

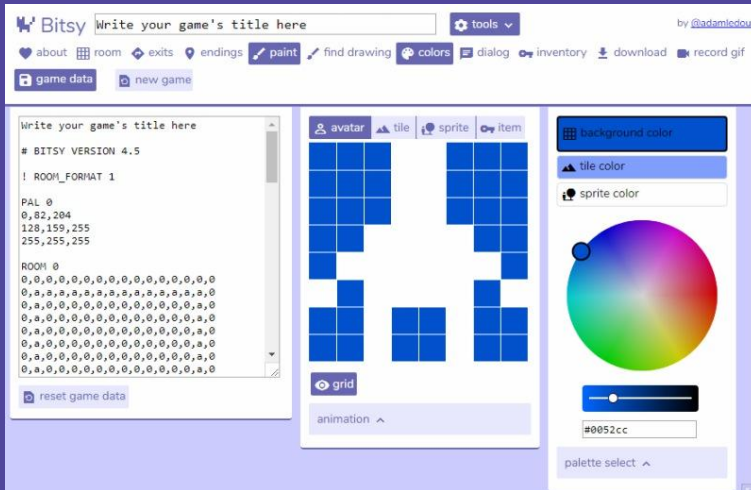
Low-tech by design: using retro
tools for green game dev
Graphic Adventure Creator as a 1986
Twine ?

Charlotte Courtois
ReAnimate 2024 - Montréal

Two opposite approaches to activist game making : decolonial and eco-feminist methodologies

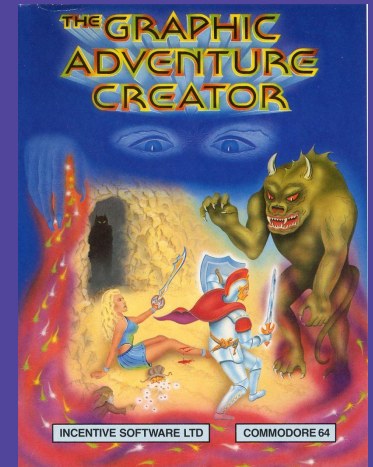
“The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”

LORDE Audre, “The Master’s Tools Will
Never Dismantle the Master’s House”, in *Sister
Outsider*, Penguin Books, 2007 [1984], 187p



Ecofeminist «reclaim» :

- reappropriation of a place and of a content
- recycling of what’s already there
- low-tech



Plenty of game development tools: the C64 (and microcomputing) as a hobbyist game development platform

Garry Kitchens

GameMaker™

The Computer Game Design Kit™

DISK FOR COMMODORE 64/128 WITH 1541/1571 DISK DRIVES

ENCL. NOTICE EN FRANÇAIS BEKNOPTTE NEDERLANDSE HANDLEIDING

Hold Everything. Now you can actually share the secrets of a top game designer. Feel the thrill of creating computer games. All possible now through a revolutionary new system anyone can master. Included is a set of games to get you going and a free disk and mailer to send your creations to a friend. It is everything you could want. It lets you become what you have always wanted to be.

ACTIVISION
CREATIVITY SOFTWARE

TOOL BOX

SHOOT 'EM-UP CONSTRUCTION KIT

YOUR OWN ADVENTURE PROGRAM the first time you try!

CodeWriter Corporation

Apple/Franklin (not available for other computers)

Adventure Writer

A CodeWriter™ Program

GRAPHICS INCLUDED Also Compatible With Koala Pad

Enjoy playing computer adventure games? Think about the thrill of creating them, as you can imagine. Create your adventures in plain English. AdventureWriter programs them on your own disks... to use, share, sell. And you don't need AdventureWriter to run your games.

