



CREATIVE

Video Game History Foundation @ PAX | PAX West

[youtube.com/watch?v=AMhgeWLdmH8](https://youtube.com/watch?v=AMhgeWLdmH8)



Frank Cifaldi

# Preserving Stuff at the Video Game History Foundation



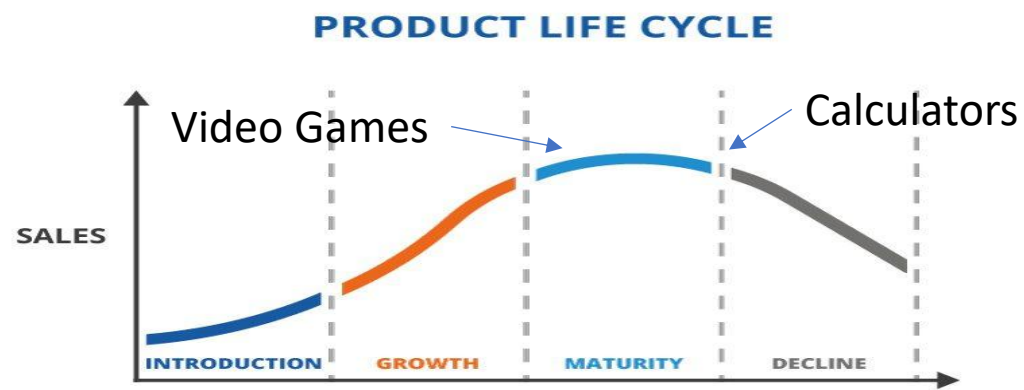
Something this color is an excerpt from Frank's presentation

# Agenda

- Calculator/Video Game Markets
- Archival Information- Where does it go?
  - Options (Choices)
  - Libraries
  - Companies & Preservation
- Examples
  - Game Informer
  - Computer Entertainer
- Super-collectors & Distinguished Presenters
- Preservation
  - Our roles
  - Preservation Champions
  - Video Game Foundation Setup
- Questions to ask ourselves

# Calculator/Video Game Markets

2024 Calculator Market: \$1.2B  
2024 Video Game Market: \$298B



| Products & Intro Dates |       |       |           |       |        |        |        |         |      |             |        |               |      |       |      | TIME        |        |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------|------|-------------|--------|---------------|------|-------|------|-------------|--------|--------|----------|----------|------|---------|------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|-----|--|
| Year                   | 1972  | 1973  | 1974      | 1975  | 1976   | 1977   | 1978   | 1979    | 1980 | 1981        | 1982   | 1983          | 1984 | 1985  | 1986 | 1987        | 1988   | 1989   | 1990     | 1991     | 1992 | 1993    | 1994 |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
|                        | HP-35 | HP-80 | HP-65     | HP-55 | HP-67  | HP-29C | HP-27  | HP-34C  |      | HP-12C      | HP-10C |               |      |       |      | HP-10B      | HP-14B | HP-20S | HP-17BII | HP-32SII |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
|                        |       | HP-45 | HP-70     | HP-25 | HP-25C | HP-10  | HP-31E |         |      |             | HP-15C |               |      |       |      | HP-43S      | HP-17B | HP-21S |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
|                        |       |       |           | HP-21 | HP-97  | HP-19  | HP-32E |         |      |             | HP-16C |               |      |       |      | HP-28C      | HP-19B |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
|                        |       |       |           | HP-22 |        |        | HP-33E |         |      |             |        |               |      |       |      |             | HP-22S |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
|                        |       |       |           |       |        |        | HP-37E |         |      |             |        |               |      |       |      |             | HP-23S |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
|                        |       |       |           |       |        |        | HP-38E |         |      |             |        |               |      |       |      |             | HP-32S |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
|                        |       |       |           |       |        |        | HP-38C |         |      |             |        |               |      |       |      |             | HP-28S |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
| Game Company           |       |       |           |       |        |        |        |         |      |             |        |               |      |       |      |             |        |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
| Atari                  |       |       | Home Pong |       |        | 2600   |        | 400/800 |      |             | 5200   |               |      | 130xe |      |             | Jaguar |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
| Nintendo               |       |       |           |       |        |        |        |         |      |             |        | Famicon       |      |       |      | NES         |        |        |          | Gameboy  |      |         |      | SNES      |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
| Sega                   |       |       |           |       |        |        |        |         |      |             |        | Master System |      |       |      |             |        |        |          |          |      | Genesis |      | Game Gear |  |  |  |  |  |  | 32x |  |
| Coleco                 |       |       |           |       |        |        |        |         |      |             |        | Coleco Vision |      |       |      | Coleco Adam |        |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
| Commodore              |       |       |           |       |        | Pet    |        |         |      | Comodore 64 |        |               |      |       | 128  |             |        |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |
| Commodore              |       |       |           |       |        |        |        |         |      |             |        |               |      | Amiga |      |             |        |        |          |          |      |         |      |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |     |  |

