

# The 8-Bit Video Game Gauntlet

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By DataPacRat



You've got Pac-Man Fever, you're doing the Donkey Kong, you're goin' Berzerk, and you're singing Froggy's Lament.

In other words, you're about to live through a variety of pixelated, 1980's video games. Not just by playing them, but by jumping into whatever character the player usually controls, and running around or flying your ship or the like.

Starting Budget: 0 Copper Pennies

## Drawbacks

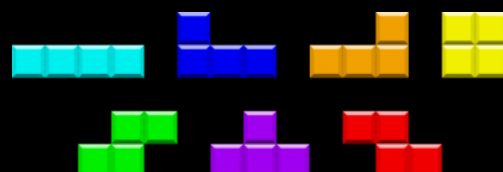
- **8-bit Vision:** Everything looks blocky, with a resolution of 640x480, at best. **+50 CP**
  - **Two-dimensional Perspective:** Goodbye depth perception. **+50 CP**

- **Black-and-Green Vision:** Or, if you prefer, black-and-amber or black-and-white. **+50 CP**
- **Poorly-Synthesized Speech:** Stephen Hawking, eat your heart out. **+25 CP**
- **N00b:** You revert to your pre-Chain skills (if any). **+100 CP**
- **"Don't copy that floppy":** From your perspective, glitchy copy protection causes in-game physics to break down every so often - and not in your favor. **+100 CP**
- **Hard Mode:** If a game has difficulty settings, they're turned against you. If it doesn't, assume Murphy's Law is in full force. **+150 CP**
  - **Nintendo Hard:** Not only is Murphy's Law in effect, it's actively trying to force you to lose. (You get to play the /real/ SMB2.) **+200 CP**
    - **~~E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial:~~**  
(As a mercy to everyone, this option is unavailable.)
- **Player Two:** By default, you play through this Gauntlet solo. With this Drawback, you get to "enjoy" the company of another intelligent person, who's doing their best to beat you at your own games. **+150 CP**
- **Longplay:** Your game selection now includes several that are similar to the Ultima series, Dizzy's Adventures, or Dragon Quest; that is, games that take more than a full day even for an expert to finish. **+100 CP**
- **Bootleg Remakes:** Get ready to play Mighty Mouth instead of Pac-Man, Apple-oids instead of Asteroids, Killa Gorilla instead of Donkey Kong, and all manner of other off-brand imitations. **+25 CP**
- **Bad Translations:** All your base are belong to us. **+25 CP**

。 **Untranslated:** あなたは本当にこれを英語に翻訳する

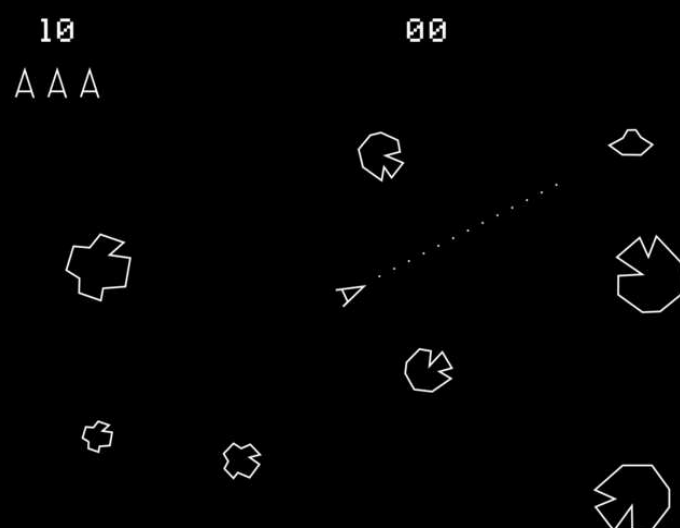
努力に行く必要はありませんでした。 **+50 CP**

- **Protagonist Mentality:** You just can't resist rescuing any princesses you come across, etc. **+50 CP**
- **Digital Vulnerability:** Yes, even in the 1980's there were viruses, worms, and other such hazards. Keep an eye out, because at least one is going to start infecting one of the games you're in - and if you're not careful, you, as well. **+100 CP**
- **Memory Swapping:** If you have 64kB of memories, and your processor can only access 8kB at a time, what do you do? Point your CPU at 8kB at a time, and swap to a new bank when you need other things. With this, for the duration of the Gauntlet, you can access no more than 1/8th of your memories at a time. **+200 CP**
- **GORILLA.BAS:** Not all games from this era can be described as "good". Some are, in fact, quite amateurish and terrible. In addition to all the other games you'll be playing, you have to suffer through interminable rounds of solitaire, Snake, Minesweeper, and the like; and, yes, gorillas throwing bananas at each other. **+25 CP**
- **Four-way Movement:** You can only face and move in the four cardinal directions. **+100 CP**



