

July 2003

INTELLIVISION HANDHELDS: WE COME FULL-CIRCLE!

In 1977, **Mattel** revolutionized toys with the first microprocessor-based handheld games: **Football** and **Auto Race**.

Even after their release of the **Intellivision** system in 1980, Mattel continued to produce many popular handhelds.

Now, for the first time, a line of handheld games is carrying the **Intellivision** brand. The games are available this month in many **Kay-Bee** toy stores in the US and will be showing up at retailers worldwide over the next few months.

Three different models are available. The standard handhelds come in 6 titles: **Auto Racing**, **Space Armada**, **Pinball**, **Baseball**, **Football**, and **Soccer**.

The Vibra-Action model comes in 3 titles: **Auto Racing**, **Sea Battle**, and **Black Belt Battle**. Vibration feedback adds to the game play.

Most revolutionary is the 2-play system. This unit comes with 3 games - **Sea Battle**, **Black Belt Battle**, and **Hover Force** - that can be played by 1 or 2 players. The unit itself features two hand controllers.

"We feel this is a great way to introduce the **Intellivision** name to new players, especially kids," says **Keith Robinson**, president of Intellivision Productions, Inc. "These handhelds make perfect stocking stuffers, party favors, and are great for car trips. We hope kids will start associating the name **Intellivision** with simple, challenging, fun games and will check out the web site and discover the whole world of Intellivision." Depending on the model, the games retail from \$5.99 to \$12.99 (prices subject to change).

The games aren't clones of the **Intellivision** titles but suggest the originals. "The Intellivision **Auto Racing** cartridge is a top-down game and not much fun for one player - there's no computer-controlled cars," points out Robinson. "The handheld **Auto Racing** is point-of-view with plenty of traffic. It's pretty cool, especially the Vibra-Action model."

One title will be unfamiliar to Intellivision fans. **Techno Source**, the company which manufactures and distributes the handhelds, developed a karate fighting game, a popular genre that didn't exist back in the original days of Intellivision. "We needed a title for it that would fit in with Intellivision," says Robinson. "We



figured we had **Sea Battle**, **Armor Battle**, and **Space Battle**, so why not **Black Belt Battle**?"



A limited number of all the models will be available for sale at the **Classic Gaming Expo**, August 9 and 10 in Las Vegas.

[More information, including photos of all the games and models >](#)

ROAD TRIP TO VEGAS, BABY! CLASSIC GAMING EXPO 2003!



Less than one month to go until the **Classic Gaming Expo** in Las Vegas, August 9 & 10! **Intellivision Productions, Inc.** is proud to be a sponsor of the Expo. We show up every year - you should, too! Why?

- Dozens of the pioneers of video games - creators of your favorite games - answering your questions and signing autographs.
- Thousands of games and consoles for sale from common to rare - complete your collection or relive your childhood!
- Brand-new and previously unreleased games for various classic systems available for sale!
- Museum of rare consoles and peripherals.
- Over 50 classic arcade games, all on free play!
- Contests, auctions, door prizes!
- A roomful of hundreds and hundreds of people who think your obsession with 25-year-old video games is perfectly normal!
- And, hey, a weekend in Vegas!

And for the fifth year, **Intellivision Productions, Inc.** will have a booth where you can experience the past, present, and future of **Intellivision**:

- **THE PAST:** Meet with **Blue Sky Rangers** and talk about the old Mattel era; play classic and unreleased **Intellivision** games on actual consoles; take on the never before seen **Tutorvision** educational games (see **Intellivision Lore**, below).
- **THE PRESENT:** Try out and purchase our latest releases: **Intellivision 25** and **Intellivision 10 direct-to-TV game systems**, **Intellivision handheld games** (see above story), and **Intellivision Greatest Hits** for PC and Mac.

- **THE FUTURE:** If everything goes according to schedule, see the first-ever public demonstration of the **next** Intellivision project! Everyone will be talking about this one!

We hope you can make it. It's fun for us to meet the Intellivision fans, but it's also important for us to hear your suggestions, comments, and complaints. The feedback we get during the Expo weekend affects the direction **Intellivision** takes for the next year!

For information on registration and discounts on rooms and airfare, visit the **Classic Gaming Expo** web site! Be there!

