



THE VIDEO GAME GENERATIONS NEWSLETTER

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Issue #27 – November 8, 2025

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Loading Screen

Fall (or Autumn, if you prefer) is here. When I was a kid, this was my favorite season. I'm not sure why. Maybe it was because the blazing heat of summer had ended but the freezing cold of winter hadn't yet begun? If that was it, it seems like Spring would have been in the running too, but in reverse.

Maybe it was just the fall colors, and Halloween.

Unrelated to that, this week's topic is shovelware. For almost as long as video games have been a thing, low budget, low effort garbage intended only to make an easy buck has also been a thing.



Not all of this week's mini-reviews are shovelware, but several of them sure are. *Collection Inspection* this week is a look at a few Wii shovelware games.

Recent Events

Three Unusual New Ads for PlayStation 5

PlayStation is rolling out a trilogy of weird new cinematic ads for the 5th anniversary of PS5. The theme is “It Happens on PS5” and each ad features some wild scenario or premise. They’re short but interesting, and a bit surreal.



I can’t say I’ve seen any of this in a game on my PS5, but it probably isn’t meant to be literal. It’s probably more about the vibe and the possibilities. Each one has little Easter eggs, like the four PlayStation shapes on the radio display in the third ad, and the PS5 license plate on the truck itself.

Source:

<https://www.pushsquare.com/news/2025/11/it-happens-on-ps5-new-playstation-adverts-mark-five-years-of-ps5>

Grand Theft Auto VI Delayed to 11/19/2026

Because of course it is. All those other games creating a wide window for next May to get out of the way of GTA6 may now be able to launch earlier/later than planned. Mid-November, though... that’s going to be interesting.

Of course, this *actually* means it’s coming out in spring 2027, right?

Source:

<https://x.com/RockstarGames/status/1986540361011880167>



Marvel 1943: Rise of Hydra Delayed to ????

This is a game I keep forgetting even exists.

I think if it had *Black Panther* or *Captain America* in the title, I’d be more likely to remember it, but that won’t be a problem if it comes out and it’s a good game.

Will it come out, though? For all the notoriety of lead writer Amy Hennig, it’s almost like her projects the past few years have been cursed.

Source:

<https://thisweekinvideogames.com/news/marvel-1943-rise-of-hydra-from-uncharted-creator-delayed-beyond-early-2026/>



Platform Pollution – A Shovelware Story

Last weekend, I went with my ex-wife and our twins (I can't believe they're 17 going on 18 now) to meet my oldest daughter for lunch half-way between here and the town where she goes to college. Of many conversation topics, I mentioned that the main feature of my next newsletter was shovelware.

I got a lot of confused looks. I thought it was a pretty common term, and they're all gamers to an extent (even my ex), but maybe it's not.

The dictionary definition is a bit different from what I consider shovelware to be today, but it's probably true to the term's original use.

The [Cambridge Dictionary](#) defines it as:

Information that is put onto a website or CD-ROM without being checked or changed to make sure that it is suitable or useful:

Any CD that promises 10,000 "professional fonts" for \$3 is shovelware.

A user on [Reddit](#) gives a more modern take, and this lines up nicely with what I mean:

"Shovelware is a term for lazy, low quality products flooding eShops and app stores at low prices, and then often put on seemingly permanent discount to appear in "on sale" tabs. They're made cheaply, and can turn a profit purely from laymen going "it's 49 cents. Why not buy it and see what's up."



Shovelware is more prevalent than ever, thanks to the proliferation of digital distribution on platforms like Steam, the Nintendo eShop, the PlayStation digital store, and mobile app stores (iPhone and Android). This makes it far easier for people to crank out low effort "games" without risking the added costs of physical production and marketing.

Free and cheap game assets were a boon to shovelware developers for years. Now, it's AI.

You might be thinking "Mike, there's AI 'art' in this very newsletter. Aren't you a hypocrite for calling it out when other people do it?"

Well, maybe, but hear me out. One, I'm not selling this newsletter. Two, it's supposed to be a little off and not quite right. I mean, look at how "cartoon me" is holding that shovel on the cover page. Pure nonsense. I do try to get the title and weekly logo to look nice, at least. Three, I'm just trying to write, not make art. For me, it beats making stick figures, but I digress.

Even though the barrier to entry is lower now than it's ever been, it seems like every console and platform has seen some amount of what might be called shovelware, even when those consoles and platforms did require physical media (disks, discs, or cartridges).

Let's start by going back to the beginning.

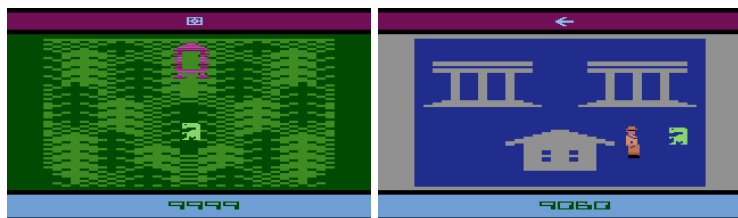


The Beginning – Atari 2600

We didn't call it "shovelware" back then. They were just "bad games" Really, the two terms aren't even interchangeable. It's usually fair to say that all shovelware are bad games, but not all bad games are shovelware.

For the Atari 2600, there was no approval process or seal of quality to publish on the platform. It was the proverbial Wild West of game development and publishing, with the barrier to entry for coding a game so low that a single programmer could write a game in a matter of weeks, once they understood how to code for the console.

The most well-known flop of that era is, of course, *E.T.*, programmed by Howard Scott Warshaw in around five or six weeks to have the game ready to launch by the holidays in 1982. By all accounts (including [his own](#)), it was the best that could be done in such a short amount of time.



In that interview, Howard says it sold at least a million copies, but they produced four million copies. This famously led to the rest being dumped in a landfill in New Mexico – perhaps the truest use of the “shovel” in “shovelware”.

Otherwise, it really doesn't fit the definition. Yes, it was a bad game by most accounts (I've never played it) although not by all, and yes, it was a bit of a cash grab, but real effort was put into making *E.T.* within the tight deadline and the platform's hardware limitations.

I *did* play *Pac-Man* on the Atari 2600. I was young enough not to question why it was so bad, yet I still knew something wasn't right.

Again, it comes down to one guy (Todd Frye) and the limitations of the hardware. How do you fit the arcade excellence of *Pac-Man* onto a 4k cartridge? It turns out, you can't.

To put it in perspective, 4k is 4096 bytes. Think of a byte like a letter or number. Even without all the overhead of modern computers and programming languages, where 4k is barely enough for a nice icon (64 pixels x 64 pixels and 256 colors = 4096 bytes), it's just not much to work with for a game.

Even as a bad and unfaithful port, *Pac-Man* reportedly sold upwards of 7 million copies.



I mention all this because I want to stress the distinction I made earlier. These may be bad games, but they're not the kind of shovelware I'm talking about. Real effort was put into coding those games, even if the publishers were only seeing potential dollar signs.

What *might* qualify are the types of games that resulted in the video game crash of the early 1980s, unless we're going to blame it entirely on *E.T.* People were tired of spending their money on slop, and there was simply too much of it for any one company to thrive with all the competition out there.

I found an excellent article detailing the ten worst Atari 2600 games; apparently garbage like *I Want My Mommy*, *3D Tic-Tac-Toe*, *Space Jockey*, *Karate*, and *Bugs*. Give it a read.

<https://www.deafsparrow.com/2014/03/21/top-10-worst-atari-2600-games/>

The Return - PS1 / Wii / DS

Nintendo is widely credited for resurrecting the video game industry a couple years after Atari 2600 shovelware crashed it. They did so with two important decisions.

First, they dubbed it as an “Entertainment System” (hence the ES portion of NES). Video games had been written off as a fad and a bad investment, so the marketing of additional hardware like R.O.B. the Robot (I played a bit with this at a friend’s house with *Gyromite* – it wasn’t fun) and the Zapper light gun (for games like *Duck Hunt*) allowed them to position it alongside toys.

More importantly in the context of avoiding the glut of low-quality games that plagued the Atari 2600, they introduced a “Seal of Quality” approval system, and locked hardware that would prevent third parties from dumping electronic garbage into their ecosystem.

Sure, some publishers figured out how to bypass Nintendo’s lock-out protection (most notably Atari themselves under their Tengen brand, Color Dreams, and probably some bootleg publishers), but even most of that was legitimate, real, and worthwhile (to an extent).

At worst, there were a few bad games like the movie tie-ins from LJN and the notorious *Action 52* cartridge from 1991 (now a collector’s item).



