

# InfoWorld Software Review

## TI Invaders, an arcade-style game for the TI 99/4

By Lawrence De Rusha, Jr.

The Space Invaders arcade/video game was one of the most popular of the earlier arcade games and generated many different spin-offs into the home-computer market, including Texas Instruments' new release: TI Invaders.

For those who enjoy arcade-style games, TI Invaders will meet expectations.

**FEATURES:** Rows of brightly colored monsters move back and forth across the screen and down toward

your missile bases.

In the lower third of the screen one missile base moves horizontally and fires missiles at the monsters. You control the missile bases and you decide when to fire your missiles.

Two additional missile bases are displayed beneath the active playing area marking the number of remaining chances. In the left-hand corner of the screen is the current game score. In the right corner is the highest score for the series of games played.

There are two game options to

choose from, and both are listed on the display's instruction page.

The first option, called Merely Aggressive, is for beginners and intermediate-level players. With this option each monster can fire one random shot at a time as it moves.

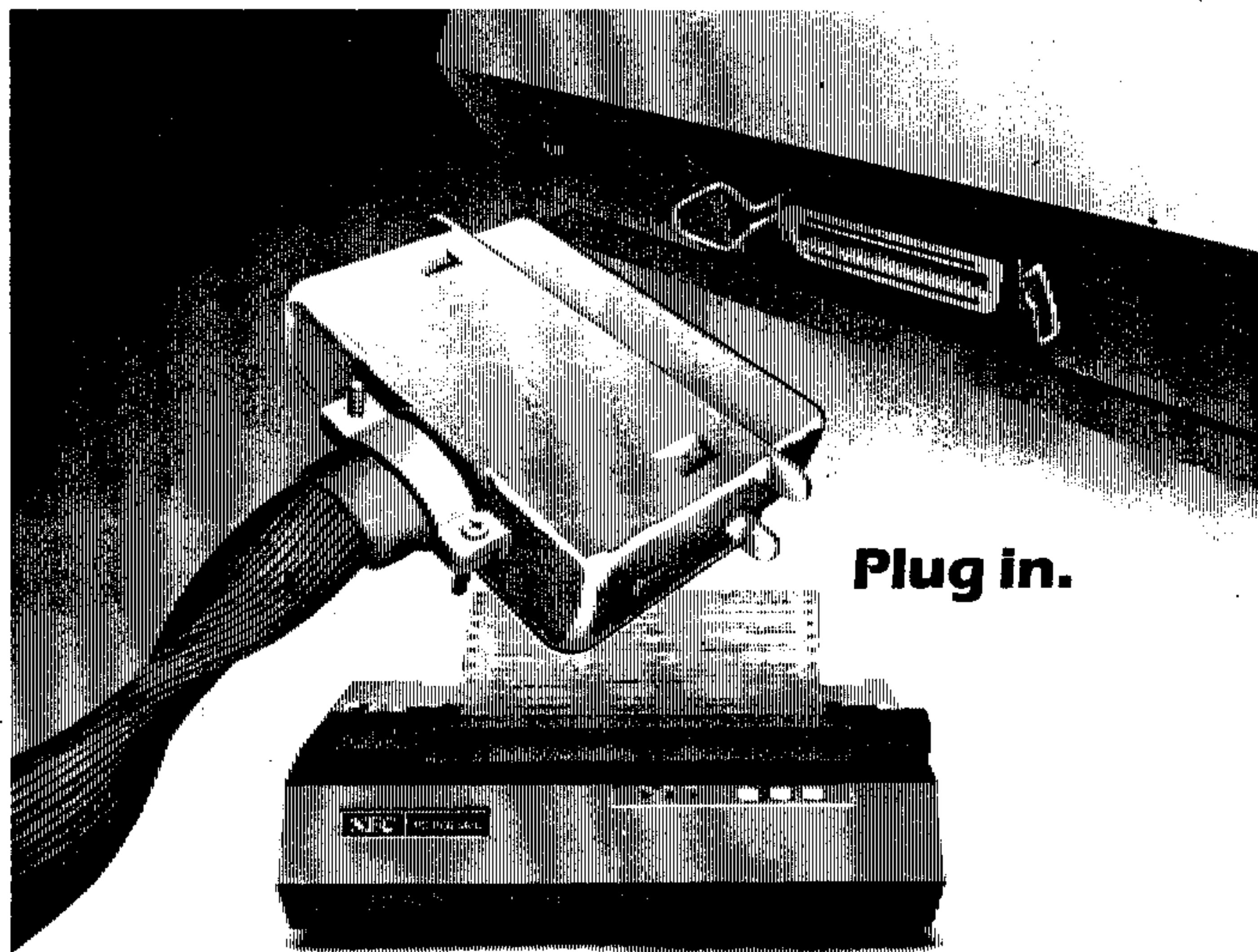
In the second option, Downright Nasty, the monsters can shoot more than one shot while also tracking your missile base's position.

Regardless of which option you choose, a yellow flying saucer randomly appears moving across the

screen. Depending upon where you hit it, you can score as high as 300 points. Dead center is the highest score on the saucer.