[Info on the 2003 Classic Gaming Expo >](#)

FOUR TIMELY ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. The half-hour TV show **Icons** on **G4**, the network devoted exclusively to video gaming, looks at the history of **Intellivision**: "We take an in-depth look at the Intellivision. Get the true story behind how they began, the world's first console war, and who won. With interviews from people who were there, we show you what happened to Intellivision and where it is today." **Thursday, July 17, 5 pm Eastern, 3 pm Pacific.** Check their web site for future airings.



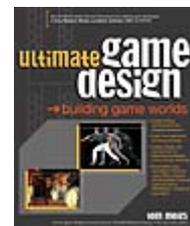
[Intellivision on G4 >](#)

2. There are many good reasons to attend the **Comic-Con** expo in San Diego this month, but meeting **Blue Sky Ranger Keith Robinson** isn't one of them. In last month's newsletter we announced that Robinson would be in the **National Cartoonist's Society** booth at **Comic-Con, July 17 through 20**. Unfortunately, Keith has had to cancel his appearance due to upcoming deadlines on a new Intellivision project. What project? We aren't allowed to say yet, but we plan to announce it at the **Classic Gaming Expo** August 9.



[Info on Comic-Con 2003 >](#)

3. Interested in video game design? Get the new book **Ultimate Game Design: Building Game Worlds** by **Tom Meigs**. Tom used to work at **Realtime Associates**, the game development studio founded by **Blue Sky Ranger David Warhol (Thunder Castle)**. Realtime produced all of the original **INTV Corp.** titles for **Intellivision**, then went on to produce games for the **Nintendo**, **Sega**, and **PlayStation** systems. In addition to Tom's personal insights and expertise, the book features interviews with game developers from throughout the industry, including Mr. Warhol himself.



[Get more info and order Ultimate Game Design on Amazon.com >](#)

4. Last but not least, another new book: **The Fat Man on Game Audio: Tasty Morsels of Sonic Goodness** by **George Alistair Sanger**. If you've been paying attention at all, you should know that **George "The Fat Man" Sanger**, the biggest name in



computer game music, got his start with the theme for **Intellivision's *Thin Ice*** in 1983. This book is a must-have for anyone wanting to work in computer or video game audio, but its scope goes far beyond that. This is a memoir of how George applied common sense for business and uncommon sense for self-promotion to become **The Fat Man** - a successful brand who is having way too much fun. Anyone interested in running his or her own business of any kind will find loads of tips, laughs, and inspiration.

[Read sample pages and order *The Fat Man on Game Audio* on Amazon.com](#)
➤

INTELLIVISION LORE FROM THE FILES OF THE BLUE SKY RANGERS:



TUTORVISION

In 1989, **INTV Corp.** made a deal with **World Book Encyclopedia** to manufacture an educational video game system called **Tutorvision**. The **Tutorvision** console would be a modified **Intellivision**, molded in gold plastic. Two sets of eight cartridges, one for younger children, one for older, would be produced. The **World Book** direct sales staff would market **Tutorvision** as they did encyclopedias - get the console and one set of the cartridges for a low monthly payment.

Part of the sales pitch would be that the family was also getting a game machine; while the **Tutorvision** cartridges would only work in a **Tutorvision** console, the **Tutorvision** console could play the entire library of **Intellivision** cartridges.

As they had on all their other original titles, **INTV Corp.** turned to **Realtime Associates**, headed by **Blue Sky Ranger David Warhol** (*Mind Strike*, *Thunder Castle*), to develop the sixteen **Tutorvision** cartridges. Dave, in turn, hired **Steve Ettinger** (*Hover Force*), **John Sohl** (*Astrosmash*), **John Tomlinson** (*Mission X*), **David Stifel** (*Game Factory*), and **Doug Williamson**, a recent graduate of Dave's alma mater **Pomona College**, to program the individual games. **Dave Warhol** did the music based mostly on classical themes, and **Connie Goldman** did the graphics, including the animated **Tutor Tiger** for the younger kids' games.



Tutorvision prototype console with Wordcalc title screen and mascot: Tutor Tiger.