This remained true for a long time, at least in the console space. That’s due in part to the expense of creating a cartridge (on the SNES and N64 in particular), and in part from lower install bases, making it less appealing for publishers wanting to just throw spaghetti at a wall to see if it sticks (excuse the cliché).

Even in formats easier to mass produce, like CDs for the PlayStation 1, most shovelware took the form of licensed tie-in properties like *The Dukes of Hazzard* (pictured below), *Spice Girls*, and the *Mary-Kate and Ashley* games.



In the Nintendo Wii era, this began to change. With looser publishing restrictions, a huge install base with a disproportionate number of casual and uninformed consumers, and a low barrier to entry for developers, shovelware began to invade Nintendo’s hit console and their innovative dual-screen handheld.

It could be argued that even bigger publishers like Ubisoft were cranking out shovelware in the form of recycled franchises like *Petz* and *Imagine*. Some of it came in the form of low-effort licensed properties based on cartoons and movies, rip-off games hoping to cash in on the success of some other popular series, and just straight-up garbage in general.

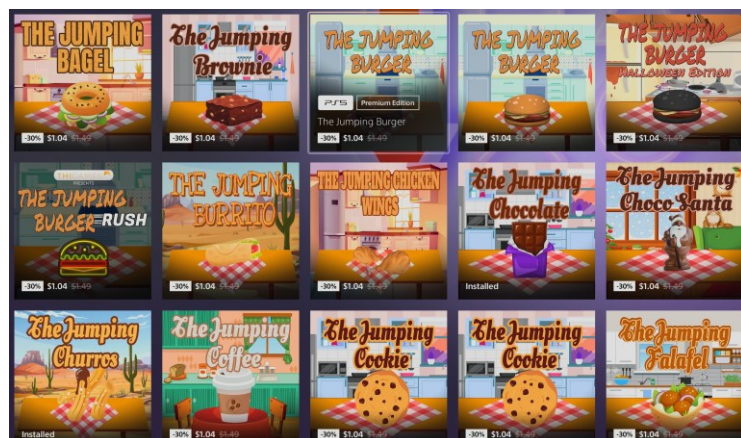
Look for a few of those games in this week’s *Collection Inspection* feature.



The Digital Age

This brings me to the *real* reason shovelware stands out to me as a topic worth writing about. The “Seal of Quality” is long gone. Even with some storefronts claiming they’ll crack down on shovelware, it remains a problem.

For every low-effort “easy platinum” series on PlayStation that gets delisted like the entire catalog of RandomSpin Games (where at least their stuff had the semblance of real, distinct games), there remain dozens of the exact same “Jumping Food” or “Stroke the Animal” or “Country Quiz” slop game with no effort at all and the exact same one-button gameplay, existing either to get a few “why not” buyers based on the low price, or a few “I need easy platinum trophies” buyers who accept them for what they are.



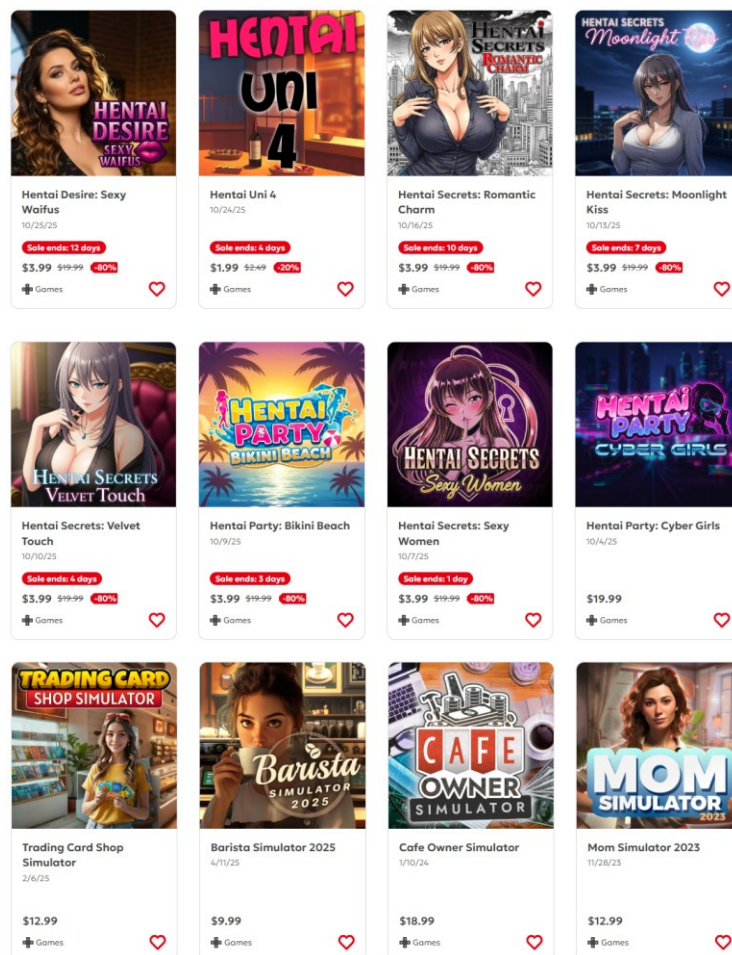
They’re literally the same game with swapped assets. In some cases, they’re even the same variation exactly, with just a slightly different name to facilitate a new trophy set.

I’m less invested in the Xbox ecosystem these days, but my understanding is that better curation has helped curb some of it there. At the very least, I see fewer “simulator” games there aside from mostly legitimate ones, and no game whatsoever with “hentai” in the title.

On Nintendo Switch, those are particularly prevalent. It makes sense – sort of – since the Switch doesn’t have an achievement or trophy system that would be a draw for developers of those games.

Instead, Switch shovelware tries to attract buyers with AI-generated images of women and the promise of “hentai” (which, in the truest sense, I kind of doubt, but I’ve not had the urge to find out for myself) and the idea of finding the next viral wacky “simulator” game experience (which again, I doubt, since they often seem to consist of simple menu-driven gameplay and little to no originality).

This can make it tougher to find *real* games.



Shovelware's Future

I suspect some of it flies under the radar of whatever team of people is responsible for each of those storefronts, for a few reasons.

It doesn't seem like anybody at PlayStation is actually playing those games and making an informed decision; Nintendo too, for that matter. In the case of Steam, I just don't think Valve cares (within reason), leaving it all up to the open market and their review system.

There are legitimately good games I've played on PS4 and PS5 that didn't get a Platinum trophy because of guidelines put forward by PlayStation. At the same time, each and every one of those asset-flipped games that can be 100% completed in a matter of minutes have one. Just... how?

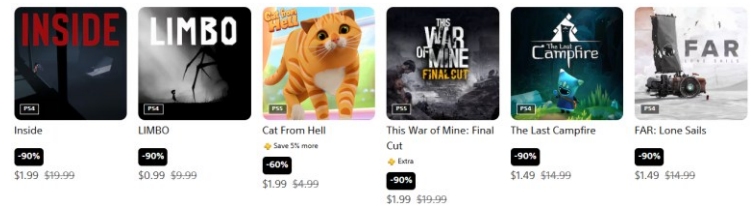
I can understand that it might be tough to tell for some games. This week, three of my mini-reviews are for games from a solo developer who markets his games as The Voices Games, and while they're crude and amateur in many ways, I wouldn't really consider them shovelware. It's not like he's releasing a new game daily. Some of them really make you work for the trophies – a far cry from simply holding or tapping a button for 45 seconds to unlock the entire set. They're janky, but they're also just \$0.49 and are exactly what they seem to be.

When it comes to "Quiz Thiz" and "The Jumping Food" and "Stroke the Animals" and all those "Italian Brainrot" and "Backrooms" and the goofy "Anomaly" games and the "Simulator" and "Hentai" slop, it should be immediately obvious when you boot them up.

Either those teams are asleep at the wheel, or those games make enough money for the platform that it's worth allowing if there aren't many consumer complaints, or they simply aren't checking them closely at all.

They might stand out for me more because I'm drawn to the "Deals" and "Sales" sections of those e-shops, not the "New Releases". I prefer buying physical games if I'm going to spend much money, but I don't mind adding to my digital library when stuff gets a deep discount. In looking for those discounts, though, it's nearly impossible to not be inundated with all the shovelware, because it's perpetually on sale and so prevalent that it always shows up – especially if you make the mistake of sorting by the lowest price first.

Doing that, though, is how you'll find out that fantastic games like *Inside* and *Limbo* are a staggering 90% off in a sale that sadly ends before this issue is out.



