

## The Atari XE - Atari's 8-bit gaming console



It seems every popular publisher during the late 80's attempted to jump on the 8-bit bandwagon. Though Atari wasn't new to the world of 8-bit programming, they did develop a home gaming console in hopes of re-joining the competition; in lieu of the sluggish 2600 and 7800 sales.

The Atari XE (XEGS) was released in 1987 as not only a gaming system, but as a beginners home computer. This would play the complete list of Atari's compatible 8-bit software and games, as well as a few new console specific titles. Released with a detachable keyboard, joystick, and light gun (much like the NES zapper), this system had its potential quickly overshadowed by the continued success of the NES and Master System.



I personally didn't know of its existence until the day I found one. Its pastel colors and unique design caught me off guard as it didn't even appear to look "Atari" at all, but something different entirely. Bug Hunt, Tennis, Robotron 2084, and Donkey Kong were some of the titles I was able to play before it was quickly sold off to a friend.

Atari has always fascinated me with their persistence; always trying to innovate and stay on top of the current generation, but subsequently falling below the radar. The underdog status they employed for years, even during the console wars, is a solid reason I have such respect for them.

-Justin