It's Not Old, It's Classic:

How your Old Videogames can Save your Summer

Andrew Chapman
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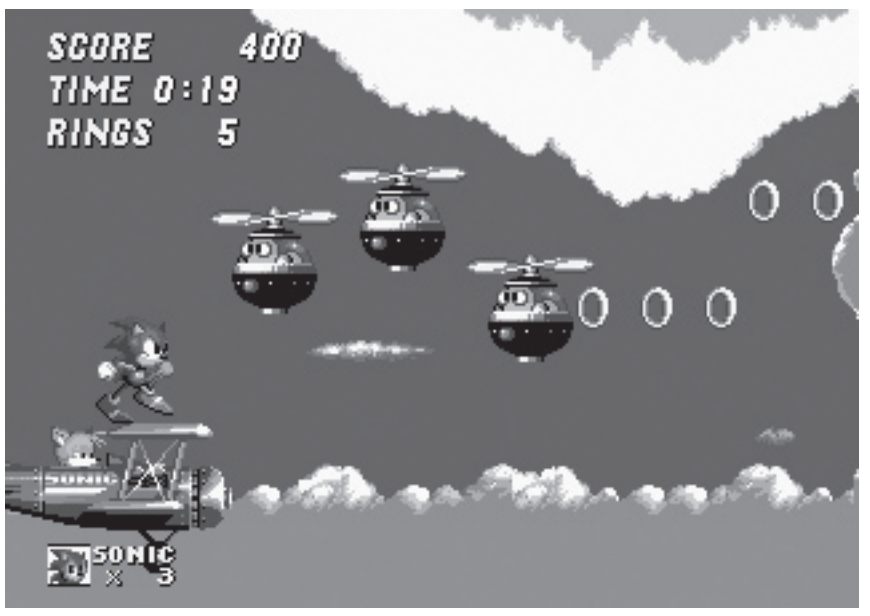

Believe it or not, this little blue hedgehog could be instrumental in curing your summertime boredom.

As winter winds down and we begin our steady climb into the summer months, videogame players are confronted with the inevitable summer drought of new releases. Sure there ís the occasional videogame based on a summer blockbuster, but many of those games have been rushed to coincide with their respectable movie and are hit or miss at best. There are many ways to counter the drought, but there is a solution that will get you the most bang for your buck, especially since it costs no money at all.

Remember that old console you sent to retirement in your closet, the day you bought its next generation successor? Well it's time to dust it off and unearth that box of game cartridges and disk cases.

Now I know what you're thinking, in a day of cell processors and online support why should I bother playing some relic from a lost age? Remember all those pleasant memories you've attached to certain videogames you owned in your younger years? You attached all those pleasant memories to those videogames because many of those are great games, and some still hold up to the test of time. Many modern videogames owe a great deal to these games because without them there would no standard of quality set.

Sharing the stage with the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES) in the early 90's, the Sega Genesis had several great hits throughout its lifespan. If you are looking for a great run and jump platformer game, the first three "Sonic the Hedgehog" games provide fast paced action with excellent level design, music and some excellent boss battles, as provided by series antagonist Dr. Robotnik and his robot army. Before there was "World of Warcraft" there were the first two "Golden Axe" games, a side scrolling brawler in which you and a friend take on endless hordes of bad guys in a fantasy world. Looking for a roleplaying game? "Phantasy Star 2" is regarded by many as one of the forefathers for the modern role playing game, with an excellent storyline and great gameplay.

Want to add a great fighting game to your collection? Tons of arcade classics such as "Street Fighter 2" and "Mortal Kombat 2" are regarded by many as the genre at its best; both feature a diverse cast of characters with unique move sets and creative stage design and also appear on the SNES.

