

Atari AsteroidsTM Background Information

The Asteroids Phenomenon

Atari AsteroidsTM is a landmark entertainment attraction in the coin-operated amusement industry. In 1980, this one or two player astral shootout video game established itself as the highest earning game of its kind in the U.S.

Asteroids not only eclipsed previous Atari production and industry earning records, it also began to change the way the world plays. The game was first shipped from Atari's Sunnyvale, California, facility in October, 1979, and from the company's Tipperary, Ireland, plant two months later.

Its popularity has attracted and held the interest of millions of players, primarily in the 13-30 age group, but it has also been responsible for attracting a legion of dedicated new players -- adults, business people in their thirties, forties, even fifties, in a wide variety of occupations have fallen victim to the excitement of the Asteroids challenge.

New public awareness and proven popularity also made it possible for industry operators to place the game in new places -- restaurants, theaters, convenience stores, student unions -- anywhere people congregate for fun and relaxation.

The Asteroids story is a continuing series of milestone achievements.

- o Since October 1979, more than 70,000 games have been shipped throughout the world, including cocktail and CabaretTM cabinet and standard upright versions.
- o Asteroids is the longest running "hit" product in the company's history. Most video games have a manufacturing life of four to six months. Asteroids is still being produced after 18 months.
- o Collections for a typical Asteroids game average about \$225-\$250 per week nationwide at 25¢ per play.
- o Asteroids was Atari's first high production game to utilize the company's unique QuadraScanTM video graphic system, which "draws" connecting lines or vectors on the screen to form pictures.
- o Asteroids was given Play Meter magazine's (a leading trade journal) 1980 annual award for video game excellence. The game was "voted by U.S. amusement operators as the highest earning video game in 1980."
- o Asteroid's popularity attracted many players to challenge the game for world high score and endurance records. People have played the game continuously for up to thirty-one hours.

The current world record holder for highest score is Greg Davies, 17, of Fresno, California, who scored 15,449,950 points in 31 hours of continuous play on January 31, 1981, at Starzone Entertainment Center in Fresno.

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