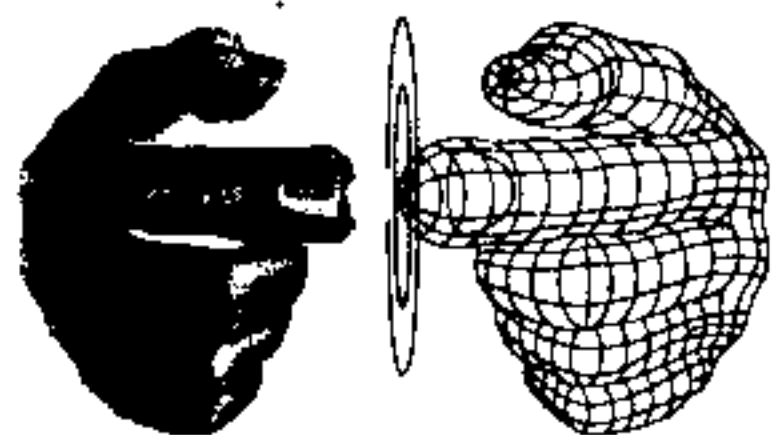
Once you have destroyed all the monsters on the screen, another flying saucer appears moving across at mid-screen level. Each time you hit this saucer it reverses directions, becomes smaller and moves a little higher on the screen. At 500 points the saucer is just a speck near the top of the screen.

The left- and right-arrow keys control the movement of the missile base.



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## InfoWorld

Software Report Card

### TI Invaders

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ease of Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Error Handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### System Requirements

- TI-99/4 or TI-99/4A system

Price: \$39.95

Texas Instruments  
P.O. Box 53  
Lubbock, TX 79408

ENTER or Q is the fire-control button. If you use the wired remote controllers with this program, the fire button is located on the joystick pad.

You score points by hitting the monsters and flying saucers. Each monster type has a value and each hit accumulates on the game-score display.

Once you have passed the 3000-point mark, the program awards you one missile base. For every 10,000 points you score, one destroyed missile base is repaired and added to the remaining number.

The object of the game is to achieve the highest possible score. This is a no-win type of game. The number of screens (a screen is five monsters deep and eleven wide) seems to be unlimited. With each new screen comes one new set of monsters to be destroyed.

**PERFORMANCE:** This is one of the fastest games TI has ever marketed. The graphics are well defined, and the colors of the monsters against the black background make a sharp and clear display. Sound effects are used to advantage in the program. The flying saucer sounds like you would think a flying saucer should sound.

After all the monsters have been destroyed, new monsters are added to the next screen, which keeps the game

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# Microhome, home-management program for Atari

By David and Dorothy Kunkin Heller

We gladly agreed to review Microhome, hoping that we had found a software package that would help us manage our budget and run our household more efficiently. Microhome seemed to offer a variety of programs we could use. These expectations were never fulfilled, however.

**FEATURES:** The Microhome package consists of ten programs written in BASIC for the Atari 800 computer with 24K RAM and a single disk drive. The ten programs in the package are:

1. Family Budgeting, a monthly budget of income and expenses (projected and actual) in 15 different categories.
2. Checkbook Balancing, a routine designed to assist in balancing a checkbook based on your bank statement, and that "can be used in place of the bank work sheet."
3. Energy Savings, a program to evaluate your home-energy situation and provide "an energy analysis based on your input of the status of caulking, weather stripping, storm windows, insulation, and other heating and cool-

ing factors."

4. Shopping Comparison, a routine for comparing merchandise prices at up to four stores; it compares the item price totals and flags the best buys at each store.
5. Appointment Calendar, a chronological list of appointments and special occasions for one calendar year.
6. Car Fuel Consumption Program, a fuel report, calculating miles per gallon and miles per dollar.
7. Measurement Conversion Program converts units of weight, volume,

temperature, length and area.

8. The Eternal Calendar Program displays the month or whole year for any year after 1583.
9. The Telephone Directory Program sets up and maintains a telephone file. The program can list a single number or group of numbers when you enter the name or partial name of the group.
10. The Clock/Timer Program keeps track of time while the computer is running. The chime sounds on the

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## TI Invaders

continued from preceding page

interesting. The two options and the continually changing screens make this a challenging and skillful type of game.

**EASE OF USE:** TI Invaders is marketed as part of the Solid State Software line of Command Modules. They snap into the console and are ready to go. No programming knowledge is required and you need only minimum knowledge of the computer to play.

**ERROR HANDLING:** The error handling for the solid-state modules eliminates input errors by ignoring erroneous inputs. Only the active keys for control are "live" on the keyboard.

Power failures simply kill the program. A reset circuit starts the program from the beginning after the power has been restored. There is no crash recovery with the module.

This program locked up once while I was playing it. There was no way out of the problem except to power down.

**DOCUMENTATION:** Although the documentation provides all the information required to operate the program, it appears sparse.

The booklet has an overview of the game, a quick reference guide to key functions (for both the TI-99/4 and the 99/4A models) and a discussion on loading the game from disk (which is an optional medium) and modules. Also covered are how to care for the module and the warranty information.

The booklet is clear and easy to understand.

**SUPPORT:** This game is available on disk or in the Solid State Command Module. The disk, however, was not available at this writing. The disk-based version requires either the Extended BASIC module (which is hard to find) or the Editor/Assembler Command Module (which is not due for release for a couple of months).

**SUMMARY:** I found this game very entertaining and a challenge to play. Because the options, including the various screens, allow for a wide range of skills and because the level becomes harder as you progress, the game has lasting value.

The game did lock up once, but this may have been the result of static electricity, which can damage the modules. I would recommend this game to anyone who enjoys arcade-style games.

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