Until those digital shops are truly curated and locked down, shovelware won't go away. I'm not sure they *should* be locked down, though. I think that might go too far in the other direction, preventing some well-intentioned offerings by amateur developers from ever reaching a wider market.

At the same time, a part of me imagines a scenario where little Suzie or little Johnny was gifted a \$5 PSN gift card.

Poor little Suzie loves rabbits and horses and has enough money to buy *Stroke The Rabbit* and *Stroke The Horse*, only to find out you just mash one button over and over to make a plain clip-art cut-out animal go dim briefly.

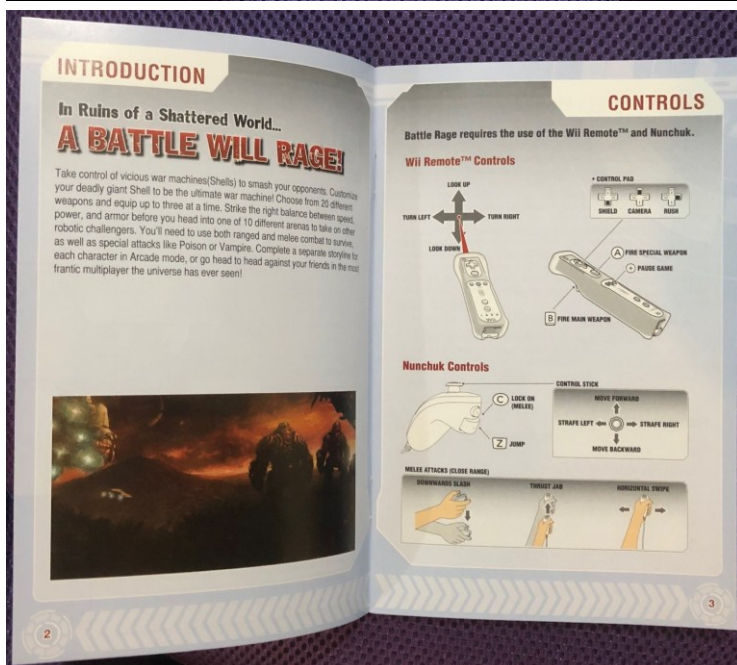
Poor little Johnny likes football and pizza, so he buys *The Football Quiz* and *The Pizza Quiz*, only to discover that the questions are pointless, they quickly start to repeat, and there's no progression system at all. There should be at least *some* kind of standard.

Collection Inspection - Wii Shovelware

Battle Rage: Mech Conflict

Platform: Wii / **Edition:** Standard

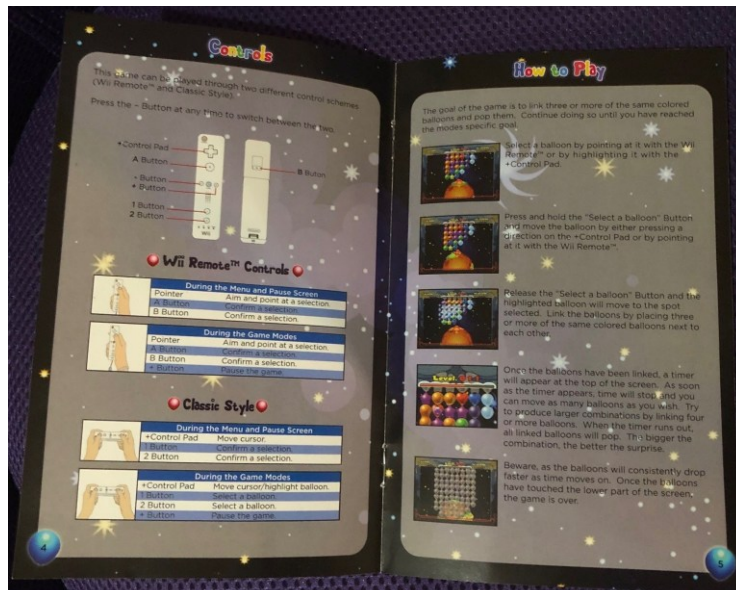
Comments: It was rated a dismal 2 out of 10 by Craig Harris of IGN in [this review](#). I also came across this [video review](#) that wasn't a big fan of it either.



Balloon Pop

Platform: Wii / **Edition:** Standard

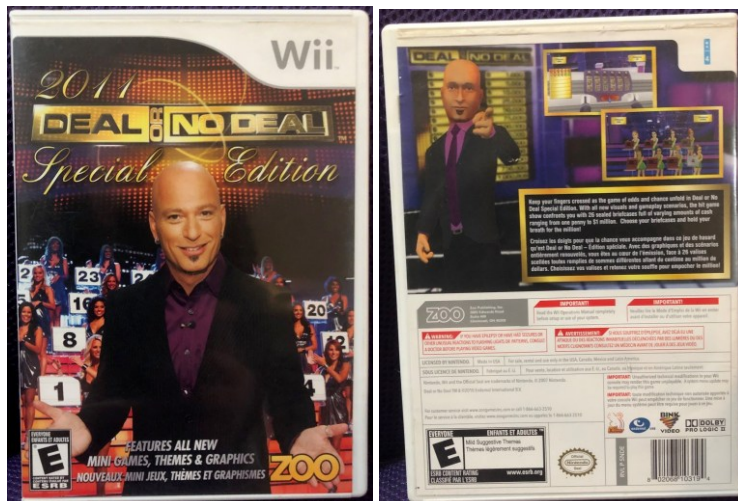
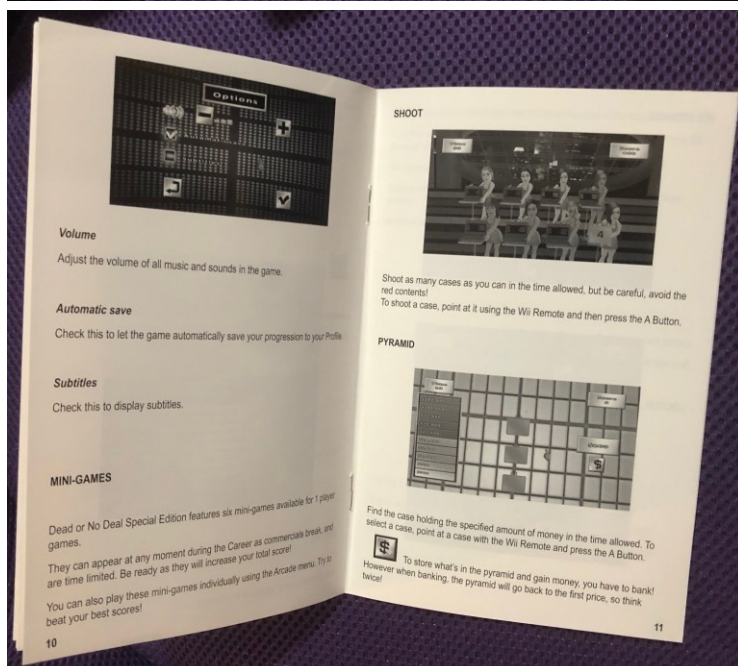
Comments: It was tough to find any review for this specific version, but it's not as dismal as *Battle Rage*. Somebody on GameFaqs gave it a 4 out of 10 [here](#).



Deal or No Deal

Platform: Wii / **Edition:** 2011 Special Edition

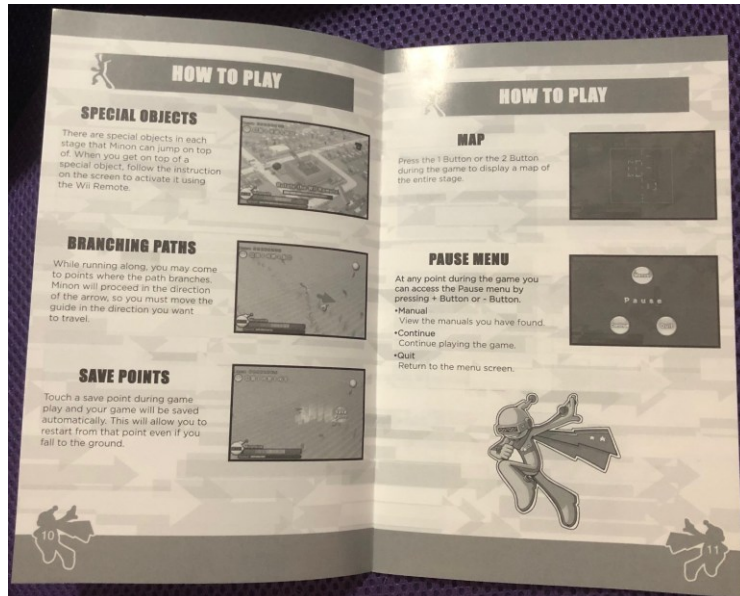
Comments: I had trouble finding reviews for this specific 2011 *Special Edition* of *Deal or No Deal*. Prior versions range from a 1 or 1.5 out of 10 (seemingly a different developer from a few years prior) to the 5 or 6 out of 10 range. All in all, it seems like shovelware.



