

NINTERROGATION

NMS: Are you planning a simultaneous release?

Mr Hongo: I'm not sure.

NMS: Will the NU64 be boxed with a game like previous releases?

Mr Hongo: In Japan, as a campaign there will be games to choose from with the hardware and in Europe it's up to each country's individual marketing activities.

NMS: Any ideas on prices?

Mr Hongo: At the moment about \$250.

NMS: Nintendo made the decision to use cartridges instead of CDs.

What are the reasons for this?

Mr Hongo: Well, they're faster. With CD there is some waiting time, so to play the games most smoothly, cartridges are most suitable.

NMS: Are there any plans to make a CD add-on unit?

The Super Famicom is due to have some great software. For example: Mother 2/3, WarioLand, StarFox 2...

Mr Hongo: No, not really...

Mr Minagawa: ...But about one year after the launch I think we are going to include a new format which shall be a disk - but not CD-ROM. Of course, CD-ROM offers huge storage capacity but the fact is that no company has ever used it. This is surprising when you consider a game like Donkey Kong Country. It's such a great game but only uses a fraction of the memory available on a CD-ROM. You don't need a CD-ROM to make good games. We are thinking of using a read/writable 'CD' so that information can be stored. A new company is going to be established. Nintendo is going to invest 20%, another company called JUST is going to invest 10% and together with the most popular software company in Japan, these three companies are going to make some new project. Nothing's set yet, but we're exploring a new application for software of this 'bulky' capacity.

NMS: When we visited Shoshinkai last year, there was a press release saying that Nintendo invested money in the company that developed technology for Virtual Boy. Is there any more news about this investment?

Mr Minagawa: We have not made any announcement, but Square has already told Nikkei UK (a Japanese publication - NMS), which has always been saying that Nintendo/Square is making some attachment.

NMS: It sounds very interesting. Do you have any official...



(ABOVE) Could Donkey Kong Country ever appear on the Virtual Boy?

(RIGHT) Yoshi gets the full rendered treatment - but will he show on NU64?

Mr Minagawa:...We don't have any official... It's top secret!

NMS: We've talked about this new technology for Ultra 64 - are there any new add-ons for it?

Mr Hongo: Everyone can do the networking, I'm sure - the Internet is now spreading.

NMS: Would you like to make Ultra 64 more multimedia compatible in the future?

Mr Hongo: We can't really say much about this.

Mr Minagawa: Nintendo is going to make the best or ultimate entertainment or entertaining game machine, but it is of course 64-bit, very powerful in generating sound and easy to control. Our system will be designed so that anyone can use the Internet. As for other next generation machines, they are just combining with arcade games. I believe that if we have a capable computer, anything can be entertaining. You enjoy your work at the office sometimes - it can be entertaining like a game. That's the concept.

NMS: Piracy is

always a big problem. What precautions have you taken with the Ultra 64?

Mr Minagawa: There are many secrets here - but however hard we try, there are always going to be ways around it. One reason we use cartridges is for protection but, yes, you can see many illegal cartridges - especially in Asian countries. Only a handful of famous and high-class companies around the world can manufacture them. The problem we have is with these famous companies is knowingly or not knowingly producing illegal copies for these pirates.

NMS: The first picture of the Ultra 64 casing was revealed at the E3 show in May. Can you tell me if it will remain the same?

Mr Hongo: There may be slight changes and any new features will



be shown at the Shoshinkai. There will be photos there.

NMS: Is it Nintendo's plan to have the same design in all countries or change it like the Super Famicom?

Mr Hongo: It will look virtually the same as the E3 case.

NMS: Would you change the design of the case if it was considered unfavourable in Japan.

Mr Hongo: It's probably all right at this time.

NMS: Sony are pitching the PlayStation at older gamers. What about Nintendo?