# Archival game material - where does it go?



# Archived Material: Where does it go?

## Option One: Just Put It Online

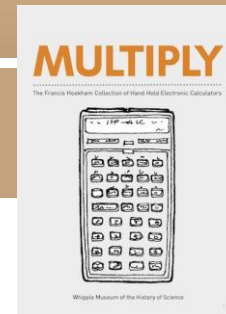
- Universal access! Anyone can have it!
- But only if they can find it
- And if they know it's out there to find
- And if it's still online when they look (can I get a reseed?)



## Option Two: Donate It

- Cataloged and retrievable (librarians are amazing!)
- Maintained forever (conservationists are amazing!)
- On-site only (hotels are expensive!)
- Restricted usage (don't post it!)
- Almost entirely physical (how do you ctrl+f paper?)
- Extremely risk-averse (unlikely to ever leave or get copied)

- Museums don't handle materials they don't own



## Dedicated Alternatives



Hpcalc.org  
Hpmuseum.org  
Groups.io  
Pahhc.org  
Hpcc.org

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Access       | ★★★★★ |
| Curation     | ★★★   |
| Conservation | ★★★   |

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Access       | ★★    |
| Curation     | ★★★   |
| Conservation | ★★★★★ |

|              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Access       | ★★★★★ |
| Curation     | ★★★★★ |
| Conservation | ★★★★★ |

# Libraries

## The Industry\* Hates Libraries

- Libraries cannot legally provide remote access to games
- There is no logistically-feasible way to legally preserve digital games, all we can do is shelf physical ones
- We did about all we can to mitigate concerns and find a compromise, but the industry won't budge
- The industry has chosen to sacrifice 87% of its history because you might accidentally have fun playing it

\*As represented by the Entertainment Software Association

Don't send a prototype to a video game museum unless you don't want anyone to look at it.