Domino Rally

Platform: Wii / **Edition:** Standard

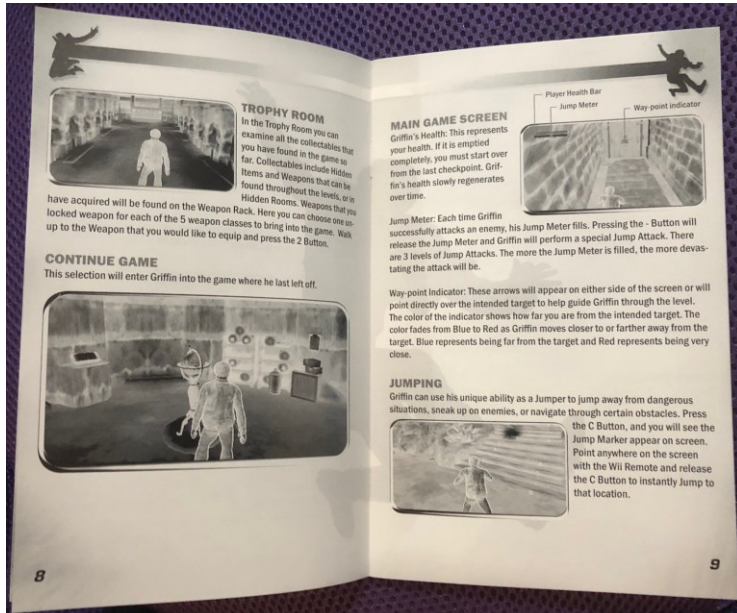
Comments: If these few Wii games were the only games that existed, this one might be the crown jewel with a 57 out of 100 [average critic score](#). It looks kind of interesting, I guess. These games probably ended up in my collection back when you could get them for under \$5 at GameStop, and I was still in that “heck yes, I just want to own all the games” phase.



Jumper: Griffin's Story

Platform: Wii / **Edition:** Standard

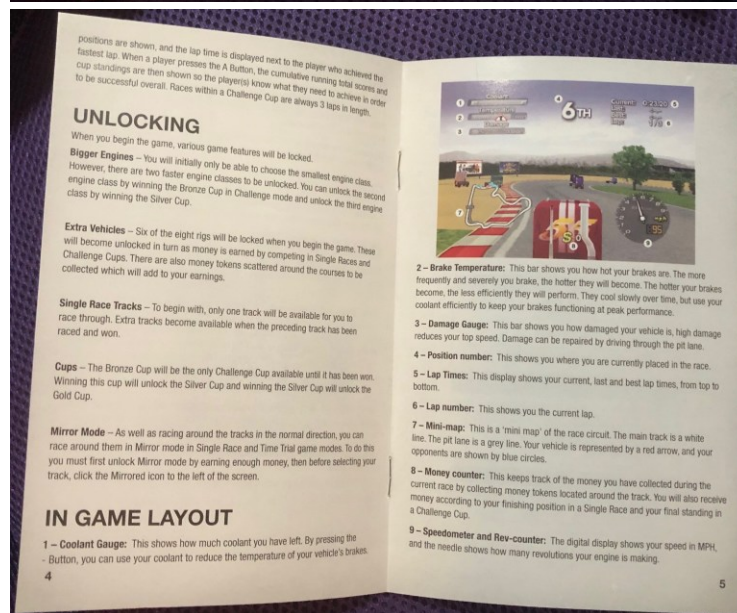
Comments: I thought the movie was interesting (although I don't remember much about it now), and by extension, I wanted to play the game (but never did). Somehow, I own all three versions (PS2, which is unrated on MetaCritic, Xbox 360 with a 29 out of 100, and this Wii version, with a 28 out of 100 [rating](#)).



Rig Racer 2

Platform: Wii / **Edition:** Standard

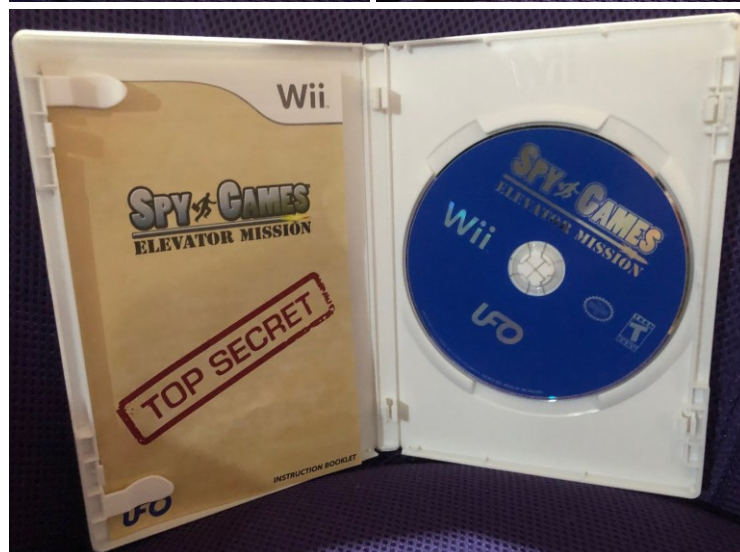
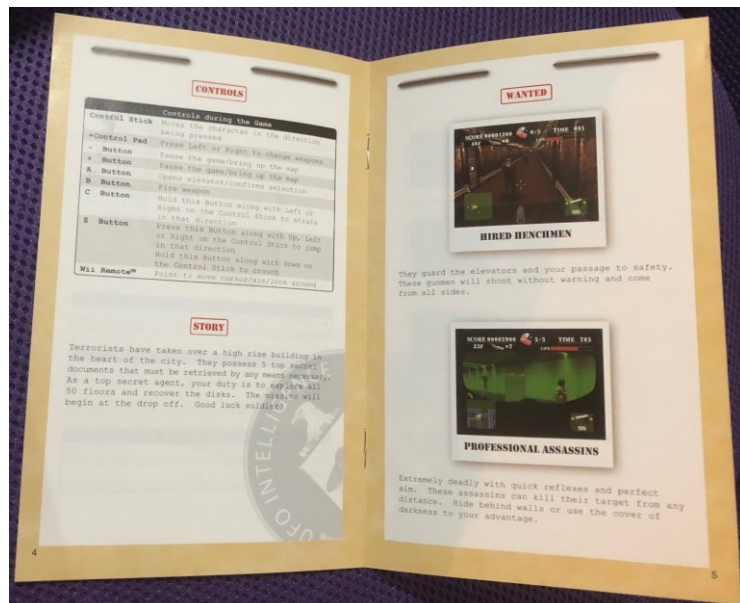
Comments: Not to be confused with *Ridge Racer*, this is a RIG racer – you know, those 18-wheeler semi trucks that are (cough, cough) known for their speed. On IGN, Lucas M. Thomas [gave it](#) a 3 out of 10 and cites the developer's tendency to recycle assets; a telltale sign of shovelware. Then again, RGG Studio does that with the *Yakuza* games, and they're great.