Needed: Apple II+, IIe, or IIc, one disk drive, printer optional Item A-300

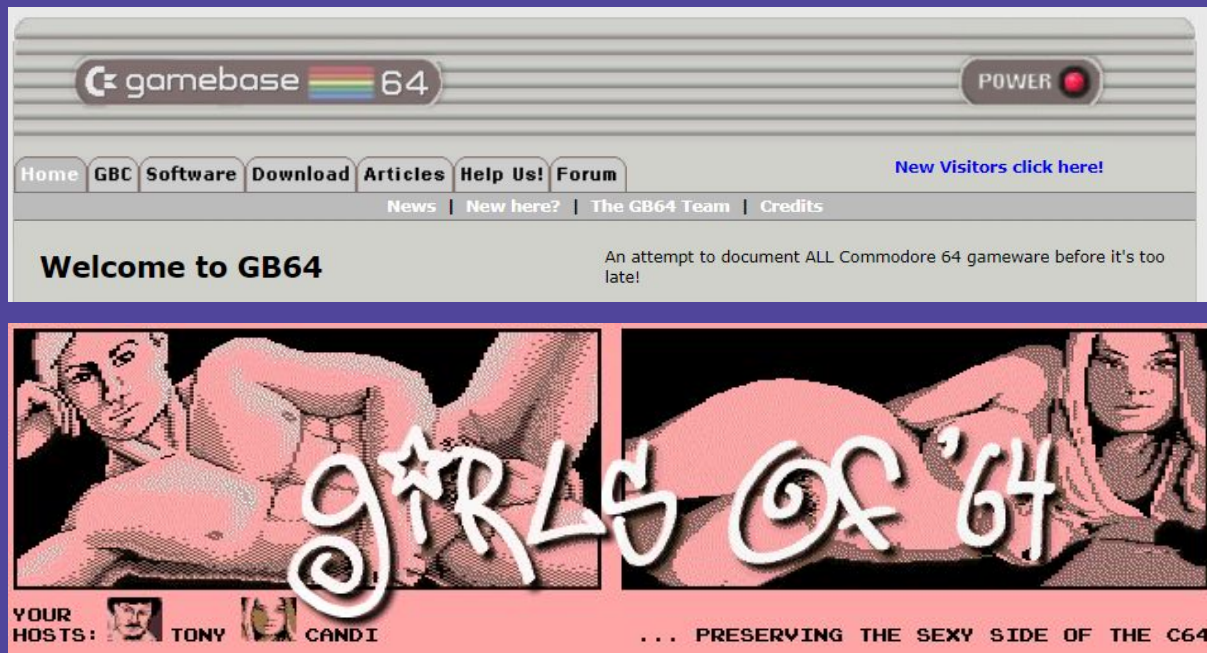
GILSOFT
Home Computer Software

The Quill

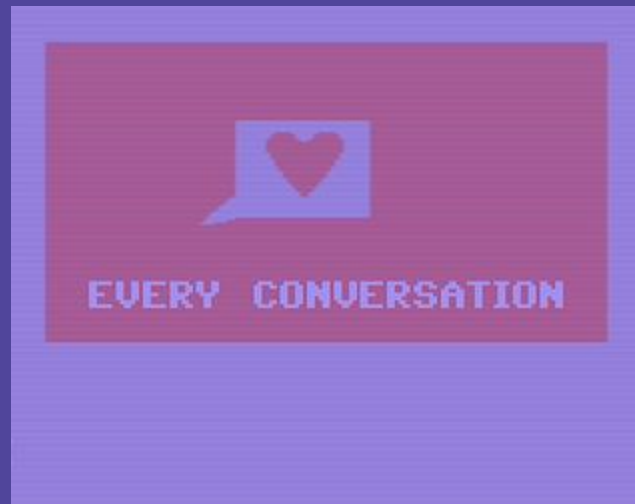
Adventure System

A hobbyist history based on hobbyist work

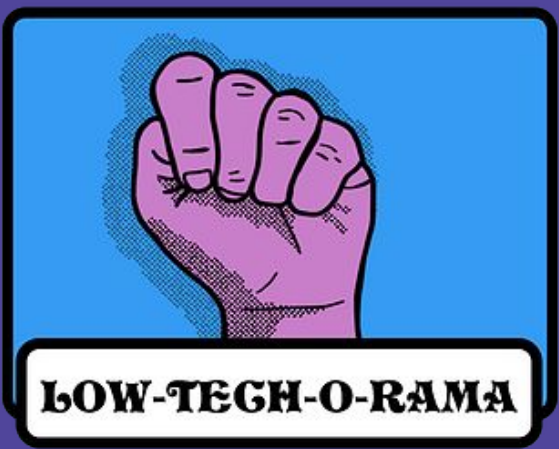
- Archive websites (general or specialised)
- Inventory, playtest for classification, quantitative and qualitative data
- Game development in consequence of the data
- Discovery of anomalies



Gamebase64, since 2000, <http://gamebase64.com/>
Girls of '64, since 1997, <http://girls.c64.org/>