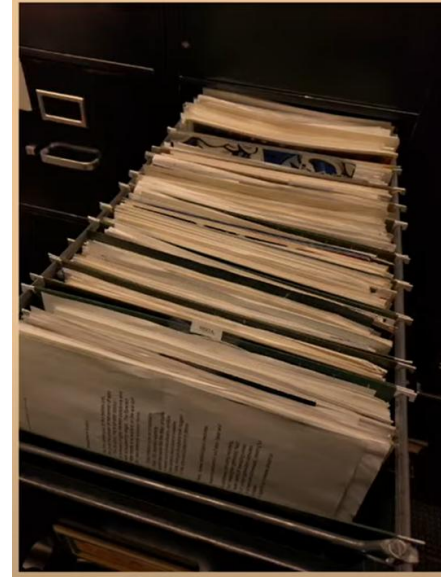
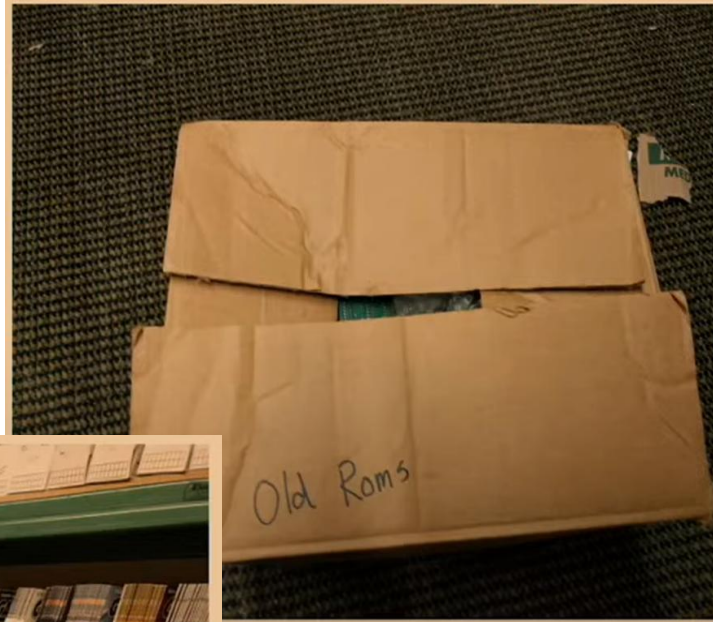
*This is different for the calculator industry. Developers, users, libraries, museums, & other preservationists are working cooperatively, productively.*

# Companies & Preservation

## Companies Are a Black Hole

- Game companies, especially large ones, are legally conservative
- Your work may be headed to the shredder, and I mean that literally
- And even if they kept it, they're not showing it to anybody
- ...and it'll end up in the shredder anyway

- Companies' focus on P&L, IP protection, & changing goals is often not conducive to preservation/conservation
  - Even when it is in their best interest (e.g., lost calculator ROM codes)
- The HPs have recognized the value of preservation and are sponsoring Heritage Works
- The time to preserve ongoing development work is now...



# Preservation Project

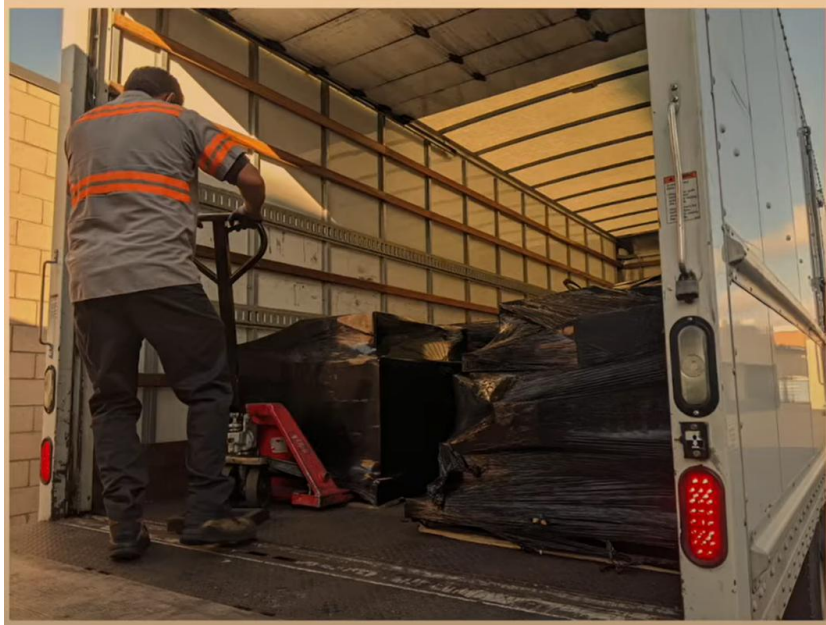
## The challenges

- Owners wanted to keep their collection in the office
- Copyright and relationship concerns (they still did business with these companies!)
- Insurmountable volume (no way staff could get through it)
- Business uncertainty

## The solution

- Frank & a team of volunteers relocated to Minnesota for 5 weeks
- Institution trust & industry experience opened doors
- Showing the work every day builds enough trust for a donation change of heart

May 2019:



**May 2019**

- ~70% of collection archived/digitized
- 25Tb+ of data

**June 2019**

- to be cont'd next year

**March 2020**

- COVID

**August 2024**

- Game Informer shut down
- Game Informer reborn**
- Closets, Game library lost 😞

# Computer Entertainer



- The Video Game History Foundation acquired the rights to the Computer Entertainer magazine.

