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## HISTORY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The early days of Finnish game culture: Game - related discourse in *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* in the mid-1980s

Niklas Nylund<sup>1\*</sup>

**Abstract:** In the early 1980s, digital games played at home were an unprecedented cultural phenomenon. In this article, I examine the ways computer fanzines and disk magazines from the 1980s write about games and game culture, and how they contribute to the process of digital game domestication. My sources offer insight on contemporary views on multimodal games, the qualities of good games, and the different ways game making and game playing are intertwined. It is in these fanzines and disk magazines that the cultural meaning of digital games played at home is dealt with for the first time, and they provide an unique view into a complex world in which the meanings of computers, coding, games, and gaming are constantly negotiated.

**Subjects:** Culture; History of Science & Technology; Social & Cultural History; Video Games

**Keywords:** computer games; game culture; game history; Finland; game discourse; domestication; fanzine; disk magazine; video games in the 1980s

### 1. Introduction

Although computer, console, and arcade games have been played in Finland since at least the 1970s, the 1980s is the decade that is fundamental in the birth of a new type of game culture. In just a few years, games and gaming became a cultural phenomenon, at least in the lives of most Finnish teenage boys. This article traces what kinds of cultural processes drove this added interest in games and how, paraphrasing Kirkpatrick (2012), games played on computers became computer games.

In the early 1980s, computers became the “new luxury item for aspiring middle-class households” (Swalwell, 2007), and it was games that were the main selling point for them (Haddon, 1992). Most people had their first contact with computers via games played on them, and before that, had

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Niklas Nylund is a museum researcher working for Vapriikki Museum Centre in Tampere, Finland. He was involved with the crowdfunding campaign of the Finnish Museum of Games and is currently responsible for curating the museum's first exhibition, due to open in late 2016. His research interests include game preservation, game history, disappeared game genres, and multimodal gaming.

### PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Games have become hugely popular lately, but they have not always been so. In this article, I examine the ways the people who first came into contact with computer and role-playing games in the 1980s tried to make sense of them in the computer hobbyist magazines of the day. This happened by comparing them to earlier forms of play and games, and also by redefining the qualities a good game should possess. Some of the views expressed in computer hobbyist magazines in the 1980s differ from the ways computer games are thought of today, but there are also surprising similarities.

contacted them via arcade machines in bars, gas stations, and amusement parks. Non-digital games had of course been played for far longer than that, but the proliferation of games that came about with increased sales of home computers brought with it a demand to renegotiate the cultural meaning of (digital) games.

Part of this process was an interest in code and coding. Computer hobbyists wrote and played digital games, although a fully developed commercial market for selling them did not yet exist. For many, games were just one more reason to learn how to code. The way computer magazines in the UK wrote about games before 1985 emphasized the fact that they were first and foremost computer programs (Kirkpatrick, 2012). The reviews published in magazines focused on how well-said software functioned as computer programs, not as games. A change in writing and reviewing practices surfaced from 1985 onward when game reviews started to focus on how well computer games performed as games and how well their gameplay served this end:

The magazines of this time allow us to see the emergence of a game-specific evaluative terminology. One of the primary effects of this was to prise games away from their basic association with technology; to create an understanding of games as *discontinuous* with technology and in some ways even opposed to other computing practices. (Kirkpatrick, 2012)

This article examines how the domestication and repurposing of digital games can be seen in (lesser known) Finnish computer hobbyist fanzines from the 1980s, a fanzine called *Micropost* and the disk magazine *Floppy Magazine*. They were both aimed at a young readership. These two sources were selected for their unique position in the history of Finnish game journalism and because they offer a representation of the “user generated culture” at this time. Their importance is highlighted by the limited exposure to games and game-related discourse in commercial magazines at the time.

Both sources date from a time when computer game culture was formed, and in them, the ways an emerging sub-culture talks about games can be followed. They both had a very limited circulation, but their role is still crucial in order to fully understand the foundations of Finnish digital game culture. Neither have been an object of academic scrutiny before, so new results are to be expected, although because they were very small publications, representing a niche view, it is difficult to draw generalizable conclusions.

The added interest in games in the 1980s produced an unique discourse related to making and playing them. At the same time, these magazines were obliged to write about and ponder about what a game is in the first place. When looking at these fan-produced written materials, I am particularly interested in the formation of gaming and gameplay-related discourse and the cultural identity of “gamers”. I am also interested in how gaming is presented as an experience across different media and the ways non-digital games influenced the way digital games were evaluated in the mid-1980s. Finally, the article explores how and why conceptions about digital games and gaming diverged from the ideas presented in the computer programming context already established at this time.

It is this discourse I analyze in the context of the formation of a *culture* related to games. My analysis answers the following research questions: *In what ways were games and gaming dealt with in Finnish computer hobbyist circles in the early to middle 1980s? How did the discourse used in conjunction with a new kind of computer game culture come about in the examined writings?*

Considering my research questions, the article proceeds in the theoretical frame of game-related cultural history studies (Mäyrä, 2014; Shaw, 2010) and the domestication of digital gaming (Silverstone, Hirsch, & Morley, 1992; Suominen, 2015). The analysis follows a thematic approach: I have systematically read through all of the issues of *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine*, and divided the material into thematic categories according to what they dealt with. These categories were further analyzed and compared to secondary sources from the same historical period.

The article is structured as follows: first, I present the theoretical frame guiding the analysis, then deal with the history of Finnish computer culture in general. After that, I subject my source material to a thematic analysis, presenting the various findings. Lastly, I present my conclusions and deal with further questions in the discussion.

## 2. Culture and games

Game and gaming culture are expressions that have entered the common parlance. We talk of “gamer culture”, “video game culture”, and their various sub-cultures. It might be worthwhile to stop and think about what it means to address games as a culture, and to talk about a culture “defined by the consumption of a particular medium” (Shaw, 2010, p. 403). The discussion about culture and games provides the theoretical frame of reference for this article, together with research on the domestication of games.

There are at least two different ways to talk about culture in connection with games. Culture as a concept can direct “our attention to the artistic and cultural values, and to the creative expression that games are able to embody and inspire” or it can be used as a tool and key term when we need to analyze and understand games in “their rich, real-world contexts”. Thus, game culture can be understood as either (1) the “gaming capital” game hobbyists possess or (2) the anthropological study of people playing games (Mäyrä, 2014, p. 298).

Being a member of the first kind of game culture goes beyond knowing how to play games and being good at them. Instead, it is about being a connoisseur of games and game-related phenomena, to have, in Bourdieu’s words, “cultural capital” in relation to games and gaming (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 27). Devoted gaming enthusiasts possess cultural capital related to games, which is acquired by caring about being “knowledgeable about game releases and secrets, and passing that information to others” (Consalvo, 2007, p. 18), by knowing about game trivia and game secrets. It is about being interested in the details connected to games, and also about creating things, like customized game content and mods (cf. Sotamaa, 2009, p. 77). Following Consalvo’s example, I have adopted the term “gaming capital” when talking about cultural capital related to games.