Half of the games were designed by producers at **World Book** in Chicago, half were farmed out to **J. Hakansson Associates**, an educational consulting firm in Berkeley, California. Designers **Joyce Hakansson** and **Caroline Earhart**, storyboarder **Mitchell Rose**, and others worked closely with the **Realtime** programmers.

John Sohl recalls pointing out a few punctuation errors in the game **Story**

Stoppers. "[The designer] seemed to be amazed that I was, at the same time, a programmer AND someone who knew the difference between the usage of a colon and a semicolon."

Dave Warhol designed a new operating system for the **Tutorvision** called **REX** (for **Revised EXEC**). This new OS gave programmers more direct control over the system hardware, such as graphics RAM and controller inputs. Most importantly for educational games, it included a writing routine using a half-size proportional font, allowing much more text to appear per screen.

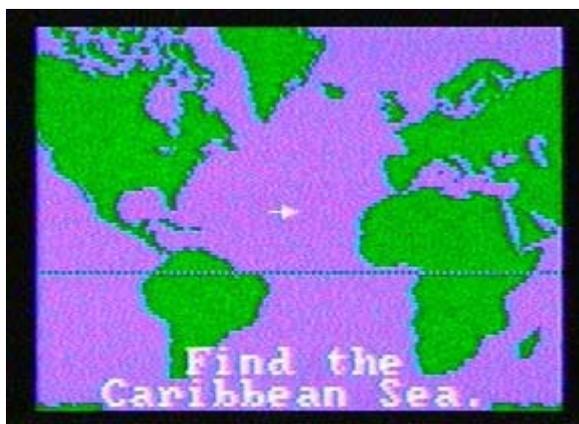
Everyone seemed happy with the completed games, so why it all fell apart is unclear. In 1990, **World Book** and **INTV Corp.** filed lawsuits against each other. The same year, **INTV** filed for bankruptcy. **Tutorvision** was never released and was mostly forgotten.

Over the years, flotsam and jetsam from the project have shown up. In 1997, collector **Ted Brunner** found a prototype gold **Tutorvision** console in a Chicago-area thrift store. **Sean Kelly**, co-founder of the **Classic Gaming Expo**, found bins of empty gray plastic cartridges stamped "**Tutorvision**" in the El Centro, California facility that used to assemble **Intellivision** cartridges for **INTV**.

But most importantly, when **Realtime Associates** moved two years ago from its El Segundo offices to new digs in Los Angeles, a box of 5 1/4 inch floppy discs and a beat-up **INTV System III** console were found. The console turned out to be a working **Tutorvision** prototype. The discs contained archives of fourteen **Tutorvision** games. For the first time in over 10 years, the games could again be played.

For younger children:

- **Nonsense** (parts of speech)
- **Busy Bodies** (jobs & workplaces)
- **Map Mazes** (reading maps)
- **Tale Teller** (building paragraphs)
- **Zoo Review** (capitalization and punctuation)
- **Jungle Math** (basic math)
- **Shapes in Space** (fractions)



Geo Graphics. The built-in font for the Tutorvision is less blocky than the Intellivision font.

For older children:

- **Tops in Terms** (word definitions)
- **Write it Right** (spelling)
- **Wordsmith** (constructing sentences)
- **Story Stopper** (advanced punctuation)
- **Wordcalc** (math word problems)
- **Time Trip** (history)
- **Geo Graphics** (geography)



Wordcalc (left): set up equations for word problems. Time Trip (right): match events to years on the timeline. Note both use the half-height proportional font made possible by the Rex operating system.

Dave Warhol recalls the history game *Time Trip*. Events are listed that the player either has to match to a year or to put in order of occurrence.



David Warhol

"It had a lot of American events," says Dave, "like 'Washington becomes president,' and 'Declaration of Independence signed.' After we delivered it, the guys at World Book said that they'd also need a version they could sell in Canada.

"The next day I called to tell them I was modeming them a Canadian version. They were like 'Wow! How did you do that so fast?' Then they downloaded the game and found that all the events were now 'Washington becomes president, eh?' and 'Declaration of Independence signed, eh?' Everything was exactly the same except with 'eh?' appended."

A legitimate Canadian version took a little longer to produce.

