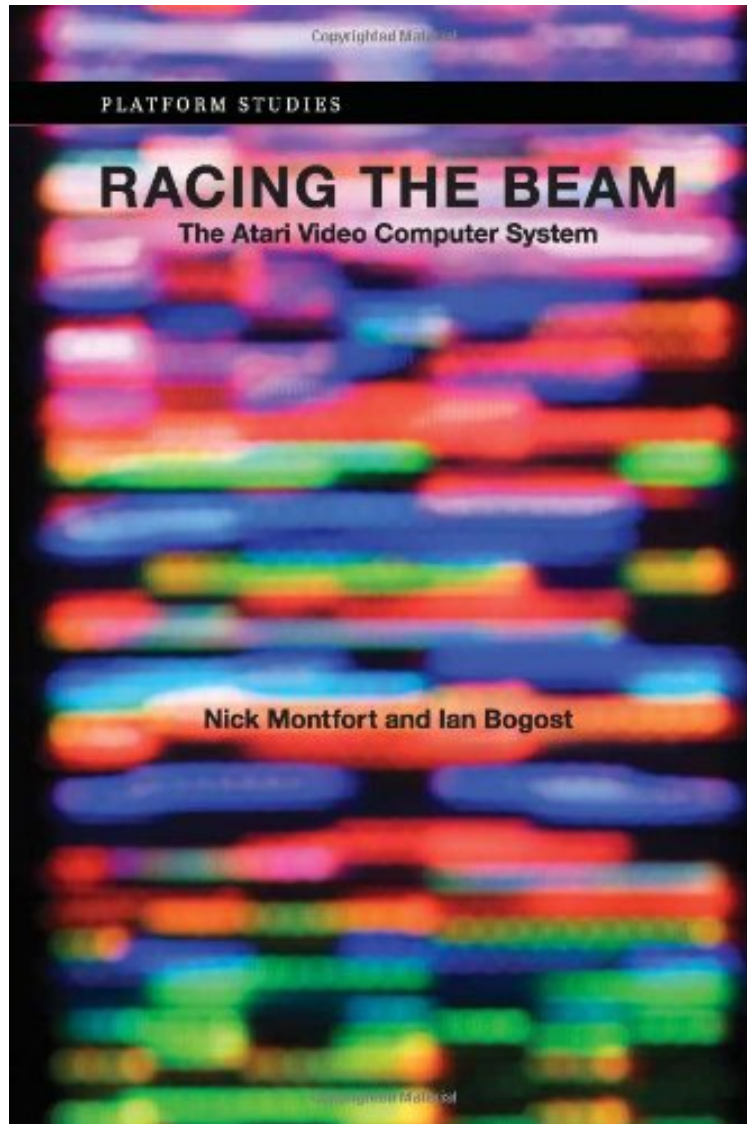


(Free pdf) Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System (Platform Studies)

Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System (Platform Studies)

Nick Montfort, Ian Bogost

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#384440 in Books Nick Montfort 2009-01-09 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .50 x 6.001, .95 #File Name: 026201257X192 pages Racing the Beam The Atari Video Computer System | File size: 21.Mb

Nick Montfort, Ian Bogost : Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System (Platform Studies) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System (Platform Studies):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. a good read but lacking polish By justin the book is interesting and the case studies are a good read. it is a bit disjointed in places and could have used a final editing pass to smooth the