Another way to think about games and gaming is to look at them and the people associated with them from an anthropological point of view. In this view, culture is, rather than a ready-made system that exists in all of us, rather based on cultural practices arising from the relations between people. In this way, culture is an ongoing process defined by cultural practices and their symbolic meanings. This second vein of game culture studies is interested in studying the ways people concerned with games and playing them behave and react as a society and how their culture behaves in relation to other cultures (Mäyrä, 2014, p. 296).

Game culture, in the anthropological sense, is not a static entity, but a process. The symbolic meanings of game culture are defined by an ongoing negotiation, so the question of what comprises game culture and how it is perceived are changing, Shaw (2010, p. 405) reminds us. Because of this ongoing negotiation, the meaning of game culture is just as much about the people included, as it is about those who are left outside. When defining games and game culture, the discourse often takes the form of dismissal of certain kinds of “audiences”. Thus, game culture is often defined by separating the “real” members of game culture from those not perceived of as members.

Kirkpatrick (2012), when examining 1980s’ game journalism, notices how a “gamer identity” in UK magazines is built by juxtaposing it with its “other”, meaning that a category like “gamers” can only exist via the people it does not include and the ones it shuts out. In the mid-1980s’ UK, the ones “othered” by game journalism include, for example, game magazine readers’ parents, women, “Games Workshop enthusiasts”, and board game players, who are all ridiculed or downplayed. In UK magazines, “gamer identity” is thus negotiated based on what “gamers” are not, by their negative relations.

By investigating who is accepted as a member of game culture gives a better understanding of the power relations involved. Shaw (2010, pp. 407–409) notes that the early history of electronic media is both an evolution of technical efficiencies, and also crucial in negotiating cultural and social issues related to them: for example, about who can be part of a particular culture and who can speak about its values and who may not. Her findings mirror those of Kirkpatrick's, and Shaw goes on to describe how “technical proficiency, ‘geek’ cultural capital, maleness, and Whiteness” tend to define games, gaming, and “gamer” culture.

Computers and the games played on them are technological products, but they gain their meaning primarily from their use by people. Thus, cultural significance is born when people embrace and assimilate new technology and when new technology is tamed and acculturated through everyday us. At the same time, what computers are supposed to be used for is the result of an extensive cultural negotiation. In this article, following Suominen (2015), I call the negotiation process “domestication”.

The cultural meanings of technology are defined by how people use them and also by how their proper use is negotiated by hobbyists, laymen, and the media. Domestication includes both the ways technological products like home computers and their interfaces end up being used, and how people use home computers and talk about them. The domestication of computers deals with a cultural negotiation about what computers should be used for: are they meant for playing games, educating their owners, or for facilitating work? In this way, the domestication process also potentially changes and undermines the ways people perceive the boundaries between work, domestic life, and entertainment (Silverstone et al., 1992, pp. 17–18).

For computer games to become truly domesticated, hobbyists needed to invent a new kind of language for evaluating and talking about them. Gaming's “bid for autonomy from other cultural practices, especially computing and various kinds of technical hobbyism” (Kirkpatrick, 2012), was a lengthy cultural process, whose progress can be tracked in computer magazines. According to Kirkpatrick, computer game-related evaluation was bound to the elusive concept of “gameplay”. Before 1985, the term *gameplay*, as in a quality that makes up a good game, did simply not exist as a social construct. There was thus no way to appraise games as anything but technical objects and feats of programming. This emergent culture rose as a culture of doers and makers, and a culture of programmers:

The shift from talking about games as part of a wider technological environment to using technical properties as indexical for value reflects the way in which games get prised away from, and in some ways opposed to, the technological context that formed them. Central to this is the establishment of a distinctive way of appraising games as something more than technical objects, or as a discrete class of objects that have a unique technological dimension but are not defined by it. [...] A vocabulary of game evaluation was something the magazines had to invent. (Ibid.)

Kirkpatrick (ibid.) goes on to remark that “gameplay” as a term is never fully defined or specified in the UK press in the 1980s. The term's prevalent use hides the fact that games at the same are more and more defined as commodities to be bought and consumed. In this process, gaming and games become weighed concepts and places of tension in the budding computer culture as “provocative objects that gain our attention with their false promise to become something else”. I return to this friction between commercial and non-commercial games later on.

Kirkpatrick does not deal with the similarities of the term *gameplay* to concomitant terms, such as “well-read”, “erudite”, and “readability”, in other cultural pursuits. Bourdieu's writing on cultural fields sheds light on the ways terminology related to the performance of cultural capital is used as a technique to ascertain taste and cultural capital in the first place (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 34). Preference

of good gameplay in ascertaining one's mastery of gaming culture is part of the defining of cultural taste and the development of power structures similar to cultural negotiations in other fields.

### 3. Finnish computer culture in the 1980s

Digital games played in Finnish homes in the early 1980s did not form in a vacuum. They were from the start based on mechanics and ludic properties of earlier card and board games, mechanical pinball machines, and electronic arcade machines. They also had a lot in common with games and forms of play among children. Computer games borrowed a lot of properties from these older forms of play. Things like scoring and leveling systems entered games directly from games in other media. In some cases, computer games were “merely” computerized versions of other games and forms of child's play (Huhtamo, 2002, pp. 19–24; Sutton-Smith, 1986, pp. 68–73).

Computer games did not develop solely by looking at other types of games, however. As Saarikoski (2004, pp. 211–214) points out, the evolution of computer games is at the same time closely linked with advances in computer hardware and the evolution of coding, processes that started as early as the first computer systems came into being in the 1940s. The history and precedents of digital games played at home in the early 1980s can be traced all the way to simulations for mainframe computers. Advances in coding made advances in gameplay possible as well. In spite of this, the earliest examples of computer games were often computerized versions of popular board games like chess, checkers, bridge, backgammon, go, and poker. Coming up with ideas for new forms and types of games did not happen automatically with the proliferation of computers and spread of coding skills.

Even though more and more people made games and played them, the understanding of different forms of games and their ludic properties did not evolve overnight. Early 1980s' computer games and gaming were closely connected to ideas expressed in coding hobbyist circles. According to Švelch (2013), this meant that early hobbyists did not see computers as tools for leisure and entertainment, but rather as tools for self-improvement and the showing of one's programming skills. Early computer games were not made for their entertainment value or for sales, but rather to show off.

There were, of course, regional differences. In New Zealand, digital games for home consumption were, in hindsight, helpful in domesticating home computers into middle-class homes (Swalwell, 2007). Conversely, in Czechoslovakia, the government “slept through” the technological revolution, and when it offered support, it was “scattershot and uncoordinated” (Švelch, 2013). In Poland, computer hobbyists and game culture gathered around a thriving black market (Wasiak, 2010), whereas, in the Soviet Union, personal computers were subject to unusual restrictions and were even suppressed as tools for Western propaganda (Graham, 1990, pp. 16–17).

Unlike Eastern Europe, Finland and the other Nordic countries saw state support for digitization and home computers. From the early 1980s, home computers were widely available and within the economic reach of all social classes. Electronics manufacturers Nokia and Salora developed their own lines of home computers, which were able to compete with foreign brands until the 1990s. Despite state support for the computer hobby, support did not reach games and gaming. Nordic game companies in the 1980s could not rely on domestic support and there were few political incentives relevant to the game industry. In spite of this, the differences concerning computer education and cheap student loans made the situation different from the one in Eastern Europe (Jørgensen, Sandqvist, & Sotamaa, 2015; Saarikoski, 2004).

