

## An Ode to Physical Games - Tales of a Dying Medium

Nostalgia plays a big part in why gaming is important to me. Those moments as a kid were only highlighted with some of the warm memories attributed with the challenging gameplay, characters, and music associated with the classics on consoles such as the NES and Genesis.



Getting a new game, even to this day is a blast! Yet, holding that brand new box in your hands, then popping the cartridge or disk into the system and starting it up for the first time was, and still is its own reward. This is something that could very well have its days numbered, when physical copies will be completely phased out by an all digital marketplace. Even though the direction the industry will go in is still undetermined, it doesn't look to good for our physical games.

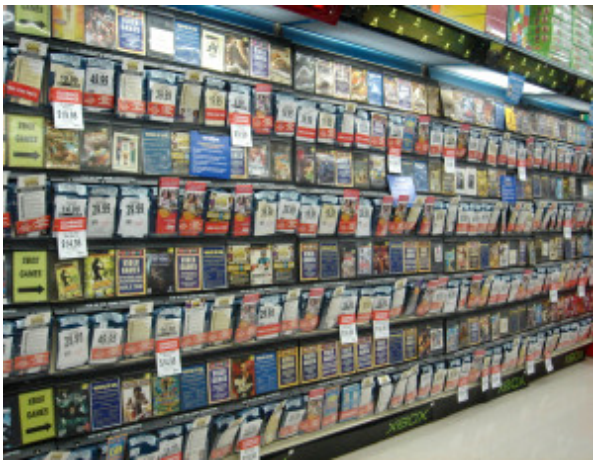
Regardless of how games are played in the future, I will always have fond memories of first getting that brand new game and the anticipation to play it. Though getting a new game when I was a kid wasn't a regular thing, it was only that more special when I did.



At the time, there were not many stores for me to go and browse new selections of games. No

Gamestop, no FuncoLand, no Electronics Boutique. Just places like Lechmere and Target; which had an ok selection to choose from, but not the greatest. Though it was almost a half hour drive, Toys R' Us was always a favorite destination for me when picking up something new, especially when it was popular and might sell out fast. It's the kind of place you would want to go just to play around. Even the fliers included with the daily newspaper would provide a warm sensation prompting you to reach for a pen to highlight stuff you wanted, even if it wasn't anywhere near the Holidays.

Taking that first corner to face down the game isle was overwhelming; glowing signs, standees and posters promoting all the popular titles as well as such icons like Mario and Sonic.



Originally the games were displayed behind a glass window and you would have to ask for help to get what you wanted. Because of the ever expanding selection from the growing market, they introduced the slip system; little signs showing off the box art and a sleeve just below it with slips of paper representing the game of choice. Just holding the piece of paper was exciting enough, but before leaving the Isle taking one last look at everything was a must!

Games soon to be released, demos, magazines, expensive peripherals that you will most likely never own, but could drool over. The saying: "Like a kid in a candy store" couldn't have been more right!

After paying at the register there was one last stop just before leaving, what I liked to call, "The Game Room". This was a tiny hole in the wall storage area with multiple copies of every game available, which were stacked up in alphabetical order and went on for what seemed like forever. Once the sliding window opened, you gave the employee your slip with receipt attached and then he would disappear into the back to retrieve your copy. You were then handed a plastic bag with just a slight view of the cover art bleeding through. Epic!

The ride home was probably the longest ride ever! At least you had the manual to flip through.

I own about a dozen games in my digital collection, and to me it's just not as enjoyable as the real thing. That process of paying for and downloading a game is boring, uneventful and the end result lacks any kind of unique personal value. No package or plastic wrap to viciously tear off, manual to flip through or stackable cartridge with glossy label. Just a cold virtual representation of what you own. It costs money to make packaging, and only makes sense that the next logical step for developers is to provide us with just the data. Its just where technology is heading and is completely understandable.



I personally enjoy having my own tangible collection of favorite games, hallmarking the many adventures the characters and I have gone through over the years and as well proudly being a representation (a trophy of sorts) of completion.

Like Records, Cassettes and Music Cds, it may soon become a relic of the old days. Though never truly forgotten.

Do you enjoy having a collection? Will you miss picking up new games if the physical media becomes extinct? Or will you just except clicking the download link and letting the system do all the work?

-Justin