GPXILE

Launch Issue!



#1
Spring '07

This Issue:

1st Issue Spectacular
GPXile launches!

The State of Play
Confused about those GP consoles?

Reviews
The latest and greatest games for your GP consoles including **Vektar**

Interviews
WarmFluffyUK, author of Myriad and the WIP game, BerzerkGP talks to us as does Nickspoon, kuru kuru creator

intro

Hey readers, and welcome to GPXile.

GPX is a magazine and website dedicated to bringing you news, resources and information for all things Gamepark.

Now, to be honest, we start this magazine with a hint of trepidation.
The previous community magazine was written by Mark Rowley. Gamepark Magazine ran for 7 issues, and was well written and informative, with great features and articles.
However, the last issue was written in spring of 2005, and since then, a new Gamepark Holdings console has been released, and there's a whole new set of games for that systems, so we figured a new publication was needed.
We don't plan to better Marks magazine, no, that would be nigh on impossible, but we hope to be able to give you an informative and light hearted community magazine you can enjoy whenever you want. In addition, we also offer you our website (www.gpxile.com) which we are aiming to fill up with guides and answers to frequently asked questions. And if that still isn't enough for you, then we have a number of dedicated members on the Xile forums, waiting for your questions.

Anyway, "Read on, MacDuff", or something like that,

Yours,

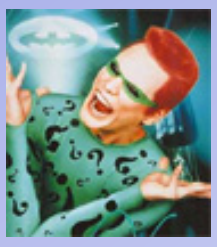
Nova and The GPXile Team

the team

Meet the team. We're a friendly bunch, and we don't bite, except maybe Sam, but that has yet to be proven in a court of law.

We (probably bigheadedly) believe ourselves to be pretty knowledgeable on the subject of the GP consoles, so you are quite welcome to ask us a question, be it in the forums, or the mailbag later on in the magazine.

Nova
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review

nova

Bomberman World GP GP32

Bomberman, or as I like to call it, 'The Littlest Arsonist'. It's the game that has single handed managed to wheedle its way onto almost every commercial games console in existence. That's obviously no mean feat,
but even so, the last console you would expect to find it on is a little known Korean open source handheld one.

But, don't get confused here, Hudson Soft, creators of Bomberman World did not port this game over to the GP32. It is the work of the community coder, Orian. Orian has taken the characters, backgrounds, music and even start screen from Bomberman World, and bunged them onto the GP32 in an attempt to bring the much-loved classic arcade game to our homebrew thumbs. So, how does the game fare against the original?
Read on.

Let's take a look at the visuals, shall we? As you can see from the screenshots, it is a testament to every Bomberman game so far, colourful and exciting. In fact it is the most visible game on a non-lit unit that I have played yet. Every playable character from Bomberman World is here in full detail (I always choose Black Bomberman, he fulfils my ninja fantasies).

As for sound, it is here that the game is let down a bit. The music is the same for every scene, and can be slightly repetitive, but if you are only playing in quick bursts, this should not bother you.

The game is great for, as I say a quick blast here and there, while waiting for a bus, on the tube, etcetera. I wouldn't recommend it for long term playing, as there is no points system, there are no levels, once you have completed a scene, there's nothing to show for it, and you return to the start screen for another crack at it.

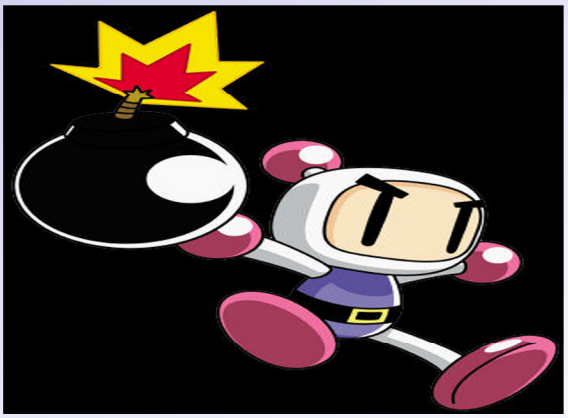
In summary, Bomberman World GP is a grand sight to behold, a stunning looking tribute to Bomberman that you can stick in your pocket. However, due to some sound issues, and no high scores or levels, the game is not entirely perfect. It's definitely worth a try though and it's probably the closest you'll get to the game on an open source console, besides roms (wink wink, nudge nudge)

Now for the disclaimer. Orian has stated that if Hudson Soft has a problem with his using the backgrounds, characters, music, etc. for this game, that he would remove it from circulation. At the time of writing, I don't think that this is the case, but if so, send yours-truly a PM on the gpxile forums and I'll let you "borrow" my copy

-Nova







score:

7/10

A respectable score here, if the music was sorted out and perhaps a story mode added, this game could be great

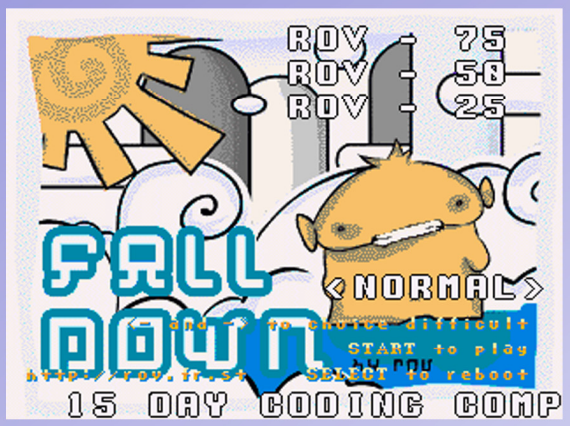
GPX

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Falldown

GP32



When I first got my GP32 way back, my first port of call was the entrants list for GBAx's 16 days competition. After ruining my retinas playing drunken frogger for a good solid god-knows-how-many hours, I needed something light, with no foreseeable goal. The game I turned to was Falldown. Big mistake.

The premise of Falldown is simple. A little orange and green character is hurtling at a speed that would put le mans to shame, down a bottomless pit, attempting to avoid obstacles in it's path. Death is unavoidable, but it is how long one can go without smearing your little character across a colorful block which is the issue here.
The game is, without a doubt one of the most addictive ones on the 32. One is always trying to top that high score. It is infuriating though, as "Real Life" constantly gets in the way, and keeping your eyes glued to the screen is harder than you may think. For instance, it is incredibly easy to be nearing that high score, almost, almost, the dog barks, you peel your pupils away for half a second, BAM! And you utter a sentence which would make a tourettes sufferer blush. I'd also like to add that taking a screenshot while the creature is in freefall is like making a carnie admit he's ripped you off.



