

UPSTATE UPSTATE UPSTATE UPSTATE UPSTATE UPSTATE UPSTATE UPSTATE UPSTATE UPSTATE

OUR NEXT MEETING will be on Thursday
DECEMBER 13, 1984 at 7:30 pm

THE DECEMBER Meeting will be
JANURARY 17, 1985 at 7:30 pm

PLACE: CAPITAL DISTRICT PSYCHIATRIC CENTER

New Scotland Ave. Next to Albany Medical Center

The program for the December meeting will be as follows: A talk on CALL SOUND, A demonstration of commercial software for possible Christmas gifts, Software Library demonstration, Printer graphics.

A NOTE to other Users Groups: The articles printed in the Upstate Newsletter may be reprinted if proper credit is given to the author and to the Upstate New York 99/4 Users Group.

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THE ZORK TRILOGY
ZORK I: The Great Underground Empire

I will take on the task of beginning my full review on the Zork Trilogy. The first installment of the three part series is *Zork I: The Great Underground Empire*, and that is just where we are going to start.

Before I start into the details of the adventure game itself, I would like to give you an idea of what Zork is. In my opinion Zork is not an adventure game, but a world unto itself. Unlike other adventures not of its kind, things in Zork can happen spontaneously. For example, the Wizard of Frobozz in *Zork II* can "pop" up and cast a "Freeze" spell on you when you are just going to complete a very important part of the adventure, or the Thief in *Zork I* could move your brass lantern from a room where you set it to a completely different room, where only he now knows where it is.

Another aspect that sets Zork apart from other adventures is the command area. As in all of the Infocom adventures, you can use complete sentences like "Get the chest, then put the book in it, and close the chest." Also the span of the vocabulary of the game is extraordinary. One final thing: you better have a lot of graph paper around if you can't remember the location of the rooms as I can, because there are up to 100 (maybe more) rooms in a single Infocom adventure. As you can see, Zork, as well as all of the other Infocom adventures, is a truly amazing game!

You are standing in an open field west of a White House, with a boarded up front door. There is a small mailbox here.

This is the way *Zork I* starts out. This area outside the house is the forest area as I call it. There's nothing much around to see, but trees (of course), a few clearings, and a path leading down into a canyon. In the canyon you will find the Frigid River along with the Aragain Falls and a rainbow. Finding nothing of real importance down in the canyon or in the forest area, you decide to try to enter the White House.

Entering the house, you find, is a simple matter: just go to the back of the house, lift a window, and you're in! This to me is a strange house! It only has three rooms (not to mention the cellar, but that's another story): a kitchen, a living room, and the attic. In the kitchen you will find a brass lantern, an elongated brown sack containing a clove of garlic and a hot pepper sandwich (that's a first for me), and a bottle of water. In the attic you will find other supplies that you will need on your adventure. Finally, in the living room you will see your sword and a trophy case for the safe-keeping of your treasures. Now you think you're stuck again with no place to go. But there's one more thing you have yet to do...

After leaving the living room and venturing down into the cellar, you find yourself in the strange world of GUE (that's Zork talk for the Great Underground Empire) where anything and everything can happen (and usually does!)

I'm not going to go into many details on the GUE! I'll leave it for you to plunder, but I will describe some of my favorite spots in it.

The first spot of interest I found to strike my fancy was FCD#3 (Flood Control Dam #3). This massive structure was built by the one and only Lord Dimwit Flathead the Excessive. Its purpose was to control the waters of the Frigid River. It was never really needed, but Flathead got an attack of his excessiveness and built the dam on impulse.

Another of my favorite places is the "Entrance to Hades" and Hades itself. This place is complete with ghosts and wailing souls. To enter Hades you must collect certain items and perform a little spell with them. Once inside you'll find a valuable treasure.

The last of my favorite rooms is the Cyclops' Room. Yes, another beast to deal with in Zork. This hungry, shall I say person, needs to be fed so that you can collect the treasure he's guarding. I bet now you know what some of the other items I mentioned before are for.