Along with the Sega Genesis, the SNES was a home gaming staple of the early 90's. In its heyday, the console boasted an impressive number of games covering many different genres. For those looking for a good platformer, "Super Mario Bros. 3" is regarded by fans as a high point of the popular platforming series. For gamers looking for some sort of adventure game, "The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past" is seen by many one of the best in the series. Need a good racer? The original "Super Mario Kart" is simple, fun, and highly addicting.

This is Music: Mash-Ups

Andrew Chapman
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Have you ever listened to two very good songs and wondered what they might sound like together? Sure they could be from polar opposite sides of the music spectrum, but you still want to know how they would sound together. Now thanks to a new genre of music that has been slowly rising in popularity, you just might find out what those two songs combined sound like.

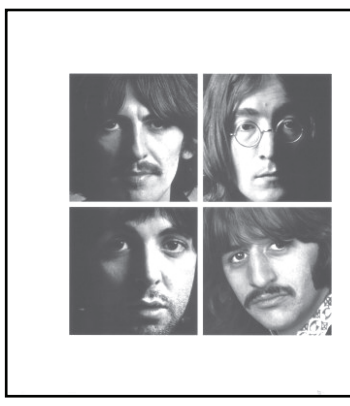
These combinations are known as mash-ups; the vocals of one song set to the instrumentals of another. Unlike sampling, in which a song uses the beat and/or vocals of another song, mash-ups are entirely unique creations and are usually created by a third party, and not by the original artists themselves. Mash-ups have become a huge hit on the European club scene and have led to individual DJs gaining notoriety for their creations.

Mash-ups have existed in some form or another for decades, although in relative obscurity save for a few examples. The genre really began to rise in prominence in the late 90's and early 2000's as more and more computers became connected to the internet and free music downloads and the technology for amateurs to alter music became more readily availible.

However, the genre was hurt as anti-music piracy laws made it illegal to download music without the creator's authorization. These legal battles came to a head with the release of popular DJ, Danger Mouse's "The Grey Album" (a mash-up of Jay-Z's "The Black Album" and the Beatles "The White Album") in 2004, that brought the legal debate over producing and distributing mash-ups to the attention of the mainstream media.

The question as to the legality of Mash-ups is still highly contested. Opponents argue that Mash-ups use the creative property of the artists that made the original songs and are illegal without proper authorization. Supporters argue that Mash-ups are creations of the DJ's who mix them and are a breath of fresh air to the industry, and sometimes better than the original songs.

As Mash-ups continue to rise in popularity, the debate about their legality rages on. Despite legal concerns, Mash-ups continue to bring new life to certain songs and provide listeners with some of the most unique music available today.



The White Album by The Beatles

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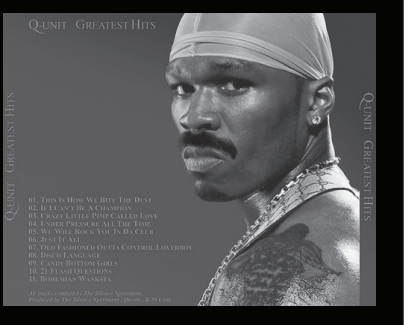
The Black Album by Jay-Z

The Grey Album by Danger Mouse

Night Ripper by Girl Talk

A Night at the Hip Hopera by The Kleptones



Q-Unit's Greatest Hits

Blu-Ray vs. HD DVD: Is the Upgrade from HD DVD *Necessary*?

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The film industry has come a long way from hand wound video cameras. In this new digital era, the most recent development in DVD technologies is the Blu-Ray disk. Currently most people use HD DVD technologies. Blu-Ray is supposed to be an upgrade from HD DVD, and in some respects while it does surpass HD DVD capabilities, it's not really worth the change.

The main differences between Blu-Ray disks and HD DVD disks are cost and the amount of memory they hold. Blu-Ray costs more, about twenty cents more than HD DVD disks, which are sold at about sixty-five cents. Blu-Ray disks theoretically can reach 200 gigabytes of memory, while HD DVD disks have a theoretical limit of reaching 60 gigabytes.