transitions.as much as I love the detail gone into, I would have preferred something either more superficial or more in-depth. there are fascinating technical comments which are not followed up on (such as how to add sound to an Atari game).I know some people have complained that the connections made between modern gaming and the ones in the book are tenuous. I disagree. the authors choose well-founded examples but they could have used more explanation to assist those who are not life-long gamer trivia buffs to make connections firmer.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Not quite enough meat for the geeks (but still worth a read)By Thomas KiteThis book is not quite what I expected, but I enjoyed it just the same. I'd been expecting a thorough description of the VCS hardware, hopefully down to the (tiny) memory map, and at least a few code examples showing how the screen is generated, sprite multiplexing, etc. There is much more information at this level online, so you can learn about it; just don't expect much more than a cursory examination from this book.With that, the book has a few aims. One is to show how the restrictions imposed by the VCS hardware led to extraordinary leaps of creativity to produce playable and, in some instances, graphically impressive games. The authors do a nice job here of balancing the presentation of the dry technical aspects with sheer reverence for the programmers and designers.Another aim is more long-reaching: showing how some VCS games were the genesis (or an important part) of game genres that still exist today. This might be more of a stretch. There was a lot of arcade video game activity at the same time that the VCS ruled the living room, and many of the VCS titles were ports, i.e. they contributed little to moving the field forward.The book is part of a series called 'Platform Studies'. I'm not a media type, so I don't really know what this means. There's a fair amount of lip service paid to this concept in the book, but it seems a little contrived, as if the editor insisted that 'Platform Studies' be mentioned a certain number of times. Is the VCS an object lesson in platform studies? I don't know. What I do know is that it is probably the simplest programmable gaming system one could imagine. It's a brilliant design that offloaded all the difficult jobs onto the programmers to keep the hardware cost as low as possible. As such it deserves to be recognized for the milestone that it was, and this book does that, and in an enjoyable way.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. it's amazing that games like PitfallBy BillI grew up with the Atari 2600, and one of it's younger siblings, an Atari 1200XL 8-bit home computer. I learned to program on the 1200XL, and eventually learned a lot about its graphical and sound capabilities. Based on that knowledge, I thought had a basic idea of what the 2600 was capable of... this book proved me wrong.After reading this book -- a book I plan to read cover-to-cover again, to refresh my memory -- I gained incredible respect for what 2600 programmers were (and still are) capable of eeking out of the machine. Coming from the relative luxurious comfort of the 8-bit computer, with a real framebuffer, character/tile graphics, etc., it's amazing that games like Pitfall! exist at all, let alone are fast, fun, and highly playable!If you're interested in retrocomputing or retrogaming, computer video game history, or just enjoy learning about how technology works, this book is a must.

A study of the relationship between platform and creative expression in the Atari VCS.The Atari Video Computer System dominated the home video game market so completely that "Atari" became the generic term for a video game console. The Atari VCS was affordable and offered the flexibility of changeable cartridges. Nearly a thousand of these were created, the most significant of which established new techniques, mechanics, and even entire genres. This book offers a detailed and accessible study of this influential video game console from both computational and cultural perspectives. Studies of digital media have rarely investigated platforms--the systems underlying computing. This book (the first in a series of Platform Studies) does so, developing a critical approach that examines the relationship between platforms and creative expression. Nick Montfort and Ian Bogost discuss the Atari VCS itself and examine in detail six game cartridges: Combat, Adventure, Pac-Man, Yars' Revenge, Pitfall!, and Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back. They describe the technical constraints and affordances of the system and track developments in programming, gameplay, interface, and aesthetics. Adventure, for example, was the first game to represent a virtual space larger than the screen (anticipating the boundless virtual spaces of such later games as World of Warcraft and Grand Theft Auto), by allowing the player to walk off one side into another space; and Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back was an early instance of interaction between media properties and video games. Montfort and Bogost show that the Atari VCS--often considered merely a retro fetish object--is an essential part of the history of video games.

Montfort Bogost raise the bar on anyone wishing to talk meaningfully about computer culture. Not only must we interpret these machines, we must first know how they work -- and yes, sometimes this means knowing assembly code. From chip to controller, the authors lead us with ease through the Atari "2600" Video Computer System, one of the most emblematic devices in recent mass culture. (Alexander Galloway, Associate Professor of Culture and Communication, New York University, and author of Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization)Montfort and Bogost's analysis is both technically detailed and historically contextualized, both informative and methodologically instructive. They write with a rigor and grace that future contributors to the series may be at pains to match. (Seth Perlow, Convergence)Read it, it will do you good. (Jos P. Zagal Game Studies) Racing the Beam doesn't spare the technical details, but is always accessible and compelling. Downright thrilling at times, in fact, a sort of The Right Stuff of video game development. (Darren Zenko thestar.com (Toronto Star))About the AuthorNick Montfort is

Assistant Professor of Digital Media at MIT. He is the author of *Twisty Little Passages: A New Approach to Interactive Fiction* and the coeditor of *The New Media Reader*, both published by The MIT Press. Ian Bogost is Assistant Professor in the School of Literature, Communication, and Culture, at Georgia Institute of Technology and Founding Partner, Persuasive Games LLC. He is the author of *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogame Criticism* and *Unit Operations: An Approach to Videogame Criticism*, both published by the MIT Press.