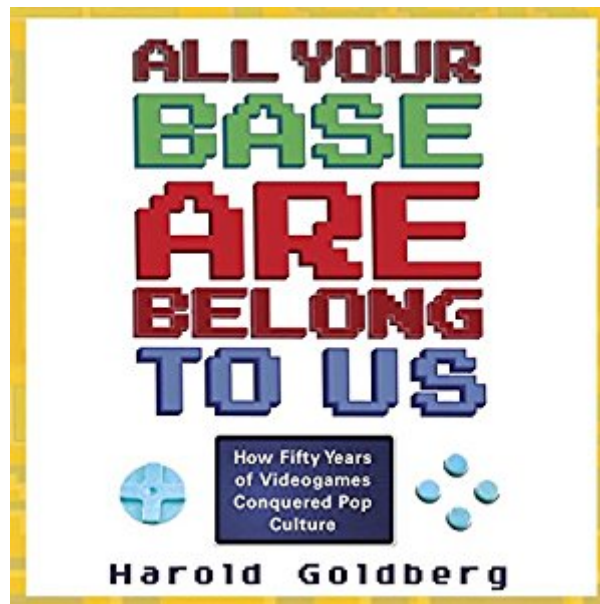


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All Your Base Are Belong To Us: How Fifty Years Of Videogames Conquered Pop Culture



Synopsis

Through the stories of gaming's greatest innovations and most-beloved creations, journalist Harold Goldberg captures the creativity, controversy - and passion - behind the videogame's meteoric rise to the top of the pop-culture pantheon. Over the last 50 years, video games have grown from curiosities to fads to trends to one of the world's most popular forms of mass entertainment. But as the gaming industry grows in numerous directions, and everyone talks about the advance of the moment, few explore and seek to understand the forces behind this profound evolution. How did we get from Space Invaders to Grand Theft Auto? How exactly did gaming become a \$50 billion industry and a dominant pop culture form? What are the stories, the people, the innovations, and the fascinations behind this incredible growth? Through extensive interviews with gaming's greatest innovators, both its icons and those unfairly forgotten by history, *All Your Base Are Belong to Us* sets out to answer these questions, exposing the creativity, odd theories - and passion - behind the 21st century's fastest-growing medium. Go inside the creation of: Grand Theft Auto World of Warcraft Bioshock King's Quest Bejeweled Madden Football Super Mario Brothers Myst Pong Donkey Kong Crash Bandicoot The 7th Guest Tetris Shadow Complex Everquest The Sims And many more!

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 12 hours and 29 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Harold Goldberg

Audible.com Release Date: April 1, 2015

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00VIQKTVU

Best Sellers Rank: #28 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Arts & Entertainment > Games #159

in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Puzzles & Games > Video & Computer Games #170

in Books > Computers & Technology > Games & Strategy Guides

Customer Reviews

I usually don't review other writers' books, but this one was so filled with errors that I was truly disappointed while reading it. I'll list some of them. I have to say that, although I enjoyed the book,

the errors were very distracting. Page 1: "In 1966, Ralph Baer, a short, bespectacled man with a deep, radio-quality voice and a sharp wit, had been a successful engineer for thirty years." If this is true, then Baer became a successful engineer in 1936 when he was 14 years old, and two years before he fled Nazi Germany. Page 20: "The testing ground for Pong, the very first arcade game, was a newly opened bar in the Silicon Valley." But Pong was not the first arcade game, Computer Space was. And the book says that on the following page. Page 34: "At first, no one was interested in the home version (of Pong), even when the game was shown to retailers at New York City's famous and chaotic Toy Fair. Part of the Toy Fair debacle was due to Bushnell and his people being wet behind the ears. Their space for Toy Fair wasn't in the building at Broadway and Twenty-third Street where most business was done. It was far away (in the Jacob Javits Convention Center). Few stopped by." Home Pong came out in 1975. The Jacob Javits Convention Center opened in 1986. Page 42-43: "Wozniak pocketed \$375, but Jobs kept the remainder of the \$5,000. When Wozniak discovered what Jobs had been paid, his hacker heart, which had led him to work on Breakout for art's sake, was broken."

Disclosure #1: I was an arcade junkie. Even today, I have a full-size Joust upright in my basement. Somehow I missed catching the online gaming bug, but I have enjoyed console games from the Atari 2600 through multiple PlayStations to my current Xbox 360. Disclosure #2: I already own several books on the video game industry, from colorful coffee table books to inclusive price guides to encyclopedic references. Comparatively, All Your Base Are Belong to Us was disappointing. Fair or not, this book got off on the wrong foot. The title is an in-joke: a poor translation from a forgettable game (Zero Wing*) not even released in North America. Choosing this broken English as a cultural touchstone seems an odd choice for a book which the publishers hope will appeal to a wide audience. Worst of all, the phrase is not elucidated in the book, and barely mentioned in an easy-to-miss reference between the Table of Contents and Introduction. The book itself is juvenile and gossipy. It needed an editor. If it had an editor, it needed a better one. The writing level and jocularity might be acceptable for online newsletters (for which the author has much experience), but that same freewheeling familiarity falls short here. The overused idiom "so much so" appears in virtually every chapter, so much so that I found myself keeping track.

Harold Goldberg's inappropriately titled All Your Base Are Belong To Us (AYB) - more on that later - is a comprehensive and thoroughly researched look into the people behind the last 50+ years of video games. From moving dots to bits and bytes, AYB provides readers with a fantastic

dissertation on game development. With such an ambitious goal, there are bound to be successes and failures that mirror those of the geeky innovators who provided everything from Pong to World of Warcraft. For the most part, however, the book moves along pretty well for what amounts to a biographical compilation of programmers, investors, companies, and games. While perfect for someone wanting to know the history behind the rise of gaming, and perhaps ideal for someone with dog-eared copies of old Nintendo Power magazines, I found the book a bit lacking for me, an actual geek. That is neither a slight upon this book nor Goldberg's work, merely a note for other game-playing, computer-programming geeks out there. Had a little more technical information been thrown in, I'm sure it would have satisfied my unfed cravings that were, for the most part, satisfied by the linear content. Two other faults, in my opinion, concern the book's title. First and foremost, the English origin of AYB (FYI - Zero Wing) should have been explored, and could have seamlessly fit into any number of Japanese influences in gaming's rise in popularity. Second, as an avid gamer who has owned nearly every console from the Atari 2600 & Colecovision to Xbox and Wii, I felt there was a glaring omission of the fighting genre that swept the world in the late 80s and early 90s.

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