Stop! Graphics time! Although not pushing the boundaries in terms of what the GP32 can do, Falldown does look rather lovely; colourful and cartoony, something the 32's screen does well, and considering the speed of the game, it's quite surprising to find out that there is no slowdown or blur.



Overall, Fallout is the perfect arcade game to whip out somewhere like the train, but be prepared to turn the carriage blue.

-Nova

Find this game at:
http://www.gp32x.de/cgi-bin/cfiles.cgi?0,0,0,0,27,771

score:

8/10

A fantastically addictive game, with great replay value

review

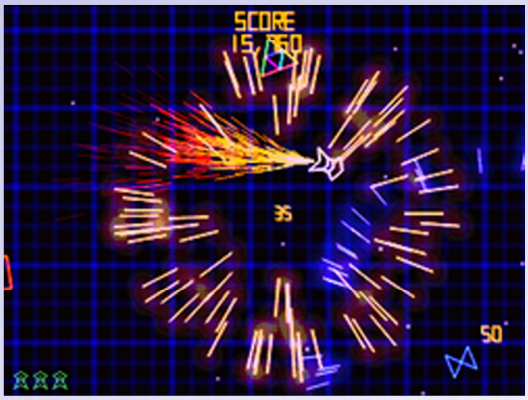
peter

Vektar (free version)

GP2x

“Take Tempest2000, Asteroids and Geometry Wars, mix them all together and you get Vektar. A trip of a game indeed.”
-Craig Rothwell (gp2x.co.uk)





Now, to begin with I will mention that this is just my type of game, however I will attempt to remain impartial. Vektar, created by Dzz, is a Vector graphics arcade shooter. Think Asteroids, but modern. I am very partial to Vektar as it is very much similar to a game on the Xbox 360, called Geometry Wars. In fact Dzz mentioned while developing Vektar for the GP2x.co.uk competition that he created it using some screen shots of Geometry Wars for inspiration. However, this is where the similarity ends. While graphically similar the game play of Vektar is very much its own. At its time of development Geometry Wars was not released and, hence, Vektar was written to play in that Dzz thought Geometry Wars right. I’ve got to say, Dzz made a good call as it makes the game a lot more original.

Gameplay

Now, onto the actual gameplay part of the review. Vektar is a shooter, similar to asteroids in terms of ship mechanics. The aim of the game is to get the highest score possible. Now, I know that sounds like the old “tried and tested” basis for a shooter, and it sounds like it would be the same old gameplay and boring. Now, here’s the thing, it’s not. I’m not entirely sure what it is. Maybe it’s the modern graphics or maybe it’s the brilliantly thought out gameplay. In Vektar, your enemies are unrelenting onslaughts of evil shapes, bent of obliterating your ship. You have a certain amount of lives that can be increased by gaining points for destroying enemies. There are a whole myriad of enemies, that do everything from aimlessly float around to ones that chase and shoot you. The enemies come in waves, starting with a fairly easy amount to deal with, and slowly increasing. Another part of the game play is how the ship moves. Similar to asteroids it drifts with inertia you have left over from firing the thrusters to move it. However, in Vektar you do not disappear when you leave the screen and appear on the other side, you bounce off the edge of the screen and often back into the enemy. This means much more skill is required to pilot your ship and it really does add to the challenge. As far as I can tell, the waves never end and come on forever and ever. Vektar has two difficulties and I am about to mention one of the very few bad points present in this game. Even on the harder difficulty, if you put some effort into playing it never gets hard enough.

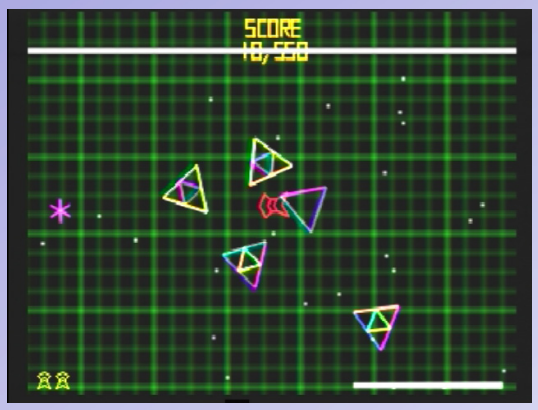
review

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Vektar (free version)

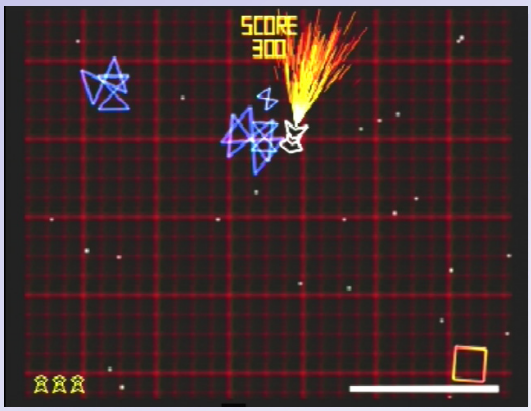
GP2x

By that, I mean that its possible to endlessly fend off the attacking waves for ever and ever until something eventually causes you to stop, be it boredom or real life. However, on the whole, the game-play is excellent and well worth trying out, especially as the game has such a professional, unique and polished (bugless) finish.



Graphics

In this area Vektar also excels well. It carries a simple graphical feel while also looking very “new” and “next generation”. It’s very colourful, each enemy identified by different colours. The enemies are one whole colour and are very well done. The same is true for the ship as well. The background consists of a grid, just like in Geometry Wars, that really fits well with the graphical style of everything else and the thrusters send out beautiful sparks as you move. Last but not least, as you destroy and enemy, or are destroyed yourself, the annihilated object explodes in a burst of sparks and pretty colours. The graphics suit the game well and are simple yet elegant.



Sound

The sound in Vektar isn’t the hugest part of the game. Basically it has some fairly good background music, and some sound effects that fit fairly well with the action. Nothing too brilliant about it but nothing is too bad about it either. Plus it seems to be pretty high quality. Still, this is not the high point of the game.

