

Game Monitor The Answer To Inventory Woes?

By TIM BASKERVILLE

Romox Inc., a Campbell, Calif.-based manufacturer of computer games, claims to have the solution to the inventory problems that have plagued the game cartridge business since last year. According to Romox president Paul Terrell, the company's "edge connector programmable cartridge," essentially a cartridge containing an erasable memory chip, has the capability of being erased and reprogrammed by the manufacturer in a little more than a minute.

This makes it possible to recycle the cartridge housing, board and semiconductor, and reship the cartridge with a new label and packaging. The upshot for retailers: 100% replacement for unsold cartridges. Romox's own line has been manufactured since its first shipments last November using the technology.

The company accepts 100% returns on its titles, with the result that "none of our cartridges are sitting around gathering dust."

Romox hopes to license the technology to other companies, pitching the economy and lower risk factors involved. The company's aim, says Terrell, is to become as key a licensor of primary technology in game cartridges as Philips is in audio cassettes.

★ ★ ★

Imagic terminated 50 employees May 12 in a "strategic redirection" which will see the company turn its efforts more heavily toward the creation of entertainment software for computers. The firing did not affect the design department, Imagic's spokeswoman says: that staff will continue to grow, with programming for a wide range of computers a top priority.

Imagic will bow software for

Colecovision, Atari's 400 and 800 computers, and for Commodore's VIC-20, aside from its Atari VCS and Intellivision games, at the upcoming Chicago Consumer Electronics Show. Computer titles will be games translated from cartridge releases such as "Demon Attack" and "Novablast," making up about one half of the 20 titles Imagic will show.

The company's planned public offering was shelved and subsequently replaced with a new \$12 million venture capital.

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Datasoft is launching a new line of computer software at CES carrying the name Gentry Software, and priced inexpensively at \$9.95 to \$19.95. All packages in the 10- to 13-title introductory release are new games, for Commodore, Atari and TI computers. Later on, Datasoft president Pat Ketchum says, the line will be diversified with home management and personal productivity software, with each area given separate image identity.

To reduce the SKU burden of the retailer, the four Gentry titles for Atari computers will be sold with both cassette and disk in the same package. Ketchum believes that most Atari owners intend to upgrade their systems with a disk drive eventually, so a pass-along problem shouldn't develop. The company will stress that owners who upgrade will not have to retire their old software.

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Activision's "Enduro" racing game cartridge is a marvel of graphics: the screen changes from dawn to dusk to nighttime; snow and fog hazards also appear, all in vivid primary colors. Adding to the thrill of the race is the game's radical point-of-perspective, which causes cars to appear somewhere out of the horizon, although the sky takes up half the screen. The pace becomes intense at a very quick rate—in sum, all the satisfaction of "Turbo" without the expense of a racing peripheral.

Ohio Stores Eye Rackjobber Aid

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9 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 1-5 p.m. Sunday. The staff of 10 is stretched, and the Glowackis have plans to take their alternative-merchandise expertise to other cities, targeting some campus communities. "We even did a little rackjobbing of alternative goods of our own along the way," laughs Mrs. Glowacki.

Alternative goods create plenty of traffic for records and tapes and vice versa, she notes. As they are at Vibrations in Miami, which moves an estimated 6,000 people through its main store weekly (Billboard, April 23), greeting cards are a big item at Head Shed. "Paper Moon, Anonymously Yours and Kalan are my big brands," she says. "Most sell for 50 cents, and people make multiple purchases when they find cards they like."

On being told that Larry Schaffer of Vibrations once sold 5,000 tadpoles, packaged in their own life-preserving protein water environment, at \$5 each, Mrs. Glowacki recalls a similarly far-out item that she wishes she had taken a chance on: "Wet T-shirts in a jar to sell at \$10."

EARL PAIGE

Billboard®

Survey For Week Ending 5/28/83

Top 25 Video Games

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This Week	Last Position	Weeks on Chart	TITLE Copyright Owner/Manufacturer, Catalog Number	Atari 2600	Atari 5200	Coleco Vision	Intellivision	Odyssey
1	1	9	CENTPEDE—Atari CX 2676	•	•			
2	2	13	MS. PAC-MAN—Atari CX 2675	•				
3	4	35	PITFALL—Activision AX-108	•			•	
4	3	19	RIVER RAID—Activision AX-018	•				
5	7	37	FROGGER—Parker Bros. 5300	•			•	
6	5	11	DONKEY KONG JR.—Coleco 2601				•	
7	8	37	DONKEY KONG—Coleco 2451	•			•	•
8	6	13	PHOENIX—Atari CX-2673	•				
9	9	37	PAC-MAN—Atari CX 2646	•	•			
10	10	19	VANGUARD—Atari CX-2669	•				
11	12	11	ZAXXON—Coleco 2435	•			•	
12	18	3	KEYSTONE KAPERS—Activision AX-025	•				
13	11	7	SEAQUEST—Activision AX-022	•				
14	14	3	OINK—Activision AX 023	•				
15	13	15	SPIDER FIGHTER—Activision AX-021	•				
16	NEW ENTRY		DOLPHIN—Activision AX-024	•				
17	21	6	SPACE FURY—Coleco 2415				•	
18	16	17	DRAGONFIRE—Imagic IA 3611	•			•	
19	17	6	MEGAMANIA—Activision AX-017	•				
20	NEW ENTRY		GORF—Coleco 2449				•	
21	15	7	SWORDS & SERPENTS—Imagic IM 7602				•	
22	22	3	M*A*S*H—20th Century-Fox 11011	•				
23	23	3	SMURF RESCUE IN GAGAMEL'S CASTLE—Coleco 2465				•	•
24	25	6	JEDI ARENA—Parker Bros. 5000	•				
25	19	6	ESCAPE—Data Age 116-006	•				

•Denotes cartridge availability for play on hardware configuration.

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