Intellivision Productions is trying to sort out the legalities so that the 14 games (15, counting the Canadian *Time Trip*) can be released in a future **Intellivision** collection. The existence of the final two games is still being investigated. We will also be posting more detailed descriptions of each game, along with screen shots, to our web site.

But in the meantime, the games will make their delayed world premiere at the **Classic Gaming Expo**, August 10 and 11 in Las Vegas (see above story). Come test yourself in math, grammar, and Canadian history, eh?

ASK THE BLUE SKY RANGERS!

Nick Cihlar writes:



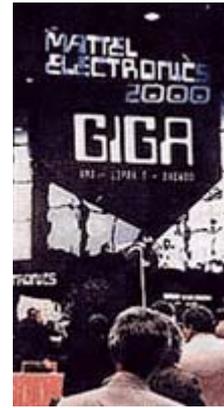
Why couldn't **Mattel** make a 128-bit console? I would like to see **Mattel** come back and compete with **Sony**! Give me your best reason. It would be a big comeback.

Hal, fictional leader of **The Blue Sky Rangers**, replies:



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In April 2000, **Electronic Gaming Monthly** scooped the other video- and computer-game magazines by announcing Mattel's upcoming new videogame system, **Giga Intellivision**.



The magazine reported that the system would feature "the recently announced **AMD** 1.6 GHz processor, an as-yet-unnamed graphics processor (thought to be developed by a relatively unknown team called **Lipra 1 Technologies**), an internal 8 GB hard drive for saves, built-in cable modem, DVD/CD player, **Dolby Digital** sound system, and in a novel approach to the market, a deluxe model will be shipped with a 100-watt, six-speaker sound system, including subwoofer. Korean giant **Daewoo** will be primarily involved as a manufacturer."

Within hours of the magazine hitting the newsstands, we started getting e-mails at **Intellivision Productions** asking if we knew anything about when the **Giga Intellivision** would be released. The fans were ready to line up to order it!

Unfortunately for them, the article was an April Fool's joke.

So why doesn't **Mattel** make a 128-bit console? Well, remember that **Intellivision** no longer has any connection with **Mattel** so this is just our speculation, but the simplest answer is that after the billions of dollars Mattel lost during its forays into the interactive gaming business in the early '80s and the late '90s, if Mattel's management announced they were going to try taking on **Sony**, the stockholders would storm the headquarters with torches and pitchforks.

[Got a question for the Blue Sky Rangers? Write us here >](#)

THE INTELLIVISION TRIVIA CONTEST!

120 of you entered last month's trivia contest. The question:

Space Armada and many other games have hidden names or messages in them. But which released Intellivision cartridge has an entire other game hidden in it that can be consistently revealed with the right key presses?



Many people answered **Astrosmash**. While the **Astrosmash** cartridge does indeed have a second game hidden inside, it cannot be consistently revealed with the right key presses.

But 45 of you had the correct answer: **Dig Dug**. Pressing and holding 4 and 7 on both hand controllers and hitting RESET will reveal the game **Deadly Dogs**. **Deadly Dogs** is **TRON Deadly Discs** played by the hot dogs from **BurgerTime**. (The explanation of this can be found on our web site and on the **Intellivision Lives!** CD-ROM in the **Dig Dug** production notes.)

From the 45 correct answers, the random number generator at <http://www.random.org/> selected **Dale R. Theobald** as the winner of an

Intellivision coffee mug.

Congratulations, Dale! And thanks to all of you for playing!

Now try **this** question:



Ray Kaestner

Ray Kaestner started at Mattel programming handheld games. He went on to develop **Intellivision** games. Ray likes to point out that one magazine writer called one of Ray's games the **best** Intellivision game ever, and another of his games the **worst** Intellivision game ever. What are the two games?

[Submit your answer >](#)

(If you have trouble following the above link, or if submitting your answer fails, type the URL <http://www.intellivisionlives.com/contest.shtml> into your browser and try again.)

We'll pick a random winner from all complete, correct entries received before NOON PDT, WEDNESDAY, JULY 23. The winner will receive an official **Intellivision Coffee Mug** - just like we use here in the office for serving up steamin' hot java!

GOOD LUCK!

THE BLUE SKY RANGERS

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