Overall

Overall Vektar is a very well rounded game. The production quality is excellent, there are no noticeable bugs in the game and the graphics are exceptional and very high quality. The sound isn’t bad, however it isn’t the greatest. The game play is very simple, yet surprisingly captivating if a bit too easy. So, once you master the game you may find yourself playing for so long that your batteries could easily die on you, and we all know how the GP2x eats those for breakfast. But, on the whole, Vektar is a great commercial quality game. Heck, there is a commercial version out as well. Review on that coming soon.

score:

7/10

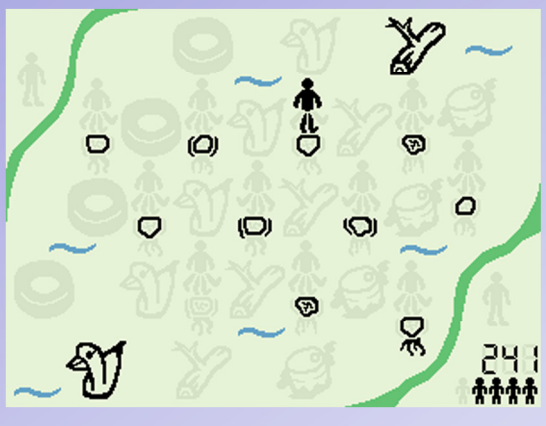
Pretty great, fun to play for a short blast, or a long while. It can be a bit too easy and the action can eventually get boring but by the next day you’ll have urges to play it again

review
nova

River Crossing
GP2x

Remember the Game and Watch systems? They were usually a rectangular piece of plastic with a screen, two buttons and a sound that almost went into ultrasonic range. They usually consisted of a simple, but brilliantly addictive game and for some inexplicable reason, a built in alarm clock. Well, 1 out of 2 aint bad...

River Crossing is, essentially, a Game and Watch game. It is even presented by the author as such. It has a bunch of pre-drawn sprites upon a pre-drawn background and very high pitched bleeping sound effects, sounds very Game and Watch to me, let's dig deeper.



Loading it up, for me, is where the confusion began. There's no splash screen, you are taken directly to the scene of the action, with a little stick-like man standing stationary at a riverside, watching tyres, logs, etcetera float down the river. I had guessed from the title that the objective was to get to the other side of it, and instantly assumed that this would be a frogger type affair, leaping from object to object to get across the river, and thus I pushed the stick in my intended direction. Nothing. Mashed the buttons. Nothing. In frustration, I pressed every button, finally landing on select, and the game started. Duh!

However, it turned out the game was nothing like I'd assumed, every round, a cluster of stones appear, which you jump forward and backwards onto using the B and X buttons. It's still not that easy though, as some stones have cracks - and you need to jump off of these before they break sending you to a watery grave - some are covered in moss – meaning that you need to wait until you regain your balance before jumping off, and some are like those infernal turtles in the aforementioned frogger, bobbing in and out of the river. Your objective is to time your jumps onto each of these stones until you get to the riverbank, each level. It sounds simple, but like most absolutely fantastic game concepts, it's not.



Getting your timing right for each jump can be increasingly difficult as the game progresses, and therefore frustrating, and in the later levels, the said logs, tires and ducks float down the river, defiantly trying to stop you advancing. However, you are supplied with a more than adequate stockpile of lives. It's an interesting game, and feels familiar, yet fresh at the same time, give it a go and you'll see what I mean.

As for looks, obviously due to the fact it is based around the game and watch, it's nothing special, but what it attempts to do, it does very well. The idea of the background being coloured and the sprites black transitions very well to the GP2x's bright, clear screen, and I love the way that if you tilt the console slightly, you can see all the sprites at the same time, exactly like the Game and Watch.

The sound effects are no Mozart pieces, but once again, they were never intended to be. The G&W style bleeping is utilised well, there are only a few sound effects, about 7 to be precise, but they are (thankfully) nowhere near as eardrum piercing as I remember, and not as irritating.

Altogether, and this seems to be a current theme in this issue, this game is ideal for a short play, it's definitely nothing deep. However, the seemingly infinite amount of levels mean for a huge replay value, and the nostalgia of playing a Game and Watch on your gp2x!

score:
8/10

review goity

GP2x Demo Competition Entrant Reviews

GP2x

Back in 2006, Dzz launched a competition to see who could create the best scene demo on the 2x, something that would push the hardware to it's limits. Goity took up the job of personally viewing and reviewing all of them.

Babylon Bastard

Well, this is the first demo I looked at, and while some of the effects looked really cool, like one similar to the mercury physics used in Archer Maclean's Mercury on the PSP, it tended to look horribly blocky at times. I don't know whether this was just the choice of textures, but it didn't really look visually appealing to me, and I believe the GP2x is capable of more.

Code Alone

Personally I loved it, and the shock of thinking it hadn't started properly, then suddenly flashing to a cube involving the start-up menu was a great effect. Visually it looked appealing, however since it was mainly rendering cubes I don't suppose it was really using the power of GP2x much. Also, I couldn't help noticing the polygons looked very jaggy, so maybe some power could have been used for anti aliasing? The shading also looks a little under whelming. It also seems there is a bug with this that makes things running afterwards run slow, forcing you to reboot.

Creep Tea

One word: breathtaking. The effects used here were so cool, with excellent lighting effects used, and the wave effects were astounding. Sure, at times some parts were a little blocky, but this is more than made up for with the style this has achieved. The music fitted the theme well, and helped to immerse you into the scenes. The GP2x logo at the end was excellent, and would be impressive even if it were pre rendered. Considering this is apparently unoptimised and not using any special features like the MMU hack or the 940t, it shows great promise for the GP2x hardware. Boogaloo!

Cube Effects (64k)

Nice visuals. Sure, it isn't really that impressive, but the random textures feature is a mesmerising effect. If fact, screw the not being impressive bit. Once the demo gets going it starts to look err… buzzing. It uses affine texture mapping, which looks fugly, but the PS1 got away with it didn't it? Not much more I can say about this one.

