Alive Dead Media 2021

Retro graphics and visuals programming

Arrangements

- Who am I?
- Who are you?
- What sort of background and interests do you have with regard to the topic?
- Schedule and outline
- Assessment
- Materials
- Needed tools

Coming up next

An overview of consumer computer graphics starting from the 1970s all the way to today

Any questions before we begin?

The anatomy of a crack intro

- What are *crack intros*?
- Let's go back to the early 1980s and home computers
- Blooming software industry
- ... but no related copyright legislation yet in most places
- Rampant (game) piracy
- Companies tried to fight back with copy protection, such as: code tables, required manuals, low volume level cassettes, uncopyable floppies, encryption and more

And campaigns

Don't Copy That Floppy (1992),
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=up863eQKGUI

Code page and wheel

Jet Set Willy (1984), The Secret of Monkey Island (1990)

Cracking

- People still didn't want to pay
- *Cracking* i.e. copy protection removal became a sport
- A constant race between companies and crackers
- Cracker groups formed, different roles (cracker, supplier, swapper, SysOp)
- Use of handles
- Distribution channels international early on – note the different TV systems in America and Europe (NTSC/PAL)
- First crack screens, then *crack intros*

Commodore 64 crack intro

The necessary ingredients: credits, game name, greetings ...

Crack intros

- Became a trade in themselves
- Same intro often reused multiple times
- Later on intro collections would become *demos*
- Evolved over time together with computers
- Initially groups didn't necessarily have a musician at all and the tools were lacking: no sound, generated sound and ripped game music
- Language of choice: machine language (until the 1990s)
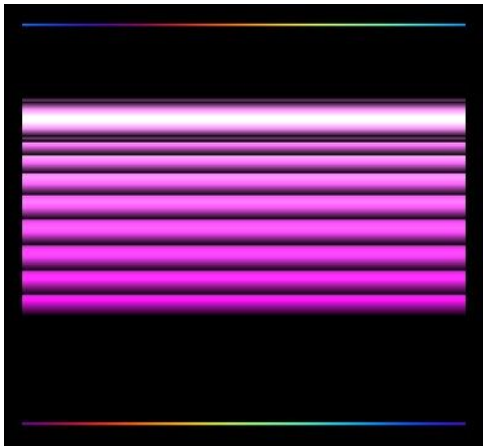- Let's see some examples!

Coming up next

Let's make a crack intro!

We need:

- Group logo
- Some text: which game, when did we crack it?
- Scroller
- Colorbars
- Bonus: background music
- Bonus: wobbly logo, more colors, better font ...

Colorbars

- Horizontal colorful, eh, bars
- Also known as copper bars
- Many different ways to do them depending on the hardware:
  - Changing the background color
  - Repeating modified characters across the screen
  - Multiple lines of different colors, changing the palette
- These days we can just draw them
- Let's see some examples