

The RetroBattlestations Teleprinter



FozzTexx - Mar 28, 2021

Contests Keep your Computers from Collecting Dust in the Closet

RetroBattlestations is more than just a place to show off your latest haul, it's about finding inspiration to do something with all those machines you've been collecting. Getting people to get their machines hooked up and actually do something with them is the reason behind the RetroBattlestations contests! This newsletter itself exists because of a contest!

Some contests happen only once, sometimes they turn into a regular annual event. The Portable Week contest is probably one of the most popular. Holiday Music Week and BBS Week are also popular. The most retro throwback to the old days has to be BASIC Month though, which happens in July of every year. The contest is about experiencing what it was like in the 1970s and '80s when software had to be distributed in physical form. The cheapest way to do that was to print out source code listings in books and magazines and let the user type the program in! Distributing software this way also allowed the user to learn a little bit about how to program and become more familiar with how their computer worked. Last year's BASIC Month contest was a program to play music on a Sinclair ZX Spectrum. Of course this led me to fill the contest with lots of Easter eggs and in-jokes. Music played on an 8-bit machine is often called "chip tunes", but since I was working with a British computer, I called it "Crisps Tunes." The song? A corn chips jingle from a TV commercial from the late '70s. Of course the corn chips were Fritos which aren't sold in the UK, making the connection even more obscure.

I've already started working on the BASIC Month contest for 2021. I'm planning more in-jokes but I think this time it will be more obvious what the reference is. But we shall see!

Does Your Family Find Your Hobby Boring?

Whenever you sit down at your favorite battlestation, do you get those looks from your family? Do they not understand why you're paying so much attention to out of date junk when they think you should be doing the things that they're interested in? Perhaps they insist that you need to stop what you're doing and instead spend some time outside. It may not be possible to get them interested in your hobby but perhaps it might be possible to get them to understand that when you're messing with your old machines it makes you happy.

Of course there's many different things that draw us all to this hobby. For some people it's reliving the feeling of playing a favorite game or remembering what it was like when powering on the machine. For others it's the discovery of things that they never tried before. Sometimes it's neat to see things that you may not have even known about when those machines were being produced.

Occasionally though you just have to take a break and go outside and play some frisbee.

The Pet Center

For more insights and perspectives from Miles you can follow him on his Twitter account: @TheMilesSmiles



Am I helping?



I'm ready to help!



Can I help?



Finally, something I can help with!

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