



Barrie Ellis <oneswitch@gmail.com>

Hello from the UK

4 messages

Barrie Ellis <oneswitch@gmail.com>

9 June 2012 at 17:49

Reply-To: Barrie Ellis <oneswitch@gmail.com>

To: kenyankelevitz@msn.com

Hello Ken,

I hope you're well, and wondered if you wouldn't mind answering a few questions I have linked to a book I'm writing on the history of accessible gaming...

1. Would you mind being interviewed by e-mail or on the phone?
2. If not... Can you remember how your first Atari controller/s worked, and what these buttons did on the surface of the Atari VCS?



3. Do you have any photos I could possibly use for my book (it's a non-profit making book - aimed to raise awareness and donations if people wish to www.specialeffect.org.uk). I'd especially be interested in anything from the early days.

4. Do you recall if Peter A McWilliams who interviewed you in 1984 for his book is the same as this Peter McWilliams: <http://mcwilliams.com/> ?

5. Did you still want to find someone who could potentially take over your work, in the spirit that you have been selling it (i.e. at a reasonable cost)?

Kindest regards,

Barrie Ellis

Technical Specialist at www.SpecialEffect.org.uk

Barrie Ellis <oneswitch@gmail.com>

9 June 2012 at 23:29

Reply-To: Barrie Ellis <oneswitch@gmail.com>

To: Ken Yankelevitz <kenyankelevitz@msn.com>

Hello Ken,

Many thanks for agreeing to be interviewed, I really appreciate your valuable time. Here are my first batch of questions...

Firstly linked to the previous questions...

1. With the Atari VCS, did you need to make the game console toggle switches, such as game reset and game select, more accessible too? If so how did you do this? And do you recall which Atari games were most popular with your first attempts?

And new questions...

2. What is your first memory of coming across/experiencing disability?

3. Do you remember how it came about that Atari first found you?

4. Atari seemed to be quite empathetic to the cause of disabled players in the early 1980s, e.g....

<http://www.atarimuseum.com/otherprojects/vidcom/vidcom1.html>

<http://www.atarimuseum.com/videogames/consoles/2600/mindlink.html>

http://www.atariage.com/magazines/magazine_page.html?MagazineID=54&CurrentPage=6

<http://switchgaming.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/thank-you-atari.html>

...How do you feel that things have progressed since that time in the field of game accessibility for disabled people?

5. What are your hopes for the future of leisure accessibility for disabled people in the near and long term future?

Many thanks again.

Barrie

From: Ken Yankelevitz

Sent: Saturday, June 09, 2012 8:30 PM

To: oneswitch@gmail.com

Subject: RE: Hello from the UK

Hi Barrie,

I don't mind being interviewed by Email.

I hope to keep building these controllers on a part time basis.

The parts count in these controllers is high and availability of special parts have long lead times. So building them requires keeping large inventories of parts.

There are about 8 hours of labor and special tools are needed so I don't think it's practicable to have "open source" or "how to" for builders make them.

The Atari VCS in the photo has "pushbuttons" instead of joysticks for the two players. It also has the "pots" for the pong type games.

I don't have any photos . Only what's on my website.

I don't know if he is the same Peter A McWilliams who interviewed you in 1984.

Ken

From: oneswitch@gmail.com

To: kenyankelevitz@msn.com

Subject: Hello from the UK

Date: Sat, 9 Jun 2012 17:49:16 +0100

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Barrie Ellis <oneswitch@gmail.com>
Reply-To: Barrie Ellis <oneswitch@gmail.com>
To: Ken Yankelevitz <kenyankelevitz@msn.com>

9 July 2012 at 07:58

Hi Ken,

Many thanks for your answers, and for sparing some time here.

Just to follow up question 3, I'm wondering what led you to make an "unbreakable" VCS controller in the first place? Was it unrelated to the field of disability at the time? And how did Atari come to know about it?

Best wishes,

Barrie

From: Ken Yankelevitz
Sent: Saturday, June 23, 2012 5:02 PM
To: oneswitch@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Hello from the UK

Hi Barrie,

I'll try to answer your questions for your book .But I don't ship my controllers outside the USA due to the high costs of shipping and customs forms.

When they needed repair due to stuck switches, dirty switch contacts, broken wires,etc the shipping costs of \$150US and the customs paper work made it too inconvenient to send it to me for repair.
So I don't want to encourage people in the UK to order these controllers from me.

Question 1 -- I had a SIP/PUFF switch on the mouthpiece for START/SELECT

Question 2 -- I am not disabled , Atari asked me to help some people who could not use the VCS joystick. That was my first contact with the disabled community.

Question 3 -- I had designed a VCS controller that was "unbreakable" and Atari invited me to show it to them.

Question 4 -- Atari did not want to get involved with special controllers for the disabled because the market was not big enough and very diverse.

Ken

From: oneswitch@gmail.com
To: kenyankelevitz@msn.com
Subject: Re: Hello from the UK
Date: Sat, 9 Jun 2012 23:29:45 +0100
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Barrie Ellis <oneswitch@gmail.com>
Reply-To: Barrie Ellis <oneswitch@gmail.com>
To: Ken Yankelevitz <kenyankelevitz@msn.com>

9 July 2012 at 16:08

Cool. And how did Atari find out about it? Word of mouth, or something else? I don't suppose you've still got the controller anywhere to take a picture of it?

Cheers, Ken. I think I've said it before, but I'll say it again if not. Absolutely brilliant what you do, and I've so much respect for you for the length of time that you've done it. A true pioneer.

Barrie

From: Ken Yankelevitz
Sent: Monday, July 09, 2012 4:01 PM
To: oneswitch@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Hello from the UK

My kids VCS joystick broke and I disassembled it to try to fix it. When I saw how cheap it was made I built one using arcade joystick parts that were good for millions of cycles.

Ken

From: oneswitch@gmail.com
To: kenyankelevitz@msn.com
Subject: Re: Hello from the UK
Date: Mon, 9 Jul 2012 07:58:34 +0100
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