

ACTION REPLAY

The Games Designer



Standard Format

The sprites will initially appear against a plain background, following a slow and orderly descent

Final Effect

This shot shows the changes to the original sprites and background colour. The only element unchanged is the cat

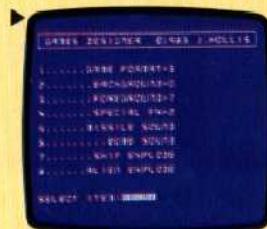


Sprite Configuration

Select the appropriate co-ordinate on the chart you want to fill (or erase). At the bottom of the screen you can see the actual shape and colour of the sprite

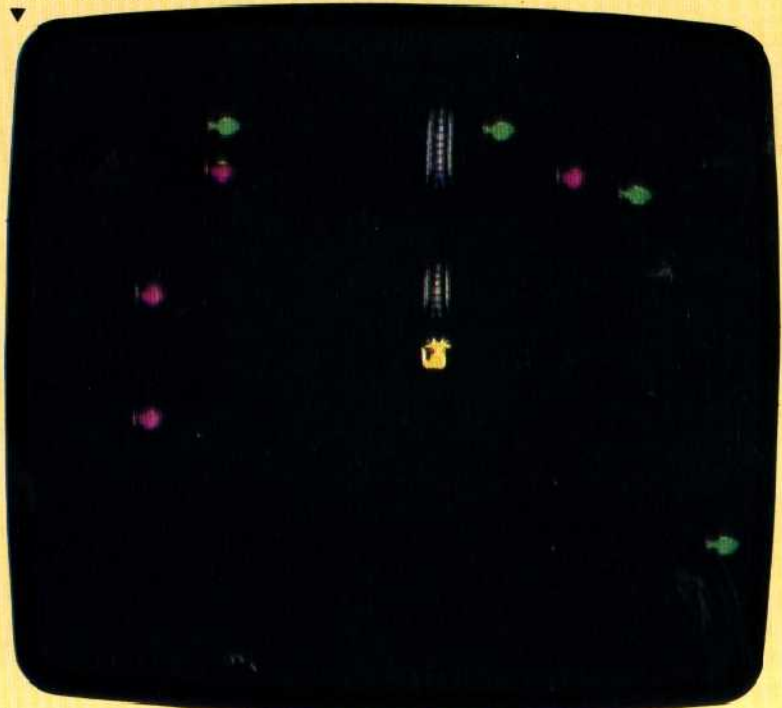
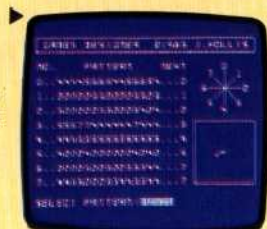
Configuration Menu

This menu gives you the option of selecting the direction of movement of your ship or laser base, the foreground and background colours, how the aliens appear, and sound effects for all elements



Movement Menu

This allows you to determine the attack approach. At the top right of the screen you will see a numbered direction chart and at the bottom right there is a pattern display where you can monitor the effects



Millions of microcomputer games packages are sold every year and the size of the market for this ready-made software was an indication to enterprising software houses that there was good sales potential for games generator packages. What is surprising is that so many of the games on the market are similar to one another.

Most games played on home computers fall into two categories: Adventure participation games, with or without a graphic representation of the scenario on the screen, as in *The Hobbit*; and the totally screen-based 'fantasy simulators' such as *Space Invaders* or *Asteroids*.

Even a cursory analysis of the two generic types reveals the reason for their similarity. To take the fantasy simulators first, there are two prerequisites of the *Space Invader* type of game — a firing base and a target to aim at. So if we can

construct abstract versions of these two and allow the games designer to decide independently on the defender's position and fire-power and the frequency and intensity of the attack waves, then it is feasible to produce a variety of games, each subtly different from the next, simply by varying the parameters. An analysis of the numerous games with similar-sounding names produced within a games 'generation' will reveal that this philosophy has been applied by the professional software producers.

A prime example of a software package that allows you to do just this is John Hollis's *Games Designer* (from Software Studios/Quicksilver for the Spectrum 48K). *Games Designer* offers you eight outline games. Having selected one of them you can change all the basic parameters mentioned above, but it does not allow you to build up a new game from scratch.

The package is menu-driven, and even as a series of pre-programmed games, the *Games*