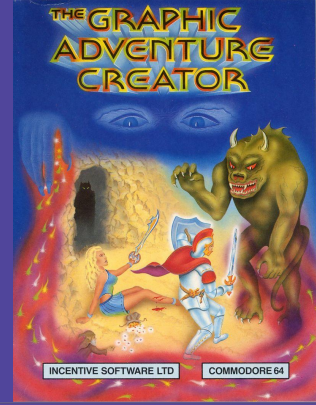


Games about gender, sexuality and ecology



Praxis of microcomputer development with *Graphic Adventure Creator*

- *Graphic Adventure Creator*, Incentive Software, 1986
 - text adventure games
 - for a hobbyist / amateur audience
 - possibility to add visuals
- Developed by Sean Ellis in assembly language
 - goal to make game development accessible
- Guides in magazines



Praxis of microcomputer *Graphic Adventure Creator*

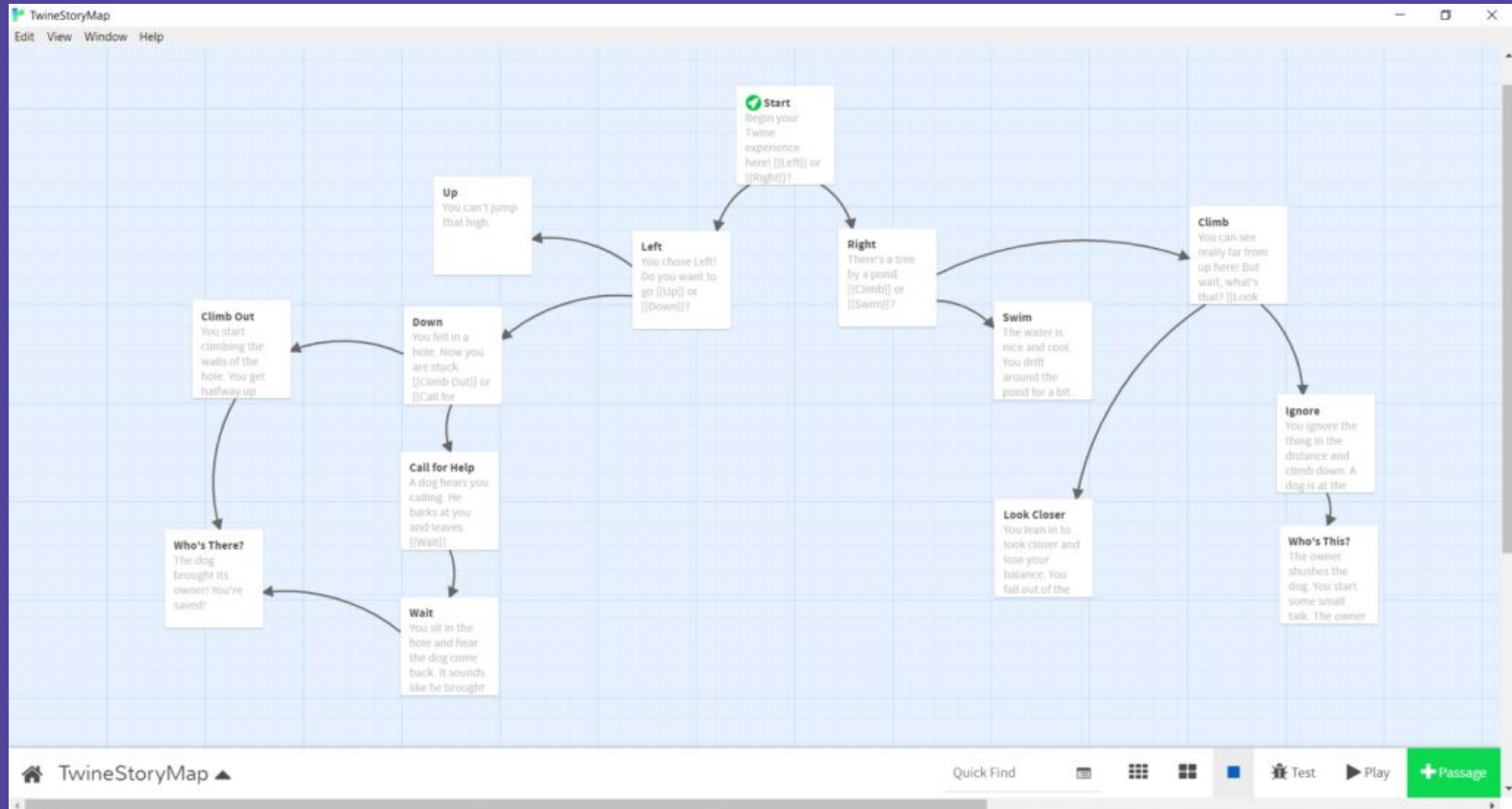
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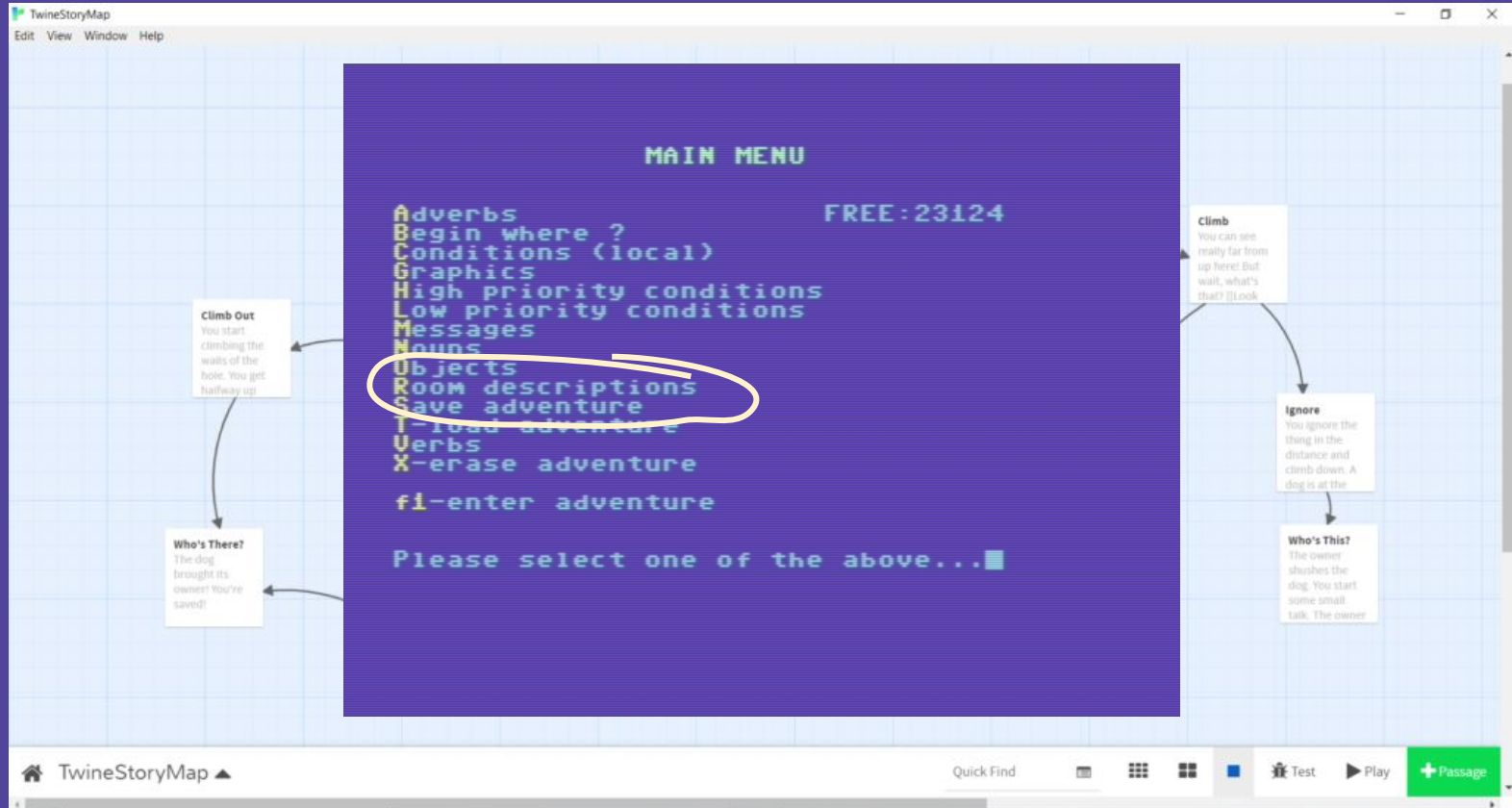
Zzap 64, Issue 17, Septembre 1986, p71