Computers were widespread, games less so. Because of a legislative monopoly on the operation of pinball and arcades machines and modest sales of early home consoles, gaming in Finland was defined by the rise of home computers, especially the Commodore 64. Games were not from the beginning seen as an essential part of the computing hobby. The import of Commodore 64 games started in July 1983, but sales and availability were modest until the following year (Saarikoski, 2004,

pp. 217–224). People writing for *Micropost* reported one had to travel abroad in order to acquire games for home computers as late as 1983.<sup>1</sup>

While the availability of games gradually changed, *Micropost* reports that pirated games had already entered the market en masse in 1984, and that “copyrights are not enforced at all”.<sup>2</sup> A few years later, Finland was already a thriving black market for cracked and copied games. Although pirated games were more often swapped with like-minded hobbyists than actually bought with money, there existed a culture of looking the other way when dealing with piracy in moderation. Risto Hieta, writing for *MikroBitti*’s popular “Peliluola” column in 1985, takes a liberal view toward piracy, as long as it is done for “personal use and not for sale”.<sup>3</sup> Hieta even thanks the crackers sending him pirated games a year later in 1986.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, the commercial Finnish press was rather slow to catch on to the added interest in games. Although Finnish game journalism first emerged in computer and IT magazines in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and these magazines published more regular game reviews from 1984 onward, they were usually very short, introductory pieces. Regular game reviews started to appear in established computer magazines, like *MikroBitti* and *Printti*, in 1984, but these reviews were still typically quite short, just 100–150 words. Most often, they were short presentations of the game combined with the reviewer’s own opinions and thoughts on the game (Suominen, 2011, p. 2).

Even with the rise of the Commodore 64 from 1984 onward, game reviews were still confined to the back of the magazine even in *MikroBitti*, the magazine with the best reputation among people playing games. Editorial policy still shunned and marginalized game-related articles and game reviews at this point, and *MikroBitti* did not start to cover computer games in a serious manner before 1987 (Saarikoski, 2004, p. 224; Suominen, 2009, p. 24). As professional magazines did not start to deal with computer games in a more regular manner until this time, it was hobbyist releases like *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* that first defined what computer games and gaming meant.

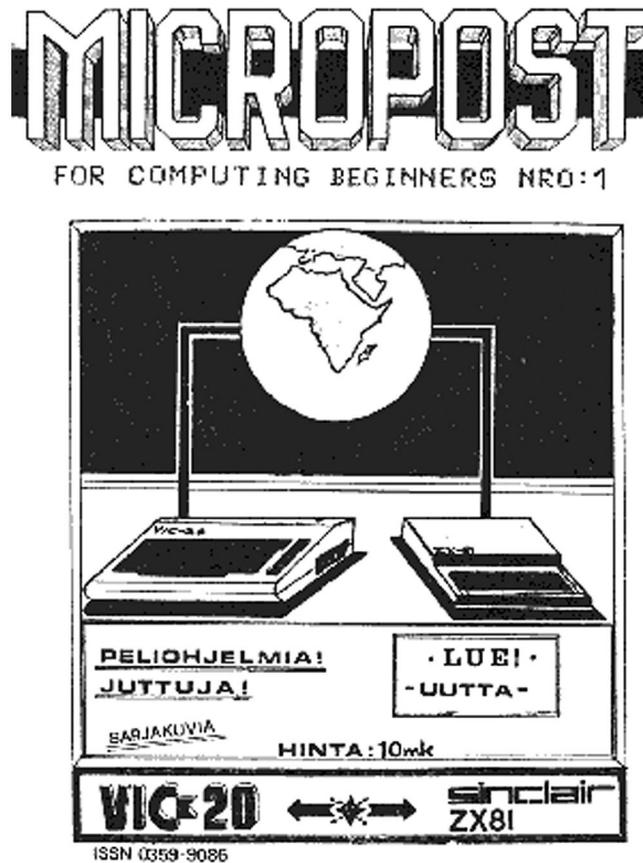
#### 4. Games, gaming, and creativity in computer fanzines 1983–1986

The source material of this article consists of two computer hobbyist releases from the 1980s, a computer fanzine called *Micropost* and a disk magazine called *Floppy Magazine*. Of these, *Micropost* was launched first, in 1983. With punk-fanzine-type esthetics, it was edited by two computer hobbyists in their late teens, Reima Mäkinen and Petri Tuomola. Early issues had a print run of 150 copies, but this decreased to 100 copies by issue 5 in 1984. Throughout its publication, *Micropost* featured a wide range of articles. The fanzine continued until 1985 and, in total, nine issues were published. All issues are digitized and available online (Rautanen, 2014).

*Micropost* was mainly written by Mäkinen and Tuomola, but others contributed as well. By 1984, *Micropost* already had over 10 people writing for it, covering a wide range of subjects, everything from comics, short stories, and articles on tabletop role-playing games and “gamebooks” to game and program listings for the VIC-20, Commodore 64 and Spectrum, as well as a “minority column” dealing with issues related to non-male hobbyists. Program listing was an important part of the fanzine’s content in early issues, but they all but disappeared by late 1984. Even though it covered a wide range of topics, computer games remained a central part of the magazine. In this, *Micropost* preceded commercial magazines by several years, as *MikroBitti* did not start to cover computer games in earnest until 1987 (Figure 1) (Suominen, 2009, p. 24).

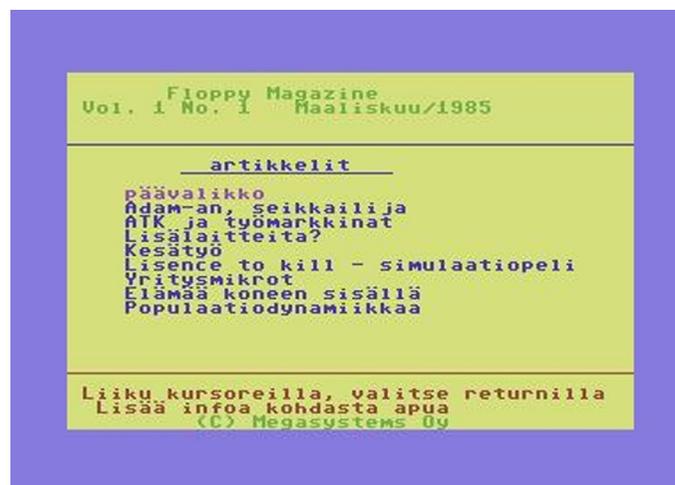
*Floppy Magazine* was founded in 1985 and it was published until 1988. According to Rautanen (2007), it was the first, but not only, Finnish magazine published on a computer disk. These magazines are more commonly known as “disk magazines” in computer hobbyist circles. *Floppy Magazine* was first published by Megasystems Oy with editor in chief Pasi Malmi. Later the publisher changed from 1/1986 onward to Protocol Productions Oy and editor in chief Jari Pauna. According to issue 6/1985, the readership consisted of a wide range of different age groups, mostly of readers between the ages 15 and 30, but also many people younger or older than that.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1. Cover for first issue of *Micropost* (1/1983).