Spy Games: Elevator Mission

Platform: Wii / **Edition:** Standard

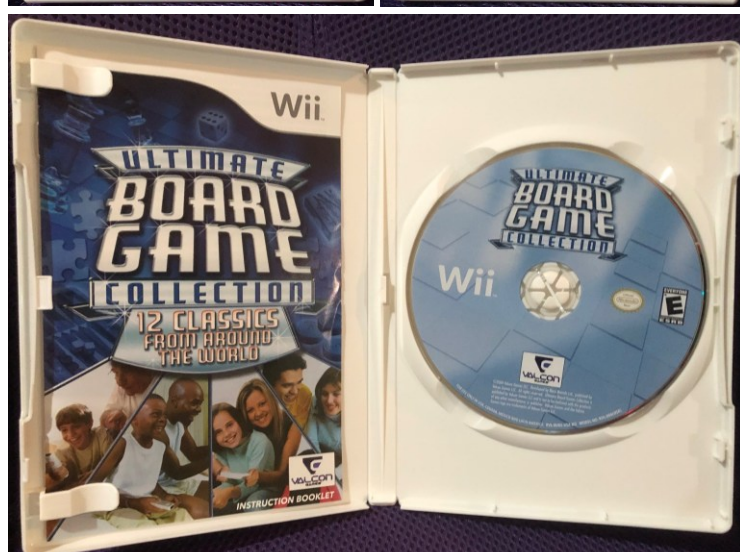
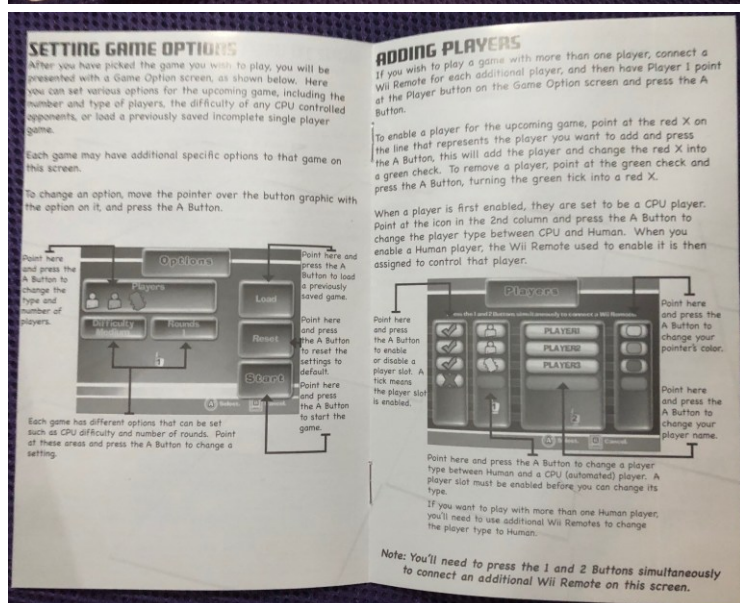
Comments: Perhaps UFO was one of the most prolific purveyors of shovelware on the Wii and DS both, with a slew of *Chuck E. Cheese* tie-ins, a series of *Smart Boy/Girl/Kid* games, and of course one-off travesties (apparently) like this one. Shaun McInnis of GameSpot gave it a 2 out of 10 in [this review](#).



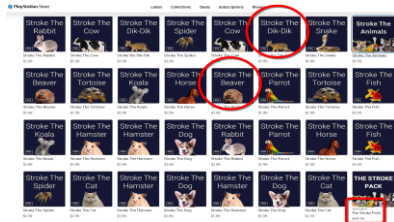
Ultimate Board Game Collection

Platform: Wii / **Edition:** Standard

Comments: I found a few sources that were a little more positive about this game than Lucas M. Thomas when he scored it a 3.5 out of 10 in [his review](#) for IGN. It includes their versions of *Connect Four*, *Battleship*, chess, checkers, *Sudoku*, *Reversi*, backgammon, etc.



Capsule Review: Stroke The Animals



This series is perhaps the biggest shovelware offender on PlayStation. The same elevator music gets reused. Animal stock photos. Pricier than other “easy platins”. Wear out your X button (can't just hold X). No animation, just a slight dimming effect. It's irredeemable slop.

Played on console: PS5.

Originally posted: 11/02/2025.

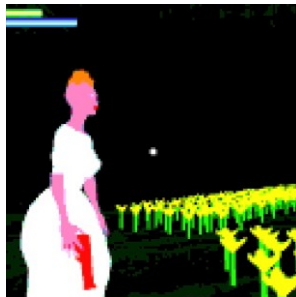
*Verdict: **SHOVELWARE***



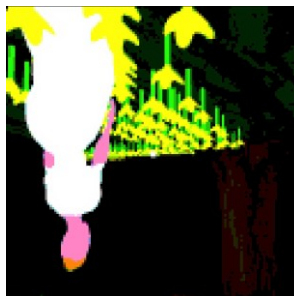
Mini-Review: Spectrewoods



This week's issue of the VGGN is all about shovelware. In the interest of doing additional research, I decided to buy several games that seemingly fit the definition.



These are games that are almost always on sale on the PlayStation store for under a dollar and somehow look even cheaper than their price tag. I wasn't wrong about most of them, but the ones from The Voices Games are actually real games.



They're not necessarily good games, but they have a crude indie charm to them that reminds me a lot of some of my own games from years ago.



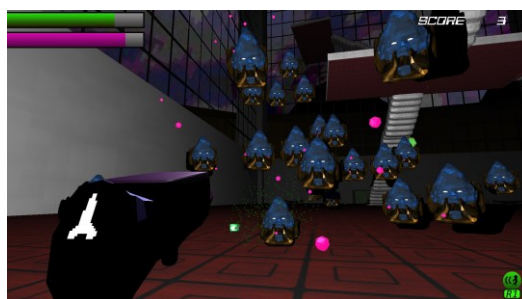
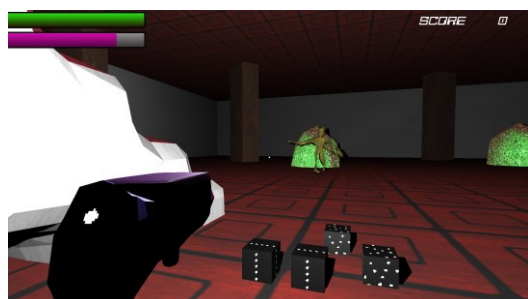
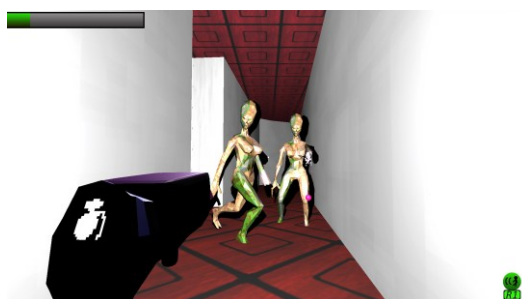
While *Spectrewoods* lacks the challenge of the other two I'll review next, and it's super short (a few minutes, unless you don't realize you should follow the flowers like I did) it's a minimalistic third person shooter with a story.

Played on console: PS5.

Originally posted: 11/02/2025.

*Verdict: **NOT SHOVELWARE***

Mini-Review: Multigun



The second of three “The Voices Games” games I played through this weekend is Multigun, a janky first-person shooter where ammo cubes get used in the order you pick them up. While your \$0.50 could be spent towards something far better, there's actually a real game here, not just an easy platinum like some of the other stuff I'll be writing about in this issue.

The game has several levels with PSN trophies awarded for not dying, which will ultimately unlock challenge levels.

I have no desire to replay these levels (although I did avoid dying in some of them) and a couple levels started lagging down to single-digit frames per second.

I found the last boss to be really tough, starting with no special ammo, but I finally beat him.