the author has taken full advantage of this very sophisticated parser. Multiple commands may be punctuated by AND, THEN, ;

A parallel with *Twine*: rooms and passages



A parallel with *Twine*: rooms and passages



Spatial approach to text adventures

- Rooms are the building block of adventure games
 - a room is the spatial unit, but it doesn't have to be an actual room
 - players type the direction they want to go from one room to the next (can be N, S, E, W, up, down, left, right...)
- Genre built for exploration, object picking, doors unlocking...
 - not a very dynamic gameplay



The Genesis of Wumpus

Two years ago I happened by People's Computer Company (PCC) and saw some of their computer games — such as Hurlie, Shark, and Magwump. My reaction was: "ECHH!" Each of these games was based on a 10 x 10 grid in Cartesian coordinates and three of them was too much for me. I started to think along the lines of: "There has to be a hide and seek computer game without that (exp. labeled) grid!" In fact, why not a topological computer game — imagine a set of points connected in some way and the player moves about the set via the interconnections.

That afternoon in meditation the phrase "Hunt the Wumpus" arrived, and Wumpus was born. He's still a bit vague in physical detail as most dedicated Wumpus hunters know, but appearances are part of the game. (If you like, send me a picture of your version of a Wumpus. Perhaps Friendly Dawes, our editor, will publish the best one in *Creative Computing*.) The grid I chose was the vertices of a dodecahedron — simply because it's my favorite Platonic solid and once, ages ago, I made a kite shaped like one. The edges became the connecting tunnels between the caves which were the set of points for the game.

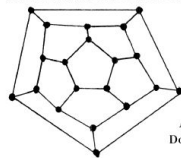
My basic idea at this time was for the player to approach the Wumpus, back off, and come up to him by going around the dodecahedron. To my knowledge, this has never happened... most players adopt other strategies rather than this cold-blooded approach.

Anyway... how to get the Wumpus! How about an arrow which could turn corners as it goes from room to room. Let the hunter tell the arrow where to go and let it fly. The shortest round trip without reversals is 5 caves — and thus the Crooked Arrow.

Hmmm... How does one sense the Wumpus? It's dark in yonder cave, and light would wake him up. If one got one cave away, the wumpus's distinct smell would serve as a warning. So far, so good... but Wumpus is still too easy, so let's find some appropriate hazards for the caves.

Bottomless pits were easy. Any imaginary cave would have a few of those around the place. Superbats were harder to come by. It took me a day or two to get that idea. The Superbats are a sort of rapid transit system gone a little batty (sorry about that one). They take you a random distance to a random cave and leave you there. If that's a pit or a Wumpus, well, you are in Fate's hands.

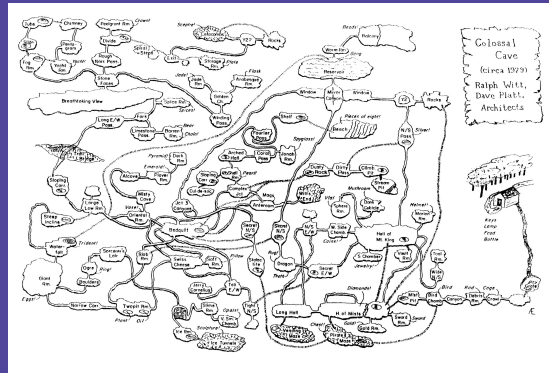
Around this time, I saw that Map-making would be a regular activity of Wumpus-hunters. I numbered the caves and made the scheme fixed in the hopes a practiced player might notice this and make himself a permanent map of the caverns. (Another unrealised hope — as an exercise, make yourself such a map on a Squashed Dodecahedron!)



A Squashed Dodecahedron

To start the game fairly, Wumpus, Hazards, and Hunter are located on different points at the start of the game. Each game starts with random choices of location, but the hunter may restart with the same set-up if he chooses. This allows re-plays if the hunter, say, fell into a pit on the first move.

Wumpus was nearly done in my mind... (hint to a game-writer: Have a clear notion of your game before you



Adventure (Crowther and Woods, 1976-79) map

“YOU ARE STANDING AT THE END OF A ROAD BEFORE A SMALL BRICK BUILDING.

AROUND YOU IS A FOREST. A SMALL STREAM FLOWS OUT OF THE BUILDING AND DOWN A GULLY.”

Hunt the Wumpus (Yob, 1974) guide and map

GAC Stats: 256
units of data (8
bits or 1 octet)

- 256 rooms
 - 256 characters
- 256 verbs (possible synonyms)
- 256 nouns
- 256 messages
- ...