Mr Minagawa: Sony and Sega are making a lot of arcade conversions - they are transferring their arcade audience to the home machines. Most arcade games are for experienced, older gamers. Their games are complex and you need to be very skilful. Nintendo wants to produce a family console - everybody should be able to play the games.

NMS: We've got a few general questions... Games like Donkey Kong Country and Killer Instinct show that you don't need 32-bit hardware to produce great games. How much longer can the Super Famicom continue, especially after the release of the Ultra 64?

Mr Minagawa: From next year, the Super Famicom is due to have some great software. For example: *Mother 2/3* (see

Earthbound 2 to me and thee - NMS), *WarioLand*, *StarFox 2*... Even after the Ultra 64, there will still be popular software for the Super Famicom.

Nintendo has the capability to reach for the new future.

NMS: The full potential of Virtual Boy hasn't been realised yet - it needs a game like Donkey Kong Country. Do you know of any games in development at the moment which you consider critical for the Virtual Boy's success?

Mr Hongo: You can see many games, but *Mario Land* is probably the most popular.

NMS: At the E3 Show in May, Nintendo was saying that there are a lot of developers of Virtual Boy software, but there's maybe 11 games available...?

Mr Hongo: Probably about 15, but with those in development, maybe about 27.



NINTERROGATION



NMS: Yoshi's Island made good use of the FX Chip. Can you tell us of any other developments planned?

Mr Minagawa: It's a secret!

NMS: Do you have any other surprises coming?

Mr Hongo: We don't like to talk about the far future. We only confirm things a short time before release.

NMS: Where does Nintendo see itself in the 21st Century?

Mr Hongo: We don't have particular titles, but we want to continue the research for enjoyable games.

NMS: You said yourself that the arcade market is shrinking, so do you have any intentions of re-entering this market?

Mr Minagawa: Well, people say that they are going to diversify, but other areas are already crowded with new companies. They will have to compete with already established competitors. Sometimes people say that Nintendo should diversify, but we already have the Virtual Boy and the Satellite System... Diversifying takes a lot of money. Nintendo has a large cash surplus but apparently Sega is in debt and Sony make little profit with their PlayStation - which they put into further discounting. Nintendo has the capability to reach for the new future.



SPECIAL FEATURE

As new Virtual Boy titles continue to trickle onto the shelves, NMS is there, weeds of grubby yon in hand, snatching the games from the hands of bemused shop assistants and whisking them back to Brighty so you lot can see what you're missing. We're a bit cruel that way. There have been a fair few releases over the past few weeks, yet still we wait for the one that truly demonstrates the VB's powerful graphic capabilities. But until that day arrives, we'd better give this little lot the NMS once-over.

VIRTUAL BOY UP



JACK BROS BY: ATLUS

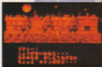


MARIO CLASH BY: NINTENDO

Atlus are a bit of an unknown quantity over here, although they've been producing quality games in Japan for some time now. This one's not bad either although, like so many VB games, it doesn't really show off the VB's capabilities. The game itself is a sort of Gauntlet clone, with the player controlling one of three characters whilst exploring a baddy-infested maze viewed from overhead. As each maze is completed the action moves to the level below where even nastier nasties and bossier bosses await.

JACKS OF ALL TRADES...

Jack Bros is only a single player game, although it makes up for this shortcoming by offering gamers a choice of three spooky characters, all bearing the name Jack - Jack Frost, Jack Lantern and Jack Ripper - and all having their own distinctive attacks. Jack Frost has snowballs as his main weapon, Lantern makes good use of fireballs while Ripper lets rip with a close-range dagger. All characters have a super attack too, each being a more wide-spreading version of their standard attack; Jack Ripper's, for instance, fills the screen with rotating daggers. Not that it really matters, though, because Jack Bros is as easy as easy gets.