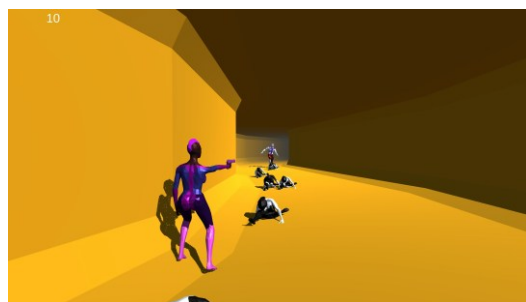
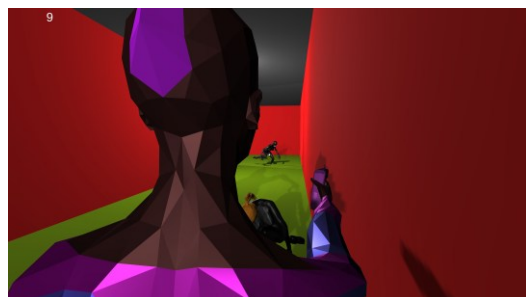
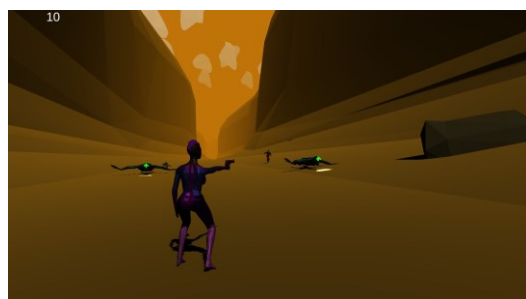
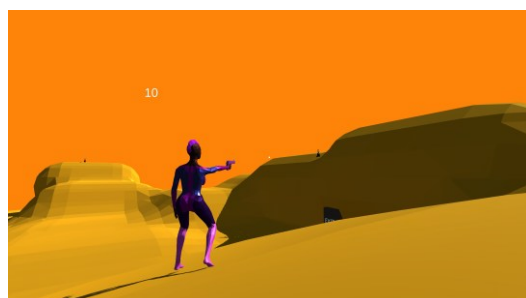
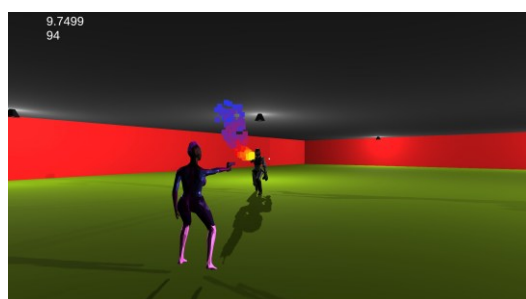
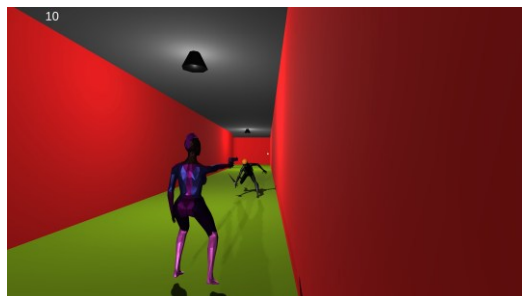
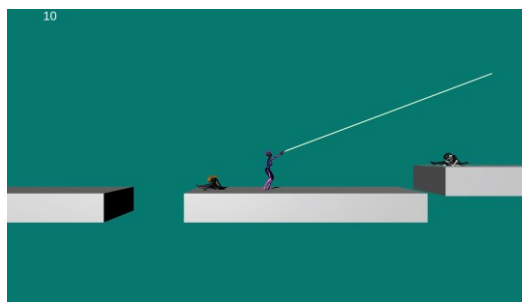
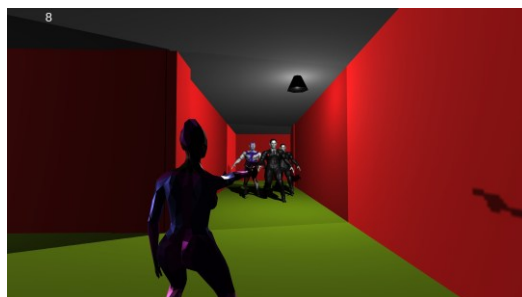
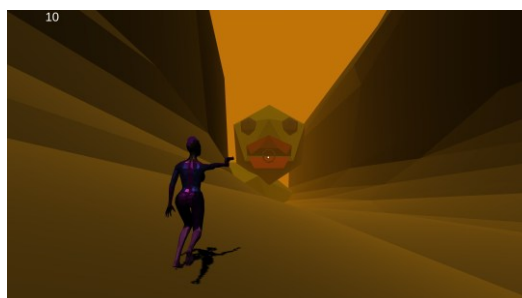
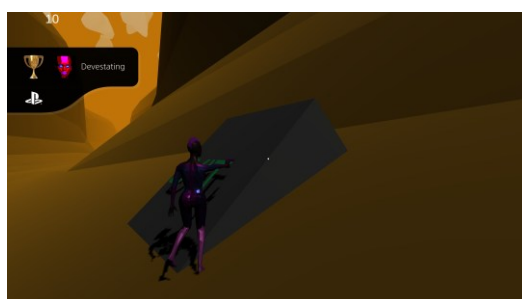
It's not a good game, but at least some effort was put into it.

Played on console: PS5.

Originally posted: 11/02/2025.

Verdict: NOT SHOVELWARE

Mini-Review: Lady in a Leotard With a Gun



If you've ever browsed the PSN store on PS4 or PS5, either for games on sale or just sorted by price from lowest to highest, you've probably seen this weird-looking \$0.49 third-person shooter.

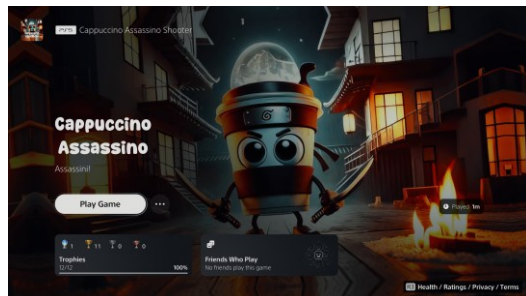
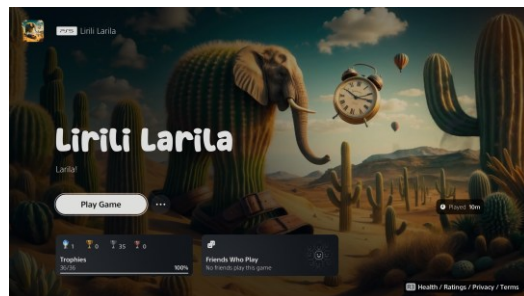
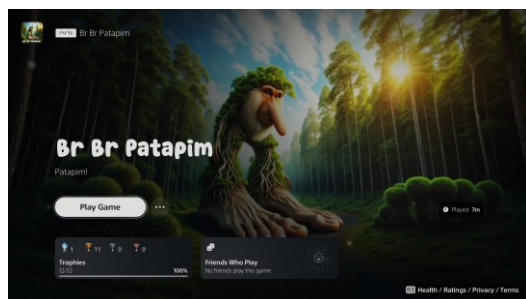
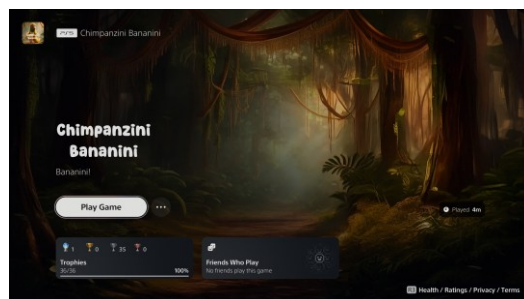
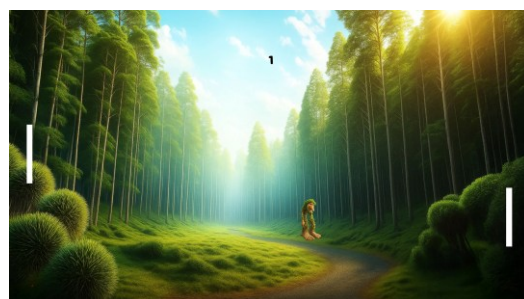
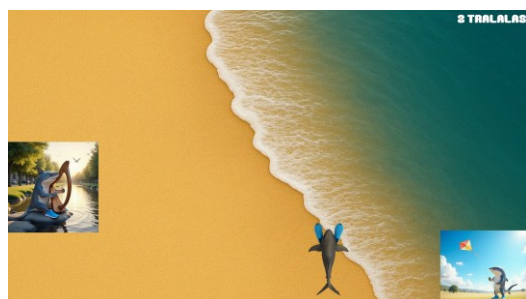
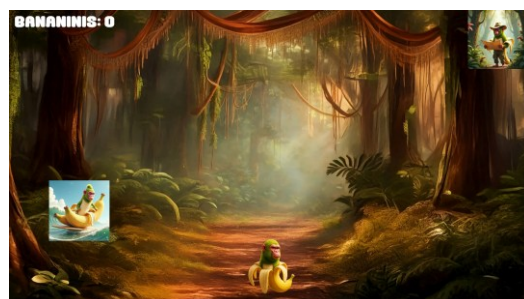
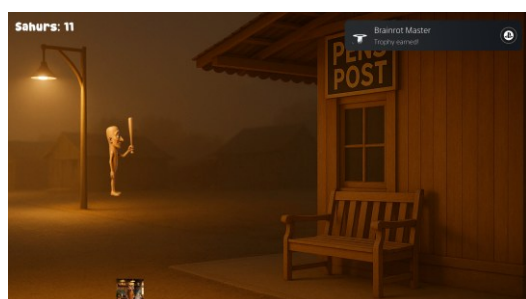
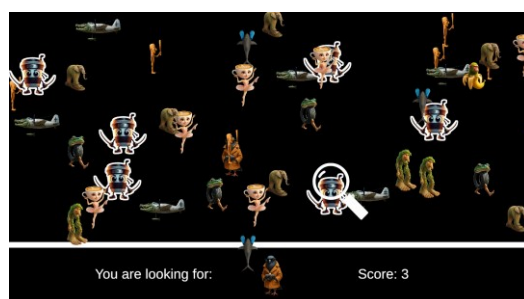
This is the third of The Voices Games I played through this weekend, and aside from the bizarre *Hoodie Survivor* (which I got addicted to for about 4 hours and might review later), it's my pick for the "best" (a low bar to meet) of this solo dev's offerings (at least among the ones I played).