- Documentation available
 - official manuals
 - non-official manuals
 - magazine creation guides
 - interview with creator

THE GAC ADVENTURE WRITERS HANDBOOK

CONTENTS

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THE GRAPHIC ADVENTURE CREATOR

COMMODORE 64



University of Calgary

PRISM: University of Calgary's Digital Repository

Science

Science Research & Publications

2016-08-19

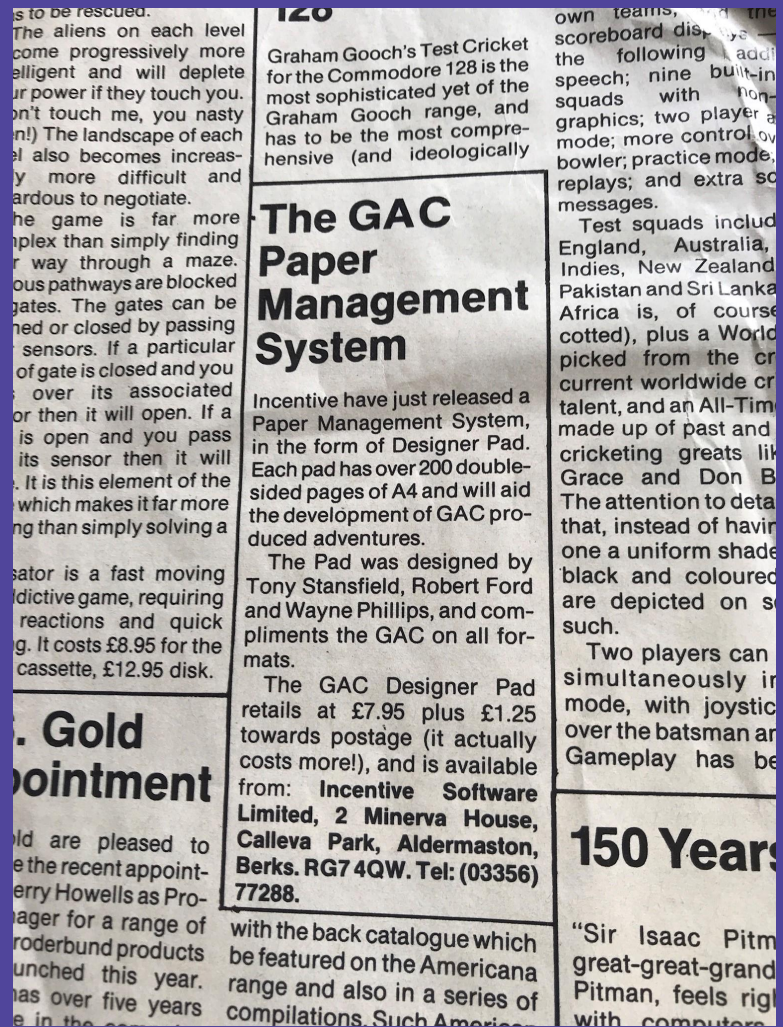
Interview with Sean Ellis re: Graphic Adventure Creator

The screenshot shows the website for 'THE GRAPHIC ADVENTURE CREATOR'. The header features the title in a stylized, colorful font. Below the header, there is a navigation menu with links to 'Programming with the Balrog', 'Your Sinclair', and 'Manual'. The main content area contains introductory text about the software and links to related resources. A sidebar on the right contains a small logo and additional navigation options. The footer includes the email address 'hitch-hiker@earthling.net'.

Toolkit to make a GAC game


- A rom of GAC
 - csdb.dk
- Your favorite C64 emulator
 - I use Vice
- Your favorite spreadsheet
 - with a function counting your characters
- A sheet of paper

Picture by Ian Andrew



C12	A	B	C	D	E
	Nom de la room	Numéro de la room	Description	Nombre de char	GO TO
1			Tu arrives 11 impasse des châtaigniers avec ta voiture. Le vieux portail en bois est fermé, tu descends pour l'ouvrir et bloquer chaque battant dans la butée de course. Tu te gares dans le jardin.		
2	Intro	Intro		197	
3	Jardin	1	Dans le jardin, les rosiers de ta grand-mère sont en fleurs. Le chêne et le châtaignier s'élèvent à une dizaine de mètres. Apparemment les acquéreurs veulent les couper. Devant se trouve l'entrée principale de la maison.	220	Châtaigniers
4	Entrée ext	2	Sur la sonnette à côté de la porte en bois est collée une étiquette avec le nom de tes grand-parents. Une cigale en terre cuite est accrochée sur un poteau à côté de la porte, les clés sont cachées à l'intérieur.	212	clés de maison
5	Couloir	3	Tu es dans le couloir étroit, au centre de la maison. Au Ouest se trouve la chambre de tes grand-parents, au N chambre des enfants, à l'Est le salon et à l'Ouest la porte d'entrée. // Au mur est accroché un des tableaux peints grand-père. C'est un sous-bois en monochromes de brun et de vert. // Au mur est accroché un des tableaux peints grand-père. C'est un sous-bois en monochromes de brun et de vert. // Au mur est accroché un des tableaux peints grand-père. C'est un sous-bois en monochromes de brun et de vert.		
6	Salon	4	Tu es dans le salon, au nord se trouve la cuisine, au sud accès au jardin par une porte-fenêtre. La cheminée est comme la télé qui se trouve à côté. Tu revois ton grand assis sur le minuscule tabouret en bois, arrangeant le feu remettant des bûches qu'il venait de couper dehors. // A la télé se trouve encore la VHS favorite de tes cousins. // A la télé se trouve encore la VHS favorite de tes cousins.		
7			Tu es dans la cuisine, au sud se trouve le salon. Tu peux presque sentir l'odeur de la quiche de ta grand-mère et salade de tomates (cornues des Andes) du jardin. // Sur la table se trouve une bouteille en céramique qui vous sert de...		