# Scenarios

- **Baseline:** Live through at least 10 games, of your choice, in the order you wish.
  - **Arcade Museum:** Live through at least 50 games of your choice.
  - **Gotta Play 'Em All:** Live through /all/ the games of this era.
- **Randomized Selection:** You no longer get to pick which games you'll play.
- **Randomized Order:** You no longer get to pick which order you play your games in; no more easing into things with Lunar Lander or Moon Patrol before graduating to Tempest or Castlevania III.
- **High Score:** You not only have to survive, but beat every game's default top scores.
- **World Record:** You must at least tie at least one world-record score. (A perfect game of Pac-Man will do.)



1979 ASTEROIDS

## Perks

- **1up:** You have an extra life! Usable once per Jump or decade, whichever comes second. **200 CP**
  - **Pushing Reset Solves All Problems:** You can now use your 1up once per Jump or decade, whichever comes /first/. **+100 CP**
- **Save-Game Slot:** Possibly even better than a 1up, you can mentally choose a moment to 'save', and if you don't like how the next ten minutes go, roll back to that moment and try again. Activating the roll-back has a cool-down period of 1 day, because nobody likes a save-scummer. **200 CP**
  - **Save-Scumming:** Go back to the ten-minute save-point as many times as you can stand. **+200 CP**
- **Pause Button:** Freeze time, at will. You can't move, either. **50 CP**
- **1337 Skillz:** NEET-level skill at playing video games. **25 CP**
- **Life Skills:** The video-game version of Basic Training: how to run and jump and shoot, including at the same time. Plus just enough riding, driving, piloting, punching, and sports skills to avoid embarrassing yourself. **100 CP**
  - **Sportsball:** Professional level playing ability, at one sport of your choice. **+25 CP**
    - **World Games:** Training good enough to compete in events at the Olympics. (/All/ the events.) **+125 CP**
- **Encyclopedic Knowledge (of video games):** As if you'd read through all those 1980's video-game magazines and reference books. **50 CP**

- **Difficulty Toggle:** Some arcades had hidden hardware switches to make them slightly easier (to attract more customers) or harder (to extract more quarters per customer). You can apply similar nudges to some real-world tasks. **100 CP**
- **Next in Line:** Based on putting a quarter on the bezel to show your turn is next; you have no problems making reservations. **50 CP**
- **Enemy Loot Drops:** Even when it doesn't make sense, when you KO or kill someone (or something), there's surprisingly good odds you'll find some coins or ammo, or on rare occasions, power-ups. **50 CP**
- **High-Density Storage:** Did you know that it was once possible to double a floppy disk's capacity using nothing but a hole punch? Now you can double any storage space just by touching it. (Just once per space, you cheater.) **100 CP**
- **Shareware Versions:** If someone is selling an expensive version of something you want, then with a little digging you can find a just-barely-usable version for free. It only lasts a short time, and you'll have to put up with nagging urging you to get the real thing, but it may be just enough for your needs. **150 CP**
- **Mini-Map:** You can call up a mental HUD which displays up to fifty metres around you, identifying allies, enemies, and terrain. **50 CP**
- **Loading Screen:** Almost but not quite a "Someone Else's Problem field"; when you activate it, however exciting events may appear to be, nothing actually significant will happen until you turn it off. (You can't do much of anything

yourself, either, but that can still be a good tradeoff now and then.) 100 CP

- **Attract Screen:** Toggle this on, and whatever you're doing, no matter how mundane, will inexplicably start drawing an audience. 50 CP
- **Minus World:** You know a trick to pass through doors in a special way, leading to a strange, funhouse-mirror dimension. After five minutes there you're booted back out where you came from. (It's a new world every time, and is thus unsuitable for storage.) 100 CP

