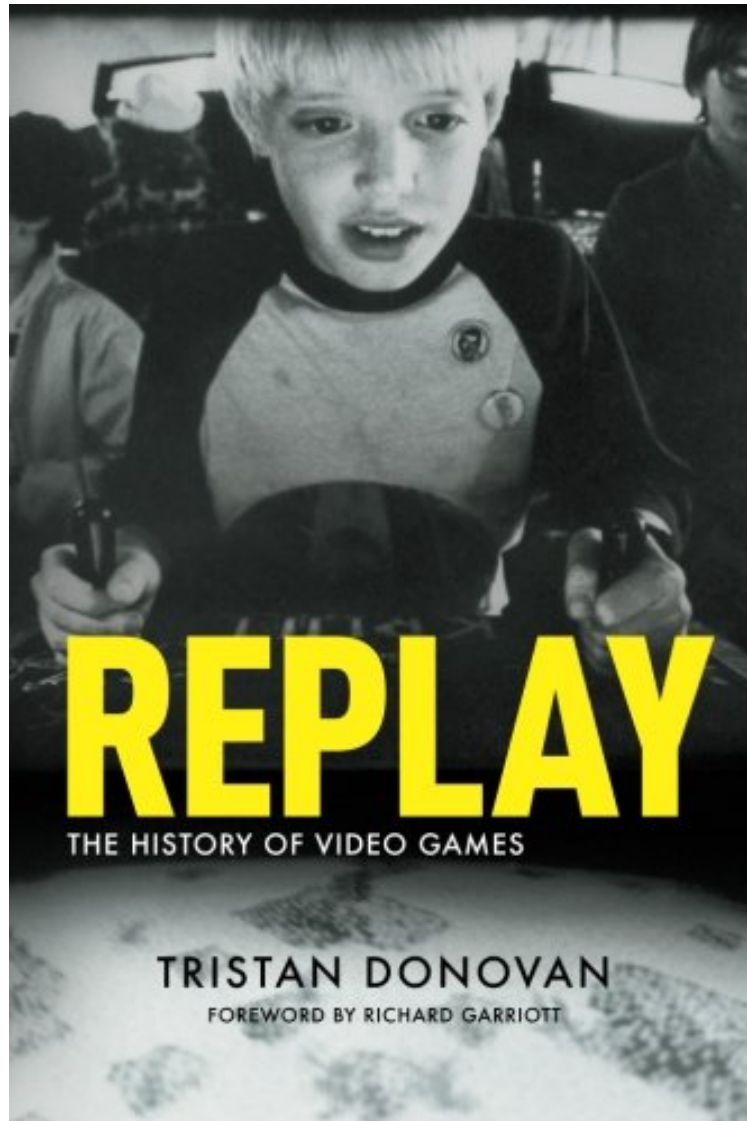


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Replay: The History of Video Games

Tristan Donovan

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#514635 in Books Yellow Ant 2010-04-20Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.29 x 6.00l, 1.65 #File Name: 0956507204516 pages | File size: 40.Mb

Tristan Donovan : Replay: The History of Video Games before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised [Replay: The History of Video Games](#):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An essential read, both rigorous and entertaining.By Xa4Replay: The History of Video Games does very little to convince you that you need to buy it: its cover is unattractive, to say the least, and should you decide to casually browse it in the shop, youll be confronted with nothing but a massive wall of small-font text with the occasional black and white picture of people you probably wont recognize. In short, this is