OBJECTS



Objects allows you to list and describe particular objects that may be taken from a room and, if desired, left at another location.

To enter Objects, press **⌘** from the Main Menu. Then press the number of the room you want to put an object in. It is not necessary for every room to have an object in it. But remember: if, for example, you use the Special Direction feature of Passageways and designate an Object Needed (See PASSAGEWAYS), you must, in the name of fairness, place that object somewhere within your adventure where it may be obtained. You do not have to put the object in the same room where possession of it is required. In our sample adventure, we've decided to put an object in Room 7.

Object — Required
Type in the name of the object as you would want a player to type it during the game.
In our example, we've typed in "Candle". From now on (unless we edit this object out) wherever a player begins our adventure, he will encounter candles in Room 7.

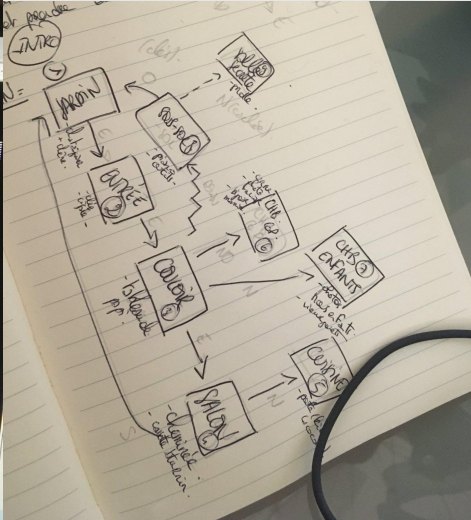
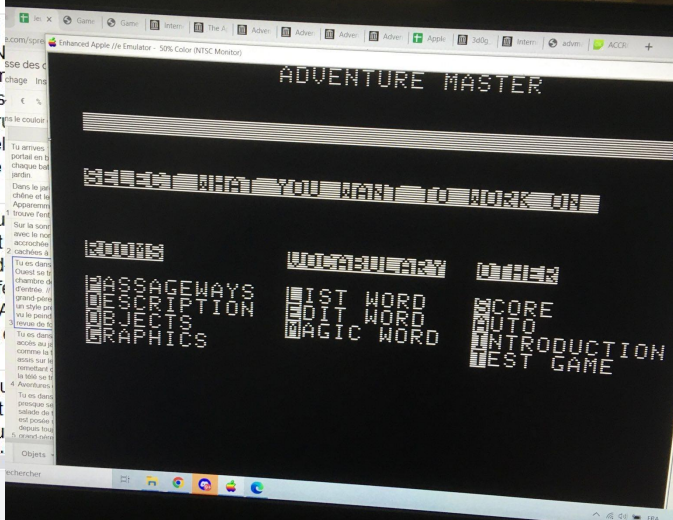
Object Sentence — Optional
Try to think of the Object Sentence as a temporary extension of the room description. As soon as a player enters the room, the Object Sentence can alert him to an unusual situation. Correctly handling this situation can help clue a player in to the fact that the object is present there.
If we use "Candle" as our object, one possible Object Sentence might be "It Is Very Dark." However, the Object Sentence illustrated here, "Ants Crawl In And Around The Box" adds more visual character to the room and draws the attention of the player to the ants and the box, setting him up to use our Key Phrase.

Key Phrase — Required
The Key Phrase is a condition that you must require a player to meet in order to gain access to the Object. In our example, the Key Phrase is "Kill Ants." A player would not be granted access to the candles until he typed in that phrase in that room.
After you type in the Key Phrase, you have the option of putting further conditions upon the use of the Object. **Object Needed** refers to another object that must be in the player's possession before use of the Key Phrase will result in access to the Object. **Object Unneeded** refers to an object that must not be in a player's possession before use of the Key Phrase will work. Using either one of these is optional. In our example, we've chosen not to.