AMBERMOON

205 PSYCHONS

A CHEMICAL WEAPON  
DAMAGE -- HEAVY  
ROUNDS REQUIRED  
COST -- 200

|                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |
| AUTORIFLE                                                                           | BOORANG                                                                             | E-MACE                                                                              | E-STEALER                                                                             |
|  |  |  |  |
| FLAMER                                                                              | GAS GUN                                                                             | GRAV-GUN                                                                            | GRENADE                                                                               |
|  |  |  |  |
| LASPISTOL                                                                           | MINDSINK                                                                            | MISSILE                                                                             | MULTILAS                                                                              |
|  |  |  |  |
| NEEDLER                                                                             | SWORD                                                                               | BOMB                                                                                | EXIT                                                                                  |

## Items

- **Inventory:** It's a backpack. 0 CP
- **Game Guides:** A library of gaming magazines and books, covering all the details that've been written about 8-bit games. 25 CP
- **Cheat Cartridges & Software:** Game Genie, Game Gear, GameShark, and similar gizmos for consoles; and the equivalent software for other

platforms. Works on any 8-bit game. (Only works on actual video games, not weird situations like living through them.) **25 CP**

- **Reality Hex Editor:** The Reality Genie cartridge lets you poke at the codes underlying how everything works.

Unfortunately, there's no way to tell what codes correspond to what; but by writing random values, you can cause glitches in nearby physics and objects. (You may want to have a Save Game on standby, in case you accidentally flip a chair's atoms into antimatter.) **+75 CP**

- **Hex Manual:** Once you've read and grasped this, you'll have Great... Cosmic... Powers! Though still only an itty bitty interface, typing in one hex-code at a time. **+200 CP**

- **Universal Interface Items:** Joystick, trackball, lightgun, glove, etc. The RS-232-style plugs somehow manage to fit any digital-type device. **25 CP**
- **Quarters & Tokens:** All the money you could want, in the form of a change machine that you don't have to feed bills into. May take some time for however many quarters you want to be expelled. **50 CP**
- **Generic Video Game Gadgetry:** Vending machines that provide Lazur™ guns, Armur™, Bullut™ Boxes, Healthur™ Packs, Power-Ups™, etc. **100 CP**
- **Dial-Up Bulletin Board System:** "It Just Works", regardless of where you are or what you have available; though it may take some time for FidoNet's echomail to get very far, up to a week for the most distant part of the inhabited universe. **50 CP**



- **Hall of Fame:** Type in the name of a skill; this display screen reveals the names of the ten best individuals at it. **50 CP**

## Companions

- **Ready Player Two:** The Luigi to your Mario, the Bob to your Bub, the Jimmy to your Billy Lee. **100 CP**
- **Game Sprite:** Once you've rescued the princess, why not bring her with you? Or maybe the first enemy-sprite you ever met, or a final boss; no judgement here. **50 CP**
- **Bit:** Small, geometric, floaty sidekick, who can say 'yes' or 'no'. **0 CP**



## Scenario Rewards

If you successfully made it through this Gauntlet, then you automatically get 'The Games You Played'. You can pick one other Reward per additional Scenario you've toggled on and succeeded at.

- **The Games You Played:** The game-versions of all the games

you've lived through in this Gauntlet, including whatever hardware is needed to play them. Comes with one 1980's bedroom or den, with snacks, to complete the atmosphere.

- **Arcade Warehouse:** All the 8-bit (and earlier) arcade games, consoles, and computer video games ever made. Attaches to your Warehouse.
- **Arcade Business:** Comes with enough part-time teens to keep the place running, and a small apartment above. Provides enough income to keep your fridge stocked. "Flynn's" sign optional.
- **Disk of Rebooting:** About the size of a sheriff's badge (and can be worn like one), this allows you to change into the form of any of the game-avatars you experienced during this gauntlet. Comes with appropriate equipment, up to the scale of a small vehicle. The abilities granted max out in oomph at your current universe's middleweights, or that particular avatar's ability, whichever is less.
- **Mass-media Tie-Ins:** Showcasing your adventures, in the form of cartoons, movies, novels, board games, RPGs...
- **Completely-Not-Tron™ Digitizer Laser:** Turn a solid object or living being into data, and shove them into the nearest computer or storage device. Keeping your starship on a 3.5" floppy disk when you're not using it can really save a lot of space. (Just, you know, keep it away from magnets.)
- **Summon Game:** Let other people experience what you just did, and live through a video game. Optionally arrives in the form of a building-sized cube which drops from the sky.