In this one, I *did* replay levels to avoid taking damage, in order to earn the platinum trophy. The second to last stage was tricky, with rocket launcher guys and simplistic aiming, but I finally did it.

It's crude and janky, yes, but there's a real game here, not just egregious PSN Platinum slop.

Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 11/02/2025.
Verdict: **NOT SHOVELWARE**

Mini-Review: Italian Brainrot (series)



Now we're getting into the truly egregious of the shovelware slop littering the PSN digital shop.

Several different devs are using these absurd AI-generated characters (stick man "Tung Tung Sahur" seems to be a popular choice), but all the games in this set come from Oiven Games.

There's a "pong" that doesn't work right (*Br Br Patapim*), one where you score by dodging left and right (*Tralalero Tralala*), one where you catch falling tiles (*Chimpanzini Bananini*), a simplistic "light gun" shooter (*Cappuccino Assassino*), a *Flappy Bird* rip-off that's crude and very easy (*Lirili Larila*), one where you jump over slow-moving icons (*Tung Tung Sahur Runner*) and one where you just click on the right character floating around (*Italian Brainrot*).

All junk, each an easy four-minute Platinum.

Played on console: PS5.

Originally posted: 11/02/2025.

Verdict: **SHOVELWARE**

Capsule Review: Quiz Thiz (series)



First of 2 "easy platinum" shovelware "quiz" series. They even re-release the same games multiple times (gold, silver, etc.) for extra trophy sets.

No way to lose - just press X/O rapidly to mine all trophies in a matter of seconds. Utter garbage.

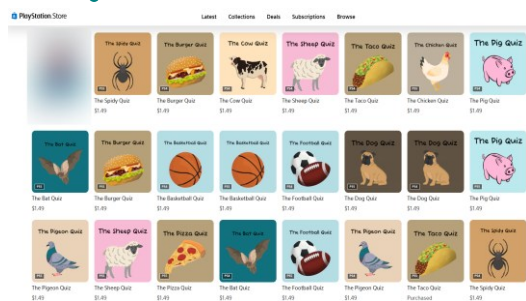
Played on console: PS5.

Originally posted: 11/02/2025.

*Verdict: **SHOVELWARE***



Capsule Review: Animal/Food/Sports Quiz



Second of 2 egregious "easy platinum" shovelware quiz series on PlayStation. L1/R1 to answer, and it ignores wrong answers.

Just press/toggle rapidly to mine all trophies. PSN Quality Control is asleep at the wheel, I think.

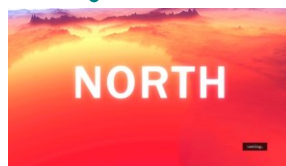
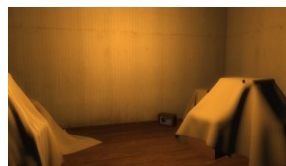
Played on console: PS5.

Originally posted: 11/02/2025.

*Verdict: **SHOVELWARE***



Capsule Review: North



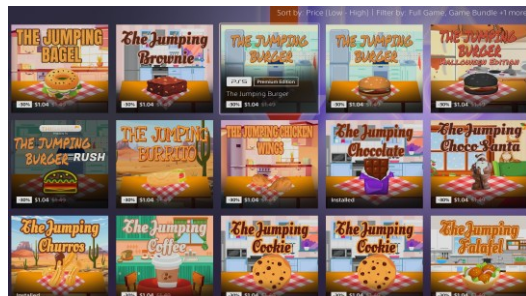
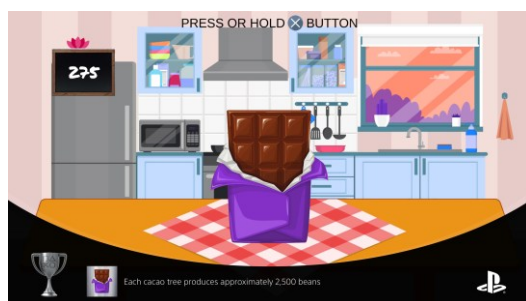
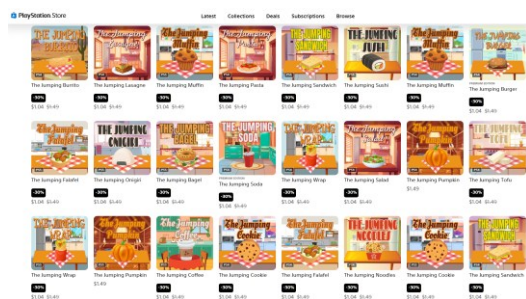
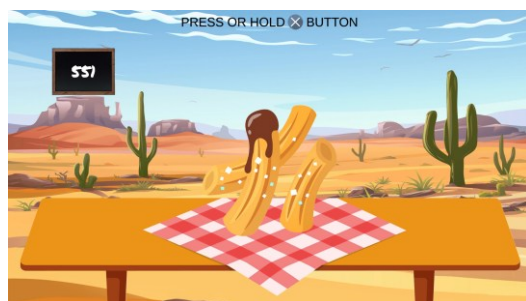
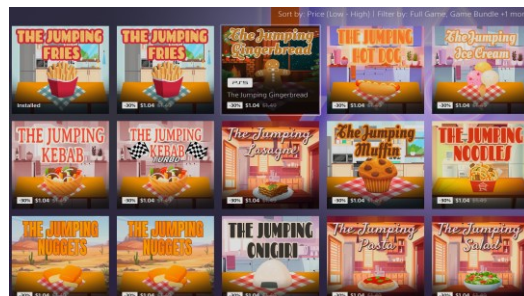
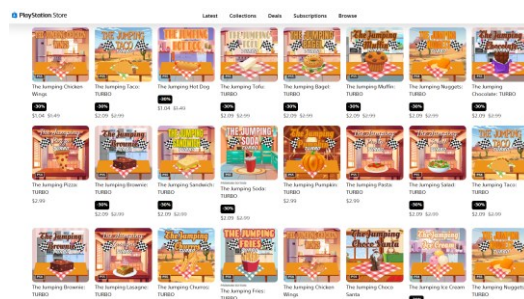
Odd little one-hour first-person sci-fi narrative game. A glitch prevented fast movement in the mines after dying but fixed when starting over. Surreal and intriguing, but not sure what it's trying to say, if anything. Cheap enough to recommend, at least.

Played on console: Switch.

Originally posted: 03/28/2018.

*Verdict: **NOT SHOVELWARE***

Mini-Review: The Jumping Food (series)



Some shovelware devs at least *try* to include game-like elements to mask the lack of any redeeming qualities in their games, but not ThiGames.

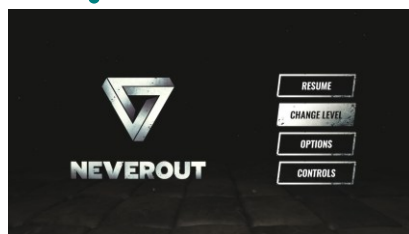
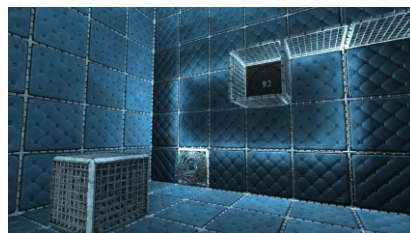
Each one is just a different still image with a picture of food that hops slightly when you hold the X button. The whole point is that you're buying a quick platinum trophy to easily raise your PSN rank, not any sort of actual game.

Even the music seems to get re-used, but I only tried three of these.

FWIW, I could actually see toddlers enjoying one of these.

Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 11/02/2025.
*Verdict: **SHOVELWARE***

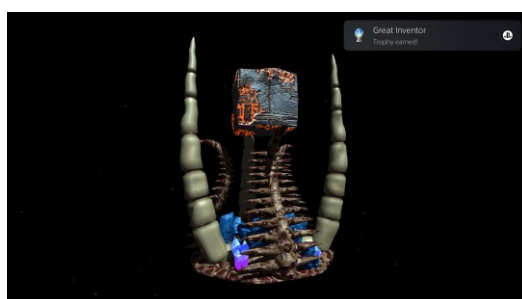
Capsule Review: Neverout



It's like that movie *Cube*, but with no characters. First person series of puzzle rooms inside 6x6x6 rooms that rotate as you walk up the walls. Grid movement often felt clunky in 3D space. Difficulty varies, but it's not a long game. Overall, it's a good game.