Wrong Combination — Required
When putting an Object in a room it is important to let the player know when he has met your conditions and/or when he has not. The Wrong Combination is a phrase that you type in to let a player know that your conditions have not been met. In our example a player typing in "Take Candle" without having first typed in "Kill Ants" would be denied access to the candles and see the phrase "What Candles?" on the screen. This message works as a clue, letting a player know that he must first do something (like kill the ants) before being allowed to take the Object.

Right Combination — Required
The Right Combination is a phrase that you type in to let the player know that your conditions have been met and that he may now take the object. The phrase in our example tells a player that candles rolled out of the box as he tried to kill the ants. It also goes on to mention that the ants are now very angry an illustration of how to use this feature to add more information and flavor to your adventure.
Important: The conditions you create for access to an object are only to be met once by a player during a game. For example, if a player decides to "Drop Candles" in Room 7 after taking them, he won't have to kill any more ants in order to take them back.

Followup Sentence — Required
The Followup Sentence is like a portable piece of the room description. When a player takes an Object, the Followup Sentence for the Object goes with it. From then on, wherever a player leaves an object, the Followup Sentence will be added to that room's Description. If we take our candles with us to Room 12 and leave them there, the Followup Sentence "There Are Some Candles Here" will be added to the description of Room 12 and appear every time we enter it or look around. Followup Sentences do not appear when Objects are in a player's possession.
Once you finish using the Objects feature in a particular room, press **⌘** to leave. You must then press **⌘** to save the information to the disk or **⌘** to abort the information after which you will automatically return to the Main Menu.



Let's take a look !

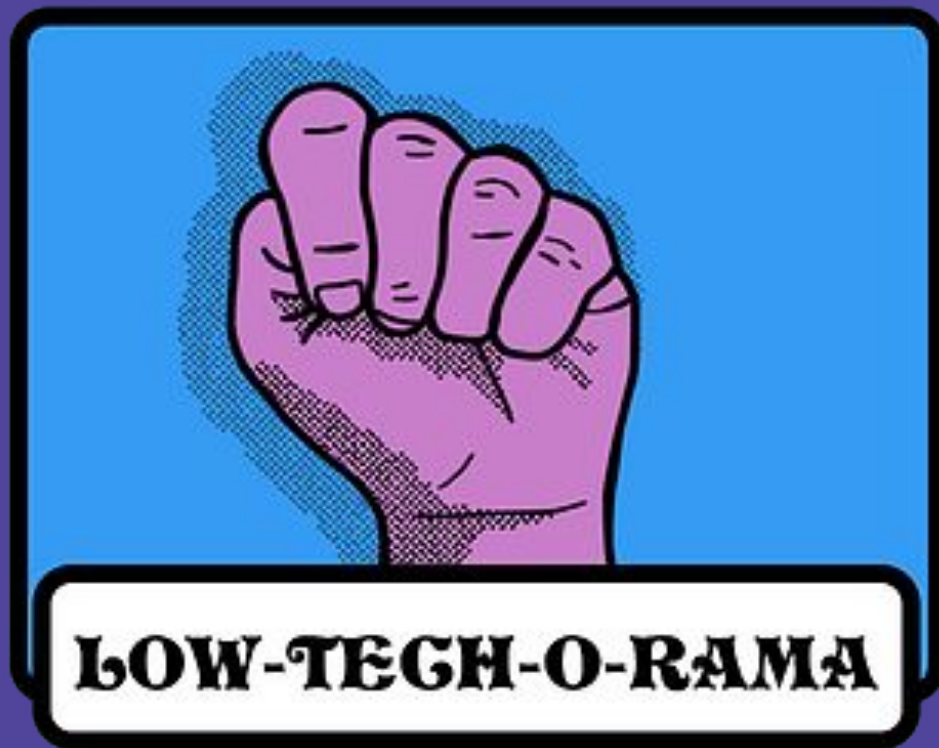


Table 1: Game image elements, aggregate statistics

	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Un baiser d'eau salée	Did you just...
nouns	1	134	57.6	55.5	0	20
verbs	1	160	71.3	68.5	7	43
adverbs	0	43	4.3	2.0	0	0
messages	17	248	114.4	115.0	15	70
rooms	2	149	50.2	46.5	62	21
objects	0	95	27.3	20.5	0	0
pictures	0	116	16.3	13.5	0	0

From AYCOCK John and Katie Biittner, “LeGACy Code: Studying How (Amateur) Game Developers Used Graphic Adventure Creator”, FDG '20: International Conference on the Foundations of Digital Games. 2020.