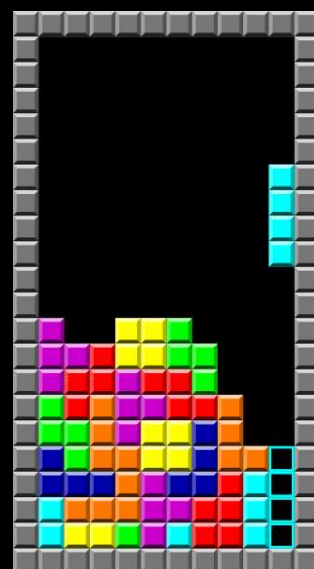
## Special Modes

- **Chain Modifier:** Before every Jump, you have to run a gauntlet of living through one or more video games, with no other Perks or Items - nothing more than your BodyMod form and skills. The upside is that you gain an extra Scenario Reward by activating this toggle. The downside is that if you fail to win your games, then in the following Jump, everything you've gained from this Gauntlet will be locked out for the duration.
- **People, Not P-Zombies:** This converts everyone else in the gauntlet from P-Zombies (lacking any more consciousness than those few lines of code that described them in their original games) into entities with some degree of self-awareness. (At least until you blow them away. You monster.) (Oh, don't worry; the next time the game restarts, they'll be back to normal and just fine, if maybe a bit grumpy.)
- **Cyberspace is Real:** This sets the whole Gauntlet within a larger cyberspace, similar to the ones described in Tron, Reboot, and Kid Radd. (... or less similar, if P-Zombies are still running around.)

- **Insert Quarter to Continue:**  
Instead of only having the standard number of lives in each game, you can try as many times as you wish; but for each game you apply this toggle to, you receive one fewer Scenario Reward. (If you run out of Scenario Rewards, then you lose out on your Items and Perks.)

## Notes

- If you run through a game without a defined ending or kill-screen, you merely have to last until you demonstrate that you are capable of winning given anything that that particular video game can throw at you, at whatever maximums the game eventually ramps up to.
- In a game without a clear protagonist (such as Tetris, Missile Command, or Qix), you will find yourself to be a disembodied intelligence, with a perspective and the ability to shove things around, but no form or substance. (For the Disk of Rebooting, when you assume an insubstantial avatar from such a game, you can only shove things around that match that game's playing pieces - tetromino-shaped things when in Tetris form, line-drawing tools when in Qix form, and so forth.)



# Inspirations

- Games: Archon, Asteroids, Bubble Bobble, Centipede, Chip's Challenge, Choplifter, Civilization I, Crush Crumble and Chomp!, Defender, Dig Dug, Dizzy (& sequels), Donkey Kong (& Jr.), Dragon Quest series, Frogger, Galaga, Gauntlet, Ghosts 'n Goblins, IK+, Joust, Jumpman, Lode Runner, Lunar Lander, Mail Order Monsters, Missile Command, Montezuma's Revenge, Moon Patrol, M.U.L.E., Pac-Man (& sequels), Pitfall, Popeye, Q\*bert, Qix, Space Invaders, Spy Hunter, Super Mario Bros., Sword of Fargoal, Tetris, Ultima (I to VIIp2), Wizard of Wor, World Games (& Summer & Winter & California Games), Zaxxon
- Hardware: Apple II, Atari 2600, Colecovision, Commodore 64, Intellivision, Nintendo Entertainment System, Sega SG-100, Sega Mark III, TRS-80
- Music: "Pac-Man Fever" album, at <http://youtu.be/A-qdk-11aiM&list=P Lx8MTfjd90LGhCRbofB0jrgS9II5I0L7o>
- Ambient Audio: <http://youtu.be/x6aNPsjNwFo&list=P L5G6BYUM6Q3CVBS1crNATU0YTg1nAWZse>

GAME OVER  
CONTINUE Y/N?