

2 *Spectrum Graphics and Sound*

own right, but are dedicated to the task of providing a specific video game.

Arcade games can be presented on a home television by using a dedicated video games console, such as the type made by Atari. These units also use a microprocessor but unlike the arcade machine they can generate a wide selection of games. In these machines the computer program for each different game is supplied in a cartridge which is plugged into the games console unit.

Computers as games machines

A home computer, such as the Spectrum, can also be turned into an arcade games machine provided that it has a good graphics display capability. Here the computer is programmed to display a real time moving picture of the game situation with perhaps rockets, spaceships and aliens moving rapidly around the TV screen. Colour and sound are also important constituents for such games and in fact the Spectrum can perform quite well on all of these points.

A major advantage of the home computer compared with a video game unit is that you can invent your own arcade games and program them into the computer using either BASIC or machine code. Having written the program it can then be saved on a cassette tape for future use.

Apart from arcade type games here are many other varieties of game that can be played on a computer. These range from simple number guessing games up to complex games such as chess. Of these games one of the more popular types is the adventure game. Variations on this theme include maze games and the role playing games like Dungeons and Dragons. In adventure games the player explores a mysterious world, moving from location to location seeking treasures, fighting monsters and solving riddles. The computer itself acts as your puppet telling you what it can see and carrying out actions such as picking up objects. The Dungeons and Dragons versions allow the player to adopt the role of various characters as he explores.

In most adventure type games the locations are described by written text on the screen and these are generally referred to as 'text' adventures. Adventure games can be greatly enhanced by actually showing on the TV screen a picture of the current location of the explorer rather than just having a written description. It is also possible to show pictures of various objects or treasures that may be