*Floppy Magazine* was published for the Commodore 64. The size of its circulation was not revealed, but it is doubtful it rose above 1,000 copies per issue, a very small number compared, with for example, *MikroBitti*'s print run of about 40,000 copies at the same time (Suominen, 2011). *Floppy Magazine* featured numerous programs and games made by the readership. Other types of content featured were tips for programming, diverse articles on aspects of game culture, as well as columns on text adventures and tabletop role-playing games. Writers included young teens, whose participation the editorial policy of *Floppy Magazine* actively promoted. Individual authors can in most cases not be determined. Actual working games and programs continued to be a major part of content for the total of 24 issues released (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Menu for first issue of *Floppy Magazine* (1/1985).



#### 4.1. Multimodal games in the 1980s

When games played on computers started to appear in Finnish homes with increasing numbers in the 1980s, they were something unprecedented. “Early interest in games was huge”,<sup>6</sup> *Micropost* writes in 1985. People writing for hobbyist magazines like *Micropost* were among the first to cover the emergent interest in digital games and to make it understandable in some way. In their own way, these hobbyist writers were domesticating computer games.

People were of course familiar with games *per se*, but digital games were difficult to grasp in at least two ways, as the surge of digital games from the US and UK often meant new types of game content in addition to the unfamiliar computer interfaces. People writing for hobbyist magazines experienced a two-way cultural clash, and needed to make both digital games and their subject matter understandable for themselves and their readers. One way of doing it was finding comparisons from other forms of culture, however far-fetched they may seem from our perspective, for example, by comparing text adventure games to progressive rock lyrics:

In [text] adventure games, the player experiences a story while playing through the game. Likewise, if a song is written as a story, the listener experiences it when listening to it. If we start to examine the starting points and ingredients [text] adventure games are made of, we can see that many things are common for [text] adventure games and in the “song stories” of heavy and progressive rock. [...] Both [text] adventures and said songs deal with old legends and fabulous objects.<sup>7</sup>

It might be striking to compare text adventure games to progressive rock lyrics, as these two media are so distant from each other, but we have to remember that adventure and fantasy genres in literature were not the major mainstream phenomenon they are now, and even less so in provincial Finland. When encountering fantasy-themed worlds in text adventures, understanding them and their context was not always easy. As text adventure games were “a major and fast rising”<sup>8</sup> genre at the time, these kinds of games needed to be made understandable for the computer hobbyist readership. This was the first part of the domestication process of computer games (Suominen, 2015).

In addition, playing complex text adventure games, but also other games, required learning a new set of skills. This was something that the hobbyist press was trying to teach to its readership in various ways. Without these new skills, it would prove impossible to complete the game, or even make any sense of it. One such skill was the requirement for maps in certain types of games, as can be seen in a 1983 issue of *Micropost*:

Failure [to proceed] is often attributed to the fact that you as the player did not take the time to start drawing a map at the start of your adventure. If you possess a detailed map, not that many things are left to chance, and you are saved from going back and forth.<sup>9</sup>

A similar view on the importance of maps in text adventure games can be seen in a slightly newer issue of *Floppy Magazine* from 1986: “All diligent adventure game players know how important it is to make a decent map”.<sup>10</sup> Augmenting the digital game in this way was seen as something of a requirement for playing many other types of games, as well. For example, maze exploration games, like the Finnish *Raharuhtinas* (1984), needed the player to make maps in order to proceed. This presumption was an integral part of the game culture of its day, and one that was not articulated that often, although a reference to the necessity of the map is made in the operating manual of *Raharuhtinas* (Nylund, 2015).

Early digital games had limited graphical qualities, so it was commonly assumed that players would take notes and draw maps of their progress. Digital games in the early 1980s were not yet something isolated or complete in themselves, but rather only one part of the gaming experience.

Games needed augmenting, often by physical means. In this way, the domestication of computer games required more than technological knowledge and hardware, they also called for new skills to be adopted by gamers, and thus for a redefinition of what gaming capital is about, compared to the gaming capital of earlier, non-digital, forms of games.

This domestication could advance via a set of skills to be learned, but another way to understand computer games was to compare them to earlier forms of games and child play. Computer games were not only a completely new form of culture that needed new skills in order to be enjoyed, but also, at the same time, an extension of other forms of play. People writing for the hobbyist computer magazines were torn between, on the one hand, conceiving computer games as a new form of play and, on the other hand, seeing them as an extension of earlier forms of play:

Computer versions of classic games are interesting. All the more popular two-player games have been made for computers, so you don't need to look farther than your computer for a gaming buddy. A computer is always willing to play another round, and does not become mad if you quit the game in the middle. A non-human opponent is willing to wait for your move as long as you want it to.<sup>11</sup>

The people writing for hobbyist magazines were not always uniform when making these comparisons. Some thought old forms of games were not that suitable for computerized play, and that computer gaming needed new types of games. Computer games were seen as something else than computerized versions of classic card and dice games in the first issue of *Micropost*, for example, since “dice games should be played with dice and card games with cards”<sup>12</sup>. As Huhtamo (2002) and Sutton-Smith (1986) note, many digital games were based on earlier forms of games, but they also had the potential to become something else. People writing for hobbyist magazines were negotiating their position in this context, often opting for a new kind of approach.

The discourse used in hobbyist magazines gradually distances itself from more traditional games, arguing that old games should be played the way they have been played for ages and that new kinds of games needed to be developed for computers. Games that were “merely” versions of older forms were failures:

Computers can take many different roles in games. At their most simple they take care of bookkeeping and that the rules are followed. On the next level the computer, in addition to the things listed above, also functions as an adviser and tells about changes in the game situation. The computer can also be an active player, an opponent who is challenging from beginner to expert level.<sup>13</sup>

Comparisons were not made just to older forms of games, like dice and card games, but to other kinds of games as well. Mostly, it meant comparing computer games to another newcomer in the Finnish gaming scene: role-playing games. Looking at *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine*, it is clear that the editorial policy and the target audience were very interested in role-playing games in both their traditional pen and paper versions and their counterparts in computer games. In this discourse, role-playing games were seen as a viable option for computer games, or rather, as a kind of fulfillment of one particular game type:

If you are disappointed with fantasy games played on computers because they don't offer enough variation, you should try one of the numerous role-games, available in the US and UK. [...] The game master describes the situations and persons the players meet, quite a bit like the computer in adventure games describes the player's surroundings. They differ in that you can ask the game master anything, and are not restrained by certain predefined commands.<sup>14</sup>

Dealing with role-playing games in computer magazines might seem an odd editorial policy, but as Saarikoski (2003, p. 7) notes, these magazines tried to take into account the varied hobbies of their teenage target audience. Throughout 1983–1987, computerized role-playing games were still

seen as something less than their tabletop counterparts. “No matter how good a computer game is, it can never have as much freedom of adventure as a proper roleplaying game has, where one can do almost anything”, Risto Hieta wrote in his popular “Peliluola” column in *MikroBitti* magazine in 1986.<sup>15</sup>

*Floppy Magazine* chimes in on the praise for tabletop role-playing games, noting that “nowhere can imagination be used as freely as in conventional roleplaying games”.<sup>16</sup> These views on role-playing games are seen comprehensively in all source texts, although they were primarily dealing with *computer* games. Role-playing games were seen as both a role model for certain types of computer games, and also as part of an added interest in games as a whole. For the people writing for the hobbyist magazines of the 1980s, role-playing games were seen as part of the same cultural trend as digital games.