Debris

The effects were good at times, but weak at others. The interlacing effect of the MK1 screen looked disastrous here, even to the point of making me feel sick, but I suppose it wouldn't do this on an MK2 gp2x, so I don't know how much of a point this really is. The music was simple but fitting and the effects sometimes moved to the music, which was fun. The graphics were so -so. I'm not sure how I feel on this one.

review goity

GP2x Demo Competition Entrant Reviews

Demo1 (64k)

Kind of cool, effects were rather nice, but I'm not sure whether the "3d" was actually 3d. It tended to look pixelated at times but was fun and interesting regardless. There is some background info to keep you interested, but the demo is quite short.

Pool Demo (64k)

Wheeeeeee!!! I swear this is hypnotic; the swinging round of the background is like a pendulum. After a while of just being immersed in the changey background, you start to notice the wicked bouncy collision effect of the balls, which is also kind of well ace massive brill. My vocabulary is starting to suffer, you say? This is what hypnotism does to you. Who needs 3d?

Waking Up The Dead

Hmm… a sort of plea demo? A pleado :P? Sort of okay, but there is a lot of slowdown at times. Music was fun, and the 'oldskool effects' were not bad. All in all a pretty good demo, but quite text based. Nice name, but hopefully it won't scare me to death :S.

Who I Think Should Win:

PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THESE HAVE NO INFLUENCE OVER THE FINAL DECISION, I AM NOT DZZ

1st prize: Creep Tea
This demo shows all sorts of interesting features, and more than anything just looks good, which I think is a very important feature to anything that is specifically made to showcase the power of GP2x.

2nd prize: Pool Demo
Wheeeeeee!!! This demo is so fun and mesmerising. Who needs drugs? This doesn't need 3d to be cool and fun and cool and fun and cool. The hypnosis effect I was talking about probably helps too.

3rd prize: Code Alone
Though this demo had a bug which messed up other demos, the effect was interesting, and really shocked me when it suddenly screen captured.

Best 64k Demo: Pool Demo
See above.

Honourable Mention: Demo1
The Voxel effect, while I think it didn't look that great, is apparently difficult to do, so that's why I think it should get the honourable mention.

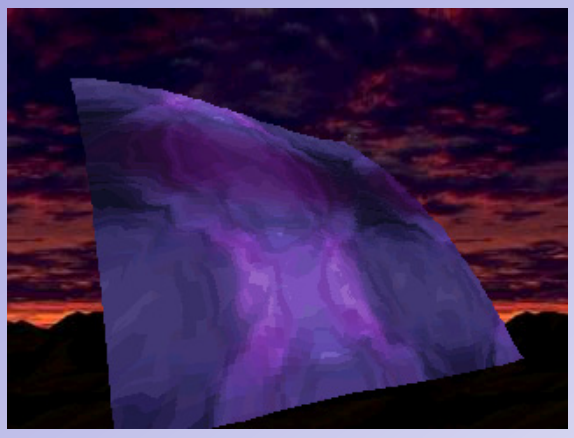
In conclusion, these entries have all been impressive, and I am shocked to see this many entries. I would also like to add that I could not do any of these effects myself, so please don't take my criticism too seriously.

The real results of the competition on the next page!

review goity

GP2x Demo Competition Entrant Reviews

The results came in for the Demo Competition, and they were as follows. I reckon I was pretty close with my predictions ;) . Congratulations go to the winners!



1st Place:

Creep Tea

Optimus



2nd Place:

Debris

Hedelmae



3rd Place:

Babylon Bastard

Live!

Find these and all other entries at:

http://www.pouet.net/party.php?which=1279&when=2006

RETRO. review nova

GPX

Sam & Max Hit the Road



You may or may not remember the lovable, but seriously wacky characters who starred in the graphical novel, Sam and Max: Freelance Police. As the title suggested, it featured two characters, namely Sam, a 6 foot tall, sarcastic canine, and Max, a psychotic creature that slightly resembles a rabbit, solving crime as self appointed keepers of the peace.
In 1993, the dynamic duo were given the leading roles in a LucasArts game for the DOS and Macintosh computer systems. In Sam & Max Hit the Road, the private investigators travel across America, in search of a lost sasquatch, and Trixie, the giraffe-necked girl, stopping only to steal colouring books from Snucky's convenience stores. If you hadn't already guessed, the game is dripping with insane humour, and I'm not talking the chuckle into your hand kind, no. I'm talking the full blown laugh-out-loud-snort-milk-from-your-nose-onto-your-GP2x kind.

The game plays well on the GP2x, with full sound and speech. I personally recommend some headphones though, as the 2x speakers aren't the loudest. The only problem with the sound, to my knowledge is a slight crackling, but this is barely noticeable.
The game was designed to work with a mouse, but the GP2x stick actually does a really good job emulating this. I'd imagine that with the D-pad mod, you may have a harder time with it, but I personally haven't tested, so couldn't say.



Graphically, the cartoony look befits the game's wacky humour perfectly and looks great on the 2x's huge, clear screen.

Overall, if you have a bit of time to dedicate to playing this through, it's ultimately a rewarding fun experience, and one of my personal favourites on the GP2x.

score:
9/10

main feature

Back From The Front: GP2x Vs PSP

vaustein

Finally! The most non-biased comparison of emulation between the GP2x and the PSP so far, and we have it here!
Reproduced with permission of the original author, Vaustein. Enjoy!

-Nova

To celebrate my birthday + tax refund, I picked up a PSP and began playing with homebrew. Here are my impressions of how the PSP performed compared to the GP2X. Although I've owned a GP2X since last year, I don't believe I carried any bias against the PSP. In fact, I expected the PSP to replace my GP2X; didn't happen, surprisingly. Also, these comments are based upon 10-12 hours with the PSP.

The Handhelds

PSP: Purchased last week at Target. Initially FW 2.71 (indicated by the letter "K" above the bar code). Downgraded to 1.50 then upgraded to Dark_Alex's 3.10 OE-A homebrew-friendly firmware.

GP2X: Mk2 model purchased last year from gp2x.co.uk, just arrived (kidding! ). FW 2.1.1.

Emulators

Most emulators on PSP found at PSP News: http://psp-news.dcemu.co.uk/
All emulators on GP2X found at GP2Xtreme, natch.

