



Combat School, retro games, imagination and broken bones.

Description

I suppose I could call this the “Realification of Games”, but I won’t!

A slightly related more recent article I wrote can be found here [Don't See what's there, see what's not there.](#)

“When I were a lad, games were better”.

That is often an opening gambit of any retro game lover. Of course it is not precisely true for all retro games. It would be more accurate to say; “when I were a lad, I loved the games we had available to us”.

That is not to say some were not better, but try convincing a modern gamer that any C64 game was better and they will laugh at you – before trying it. You see the sad fact is, they all look crap compared to the current photo realistic games we have.

However, the old games relied on something that modern games often ignore. Imagination. I mention Combat School in the title. In 1987 Konami released Combat School in the arcades. It was a military take on the very popular athletics games of the time. You used a roller ball and two buttons to complete seven objectives, which ranged from obstacle courses, shootin ranges and finally combat training with your instructor.

Most of my friends had it on their home computers, but we very rarely played the game, even though the likes of Zzap 64 gave it rave reviews and scores ([91%](#)), you see, whilst the main game tried to break our joysticks, it was the final level that really captured our imagination.

Suddenly we were all split into marine recruits and combat instructors on the playground. We began to recreate the game in our own way, setting up obstacles and missions around the school. When we had completed these tests, we got to beat the crap out of each other, pretending it was the final level.

So why is this good you may ask. How does this relate to retro games being in some way better than modern games? Well, on the home systems the graphics were pretty poor. You had to really use your imagination to see the full picture. I used to have a global war game that my dad and I played. We

would use a real globe to plan our attacks. So it was with Combat School. Whilst the graphics we not the photo realistic beasts we are now used to, it got your mind going. You had to see the pictures in your minds eye, a bit like when you read a book.

In this case that translated to my friends and I trying to break each others noses on the playground. Today, there is no need for that kind of thing. The games looks so real, you don't need to imagine the details. They are right in front of you in all their gory glory.

Now we really do just turn on and switch our imagination off.

Category

1. Gaming

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