#### 4.2. The qualities of good games

Even though games were seen as a multimodal phenomenon, in which some types of games were more widely acclaimed than others, there was also a need for criteria for evaluating digital games in general in fan magazines of the time. We have already seen the discourse related to computerized role-playing games, and their tendency to try to emulate the tabletop role-playing game, but other types of games needed different kinds of evaluation criteria. In the computer fanzines of early 1980s, these criteria were far from clear and easily defined, however.

In the first issue of *Micropost*, when talking about the games potentially released in the magazine as program listings, for example, emphasis is put on the “plot” and “functionality” of the game<sup>17</sup>, but these qualities are never satisfyingly defined. Another designation can be seen in an issue of *Floppy Magazine* from 1985, when the magazine states its criteria for accepting games into publishing: “There is no sense in spending months perfecting a game, even with advanced coding skills, if the basic *idea* and concept of the game is lacking”<sup>18</sup>. Another way to express this, in the next issue of *Floppy Magazine*, is to talk about the “topic” of the game, and to scold aspiring game makers for not “paying enough attention”<sup>19</sup> on it.

*Micropost*’s writing on “plot” in this context (where it does not seem to fit) seems strange from our point of view, but we must remember that it is used because there is really no other word available. Likewise, the focus on “ideas” or “topics” of games in *Floppy Magazine* seems strange as well. All these three examples show us how vague the criteria for evaluating games were. We can discern from the context of the article what the writer means, what we nowadays call quality of gameplay, not the plot or a narrative connected to the game world. In this way, writers had to resort to vague terms, when they talked about the things they were trying to depict, as the words or concepts relating to it simply did not exist.

Keeping in mind Kirkpatrick’s reading of the UK computer game press, a similar situation can be seen in Finnish computer hobbyist press. As the criteria or language for dealing with computer game quality had not yet been born at this time, the “vocabulary of game evaluation was something the magazines had to invent” (Kirkpatrick, 2012). In these early stages, there was still no way to appraise games as anything but technical objects and feats of programming. Game journalism prior to the mid-1980s had no clear way to talk about the games they were reviewing. Plot, ideas, story, and functionality take center stage, but these concepts do not seem to be able to convey the things the writers are trying to get across.

When commercial games started to be available in stores (or pirated copies became available), the logic of the early computer hobbyist scene was totally changed. The changes the commercialization process brought with it were severe. Suddenly games were no longer a rare thing that needed a lot of effort from hobbyists, but rather something that was becoming ubiquitous. The abundant availability of commercial digital games was at the time seen as a shift from earlier non-digital game culture. People writing for the computer fanzines of the early 1980s were amazed by this shift

in the availability of digital games. Consequently, some writers started to look back at earlier and better times with nostalgia:

Now when computers have lost their novelty and the computer fever has receded, we decided to put out a nostalgia issue. [...] We remember the few game makers that believed in games played between people with fondness. The idea of the game is as important, if not more so, in non-digital games as in digital games.<sup>20</sup>

It seems striking that nostalgia for past computer use was expressed so definitely, only a few years after the initial issues of *Micropost*. The changes the computer game hobby underwent must have been severe, and the most shocking of the changes experienced seems to be the unprecedented spread of digital games.

#### 4.3. Making and playing games

The examples presented above show how the people writing for *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* are people who take code and computers very seriously. In addition to code, they are especially interested in the possibilities of computer games. For these people, trying to disclose the workings of a good game is not just a technological challenge, but also a cultural one, because they do not have ample language to discuss the properties of good games and it was up to intuition of individual coders to make these games reality.

As we have seen earlier, the computer hobbyist scene was still in its infancy and a viable way to publish hobbyist games did not exist, at least in provincial Finland. Consequently, publishing their own games was not really the objective of coders at the time. Games were instead made in order to show off one's programming skills. At this point, the concept of "professional developers [working] for paying customers with the goal of making profit" was a very strange one indeed (Švelch, 2013). Still, making games was part of this early game culture to the extent that the best way to acquire games in 1983 was to make them yourself:

There are a couple of options for getting games. You can buy them in stores or borrow from your friends. The cheapest option is to make the games yourself or play games made by your friends.<sup>21</sup>

Making games was an integral part of the new game culture about to be born at the time, and as it was also the "cheapest option". It was thus a viable way to go for people who had already used an ample sum for buying themselves a home computer in the first place. But above else, it was an issue of pride, one of the things that could be used to tell apart "real" computer hobbyists from those who just happened to own a computer. Those writing for *Micropost* enjoy playing games, but they constantly remind readers that making computer games for yourself is the real use for computers, not playing them:

Hopefully these fine new games don't hamper but advance the game production of computer owners. There is always the risk that computers are only used for playing games. Getting a HI-Score in a game made by somebody else is not nearly as fulfilling as creating a functional game based on your own idea.<sup>22</sup>

In the discourse of the early 1980s, playing games can never be as fulfilling as making a "functional game based on you own idea". Thus, people using computers can be divided into those that make games and those that "merely" play them. Defining who is part of game culture and who is not is also about drawing borders, defining game culture by "othering". At the same time, it is a cultural process defining who is in possession of cultural capital, and who is not. For some, making games yourself is an integral part of acquiring gaming capital (cf. Consalvo, 2007; Sotamaa, 2009).

Švelch (2013) writes about a similar situation in Czechoslovakia in the 1980s, where commercial entertainment can be seen to threaten the "creative work" of computer hobbyists, making them

more “passive” than if they made the games themselves. Thus, passively “consuming” commercial entertainment is seen as a genuine threat to the emerging computer hobbyist culture, as seen in *Micropost* (2/1984):

Comics, computer games, rock music and movies demand great physical and mental effort from the people making them. In these fields it is easy to divide people into CREATORS and CONSUMERS. Not everyone can make a movie, or play Johnny B. Goode, and this also extends to making a good comic or realizing a computer game. [...] What could be better than playing guitar in front of an audience or to tell your friend: “Look I made a great comic/ computer game (and you can’t do that...)” [...] Not many people understand the idea of reading comics or playing computer games. These critics don’t understand what kind of creativity goes into making a computer game. You can show a finished game to your friends or send it to *Micropost* and be proud of it. It is YOUR game, YOU have made, and nobody else can make it without imitating you. YOU are something.<sup>23</sup>

Whereas playing games is seen as “consumerism”, making them is elevated into a form of art. For the people writing for the computer hobbyist magazines, games are an emerging art form, but this status does not extend to the people who buy games and play them. The pride shown in the above example is a pride in the handicraft of making code. Computer games are made by people, and these people are the creators of something special, something more than just entertainment. And this “something more” of course exists solely because somebody’s effort went into making it that way.

