plagued with authorial bias in its summaries of each system and their merits. It would have proved more profitable to devote more space to the history and nature of each system and less to editorializing about which is better than the other. There's a certain amount of hubris involved with the authors' undertaking here, evident from the front and back cover illustrations. What's on display are the gems of a collection, and not the games that would be familiar to someone who might have owned any of the systems covered back in the 80's. The desire to show off the holdings of the authors should have been tempered to broaden appeal of the work, but again, this is a pitfall common to the field. In sum, this is a fair first effort that tries to cover too much ground to its detriment. For the price, it's a somewhat useful identification guide. Beyond the photos, though, there isn't ample evidence that the book can be trusted as a value guide or comprehensive catalog. Perhaps a later edition will address these problems, but until the authors rein in the exuberance they have for their favorite systems and personal collections and draw upon the larger collecting community to both broaden and deepen coverage, I fear that one can only hope for the fiddling of a number here and there and not much else.

Excellent photography and very good to excellent text descriptions of game cartridges, label art and command variants help make this an invaluable guide to collecting for the various systems covered. While internet resources have supplanted some of the info, and of course the pricing data is wildly out of date, this book remains a classic reference and very useful for the collector once he or she gets "serious" about the hobby. Well worth tracking down a copy.

This is a great visual reference for classic home videogames. Sure, the prices are outdated, but I still love the book as a visual reference. I don't collect games, but I love trying new games on emulators, and this guide has inspired me to try many games that I would have ignored based on title alone. I have had it a few months and still flip through it on at least a weekly basis. The quality of images and print is professional, and it is definitely a "keeper" for my bookshelf ... but just hasn't made it yet to the bookshelf since I keep referring to it. In summary, if you enjoy retro games and aren't buying the book for the game values, then I highly recommend you pick up a copy!

Book features pictures of common and hard to find collectible items from Atari, Intellivision, Coleco, Imagic, and many (if not all) of the gaming companies from that time period when home gaming consoles were in their early days. I Love this book!

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