Chapter 1.1
A Brief History of Video Games

(Note the use of the term "video" and not "computer")
The First Video Games

- William Higginbotham and *Tennis for Two*
  - Created in 1958 for the Brookhaven National Laboratory’s annual visitor day
  - Display was an oscilloscope
  - Sound effects were a side-effect of the relays that made the game run
  - No one realized its significance
The First Video Games

- Steve Russell and *Spacewar*
  - Created in 1961 at MIT for the DEC PDP-1 computer
  - Hugely popular within MIT
  - Required prohibitively expensive equipment
  - Eventually shipped as a diagnostic program with PDP-1s
Games for the Masses

- The Advent of Home Video Games: Ralph Baer and the Magnavox Odyssey
  - 1966, initial idea for a game machine that would work on home TVs
  - Created a shooting game and ice hockey game
  - Sold to Magnavox in 1972
Games for the Masses

- Breaking Into the Amusement Business: Nolan Bushnell and Atari
  - Engineering major at the University of Utah
  - Background in coin-operated amusement devices
  - Tried to bring *Spacewar* to arcades as *Computer War*
Games for the Masses

- Bringing Games to the Masses
  - Atari founded by Nolan Bushnell in 1972
  - Brought *Pong* to arcades
  - Sued by Baer and Magnavox
  - Paid a one-time license fee of $700,000
Pong & Space War

**Computer Games**

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<td>Pinball Parlors</td>
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<td>Video Arcades</td>
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<td>Early Evolution</td>
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<td>Doom</td>
<td>Twilight of the Video Arcades</td>
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**Arcade Games**

- Penny Arcades
- Pinball Parlors

**Console Games**

- Early Evolution
- The Console Wars
- Multimedia Machines
Console Kings
(Past, Present Future)
The Console Kings

- Atari and the 2600
  - Released October, 1977
  - Not quite the first cartridge-based home system
  - Open architecture allowed easy development
  - First to introduce licensing of a system
The Console Kings

- **Video Game Crash of 1983**
  - Factors leading to the crash
    - Poor economy
    - Natural market cycle
    - Video games perceived as fad
    - Glut of poor 2600 games
    - Introduction of home computers
The Console Kings

- Nintendo and Shigeru Miyamoto
  - Released *Donkey Kong* arcade machine in 1981
  - Released Nintendo Entertainment System in 1985
  - By late 80’s Nintendo owned 90% of the market
The Console Kings

- Sega
  - Created in 1952 in Japan to sell amusement games on US army bases
  - Released the popular Sega Genesis in 1990
  - Final console was 1999’s Sega Dreamcast
  - Now dedicated to software
Sega (in memoriam)
The Console Kings

- Sony’s PlayStation
  - Created out of an aborted attempt to launch a CD-ROM based system with Nintendo
  - Released PlayStation in 1994
  - PlayStation 2 (2000), backwards compatibility with hugely popular PS1
  - PSP handheld, Wi
The Console Kings

- Microsoft and the Xbox
  - Xbox released in 2001, Xbox 360 2005
  - Based on a PC-like architecture
  - Significant money lost on each console sold
  - *Halo* became the reason to own the system.
Home Computers?
Who can afford $12,000?
Home Computers

- Apple Computer
  - Founded by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Mike Markkula in 1976
  - Apple II was released in 1977
  - Revolutionized the home computer market
    - Why? Complete System & Low Cost (48K $2,638.00 $1,938.00 board only).
Home Computers

- Commodore
  - Commodore Vic-20 Released in 1981
  - Low price and shrewd marketing lead to success
  - Commodore 64, released in 1982, became the best selling computer in history
Home Computers

- IBM
  - IBM PC introduced in 1981
  - Moderate pricing helped it gain a foothold in the business world
  - BIOS licensing model backfired on them, allowing cheap clones to enter the market
Famous Games & Designers
The Designers