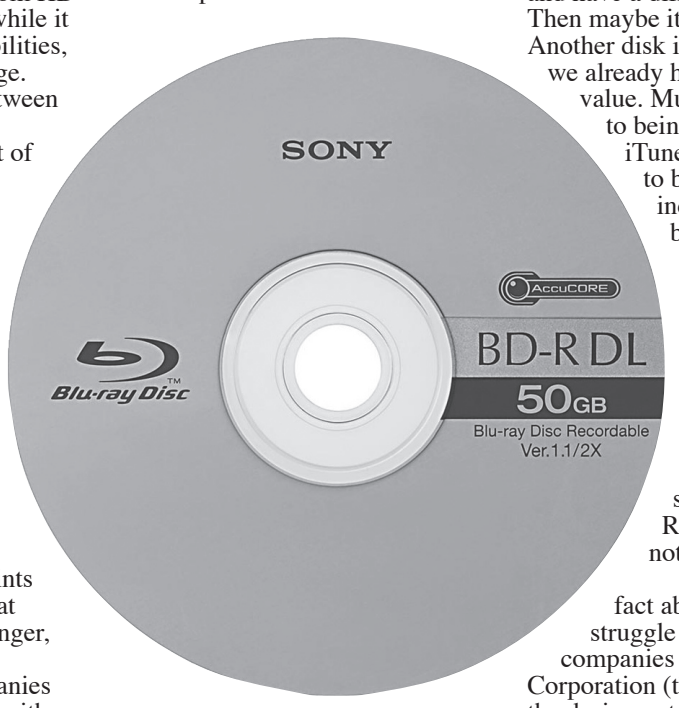
Getting deep into the differences, HD DVD disks have a thin layer of coating that protect the data, this is where scratches and fingerprints occur. Blu-Ray disks have that same coating, but a little stronger, and a little thinner.

It's not just movie companies that are looking into Blu-Ray either. Companies such as Sony, Adobe, Dolby, Electronic Arts (commonly known as EA), Paramount, Disney, Microsoft, DreamWorks, and Macintosh are a few of the big names looking into whether Blu-Ray is worth the move from HD DVD.

Paramount seems to be a company with particular troubles picking a side, as it seems to switch from HD DVD to Blu-Ray every week or so.

The Play Station 3 is the first game console that can play Blu-Ray disks, but as most families who have a PS3 also have a DVD player, making this fact irrelevant.

Blu-Ray is a little more expensive, but you get a larger memory for it. While this reasoning is completely valid, the quality of the image produced by both of these products are virtually the same. A point to consider is that the film industry is a business. Less expensive discs for the same quality price, regardless of memory space, sounds a lot better to a businessman.



Blu-Ray disks and HD DVD disks cannot play on the same DVD players either. The lasers they have to use in the DVD players to get the DVD players to read the disks have to be different for each disk, as the Blu-Ray reads differently from the HD DVD disks. While this is great for DVD player providers like Toshiba, Americans don't want to pay for a new DVD player to play a more expensive disk for the same quality.

Consumers also should not buy Blu-Ray because it's a disk. Without knowing about all the nit-picky details of each disk, and they still just see as a disk. The next development should be digital and have a differing appearance. Then maybe it will have a chance. Another disk is too similar to what we already have to be of any value. Music went from CD's to being sold digitally on iTunes, somehow it's hard to believe the movie industry will be that far behind.

What it really comes down to is not what the consumer wants to buy, but what the film companies want to pay to produce their movies. There is a longer list of supporters for Blu-Ray, but HD DVD is not too far behind.

An interesting fact about the political struggle between these companies is that the Nichi Corporation (the people who hold the design patents for Blu-Ray) are on the HD DVD Promotion Group. They're working to promote against their own product. This seems more than a little counter productive.

As it is, there doesn't seem to be an end to reach any time soon. The struggle keeps turning over what seems to be a very small and easy decision: Throw out Blu-Ray and go back to the drawing board.