The dividing line between the makers of games and the ones playing them gets deeper over time as home computers become more prevalent and the playing of games gains more and more momentum in the computer hobbyist press. When the availability of games expands, computer hobbyists start feeling “ashamed” by the stigma of home computers being used only for gaming:

When the Commodore 64 came on the market, it was advertised as a superbly beneficial machine, that could be used by the small time entrepreneur to take care of accounting, invoicing, calculations and almost everything else. At home, the C-64 was supposed to be of even greater utility; phone numbers, the contents of your fridge, home budget, cake recipes, everything was supposed to be possible according to commercials. Did this happen? The computer you are using is so utterly stained by its game playing, to make you feel ashamed.<sup>24</sup>

This discourse, seen frequently in both *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* from 1984 onward, encourages “active use” of home computers and disapproves of anything else. When making your own games is “fulfilling”, playing someone else’s game “consuming”, making games yourself “creating”, and when you feel “ashamed” when people view the Commodore 64 as just for playing games, this is how a culture negotiates who is allowed to be part of it and who is not. In this cultural negotiation and domestication process, coders are pushing those in it for the entertainment away, “othering” them.

But it is not just a question of “real” computer hobbyists making their games themselves, but also one of oversupply. As the market for computer games grows in the mid-1980s, so do the products that compete for it. Although this added competition on the market and a wider supply of games was welcomed with open arms by *MikroBitti’s* “Peliluola” (e.g. 4/1985), and even in early issues of *Micropost* (e.g. 2/1983), it was not always seen as a good thing. Already in 1984, this “oversupply” is written about as “tiresome”, and the games that were seen as entirely captivating just one year prior start to become heralds of something entirely different:

What do you do with your computer? You mainly play games, don’t you? This year hundreds of new programs for home computers have gotten on the market in little Finland. Most of these have of course been games. New programs by English and American companies enter the market faster than you have time to read about them in the foreign press. This kind of oversupply becomes tiresome, because even if game is good, it cannot be interesting for long periods of time.<sup>25</sup>

From this kind of point of view, the onrush of foreign commercial games can be seen as a threat to domestic creativity in making games. When computer hobbyists had learned to make the games they wanted to play themselves, a sudden change in the operating climate with respect to the availability of games was seen as threatening. This same kind of discourse can be followed in the Finnish computer hobbyist scene, particularly in *Micropost's* "nostalgia issue" (2/1985):

At the time 'daddy' bought a Commodore VIC-20, home computing was different from today. Home computers at the time were mostly meant for gaming, but you had to code the games yourself or type them up from a program listing. Gaming wasn't that disapproved of, because it took a lot of effort.<sup>26</sup>

But not everyone encountering computer games for the first time in the early 1980s shared the ideas presented above, or even thought about these issues at all. For many, games were primarily one of the "main ways in which people became familiar with computers and digital technology" (Swalwell, 2007, p. 258), not a passionate hobby or something to base their whole identity around. For others using computers was simply a pastime. Computer use did not have to have a purpose, and it did not have to teach the hobbyist any "utilitarian" skills:

Even if you are not interested in [...] any sort of 'utilitarian' use of computers, it is nothing to be ashamed of, because computers are a hobby, and it does not need to have any sort of use attached to it.<sup>27</sup>

In the domestication process of computers, this view of computers as a hobby in themselves, not an instrument for some other aspiration, was a crucial part in their more widespread use. In light of the above discussion, we can discern how the early stages of an emerging game-related *culture*, although one still mostly influenced by ideas and ideals expressed by computer hobbyists and especially coders, was treated. This was a violently anti-commercial and anti-consumer type of culture, where most credit was given to those able to supply themselves with everything needed, both games and utility programs. At the same time, games as a cultural form were starting to impress people.

## 5. Discussion

In this article, I have been reading early Finnish computer hobbyist releases as one expression of the mindset of passionate computer hobbyists in the early stages of home computer use. As we have seen, some (or even most) of the people writing for these hobbyist magazines were very passionate about games and creating them. For many, computer games were their first contact with computers, but the people writing for these magazines saw games as something much more interesting. For these writers, games played on computers were important in themselves.

The issues of *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* I have been reading are not coherent in their treatment of games and gaming, however. Early on, a gulf between those more interested in coding games and those interested in playing them can be seen. These conflicting views express the ways computer game culture was being defined and reported by those encountering it. The conflicting perspectives on games gave birth to many questions in the magazines; should people interested in games, "gamers" if you will, be defined as consumers or as creators? Were computer games something one consumed (and played) or something one created (and played with)?

When home computers arrived in Finland in the early 1980s, there was no language to talk about them and the possibilities they entailed. This language was created as part of the domestication process of games. At first, the discourse dealing with computers stressed the importance of coding skill. Both *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* deal with the issue, and in both, it is especially prevalent in the context of games. For the people writing for these magazines, one important way to express one's skills as a computer coder was to make games one could show to other coders and friends.

At first, games were seen as primarily interesting from a coding viewpoint, and the discourse used emphasized the handicraft nature of code. Gradually, the focus of games-related articles started to shift to the qualities desirable in good games. Writings about “story”, “plot”, “functionality” or “idea” try to define what a good game is about, but the language remains imprecise. Still, these are symptoms of a new way of thinking and feeling about (computer) games, a way that does not only take into account the quality of the code, but also the quality of the playable game, echoing the not-yet-born concept of “gameplay”.

Gradually, concern about the heightened consumer culture related to games began to form. *Micropost* especially laments this development in its “nostalgia issue” (2/1985). All this is part of a cultural negotiation about the way game culture should be defined, and it continued later in commercial magazines. Gradually, a shift from “gamers” as creators to “gamers” as consumers was negotiated as the audience reading commercial magazines in the late 1980s started growing. In this way, making games yourself was no longer an essential part of the gaming capital required by those hoping to be a member of game culture.

In this emergence of a new field related to computer games, we recall Bourdieu’s writing about how cultural capital is embodied by an “aesthetic distancing”: a way to see the artwork more in terms of form and structure instead of content and characters (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 34). When computer game enthusiasts write about the benefits of writing your own games, the “tiresome oversupply of games” or how consuming commercial games is “shameful”, they are doing so in order to advance and strengthen their gaming capital in relation to other hobbyists more interested in the playing of games than in writing about them.

Esthetic distancing is a way to strengthen the power relations formed by gaming capital, but defining who is a gamer, who is a game maker, and what kind of cultural positions they inhabit is at best a long-term cultural process. Both my primary sources were written by amateurs, mostly young people speaking about the things they were doing in their spare time. This amateurism continued to define Finnish game journalism for some time. Suominen (2009, p. 25) and Saarikoski (2004, pp. 228–230) discuss how the commercial press started to deal with games in a more regular manner, and how publishers recruited passionate younger reviewers to write about games from 1987 onward, and how this helped propel *MikroBitti* to a position as the most respected magazine available.