I rate *Zork I* using my 3rd-party adventure rating system (I consider all adventures that are not in the Scott Adams Adventure Series 3rd-party adventures), and it received a gold star, the highest mark possible. I strongly feel that *Zork I* is a wonderfully written adventure with interesting challenges, bizarre characters, and fascinating treasures all mixed together with wit and humor. I think that this adventure is a great adventure to introduce what is to come in the Zork Trilogy. I also feel that it is a good adventure to begin with if you have not played an Infocom adventure before, and as I said: they are quite different.

So, take, if you feel yourself able, the journey down into the vast Underground Empire and try to solve the Zork-Trilogy. It will be an experience that you will never regret! I assure you of that!

Reprinted from the November 1984 P.U.G. PERIPHERAL published by the Pittsburgh Users Group.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The vocabulary had better be extraordinary, as the program is 100K as compared to Adams' 20K. Sorry cassette owners to run these adventures you need: Memory Expansion, Disk Controller, Disk Drive, and choice of Editor/Assembler, Mini Memory, or Extended Basic.

Q*BERT TM Parker Brothers

A REVIEW by Paul J. Bartoszewicz

"Just like the arcade game, but maybe a little bit easier". So says my 7 year old as she "reviews" Q*BERT. She will spend hours with the hopping Q*Bert, binging and bringing its way down a pyramid, changing boxes' colors. She's right, though, the graphics for the Texas Instruments 99/4A computer and the sounds make you feel like you are pumping quarters into your local arcade game.

You cannot play this game without joysticks, and you use only 1 joystick at all times. Put the cartridge into the port, as any other TI cartridge, and choose 2 (Q*BERT) to start. You will start the game with 3 Q*Berts. The first Q*Bert will appear on the topmost cube as soon as the game starts. The number of remaining Q*Berts is shown to the right

of the pyramid. Try to hop, by moving the joystick, Q*Bert onto each and every cube, so that eventually the entire pyramid becomes the destination color. This indicator is to the left of the pyramid. Be careful not to hop Q*Bert off the sides of the pyramid or off the bottom row of cubes. If you do, he falls and you lose that Q*Bert. When this happens, the next Q*Bert will appear on the topmost cube ready to try again.

There are a variety of "nasty" characters, "Red Ball", "Coily", "Ugg", and "Wrongway", which must be avoided or you will lose that Q*Bert. (I didn't say that this game was easy, my daughter did!) Some "safety" factors do appear, such as "flying discs" and "green ball", to help you out and to get Q*Bert out of trouble.

The round ends when you complete the pyramid, as long as you have a Q*Bert remaining. Then a new pyramid will appear with a new destination color. The game ends, when you run out of Q*Berts. You may receive extra or BONUS Q*Berts by reaching 6,000 points, and then get one for every 12,000 points you score thereafter. (As I said earlier, my daughter spends "hours" !)

So for a mere \$34.95, which I spent in April, 84 (price might be lower now), I feel that I have saved that many quarters in the arcade. For the money, it is well worth it, but don't buy it if your frustration level is low. I know, this writer has been there!

HAVE A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON.

EDITORS NOTE: The price of Q*BERT in the fall Triton catalog is \$19.95. Isn't that the way it always is Paul? The price always drops after you buy it.

P-CODE

For those of you looking for P-Code Unisource claims to have P-Code cards in stock for \$99.95. Call 1-800-858-4580

EXTENDED BASIC

Exceltec Inc. (formerly Sunware Ltd.) has secured the rights to build the TI EXTENDED BASIC Module and Manuals. They offer a completely interchangeable EXTENDED BASIC Module. They use TI parts so therefore you can expect the module to have the same high quality performance and characteristics. The manuals follow the same format as the TI documentation. Their product also includes the handy command reference card.

The company will sell this Extended Basic to the group for \$79.95 if we buy 5 or more.

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