



1986 was the year of Out Run, no doubt about that. However we still loved playing games at home. In Late 1986, Crash was undoubtedly the most popular game magazine for Spectrum owners. With a circulation of over 100,000 magazines each month, they had only 3-4 staff writers. TT Racer arrived for review and went into the October issue along with over 30 other, slow, tape loading games. Not playing the game long enough would seem the only possible reason they gave TT Racer just seven marks out of ten. Even competing magazines awarded eight and nine out of ten. (Remember this was an era where 10/10 was a game to buy and 6/10 was much below average). Despite this, the Million+ Spectrum owners saw the potential of this game and it quickly hit the charts, sold by the bucket load and became known as a great motorbike simulation. With an immensely steep learning curve, gamers used to be (had to be?) a far more patient bunch.

## CRASH READERS AWARDS

Fighting off four flight simulators, TT racer won the readers award for best simulation of 1986 in crash magazine.

Two other big 'racer themed' games didn't fare as well in the reader polls. The terminally bad tv-tie-in games, Street Hawk and Knightrider from Ocean both occupied places in the top five readers biggest disappointments of that year!

TT Racer was highly anticipated, months before release, after a preview in Crash. But it was first advertised a full year before release, in the October 1984 issue. It's amazing that a game from a period when some games were knocked together in a matter of a few nights or weeks, this game had taken so long. This is no doubt a reflection of the effort put into this game. When eventually it hit the streets, it was clear this was special. It had fancy packaging and a comprehensive options menu, It had working brakes and clutch levers, a power gauge on the right hand throttle. The track raced toward you with good speed with many competitors to race against. A track made from vector graphics had been seen before and the spectrum already had a decent third person bike game - Full Throttle. Still, in 1986 this game stood high above the crowded genre of 60+ racing games already available on this machine alone.

TT Racer wasn't just a good-for-its-day simulator. It did something never done before on home racing games. For a very reasonable £29.95, Sinclair owners could add an interface to the machine which allowed access to a faster tape loading system (Microdrive), an RS232 interface for printers and, here's the one you need to know about - the ability to network upto 63 other spectrums together on a LAN. 100 baud may seem poor now, but it was the first in domestic use and was available back in 1983! TT Racer was the first racer to use this network facility allowing upto another six friends to race on their own portable televisions. The strange thing is, it seems no-one actually bothered with this. Perhaps bagging up the Speccy, joystick, interface, wires and tele and dragging them round to a friends bedroom to set-up for a few hours was too much effort. More likely then a journalist or three could set them up in the office and enjoy - but given the scores and reviews written, it seems this was not the case.

So the first home LAN racing game was great, but no one bothered with multiplayer. How typical of the years that followed.



DI were renowned for their ZX Spectrum simulations Fighter Pilot and Tomahawk. They went on to produce 16-bit games and ultimately PC games only. They published their own games in the UK, as well as publishing for other companies (for instance 1990 Stunt Driver from American Sphere Inc). They were eventually bought by French publishers, Titus in 1998. Titus went bankrupt and out of business in 2004.

In the early eighties, their nearest rivals were Realtime Games (Leeds) with their simulations like 3d Starstrike and Carrier Command. During later 16-bit years, their nearest rival was Spectrum Holobyte and DiD.

Digital Integration went on to outlast both - Realtime ceased to make games - turning into 'Cross Product' and producing tools for game/simulation developers and both Spectrum-Holobyte and DiD were consumed and abandoned by Infogrames. (DiD was sold to Rage in 1998, who went bankrupt late 2002).

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