Mario makes his second outing on the Virtual Boy and - gasp! - it's still not a platform game. Well, not quite. You see Mario Clash is a three-dimensional version of the single-screen shell-chucking sub-game on Mario All-Stars or, if you're a real old chuffer, Mario Bros on the NES. It was never the most interesting of the Mario games and the updated Mario Clash has done precious little to help matters, despite the addition of some pretty cool 3D.

YOU CAN BE SURE OF SHELLS!

The premise of Mario Clash is a stunningly simple one - gamers control Mario as he roams a two-storey high, two-layer deep platform network connected by pipes, cluttering the place. This is achieved principally by then using it as a projectile to hurl at the other nasties. Simple, eh? Well, it would be were it not for the fact that some baddies take more than one hit or from the side as opposed to from head-on. As I said, it's a fairly simple task, but it does get presented here. Really I would have preferred to find this as a sub-game to a proper 3D Mario platformer. Ah well, I live in hope...



IT'S A WRAP!

Fans of the original Tetris will be pleased to find that the original game is totally intact in here, including the great 'B' game where the player has to complete 25 lines at varying speeds. However, V-

Tetris also includes an all-new variation on the classic theme known, remarkably, as 'C' type. It still doesn't make particularly smart use of the machine but it does have a weird sort of wraparound screen that effectively expands the width of the play area. Players rotate the screen by using the L and R buttons. Other than that, it's pretty standard Tetris fare, just wider. V-Tetris is smoother than the Game Boy version, but not as hard. Still, no system is complete without it.

SPECIAL FEATURE

V-TETRIS

V-テトリス

バーチャルボーイならではの3D

- テトリス史上初、ループテトリス新登場 ●手にてこ
- もちろんなーまろテトリスもバッチリ登場

V-TETRIS BY: BULLETPROOF

Tetris is undoubtedly a classic puzzle game, but its distinctly flat, block-rotating style of gameplay doesn't make it the most immediate candidate for Virtual Boy treatment. Still, that hasn't prevented Bulletproof from giving it a go and here's the result - V-Tetris. V-Tetris offers three variations on the Tetris theme, none of which use the machine's 3D abilities to any great degree. There are also a plethora of different to choose from and two different graphic styles. Like, wow.

DATE

COCONUTS



VIRTU

SPACE SQUASH

スペーススカッシュ

スピードアクションゲーム

SPACE SQUASH BY: COCONUTS

At last, a title that makes fairly decent use of the Virtual Boy's graphical abilities. What a pity the game's about as much fun as smacking your head incessantly against a brick wall. Which, funny enough, is just what you'll find yourself doing after a protracted spell of playing this risible effort. In short, Space Squash is rather cock.

IT'S JUST NOT CRICKET!

And it certainly isn't Squash either. In fact, it's much more akin to tennis. A single player controls a cuddly floating robot in a series of challenges against a bunch of largely uninteresting series of alien-type opponents who lurk at the far end of checkered corridor. The object of the game being to hit their end-wall with the ball whilst preventing them from hitting yours. Add to that a few collectible power-ups and you've a recipe for a very dull game indeed. Still, the 3D effect's quite nice.

Surprisingly, the Virtual Boy is somewhat bereft in the shoot-'em-up department. In fact, up until now Red Alarm has been the only one available. But don't despair, all you mindless 3D blast fans - Hudsonsoft is destined to change all that with the release of Vertical Force.

This neat little shoot-'em-up slides a standard up-the-screen viewpoint and is similar in style to Hudsonsoft's much earlier blasters, Star Force and Star Soldier. But despite these strong links with the past, Vertical Force is anything but traditional.



VERTICAL FORCE BY: HUDSONSOFT

THE PARALLAX VIEW

What sets Vertical Force apart from its forerunners is that the player has two planes of parallax to move between. This makes for much frantic shooty-type action as the gamer tries to avoid alien attacks from all sides - literally! There are power-ups to collect too, although none are that impressive - just lasers, shields and missiles. All told, Vertical Force is a very decent game, even if it does look distinctly old-fashioned. Certainly the best of this particular crop.