NES: NesterJ vs GPFCE

- NesterJ scales to the PSP display's height with the correct aspect ratio. Fullspeed at default settings.
- GPFCE must be overclocked to 233 via Cpuspeed (popular GP2X overclocking app) for fullspeed.
- NesterJ: slightly better interface and default performance. GPFCE: slightly smoother animation, compared to NesterJ slight flicker. Both emulators easy to install via simple drag-and-drop with a card reader.
+ No clear preference

PCEngine/TG16: e[mulator] + PCEP + HuE PSP vs Hu6280 + CPCE + gp2xengine

- It's a wash. Performance, features, audio are indistinguishable. The PSP never outperforms the GP2X in this area, nor vice versa. Also, there is no single best PCE emulator on either platform: one that has full-speed with audio lacks real-time save.
+ No preference - and some emu developer ought to take up this cause

Gameboy/Gameboy Color: Rin vs GnuBoy2x

- Both up-scale to the full display height with correct aspect ratio (and gameboy graphics look ugly that close...).
- Better audio on GnuBoy2x; however, Rin has a better interface without the ponderous scrolling marquees of GnuBoy2x.
+ Somewhat prefer GP2X

MAME: Mame4All vs Gp2xMame

- Mame4All no apparent built-in overclocking nor any or orientation adjustment (e.g. flip to landscape orientation for cocktail mode). Also lots of wasted screen real estate. And less compatible than the current release of Gp2xMame. Less friendly interface than Gp2xMame.
- Given the slower hardware, Gp2xMame hits a performance upper bound for more demanding titles. Sometimes, 250Mhz overclock just isn't enough.
+ Strongly prefer GP2X

Megadrive/Genesis: Megadrive for PSP and DGen vs PicoDrive

- Megadrive hasn't been updated in over a year. DGen is still being developed, but PicoDrive has a far superior list of features. Did not attempt nor discover Sega CD emulation for PSP, which PicoDrive supports.
+ Strongly prefer GP2X

Commodore Amiga: UAE PSP vs UAE4All2x

- GP2X control handles mouse emulation quite smoothly. By contrast, the PSP analog control is jerky and difficult to use as a pointing device.
- UAE4All2x has a far better interface
- Performance practically identical
+ Strongly prefer GP2X

SuperNES: Snes9X PSP + Snes9X PSP Optimized vs PocketSNES and SquidgeSNES

- All of the above have good runtime configuration menus.
Do-Re-Mi Fantasy - Milon no Dokidoki Daibouken is my SNES torture test. Little Milon deserves the best 
- All emulators were set to frameskip = 0 and audio_frequency = 44KHz.
- Both PSP emulators averaged at least 10fps worse than SquidgeSNES and 15-20 fps worse than PocketSNES. For more detailed performance numbers on SquidgeSNES and PocketSNES, check their compatibility lists @ wiki.gp2x.org.
- At the initial Do-Re-Mi Fantasy title screen, both GP2X emulators are 60fps with perfect sound. However, both PSP emulators *lag* to 45-55 fps!
- EDIT: Tested PSPSNES_TYL v0.4.2, both "standard" and "Media Engine" releases. PSPSNES_TYL is the latest and greatest SNES emulator on PSP. Both releases crashed on loading Milon - my first time seeing PSP's BSoD. Since this emulator claims to fully utilize the PSP's graphics hardware, it probably outperforms Pocket and Squidge on other games.
+ Strongly *and very surprisingly* prefer GP2X (in the absence of further testing)

CPS: CPS2PSP vs CPS2EMU test version 8

- Each has a clean interface. Both are packaged with the "rom convert" tool that generates required cache files from rom packages.
- While audio and performance are nearly identical, the PSP's wide screen shines here. Fonts in particular look crisp on the PSP and distorted on the GP2X due to aspect ratio differences. It's similar to what happens to a widescreen film projected onto a fullscreen television: either the vertical dimension is scaled (letterbox mode with black bars on top and bottom) or each frame is forced to a non-native resolution (causing distortion).
+ Strongly prefer PSP

PSX: 3.10 OE-A built-in PSX emulation vs GP2PSX

- Here's your reason to get a homebrew-friendly PSP. [Currently, the PSP is doing great at this]
- PSP FW 3.10 OE-A launches PSX ISOs directly. It's a little more circuitous to set up GP2PSX.
+ Strongly prefer PSP

(There are some major games which don't work on PSP like FF8… the emu is not perfect but it is pretty good - Goity)

ColecoVision: Columbo vs Columbo + Gp2xMess

- Both Columbo ports suffer from poor sound quality, confusing control mappings, and sync problems that resemble dropped frames.
- Columbo for PSP has a better GUI but is less stable. During one session I loaded and ran a game, then returned to the GUI, reloaded the same game, and the emulator locked up. Hard reset time.
- GP2XMess includes first-rate ColecoVision emulation. It's only lacking virtual numpad support and real-time save/load. Please note that it does include a virtual keyboard but lacks the numpad portion of a standard keyboard. Since XMess maps numpad keys to numpad buttons on the ColecoVision controller, this results in some confusing control mappings as well.
+ Strongly prefer GP2X running GP2XMess

NeoGeoPocket: NGPSP vs RACE

- NGPSP failed to work. I could navigate the GUI but "LOAD ROM" was a no-op. The last update was September, 2005. The author's comments in the readme mention working real-time save/load but "ungodly bad" sound that was recently added.
- As for RACE, the audio seems perfect, and SRAM is supported, but there is no real-time save/load.
- RACE is known to be frustrating to set up. It took me an hour of editing GPE files. Part of the problem is RACE's integration with Selector, the generic "drop-in" file selector frontend popular among developers who lack the time or inclination to write and maintain their own GUIs.
- RACE also features an *extremely loud and obnoxious jingle* that plays at maximum volume on boot. Luckily, the jingle is easily disabled by replacing its WAV file. And what are WAV files doing on a GP2X? I'm guessing that feature is owned by "Flavor", the developer chiefly credited with porting RACE to the GP2X. I'm not sure whether to thank him or kick him.
+ Prefer GP2X after some customization

Gameboy Advance: Did not test. I use my NDS for this. (***Fair enough, I'm the same—Nova***)

MSX: Did not test on PSP. However, fMSX2x needs function key support before Metal Gear and Solid Snake are playable. Also lacks real-time save.