one book that will never make the acquaintance of a coffee table. And yet, it's an absolutely essential read for anyone that wants to broaden his/her understanding of video games, and how they came to become what they are. Not only is it hands down the most interesting book I've read on the subject, it's also one of my favorite non-fiction books of all time. A clear example of substance over style, if there ever was one. Chronicling 40+ years of video game history will never be done comprehensively, even in 400 pages of dense text. But *Replay* is certainly the most convincing attempt at covering everything of importance. And it doesn't compromise on the width to achieve its remarkable depth. It's a history of video games, but it's also a history of the people who create them, of the hardware they run on, of the companies that make them their business, of the economic issues they had to face and of the social debates that games have raised. It gives balanced attention to the arcade and the home games. Even more remarkable, *Replay* is a true worldwide history, covering people and events in all the places that ever mattered for the hobby: the USA, Japan, Europe (the UK, of course, but you might be surprised to learn exactly how much happened in Spain, France or Eastern European countries), Russia... There's even a whole chapter dedicated to the very peculiar history of video games in South Korea. Very, very little bases are left uncovered. The early history is told in an essentially chronological manner. It may be the most fascinating part of the book: it's an era of heroic deeds by individuals, or small groups, who single-handedly created games and/or game machines with the reluctant agreement of companies that believed so little in the projects that they only allocated pennies to them. An era of teenage boys creating both complex and surreal worlds in their basements, and then squeezing them into the very few kilobytes of memory available on the early home computers. If you're a younger video game player, this part will probably make you wish you were born sooner! More recent times have seen the rise of bigger studios, with big-budget games rarely associated with a single creative mind, and the release of hundreds, if not thousands of games each year, render the chronological approach impractical. That's why Tristan Donovan logically switches to a more theme-centric discussion. Chapters in the second half of the book tend indeed to each focus on a couple of themes. At first, these themes appear unrelated, but he nonetheless always comes up with an elegant transition. Finally, the last chapter covers the rise of indie video games and we go sort of full circle, back to visionaries making the most of limited means. It has to be said that, being published in 2010, you won't get coverage of the last three years. Going back to the stylistic aspects, Donovan's writing is elegant and enjoyable. Many quotes from hundreds of interviews are interspersed within his narration, making the people come alive in the reader's mind. My one and only complaint with the book would be the rare but annoying grammatical errors. I'm talking about horrible, "could of been"-style errors that one can expect to find in a teenager's Facebook wall, but certainly not in an otherwise excellent history text. Two large annexes close the book. The first is a "gameography", listing some 600 games by genre, with short comments. Many of those have already been discussed in the main text, but the annex's interest lies in its organisation: it's a sort of evolutionary tree, explaining, for example, when fighting games got split into the beat-em-up's and one-on-one fighting subgenres. The second annex lists all systems discussed in the text, with a definition in one or two sentences. It may occasionally come in handy, but is little more than a glossary. Overall, *Replay* is about as perfect as a history of video games can be. It's pleasingly written and entertaining enough for the general public who would like to know more about the hobby. It's also deep and rigorous enough to satisfy the more scholarly-minded reader. In short, it's an essential read for most everyone.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. The [short and abruptly ending] history of video games
By T. Rodgers
While by no means a comprehensive history, this offers some a nice chronology and many interesting tales about the birth and maturity of gaming. The best asset is that it's not Americentric, and offers a great history of the European market, in particular. I found the details about the European hardware market, along with the history of European software developers (French Adventure gaming, for example) fascinating. Much of the European stuff was completely new material to me. The descriptions of the type of innovation or idiosyncrasies each nation tended to bring to gaming was also fascinating, since it shows how the different cultures contributed along the way. Finally, for something being published in 2010, the book ends abruptly in the early 1990's. It's kind of jarring, because there are a lot of pages left and stories to tell. Unfortunately, the last 200+ (of 500 some) pages are not-very-interesting mind map of games and the hardware to play them. It's a shame, because two or three more chapters would have really rounded the book out. Still, video games are embedded into our culture and there is room for many accounts of the first 50 years of this nascent art. This is definitely a worthwhile read, but probably not the ideal choice for someone looking for the 'comprehensive history' condensed into one book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Truly helpful
By Josiah
This title has been a great help for my investigative paper required by my BFA. Donovan documents more about video games than just the tech or the reviews, there is a deeper level of social and artistic observation. Every so often a quirk of humor is noticeable that keeps the read refreshing.

A riveting account of the strange birth and remarkable evolution of the most important development in entertainment since television, *Replay* is the ultimate history of video games. Based on extensive research and over 140 exclusive interviews with key movers and shakers from gaming's past, *Replay* tells the sensational story of how the creative vision of game designers gave rise to one of the world's most popular and dynamic art forms.

"While other history books have covered the topic, Tristan Donovan's 500-page tome is the most wide-ranging history I've read." --Wired
"An amazing work. Comprehensive and wide ranging - yet engrossing and splendidly entertaining. If you read only one history of video games - Replay is it." --Eugene Jarvis, creator of Defender, Narc and Smash TV
"Tons of interviews with creators, a window into early US and Europe PC industry stuff I'd never read about before at all... very enjoyable and informative reading." --Christian Nutt, Gamasutra
"Tristan Donovan's account is the most comprehensive thus far...He details with great insight the people and events that led to what is the most powerful creative field today." --Richard Garriott (aka Lord British), designer of the Ultima series
I cant think of a reason that you shouldnt go and order a copy of it immediately...If you enjoy reading about games, theres absolutely no way that youre not going to find spending quality time with this rewarding. --Kieron Gillen, Rock Paper Shotgun
Whether you grew up with your eyes glued to Adventure or Super Mario Bros, with your hand around a joystick or inside a Nintendo Power Glove, this is one history lesson worth its weight in quarters. --Rob Lott, Bookgasm
Striking a near-perfect balance between art and commerce, Replay is the most comprehensive history of videogames so far. --Edge
Essential reading --GamesTM
About the Author
Tristan Donovan has written about video games for The Guardian, Edge, Game Developer, Stuff, The Gadget Show, GamesTM and many other publications. He lives in East Sussex, UK.