Research

When compared to television and movies, video games are still a fairly new medium. While they have been around for nearly forty years, it was not until the mid and late 1980s that they really started to become mainstream and popular. For this section of the Video Game Informer I have decided to give a brief history of video games.

One of the very first video games ever created was a title known as Spacewar for a Digital Programmed Data Processor-1. It was created by a man named Steven Russell in 1961. Almost a decade after Spacewar was created a man by the name of Nolan Bush created another game similar to Spacewars called Computer Space. This game was made available to the public by a company called Nutting, but ultimately did not do well because of the difficult controls in the game. A year later in 1972 Nolan Bushnell creates a game called Odyssey, which is manufactured and distributed in 1972 by Magnavox. It was in the same year that Bushnell leaves Nutting, and with the help of a man named Ted Dabney forms the first well known video game company, Atari. With this new company a game called Pong is created which turns out to be a great success. At first the game is only available in arcades, but soon after is released for the Odyssey. It is in 1976 that cartridges are developed, and in 1977 Atari comes out with their first home console, the Atari VCS (or Atari 2600). It ends up retailing for $250.

In the years to come Atari and Magnavox release new versions of their systems. Many new games are developed which end up being huge hits, such as Space Invaders and Pac-Man in 1980, and Donkey Kong in 1981. It is in 1982 that a company named Coleco releases the Colecovision. In 1983 a fairly new company also releases their first video gaming console exclusively in Japan due to Atari's strong hold over the video game market in America. The
system is known as the Famicon. The next couple years are rough for the video game industry due to oversaturation of consoles and games. It is in 1985 that Nintendo sees a window of opportunity and decides to release the Famicon in the U.S., but changes the name of the console to the Nintendo Entertainment System. In 1986 a company named Sega releases the Sega Master System. In the coming years Nintendo manages to control a large portion of the video game industry.

In 1989 Nintendo releases its first hand held system, the Game Boy. They also acquire the legal rights to the mega popular game Tetris and begin distributing that as well. 1989 also sees the release of the first 16-bit consoles. Sega ends up creating the Sega Genesis, while a NEC creates the TurboGrafix-16. In 1990 a company called SNK releases a 24-bit system known as the NeoGeo, but due to its $400 price tag the system ultimately fails. 1990 also sees the release of Mario 3, one of the best ever selling cartridge based games. In 1991 Nintendo releases their own 16-bit machine which they call the Super Nintendo Entertainment System. It is in 1991 that Sega also creates their mascot, a hedgehog named Sonic. Through the next few years several video game consoles are released by various companies but none can match the popularity of the Genesis or Super NES. That is until 1995 when Sony breaks away from Nintendo and creates their own system called the PlayStation which retails for $300. The Playstation proves to be one of the most popular systems ever created.

In 1996 Nintendo creates one of the first 64-bit systems, the Nintendo 64. In 1998 Sega creates the first 128-bit system, the Sega Dreamcast. However, as it turns out the Dreamcast proves to be the last console Sega will create. In 2000 Sony releases their second console, the PlayStation 2. With people lined up in the hundreds to secure a system, the PS2 proves to be one of the most popular video gaming consoles in history. In 2001 Microsoft decides to release their
own system known as the Xbox. Nintendo also releases their new system, the Nintendo
GameCube. These three systems, the PlayStation 2, Xbox, and GameCube end up being the first,
second, and third best selling video gaming systems on the market. It is on November 22, 2005
that Microsoft released their second console, the Xbox 360 and thus began the next-gen war. With
the Nintendo Revolution and Sony Playstation 3 both tentatively scheduled for a 2006 release, it
is anyone's guess who will take the top spot this time around.