- Maxis and Will Wright
  - *SimCity* released in 1989
- Sid Meier
  - Concentrated on strategic simulations
  - *Pirates!* (1987) *Railroad Tycoon* and *Civilization*
- Sierra and Ken and Roberta Williams
  - Created first graphical adventure game, *Mystery House* in 1980
  - *King’s Quest* series, *Police Quest* series, and *Leisure Suit Larry* series, Published *Half-Life*
The Designers

- Origin Systems and Richard Garriott
  - Created the *Ultima* series and *Ultima Online*, one of the first MMORPG (tanked in 2000)

- Origin & Chris Roberts
  - Created *Wing Commander*
  - One of the more popular starfighter games
  - Known for epic storylines and full-motion video
  - Spawned a 1999 movie, directed by Roberts
"You never played ________ ?
Where've you been?"
The Phenomenons

- **Space Invaders**
  - Introduced to the US in 1978
  - First big Japanese success
  - Introduced the “High Score” list to video games
The Phenomenons

- **Pac-Man**
  - American debut in 1981
  - Attempt to create a completely non-violent game
  - Generated $100 million in sales during its lifetime

- **Tetris**
  - Russian programmer Alexy Pajitnov in 1985
  - Became a pop culture sensation
  - Helped drive the success of Nintendo’s Game Boy
The Phenomenons

- Capcom (1979) *Resident Evil*
  - Also created *Street Fighter, Mega Man*
  - *Resident Evil* has spawned 15 variations and sequels as well as two Hollywood movies

- Square and *Final Fantasy*
  - In 1987 released *Final Fantasy* as a last-ditch effort to stave off bankruptcy
  - 15 games have been released since then, selling more than 40 million copies (and a movie)
The Phenomenons

- Cyan and Myst
  - Created by Rand and Robyn Miller
  - Released in 1993 on the Apple Macintosh
  - Helped popularize the CD-ROM drive
The Phenomenons

- Pokémon
  - Created by Japanese video game enthusiast Satoshi Tajiri
  - *Pokémon Red* and *Green* released for Nintendo Game Boy in 1996
  - Movies, TV series and multiple sequels have followed
"We're looking for a few good programmers"
The Studios

- Activision and Infocom (& Blizzard)
  - Founded by former Atari programmers
  - Lawsuit by Atari created “royalties” system still employed today
  - Merged with Infocom and gutted it
  - Still a strong player today
The Studios

- Electronic Arts
  - Created by Trip Hawkins in 1982
  - Revolutionary business plan did three things
    - Creative talent treated like artists
    - Creation of in-house tools to aid cross-platform development
    - Handle own distribution
The Studios

- Interplay
  - Formed in 1983
  - First big hit was *The Bard’s Tale* in 1985
  - Famous for their CRPGs, including *Wasteland*, *Fallout*, *Baldur’s Gate*, *Baldur’s Gate II: Shadows of Amn*
  - Currently bankrupt.
The Studios

- LucasArts
  - Formed in 1982 (offshoot of LucasFilm Ltd.).
  - Released *Maniac Mansion* in 1987
  - Created strong history of adventure games and Star Wars universe games
The Studios

- **Blizzard (subsidiary of Activision 2007)**
  - Released one of the seminal Real-Time Strategy games, *Warcraft*, in 1994
  - *World of Warcraft (MMORPG)*, became the fastest selling PC game in history
The Studios

- id Software
  - Formed on February 1, 1991
  - Utilized Apogee’s shareware formula
  - Created the defining first-person shooter with *DOOM*
# Top Studios 2009 (GD)

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<tr>
<th>Rank (2009)</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nintendo</td>
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<td>EA</td>
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<td>Activision/Blizzard</td>
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<td>Take-Two Interactive</td>
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<td>Sony Interactive</td>
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<td>Bethesda</td>
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<td>Namco Bandai</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Warner Bros. Interactive</td>
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<td>LucasArts</td>
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Genres

- Can be thought of in “historical” terms
- We will consider them in Design terminology and discuss them next week.
Modern Trends

- Casual Gamers?
- Controls and Interfaces
- On-line Content (downloads)
- Return of shareware (content charging)
- On-line Identities & Communities
- Game economies
- Multimedia PC's vs. Multimedia Consoles
- Mobile Gaming
The End