

A Look Back: The MSX

Written by DarkTetsuya

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(Editor's Note: In an attempt to bring some more all-new content to the site, is my attempt at a new series of articles looking back at some of the 'lesser known' systems, like this one. If the reception on this article is good, I will definitely follow up with future installments covering other less well known systems!)

Welcome to the first all-new segment since they invited me to join in for 'I love that song!' I thought I'd try my hand at starting a new series of articles which cover some of the systems you may not have heard of, like my first entry: the MSX.

The MSX was released in the early 1980s in Japan and some parts of the UK. Interestingly, it was actually *Microsoft* that was responsible for the conception of the MSX. Also interesting to note is that much like the slightly more recent 3DO multimedia system, the MSX was also manufactured by several different companies. Phillips, Spectravideo, and Goldstar all had their own variations of this classic computer.

But, like OLR says "*A system is only as good as the games that are on it*". Luckily the MSX has a massive library of classic games. In fact many classic franchises that are still going today actually had installments or got their start on the MSX! The list includes:

- Metal Gear (*The original is vastly different from the NES/Famicom version, and the 2nd game 'Metal Gear: Solid Snake' was even inspired by the abysmal 'Snake's Revenge' on NES!*)
- ChoroQ (*Cute super-deformed racing game featuring miniature Micro Machines-esque*

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vehicles)

- Dragon Slayer (*The fourth game was released on NES as 'Legacy of the Wizard' and also appeared on the MSX2*)
- Goonies (*Also vastly different from the Famicom original*)
- Contra (*Which was slightly easier than any of the other versions, with the addition of a life meter instead of dying in one hit*)
- Final Fantasy and Dragon Quest
- Several of Konami's shooters (*Gradius, Nemesis, Parodius, Twinbee*)
- Popular puzzle series Puyo Puyo also got its start on the MSX systems

So the MSX is no slouch when it comes to having a massive library of games. Unfortunately the MSX also had some technical shortcomings. For example most games didn't implement scrolling - they could only handle one screen at a time. Which for better or for worse made some games easier, like *Contra*. Luckily by the time the vastly updated MSX2 came around, companies had figured out ways to implement scrolling in later titles.

Unfortunately, unless you live in Japan your only chance of ever seeing the system in the flesh is to hit up eBay, and considering just how rare these systems are, they'll probably set you back a pretty penny. However if you *do* live in Japan, Nintendo has reportedly added MSX games to the library of Virtual Console titles on the Wii.

Luckily it looks like several hobbyists around the world still celebrate the MSX. Like Kazuhiko Nishi, who has released the only official MSX emulator, MSXPLAYer, you can read up on it [here](#).

There's also that

[tribute fan-game](#)

dedicated to the MSX and Konami's games... :3.

Well I hope you liked my first attempt at an all-new article series. If there's a classic system you'd like to see me highlight, hit me up on [twitter](#) if you have any ideas for future installments... I know I have a few more ideas in the pipeline, I just wanted to start with this one and see what kind of reaction I would get out of it.