## Computer Entertainer takeaways

- A library would have taken in the physical volumes and provided on-site access, but likely wouldn't have scanned it.
- Institutional trust made this possible (can't say this enough!)
- The approval process to destroy our duplicate volumes for proper scans was a five-minute conversation
- Searchable, readable, and downloadable on our website
- Same lessons learned as with calculator literature preservation

# Super-Collectors

- We know who we know. We don't know who we don't know. (e.g., Francis Hookham Collection at Whipple Museum).
- Super-collectors want to maintain control/ownership of their collection
- Super-collectors are often open to having professionals copy and share their collection
- We need to continue to:
  - Identify opportunities to copy/scan super-collectors' collections
  - Encourage known super-collectors to have directives
  - Try to identify “sleeper” super-collectors (forums?)



A personal collection



Frank copying the personal collection

# Distinguished Presenters

*Preservation is not just about preserving stuff – it is also about preserving peoples' stories.*



- “HHC serves as a meeting place for collectors, programmers, and former HP engineers to share their knowledge and passion for these products.”\*
- HHC has a long history of Distinguished Presenters that have shared their knowledge and experiences.
  - Dave Cochran, Dave Conklin, Bill Wickes, Bernie Musch, Don Morris, Dennis York, Eric Vogel, Henry Horn, Jim Donnelly, Cyrille de Brebisson, Fred Valdez, Tim Wessman, Sam Kim and *many* others...
- We need to continue to solicit & encourage these presentations...

# We all have a role in Preservation

- ***“If you see something, say something”*** 😊
  - When you encounter something interesting share it with community- get a scan/copy in archives
- We are subject matter experts, we are in the best position to gauge relevance
- This group has been doing excellent work identifying and preserving history!
  - The conference drive is an excellent resource.

# Preservation Champions

*“a persistent advocate who promotes an idea or cause”*

- Defined by an unwavering support for preservation
- Self Motivated
- Often uncompensated
- Library skills (indexing, categorization)
- Scanning/OCR expertise
- Media duplication expertise
- Websites to share/disseminate information
- Storage technology skills
- Database skills

# Video Game History Foundation Setup

## Step One: Hire a Librarian

## Step Two: Invent Multiple Things

- OCR that actually works
- A fair use argument for out-of-print magazines
- A custom frontend
- Complete catalog of all video game magazines
- Scanning tools and processes
- Buying duplicates to scan
- Selling duplicates to fund
- Partnering with community scanners

*Calculator preservationists (especially Preservation Champions) have done the same (or very similar) Step Two things.*

## Next Steps...

Forget about how things are done now, how do *you* want things to be done?

## Questions to ask yourselves (and others)

- Does the ESA's anti-library stance actually represent your values? If not, what can you do about that?
- How can you advance historical preservation within your circles? How can you promote change from within?
- Can your company help game preservation efforts?

## Questions to ask yourselves (and others)

- If you're donating your materials: What do YOU want to happen to it? How do YOU want it accessed? Is what's being offered good enough for you?
- If you're an archive: Is your institution the best home for a particular item?
- If you're donating money: How do YOU want your money spent? Is your money going toward initiatives that speak to your values?

Get involved, however makes sense to you. Don't rely on any institutions, even ours, to save you. All we've got is each other, but I promise it's enough.

# Thank You!!!

...Questions?



Classic example of what we don't want to happen to priceless collections...

**HHC**  
**2025**