



David Beren

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David Beren is a tech writer who has written and managed content for tech companies like T-Mobile, Sprint, and TracFone Wireless. He was Director of Network Content for PhoneDog Media and contributor to WebGeekStuff and MakeTechEasier.

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David Beren is a writer at History-Computer, where his primary focus is on personal tech, home gaming systems, electric vehicles, and the latest computer technology. David has been working in social media for the last 10 years after earning a Masters Degree in 2005 and has been writing about tech for over 15 years. A resident of South Florida, David enjoys retro gaming, cruising, and sunny weather.

For millions of gamers, the video game crash of 1983 is all but a distant memory, something to read about in history books. It's hard to imagine the idea that an almost \$200 billion dollar industry today almost never was. Except, it almost happened, and had it lasted, the entertainment world might look very different from what it does today.

How did this giant industry once come crashing down to the point of near obliteration? The story is one of oversaturation, the rise of personal computers, and a Japanese gaming company with a plumber. Let's take a look at the great video game crash of 1983 and how it almost upended one of the biggest industries in the world.

The most basic explanation is that this was the time when video game sales dropped 97% from \$3.2 billion in 1982 to \$100 million by 1985. As the world gave rise to Atari and a dozen other consoles like it, the industry exploded on the scene, and parents and kids gobbled up consoles just as quickly as they hit store shelves. Unfortunately, it was too much of a good thing as consumers had too many consoles to choose from, which created significant levels of confusion for would-be buyers.

Eventually, the video game market was bound to hit a breaking point, and that's exactly what happened in 1983. Almost overnight, the industry was decimated, leading to the bankruptcy of many video game console manufacturers and unsold games destined for landfills in the desert. The abrupt end of the second

generation of American console video gaming led many analysts to think the video game console war was forever over.

Although many historians like to point at one factor over another, the reality is that there wasn't a single primary reason the video game crash of 1983 occurred. Instead, it was caused by a combination of factors that all led to the same implosion of the industry.

In today's video game world, and for the last twenty years or so, the video game industry has been dominated by a small number of players like Microsoft, Sony, and Nintendo. However, in 1983, the video game industry gave way to dozens of console choices from the likes of Atari, ColecoVision, Intellivision, Vectrex, Bally Astrocade, Magnavox Odyssey 2, and more.

Take, for example, the game, Q-Bert, which was available on nine different consoles in 1982 with barely any differences between its various console releases. There were very few console exclusives as we know them today, which meant differentiation between consoles was almost nonexistent.

This meant that you could buy a console for your home, your friends bought another, and, while you might have the same game title, you wouldn't be able to play them together. It caused significant frustration for parents who were also flooded with too many games and not very good ones. There was a significant oversaturation of games themselves, and many of them were of inferior quality and were rushed to market.

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