The example of *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* reminds us that the domestication process of computers is at best very complex. Domestication is negotiated by a wide variety of cultural actors, everything from hard core computer hobbyists to schools and education, commercial computer, magazines, and families interested in providing equal opportunities for their children. The domestication discourse in both *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* deals in depth with the issue of what computers should be used for and in what ways games should be accepted as part of the emerging computer culture. When making games is seen as a serious hobby, not entertainment, the playing of computer games for fun might seem threatening (cf. Silverstone et al., 1992).

The views and ideas on games expressed by hard core computer hobbyists in *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* could be seen as a first wave of home computer domestication. In this first wave, the role of games in computer culture is negotiated for the first time, but the ways games should be understood in a wider cultural context are not yet very clear. It is not until later that a commercial game journalism comparable to the UK press of the mid-1980s (Kirkpatrick, 2012) emerges in Finland, and as *MikroBitti* and later *Pelit* magazines start to deal with games in a more serious manner in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the domestication of computer games gains many of the qualities associated with gaming capital today.

As the domestication process continued, the criteria for entering computer culture gradually changed from being able to make games for yourself into just being entertained by playing them. At the same time, anti-commercial tendencies in the hard core hobbyist scene started to distance

coders from the commercial computer game market. The ways computer hobbyists talk about commercial games and their “tiresome oversupply” (*Micropost* 3–4/1984) show a shift from an ecstatic view of games as a whole to viewing commercial games as something foreign to the computer hobby. This could be perceived of as a response to the commercialization of a previously non-commercial hobby. The opposition of game playing and game coding can later be followed in the development of the Finnish demoscene and its gatherings and events, where coders repeatedly clashed with players (Tyni & Sotamaa, 2014, p. 114).

In this vein, when *Micropost* writes about the “tiresome oversupply” of games, it can also be seen as an “othering” strategy, as defined by Shaw (2010). Hard core game hobbyists start to distance themselves from people merely playing games. People who are just “passive” consumers of games start to be written about in a negative light. Defining game culture in *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* requires leaving others outside this culture. In the end, this is an “othering” of people who do not have coding skills or the ability to make their own games.

Making games demonstrated the technical skill of coders, but for digital games to become something worthwhile and playable was connected to the realization of the space of video games as a medium for game *design* of new game forms as well as *adaptation* of non-digital games. In the 1980s, home computers called for new kinds of games, ones that would take into account the possibilities home computers brought into the gaming field. As space here is limited, this cannot be developed further, but there is clearly demand for further analysis about the game design possibilities computer games enabled in the 1980s, and computer fanzines provide a valuable source for this endeavor.

Writing as a museum professional dealing with games, I am very interested in how we create an image of the past by negotiating with it, constantly looking back in order to understand the present. Like culture, cultural heritage is constantly changing, defined by a process dealing with the creation and passing on of various cultural values and cultural meanings. In this way, cultural heritage is more about the relationship between past and present, including the remembering of some things and the forgetting of others. In short, cultural heritage is a way to represent the past and a negotiation of cultural values (Vahtikari, 2013).

This dual character of game culture is often seen as problematic and elusive. Games and especially gaming and the culture associated with them are very complex things, and are thus very difficult to define from a preservation point of view. If we want to preserve games and gaming, it might be difficult to define what and where they are. Taking into account the heterogeneity of play, we need to look at not only games as products, but also accounts of people playing them, for example, walkthrough texts, first-hand written accounts, and Let’s Play videos (game “paratexts”), and the views expressed therein (e.g. Consalvo, 2007; Nylund, 2015).

Understanding the burgeoning game culture of the mid-1980s is imperative in this regard. If we want to save an understanding of the ways computer culture was born in the 1980s, we have to accept the many different facets related to this history. *Micropost* and *Floppy Magazine* show an interesting parallel world to that of commercially published computer magazines. The ideas and views expressed therein are spoken from the point of view of hardcore computer hobbyists, who more often than not were also obsessed with gaming in its various forms. Their views are also part of the history of Finnish game culture.

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#### Notes

1. *Micropost* 2/1983, p. 34.