THE FINAL CONCLUSION ON THE NEXT PAGE

main feature

Ergonomics

PSP Pros: Impressively lightweight for such a packed handheld! Good case width for a comfortable grip over extended periods. Excellent battery life. Widescreen display that benefits from freeware media players that are compatible with homebrew-friendly PSPs.

PSP Cons: The PSP analog control is poorly calibrated and curiously positioned toward the bottom -left of the case; it's difficult to reach the analog control without cradling the case with the left hand. Also, having 4 directional buttons rather than a D-Pad was pure idiocy! It is simply the worst control mechanism I've ever used. And trust me, I've suffered through a year with two different GP2X stick caps.

GP2X Pros: Although not widescreen, the GP2X display subjectively appears to be sharper when playing games. Also, the PSP suffers from blurring during fast-motion scenes; this is particularly evident when playing some commercial PSP titles such as GTA:LCS.

GP2X Cons: Suffers from poor battery life. Is there a LI-ON replacement for AA batteries that would fit the GP2X battery compartment? And that stick - it's better than the PSP's control by far, but a D-Pad mod would be nice.

Conclusion

+ Strongly prefer the GP2X

Also, I just received my new Tapwave Zodiac 2 and spent several hours setting it up. Most emulation doesn't approach the GP2X. However, naturally mouse-based games like ScummVM, PalmUAE (Amiga), and CliFrotz (Infocom) work better with a touchscreen and stylus. Between the two, it seems that I've attained the Holy Grail of feature convergence 

another feature...

The State of Play
nova

Well, wouldn't you know, a little Korean company could cause such a stir in the homebrew games market. With so much competition and bankruptcy all surrounding the creators of the GP32, It's easy to get lost in the world of Gamepark. Who makes what? who left who? What do these questions even mean?

Why don't we start from the beginning, with the GP32?

Yes, we know it looks like a Gameboy Advance.

The GP32 was the first of Gamepark's creations, way back in November 2001. The design and consequent development of the GP32 was funded by the Korean government, as a law that was established shortly after World War 2 which forbid any importation of Japanese electronics was still in place. This meant Gamepark's console was the first handheld manufactured in Korea.
The GP32 launched in one iteration, a Non lit Unit (or NLU). The console looked like a more ergonomic Gameboy Advance with a larger screen and higher quality stereo speakers. Later on, however, a third party, called Hahotech started taking a NLU and sticking in a front light. This iteration was coined the Front Lit Unit (or FLU).

Unlike the GBA, the GP32 used a memory card format, the Smart Media Card (or SMC), which I'm sure you'll understand, means users could edit the card, and therefore put their own data into the GP32, but at first, this was only used for MP3 Playback, as the firmware at the time did not allow the loading of ones own programs.
Unfortunately for Gamepark, on January 1st 2002, the law forbidding Japanese electronics was scrapped, meaning the GBA, with it's far superior lineup of commercial games was released in Korea anyway, meaning less sales of the GP32 in Korea, as for the first time ever, Korean gamers had a choice of handheld consoles.
Gamepark began to see that if the GP32 was to stay afloat, they needed to make it open source. They subsequently released the FreeLoader, which allowed the playing of .fxe binary/executable files from the firmware. This was a big hit, and very quickly the GP32 was discovered by alternative gamers and home developers alike, who saw the potential in this powerful handheld.
Gamepark set up a system that allowed a potential homebrew developer access to development tools when he or she registered their GP32 on Gamepark's site, and soon the handheld gathered a large following, and a wide range of games
and applications.

Nowadays, since the release of the GP2X, the rate of games or applications being released has slowed down considerably, but for the potential buyer, the GP32 offers a lot. There is a wide range of top quality programs, and the console can emulate a lot of old consoles very sufficiantly, such as Genesis/MegaDrive, Nes, Snes and ZX Spectrum among others. It also offers good quality MP3 and DivX playback, and is still worth a look, despite the new guys in town.

During the development of the GP32's successor, there were disagreements among the Gamepark employees over how to handle it. Some people thought that the best idea would be to stick to their tried and true homebrew roots, but with some more media compatibility, which was really the

another feature...

weaker side of the GP32, and some wanted to branch out and try out commercial 3D releases, something which really never worked out on the 32. A compromise could not be reached, and the company was torn into two, with one side remaining Gamepark, and the other adopted the somewhat unoriginal title of Gamepark Holdings, who we will focus on first.

Heralded by many as the true successor to the GP32, the GP2X was released early November in 2005.
The GP2X was designed as a digital jukebox type unit that could play homebrew games, meaning it was created with a dedicated video player, picture viewer and music capabilities. For the homebrew side of things, GPH took initiative, and spoke to previous distributors and coders for the GP32, and asked how it should be implemented.
GP2X was also not the first name for the console. When conceptualized, GPH had settled on the name GPX2. However, due to copyright reasons (A jappy printer called the GPX was the cause of the problem), Gamepark Holdings was (were? - the S really messes around with plurals) forced to scrap the name and try to find a new one. A competition was held, with about 1500 entries, but finally GPH chose the name GP2X, which had been submitted by quite a few people.
The GP2X is doing well with usually at least a couple of updates every day. Notably, the emulators are looking great, with DrMD (Megadrive) Neogeo, GPSP2x (Game Boy Advance) and Vobbo's PC Engine looking near perfect, and most others, such as SquidgeSnes and Spot, a GP32 emulator, progressing nicely, and it seems that even Playstation emulation is perhaps getting there, so the future looks bright for the GP32's second coming.

Now for the bad news.
I mentioned earlier that Gamepark had split off to follow their own calling. Well, after months of silence, Gamepark announced three consoles that they were to develop. The XGP, which was to be their answer to Sony's PSP, The XGPMini, which was a Game boy micro-esque version of the XGP with half the ram, and more recently. The XGP Kids, which was a redesign of the GP32. After a very promising period of footage being released of the three consoles running, everything went quiet.
After months now of silence, on March 8th of this year, Gamepark declared themselves bankrupt. For some strange reason, their site now sells shoes.

However, in a strange twist, on the GP32x boards, someone identifying themselves as Woosuk Lee posted that another company had been working with Gamepark to get the XGP Kids released. They announced; *"Besides that company want to be more powerful GP KiDS, he is under discuss with mobile flash contents development company in Europe and that is tail at the end. We will pack the GP KiDS as junior PMP device. You'll see the GP KiDS movie and check the great change soon."*
So maybe things are looking up for the XGP Kids, but unfortunately it is unlikely that the other two will ever see the light of day.

another feature...

