

# **PLAYING AT THE NEXT LEVEL: A HISTORY OF AMERICAN SEGA GAMES BY KEN HOROWITZ**



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## **Review**

"Definitely worth a read...a great inside look at the video game industry in the '90s...a concise, highly-readable documentary of Sega's story...an eye-opening narrative that testifies to the challenges of making it in the video game industry...much to enjoy...hard-pressed to find a more appropriate and approachable volume" --M. Brandon Robbins, level250geek

## **About the Author**

Ken Horowitz is a professor of English and has written about Sega and video games for over a decade for his website, *Sega-16*, as well as for numerous other websites and magazines. He lives in Puerto Rico.

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# **PLAYING AT THE NEXT LEVEL: A HISTORY OF AMERICAN SEGA GAMES BY KEN HOROWITZ PDF**

Today a multinational video game developer, Sega was the first to break Nintendo's grip on the gaming industry, expanding from primarily an arcade game company to become the dominant game console manufacturer in North America. A major part of that success came from the hard work and innovation of its subsidiary, Sega of America, who in a little more than a decade wrested the majority market share from Nintendo and revolutionized how games were made.

Drawing on interviews with nearly 100 Sega alumni, this book traces the development of the company, revealing previously undocumented areas of game-making history, including Sega's relationship with Tonka, the creation of its internal studios, and major breakthroughs like the Sega Channel and HEAT Network. More than 40 of the company's most influential games are explored in detail.

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## **Features**

- Playing at the Next Level A History of American Sega Games

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## **Most helpful customer reviews**

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

A Truly Outstanding Look At Game Development in the 1990s

By Alexander Smith

Playing at the Next Level presents the history of Sega of America from its founding in 1986 through the end of hardware manufacturing at Sega in 2001. While there are small vignettes on the company's marketing activities, the vast majority of the book is devoted to game development, providing a fascinating look at how

games were designed and programmed during the period. In this way, the book serves as a perfect complement to Blake Harris's fascinating, yet flawed, *Console Wars*, which is devoted almost entirely to SOA's marketing activities under Tom Kalinske. This book is far more readable than that tome, however, and does not fictionalize the account through artificially constructed dialogue.

My only two complaints are minor. First, this is a book largely based on interviews with dozens of Sega executives and first and third party programmers, yet there are no direct quotes to be found anywhere. Thankfully the book is thoroughly cited, however, so you do always know what information came from whom. Second, the book does perpetuate several errors related to Sega's early history. Specifically, the author fails to understand that Sega was, in fact, an American company with a Japanese subsidiary between 1974 and 1984 during most of its ownership by Gulf & Western. He incorrectly notes the sale of Sega's arcade factory to Bally in 1983 as the end of Sega's US operations, when these persisted for two more years. He also identifies Hayao Nakayama as CEO of the company in the early 1980s when he was actually just an executive VP and the firm was run by former Mattel Electronics president Jeff Rochlis. Finally, he states Sega pulled out of North America in 1985, which was actually the year they returned by founding Sega Enterprises USA, an arcade subsidiary that predated SOA by nearly a year. As all of the above is outside the main scope of the book, I list it here merely to be informative. The core of the book is impeccably researched, and these small goofs are not enough to alter my review score.

Ken Horowitz has long been the foremost authority on Sega during the 16-bit era, and I am delighted he has contributed such an important work to video game history scholarship.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A must read for every SEGA fan

By Amazon Customer

If you think you knew everything about SEGA, then be prepared to be surprised by this book. While other books mostly covered about the big events (Sonic 2sday or SOJ vs SOA) this book goes deep beyond that. It covers all of SEGA of America's product development division including Alpha Group, Omega Group, BlueSky Software, Westwood Associates, Midwest Studio, Multimedia Studio, STI, Novotrade International, and many more. You have some games you love that developed by SEGA of America? You'll love to read how they're being made here and I guaranteed you'll find some fact that you'll never know before. As for me, I learned something new about my pop idol that I've never knew it before : Michael Jackson is the first person in the U.S. to own a SEGA Genesis. How awesome is that. To sum up, this book is a must read for every SEGA fans, especially if you're the survivor of the 16-bit console wars. :)

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Wonderfully written book that fully explains the inner workings of ...

By Chris Guera

Wonderfully written book that fully explains the inner workings of Sega of America and things such as why the grid design was incorporated in the master system and Genesis box art in the beginning.

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