

ARTS

wide

Tough luck guys, you get what you pay for.

Which brings me to where I think the future of computer gaming is going: the IBM and compatible computers. The 8- and 16-bit games dedicated machines are fine, but they are limited by the architecture of the system, and by the memory of whatever medium (cartridge, or compact disk) they are using. The IBM on the other hand, has an incomparable versatility. It has to have.

People who want a business machine and also want a game machine don't want to buy one of each, they want both in one. For a while now, IBM and other manufacturers have been giving them both. Programmers can do so much more with the IBM versatility.

Take for instance what I think will be the best selling arcade game for the IBM this year. The program is called "Wing Commander", and needs an EGA or VGA graphics adapter.

"Wing Commander" is a combination flight simulator/strategy game with arcade action. You can command your choice of ships and

late effectively onto the 8-bit system. I think that some of the complexity will be gone.

Another adventure series is the Kings Quest games. Sierra recently released "Kings Quest V", which I don't think will ever be converted to Nintendo.

"Kings Quest V" outdoes all previous Kings Quests because of its complexity and the beauty of the graphics. The VGA backgrounds are beautiful and draw you into the screen.

The only problem I have with the game is that the characters look much as they always have. Little bit-mapped dudes which move in jerks which are incongruous with the subtle backgrounds. The fluidity of movement has improved over time, but it still needs work. This is another large game, eating seven megabytes on your hard disk.

Now we go where the Nintendo and others cannot follow — the simulation market. Okay, sometimes Nintendo can follow. There are rumors of "SimCity" coming out on Nintendo. But let's see them put "Life & Death II: The Brain" on any other machine than the PC.



fly missions with computer generated compadres who will talk to you.

That may not sound too impressive, but the technology which is used to do all these things is.

First of all, the enemy ships, asteroids and other objects that appear in your ships window are not bit-mapped. These objects are mathematical equations which the computer shows as objects. These ray-traced graphics effectively reduce the amount of memory needed to illustrate the complex designs of enemy ships. It's still a huge game running at about six megabytes of memory, but it would be even larger without the ray-tracing. A lot of the memory is used to run animation sequences in a semi-successful attempt to make the game feel like a movie experience. All talk of technology aside, though, it is still just an arcade action game.

Another staple of the game dedicated machines and computer gaming is the adventure game. "Quest." Ultima will soon be releasing "Ultima I and II" for the Nintendo.

These games were, and still are, intensely popular with the computer gamers. I can't say anything about the Nintendo versions, because I haven't seen them yet, but I have my doubts whether the games will trans-

The brain game is simple in concept. You are an intern on a neurosurgical ward. You have to examine patients, diagnose them, and perform surgery. There is a medical school that you can refer to when you need to.

The graphics are sometimes horribly realistic, especially when you are taking out a brain tumor.

It's not a simple game, and most kids would find it too difficult, but it's a perfect way to put more relaxing stress into a university student's life.

When it comes right down to it, simulations are where it's at. How many times can you face the "Mario Brothers" before you want to knock their caps off? How many times can you go on a quest for two magical Ben Wa balls in Neo Geo's "Magician Lord". How many times can you go through "Alice's Adventures In Wonderland", on your PC? Simulations on the other hand, are never the same. Each subdural haematoma I've operated on is different. In the submarine simulation "Silent Service II", each patrol is different. And I think sooner rather than later, the game dedicated manufacturers are going to find out that consistent difference is what makes a game exciting.



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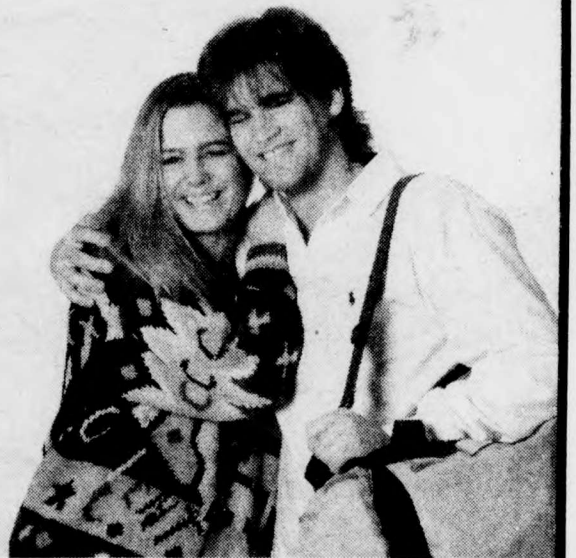
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