And here it is, the what's hot, and what's most definitely not in the world of Gamepark. right here, right now.

WHAT'S HOT

GP32 Emulator

Squidge releases his very, very alpha version of Spot, his GP32 emulator, for the GP2x. Despite not actually doing anything at this moment in time, It's looking very promising, and looks to open up hundreds more apps and games for the 2x.

GBA Emulation Heaven

ZodTTD and Exophase released the public release of their GBA emulator, GPSP2x. It's making great progress, and I can foresee much fullspeed greatness on the GP2x thanks to these guys.

Firmware Blunders

ZodTTD features twice in this feature. That's 'cos he's on fire! Working closely with other coders, Exophase, Chui, Unai and a mysterious other coder, they have been working on the current PSX emulator for the GP2x. Word from the team suggests a very significant speed increase, congrats guys!

End of Gamepark

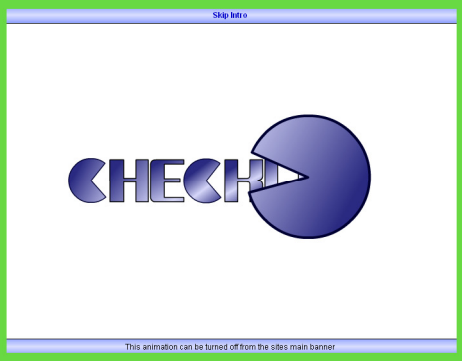
Gamepark, the ones who didn't make the GP2x, who had 3 consoles of their own in the works has announced it's bankruptcy. It's old site www.gamepark.com now sells shoes. Yes, we know it doesn't make sense...

WHAT'S NOT

interview

WarmFluffyUK Interview

nova



WF's Checklist at www.berzerk.com/checklist lists whether many retro games run on the GP2x It's a very useful tool

Hello WarmFluffy!

Howdy Doody!

To start off, could you please describe yourself to the discerning readers?

Well I'm 5'6" tall, Blonde. I like shopping, fluffy animals, helping the aged, paragliding, Marathon running, thermo nuclear detonator design and I am a compulsive liar :D.
I guess I'm pretty average really, nothing terribly special. But I do have a zest for life, I love my friends and I do like a good party. Unfortunately for me, my friends do have the pictures of said parties to prove it…

As I understand it, you have been using computers and generally doing lots of interesting bits and bobs on them for a while now. When did you start to tinker with computers?

Well I moved from my home town to Aberystwyth when I was 11 years old, and used to pop back now and then to see my grand parents. One day while I was there I bumped in to one of the boys I went to primary school with, I always liked him and we got chatting about this and that. When he told me that he had a computer I didn't believe him, so we went back to his house to see his etchings, er I mean computer :D. I was expecting a huge wall full of rotating tape thingies and lots of lights and beeping sounds. But it was a Sinclair ZX81. He showed me a bit of ZX basic and I was hooked. I spent nearly all of my holiday round his house writing games and apps. The rest is not exactly historical, but it is history.



Myriad is a strategic kind of shmup on the 2x, addictive stuff

You have been in the community for just about 2 years now, since during the GP32's reign. You even created a huge compatibility list for emulators on the GP32 and 2X in your spare time. May I ask what attracted you to us?

No.
Only kidding!!!
Well one day I was surfing the web, I was seriously thinking of buying a GBA with a spectrum emulator when I stumbled across the GP32. I ordered one from Craig straight away.

Right now, Myriad is at Beta 4.0 but It is looking to be very polished already. What we'd like to know is, why did you choose to code the game in Fenix?

Well I always wanted to bring something else to our little community, one day I was bored and decided to look into coding for the GP2X. I remembered Quiest had written Klatterbox in Fenix so I decided to venture further. Within an hour I had the dev environment set up and had written something basic. I found the language to be very easy to code, and took to it like fire to a slice of my boyfriends toast. One week later I had Myriad running and 2 weeks later it's in its present form!

interview

Care to give us a little preview of what we can expect to see in future releases?

Yes of course:
1. Extra powerups.
2. Mini side scrolling level where you navigate through an asteroid field.
3. Free prizes including a Porsche, world cruises and a poke in the ribs.
4. Basic storyline with splash screens.
5. Possibly in game music.

By the way, one of the above has been found not to be a viable option.

(Editors Note: Just after this Interview took place, the final version of myriad was released. Check it out.)

Besides myriad, have you anything else in the pipeline?

My favourite arcade game of all time is Berzerk. This is why I wrote Berzerk 2005 on the PC. I didn't want to write that game on the GP2X first, as I wanted to really get the feeling of Fenix before I started on Berzerk GP. So stay tuned for that one.

Thinking of entering in the new coding competition (Dream Coding Grand Prix '06) coming up?

Not really no, I have never really been that competitive, and I don't think my games are good enough. Mind you, for a laugh I could write "hello world" on the screen and enter that!

You have just been made a moderator of the GP32X.com Forums, which, I believe makes you the first female mod in the history of Gamepark! How do you feel about that?

I feel very honoured, it's not a role I take lightly and I hope to do you boys well. I'm very much in favour of free speech and I don't get narked off easily, so I probably won't be deleting many posts. But be warned, if you are an ass, I will be there to kick it :D .

How would you describe the community if you were to use one word?

Exhilarating!

Well thank you for the interview, you have been great, one last question though if i may. How do you feel on the subject of Marmite? (Sam made me ask)

Cough cough, splutter. Throat, choking. Lights, dimming. Got to get, water. AARG!

Thank you very much, I feel the same; have you got any last minute thanks or greetings you'd like to extend?

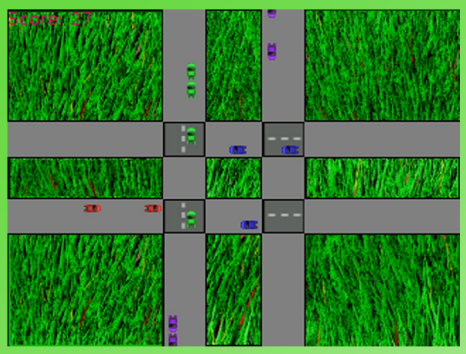
Well yes: Thanks to Craig for introducing me to the GP32. Thanks to Hando and Mr Dragon for the Website. Thanks to Quiest and the maniac of race for the Fenix help. Thanks to the rest of you all for welcoming me here and being such fun guys.

