

Games People Play

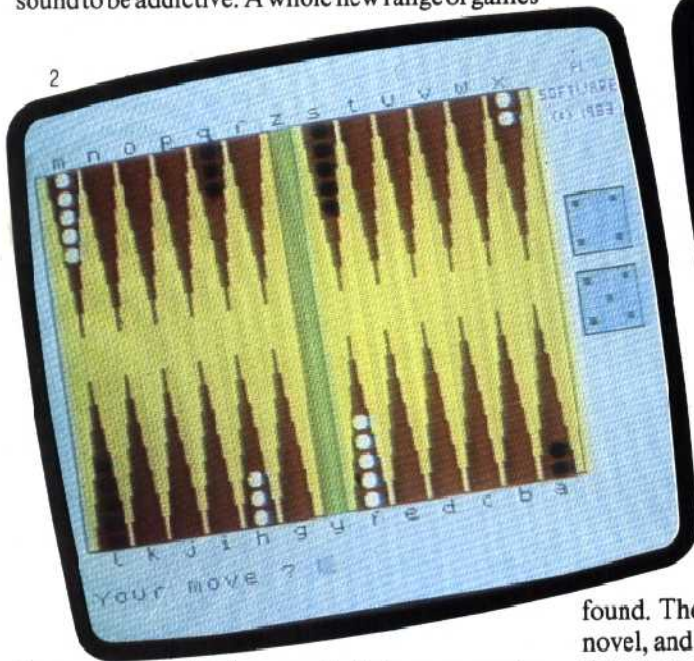
Dungeons and dragons, stock markets and space flights, excitement and education — all are in computer games

Most people play games on their computers, and the world of computer games is a fascinating kaleidoscope of excitement, puzzling problems, and new challenges.

The video games machines in the arcades and in the home are being overtaken by cheap and powerful home computers that give more variety and thrills without taking all your savings while you learn how to play. These home computer games have introduced more people to the fun of computing than any business accounting software ever did or will. There's no need to feel you're misusing the machine. Games are there to be enjoyed.

Adventure

Not all games need to have colour pictures and sound to be addictive. A whole new range of games



has appeared with the spread of cheap computer power; games that stimulate the imagination with words in the way that books have always done.

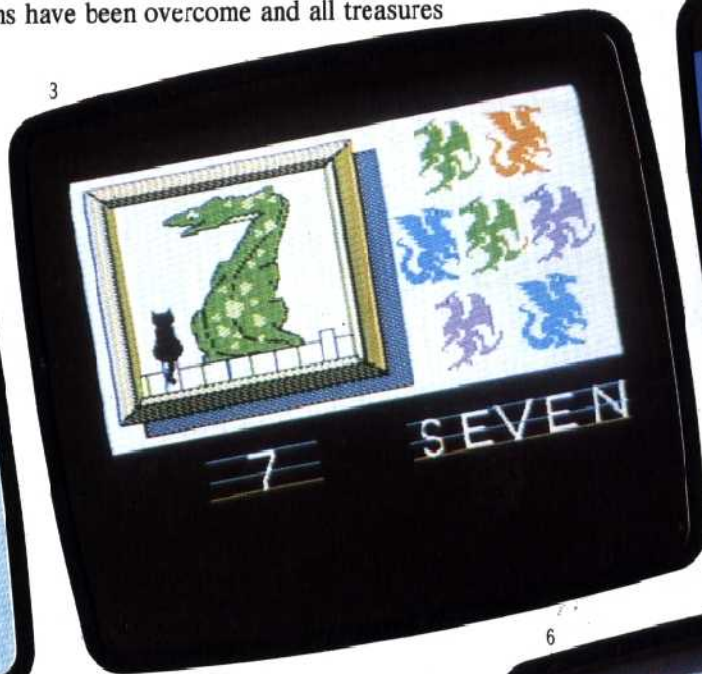
These are called 'adventure' games, after the first program that was written for programmers to play on their giant mainframe computers in their spare time. The idea is that the program creates a world that the player explores by guiding an alter ego; but the guiding is done with words typed on the keyboard rather than with joysticks.

The little character inside the computer's world is moved by typing directions like 'north' and 'up', and the computer gives word pictures of the surroundings and any objects lying around. The

player's character can 'take', 'drop', 'turn' or 'break' the objects, or can try any action that might seem helpful. The player can try anything. The only limit is the imagination.

The world inside the computer program can be a maze of caves and dungeons packed with treasures and monsters, as in the popular 'Dungeons and Dragons' role-playing games. Or it can be a deserted alien spacecraft, or even a country house where a murder needs to be solved.

Whatever the scenario, the player has to explore, find useful objects and treasure, and solve intellectual puzzles. The computer world needs to be mapped, and a full score comes only when all problems have been overcome and all treasures



found. The best adventure games are like a good novel, and it can take much longer to complete one than to read the book.

Board And Table

It was natural for the old favourite board and table games to be transferred to home computers as soon as the technology could handle it. There is no need to find an opponent when the computer can handle that job, and if you make a wrong move you can correct it without the computer accusing you of cheating. The machine can also improve your game by pointing out and correcting any mistakes you make during play.

Computer chess has reached a very good stan-