Played on console: Switch.
Originally posted: 10/12/2018.
*Verdict: **NOT SHOVELWARE***

Mini-Review: Engine (RandomSpin series)



It was only a few weeks ago I bought these five silly "easy platinum" shovelware games on PS5, and now they've been delisted.

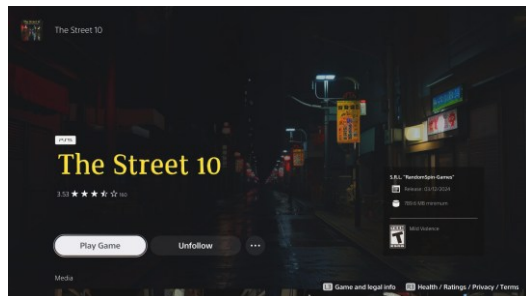
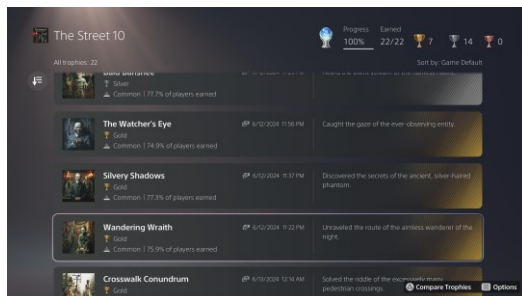
PlayStation has reportedly been cracking down on slop, yet those dumb "Italian Brainrot" games, all those "jumping food" games, all those "stroke the animal" games, and the two different "quiz" series games are still listed. Go figure.

The five games (*Alien Engine*, *Cyber Engine*, *Organic Engine*, *Steam Engine*, and *Windmill Engine*) work the same way. You gain "money" every second, which you then use to upgrade and add components, which increases your income even more. Just keep doing that, and within a few minutes, you'll have a completed "engine" and the PSN platinum trophy.

These are a marginal step up from other shovelware, but they still exist only for those cheap trophies.

Played on console: PS5.
Originally posted: 11/02/2025.
Verdict: **SHOVELWARE**

Mini-Review: The Street 10



I'm going to totally spoil this game, because there's no other way to review it. Based on its list of 22 epic-sounding PSN trophies, you'd think it was something really grand, but no.

It's one short Z-shaped street with that *P.T.* style loopback twist that feels more like you're just teleported back to the start since it's not a seamless transition, one NPC that walks toward you, and a final "ending" street that ends in a flash of white but still loops back.

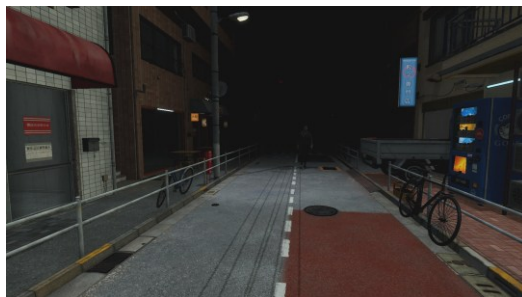
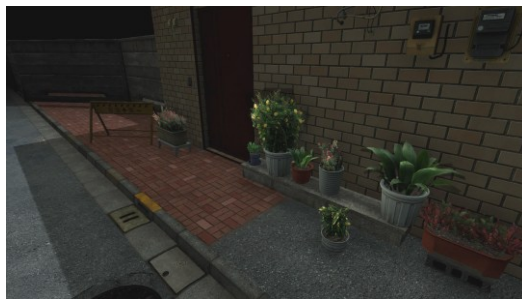
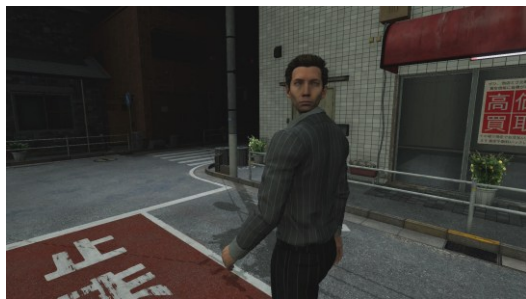
You're supposed to notice changes (according to what the game's PSN store listing says) but you don't have to. Some small variation just needs to happen during a loop (the guy has gray hair, he's really tall or really short, etc.) and a trophy unlocks.

You can simply walk backwards from the start to repeatedly grind for all trophies.

Played on console: PS5.

Originally posted: 06/13/2024.

Verdict: SHOVELWARE



The Final Stage

My Own Shovelware?

When I think back to some of the TRS-80 CoCo 2 games I wrote (less so when I was more experienced and started writing games for the CoCo 3), I wonder if some of it might be considered shovelware if the term had existed back then. I certainly didn't intend them to be, but I was sometimes churning out a simple new game every few days.

I wrote about each of those extensively back in [issue #13](#). It's the VGGN's biggest issue.

I did put effort into each and every one, but the end result might be the same.

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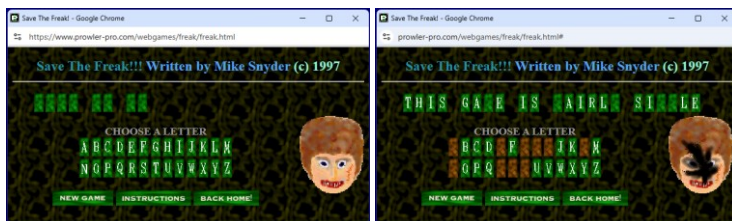
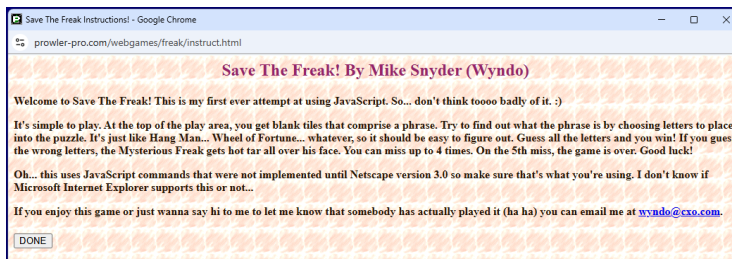
Save The Freak!!!

Back when I was excited by new technology that could lend itself to game development, I decided to learn JavaScript.

As a platform back then, in 1997, it was way less robust and powerful than it is in today's modern web browsers. There was no Ajax, no HTML 5, and certainly no TypeScript or JS-based frameworks like Angular or React.

My first effort, a *Hangman*-like word game, was as crude then as it is now, and might be considered shovelware. You be the judge.

<https://www.prowler-pro.com/webgames/freak/freak.html>



Next Week

From all my newsletter topic ideas, I've been thinking about two in particular. One would be a feature about solo game developers and the game or games they're known for.

The other would be about comedy in games that may or may not otherwise be comedic games. I had the idea after two surprisingly hilarious bits in two different games this year; the first being the absolutely bonkers live-action "Bachelor" scenes in *Like a Dragon: Pirate Yakuza in Hawaii*, and the other being the "comedy" route in *The Hundred Line: Last Defense Academy*, particularly the "clown energy" bit, and to a lesser extent, the "fish heads" bit. All of it had me rolling.

However, with the recent news that *GTA6* is delayed, I might go ahead and write about games where crime is the focus. I had planned to wait until *GTA6* so I could include my mini-review and several prior mini-reviews for older *Grand Theft Auto* games, but if that's going to be a year from now (plus however long it takes me to beat the game), maybe I'll just make that the topic for next week instead.

End Credits

The VGGN controller logo with multiple "X" buttons and some occasional other artwork was made using <https://openart.ai>.

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Screenshots from *E.T.* for the Atari 2600 are from MobyGames and were found [here](#). Screenshots from *Pac-Man* for Atari 2600 are also from MobyGames [here](#). Screenshots from *Action 52* for NES are, you guessed it, from MobyGames and were found [here](#). Lastly, the screenshots from *The Dukes of Hazzard: Racing for Home* came from MobyGames and were found [here](#).

Images sourced from elsewhere on the internet are sometimes credited and/or linked in captions that appear on or below them.

Images of the physical games in the "Collection Inspection" feature are photos I took of games in my own collection and weren't sourced from the internet.

Screenshots used in my video game mini-reviews and some screenshots used in other articles or features that weren't already attributed to a different source were captured by me in-game and are used here in what I believe is "fair use".

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