2. *Micropost* 1/1984, p. 2: "Pelien tulo kauppoihin on mahdollistanut myös laajan piraattikopioinnin. [...] Piraattikopioita on runsaasti liikkeellä, kukaan ei tunnu valvovan copyrightin noudattamista." All translations by author.
3. *MikroBitti* 6–7/1985, p. 73: "Kohtuus kaikessa eli kopiointia vain omaan käyttöön, ei myytäväksi eikä muuten kaupattavaksi."
4. *MikroBitti* 11/1986, p. 46: "sVauhtipeleistä pitävälle suosittelun oikein olan takaa Super Cycleä, jonka arvoisa Rainbow Cracking Service toimitti käyttööni."
5. *Floppy Magazine* 6/1985: "[L]ukijakuntaamme kuuluu myös runsaasti alle 15-vuotiaita ja yli 30-vuotiaita[.]".
6. *Micropost* 2/1985, p. 13: "Varhainen peli-innostus oli valtava".
7. *Micropost* 2/1983, p. 17: "Jos adventure-peliä ajatellaan kokonaisuutena, niin siitä hahmottuu selvästi tarina, jonka pelaaja käy läpi pelin kuluessa. Jos jonkun biisin sanat on sepitetty kertomuksen muotoon, niin sen kuuntelija käy tarinan läpi sitä kuunnelllessaan. Ruvettaessa sitten tarkastelemaan niitä lähtökohtia ja aineksia, joista adventuret koostuu, niin huomataan, että monet asiat ovat yhteisiä adventureissa ja heavy-rockin (&progen) 'biisi-tarinoissa'. [...] Sekä adventuret, että biisien sanat käyttävät myös hyväkseen vanhoja legendoja ja tarunomaisia esineitä."
8. *Micropost* 2/1983, p. 2: "Tämän lehden teemana on Adventure, koska se on tärkeä ja nopeimmin kasvava osa-alue tietokonepeleistä."
9. *Micropost* 2/1984, p. 12: "Monasti epäonnistumisesta johtuu siitä, että et viitsinyt lähtiessäsi seikkailemaan aloittaa kartan piirtämistä. Jos pelistä on tarkka kartta, ei monikaan asia jää sattuman varaan, sekä säästyt turhalta hortoilemiselta."
10. *Floppy Magazine* 4/1986: "Kaikki seikkailupelien ahkerat pelaajat tietävät, miten tärkeää on kunnollisen kartan tekeminen."
11. *Micropost* 2/1985, p. 9: "Perinteisten pelien tietokoneversiot ovat mielenkiintoisia. Kaikki suosituimmat kaksinpelit on työstetty koneille, joten pelikaveri on aina yhtä lähellä kuin peliväline. Kone vastustajana suostuu aina uuteen erään, eikä suutu vaikka heitit lekkeriksi ja lopetat kesken. Epäinhimillinen vastustaja jaksaa tarvittaessa odottaa siirtoasi vaikka viikon."
12. *Micropost* 1/1983, p. 4: "noppaa voi pelata nopilla ja korttia korteilla."
13. *Micropost* 1/1983, p. 4: "[Tietokoneella] voi olla peleissä monia erilaisia rooleja. Yksinkertaisimmillaan tietokoneen käyttö voi rajoittua siihen että sen annetaan pitää huolta kirjanpidosta ja siitä, että sääntöjä noudatetaan. Seuraavaksi korkeammalla tasolla tietokone edellisten toimintojen lisäksi, toimii myös neuvonantajana ja kertoo pelitilanteiden muutoksista. Se voi olla aktiivinen pelaaja, antaen vastusta aloittelijan tasolta mestari pelurille."
14. *Micropost* 2/1983, p. 32: "Jos olet pettynyt tietokonefantasiapeleihin koska ne eivät tarjoa riittävästi vaihtelua, sinun tulisi kokeilla jotain lukuisista rooli-peleistä, joita Yhdysvalloissa ja Englannissa on saatavana. [...] [Pelinjohtaja] selittää suullisesti tulevia tilanteita ja kohdattavia henkilöitä, melkoisesti samaan tapaan kuin tietokone seikkailupelissä antaa kuvauksen ympäristöstä. Poikkeavaa on kuitenkin se, että pelinjohtajalta voi kysyä mitä tahansa, eikä ole tyytyminen tiettyihin ennalta määrättyihin käskyihin."
15. *MikroBitti* 5/86, p. 68: "Vaikka tietokonepeli olisi kuinka hyvä, ei siinä koskaan voi olla samaa seikkailun vapautta kuin kunnan roolipelissä, jossa yrittämisen vapaus on lähes rajaton!"
16. *Floppy Magazine* 1/1987: "Pyrin tällä palstalla käsittelemään pääasiassa normaaleja roolipelejä, vaikkakin viime kerralla käsittelemäni tietokone-roolipelejä, sillä missään muualla ei voi käyttää mielikuvitusta niin vapaasti kuin tavallisissa roolipeleissä."
17. *Micropost* 1/1983, p. 4: "Pääpaino julkaistavien pelien valintaan on [...] pelin juonessa [ja toimivuudessa]".
18. *Floppy Magazine* 3/1985: "Mitä järkeä on käyttää pari kuukautta konekieliohjelmointiin, jos ideassa on vikaa? Jotkut ovat lähettäneet tänne konekielipelejä, joista he ovat pyytäneet melko kovaa hintaa--pelkästään sillä perusteella, että ohjelman tekemiseen oli kulunut 'monta kuukautta'." Emphasis by author.
19. *Floppy Magazine* 4/1985: "Useimmat pelit- (ja muutkin) ohjelmoijat tekevät seuraavat perusvirheet: [...] Ohjelman aiheen valintaan ei kiinnitetä tarpeeksi huomiota".
20. *Micropost* 2/1985, p. 2: "Nyt kun tietokoneista on uutuuden viehätys kaikonnut ja pahin mikrokuume laskenut, päätimme laittaa nostalgia numeron. [...] Muistamme lämmöllä niitä harvoja pelintekijöitä, jotka tietokoneaikana uskovat ihmisten kesken pelattaviin peleihin. Sähköttömissä peleissä idea on vähintään yhtä tärkeä kuin sähköisissä."
21. *Micropost* 1/1983, p. 4: "Pelien hankkimiseksi on olemassa muutamia vaihtoehtoja. Niitä voi hankkia valmiina kaupasta tai lainata kaverilta. Halvin vaihtoehto on tehdä pelit itse tai pelata kaverin tekemiä pelejä".
22. *Micropost* 1/1984, p. 2: "Toivottavasti nämä hienot [peli]uutuudet eivät haittaa tietokoneiden omistajien omaa pelituotantoa, vaan edistävät sitä. Aina on olemassa vaara, että tietokonetta väärinkäytetään pelkästään pelien pelaamiseen. HI-Scoren saavuttaminen jonkun toisen tekemässä pelissä, ei voi tuottaa läheskään yhtä suurta mielihyvää, kuin oman idean toteuttaminen toimivaksi peliksi".
23. *Micropost* 2/1984, p. 22: "Sarjakuva, Tietokonepelit, Rock-musiikki ja Elokuvat vaativat tekijältään henkisiä ja fyysisiä ponnistuksia. Näillä aloilla onkin helppoa suorittaa jako LUOJIIIN ja KULUTTAJIIN. Elokuvan tekeminen, tai Johnny B. Gooden soittaminen ei kaikilla onnistu, ei myöskään hyvän sarjakuvan tai Videopelin toteuttaminen. [...] Mikä onkaan hienompaa kuin soittaa kitaraa yleisön edessä, tai sanoa kaverille: 'Katsopa, tein hienon sarjakuvan/tietokonepelin' (sinä et siihen pystykään ...). [...] Kovin moni ei myöskään ymmärrä sarjakuvan lukemisen tai tietokonepelin ideaa. Näiden alojen aliarvostajat eivät tiedä, mikä luomisen ilo sisältyy esimerkiksi tietokonepelin tekemiseen. Valmiin pelin voi näyttää kavereille tai sen voi lähettää Micropostiin ja siitä voi olla ylpeä. Se on SINUN pelisi, SINÄ olet sen tehnyt, kukaan muu ei voi enää sitä tehdä matkimatta sinua. SINÄ olet jotain".
24. *Floppy Magazine* 6/1986: "Kuusnepan tullessa markkinoille, sitä mainostettiin loistavana hyötykoneena, jolla pienyrittäjä hoitaa kirjanpidon, laskutuksen, laskelmat ja liki kaiken muunkin. Kotiympäristössä kuusnepan hyödyn piti olla vielä suurempi; puhelinnumerot, pakastimen sisältö, perheen budjetti, kakkureseptit, kaikki oli mahdollista mainosten mukaan. Vaan kuinka kävikään? Edessäsi on niin täydellisen pelikoneen leiman saanut laite, että ihan hävettää."
25. *Micropost* 3–4/1984, p. 23: "Mitä sinä teet mikrollasi? Pelaat, niinpä tietysti, entä mitä muuta. Kuluva vuoden aikana on pienen Suomenkin markkinoille tulvinut jopa satoja uusia ohjelmia kotimikroihin. Suurin osa näistä on tietenkin ollut pelejä. Englantilaisten ja amerikkalaisten firmojen uudet ohjelmat ovat Suomesa jo melkein nopeammin kuin niistä ehtii lukea mitään ulkomaisistakaan alan lehdistä. Tällaiseen pelien ylitarjontaan alkaa tyyppiintyä, sillä mikään hyväkään peli ei jaksaa kiinnostaa pitkää aikaa".

26. *Micropost* 2/1985, p.13: "Siihen aikaa, kun isä Vicin osti, oli mikroharrastus toisenlaista kuin nykyään. Kotitietokone oli kyllä silloinkin lähinnä pelivehje, mutta pelit täytyi ohjelmoida itse tai naputella jostain lehdestä. Pelaaminen ei ollut kovinkaan paheksuttua, koska sen eteen täytyi nähdä vaivaa".
27. *Floppy Magazine* 6/1986: "Jos mikään mainituista hyötykäyttömahdollisuuksista ei sinua kiinnosta niin ei siinä mitään häpeämistä ole, sillä tietokoneilu on harrastus, eikä siitä tarvitse olla mitään erityistä hyötyä".

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