Find WarmFluffy's games in the GP2x Archive

interview



KuruKuru2x is a nice
Kuru Kuru clone by Nickspoon



Crossroads is an interesting concept,
a puzzle game, you must control
the flow of traffic on a motorway
by changing the directions of the road

Nickspoon Interview

goity

Hello Nickspoon, what is your name and your claim to fame?

My name is Nick Spooner, and I have very little to rant about.

That's nice.

Indeed it is. Is that the only question?

Is "That's nice" a question?

It doesn't end with a question mark, so I don't think so. However, that was.

Perhaps so. So how did you first hear about the GP2x?

I was poking around Lik-Sang, and they had a pre-order in the GP32 section.

Did you know about the GP32 before you stumbled upon the GP2x?

I was vaguely aware it existed, but never took much interest in it.

Why did you take interest in the GP2x and not the GP32?

Not sure. Maybe because the word "Linux" caught my eye.

Had you used Linux before you got the GP2x?

Indeed, I'd used Linux as a server and desktop for maybe a couple of years.

What was your first project for the GP2x?

Well, I didn't know much about coding for it, so I turned a 1-player Pong game into a two-player Pong game.

I understand your next project was trying to port a flash player to GP2x. What made you leave this incomplete?

Well, I don't know much about Flash. The player I ported only supported Flash 4 or lower, and didn't really work with those properly, so it seemed rather pointless to enhance it further.

What are your current projects?

Currently, I'm writing a commercial game (demo soon, hopefully) and also attempting to port the current mplayer into Open2X's firmware.

This commercial game, am I right in believing it is a continuation of the Kuru Kuru Kururin clone you released some months ago?

That's correct, yes, though it won't retain its name due to copyright reasons.

interview

How far along is the project, and by what method are you planning to sell it?

It's nearing completion - I did have a fairly solid engine to work on after all. I'm planning on selling it through ED's gp2x-shop using his download purchase system.

Is anyone else working on the project?

Since I can't draw, Sonistar (http://www.whitestarproductions.co.uk) will be doing graphics and level design.

What extras are you adding to the game to make it differ from the original Kurukuru Kururin on GBA?

Let's just say I have a few things planned. Extra modes and some gameplay dynamics that aren't quite finished yet.

When do you expect to have the game released by?

Sometime during Q2 2007 if all goes well.

How much will the game cost?

Probably around £7-£10. ($14-20 – Nova)

Coming back to Open2x, can you tell me any information about it and its goals?

Well, I'm not the most involved person in Open2X, but its goal is simple. To enhance the GP2X firmware so it is fully open source, as well as adding significant steps forward from the original firmware such as SDHC support.

Will this firmware be able to offer any speedups to homebrew and emulators?

I doubt they will be affected. The boot time, however, is cut in half.

Interesting. After you have completed your Kurukuru clone, do you have anything else in the pipeline?

I expect I'll be doing some stuff on the DS after this. Other than that, I have no plans yet.

So you want to develop for other systems?

Certainly. I'm not going abandon the GP2X, but I don't want to restrict myself to it either.

What other systems do you want to develop for, and what is it you like about developing for the DS?

I'd like to develop on the Dreamcast and Rockbox systems (MP3 players). As for the DS, I like its libraries, but also its 2D and 3D graphical ability.

What, the DS does 3d?

Of course it does. It has a 3D accelerator in it.

Just messing. The DS does 3d in homebrew?

Yep. The 3D accelerator has been handled.

How is the DS homebrew scene, and how much 3d stuff has been released?

I'd say it's doing quite well at the moment. Most stuff released has been 2D, however, because 3D is always quite difficult to work with.

So basically the same as what commercial DS developers say. What are you planning for DS?

interview

Depending on whether I can get it working or not, I may be porting my current game to the DS. If not, then I'm not sure.

Does it annoy you that most commercial DS games look like GBA games with a map screen?

Odd question. I tend to prefer it if a commercial producer exploits the DS hardware for what it's worth, but if it's a good game, I don't mind.

Would you ever consider developing for other handhelds such as the PSP?

I don't currently own any handhelds other than the DS and the GP2X except for a Palm. I don't plan on buying a PSP in the near future.

If you were to describe the GP2x community in one word, what would that word be?

I'm not sure I could answer that. There's a lot to say about the GP2X community. I suppose "diverse" would be a good word.

Thanks muchly. Do you have anything else to say?

Not really, thanks.

Find Nickspoon's creations in the GP2x Archive

that's all folks

Well, that's it for the first edition of GPX magazine.
Please feel free to drop your comments and suggestions at our forums, as we'll now be beavering away to get issue 2 out.
Until then, we'll leave you with some choice quotes from the GP community.
Bye!

-Nova

"**iignotus:** What the f*ck is a sugarbaby?"

"**Senor Quack:** I know there's been more than one occasion I've woken up in the morning and thought.. "Damn, it'd be nice if I didn't have to get out of bed for my morning tentacle porn session."

"**daclassicgamingmaster:** why is santa's sack so big?

Cuz he only "comes" once a year!"

"**jrksuperman**: ok i think im gonna get a gp2x mk2
so with the gp2x can it play psp homebrew
i mean can i use the emulaters that i have on my psp and use them on a gp2x
like eboots

Telcolou:It's a GP2X ... it can play GP2X homebrew, but since there's no PSP emulator, then no, it can't play PSP homebrew.
Did you actually think before posting this, or was it an involuntary impulse, like a muscle spasm?"

"**daclassicgamingmaster (again):**Stop orgasming over your own kittens. I have a chihuahua that's quite adorable as well, but im not busting my nuts over her, am I?

kknd_cf: I busted my nuts on your mother.

daclassicgamingmaster: join the club"

"**LHC:** Who the f*ck stole my gay card?"

"**Lintsniffer:** So I used to regular these forums, I leave and come back, and they have just gone to hell. 70% of these threads are about homosexual faggotry, and the rest are 12 year old PSP noobs trying to 'actz hardcore with the underground scene, yo'

Goity: STFU N00B

Shikaku: Also, Penis"